

TREVOR RICHARDS

was born in South England in 1945. After an introduction to percussion in kindergarten at the age of four and a year of desultory piano lessons at seven he finally recognized the attraction of New Orleans jazz in his early teens. He set about learning to play the drums under the tutelage of experienced jazz and dance-band drummers. These early years were spent playing with local bands and later with groups around Europe before moving to the U.S.A. in 1966 from Hamburg, where he had spent over a year working with *Abbi Hübner's Lowdown Wizards* and his own trio. He first stayed in New York and studied informally with Louis Armstrong's favorite drummer *Zutty Singleton*, the quintessential representative of classic jazz drumming, whose instrument he later inherited and still plays today. He moved on to New Orleans and continued his studies with prominent veteran drummers such as *Cié Frazier, Alex Bigard, Louis Barbarin, Freddie Kohlman* and *Ray Bauduc*. At the same time he became active on the local jazz scene. A member of the black local of the Musicians' Union, he played in the city's great traditional jazz and brass bands, and at Preservation Hall, with the surviving pioneers of this music: *Punch Miller* (see photo), *George Lewis, Emile* and *Paul Barnes, "Cap'n" John Handy, Jim Robinson, Manuel Manetta* and *Willie, Percy* and *Earl Humphrey* amongst others.

Parallel to these activities Trevor has contributed occasional research and recorded material to the New Orleans Jazz Archives at Tulane University. He graduated in England with an Honors degree in linguistics and music theory and formed the *Trevor Richards New Orleans Trio* in 1972. With this group he toured the world for ten years performing at festivals, concerts and school seminars, also on radio and TV programs. He recorded numerous albums and accompanied top jazz names, amongst them *Albert Nicholas, Benny Waters, Herb Hall, Wallace Davenport, Alton Purnell, Champion Jack Dupree* and former members of the *Louis Armstrong All Stars* (e.g. *Barney Bigard, Joe Darensbourg* and *Trummy Young*).

Upon his return to New Orleans in 1982 he assumed co-leadership of the *Original Camellia Jazz Band* and played throughout S.E. Asia 1985-89 as the only band from New Orleans to be on permanent tour outside of the U.S. Their sensational opening of the New Orleans Restaurant in Singapore secured a twelve-month residency, a recording for Polydor and the highest commendation from the *National Endowment of the Arts* in Washington, D.C. Trevor maintained an annual European tour with the *Art Hodes Trio* 1981-91, thereafter with *Ralph Sutton*. His New Orleans Trio and Band have usually featured U.S. artists like *Red Richards, Charlie Gabriel, Gene "Mighty Flea" Connors, Butch Thompson, Orange Kellin* and *Evan Christopher*. In 1997 he formed his Legends of the Swing Era for unique documentary recordings and festival appearances, starring *Doc Cheatham, Benny Waters, Franz Jackson, Jay McShann, Claude Williams, Lawrence Lucie, Truck Parham, Jack Lesberg, Anita O'Day, Laurel Watson, Dan Barrett* and *Tom Baker*.

In the course of his career he has had close contact with and learned much from such leading figures in the history of jazz drumming as *Paul Barbarin, Louis Bellson, Cozy Cole, Sonny Greer, Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Max Roach* and *George Wettling*. His reputation as jazz historian has resulted in his writing many magazine articles and liner notes and compiling programs for radio. He has continued to support jazz research, assisting with the editing of jazz literature for publication, notably for the late *Danny Barker*, and working independently on his own jazz book. He has also organized and co-ordinated jazz festivals and recording productions, and worked as consultant for radio and TV stations, musical agencies and hotels, besides tutoring in traditional drumming. In 1993 he was awarded a certificate of merit "in recognition of outstanding musical services to the City of New Orleans" by the Mayor. In 1998 he was the recipient of a European media award as Drummer of the Year and in 2000 the *Hot Club de France* honored his CD "City of the Blues" as Record of the Year. He became chairman of the Old Jazz Union's Cultural Advisory Board in Germany in 2002 and has been the consultant for and endorser of a newly developed classic line of drums and sticks by WorldMax.

Since the devastating flood in New Orleans – on his 60th birthday! – Trevor has given up his home base there and relocated to Europe. What could be salvaged of his extensive collection of jazz recordings, literature and vintage percussion instruments has now become *The Trevor Richards Collection* at the Jazz Archives of the *Lippmann and Rau Foundation* in Eisenach. He has been active on the board of 'New Orleans Hilfe e.V.', a nonprofit society supporting New Orleans relief organizations for musicians. In 2004 he formed his *British New Orleans All Stars*, which has toured Europe with great success and produced a benefit CD in aid of this worthy cause.