

Beitrag von John Chilton (UK)

Musiker und Autor

über Johnny Simmen

I was very pleased to learn that you are organising a tribute to my great friend Johnny Simmen. I wish I could be with you on January 26. But health problems make my attendance impossible.

Please forgive me for not giving the many, many words I would like to say about a wonderfully inspiring friend who was truly a Jazz expert.

Bill Coleman brought us together, saying that we should get to know one another. Thus we started swopping letters at least once a month for years. I learnt so much from Johnny and when I wrote my "Who's Who of Jazz" he was invaluable putting me in touch with many American musicians. I only had to mention Johnny's name and stubborn silence was replaced by smiling co-operation. Thank you, Johnny.

Johnny had a fine "ear" which enabled him to identify previously unknown soloists. To hear Johnny talk about his favorite pianists was a wonderful experience. His insight was awe inspiring. No wonder so many musicians respected his opinions. His writings were models of informative expertise. He loved Jazz and that shone through everything he wrote.

When Johnny and his lovely wife Liza visited America they were invited into many, many Jazz homes. These visits led to new names being added to Johnny's already huge listing of people befriended by him. Years later musicians spoke with reverence about these visits – and never failed to praise Johnny's sense of humour.

When we met in Zurich and in London we were just as friendly in person as we were on paper. What a great pal! I'll never forget him! John Chilton,
London, 12 Jan. 2014