

SHORT BIOG

Led by composer and conductor **Ben Cottrell**, Beats & Pieces Big Band are a band that happens to be big, and not your average 'big band'. They're an extremely tightknit bunch, meeting as students in Manchester and growing up and developing musically individually and collectively within the city's exciting scene. First playing together as Beats & Pieces in 2008, today these fourteen musicians know each other inside out socially and musically, and this familiarity is part of what sets them aside from many other big bands today.

The music is an expression of the band's members and their varied musical backgrounds and activities, all brought together in Ben Cottrell's inspired writing and arranging. His compositions reflect the diversity of music that people of their generation have grown up surrounded by, and as such are influenced as much by Michael Jackson, Björk or Radiohead as they are by Duke Ellington, Gil Evans or Loose Tubes.

The band's debut album **Big Ideas** was released in March 2012 on **Efpi Records**, a small Manchester-based label also run by Ben. Since then, Beats & Pieces have performed across the UK and Europe; received airplay on BBC Radio 2, Radio 3 and 6music; and received awards including Best UK Newcomer at the 2013 Jazz FM Awards and Ensemble of the Year at the 2014 Parliamentary Jazz Awards. Eagerly awaited second album **All In** was released in June 2015, again on Efpi Records, announcing the band to an even wider audience and cementing the band's reputation as one of the most original and vibrant ensembles of its type. Their third album will be released in Spring 2018, accompanying an extensive year long programme of activity celebrating the band's 10th anniversary – a remarkable achievement for a large ensemble in the current UK arts climate.

Before then, the band will embark on their biggest European tour to date with gigs in Germany, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, and UK, including at the EFG London Jazz Festival. Previous live highlights across Europe have included North Sea Jazz Festival (NL), Jazzahead (DE), Oslo Jazz Festival (NO), 12 Points festival (IE), and Love Supreme Festival (UK).

LONG BIOG

With high profile national and international awards to their name (Parliamentary Jazz Awards Ensemble of the Year, Jazz FM Awards Best UK Newcomer, European Young Artists' Jazz Award) and consistent audience and critical acclaim for their performances across the UK and Europe, **Beats & Pieces Big Band** have firmly established themselves as one of the country's foremost young jazz groups. Led by composer and conductor **Ben Cottrell**, their music draws on a wide range of influences from Ellington to Loose Tubes to Radiohead to redefine the role of the big band for a new generation.

Since their very first gig at the Manchester Jazz Festival in 2008, the band has performed across the UK to consistent audience and critical acclaim. In March 2011, Beats & Pieces were named as the winners of the European Young Artists' Jazz Award, part of the Burghausen International Jazz Festival in Germany and one of the continent's largest awards for emerging jazz musicians. The band have since performed across Europe with highlights including gigs at the Olympia in Paris for radio station TSF Jazz; 12 Points! Festival in Dublin; Oslo Jazz Festival in collaboration with Helge Sunde's Ensemble Denada; and a showcase at the Jazzahead! conference in Bremen (generously supported by the PRS for Music Foundation's British Music Abroad scheme).

The band's debut album '**Big Ideas**' was released in March 2012 on Efpi Records, an independent label co-founded by three of the original band members which has since grown into an umbrella organisation representing a growing roster of emerging musicians based across the UK and Scandinavia. This album release followed a (now-deleted) EP in December 2009 and a limited edition DVD of a live performance at Manchester's legendary Band on the Wall venue in October 2011, both also released by Efpi. The 'Big Ideas' release was marked with a major UK tour, with the hometown show at Manchester's RNCM Theatre recorded by the BBC for broadcast on Jazz on 3, and the London gig at a sold-out Ronnie Scott's receiving glowing 5 star reviews in both The Guardian and The Telegraph.

Their second album '**All In**' was recorded in January 2014 at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Wiltshire, and released on Efpi Records in June 2015 to an overwhelming reception including 4 star reviews in The Guardian and The Times and inclusion in best of-2015 lists by The Telegraph, Jazzwise and influential US blog Nextbop. March 2016 saw an extensive European tour with gigs in Germany, Poland, Czech Republic and Austria, followed in the summer by further UK and European club and festival dates including North Sea Jazz Festival, Love Supreme Festival, and headlining Canary Wharf Jazz Festival and Efpi's first label festival held at Kings Place in London.

Beats & Pieces' third album will be released in Spring 2018, again on Efpi Records, and will accompany an extensive year long programme of activity celebrating the band's 10th anniversary – a remarkable achievement for a large ensemble in the current UK arts climate. Before then, the band will return to the live stage with their largest European tour to date, performing 8 gigs over 10 days in Germany, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, and the UK (including at the EFG London Jazz Festival and a second Efpi festival, this time held in Manchester).

Beats & Pieces' founder and musical director, Ben Cottrell, is in high demand as an orchestral arranger, and has worked with artists including Laura Mvula, Esperanza Spalding, Goldie and Everything Everything, and world renowned orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Metropole Orkest (Netherlands) and The Heritage Orchestra. He was commissioned by Manchester Jazz Festival to create a brand new project entitled 'New Seeing' for string ensemble and double rhythm section, which premiered to a hugely positive reception during the festival programme in July 2016.

‘ALL IN’ PRESS COVERAGE

“One doesn't hear interplay in compositions this stormy in a big band all too often, at least not since the last Darcy James Argue album. These are roomy arrangements with solos that go places. There are no exercises in the typical jazz conventions. Everyone here has something to say and they all sound great together” **Anthony Dean-Harris, Nextbop**

“Fast becoming one of the foundations of the current UK jazz scene, Beats & Pieces make fun, grooving, high-impact music Mancunian style... continuing the great tradition of UK big bands”
Jez Nelson, BBC Jazz on 3 (September 2015)

“Lots of players have tried mixing rock brawn with jazz brain, few as convincingly as this young big band from Manchester...The Mercury Prize shortlist must surely await – 4 stars”
John Bungey, The Times (June 6 2015)

“[All In] shows that the young band's collectively grooving energy - and the gifted Cottrell's composing - have moved up a few notches further from 2012's aptly named Big Ideas – 4 stars”
John Fordham, The Guardian (June 5 2015)

“This uproariously individual yet tightly disciplined outfit is the most original big band to appear in the UK since Loose Tubes”
Martin Chilton, The Daily Telegraph (July 4 2015)

“A return... to the idea that contemporary jazz for big band can still generate the kind of direct impact more associated with rock and pop music, but without undermining its essential craft and sophistication... Highly recommended – 4 stars”
Selwyn Harris, Jazzwise (June 2015)

“[All In] retains [Beats & Pieces'] energy and enthusiasm but also adds a growing compositional and arranging maturity... The playing is excellent throughout and the band sound is well captured... As a long term supporter of the band it's good to see them back – 4 stars”
Ian Mann, The Jazz Man (June 11 2015)

PRESS COVERAGE FOR LIVE SHOWS

"If [Beats & Pieces] stonking, full-blooded performance at Bray Jazz Festival 2017 was anything to go by, then the new album and accompanying tour will be something to look forward to. Modern big band music has rarely sounded this vital" **Ian Patterson, All About Jazz (9 May 2017)**

"Their 'big' sound isn't a regiment of saxophones in harmonic uniformity but a composite of their various musical backgrounds that combine to make something brand new....Beats & Pieces proved that whilst the Big Band may have been born in the late 1920s it will be carried in creative hands through to the 2020s and beyond." **The Prickle (July 5 2016)**

"...thrilling big band Beats & Pieces ... opened with [a] floorshaking fanfare of free-sax wails and huffing trombones ... The whole set was typical of [Ben Cottrell's] erudition and vision, and the band's unfailing verve – 4 stars" **John Fordham, The Guardian (June 27 2016)**

"What really marked this gig as something special was its sheer generosity. The ideas and moods came thick and fast, each one so brilliantly vivid that you wanted it to go on, even while enjoying the leap to something new. This band's achievement is already astonishing, but they'll surely go further – 5 stars" **Ivan Hewett, The Telegraph (February 21 2012)**

"Few bands play work of this complexity with such passionate conviction. Movers and shakers such as [Colin] Towns, Matthew Herbert, Darcy James Argue and [Ben] Cottrell demonstrate that large ensembles remain a vital force in contemporary jazz – 4 stars" **John L Walters, The Guardian (August 4 2011)**

UK PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Love Supreme Festival
Ronnie Scott's, London
EFG London Jazz Festival
Wilderness Festival
Soup Kitchen, Manchester
The Sage, Gateshead
Kings Place, London
Colston Hall, Bristol
Brecon Jazz Festival
Manchester Jazz Festival
Scarborough Jazz Festival
Lancaster Jazz Festival
Cambridge Jazz Festival
Canary Wharf Jazz Festival
Bath International Music Festival
Hay Festival
Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester
Turner Sims, Southampton

EU PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Bimhuis, Amsterdam (NL) *November 2017*
Bozar, Brussels (BE) *November 2017*
Unterfahrt, Munich (DE) *November 2017*
Pappelgarten, Reutlingen (DE) *November 2017*

North Sea Jazz Festival (NL) *2016*
Bray Jazz Festival (IE) *2017*
B-flat, Berlin (DE) *2016, 2015, 2014*
Taufkirchen Jazzfrühling (DE) *2016*
Porgy & Bess, Vienna (AT) *2016*
Meskalina (PL) *2016*
Jazz Tibet (CZ) *2016*
Jazztage, Görlitz (DE) *2015*
Unterföhring Jazz Weekend, Munich (DE) *2014*
Oslo Jazz Festival (NO) *2013*
Jazzahead! Bremen (DE) *2013*
12 Points! Dublin (IE) *2013*
Olympia Hall, Paris (FR) *2012*
Duc des Lombards, Paris (FR) *2012*
Burghausen International Jazz Festival (DE) *2011*