

Media Briefing Pack

Issued 28th July 2008

Embargoed for 17.00 Monday 28th July 2008

7 PAGES

Q: What do Sir Paul McCartney, Van Morrison, Jools Holland, Paul Jones & Ian Shaw have in common?

A: They've all been inspired by the late George Melly

Come and join special musical and celebrity guests & friends of George Melly and his wife, Diana.

**For The Launch of exclusive Limited Edition Charity CD:
'George Melly: First & Last – a musical life'**

Celebrating an extraordinary musical career spanning 60 years

Tuesday, 29th July 2008

Pizza on the Park, London, SW1

12.45pm – 14.15pm

To be officially launched by Jonathan Miller

With live performance by emerging British jazz legend, **Ian Shaw**

Media welcome. Interviews & photography available at the launch.

For further details: contact Rhonda or Marc at Minerva PRC:

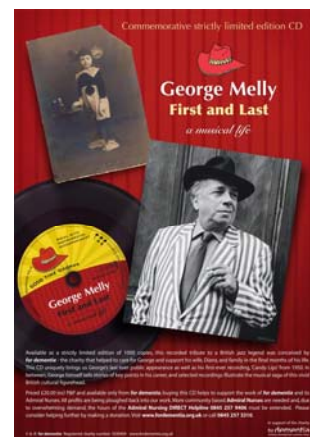
T: 01264-710428 / 07887 714957 / 07753 821525 E: info@minervaprc.com

Contents of this Briefing Pack:

1. **Diana Melly** - on coping with George's Dementia and the support from *for dementia's* Admiral Nurses
2. **Barbara Stephens, CEO for dementia** - on commissioning the CD & thanks to those involved.
3. **Digby Fairweather** - George's latter-day Musical Collaborator on putting this CD together
4. **Ian Shaw** - on the inspiration of 'My Melly'
5. **George Melly** - mini biography
6. **'George Melly: First & Last – a musical life'** – track listing, sources & original recordings.

Notes:

1. George & Diana Melly were supported by Admiral Nurses (part of the charity, **for dementia**) during George's experience of vascular dementia. For more details on Admiral Nurses, please see <http://www.fordementia.org.uk/admiral.htm>
2. This unique collection of original material, featuring George's very first & last recordings, was put together with the blessing of his wife, Diana Melly and under the guiding hand of George's latter day collaborator, Digby Fairweather.
3. All proceeds from the CD – of which only 1000 copies will be produced - will go to the charity, **for dementia**, from whom the disc is exclusively available
4. For more information on *for dementia*, or to find out details of how to obtain this unique CD, log on to www.fordementia.org.uk or call 0845 257 3310.



Charity CD Launch: ‘George Melly: First & Last – a musical life’ **29th July 2008**

Diana Melly:

Diana Melly commissioned the charity, *for dementia*, to produce the CD “*George Melly, First & Last – a musical life*” - of which only 1,000 copies will be produced - to commemorate George’s last public appearance at The 100 Club in London (10 June 2007), to pay tribute to a musical career spanning 60 years and to thank the charity for their help and support in the final phase of George’s life.



Diana Melly, now a Patron of *for dementia*, providers of Admiral Nurses who support carers and people with dementia in their own homes, speaks movingly about her and George’s experience of dementia, and how the Admiral Nursing DIRECT telephone and on-line service provided a lifeline:

“George and I received the most wonderful support from *for dementia*’s Admiral Nurses in the final months of George’s life, and we wanted to ‘give something back’. In addition to dedicating his last ever concert, 10 June 2007 at the 100 Club, London W1, to *for dementia* we commissioned this CD, which exclusively brings together original performances of George’s first ever studio recording right through to that unforgettable last performance.”

“After George and I ‘went public’ about his dementia, I received numerous letters— from complete strangers to long lost friends – telling me how much it had helped them personally to have us ‘come out’ about this devastating disease. It only struck me then just how many people are affected by dementia and are coping on their own – often in silence. We made the decision to speak out very publicly, open our home and our lives during the last months of George’s life to the media including television cameras, in order to demonstrate that we got through it - with extreme difficulty at times but also with humour, dignity and indeed a closeness that we had not shared for a long time.

“We were so lucky that my GP knew about Admiral Nurses and Admiral Nursing DIRECT - part of the charity *for dementia* - which meant I was able to access the expertise and support of an Admiral Nurse. This individual help and support kept me strong, able to cope – it still does - and to combat the loneliness that many carers feel.

“I want more people coping with dementia to be as lucky as we were and have access to an Admiral Nurse, in person if possible, but at least on the phone, through the Admiral Nursing DIRECT helpline which is manned by experienced Admiral Nurses. I’m delighted that all the proceeds from the CD are going to *for dementia* to support their vital and effective work.” concludes Diana Melly.

Ends/.

Notes to Editors:

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Barbara Stephens – CEO, *for dementia* comments:

“When Diana Melly approached us to say that her husband, George wanted to dedicate his last public appearance at the 100 Club on the 10th June 2007 to *for dementia* we were thrilled. It was a real honour to have such a legendary figure from the musical world offer to do this for us. As those who were there will remember, the night itself was magical as, despite his obvious failing health, George managed to deliver a stunning finale.

“So many other musicians came along to pay tribute. As well as George’s own band of recent years, Digby Fairweather’s Half Dozen, there were contributions from Paul Jones and Kenny Ball, George Webb with his Band of Brothers and Terry Lightfoot. Others who couldn’t be there in person, including Sir Paul McCartney and Van Morrison, sent messages of support. The evening had a real ‘party’ atmosphere. Not so much a tearful ‘farewell’ (although there were, of course, a few tears) as a joyful celebration.

“The CD we are launching today is a ‘Grand Tour’ through the 60 year musical life of George Melly, from first to last. His emotional & heartfelt performance of ‘Ol’ Rockin’ Chair’ from that eventful ‘last night’ in 2007 is uniquely coupled with the very first recording he ever made - ‘Candy Lips’ from 1950 with many musical ‘stops’ on the journey in between.

“Aby produced and narrated by his latter-day musical collaborator, Digby Fairweather, who worked tirelessly with support from Julian Marc Stringle at Merfingle Studios, to pull together the various tracks and get the right musical balance. With their help we were able to draw together what we hope will be a fitting tribute to the legend that was – and is- George Melly.

“There are so many people one needs to thank in a project like this, but in addition to giving my personal thanks to Digby for his lead on the musical production, I would particularly like to thank Peter Clayton at Robinwood Productions, whose offer to help out with ‘a couple of tracks’ materialized into 5! Likewise, Paul Adams at Lake Records who equally generously provided 5 tracks. Also to David Roper at Heavy Entertainment and Neil Rosser at Spools Out who let us include George’s own words, and Katie Buchanan and the team at Walkergeorge films who had recorded some of George’s last tour for the film ‘George Melly’s Last Stand’. And not forgetting Paul and John at Academy Design for their inspirational artwork.

“But most of all we thank George and Diana Melly, for their bravery in talking about dementia in such a public way and for creating a legacy which allows us to talk about it still today.”

Ends/.

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Digby Fairweather

The CD – George Melly ‘First & Last’ – a musical life’ - a unique collection of original material, featuring George’s very first & last recordings was put together under the guiding hand of George’s latter-day musical collaborator, Digby Fairweather.

Complete with contributions in his George’s own words, the CD has been produced and is narrated by Digby. It commemorates George’s marvelous musical talent, traces its development over the years and celebrates his flamboyant character and colourful life. Digby Fairweather, comments about working on the CD:

“Working on ‘Melly First & Last – a musical life’ is my salute to George. Our five – close on six – years working together with the roughly-enumerated ‘Half Dozen’ (Julian Marc Stringle, Chris Gower, Craig Milverton, Dominic Ashworth, Len Skeat Bobby Worth and Nick Millward) was a unique chance to get in touch with Britain’s most well-loved jazz singer, and (of course) one of our land’s most technicolour cultural icons.

“An Indian summer of renewed musical activity for George was matched by the musical challenges and resulting inspirations which he – benevolent as ever – afforded us. For me, the humble cornettist, a chance to meet – let alone work alongside – George was the achievement of a large part of my lifetime’s ambition. It had been forty-three years since I first heard the uniquely stylish voice which you can hear on the earlier tracks of this collection, and just thirty eight since I concluded that his first volume of autobiography ‘Owning up’ was the funniest book I had ever read. I still think so.

“Getting to know George in 2002 was in no way a let-down. He was funny, accessible, ever-friendly and as open to the world’s inhabitants – whether great and good or small and humble – as any star could be. He was, of course, a brilliant natural performer, a compliant musical collaborator.

“And as much as anything, a man whose lifelong ability to stick two defiant fingers up at convention, at cliché, and at the phoney world that tried – and tries - to set down what we should be thinking and saying brought everlasting support to the tentative iconoclast in my heart.

“George will be remembered too for his committed support of humanity’s right to do exactly as it pleases, love whomsoever it must and pursue life until the end. And we in turn can never forget him. So what can we offer but loving thanks?”

Digby Fairweather, Southend, July 2008.

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Charity CD Launch: 'George Melly: First & Last – a musical life'

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Performing live: Ian Shaw, who will perform in honour of his inspiration and mentor, George Melly.

Ian Shaw on 'My Melly'

"I remember so clearly seeing George Melly on the telly throughout my childhood.

"On arrival as a London University wannabee jazzer I was greedily buying up every one of his records I could get my hands on, starting with the seminal "Nuts"... What a glorious juxtaposition of words!



"My Melly was a mischievous Chaucerian uncle, telling me I had grown breasts backstage at Ronnie's, advising me how to squeeze a final viddy from the hilarious Ida Board at The Colony, refusing the caravan accommodation at the Cleethorpes festival...then coveting the camaraderie after the gig and insisting I finish the gin.

"My Melly, during a live Radio Two interview backstage at Brecon, imbued me with stories so filthy and funny, I couldn't finish my set.

"My Melly showed me that it was fine to combine just the right amount of humour with all that jazz on stage...and not give a shit what the people REALLY think.

"My Melly made me want to be a jazz singer. I am one. Cheers, George... "

Ian Shaw, London, 29th July 2008

IAN SHAW www.ianshaw.biz

Nominated for Best Vocalist, BBC Jazz Awards 2008, (Winner, 'Best Vocalist' 2004 & 2007)

"our finest jazz singer" **Time Out**,

"one of the contemporary scene's class acts" **The Guardian**

Ian Shaw has long been widely hailed as the UK 's most accomplished male jazz vocalist. Starting out in the 1980's on the alternative cabaret circuit with the likes of Jo Brand, Julian Clary and Rory Bremner, he was soon described by jazz critic Dave Illic as 'the voice of the decade'.

Following collaborations with legendary blues rock singer Carol Grimes, and a stint with his own band 'Brave New World,' he was then spotted by the late saxophonist and promoter Ronnie Scott, who mentored Shaw and launched his career on the contemporary jazz scene.

Shaw has since held sell-out residencies at the infamous Soho jazz club, as well performing with his celebrated quartet, at venues and festivals all over the world. He has released a string of critically acclaimed albums on both sides of the Atlantic and overseas, most recently 'LifeJacket' (Linn Records), a beguiling collection of self-penned songs, currently attracting rave reviews across the music press. **Ends/.**

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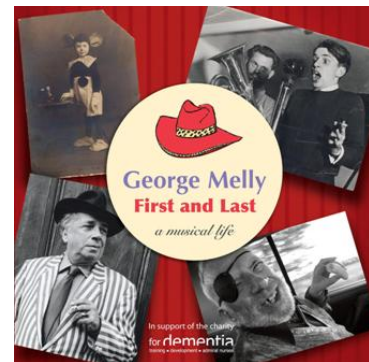
BIOGRAPHY: George Melly – 1926 to 2007

George Melly, born in Liverpool in 1926 and educated at Stowe School, first made his name in the British jazz revival of the late 1940s and early 1950s, singing with Mick Mulligan's band, returning to jazz in the 1970s with John Chilton's Feetwarmers (1974-2002) and Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen (2003-7).

Although principally celebrated on this CD for his unique singing voice, Melly was also a highly observant and sophisticated polymath who bridged his singing career with professional journalism, becoming a well-loved author, critic, and TV personality. From 1956 to 1970 he wrote the story lines and balloons for the *Flook* comic strip (drawn by Wally Fawkes, the Daily Mail's 'Trog') and in the years 1965-73, when 'rock music' put his singing career 'on hold', he was film and TV critic for *The Observer* newspaper.

George's first volume of autobiography, *Owning Up*, was published in 1965, followed by four further volumes *Rum, Bum and Concertina* (1977), *Scouse Mouse* (1984), *Mellymobile* (1982) and *Slowing Down* (2005). His other published works allowed him to share his lifelong passions for surrealism and fly-fishing.

From 1974, with John Chilton's Feetwarmers, he fashioned a hugely successful international career as jazz singer, tirelessly combining this passion with writing, lecturing on art, broadcasting and achieving a popular reputation as 'Mr Melly, the man on the Telly'. Renowned for his colourful suits, technicolour personality and open-hearted anarchy, this much-beloved performer continued singing into his eighties. His last performance, just five weeks before his death in July 2007, was at the 100 Club in London's Oxford Street where his career began, in aid of the charity **for dementia** and their Admiral Nurses.



In 2004 he was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC's Jazz Awards.

Married to Diana in 1963, George was surrounded by family especially in his later years and is survived by Diana, his son, Tom, daughter, Pandora, step daughter, Candy, and their 5 grandchildren.

Ends/.

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Track listing (& sources):

1. Dr. Jazz (Oliver/Melrose) (2.42) Herman Darewski Music Publ. Co. 2003 Robinwood Productions Ltd
2. Candy Lips (Williams) (4.08) Copyright Control, Lake Records 14 May 1950 – Mick Mulligan's Magnolia Jazz Band – Originally Tempo (E) A66 to be LAKE LACD265 (due for release in October 2008)
3. Black Mountain Blues (Cole) (4.36) Copyright Control, Lake Records – 9 January 1955 – Alex Welsh & His Dixielanders – LAKE LACD8
4. Miss Jenny's Ball (Reed) (3.04) Fellsongs, Lake Records – 13 June 1956 – George Melly with Mick Mulligan's Magnolia Jazz Band – LAKE LACD150
5. Organ Grinder Blues (De Rose/Richman/Trent) (3.08) Redwood, Lake Records – 13 June 1956 – George Melly with Mick Mulligan's Magnolia Jazz Band – LAKE LACD150
6. If you'se a viper (Smith) (3.00) Gemini, Lake Records, 5 March 2007 – George Melly with Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen
7. On Revival Day (Razaf) (2.45) EMI Music Publishing Ltd, 2003 Robinwood Productions
8. Michigan Water Blues (Williams) (3.02) B Feldman & Co Ltd, 2003 Robinwood Productions
9. Frankie and Johnny (Trad.) (4.33) Public Domain Work, 2003 Robinwood Productions
10. Young Woman's Blues (Smith)/ segues into...
11. All the girls go crazy 'bout the way I walk (Ory) (8.10) Fellsongs/copyright control, 2007 Walkergeorge Films Ltd
12. Ol' Rockin' Chair (Carmichael) (2.15) Peermusic (UK) Ltd 2007 © for dementia
13. September Song (Weill/Anderson) (3.51) Warner/Chappell, 2003, Robinwood Productions.

Tracks 1, 7, 8, 9, & 13 from "Singing & Swinging the Blues", George Melly & Digby Fairweather's Half-Dozen, Robinwood Productions 2003. Catalogue No. RWP 0019CD

Speech tracks from: 'The Empress of the Blues', written by Mike Pointon and George Melly, produced by Neil Rosser, Spools Out Productions and "It's Trad, Dad" written by Digby Fairweather, produced by David Roper for Heavy Entertainment, originally broadcast July 2005. Licensed by Paul Adams, Lake Records; David Roper, Heavy Entertainment and Neil Rosser, Spools Out Productions. Speech commentary © Digby Fairweather, 2008.

This compilation is P&C **for dementia** 2008

For dementia would like to thank all those who have given so generously of their time & talents to this project, particularly, the artists whose recordings are featured here.

While every attempt has been made to reproduce the tracks to the highest possible quality, it is not possible to remove all blemishes in the sound quality of the original analogue recordings without affecting the overall quality of the recording. Think of it as adding to the ambience. We think George would have approved.

Ends/.