

JONES, DILLWYN OWEN PATON (DILL) (1923-1984), jazz pianist

Name: Dillwyn Owen Paton Jones
Date of birth: 1923
Date of death: 1984
Parent: Lavinia Jones (née Bevan)
Parent: John Islwyn Paton Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: jazz pianist
Area of activity: Music
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Dill Jones was born on 19 August 1923 at Sunny Side, Newcastle Emlyn, the son of John Islwyn Paton Jones, a bank manager, and his wife Lavinia (née Bevan). He inherited musical gifts from both sides, his father being a good singer and his mother a gifted pianist. After attending Llandovery College where he heard jazz recordings for the first time, he worked in a bank while playing the piano at local concerts in the evenings. During service in the Navy between 1942 and 1946 he was given the opportunity of performing on the Armed Forces' network. In 1946 he enrolled at Trinity College of Music London to study piano and organ and the following year joined a band led by the drummer Carlo Krahmer, where he played alongside Duncan White and Humphrey Lyttleton. He played at the first Jazz Festival held at Nice in 1949, and subsequently in Vic Lewis's band and on board the liner *Queen Mary*, which enabled him to visit jazz clubs in New York. He also played with several other bands in London and presented the pioneering BBC programme '*Jazz Club*'. From 1958 he led his own London-based trio.

In 1961 he emigrated to the USA and spent the rest of his life in New York, playing with a number of celebrated bands. Between 1969 and 1973 he was a member of the 'JPJ Quartet' with Budd Johnson, Oliver Jackson and Bill Pemberton, then from 1974 onwards he concentrated on performing solo. He returned to Wales in 1978 to perform at the Wales Jazz Festival in Cardiff. Throughout his career he was able to vary his style and had no difficulty in playing in bands of many different kinds while still excelling as a soloist. He was equally at home in Fats Waller's 'Harlem stride' and the music of Bix Beiderbecke.

He was to be invested as a member of the Gorsedd at the National Eisteddfod at Lampeter in 1984, but died before then, in New York on 22 June 1984. A memorial service was held at the church of St Peter, Lexington Avenue, on 29 June. A collection of his recordings, 'Davenport Blues', was issued in 2004.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

'Dill Jones', Grove Music Online

The New York Times, 26 June 1984

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dill Jones](#)

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