

**A Listening Eye: The Films of Mike Dibb
Part Two: The Arts of Improvisation**

Week Two

Available to view 05 - 10 February 2021

For the fifth week of *A Listening Eye*, we continue our focus on Mike Dibb's music documentaries, tracking the life and work of the UK saxophonist / composer Barbara Thompson and her brave and very moving struggle with Parkinson's Disease, lovingly aided by her musician husband Jon Hiseman. All these films celebrate unusual lives and exceptional talent, with beautifully filmed performances.

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Jazz, Rock and Marriage, 1979, 60'

Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia, 1979, 45'

Barbara Thompson: Playing Against Time, 2012, 80'

Jazz, Rock and Marriage

1979 / 60'

This was the first of two major documentaries Mike made with the virtuoso UK jazz saxophonist/composer Barbara Thompson and her husband, the brilliant jazz/rock drummer Jon Hiseman; each one filmed at significant but contrasting moments in their personal and professional lives.

Barbara and Jon had first met back in the 1960s when they were both members of The New Jazz Orchestra. After which they married and had two children...but then for a while went their separate musical ways, Barbara towards jazz and Jon to rock.

Jazz, Rock and Marriage was filmed in 1979, at the beginning of the wonderfully creative period after Jon had left Coliseum to join Barbara's band Paraphernalia... and they musically came back together. The film follows their hectic personal and professional lives, at home with their children, in early rehearsals with the other two quartet members, pianist Colin Dudman and bass player Dill Katz, as well as in recording studios and on the road, most notably to the Bracknell Jazz Festival, where three cameras vividly captured Paraphernalia at the top of their game, playing to an enthusiastic packed audience under a huge marquee. While sequences from this performance constituted an important part of the documentary, the whole concert was filmed and subsequently edited into the following completely separate programme.

Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia

1979 / 45'

In concert at Bracknell Jazz Festival; this was transmitted on BBC 2 later in the same week as *Jazz, Rock and Marriage* was first shown.

Barbara Thompson: Playing Against Time

2012 / 80'

Playing against Time is a moving and powerful exploration of Parkinson's Disease as seen through the prism of music, featuring the virtuoso UK jazz saxophonist/composer Barbara Thompson (first diagnosed in 1997) and her husband, the brilliant jazz-rock drummer Jon Hiseman. Interweaving musical and medical sequences, the film follows five years of Barbara's inspiring struggle with Parkinson's and her search for various available treatments which until now have allowed her to continue to play, but, for how long?

The film features a remarkably intimate look at Jon and Barbara's daily life, as well as following the couple through their consultations at London's King's College Hospital with Professor Ray Chaudhuri and in Oxford with Professor Tipu Aziz, the UK's leading authority on deep brain stimulation by implanted electrodes.

Barbara is shown performing at various Parkinson's events, and as the composer of orchestral, chamber and choral music for classical musicians, including a challenging piece for two tubas and a saxophone quartet. She talks eloquently about living with Parkinson's and the importance of music and creativity to the way she copes with this (so far) incurable disease, while Jon talks candidly about how it affects their personal and professional lives.