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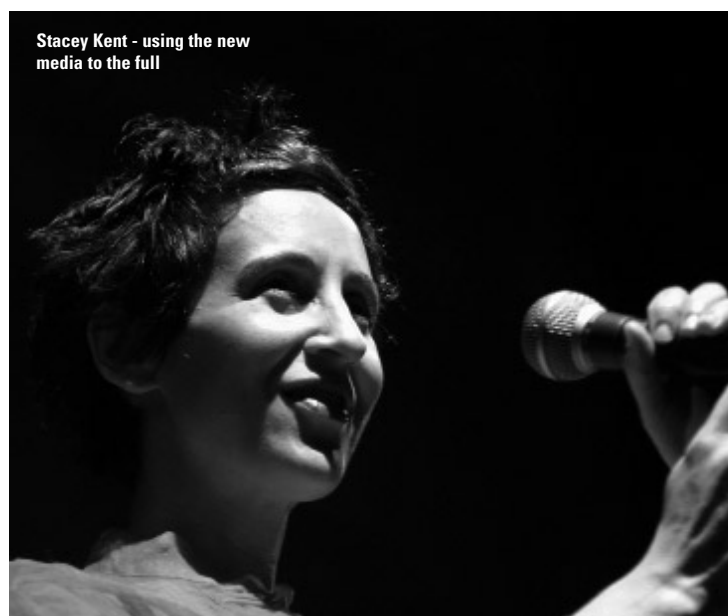
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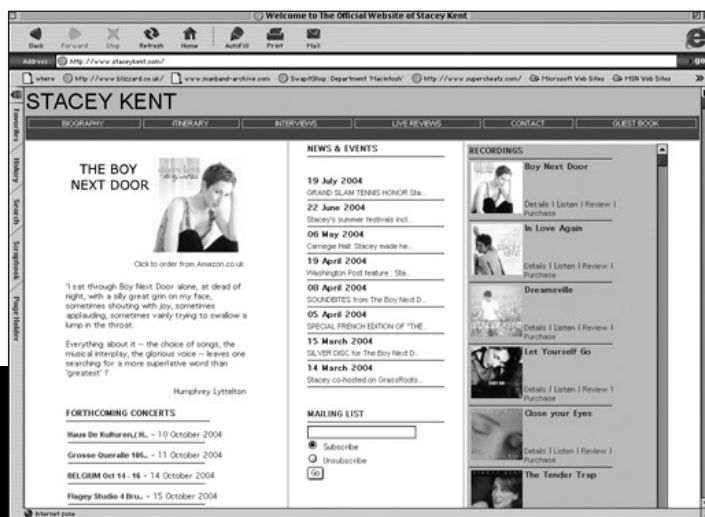
# SECRETS OF ONLINE SWING



Ten years ago, hardly any jazz musicians or venues had websites, and snail mail and the phone furnished all the connections. Today, the expectation is growing that information should be reachable at the click of a button. EMMA KENDON looks at the influence the internet is having on the jazz economy.



Stacey Kent - using the new media to the full



STACEY KENT's sophisticated website, up and running since 1997, has a wonderful quote from Humphrey Lyttleton right at the top and information on all of her CD releases, with thumbnail pictures each linked to background info, sound clips, reviews, where to buy, regularly updated news items, forthcoming concerts and an invitation to join her mailing-list.

It's a superb example of a jazz musician reaping benefits directly from the information technology revolution of the past decade. The feel of the site complements Kent's classy, romantic style, and it's so well organised that straight from the homepage the fan - and for that matter the journalist and promoter, can find what he or she wants at once. Running across the top is a menu offering a biography, itinerary, interviews, live reviews, contact details and access to the guest book.

Stacey Kent says: 'I can't tell you specifically how it has affected CD

sales but I can tell you generally that it has made an enormous difference. Let me give you a perfect example.

'In 1998, a very popular news and arts TV show in the USA called *CBS Sunday Morning*, aired a 12-minute piece on me. I was just at the beginning of my career and Candid Records had almost no distribution in the USA. Up until I came along, Candid's catalogue was full of jazz classics, such as Charles Mingus and Booker Little CDs, so they had a hard time getting any new CDs on to the US market.

'However, after *CBS Sunday Morning*, which is nationally broadcast, there was a very big demand for my albums. Up until then, nobody could find my CDs in the USA shops, but thankfully, on account of the internet and people being so resourceful, new fans went surfing in search of information on the internet. They came across my website and across amazon.com, because we had no store distribution but were being

sold on amazon. My current CD at the time was *The Tender Trap*. After that TV show, it sold over 10,000 copies on amazon.com in one weekend alone. We hit number 2 on the USA Billboard Charts the following week. After that, Candid was able to get a distribution deal and things have been radically different for me and for Candid in the USA ever since.

'Without my site or amazon's, that never could have happened. Being on a minor label, where publicity resources are not abundant, we discovered that the internet made an absolutely crucial difference.'

This is by no means the only kind of feedback Stacey Kent has had through the internet - there has been an immense amount directly from fans. Kent waxes lyrical about the emails she receives in the late evening after a gig when punters have rushed home and gone online

immediately to tell her how much they enjoyed the show.

Even if you don't yet have your own website, it's vital for musicians to be aware that many audience members now rely at least partially on websites offering listings for gigs in their area, and some are also subscribers to local email bulletins giving listings.

In the Brighton area, pianist Terry Seabrook of Cubana Bop religiously maintains a weekly email bulletin covering as an area as far afield as Worthing, Hastings, Haywards Heath and Eastbourne as well as Brighton. Users of these bulletins may not bother looking in printed listings in their local papers any more. Bands now have to familiarise themselves with such online services in their area, and make sure they send the info to people like Seabrook.

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