

'PHOTOGRAPHY IS JAZZ FOR THE EYE'

Not just a coffee table book but very nearly a coffee table, *Jazzlife* weighs in at 14 pounds and almost 700 pages, with a breathtaking collection of large-format photographs. **CHRISSE MURRAY** on the book of a unique 1960 jazz journey by William Claxton and Joachim Berendt.

FOR LEGENDARY AMERICAN photographer William Claxton and acclaimed German jazz historian Joe Berendt, a dream trip in a Chevrolet Impala on the American highways in 1960 gave birth to *Jazzlife*, a unique collection of words and pictures in which they freeze-framed many fascinating moments from a special period of musical and social history.

Claxton called photography 'jazz for the eye' and he proves his point in *Jazzlife's* evocative images, many presented in imposing, exhibition-sized prints. The variety of pictures and stories also reflects mileage Claxton and Berendt covered, and the surprises they encountered. They searched Chicago in vain for its historic 1920s character, yet arrived in California to hear Benny Carter rehearse his famous 'Kansas City Suite' with the Count Basie Orchestra at the Hollywood Bowl. They chilled out by a sun-

splashed pool, squinting with Terry Gibbs in the San Fernando Valley as friends Horace Silver, Wynton Kelly, Sonny Stitt, Herb Ellis and Paul Chambers dropped by. Then, way down yonder in New Orleans, they were disturbed to find famous jazz clubs trading as strip joints, but rejoiced to find a traditional jazz funeral causing chaos in the



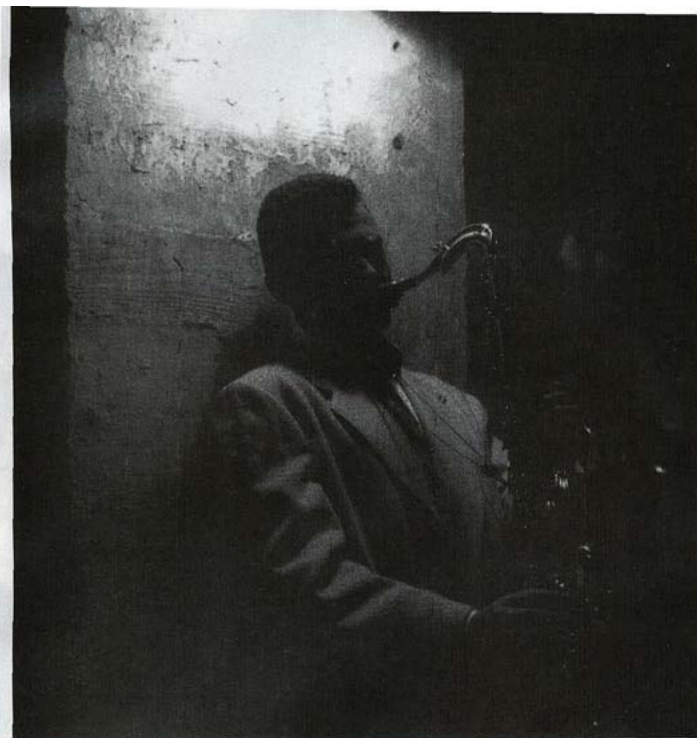
French Quarter.

In New York, Gerry Mulligan marched the pair to the spot in Central Park where he'd run through charts with his big band when he couldn't afford a rehearsal studio. In the Big Apple, Claxton photographed the city's most fêted musical couple of the time - saxophonist Charlie Mariano and composer Toshiko Akiyoshi - in a downtown 'picture yourself' photo booth, before catching Donald Byrd uptown, playing trumpet as he travelled on the famous 'A Train'.

On Death Row at Louisiana's notorious state penitentiary, our dynamic duo were sent totally unguarded to enjoy 'free association' with the inmates because many were blues musicians. And in Las Vegas, they were gobsmacked to find Duke Ellington's orchestra performing classics of Ellingtonia to a nearly empty hotel lounge in the early

hours, the Duke grumbling that nobody would leave the gaming tables and slot machines long enough to come and listen.

William Claxton is still an accomplished photojournalist, famously taking his heroes out of smoke-filled jazz bars and photographing them on beaches and bridges under blue skies. Joachim-Ernst Berendt, rightly described by the publishers as 'a distinguished German musicologist, writer and broadcaster' died tragically in 2000 at the age of 77, after being hit by a car. But through his indispensable reference work, *The Jazz Book* (revised, and selling more than 1.5 million copies worldwide), we owe Berendt a huge debt - not least for highlighting the important contribution of British jazz musicians to the world scene, especially during the 1960s and 1970s.



Top left: Max Roach, dancer and sunbather at Newport; bottom left: Miles in unguarded moment in Hollywood; this page: Stan Getz, Hollywood (top); funeral procession, New Orleans.

Now we can relive their journey, thanks to a handsome, large-format (it's half a metre high) reissue of *Jazzlife*, its original black and white images now joined by previously unpublished colour photographs. Portraits of jazz and blues legends (Muddy Waters, Dave Brubeck, Stan Getz, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, John

Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Wes Montgomery and many others) mix with fascinating scenes of street and home life among music communities all over the States. This limited-edition volume also includes a bonus CD of Berendt's digitally remastered music and interviews from the trip, originally released as two vinyl LPs.

Jazzlife by William Claxton and Joachim-Ernst Berendt is published by Taschen, £100, large-format hardback. (www.taschen.com).