

jazz notes

MENTION the band Supertramp and battle lines are drawn. One camp believes them to be one of the best British pop bands ever, the other will be searching for baseball bats. Relax folks, no bats required, because Supertramp saxophonist, John Helliwell had a change of direction some years ago. He returned from California to study at the RNCM and strayed into the world of jazz-influenced music and in 2004 created Crème Anglais, a quintet which includes the exceptional guitarist Mike Walker. Hear John Helliwell's Crème Anglais tonight at Wakefield Jazz (01977 680542).

Of the three live gigs battling for your attention tomorrow night, Martin Speake's Change of Heart, at The Gate, Goole, comes out tops. Martin is one of Britain's leading saxophone players and composers, and his Charlie Parker project received rave reviews. Tomorrow night his band features Nikki Iles (piano), Steve Watts (bass) and Jeff Williams (drums), more details from The Gate 01405 720219.

Second up is the worthy cause of Martin House, the charity which will benefit from tomorrow night's session at Jazz In The Spa. Featured band is the Eagle Jazz Band, traditional jazz as the Spa audience likes it. The venue is the Trustees Hall, High Street, Boston Spa (01937 842544).

Saturday night's third option is at Howden Live's Shire Hall. Adrian Byron Burns has twice been voted acoustic artist of the year by the British Blues Connection and Blueprint magazine. The singer/guitarist offers a subtle blend of Blues, R & B and jazz; phone 01430 431535 for details.

The Sunday night acoustic jazz quartet nights continue at the Jacobean Lodge, Plainville Lane, Wigginton, and organiser Karl

Mullen is planning some tempting guest bands from around the region over coming weeks. Phone 01904 762749 for details.

Jazz pirates storm into York on Tuesday night with the City's top young jazz talent at the helm.

Those young, high-energy rascals, Rob Lavers, Andy Hillier, Chris Moore and Eddie Hick have had a chance windfall, in the unlikely form of a Pirates Of The Caribbean full room setting.

Unusual, or what? Who could turn down such an opportunity for jolly jack far mayhem? Certainly not our demon young jazzers. The set comes direct from a famous London nightclub and was previously populated by smart set celebrities. The venue will be the Stagcoach Theatre, 41 Monkgate, and the band plans lots of new arrangements of jazz standards.

Scarborough Jazz on Tuesday has outstanding trumpeter/guitarist Thom Whitworth as its guest. Thom has caught the attention of Jools Holland, who invited him to

play in a recent BBC radio broadcast. Phone 01723 379818 for details.

Nu-jazz is the description given to the acoustic/electronic music with a jazz edge coming out of Europe, and Scandinavia in particular, over the past ten years or so. Universal Records released a useful 2-CD sampler in 2003, simply titled NU-JAZZ.

Singer Viktoria Tolstoy (Leo's great-great granddaughter) has recorded under the guidance of mega-selling pianist Esbjorn Svensson. In her new release, *Pictures Of Me* (ACT Records), she has sifted through her record collection for songs by some of pop's biggest singer/songwriters, and has included five originals by fellow-Swedes.

After a gentle lope through Paul Simon's *Have A Good Time*, Viktoria turns Prince's *Te Amo* Carazon into a seductive bossa nova. Peter Gabriel's naughty *Kiss That Frog* switches into booty R & B, with some two-fisted piano

and tasty Hammond organ. Green Little Butterfly, written by Lars Danielsson, demonstrates once again the staggering grasp of the English language by Scandinavians (and Dutch, French, Germans, etc, etc - blimey, the British are lazy linguists). This is a poetic little song, like the entire album, sung in English. Danielsson emerges as cello soloist from time to time throughout the album, and Tore Brunborg plays saxophone with more than a touch of Jan Garbarek intonation.

Don't Make Me Wait, by Seal, is bluesy and relaxed, moving on to an urgent shuffle with Stevie Wonder's *Can't Help It*.

The penultimate track, Van Morrison's *The Way Young Lovers Do*, brings the album to a fizzing climax, then a fitting encore of *Old And Wise* by Alan Parsons.

If the description *Pop/jazz* doesn't upset you, this is a very rewarding album of shifting moods.

Ron Burnett