

Institution: Royal Academy of Music
Unit of Assessment: 35
Title of case study: Public Understanding of Jazz and Popular Music
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dr Alyn Shipton's research focuses on jazz and popular music in the twentieth century. As a scholar and broadcaster, Dr Shipton has a long record of communicating the results of his research to audiences considerably beyond academia, through his own regular appearances on BBC Radio, and his writing for the broadsheet press. His work has led to enhanced public awareness of significant (but hitherto neglected) figures in jazz and popular music, a greater understanding of the American recording and music publishing industries, and a reassessment of his subjects' work which has generated commercial outcomes and affected professional practice.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Shipton's work on jazz history, oral history and popular music dates back to his first oral histories published in the 1980s. His published output now stands at four volumes of oral history, seven academic biographies and a synoptic history of jazz. He has continued this work since being appointed Lecturer in Jazz History at the Royal Academy of Music in 2008. His particular interest has been in reconciling information from oral histories and testaments with documentary biography and sound documents or discography. A study of his research methods was published in the <i>Jazz Research Journal</i> under the title 'New Jazz Histories' (<i>JRJ</i> 3:2, 2009, pp 127–144) and it also formed the basis of an academic conference on Jazz Research at Salford University in the spring of 2008. His oral history interviews formed the basis of his 'Jazz Library' series for BBC Radio 3 (2007–2012), and over 150 of these are preserved in perpetuity on the BBC website as downloadable podcasts.</p> <p>His biography of the songwriter Jimmy McHugh / <i>Feel a Song Coming On</i> was published in 2009, and explored the New York music publishing, song-plugging and recording industry, as well as the early years of the Hollywood musical. Material from it was incorporated in a subsequent biography of McHugh's songwriting partner Dorothy Fields by the American author Charlotte Greenspan.</p> <p>Shipton's investigation of Mills Music publishing (in which McHugh was a partner) led him to research Irving Mills' links with Cab Calloway in his biography of the singer <i>Hi-De-Ho</i> published in 2010. This shed new light on the early years of modern artist management and promotion, radio broadcasting and recording policy, and Shipton appeared at events organised by the 2010 Cheltenham and London Jazz festivals and at a seminar at King's College London, on 26 April 2010, presenting the fruits of this research with Dr Harvey Cohen, whose biography of Duke Ellington (<i>Duke Ellington's America</i>, 2009) looked in detail at a later period of Irving Mills' work. The interest in management and production of music drew Shipton to research the life of the pop singer Harry Nilsson, discovering new material on the development of studio recording techniques and re-evaluating a body of work that led to RCA reissuing almost Nilsson's entire catalogue of recordings in a 17CD boxed set, published in tandem with Shipton's biography. Shipton worked in detail on the documentary material on Nilsson's recordings held at the Sony / RCA archives in New York, and in the singer's personal archive, publishing most of this material for the first time.</p>

His work on Nilsson brought Shipton's jazz research methodology to an area of 1960s and 1970s pop music, and has led to subsequent broadcasts and articles on the period, from Radio 4's *Front Row* to several NPR stations in north America, and blogs including *The Huffington Post*. In particular these have focused on the establishment of London as the major base for pop music recording in the 1970s.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Authored books:

I Feel a Song Coming On: The Life of Jimmy McHugh (Urbana/Champaign, Illinois University Press, 2009) [REF2: RAM21a]

Hi-De-Ho, The Life of Cab Calloway (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010) [REF2: RAM21b]

Nilsson: The Life of a Singer-Songwriter (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013) [REF21: RAM21c]

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Shipton's research on twentieth-century jazz and popular music history has been disseminated through books, radio and television broadcasts, newspapers, and magazines. This has served to bring his subjects (and related areas of jazz and popular music) to a wide public and generated new professional and commercial interest in their work, in the UK and internationally. McHugh's songs have been recorded by a new generation of artists; Calloway and his work have featured on radio and television; there has been a major CD reissue programme of Nilsson's work.

Throughout his career, Shipton has sought to communicate his research to a wide public beyond academia. His weekly broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 have sought to reach a general listenership, and so, for example, he has not only presented programmes on Cab Calloway, but on members of Calloway's orchestra including Dizzy Gillespie and Jonah Jones. Shipton's appearances at Cheltenham Jazz Festival and King's College London in April 2010 to discuss McHugh and Calloway were open to the general public, as was the discussion of McHugh at the London Jazz Festival in November 2010. Shipton has also chaired a round table discussion on Duke Ellington (and his connections with Calloway and McHugh) at the Barbican, London, in November 2010.

McHugh's music is less well-known than that of his contemporaries George Gershwin, Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin. However, as a direct consequence of Shipton's book, Michael Feinstein presented a concert of McHugh's work at the Zankel Hall (below New York's Carnegie Hall) in November 2009, and interviewed Shipton on stage about the composer and his music. Feinstein has subsequently presented similar programmes in New York and Los Angeles. In November 2009, the singer Wesla Whitfield presented a concert of McHugh's songs at the Barnes and Noble bookstore at Lincoln Center, New York, at which Shipton talked about the composer and his work. This was televised for local New York PBS stations, reaching a sizeable media audience. Since Shipton's book was published, leading singers including Michael Bubl  and Jane Monheit have recorded McHugh's songs.

Shipton's research on Cab Calloway was used by the New York filmmaker Gail Levin in making a

television biography of the singer for the European Arte Network (the leading Arts network in France and Germany) and for public broadcasting Channel 13 in the USA. The book also generated renewed interest in the singer and his work, as interpreted by his grandson Christopher Calloway Brooks, and the present-day version of the Cab Calloway Orchestra. In addition to a *Jazz Library* programme on BBC Radio 3 in April 2011, Shipton broadcast extensively about Calloway in the USA, including appearances on the WNYC book programme *Soundcheck*, WNIC's Mark Hayes music programme, and the *Daily Swarm* blog. *Jazz Library* at the time had a weekly audience of 150,000 (source: RAJAR). WNYC has approximately one million listeners a week in the New York area (source: WNYC website) and WNIC has a reach of over 100,000.

The reach of the impact of Shipton's research is also evidenced by sales figures. Both the McHugh and Calloway biographies have sold approximately 2500 copies in hardback, with a further 1500 copies sold of the Calloway paperback. Nilsson had sold approximately 6000 copies in its first four months from publication in July 2013, plus half that number again as Kindle e-book sales. It was serialised by *The Mail on Sunday* (with a readership of 1.7 million), and broadcast as Radio 4's *Book of the Week* in August 2013 (estimated audience, BBC figures: 1.2 million). Japanese translation rights have also been sold.

The significance of Shipton's contribution to the public understanding of jazz and pop music is such that in addition to being the weekly presenter of Radio 3's *Jazz Record Requests*, he is a frequent contributor to Radio 4 programmes such as *Front Row* and *Last Word*. He is also a regular speaker at public events on jazz matters, including Jazz and the Media Conference (Birmingham City University,) 2010; Fleet U3A, 2011; Abingdon European Society 2011; Jazz and Multiple Sclerosis (speaker) House of Commons, 2011; Jazz in Europe conference, Paris, Cité de la Musique, September 2011; Highgate School jazz lecture, 2012, Sage Gateshead, Poetry and Jazz round table (chair), 2013; Cheltenham Literary Festival 2013; Charles Mingus Experience Day, CBSO Centre Birmingham, 2013.

Other Indicators: *I Feel A Song Coming On* was shortlisted for the ARSC awards for best research in popular music, 2009; *Hi-De-Ho* was shortlisted for the ARSC awards for best research in jazz, 2010.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

McHugh:

CEO of the McHugh Music Publishing Company

<http://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Jimmy-McHugh-Biography-To-Be-Honored-in-Concert-by-Michael-Feinstein-20091007>

Calloway:

The Hi de Ho Blog (www.thehidehoblog.com) : director

Cab Calloway Sketches: director

Video.pbs.org/video/2223857692

Nilsson:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01fjk76>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-2382537/The-Beatles-When-Harry-met-John-Paul-George-Ringo-The-American-Beatles-18-month-lost-weekend-Lennon.html>