Get tickets now: April 14
DIVA Jazz Orchestra
at Mayo in Morristown.
SEE AD PAGE 5
AND STORY PAGE 38


Fleet Feet Meet the Beat

story and photos
begin page 30

Photo by Tony Mottola
**NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY**

**Prez Sez**  
By Mike Katz  
President, NJJS

Sunday, March 3, marked the 44th New Jersey Jazz Society [Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp](#) at the beautiful Birchwood Manor in Whippany, NJ, our annual traditional jazz event which began even before the Jazz Society was formally organized in 1972. This year’s Stomp, like the past several ones, was nearly sold out, with close to 400 attendees. The audience ranged from several of our most veteran members to the 90 dancers who were in attendance, many of whom are quite youthful, as young as their early 20s. Through the efforts of Linda Lobdell, the co-editor and art director of *Jersey Jazz*, the dancers have been a feature of the Stomp for the past several years, and their presence has greatly enlivened the event, characterized by their often spectacular dancing and the period outfits worn by many of them. Several longtime NJJS members have remarked to me about how much they enjoy watching the dancers as well as listening to the music!

For those who were unable to attend, the program began with the presentation of the four NJJS scholarships to jazz performance majors at New Jersey colleges: Paolo Cantarella, drums, New Jersey City University; the Don Robertson scholarship (very appropriate for a drummer); Isaac Dye, tenor sax, Rutgers University, the Pee Wee Russell scholarship; Matthew Hartmann, trumpet, Rowan University, the Bill Walters scholarship; and David Zaks, piano, William Paterson University, the Jack Stine scholarship. The scholarship winners, who are selected by the faculties of their respective institutions without input from NJJS, then joined together to play the first set, augmented by Jacob Webb on bass, a previous scholarship winner from William Paterson University who graduated in 2011.

After that, the professional groups took over, beginning with Emily Asher’s Garden Party, which has graced our stage for the past several Stomps, followed by The Hot Sardines, a new 9-member band on the NJJS scene. Both of these groups were made up primarily of musicians from my home borough of Brooklyn, which of late has become a hotbed for young jazz musicians, many of them playing traditional jazz. The vocalizations of Elizabeth Bougerol and the tap dancing of Eddy Francisco especially electrified the performance by the Sardines.

Following the Hot Sardines, the Pee Wee Russell Stomp Awards were announced by our host, Joe Lang. This year’s honorees were saxophonist and flutist Frank Wess, one of the “two Franks” (the other being Frank Foster) in the reed section of the great Count Basie band of the ’50s and ’60s, for the Musician Award, and on-air personality Rhonda Hamilton of WBGO for the Jazz Advocate Award. Unfortunately, Frank was unable to attend, but Rhonda was present and among other things, it was noted that she has been with the Newark-based station since its founding in 1979.

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Stay tuned to www.njjs.org
The second half of the program featured the Kevin Dorn Trio with pianist Mark Shane, both very familiar to the NJJS audience, followed by Dan Levinson’s New Millennium All-Stars, who wound up the event, and featured Randy Reinhart on cornet and Molly Ryan, aka Mrs. Dan Levinson, on vocals and guitar.

Everybody had a great time and we look forward to next year’s Stomp, most likely at the same time, same station.

Special thanks go to: Past president and Jersey Jazz chief music critic Joe Lang, for emceeing the Stomp with his usual aplomb; Mitchell Seidel and the Music Committee for selecting and booking the musicians; James Pansulla for coordinating with the scholarship winners; John Becker, Bruce Gast and Al Parmet for handling the sound; Don Robertson for providing his drum set; Jack Sinkway and Frank Sole for manning the CD and other merchandise sales table; Sandy Josephson for publicity; Sheila Lenga for conducting the 50-50 raffle; Linda Lobdell for ordering and selling T-shirts; and new treasurer Larissa Rozenfeld for managing ticket sales at the door. If I have left anyone out, I sincerely apologize.

Not long after our 40th anniversary jam in January, another 40th anniversary of jazz performance was celebrated in February, that of Jack Kleisiner’s Highlights in Jazz series in New York City. Your correspondent and others from NJJS were in attendance at the 40th anniversary concert which Jack presented at the Borough of Manhattan Community College auditorium located on Chambers Street near City Hall in downtown Manhattan. A nearly full house enjoyed the concert, which included NJJS favorites Jay Leonhart, Ken Peplowski and Bria Skonberg, along with cabaret singer/pianist Barbara Carroll and the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. There will be two more concerts in this long-running series later this spring.

As was mentioned in one of my recent columns, the Board of Directors has decided to take a year off from Jazzfest and consider how to repackage the event in future years. We are exploring a number of possibilities for one or more events to take the place of Jazzfest on the calendar, if not in its entirety. Stay tuned for announcements that may be forthcoming in the near future.

On Sunday, April 14, NJJS will present our annual Mayo Theater concert at that venue located in downtown Morristown. This year we will be featuring the all-female DIVA Big Band, led by drummer Sherrie Maricle. I first saw DIVA at Jazzfest more than 10 years ago, and they blew the roof off of the Fairleigh Dickinson concert hall. This will be an outstanding event, and the cost is a mere $20 a ticket. Tickets for this concert can be purchased from the Mayo Theater by telephone or by going to its website — further details are in the ad on page 5 in this issue. I hope to see you all there. Mayo is a 1,200 seat theater and there is no reason why this should not be a sellout!

New Jersey Jazz Society membership makes a great gift! Plus, if you are already a member, a gift membership costs just $20! See page 55 for details!
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 55)

DOUBLE DUTY

Scott Robinson, the featured guest at NJJS's February Jazz Social, is famous for playing a wide variety of musical instruments. Guess the identities of these other versatile players who are skilled on more than one instrument.

1. This Belgian is an NEA Jazz Master of both harmonica and guitar, and his whistling on Old Spice commercials gave him worldwide exposure.

2. He was the first important jazz soloist to be featured on electric guitar (in 1938 with the Kansas City Five), predating Charlie Christian by a year. He also played trombone and was a renowned arranger for the Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller bands. In later years he played with the Countsmen and the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. The January issue of Jazz Journal included a laudatory profile.

3. He played clarinet and oboe with the Havana Philharmonic starting at age 9, switched to trumpet after moving to New York in 1930. He was music director for Chick Webb and played with Don Redman and Cab Calloway, bringing Dizzy Gillespie into Cab’s band. Later he was musical director for his brother-in-law Machito’s big band and helped launch Tito Puente’s career.

4. This Texan played trombone and vibraphone in the Ellington band from 1947-51 (in the Tricky Sam Nanton tradition) and was in Louis Armstrong’s All Stars from 1965 until 1971. He wrote “Sultry Serenade,” recorded by Duke Ellington and Erroll Garner.

5. The youngest of four musician brothers from America’s foremost jazz family, this drummer and composer has taken up the vibes in recent years. Based in New Orleans, he often tours; he accompanied Marcus Roberts at two recent concerts at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

6. A major figure in jazz from the 1920s to the ’90s, this alto saxophonist started out playing the trumpet. He also led big bands in a playing career that earned him the title “King.” He spent 50 years writing film scores in Hollywood studios. In later years he won Grammys, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and a National Medal of Arts in a White House ceremony.

7. This drummer and vibraphonist joined the Charlie Byrd Trio in 1980 at the age of 21 while also playing with the Great Guitars (Barney Kessel, Charlie Byrd and Herb Ellis). He’s been a sideman with a long list of jazz luminaries, including Mel Torme, Dizzy Gillespie, Monty Alexander, Bucky Pizzarelli, Ray Brown, Red Norvo and Billy Taylor, and is a fixture in the Washington D.C. jazz scene.

Howie also welcomes suggestions for future questions — or comments from readers. Contact him at jazztrivia@njjs.org.

Jazz Journeys
Annie and the Hedonists Bring Acoustic Blues, Vintage Jazz, Swing and Folk Roots America to Morristown

Annie and the Hedonists will perform at The Minstrel on Friday, April 19 at 8:00pm at the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, 21 Normandy Heights Rd, Morristown. Admission is $8.00 per person at the door. Children 12 and under are free. For further information, call 973-335-9489, or visit www.folkproject.org.

The group interprets the songs of the great female blues artists of the ’20s, ’30s, and ’40s — artists like Bessie Smith, Memphis Minnie, Billie Holiday, and Ella Fitzgerald. Then they mix in some western swing, a big chunk of bluesy country, and a whole lot of American Roots music.

The opening act will be Tumbling Bones from Portland, Maine. Still in their 20s, this old-timey trio has been featured on A Prairie Home Companion and features fiddle, guitar, and banjo, with great traditional vocal harmony. They play old time dance music and country blues with authentic style and feel, while maintaining a contemporary enthusiasm.

Trad Jazz Like You’ve Never Heard Before: Jeff and Joel’s House Party III

Here’s another chance to experience traditional jazz like it used to be played in the ’20s — at homes, close up to the music, with food and fun (BYOB, set ups provided). This April 20-21 Joel and Donna Schiavone are again opening their beautiful historic farmhouse in Guilford, CT to the 3rd Jeff and Joel’s House Party featuring 15 top trad jazz musicians all mixing and matching their talents for our pleasure.

Musicians for House Party III include: Trumpet: Lew Green and Gordon Au; Reeds: Noel Kaletsky and Joe Midiri; Trombone: Craig Grant and Paul Midiri; Piano: Jeff Barnhart and lan Frankel; Banjo/Guitar: Bob Price, John Gill and Joel Schiavone; Bass/Tuba: Brian Nalepka and Frank Tate; Drums: Tom Palinko, Kevin Dorn and John Gill; Vibes: Paul Midiri.

There are 3 sessions of music, food and fun: Saturday, April 20, 11-4, Saturday 5-10 and Sunday, April 21, 11-4 including all meals and setups. Tickets are limited to 80 per session and are selling quickly — $80 for one session and $225 for all three sessions. Tickets and seat choices are available from the website www.jeffandjoelhouseparty.com or call Maureen at 203-208-1481.

To see what it’s all about check out YouTube CineDevine http://youtu.be/U3Z39GHvH_U.

The Mail Bag

IN THE ANSWERS TO JAZZ TRIVIA as given on page 47 of the March 2013 edition of Jersey Jazz you properly corrected the answer about July 4, 1900 but you might also have corrected the answer given for Question 1. Bobby Hackett was hired to play guitar in the Glenn Miller Orchestra but that was because Glenn needed a guitar player. Bobby’s dental work was long since completed and he was regularly playing cornet with an orchestra in Boston before joining Miller and, within a few days of joining Miller, he was playing solos on cornet on broadcasts. The full details of this situation will be in the book on Hackett that is written by me and Bert Whyatt and which is to be published by Rust Books towards the end of this year.

George Hulme, London

O. Howie Ponder responds: George Hulme’s comments may be a little extra critical from several standpoints. First of all, this was a reprint of Don McKenzie’s first trivia column from 1985 published by Rust Books towards the end of this year. Don’s answer seems to be as good as anyone knew at the time — or since.
NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY PRESENTS:

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SUNDAY • APRIL 14TH • 3 PM
Big band fueled by girl power! This 15-member all female big band knows how to swing!
All seats $20

MORRISTOWN'S COMMUNITY THEATRE FOR 75 YEARS!
The Michael Moore Trio Live at Shanghai Jazz

(2012 Mighty Quinn Productions MQP1119)

Michael Moore, renowned as a virtuoso bassist, is also a fine pianist, as is readily apparent in this live recording of a December 2010 appearance at Shanghai Jazz in Madison, New Jersey. Moore’s usual bass chair is occupied here by Rick Crane, a solid and melodic player. Joe Corsello, the musical and imaginative drummer well known for his work with Sony Rollins, rounds out the trio.

In the CD’s liner notes, pianist Bill Charlap describes Moore’s playing as “imbued with the spirit of Duke Ellington and the sound of Jimmy Rowles” (with whom Moore frequently played). Apt enough, but the disk also conveys Moore’s own distinct personal style, one that is alternately interior, even spiritual, on ballads and gallows swinging on the up-tempo tunes. As for his attraction to playing piano, Moore says: “It’s nice to be the one calling the tunes.” And he does so with impeccable taste on this set which includes some of the finest pieces in the jazz canon, among them Ellington’s “Daydream,” Eubie Blake’s “Memories of You” and Ann Rommell’s “Willow Weep for Me.”

Might this effort tempt the bassist to record on piano in the studio? Let’s hope so. In the meantime this new recording is well worth a listen. Available at www.mighty-quinn.net.

The Speakeasy Jazz Babies
(Speakeasy Jazz Babies SJB/CD 104)

As Jazz Lives blogger Michael Steinman points out in his liner notes here, nobody is going to mistake Babylon, New York for the New Orleans French Quarter. But on a December night in 1990 eight really fine jazz musicians held forth at the Long Island suburb’s Knights of Columbus Hall in show presented by the Long Island Traditional Jazz Society.

Twenty-three years later a recording of the event has been released and it’s a purist’s delight, presenting 12 tunes penned by the likes of King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Hoagy Carmichael and Harry Ruby. A rhythm section comprised of Dick Miller (piano), Marty Grosz (banjo/guitar), Barbara Dreiwitz (tuba) and Fred Stoll (drums) chugs along solid and steady while a front line of John Bucher (cornet), Joe Licari (clarinet) and Dick Dreiwitz (trombone) solos and weaves together ensemble lines play happily with these immortal melodies.

The late, great Barbara Lea contributes vocals on four tunes: “Back Home Again in Indiana,” “Easy Living,” “After You’ve Gone” and “S’Wonderful.” The eight musical numbers are: “Doctor Jazz,” “Winin’ Boy Blues,” “Tishomingo Blues,” “Riverboat Shuffle,” “Everybody Loves My Baby,” “A Kiss to Build a Dream On,” “Willie the Weeper” and “Once in a While.”

For one night at least Babylon sounded every bit like Bourbon Street, and the results, preserved on this disk, are unabashedly good fun.

CORRECTION: In our Jazz Social story in the March issue (p. 44) we wrote that Monroe Quinn began study with guitarist Remo Palmier at age 13. In fact he began playing professionally at that age and later began working with Palmier at age 18.

...
April 6  
Bobby Sanabria & Ascension  
Newark Symphony Hall, 1020 Broad St., Newark, NJ

April 13  
Mimi Jones Quartet  
Montclair Art Museum, 3 South Mountain Ave., Montclair, NJ

April 20  
Lenny White Quartet  
Newark Museum, 49 Washington Ave., Newark, NJ

April 27  
Lauren Hooker  
Luna Stage, 555 Valley Rd., West Orange, NJ

May 4  
Michael Wolff  
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Donald Byrd, 80, trumpeter, composer, educator, December 9, 1932, Detroit — February 4, 2013, Dover, DE. In 1989, Darren Barrett was in the jazz studies program at Rutgers University when his professor William Fielder brought Donald Byrd in to hear him play trumpet. “We spent the whole day together,” Barrett recalled to Jersey Jazz, “and he invited me to come to Queens College to study with him. I switched to Queens College to get my master’s degree, and Donald and I spent a lot of time together from 1990 to 1995.”

Barrett is currently an associate professor at the Berklee College of Music and can be heard on Esperanza Spalding’s Grammy Award-winning album, Radio Music Society (Heads Up: 2012). He feels it was “so incredible to have the opportunity to play with this musician. To me, he was like a second father, giving everything to make me as good a musician as I could be. He really cared about my development. I couldn’t have asked for a better mentor or role model.”

Byrd, a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, emerged as a rising hard bop trumpeter in the 1950s when he joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. During that period, he played with a long list of celebrated musicians including Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk. He is also credited with discovering and mentoring Herbie Hancock. Alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson, in a February 11 interview with npr.org, remembered playing at Minton’s Playhouse in Harlem when Byrd “came by with his horn. To me, he sounded like Fats Navarro and Clifford Brown.” Trumpeter Nicholas Payton described Byrd to npr.org as “a very lyrical player, a very economical player. He was one of the real melody-makers at that time, a real thoughtful, introspective player with a very beautiful sound.”

In the ’70s, while teaching at Howard University, Byrd capitalized on the popularity of jazz-rock fusion, forming a group called The Blackbyrds, a jazz-funk band that included some of his students. In 1973, the group recorded Blackbyrd (Blue Note Records), an album that did well on the rhythm & blues and pop charts as well as the jazz charts. After that, the group recorded several other jazz-funk albums. Saxophonist Gary Bartz, who played on some of those recordings, acknowledged to npr.org that, “We got a lot of flak for all of that. You know, ‘they’re selling out.’ We were not selling out. First of all, when you make a record, you want to sell it.” By the late 1980s, Byrd had reverted to his original hard bop style.

For all of his success as a performer, however, his achievements as an educator may have been more important. After receiving his undergraduate degree at Wayne State University in Detroit and his master of fine arts degree at the Manhattan School of Music, Byrd went on to obtain his Ph.D at Columbia University’s Teachers College. He also has a law degree. In addition to Queens College and Howard, he taught at Brooklyn College, Rutgers, Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), North Carolina Central University and Delaware State University. His greatest impact, however, was made at Howard. According to Michael J. West, writing in washingtoncitypaper.com (February 13, 2013), Howard University, in the early ’60s, “was facing rebellion in its music department. The school’s curriculum was strictly classical, and jazz was forbidden; students were expelled for playing it in campus practice rooms and strongly discouraged from performing it off campus. Howard finally relented in the face of student protests, agreeing to create a jazz studies program and recruiting Byrd to be its first director.” Among his Howard alumni are pianists Geri Allen and Marc Cary and trumpeter Wallace Roney.

According to William Yardley, writing in The New York Times (February 11, 2013), Byrd gave a lecture at Cornell University in 1998 in which he said he had been inspired by musicians who changed music, such as Coltrane, whom Byrd met in Detroit while still in high school. “I skipped school one day,” he said, “to see Dizzy Gillespie, and that’s where I met Coltrane. Coltrane and Jimmy Heath had just joined the band, and I brought my trumpet; and he was sitting at the piano downstairs waiting to join Dizzy’s band. He had his saxophone across his lap,” continued on page 10
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and he looked at me and he said, "You want to play?" So he played piano, and I soloed. I never thought that six years later we would be recording together, and that we would be doing all this stuff. The point is that you never know what happens in life."

Word of Byrd's death was first announced by his nephew, jazz pianist Alex Bugnon, who released the following statement: "Let's remember Donald as a one-of-a-kind pioneer of the trumpet, of the many styles of music he took on, of music education. In sum, Donald was an avid, eternal student of music, until his death." No additional information was available regarding other survivors.

Paul Tanner, 95, trombonist, October 15, 1917, Skunk Hollow, KY — February 5, 2013, Carlsbad, CA. Tanner was the last surviving member of the Glenn Miller Orchestra, but his greatest impact on pop music was his contribution to the Beach Boys hit record "Good Vibrations." In the late 1950s, Tanner and amateur inventor Bob Whitsell created the Electro-Theremin, a keyboard-style electronic instrument that Tanner performed on in the Beach Boys recording as well as on the soundtrack of such television shows as My Favorite Martian and Lost in Space. The Electro-Theremin was derived from an instrument created by Russian inventor Leon Theremin in 1928. The original instrument was played by waving hands in front of two antennas, but Tanner and Whitsell added hands-on mechanical controls to replace the antennas. Writing in The Boston Globe (February 17, 2013), Matthew Guerrieri pointed out that "Good Vibrations" sessions continued for six months as the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson experimented — "somewhere between 70 and 90 hours of tape, according to various accounts, all for a 3-minute song."

Tanner played with Glenn Miller from 1938-1942, and, after Miller's death, returned to the band when it was led by Tex Beneke. He was briefly mentioned in George T. Simon's Inside the Big Bands (MacMillan Publishing Co.: 1967) shortly after the vocalist Marion Hutton had joined the band. "In February 1939," Simon wrote, "Miller took a trip down to North Carolina. Marion and Tex and a brand new trombone player, a lanky, slow-moving fellow named Paul Tanner, who's now a professor at UCLA, and I rode down together. We had lots of laughs along the way."

Tanner spent 23 years at UCLA as the director of jazz studies, retiring in 1981 when he moved to Carlsbad. He would often invite visiting musicians, such as Herbie Hancock and Stan Kenton, to his classrooms. Sixty-four-year-old Carlsbad resident Avram Kaplan took a jazz history class from Tanner at UCLA. He told the San Diego Union-Tribune (February 7, 2013) that the 400-student class "was mesmerizing and fun. He was probably one of the best professors I had." In a 1976 interview with the jazz writer Leonard Feather, Tanner recalled a question he was asked by one of his students. "One kid said, 'Professor Tanner, did they have groupies in the swing era?' I said, 'Yes, your mama.'"

David Miller, a Louisiana-based trumpeter and friend of Tanner's, described him to the Union-Tribune as "a pioneer, although I don't think he ever set out to be. His career began in the Swing Era and encompassed so many musical styles. Paul was a top-call trombonist who played in the ABC, NBC and CBS TV orchestras, but he became best known for playing the [Electro] Theremin. It's ironic, but he took it in good humor."

Tanner is survived by his wife Jeanette; two stepsons, Douglas and Dick Darnall; two brothers; and two stepgranddaughters.

Sanford Josephson is the author of Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations (Praeger/ABC-Clio). He has written extensively about jazz musicians in a variety of publications ranging from the New York Daily News to American Way magazine.
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Talking Jazz

A Jersey Jazz Interview with Joe Ascione

By Schaen Fox

Joe Ascione’s name seemed to pop up everywhere especially when our Society had a major function. A first-class drummer, he could fire a big band or provide tastefully soft accompaniment as needed. It was a sadly memorable moment when a very emotional Ken Peplowski told us at the 2007 Jazzfest that Joe was incapacitated with MS. Today Joe is unable to play but, luckily for us he is quite willing to talk about his career. We had a series of phone conversations in November and December, 2012.

JJ: I read that you are from a musical family.

JA: Well, culturally speaking; the Italian household was often filled with singing, dancing and a lot of music playing. Just the nature of the extended family — grandfathers that played instruments, cousins that played instruments, parents that sang and danced — that kind of setting. Not one particular person playing professionally although many of my male cousins did play drums ironically enough.

JJ: Obviously since you got your first set at age four, your parents encouraged you.

JA: Very much so. They used to say, “Well, he is really not making noise, just banging on a drum. He is keeping a steady beat.”

JJ: And you turned pro at age 12.

JA: I did. [Chuckles] I figured you’ve got to wait until you are almost ready to start shaving so you can fool the club owners. I got my first “professional gig” when my mom, who used to manage a pharmacy, was speaking to one customer. This lady mentioned that her oldest son was going off to music college and that her husband’s weekend wedding band was now in trouble because they had no drummer. My mom said, “Well, my son is a wonderful drummer.” “Oh, where does he go to school?” “Well he goes to Selden Jr. High School.” [Chuckles] The lady got a kick out of that, but because her younger son played saxophone and was the ripe age of 15, that was enough for them to say, “Well let’s hear what this kid can do.”

I went to their house with my dad and we set up the drums, and I started just playing and I got the gig. [Chuckles] I was the only sixth grader with two $20 bills in my pocket after playing a wedding and it got me into trouble at school. We used to give the lunch monitor lady 35 cents and we would get our hot lunch. I handed the lady a $20 bill one day and they sent me to the principal’s office. “Where did you get a $20 bill?” I said, “I had a gig yesterday.” They said, “What’s a gig?” They called and my parents said, “Instead of a paper route, or selling lemonade, he is playing his drums. He is supervised. We take him, there is no alcohol, and he is home early enough to do his homework. They pay him and we make sure the money is accounted for.”

JJ: Was that a steady gig?

JA: It was for probably three or four years. It was a long friendship relationship with the family. It was such an invaluable experience playing with different...continued on page 14
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Count Basie Orchestra

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JOE ASCIONE

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musicians. The eclectic repertoire came into my life very young. In a wedding band you have to play songs from different genres and eras — everything from “The Beer Barrel Polka” to “Color My World” to “Proud Mary” to an Elvis tune to “Satin Doll.” Besides I had an older sister who was a pop music fiend. My parents were very big on big bands, classical and opera. I was hit with music every which way. That gig experience really was invaluable. I remember then having the summer or winter or spring concert in school and that would be no big deal. Kids would get nervous and choke, but I was used to gigging. To me it was show time.

**JJ:** How did it affect your peer relationships in school?

**JA:** It affected them positively because they would get a kick out of, “Oh, Joe, is our friend and he has this special job.” They would come over and hear me drum and sit around before we would go out and play football or whatever. It was a good vehicle for social bonding that way. I had a fun and very enriching childhood.

**JJ:** Didn’t walking around school with $20 in your pocket make you a target?

**JA:** Well being a crazy wise-guy Italian drummer from Brooklyn, I had also studied Tai-zen jujitsu, so I was very capable of taking care of myself.

**JJ:** I saw that you met Gene Krupa before you went pro.

**JA:** That is correct. I met Gene in 1971. There was The Big Band Bash held at the Commack Long Island Arena, the hot spot in Suffolk County at the time. Gene Krupa was there with a trio and the Woody Herman Thundering Herd, the Stan Kenton Big Band and Bob or Ray Eberle the singer and probably others I don’t recall. When I heard Gene Krupa, my idol, I was in shock. I got a picture with him. My dad took me where the drums were set up and asked Gene if he could take a picture with me. Gene Krupa was always the nice gentleman and said, “Of course.” He put his arm around me, and so this 10-year-old star-struck drummer had his picture with his idol.

The funny thing about the photograph is that a flop of hair fell down the forehead in between my eyes and near the nose. I panicked. I said, “Well I’m going to have a picture with my idol and my hair will be in my face, but if I push it back, dad might click the picture with my hand in front of my face and nobody is going to believe it is me with Gene Krupa.” So I left well enough alone. The picture developed with this big chunk of hair flopped over my face. It is hysterical. What a 10-year-old could be thinking in a situation like that which was pivotal for me — earth shattering.

**JJ:** Did Gene say anything that influenced you?

**JA:** No, just his presence and knowing him on recordings and then him being the nicest person when my dad asked, “Gene will you take a picture with my son?” And just him saying, “Sure.” And he willingly came over and grabbed me by the shoulder and pulled me over and smiled as my dad took the picture. It was a whirlwind experience for me. I was shocked and floating on a cloud. This experience further cemented me in my determination to continue that which I love; which was drumming.

**JJ:** Okay then tell us how, some years later, you became a roadie for Buddy Rich.

**JA:** I graduated high school in ’79. During that senior year I made the New York State Concert Band as the principal snare drummer. We went to the Catskills to rehearse for the first concert. It turned out it would be the New York State Chorus, the New York State All State Concert Band and the New York State Jazz Band. So feeling good about making it to be the snare drummer you can imagine my shock and horror learning there was a jazz band that I didn’t know about. I saw a drummer playing the heck out of a set of drums in the jazz band. I got to know that person, and we are dear friends to this day. When we graduated high school we used to go hear Buddy Rich play anywhere in the tri-state area. The average fan would hear the band and go home. We wanted to experience everything about it. We would show up and hear the band and gravitate towards the backstage and the musicians and Buddy Rich.

One day, after the band finished playing, we got the nerve to say, “Do you guys need help loading the bus?” They said, “Sure kid, grab that speaker and that big case and put it over there.” Now an 18-year-old is a strong kid, so both my friend and I started lugging the gear. The next night we showed up in another city and they said, “Hey how are you guys doing? Sure, go get that case and blah, blah, blah.” Eventually I gravitated towards grabbing the drums and bringing them to the bus. The next night getting there early and taking the drums out of the bus and bringing them on the stage, and then eventually setting them up because all I did in life was eat, sleep and drink drums.

This reminds me of the Greek days when the student sat at the foot of the master and, through osmosis, learned and absorbed the discipline. I went to hear Buddy and absorbed that incredible experience night after night in the presence of incredible musicianship. Then I helped set up and break down the equipment. I took pictures of the drum set. I would sit at the set, take pictures of every angle and height and adjustment, kneel on the floor and get side views and back views and underneath views. I set up my drums to those exact specifications.

I was about the same height as Buddy Rich, so the distances for legs and arms were similar; plus he had pieces of equipment that were stock standard permanent sizes. For example he didn’t sit on a regular drum throne which has a hydraulic lift or wing nuts to make it higher or lower. He had a cylindrical piece of wood with a padded seat and it was fixed at 24 inches, the same size as a 24-inch bass drum. I went out and quickly got one of those...
cylindrical seats and had that bass drum height. From there everything flowed, the direct angles and heights.

That was an incredible, incredible experience to watch, listen, learn and experience that intensity. I always wanted to try to absorb that intensity and incredible ability. I wasn’t one to just want to copy even though as every young person does, they have their hero, and they try to model themselves after the hero. I knew it would be more important to play music and have my own “voice,” so to speak, but what better person to springboard from than an incredible musician such as him?

JA: Did Buddy ever say anything when he saw you taking the photos?

JA: No because he was backstage probably yelling at the guys. [Chuckles] The only interactions we would have, for example, I’d hear him say he wanted a Creamsicle ice cream. Before he could finish the sentence, I would find a deli and buy a box of Creamsicles and come back. He had these big capped teeth and he would take like a third of the Creamsicle in one bite. And I remember the teeth imprints on the Creamsicle. There wasn’t direct repartee and rapport sitting there discussing music at all. It was me on the periphery and wanting to keep it like that so as to not get in the way. I was really excited about setting up the drums, staying on the periphery, doing the ice cream thing.

Every now and then he would say, “You in school?” I’d say, “Yeah,” and he would say, “Good. Stay in school.” I remember reading that he had a third grade formal education. He probably stayed in school about a half hour in his life. I know he was a stickler for seeing young people and advocating that they stay in school. Only one time when I set the drums up did I do a little left handed roll on the drums and it caught his attention. He just looked at the drums up did I do a little left handed roll on the drums, and that was it. That is the tenor of that experience.

JJ: Tony DeNicola once said that Buddy’s roadie told him that he had to work about half an hour to get the foot pedal set just the way Buddy wanted it.

JA: Yeah, good old Tony. Well I don’t know about that. What I do know is we could not touch anything or retune the things. They were out of the case and assembled and if there was a flimsy drum head — leave it. If the bass drum pedal is attached, it’s attached. I never had the experience where something broke and needed to be replaced.

JJ: Do you recall any favorite concert; one that was incredibly spectacular?

JA: Every one of them and I don’t say that lightly. His abilities and natural gifts were so incredible that every time experiencing that talent was amazing. Now within that realm one can say, “Well he played better last night than tonight.” Does that constitute an off night or a bad night? From my experience, living, breathing the instrument and experiencing night after night, in very close proximity, his gift, every experience of him sitting behind the drum set was unbelievable. I’m only sorry that drummers today do not get the experience of sitting very close to that genius and witnessing first hand his gift because it is very, very different than hearing a recording, very, very different than seeing it on video, or TV or YouTube. It is incredible, but it is not like being the presence of the real live experience.

Just recently, I dug up a TV show he did and he was being his sarcastic self, saying how he was just awarded another award. He said, “Well, now I can die happy because I work 50 weeks out of the year playing high school gymnasiums and outside park gigs.” And saying that is this — not every gig was the Beacon Theater or Madison Square Garden or a major venue. Ninety percent of those gigs were a local high school gymnasium or auditorium where my winter concert junior high school band might have played the night before. I used to get a kick out of, “Yeah these guys are on the road doing it, just playing local gigs.” But I was hearing the best play whether it was at a huge arena, and many famous drummers were there, and he kicked it up a notch or a local gig. As you know, musicians really create in that style of music. That spontaneity is really the art form where they are creating in the moment. Something might put them over the top and motivate them whether it’s another drummer being in the audience or just the band is jelling and swinging and they are playing great. I don’t have any specific time when I can say, “Oh so-and-so was there, so he played better. He was a real self-starter.” It was always the music that was elevated. That was the magic, out of the ordinary came the extraordinary.

JA: Okay, I’ll ask, what do you think of the bus tapes?

JA: Every human being has good and bad days. The tapes are where you had somebody who had a bug up their ass and expressed how they were feeling. Was he a pain in the neck and caustic? Sure was! Are other people more bland? Yep! It is a snapshot of a day in the life of someone. I’m always going to give him and it the benefit of the doubt because I put the emphasis on the artistic talent. Would I behave like that? Maybe if I was really pissed off and something got to me. It doesn’t mean that’s the kind of person I always am. I kind of push all those silly things aside. For me it was all about the music and the talent. Plus, some artists are really nuts, so they are going to have quirks and about them. Artistry comes in all shapes and sizes. Buddy Rich had a high standard and a short fuse and, like anybody that is opinionated and strong minded, could be volatile at times.

JJ: Okay, you went off to college and studied engineering?

JA: I did but I didn’t study engineering right off the cuff. I had an intellectual curiosity like anyone would. I remember one time, speaking of jazz cruises, I had taken courses to get my real estate license, and I was studying on the cruise. I got the license and realized I didn’t get it because I wanted to be a real estate broker. I did it because when one buys a house one should be equipped with learning about real estate. So in learning about real estate, I got the license to boot but I never worked as a real estate agent.

I say that because I learned I appreciate learning, as anyone does. When I got a music scholarship at Hofstra University, I studied some music and was off and playing professionally. Then for my own edification I said, “Let me finish something.” I got an associate’s degree and after that I was doing a lot of contemporary recording with a lot of interesting continued on page 16
equipment. Being curious about that was the impetus for me to go to the New York Institute of Technology and graduate cum laude in 1986. I moved to California and did put my CV into McDonnell Douglas and I worked in the aerospace field.

I learned that I wasn’t per se an engineer choosing to make that my life’s vocation. I had a curiosity to learn how a lot of studio equipment ticks. I didn’t waste time, but I got a degree. I like learning and experiencing things. It doesn’t mean I’m going to be a real estate agent or an engineer. I was also in a seminary because I learned I like philosophy and psychology, and I studied that. I learned I am a drummer and that would be my vocation.

**JJ:** Please tell us about your musical studies.

**JA:** I have musical studies from Hofstra and The New School for Jazz where I was fortunate to become a part-time faculty. Both of them served as springboards to make connections and rub elbows with people like Jackie Byard, Reggie Workman, Amie Lawrence, Jim Hall and all these genius musicians associated with institutions of learning. I also learned that you can get a degree about music, but it was really about networking and hanging out at the clubs and sitting in. You don’t learn that in the classroom. You learn that on the streets. Now it has been formalized. I don’t think Gene Krupa went to college to learn how to be a drummer. [Chuckles] Today you can. I have musical studies from Hofstra and The New School for Jazz where I was fortunate to become a part-time faculty. Both of them served as springboards to make connections and rub elbows with people like Jackie Byard, Reggie Workman, Amie Lawrence, Jim Hall and all these genius musicians associated with institutions of learning. I also learned that you can get a degree about music, but it was really about networking and hanging out at the clubs and sitting in. You don’t learn that in the classroom. You learn that on the streets. Now it has been formalized. I don’t think Gene Krupa went to college to learn how to be a drummer. [Chuckles] Today you can. I learned I like philosophy and psychology, and I studied that. I learned I am a drummer and that would be my vocation.

**JJ:** What made you decide to do that and move to the West Coast?

**JA:** Well, the excitement of the unknown, the excitement of challenge and being a little risky. I said, “How bad can it be? I have a college degree now, let me go do it.” When I went out there, it was a whole new world, an East Coast guy living on the beach in a little duplex, swimming and surfing, jogging and going to different clubs on the weekends, experiencing the West Coast. I did that for a while and realized, “Okay I’m not an engineer. For the rest of my life I really want to be a drummer.” So, I took a $60,000 pay cut in the ‘80s and I came back to New York. The first night back I sat in at a jazz club and said, “Ah, I am home. I belong in the jazz clubs with my drum sticks.”

**JJ:** Wow. I’m floored thinking about that pay cut.

**JA:** [Laughs] Yeah it was pretty nuts. I remember one time there were literally three or four pay checks just sitting on my desk in the apartment. They weren’t even deposited or cashed. I remember saying, “Look at that. It is just a piece of paper with numbers on it.” Of course you need it to survive, but it doesn’t have much meaning if your heart isn’t in something. I knew my heart wasn’t in engineering. As quickly as I went out there and experienced it, that is how quickly I made a U-turn and gave my month’s notice, which was a pretty neat experience. When I moved back to New York the company said, “We need an East Coast representative,” and moved me. I stayed another year on the job as a sub-contractor. I would go from Canada down to Florida to different sub-contractors and do the reports, design reviews and things for Douglas. I felt that would be a good way to gradually graft myself back into music and pay for things rather than just take a $30 gig and start scrounging around.

**JJ:** How was the music scene on the West Coast?

**JA:** The music on the West Coast was great. It was a good experience in that there were two or three clubs that would have some great players and I remember going and hearing music and getting to sit in and meeting people. The same thing happened when I moved to the seminary in Philadelphia. I would go on a Friday or Saturday night to Morgan’s or Ortilbe’s or The Blue Note, obviously not the one in New York, and sit in. I got a kick out of it. It always pulled me back. When I came back to New York I said, “It is time to move right into Manhattan, pound the pavement and just go crazy with this now.”

**JJ:** Okay, when you were 29 you went into the seminary for a year. Were you intending to just study for a year or were you thinking of becoming a priest?

**JA:** The latter. That kind of thought always mattered to me. I went in with an open mind and it was an unbelievable experience. Midway through the year, I realized it wasn’t about being a priest; it was about exploring that life experience and then continuing on. It was a great experience, but I realized that was not the call, and I took that experience and continued on with life.

**JJ:** You are so interested in so much. What do you watch on television?

**JA:** Now I watch sports if I watch TV. It has to do with my multiple sclerosis. The sports serve as a distraction. I enjoy the Knicks, the Giants and the Yankees. I studied Tai-Zen jujitsu as a young person. I gravitate towards the very violent mixed martial arts. I try to look past all the blood and guts of it because it can get pretty violent. When the martial artists execute certain techniques — that is intriguing. The sports, as I said, serve really as a distraction. Often times, I don’t have the calmness to let myself dig into a book or a movie. I can only speak for myself, but when a person has a chronic
disease that there is no known cause of it and no cure, one has to keep one’s head centered as best as possible. I need things that keep me focused and relaxed and centered. The distraction to remove myself from this insidious disease is served well by the distraction sports offer. It is crazy, but it works.

JJ: Do you have any memories of the impact of 9/11 you would care to share?

JA: I played the 105th floor Windows of the World on Saturday Sept 8th. I remember prior to the gig I leaned my forehead in the corner of the building and there was this two- or three-inch space in the flooring and you could see all the way down. It was dizzying, crazy. I remember saying, “This is unbelievable.” We did the gig; we left. I had a gig that Monday, the 10th, and [the next morning] I woke up a little later than usual to non-stop sirens and noise. I was living at 62nd Street and 3rd Ave. at the time. My sister called from D.C. She worked a half mile from the Pentagon. She said, “Oh my God I’m glad I finally got through to you. I’m glad you are safe. We were hit too.” I said, “What are you talking about?” She said, “Put on CNN.” She hung up and I put it on and, like everybody, I thought I was watching the Bruce Willis movie. Then I saw the second plane hit live on TV, so I got dressed and went out to the center of 3rd Ave. and looked downtown and saw black clouds and realized what was happening.

About a month later, I went to Europe on a big tour. At the beginning, we were treated like ambassadors. In the fear of flying, we took flight to bring music and wouldn’t be dissuaded by any evil. So we were seen as having courage and treated with high esteem. That was wonderful. By the time the tour ended a month later, we were in a lot of areas where things turned on Americans. We had to keep on the low-down when we were known to be “American” where people were protesting aggression and retaliation. So the tour went from, “Good for you. You are the best,” to “Watch yourselves because there could be some problems here.” We flew back, a month or two later, right over town. I never got them back. I opted to catch the flight.

Another time, I gave my cymbals to somebody to take care of. They packed and unpacked the vehicle, and they took everything except my cymbal bag. It was left next to the car near the tires. A drummer’s cymbals are the priority and the charming part of the instrument. I was heartbroken that my fantastic cymbals were just gone.

JJ: Was there a history to them?

JA: No. Fortunately they were just cymbals that I loved.

JJ: I have both CDs of the Frank & Joe Show and I love Joel Dorn’s loony liner notes. How did you connect with that late, legendary producer?

JA: A gentleman named Bill Dern had gotten wind of Frank’s playing and mentioned that producer Joel Dorn was looking to work on some new projects. I think a get-together based on that scenario was set up. We met at Michiko’s rehearsal studio in midtown. Joel came with Gene Paul, Les Paul’s son. Gene was, pardon my pun, instrumental, in being Joel’s engineer to record projects. We met Joel and Gene and started playing; and literally about 20 seconds later [Chuckles] Joel stopped us. We all looked at each other and I remember saying to myself, “Wow. He thinks we are that bad?” Basically he said, “Okay baby, let’s do it.” That was it. Joel was the kind of guy that if he liked it, he liked it. If he didn’t, he didn’t. There was no reason to belabor the point. [Chuckles]

We probably rehearsed and planned intricate arrangements for four to six tunes, an hour’s worth of music so after 20 seconds we stopped. We packed up the gear which was kind of funny. It was a handful of guys squeezed into a small studio space in midtown Manhattan with cars and gear, logistics and parking and tickets and policemen and all that. And what happens is you go through all this effort and work and then, 20 seconds later, you have to reverse the whole process and pack everything down and break it apart and negotiate and deal with equipment. We kind of laughed at that. We went to a local eatery and sat with Joel and talked. That’s how we met Joel and started working together doing a couple of disks. Joel was a great guy. He was a lot of fun. The longer I knew him the more I liked him. He was intelligent, witty and had a good musical knack. He had a good track record of the people he worked with and the work he did. It was exciting.

I was out of town when he passed. I read the record company’s posting of it, and I was shocked. Every time the band would go with him to get a bite to eat, he would never have dessert. He was health conscious. “Joe, do you want to split a piece of cheesecake?” “No, no, no.” He would never have any. I remember when I read that Joel Dorn had a heart attack on the street and died what I blurted out was, “Oh my God Joel you should have had the cheesecake.” Joie did. It was exciting.


JA: Is there any movie, play or book you would recommend that would give us non-musicians a real idea of what a musician’s life is like?

JA: Wow… How about War and Peace? That is the first thing that comes to mind, and usually your first

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answer is the best. I mentioned War and Peace to allude to the fact that a musician’s life is a struggle. It’s got the high of highs — where else can you live your passion and fulfill it? Then they lose your luggage, your instrument breaks, you’re out of work, you missed the flight, and you’re tired, hungry and sick, so it is War and Peace. People will get it. I don’t think I should say Flowers for Algernon or Arsenic and Old Lace.

JJ: Did anything of great importance in your career happen in New Jersey?

JA: Red Squires used to run the Waterloo Festival. It was part of the JVC. Gus Johnson fell ill and I got the call to play with Jay McShann, Milt Hinton and Ralph Sutton in one capacity and, on the flipside, with Flip Phillips and a host of my contemporaries, kicking a larger ensemble. Red was in my corner. Flip Phillips had asked Red, “Who is on drums?” Red said, “Joe Ascione.” Flip said, “Who?” [Chuckles] Red said, “Don’t worry. He can play.” I guess Flip was a little concerned because in the back room he said, “We are going to do that tune. You know that tune?” He didn’t even say the name of the tune. I wasn’t going to tell Flip Phillips I didn’t know that tune. I said, “Yeah, sure I know that tune.” He just said, “All right. Kick them in the ass.”

It is amazing. There were promoters from Australia, Europe and a few in the states and they introduced themselves and from there gigs and tours started happening. Then the musicians that I was on stage with for the first time appreciated what I did enough to warrant a phone call every now and then. It served as a really good vehicle to get much more in the mix at the level with major artists. That was quite incredible. As a young person, I’d look at records and read these names and now I was starting to play with these people. It kept blossoming from there, doing different jazz parties and festivals and getting calls when so-and-so couldn’t make it. That’s where the lifelong friendships and musical experiences kicked in.

I loved it because there was enthusiasm there. I saw that these people knew all the musicians and had a relatability with them. I’d hear a person in the audience strike up a fun conversation with Kenny Davern, let’s say, and give him a hug and a kiss, and they would talk about this jazz party five years ago. So I was seeing this world of the musicians and the people being in the mix with one another. I remember saying to myself, “Yeah, that’s what I want to be doing. That is where I want to be. How do we keep this going?” It reminded me of when I would do a jazz cruise, and everybody is there because they want to hear the music. And then you leave the cruise and you get to the airport and all of a sudden it’s “Okay, what bags are you checking?” Oh yeah, I’m back to reality, and people who could care less that you just played with Flip Phillips and Norris Turney or whomever.

That was my first experience where I got to plug into this land of enchantment where it was all about the music, the musicians and the people who enjoyed the music and musicians. I remember saying, “Yeah. This is my world.” It was a great experience. I remember one year getting there and the excitement started with my setting up the drums. I literally stopped and did a quick check of myself. I said, “Yeah, playing my drums, being compensated for it, a lot of enthusiastic people who love this music. We are going to have a great time playing wonderful music with great musicians. This is where I want to be. This is great.” So the first time I learned how to stop and smell the roses was at Waterloo.

JJ: Were you there the year of that massive thunderstorm?

JA: I surely was. We were on stage and I remember the music being drowned out by the torrent of sheets of water coming down upon us. That was absolutely incredible. [Chuckles] The sound was amazing, it drowned out the music. You couldn’t compete with Mother Nature.

JJ: You were supposed to play a Jazzfest one year with Ken Peplowski but could not, and Ken ended up taking up a collection for you. When was that?

JA: Right, I’m going to guess 2007. I was supposed to do it, but the MS was rearing its ugly head. I physically couldn’t do it.

JJ: I remember how emotional Ken was as he told us about your situation.

JA: It was very touching. He knocked on the door where my wife and I were living and we all had a moment. Kenney is a good guy. He is there when it matters.

JJ: Okay, that is where we stop. Thank you for an enjoyable interview.

JA: You’re very welcome. Thank you and take care.

Schaen Fox is a longtime jazz fan. Now retired, he devotes much of his time to the music and shares his encounters with musicians in this column.

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A Profile by Tom Spain

“I had a hard struggle trying to hang in there. Because almost everybody I touched — they’d say, ‘You’re too serious. Have a couple of Scotches. Let me tell you a joke.’ I wasn’t interested in jokes or Scotches. And I wasn’t interested in having a party. I was interested in creating some music that you never heard before.”

He sits back in a big white chair in Springfield, New Jersey, feet up, pondering the death sentence cancer has just handed down to him. White sweat suit, white running shoes, and a magnificent mane of white hair, whiter than white, sticking up with a curl like the plumage on an exotic jungle bird. He has the look of a man accustomed to looking very sharp; intense blue eyes, a fierce gaze of defiance. Cocksure, chin up, Italian proud and a little scary. Then he smiles. The room lights up with a warmth he seems willing to share. His beloved bass fiddle, his partner in life for more than sixty years, leans on the wall behind him, waiting patiently for the next gig.

The Encyclopedia of Jazz says that Vinnie Burke was born Vincenzo Bucci in Newark, New Jersey in 1920. Other sources declare him a jazz legend, as much for his hard headedness and demanding nature as for the explosive power and drive of his rhythm and sound. He worked with all the greats of the golden age: Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Marian McPartland, Ben Webster, Tal Farlow, Bill Evans; played in the Benny Goodman Band, Sauter–Finnegan Band, the bands of Buddy Rich and Woody Herman. But never for very long. Vinnie would get bored or angry or both. And quit. People loved Vinnie but began to avoid him. He would become another proud soldier in that vast army of sublimely talented jazz musicians who gig in the shadows and remain unknown to just about everybody.

“My whole life has been rough because a lot of people don’t wanna be associated with me because I’m too strict, too serious. I used to blow my top at musicians. I’m working in Birdland and I’m with some heavyweights and there’s a drummer who wants to make time with a broad. I says, “Hey! Let’s go.” Drummers feared me because I used to get on their case. I’m digging in and these guys are biding their time, out to have a party. I used to tell them off. I hardly got any jobs from anybody anymore because everybody feared me. Word got to my family, my relatives — from the union. “Oh, your brother’s the best bass player in the world but he’s the hardest guy in the world to get along with. Nobody likes him.”

Vinnie studies his hands for a little while. Then looks up. “I wasn’t doing it because I thought I was being mean. I was doing it for music’s sake, to try to get good music.”

The look on Vinnie’s face and his reputation as a tough guy make me nervous. I have come to interview him and record his stories for an oral history. I approach him with caution. Looking for some common ground, I humbly mention that I, too, am a bass player, ersatz and amateur. That I love playing tuba in a Dixieland band. That I never look at the broads. (A lie) I’m hoping for another smile, but Vinnie’s nose twitches and twists, forming an expression all by itself, as if it suddenly smells something burning.

“I hate to get on that subject, but I’m not gonna hold back. Dixieland is music for drunks. Dixieland is music with a recipe. It’s really hard to get that real, true jazz feeling. Every Dixieland band sounds almost the same except that some sound better than others. It’s all the same formula. The trumpet, the clarinet, the trombone. And they all have a certain part to play. Rules and regulations. And to me jazz has no rules and regulations. The minute you put rules and regulations into jazz you completely destroy it. It’s like taking a free spirit and tying his hands and saying let me see you play the piano. Can’t do it. Doesn’t happen.”
This verdict reinforces a gloomy insecurity that haunts me about my inept and amateur playing of the music I love. I think back to all those hours I spent in the basement with my tuba, eyes on those hours I spent in the playing of the music I love. I think back to that haunts me about my inept and amateur This verdict reinforces a gloomy insecurity.

“Concert April 2013 ___________________________________

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pick him up and get him home. He was a fantastic drummer. He says, ‘You know, Vinnie, all those jazz lessons and jazz books? ‘It’s all a lot of baloney. There are no rules to jazz. Jazz comes out of the person. You learn how to play your notes and the rest will come. After that, you’re free.’ He says, ‘Time first. Time is the essence of music and the better you get the time together, the stronger the music gets. If you separate the time it starts getting weak. There’s a collision of the sounds. It don’t sound good and don’t feel good, and it becomes neurotic. But when time’s together it’s like the spirits are all working together. The minds are together. The hearts are together.’ That’s what music’s about.”

Vinnie ponders this for a moment.

“Lester Young always had rhythm. Never out of time. Always there. He’d come into the session at night…” (Vinnie starts clicking his fingers in a steady tempo.) Lester says, ‘The tempo’s here. It’s been here all day.”

Vinnie smiles deeper into his memories.

“We all smoked pot. And we went to the men’s room to get high. Georgie Auld says to Prez (Lester Young), ‘Hey Prez. If you were really the President, what would you do for the country?’ He says, ‘The first thing I would do is get all the cops together and set them down at the drums. Teach ‘em to play drums. If they can’t play the drums, they can’t be cops. That’s it. If they can’t keep time, they’re out.’ And he was serious.”

I remembered stories about Young’s sophistication, how his poetic use of musical language brought a new voice to the tenor saxophone and every tenor player since the 1930s is in his debt. Sentences written about him usually include the words genius, pinnacle, milestone, legend, the original hipster, a principal inventor of the language of jazz. I mention that jazz writers have had a field day with this mystical character and speculated for years about Lester Young’s complexity.

Vinnie listened patiently to my informed opinion.

“A very simple man. Wasn’t complex at all. He got up in the morning, had his breakfast, picked up his horn and he’d play. That was his life. He always had that hat on.”

“I remember some pathetic days in the Albion Hotel, which was across the street from Birdland. Tony Scott says to me, ‘You know Lester Young’s living at the Albion. He’s depressed.’ We went up to see him. Lester’s leaning out the window looking at Birdland. Really down. He says, ‘Why can’t I be over there playing?’ Like a little kid. Very sad. Very sad to see jazz musicians screaming out for help just to get a gig so they can go out and play and make a few dollars. So disheartening.”

I ask Vinnie to tell me about working with these legends, these guys he calls “Heavyweights.” He looks away for a moment and then begins to describe them in terms of lessons learned.

“Charlie Parker? A wonderful man. All he had on his mind was his saxophone. There was nothin’ else in the world but his horn. It was part of his body. But every time he played he’d be disgusted with the way he played. All of a sudden he’d start putting his horn in his case. I said, ‘Charlie, what are you doin?’ ‘Ah, man I can’t play. I gotta go home.’ I said, ‘Come on back. You sound terrific. Don’t go home.’ And I’d coax him back. Every week was like that. He was always down on himself.”

“Tony Scott had an apartment on the second floor over the Café Society. Charlie used to hang out there. He had a recording date with the strings — the one with all the beautiful stuff that he did. And he came in that night and he started to cry. He was crying like a baby. I mean sobbing. ‘Charlie, what happened?’ He says, ‘Ohhh, those strings, they were dragging me down. I played so bad. I never played so bad in my life.’ He could never play bad, really. My heart was broken to watch this man sit on the bed and sob over how he played.”

“He was heavy on junk and he used to drink a gallon of wine a day and Scotch with milk because he had an ulcer. I used to ask him questions, things that would bother me about rhythm sections. He’d say, ‘Don’t worry about it. They don’t play for me. Why should they play for you?”

“Another thing he laid on me: Every musician who loves his music should remember this: ‘When you play, play like it’s gonna be your last time. Your last time on earth, maybe your last note. With your heart. No excuses. Play like it’s your last time.’ He wrote the tune “Now’s The Time.” And that’s what he meant. Now is the time. Play NOW! There’s no tomorrow. There’s no yesterday. It’s gone. Tomorrow isn’t here. He really put the capper on it for me.

Vinnie fixes his eyes on me, with a long pause for emphasis. Then he tells me: “Every time I play I put my heart into it more and more. I say, ‘Man, this might be the last time. I play the best I can play.”

While most New York jazz musicians were scuffling to make a living, Vinnie was discarding well-paying dream jobs as if they were old socks: jobs at NBC, Decca Records, studio gigs, steady club dates with fine players; a long stint with jazz pianist and radio host Marion McPartland at the Hickory House.

“I was playing with Marian McPartland and Joe Morello at the Hickory House. And Duke Ellington used to come in and have dinner. One night he says ‘I’m gonna come up and play with you.’ It was a ballad — “I Can’t Get Started” — and he put down such pure chords. He telegraphed the music. Everything he played drove me into some new ideas. I spoke to a lot of musicians and said, ‘You know, what a pleasure it was playing with Duke.’ They’d say, ‘Duke? He can’t play the piano.’ I said, ‘Well, maybe he can’t play the piano but he’s got feeling that nobody else has. Because he drove me into choruses that I never dreamed existed.’”

Marion McPartland wrote in her memoir, All In Good Time: “One of the swingingest pieces we played was “Love You Madly,” a tune Duke Ellington had developed from his famous catchphrase. We made an arrangement of it in which Vinnie Burke had a solo and Joe Morello (drums) had a couple of frisky four-bar breaks. Vinnie was a very musical player. His solos were simple, melodic and tuneful. And he had good intonation. Joe was already developing the complicated rhythmic figures he later featured with the Dave Brubeck group. His technique was breathtaking. Once in a while, on the fours, he would do something
totally off the wall, which would make me lose my place in the tune. Things like this would make Vinnie angry. He would look at Joe and mutter under his breath, 'The Fred Astaire of the Drums.' Occasionally in the middle of a bass solo, Vinnie would stop playing and glare at somebody in the audience who wasn’t paying attention, and shout, ‘What’s the matter? Don’t you like the music?’”

Vinnie hated club dates with a bitter fury; hated the indignity of playing his heart out to people who didn’t listen or care.

“I used to come home from club dates and I’d walk to the floor and curse for hours. My beautiful wife Josephine, a wonderful lady — we were together 58 years, she says to me one morning, ‘You’re gonna have to give up the club dates. I’m gonna go out and get a job. I want you just to play the music you want to play.’ My wife was great. She went to work so that I could play jazz.”

Josephine Bucci’s job didn’t pay enough to support a family with four children so Vinnie found day work that wouldn’t interfere with his jazz dream.

“I went pick and shovel for fourteen years. And I loved it. I’d unload bags of cement from a truck. I put a hundred pounds on one shoulder and a hundred pounds on the other. I’d walk over and heave it and they’d mix it and I’d go back to the truck, they’d put two more on my shoulder. I worked for a guy and if I had gigs at night, he’d say, ‘Take Vinnie home. It’s 3 o’clock. He’s gotta get some sleep. He’s gotta work tonight.’ I had a good boss. I was strong as a bull and when I played the bass, I would pull the strings right off the bridge. That’s how strong I was. Like the Rock of Gibraltar. That’s one of the names one of the critics gave me. He says, ‘Vinnie Burke is the Rock of Gibraltar.’”

I found the name of Vinnie’s eldest daughter Johanna on the internet and called her. She invited me to come to her home in Elizabeth. We sat at the kitchen table with her sister Brenda and brother Vincent who looks astonishingly like Vinnie Burke; so much so that it’s almost scary. I asked the kids what life was like, living with “The Rock of Gibraltar.”

“My mother, she backed my father all the way,” said Johanna, “And she raised us virtually by herself because my father was on the road a lot, especially when we were little. And it was really rough for her. Really rough. He would come home at night and he would walk in the door. And all these musicians would follow him — everybody in the band. And then she would start to cook breakfast for them. Eggs, bacon…”

“Sometimes it would be pasta at four in the morning. Or steak,” adds Vincent. Johanna continues, “I remember the phone ringing in the middle of the night.” “OK, what time will you be home? How many guys? What you want?” “And here they’d come. I’d say, ‘This is crazy.’”

Vincent: “And after that we’d have breakfast and go off to school. And she’d go to work”

“My mother…” Johanna paused, sorting through her memories, “When we were sitting down to dinner, he didn’t have to say much.

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He’d lift up his plate. She would know exactly what he wanted. She knew! He’d lift his plate and she’d read his face. Put what he wanted on the plate.”

Vincent: “She doted on him. On all of us. What amazed my wife the first time she saw this was my mother peeling grapes for my father. He didn’t like grape skins. My mother would take grapes, peel the grapes, take the pits out and give him a cup of grapes to eat. With a spoon! And my future wife was like…’Your mother peels grapes?’ I said, ‘Yeah, it happens every night.’

Brenda continued, “He didn’t work during the day; normal nine to five hours like my friends’ fathers were working. When my teenage friends came over he would use the word, ‘groovy’ I was upset with him. ‘Dad! Could you stop using the word groovy?’”

Vincent: “My friends thought he was the coolest guy.”

Brenda: “My friends thought he was cool but I didn’t.”

Johanna: “You didn’t? You were embarrassed?”

Brenda: “I was… ‘Why can’t he be like other fathers? They never say the word groovy.”

It’s hard to imagine now that “groovy” was a jazz word born probably in a jam session sometime early in the last century when musicians enjoyed the memory of the groove they had found — that special moment when everything clicks, when the music sings and the group is one. When Vinnie Burke said, “groovy,” he was speaking in terms that, for him, were fundamentally religious. A “groove” was that elusive goal that he worked and yearned for all of his musical life. In the religion of jazz, heaven is the groove.

Vinnie had told me in our interview:

“When you get that groove it feels like you’re up in the air. You’re flying, you’re sailing. Ohhhahhhhh, what a feeling! And you play so easy. It sounds like it’s so hard to people that are listening. They say, ‘Wow, look at that difficult stuff he’s doing.’ And it’s so easy to do when you got it synchronized. When it’s not synchronized you’re befuddled.”

“He used to impart that to us,” said Vincent. “He used to tell us what jazz was all about. You listen to your fellow musicians so you can hear what they’re saying. So you can answer them. It’s a conversation.”

Vinnie had said, “You get one partner to converse with you and it’s a whole new ball game. He can inspire you and pull you over to a groove that you don’t have. And you can inspire him back. You play back and forth. You feed off each other. That’s the beauty of it. I think the bottom line to the whole works is love. If you love what you’re doing, put love into it, then it works out. You got five other musicians doing the same thing. They’re there for one purpose. To get the time rolling. Once you get that then you got it.”

There’s a movie of Vinnie playing bass on You Tube. It’s a black and white kinescope of a TV show from 1958. In close-up is Lester Young, romancing the old ballad “Polka Dots and Moonbeams.” He looks aged, weary and weak. He would die soon. Behind him, rocking gently with his bass, is a clearly happy, young and very much alive Vinnie Burke. He is smiling, eyes locked on Lester Young.

Prez and Vinnie are playing on a weekly TV show that God must have designed to answer Vinnie’s prayers; a simple formula conceived by disk jockey Art Ford: Put a bunch of musicians on a stage and turn them loose to play whatever they want the way they want. No script. No theme. No cover charge. No noisy customers. The musicians are dressed in street clothes, smoking cigarettes and wander in and out as if they were at a party. Young wears his porkpie hat. Present each week are the nobles of jazz royalty and Vinnie is right in the thick of it. The program was being broadcast from Newark! Channel Thirteen was, and still is, a Newark station. (In the 1960s, New Yorkers seized it for it their own.) A bizarre twist of fate blessed Vinnie when the Newark Musician’s Union ruled that there had to be five players from Newark on the job. Because he knew the New York jazzmen and had worked with them, Vinnie was the obvious choice.

“We always had a good rhythm section. We had Sonny Greer, Cliff Lehman, drummers like that. Georgie Auld, Coleman Hawkins. Lester Young, Ben Webster, Cannonball Adderley, Jimmy McPartland, Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith, Cootie Williams, Red Allen, the list goes on and on. We had 42 weeks. In those 42 weeks they made 42 films. An hour and a half of jazz with all different players every week except for two weeks. Twice I had Lester Young and Billie Holiday back. They were the only ones that did a repeat.”

For forty-two weeks Vinnie Burke was in heaven and he didn’t have to tell anyone off or quit. He was happy. The evidence is on the film.

Vinnie Burke lived almost all his life in Newark. Loved the city with a lover’s defiance. The basement of the tiny house on Brookdale Avenue became a studio — a salon that attracted eager young musicians. One night, in the middle of a session, Vinnie quit playing and yelled, “PETER!!! STOP!!! If you don’t know what you want to say, stop playing. Practice at home! Quit fooling around and using up my time. Figure out what you want to say and then play it.”

Peter Prisco, a young musician from Staten Island, was startled, humbled and terrified by Vinnie’s outburst. But he got the point… “It was the most important lesson of my life. I’ll never forget it.”

Peter Prisco is a jazz guitarist and teacher who played with Vinnie Burke in the ’70s. I wanted to know about Vinnie’s musical life in the years following the big time in New York.

“We played in a nightclub in a little strip in an underground bowling alley that was closed. Owned by Vinnie Rugieri’s cousin, a guy with polio. On Clove Road right next to the Staten Island Railroad. Downstairs.”

I find Peter Prisco at home in Wayne, N.J. on a quiet street just off the Hamburg Pike. He’s standing outside. He has the look of a mature Italian film star with a full and perfect arrangement of graying hair. Intense blue eyes with a steel sparkle. They squint a bit, taking their time to check me out. Then he smiles, and invites me into his living room. It’s a crowded and comfortable studio, a dense thicket of paintings and musical stuff. In the next room, which is
vast and airy and sunlit, is Betsy Brown, Peter’s wife. She smiles hello. She’s seated at a broad table, brush in hand, intent on her work. She is a painter — her landscapes attract buyers the world over. A huge mastiff named Max is at her feet. He raises his head slowly and looks me over. Then he, too, decides I might be OK. Max yawns, smiles and eases his huge head back to the floor with a thump, resuming his morning snooze.

I ask Peter about working with Vinnie Burke.

“Vinnie was not just a bass player. He was as good a soloist as any musician that ever lived. Lennie Tristano said, ‘It’s all right if a bass player solos. If he can. Like Oscar Pettiford. The rest of these idiots just play bass oriented lines.’ Not Burke! He played music! And when he pulled that bow out, My God, it was unbelievable!”

Peter is 62 and has the high voltage energy of a 17-year-old just let out of school. He has a tough time staying still. In talking about Vinnie he keeps exploding, cannot stay in his chair. Up he gets, waving his arms, scoots to the center of the room and begins playing air bass a la Vinnie. He does the Vinnie voice, he pulls the Vinnie faces. Superlatives for Vinnie Burke pour from him.

“He hurt his finger working in a defense plant during the war. So he played the bass with three fingers. From stretching it he ultimately destroyed another finger and he was down to two. And he could still play your ass into the floor. He gave a concert with just two fingers. You’d think he had nine! The guy was fearless.”

I hear some New York in Peter’s voice — one of the boroughs. It comes and goes according to how wide his eyes grow in what’s becoming an exciting performance.

“I was a high school English teacher. I have a Bronx accent but I drop it when I want.”

Peter pauses a moment to resume the train of thought, then lunges to his computer and types up a tune. Music pours from the speakers. It’s a private recording of The Vinnie Burke Trio: Don Hahn, trumpet, Peter Prisco, guitar. The group is swinging hard. Vinnie takes a solo and once again Peter is on his feet.

Suddenly I feel myself reaching around for my movie camera; all the old juices starting to flow. I am a retired film maker. Happily so. But the first time in years I wish I were once again making a film. This guy is just the kind of character we would work so hard to find; a person who could transform a routine documentary into a real film. They are as rare and hard to come by as the grooves that Dizzy and Vinnie lived for. They instinctively know how to romance a camera and always manage to be in the good light. The camera likes energy and Peter Prisco is a motherlode of energy. The camera also has a built-in shit detector. It can spot a bullshitter quicker than we can. This guy says bullshit a lot but there’s no bullshit in what he’s saying. This is one of the times when descriptive writing cannot come near what a camera can do. Alas, without my camera, I sit back and scribble in my notebook.

“This is some of the best Vinnie Burke you’ll ever hear.” We listen.

Peter is settled in his chair, intent on the music. Slowly, so as not to break the mood and probably out of respect for the music, he leans forward and whispers, “See how he’s quieted down? It’s because he wants everybody to shut up.”

Hahn, trumpet, Peter Prisco, guitar. The group is swinging hard. Vinnie takes a solo and once again Peter is on his feet.

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The solo is very quiet. And beautiful; melodic and clever with an occasional cheeky moment of fun.

We listen.

Peter rolls his eyes, whispers, “He’s gonna start gettin’ louder. He did shit nobody did. He had a sense of humor. He had a good time when he played.”

We listen.

Vinnie’s solo gradually picks up intensity, punch and amplitude, growing into a complex musical bouquet. His playing is full of color and surprises. Peter is on his feet again.

“He’s out-soloing both of us. I played good. Hahn played very, very good, Vinnie played great. Listen to those even eighth notes toe-toe-toe-toe. Perfect, even eighth notes! Like a German! In order for jazz to swing it has to be even. People think that there’s a jazz eighth note. That’s a lie! It’s gotta be dead even! If it’s not as even as Bach, it don’t count.”

Peter is not done. He falls back into his chair and looks off at something in the distance. I wait for the insight. But then I notice his gaze is fixed on a garbage truck navigating the narrow street around his car. He watches for a while to make sure they don’t back the truck into his car.

Then he sighs: “Vinnie had perfect, beautiful tone. Incredible pitch. His solos were constructed out of simple triads. The material wasn’t complex. It’s the way he would handle it. Dee dee ba boo, ba ba bee bee. Vinnie endlessly created things out of small pieces of material. He would screw with three pieces to the mathematical end of it.”

Peter the teacher pauses to see if I’m paying close attention. I am. He explains: “You can play four notes without repeating 26 different ways. There was a club in Italy where they got together to study Vinnie Burke’s solos.

We listen for a while longer. The tune seems to go on for a long time.

“Vinnie would never end a song. He would always go into the tag and it would go on forever. We were always sending the signal, ‘Vinnie! Stop!’ He’d give us a look that said, ‘No, I’m not done yet.’ Another chorus and then we’d go dad-a-bop-bop-bop to end it and he’d go doot de doot dee doot and off we go again. A tune could last an hour.”

I mention to Peter that I had talked to a drummer who was terrified of Vinnie. Never said a word in his presence. Other musicians were afraid to go near him.

“As long as you agreed with him and did what he said, things went smoothly. You heard nothin’ from him if it was right. If it was wrong you heard plenty. He was never mean to me. Possibly because he knew I was from the Bronx and could only take so much. I’d been around a lot of rough guys; worked in Cop bars — that’s the worst, really dangerous! We were tough kids growing up. My brother has a Ph.D. in Asian studies but was a rodeo rider and a gang leader. We’re not talkin’ about pussy here.”

I think it a good idea to suggest at this point, that I really admire Peter’s playing. I had listened to his CDs. He is a superb musician. When I tell him this he waves me off.

“One gift I always had. I was very athletic. That was the luck. And I was a nut about practicing. Because I wanted it so bad. My teacher Sal Mosca used to tell me, ‘Your trouble is you want it too bad.’ ‘What do you mean I want it too bad?’ He said, ‘You’re supposed to care for it more than anything in the world. And not give a shit at the same time.’”

I wonder about this passion music generates. I stumble, trying to come up with an intelligent question, grope around in my confusion. Finally I ask Peter, “What is music?”

“What is music?”

There is a long silence. Peter contemplates the ceiling and then studies his folded hands. Finally he speaks: “What is music? It’s the easiest way to express the most emotion in the shortest amount of time. Way better than language. I read all the books, I read Chaucer, I read Shakespeare. My major was James Joyce. Two thousand books. Art? Art takes too long. You gotta wait till you’re done. Music? It’s right there. It’s spontaneous. Except for three minutes of really great sex when you’re twenty, there’s only music.”

Peter isn’t done. He’s got a coda: “Or, as Chuck Wayne, my teacher, would say: ‘Life is
When I interviewed Vinnie I asked him if aging and cancer had taken their toll on his playing.

“I’m seventy-nine — in spite of the arthritis I still manage to play. I look forward to getting older because as I get older I know I will play better. I improve. The only way to look into the years of getting older is that if you have enough love you can do that. Every year passes and you feel yourself improving. It’s such a joy. You feel like you’ve accomplished something in your life.”

This seems like a good moment to conclude this portion of the interview. We’ve been talking for almost three hours and Vinnie looks tired. I unplug the microphone and start to pack up. Vinnie raises his hand like an emperor, ordering me to stop.

“Aren’t you gonna ask me about the sex?” (He looks disappointed.)

Sex? I had been thinking that this was about music and musicians.

“Sex?” I ask. Obedient, I plug the mike in and sit back to listen.

“Sex was always with me. Even when I was five, six years old. I’d walk around with a jock on all the time. Get on a bus, get on a train, go up to the studio. It never stopped. I couldn’t control it. I was just addicted to it. I was married, had four children — and I’m living with five different women in New York at one time. I was in a whirlpool. I couldn’t get out. Then I get on a train one day. There was a priest on the train. I sat next to him. He said, ‘You look a little disturbed. Do you want to talk about it?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ I told him about the women. So he says, ‘My son, the more you do it the more you get calloused. The more you get calloused, the less you think it’s bad. You think it’s all right. But it’s not. You’re married. To begin with, that’s wrong. That’s Number One.’ And believe it or not, had I ever known how wrong it was from the beginning or I would never have done it.

Because I was being unfaithful to my wife. I was committing adultery, which is something you’re not supposed to do.”

I raise an eyebrow, searching for a way to question the logic of this. Vinnie catches the cue.

“I don’t think I was addicted because I wanted to be. It was the environment I was in. My uncles, my nephews, my brother-in-

law — all they did was talk about women. From when I was five. They’d say, ‘Clara Bowe,’ and my thing would come up. I knew right away they were talking about women. There was something about it.

Some kind of mystical thing. And they used to make fun of you. If you were married and you didn’t have a girlfriend, ‘Oh, what kind of man are you?’”

“I don’t want to put the excuse on them for the things that I did because I still had to pay for what I did. But I’ll tell you. I was glad when it ended. Phewwww! It was such a relief to be able to just get up in the morning and pick up your bass and play.

And not worry about callin’ this broad uptown and the one downtown and the one in midtown. The reason I’m tellin’ this story is because I feel it’s very important for other people to hear what I went through because it might help them. I think back and I say, ‘Wow! If I had put all that energy into my music, the things that could have come out that bass would be phenomenal. Sounds you never heard in your life!’ You know that’s a lot of energy wasted. Running uptown, running downtown. The only time I played is when I went to the studio. And I played there for an hour, hour and a half for the show. Then I’d pick up the 250-dollar check and I’d sit in the hotel and wait for the next girl to call. It was stupid. Really a waste.”

“The point is I just hope that musicians who put too much stress on sex and not their music, if they back off a little and put more energy into their music, it will be a blessing to them. And everybody else around them would benefit because they would be better players. That’s my message about sex and being addicted.”

Once again I start to pack up. Vinnie holds up a finger; a wry smile signaling one more story.

“When I was block president in Newark, all the black studs used to say to me, ‘Vinnie, don’t you have a girlfriend?’ I said, ‘No, man.’ They said, ‘What? We all have girlfriends!’ I said, ‘But you’re married.’ They said, ‘Yeah, well, that’s why we have girlfriends!’”

One or two times a month an old Ford van driven by tenor saxophonist Knud Jensen appears in Vinnie’s driveway. Knud loads Vinnie’s bass in the van and they set off for Knud’s house in Plainfield. Knud Jensen is from Copenhagen where as a boy he attended concerts by Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins and other jazz greats and Jazz instantly became his life. He is a superb player, one of those guys in the shadows. With his blond beard going gray he has the fierce look of a Viking warrior but he is a kind and gentle man. He makes it his business to see that Vinnie keeps playing despite the cancer that lurks in Vinnie’s gut. Vinnie sits regally in the passenger seat, accustomed to being chauffeured. He has never owned a driver’s license and for 60 years his family and friends have somehow come to understand that it is their duty to drive him places.

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LAST CODA  
continued from page 27

Knud smiles, “His whole life he never drove. He was above that.”

Peter Prisco had also been a driver for Vinnie. “You went to Vinnie. Vinnie didn’t come to you. He was the King. He should have had a fuckin’ crown.”

Knud’s house is an old shambles of a place, friendly and inviting. Three nights a week jazz classics pour through the windows, and drift across across Knud’s porch out onto Sixth Street, tree-lined with the homes of working people. In many of the driveways are vans with ladders on top. Tonight, if their windows are windows open, the neighbors are hearing “Green Dolphin Street.”

Inside, Vinnie is at one with his bass; it’s his dancing partner. Eyes closed, head down in absolute concentration. His arthritic fingers display uncommon strength and agility. Knud’s cluttered living room is dimly lit and scented with the sweet smell of cannabis. Crowded into this small space are pianist Cotton Kent, drummer Tom Turek. Seated across from him, bent way forward, playing his trumpet into the carpet is Frank Grasso. Knud stands in the corner, tenor ready, listening, waiting for his solo. Vinnie had told me, “Nobody gets paid. They just come to you. He was the King. He should have had a fuckin’ crown.”

Knud comes alive at the happening. “Jazz is the most important musical art form of the 20th Century. Totally American. Contains the whole constitution in it. Contains all the principles. All the aspirations of America are right in the music. This is probably the most important product ever to come out of America. At least it’s the nicest product. It never killed anybody. It’s played all over the world because people get it. It’s about freedom. Freedom of expression. That’s what’s at stake in this world and it’s all there in the music. And it always was.”

“Jazz is freedom?” I ask.

“Jazz is about truth. No bullshit. It can’t be controlled easily. That’s Vinnie. That’s all of us. My truth and honesty are what’s at stake when I’m playing my music. Because it’s built on nothing else. There’re no words involved. And no words to describe it. It’s magic. Complete magic. The audiences are not big. A small percentage. But that goes for any art form. Modern jazz is demanding for the listener to get it. There’s no sugar on it. No honey like with corporate music. It’s not built to suit everybody.”

I say to them, “I wonder about the process of jazz. I know it’s based on improvisation and communication but it seems like I’m hearing the same tunes over again, and many of the solos sound the similar to ones I’d heard before. Where’s the improvisation?”

Knud: “I can play swing or New Orleans jazz and it’s still new every time. Because you play something different. The next chorus is different. The same tune. I’ve been playing “Green Dolphin Street” since I was 18. It’s still beautiful. The more you play the same tune, the better it gets. Your relationship to that tune gets deeper and deeper and deeper. The stuff you play might be like last time, like many times ago, might be completely new, inspired by somebody else’s playing. I’m playing with a fantastic trumpet player and it’s incredible. He breaks it open and when you play after him you have to go somewhere else.”

Vinnie: “It’s always brand new. Even if you’re playing clichés, the clichés are different. They will never be the same. You take a tempo and you play the tune. An hour later you play the same tune, it will never be the same. A lot of jazz musicians try
to duplicate solos they had. And it’s impossible! IMPOSSIBLE! It’s like saying out of all the zillions of trees in the world and the zillions of zillions of leaves on the trees, there are no two leaves alike. And that’s the way it is with your solos.”

Knud: “We play for the music. It’s not for the other guys. It’s not for me. It’s for the music. The audience is part of the creative process. If they want to. If they get it. If they don’t, it takes away from the music. But if they get it it adds to the music. It’s about consciousness. A critical mass of consciousness. Whether I’m playing or whether I’m laying out, the music is still playing itself. We all know the tune. The music takes its own course through the tune and everybody gets a chance to say their piece about this tune. Somebody is playing solo right now and we will try to add to it and back it up and enhance it. That’s freedom. It’s democracy in action. Everybody gets their say. And more than that, everybody can play at the same time! Which you can’t do when you’re talking! Amazing!”

And then he adds: “If the lessons from jazz could be learned in the greater society that could solve a hell of a lot of problems.”

Vinnie’s gaze takes in his musical mates. A twinkle is in his eye as he muses: “Course I don’t always agree with the way they play. They get flack from me. But they excuse me because I’m an old man. If we’re all in there fighting to get it, it’s gonna come eventually, we’re gonna get it to march. And once you get it to march, that’s the beauty of the music. It’s spiritual. A religion. Like you’re playing to the Lord.”

Vinnie mentions “the Lord” more and more as he grows older and more aware of the growing number of cancer cells colonizing his prostate.

“As I got older in the last 12-15 years I’ve become a church person. And I try to keep the Lord on my shoulder. I try to honor him when I’m playing. I think that’s what you’re supposed to do.”

“He was a Roman Catholic all his life,” said Brenda. “He listened to television preachers and he found a relationship with Christ and then he decided that he wanted to get baptized before…well, while he was sick.”

Vinnie had a minister come to the house and baptize him. In the bathtub.

Brenda: “After he was baptized he came downstairs and he picked up his bass and he started playing. It was a new song. It was different. It wasn’t even jazz. I don’t know what it was but it was beautiful.”

She thinks for a moment and then, “People say my father was an intimidating guy, right? I don’t think he was trying to intimidate as much as he was trying to get perfection. From himself and from people, I remember when he had chemotherapy, he’d come home after playing a job and he would stay up all night listening to the music. And I’d go into his bedroom and say, ‘Dad, what are you doing?’ He said, ‘I’m listening to the gig tonight.’ I said, ‘What are you doing it now for? You need to go to sleep.’ Because he was on chemotherapy. Your body needs to rest. ‘No-no-no-no-no.’ OK. Next morning he would call the musician he was playing with — ‘We gotta get together. We gotta listen to this.’ He was always constantly trying to perfect his own music.”

Vinnie managed to keep his prostate cancer at bay for ten tears. His way. “He didn’t follow the doctor’s directions,” remembers Vincent. “He tried to self-diagnose. He would go for six months without the Lupron, which was there to keep his testosterone level down so the cancer wouldn’t spread as quickly. That was his undoing. The cancer metastasized into his bladder and his stomach.”

Brenda: “When he got out of the hospital his hearing was distorted. My brother brought him tapes and cassettes. He was going, ‘I don’t understand this music. Can’t hear it. It’s terrible. What’s wrong with these tapes?’”

Vincent remembers, “He asked me, ‘What’s wrong with the headphones? What’s wrong with the unit? What’s wrong?’ And he said, ‘Listen to this.’ Because he would always trust me and my hearing. ‘Tell me what’s wrong with this.’ And nothing was wrong.”

Brenda: “He said to me, ‘This is a talent that God gave me. I can’t play my bass. And now I can’t even listen to my music.’ The only answer I had for him was God wants more of your attention. And he seemed to be ok with that.”

Vinnie Burke died February 1, 2002.

After I finished writing all this down, I found a publicity photo of Vinnie in a box of stuff his daughter Brenda had given me. He is handsome, smiling and dressed very sharp. He appears to be about sixty. Beneath the photo it says:

VINCENZO BUCCI (Vinnie Burke) BASS

On the back are these words written by Ronald Tamburro: “Vinnie Burke is the bass. There is always more. Every tune has to burn.”

It must be exciting and fresh. The ingredients of Vinnie's music are time and love. The catalyst is freedom and the result is heaven.

Born in Morristown, Tom Spain is a writer and producer of documentary films for television, with a forty-year career doing prime time specials for NBC, CBS and PBS. His first job in TV was in 1964 at CBS editing a Duke Ellington special. Over the years he has photographed or edited documentaries about Tommy Flanagan, Mary Lou Williams, Paul Simon, Isaac Stern, Fleetwood Mac and John Philip Sousa.

One night in 1999 jazz trumpeter/pianist Michael Green told Tom Spain about an interesting guy who had played with all the greats and had fascinating stories to tell. And that he had cancer and wasn’t going to live too long and it would be a shame not have him and his stories on record. Maybe a documentary about could be done. Green took Spain to saxophonist Knud Jensen’s house in Plainfield where Vinnie Burke was jamming with a bunch of guys. They talked and Spain told them it was doubtful he could raise money for a documentary, but he would be happy to videotape Burke for the record and for his family. He visited Vinnie’s house in Springfield shortly thereafter with Knud and interviewed the bassist for 2 hours or more on broadcast quality videotape. They returned a month later and did another two hours, plus some scenes of Vinnie practicing his bass. Later they went to Knud’s house and filmed Vinnie jamming with his friends. This material, along with a transcript, is archived at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ.
Music for All Ages

44th Stomp

By Tony Mottola
Editor Jersey Jazz

Youth will be served, goes the old saw. And if not they might just steal the show, as it was widely agreed the 30-ish Brooklyn-based Hot Sardines did at the 44th Annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp.

Consider this factoid: the oldest bandleader at this year’s event — 47-year-old Dan Levinson — was three years old when the first Stomp was held at the Martinsville Inn in 1969.

None of which is to say that the Stomp is not enjoyed by folks of all ages. True, the majority of the several hundred who were there to listen were in their middle or senior years. But the dancers ranged from the self-proclaimed “oldest dancer here,” who at 92 led his 89-year-old partner, to a young mother who spun her five-year-old daughter around the hardwood. And that supersized dance floor was filled throughout the afternoon, swelled by nearly one hundred (heavily Gen-X) swing dancers on hand, many gaily attired in colorful period garb. The Stomp, it seems, has something for everyone.

After the traditional presentation of the four NJJS 2013 scholarship winners, who received their awards and played a four-tune set (see sidebar), Emily Asher’s Garden Party opened the main event. This was a return trip to the Stomp for Emily, who’s become an NJJS favorite. But it was her trumpeter, the diminutive and dapper Alphonso Horne, who got noticed this trip. The moment he began his first solo, heads turned all around the room, and ears stood right up.

Who is THAT? The tone is fat and pure, the sound is LOUD, and lines flow and spill from his horn in an effortless rush.

Nick Russo (guitar), Jared Engel (bass), Peter Reardon-Anderson (reeds) and Jay Lepley (drums) joined Emily Asher (trombone) and Alphonso Horne (trumpet) for the first set. Photos by Lynn Redmile.

Hot Sardines’s Evan Palazzo (piano), photo by Lynn Redmile, accompanies washboard-playing vocalist Elizabeth Bougerol, photo by Tony Mottola.

Dancer photos by Tony Mottola except as noted.
Horne, in his early 20s, is apparently a rising star, who not only plays all manner of jazz with great command but is a fine classical trumpet player as well. One can only hope he is back playing in New Jersey again soon.

The Garden Party set was otherwise highlighted by an appropriately languid “Lazy Bones” and a set-closing Trad sashay through the funky Wynton Marsalis composition “Juba and the O’Brien Squaw.”

Now it was Show Time. Make no mistake, the nine-member Hot Sardines is a band that puts on a Show, replete with an onstage tap dancer (Eddy Francisco) who adapted the carpeted stage floor with one-half of a banquet tabletop to dance on.

The group is co-led by the nimble stride pianist Evan Palazzo and the Parisian chanteuse “Miz Elizabeth” Bougerol, who serves as the group’s front person and occasional washboard player. The pair met through a jam session they found on Craig’s List and discovered that they shared a mutual love for songs from the 1920s, ’30s and ’40s. And they also shared a commitment not to treat the music as museum pieces. “This music isn’t historical artifact. It’s a living, breathing,
always-evolving thing,” says Evan.

And live and breathe it did. Miz E’s vocals were saucy and sassy, the arrangements were clever and fresh, and the solos burned up the stage, all while Mr. Francisco rat-a-tat-tat tapped on his tabletop. The well-worn repertoire — the likes of “Comes Love (Nothing Can Be Done),” a burning “Them There Eyes” and an easygoing “Honeysuckle Rose” — was nicely re-imagined by the Sardines, and after a closing, very Klezmer-esque, “Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen” the crowd rose to its feet for a sustained ovation.

During a brief intermission, past NJJS president Joe Lang presented the organization’s 2013 awards. Bob Porter accepted the Musician of the Year Award on behalf of saxophonist/flutist Frank Wess, who was unable to attend, and WBGO radio host Rhonda Hamilton accepted her award as 2013 Jazz Advocate.

After the fireworks of the Sardines performance, the Kevin Dorn Trio’s program of easy swing presented a nice interlude, and coaxed some of the less frenetic dancers to the floor (the older folks and dance civilians). Kevin was joined by pianist Mark Shane and bassist Mike Weatherly to play a selection of tunes that included “Lady Be Good,” “I’m Through With Love,” “Hollywood Stampede” and “The Talk of the Town.”

The room was ready for one last blast of hot jazz, and Dan Levinson’s New Millennium All-Stars were ready to deliver, opening strong with the Mezz Mezzrow/Sy Oliver 1937 dancing ditty “Hot Club Stomp.” Mike Weatherly and Kevin Dorn, back on stage for the All-Stars, were joined by Randy Reinhart (trumpet), Matt Musselman (trombone), Dalton Ridenhour (piano) and Molly Ryan (guitar/vocals).

“At the Codfish Ball” continued the set’s dance hall motif and the dancers kept up their high-stepping counter-clockwise promenade around the floor. And they mainly remained there for another half-dozen tunes, from a breakneck “Runnin’ Wild” to the day’s closing number, “Clarinet Marmalade,” putting one in mind of Johnny Mercer’s introduction of a Benny Goodman radio performance of the tune: “Just the kind of jam you go for.”

Indeed. The Pee Wee Stomp has been “just the kind of jam folks go for” for a long time now. The event, it seems, never fails to please, but many who chatted afterward in the Birchwood ballroom, and later online, agreed this was the best edition in recent memory. It falls to the NJJS Music Committee to try and top themselves in 2014, and leaves some wondering why we only do this once a year.
Jersey Stories Jazz

DAVID ZAKS
William Paterson University, Piano
This year’s Jack Stine Scholarship winner hails from Hoboken and attended High Tech High School. David is grateful to Mulgrew Miller and Harold Mabern for their mentorship and guidance. He’ll appear many times at William Paterson’s Jazz Room before his 2014 graduation. He also performs every Friday from 5:30 to 7 PM at the Bowery Mission on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, where he is well received. His MySpace page features a number of his arrangements.

PAULO CANTARELLA
New Jersey City University, Drums
Paulo, who received the Don Robertson Scholarship, is from South Plainfield. He’s been continually inspired while being part of the South Plainfield music program as well as with New Jersey City University. He is thankful for his teachers along the way: Dan Weiss, Mark Guiliana, Tim Horner, Steve Johns, Mark Sherman and the late Tony Williams. Paolo also plays vibraphone, and his interest in cosmology has influenced his original compositions, some of which may be viewed in performances on YouTube.

ISAAC DYE
Rutgers University, Tenor Sax
Isaac came to Rutgers by way of Juneau, Alaska and Peoria, Arizona. He received the Pee Wee Russell Scholarship, which was the original of these Jazz Society-sponsored scholarships in 1970. Professor Ralph Bowen and the faculty at Rutgers have been especially inspiring. Isaac, a graduate student, is currently a member of the internationally-travelled Rutgers Jazz Ensemble. He also plays the bagpipes and owns his own equipment for home-brewed beer.

MATTHEW HARTMANN
Rowan University, Trumpet
Matt is a graduate of Shawnee High School in Medford, NJ. He was selected for the Bill Walters Scholarship by his professors at Rowan, which receives talented students from the many excellent South Jersey high school programs such as the Lenape District from which Matt graduated. He thanks Dr. Appleby-Wineberg and George Rabbai at Rowan for their guidance. Like most of our scholarship winners these days, several of Matt’s performances are available for viewing on YouTube.

2013 NJJS Scholarship Quartet
Isaac Dye, David Zaks, Paulo Cantarella and Matthew Hartmann pose at the March 3rd Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. Photo by Tony Mottola.

2013 NJJS Scholarship Quartet
Isaac Dye, David Zaks, Paulo Cantarella and Matthew Hartmann pose at the March 3rd Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. Photo by Tony Mottola.
MORE THAN HALF the oldest sound recordings, including some masters by George Gershwin, Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra, have been lost over the years, according to the Library of Congress. Patrick Loughney, chief of the library’s audiovisual conservation division, believes the nation has developed a “cultural amnesia,” forgetting how much of its history was captured in recorded sound. The library has revealed an ambitious plan to help libraries and archives across the country reverse the trend. The nonprofit National Recording Preservation Foundation will award grants to smaller archives that need funding for audio preservation. This year the NRPF is starting to raise money for the purpose. “America’s recorded sound history is incredibly rich,” Loughney was quoted by the Associated Press. “There’s just a lot of material that’s sitting in archives that is slowly deteriorating,” he warned, “and unless an effective national approach is taken to saving these materials, it’s going to be a tremendous loss.”

“BUILDING OWNER RIFFED over stripping of Harlem’s iconic Lenox Lounge façade and Art Deco interior fixtures sues for $50 million,” blazoned the New York Daily News. Alvin Reed, former tenant and owner-manager since 1988 of the 70-year-old club (Noteworthy, Feb. 2013) and his movers allegedly ripped off the bar’s façade on New Year’s Eve. They took “everything from the premises” — from fixtures, banquettes, mirrors, bathroom doors, to Zebra Room mementos — and deposited them in Reed’s new club two blocks away. Reed’s lawyer Tyretta Foster said the items he took “were part of a bill of sale that was transmitted when he purchased the business and the furnishings.” The $50 million suit seeks their return. Meanwhile, Reed is getting set to reopen in his nearby new quarters this summer. Chain restaurateur Richard Notar aims to beat him open this spring with a new jazz spot at the old site.

WHAT DO YOU CALL A TUNE based on a chord structure borrowed from another tune? At least 40 jazz songs borrow the chord changes from George and Ira Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm.” (“Chasin’ the Bird,” “Jumpin’ at the Woodside,” “Lester Leaps In,” “Rhythm-A-Ning” are four.) The term for this is Contrafact. “As a compositional device,” reports Wikipedia, “it was of particular importance in the 1940s development of bop, since it allowed jazz musicians to create new pieces for performance and recording on which they could immediately improvise, without having to seek permission or pay publisher fees for copyrighted materials (while melodies can be copyrighted, the underlying harmonic structure cannot be).” Contrafacts have been used as early as the 16th century in classical music.

Thanks to NJJS member Joán McGinnis of Mission Viejo, CA for Web research assistance.
Marty Grosz and The Hot Winds: The James P. Johnson Songbook
The inimitable Marty Grosz highlights the song writing genius of James P. Johnson, best known as the most accomplished “Harlem Stride” pianist of the century.
ARCD 19427

John Cocuzzi: Groove Merchant
Vibraphonist John Cocuzzi, who has performed with numerous jazz greats such as Snooky Young, Billy Butterfield and Nicholas Payton, presents an exciting program in his fresh, melodic style reflecting the masters without copying them.
ARCD 19417

Bucky Pizzarelli: Challis in Wonderland
World renowned jazz guitarist, Bucky Pizzarelli presents arrangements by Bill Challis who was an intimate musical collaborator of Bix Beiderbecke, and some originals with son, John.
ARCD 19435

Bob Wilber and The Tuxedo Big Band of Toulouse, France: Rampage!
Legendary jazz reedman, Bob Wilber, performs his original arrangements with the Tuxedo Big Band led by Paul Cherion of Toulouse, France.
ARCD 19411

The Harry Allen Quintet Plays Music from “The Sound of Music”
Harry Allen and his Quintet, featuring Rebecca Kiglore and Eddie Erickson on vocals, present their version of The Sound of Music in the 3rd of Arbors Records’ ongoing series of jazz-Broadway albums.
ARCD 19410

Chris Flory Quintet Featuring Scott Hamilton
One of the top straight ahead jazz guitarists of the past 35 years reunites after many years with legendary jazz saxophonist Scott Hamilton, in whose original band he performed, presenting a stunningly beautiful small group swing CD.
ARCD 19440

Louis Mazetier: My Own Stuff
All-star stride pianist Louis Mazetier, perhaps today’s best in that style, performs his original compositions dedicated to the jazz masters of stride and swing.
ARCD 19442

Bob Wilber and The Three Amigos
Jazz legend Bob Wilber leads the Three Amigos with Pieter Meijers and Antti Sarpila; an all-star combo on clarinet, soprano and tenor sax, named after first performing on a Jazzdagen cruise to the Mexican Riviera.
ARCD 19424

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Dan’s Den
Inside the Fifth NEA Jazz Masters Awards and Dinner

By Dan Morgenstern

The 32nd class of National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters was formally inducted on January 14. Numbering just four, this was the smallest class since the threesome of 2003. The following year, new NEA Chairman Dana Gioia upped the ante to six and added the new category of the A. B. Spellman Jazz Advocacy Award, which Nat Hentoff was the first to receive. For each of the next three years, there were seven, for 2008 and 2009, six, and in the following year, new chairman Rocco Landesman named a record eight.

Then came the Year of the Marsalis Family, when father Ellis and sons Wynton, Branford, Delfeayo and Jason — with only the elder getting the $25,000 — were honored, in addition to four others. Five was the lucky number for 2012, and Landesman having retired, it was acting Chair Joan Shigekawa who inducted this year’s quartet: Mose Allison, Lou Donaldson, Eddie Palmieri, and Advocate Lorraine Gordon.

There was a major change in the 2013 program, produced for the fifth time in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center. Instead of being presented at JALC’s Rose Hall, with the participation of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, however, the awards ceremony and concert took place at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, with a distinguished house trio of alumni-Kenny Barron (2010), Ron Carter (1998) and Jimmy Cobb (2009) on piano, bass and drums — joined by special guests, including alumni Sheila Jordan, Jimmy Heath, Randy Weston, and Amy Allison, daughter of Mose. In attendance were past masters, their families and friends, while press was hosted in a nearby room, the one that’s been the scene of an annual ritual since 2004, the first year that the Masters induction became a public event — the photo shoot — gathering past masters responding to the invitation, plus the new crop.

This more intimate setting proved copacetic. The New York Times headlined it “A Swinging Party With Old Friends” — but noted that it also replaced an earlier feature, namely a gathering for the same flock at Dizzy’s the night before, with live music by a group chosen by JALC. But still in place was the luncheon hosted by BMI, held once again at the Petit Salon (not so petit at that) of the Essex House, including presentations of and to the new inductees.

This is always a most pleasant social event, with much tablehopping and a nice meal. Dizzy’s also fed us, and that inadvertently triggered the day’s only glitch. You see, at lunch we were served a variation on the proverbial chicken, in this case a very well prepared chicken breast. But when it came to dinner, the main course was — guess what? Yes, chicken breast, this one with stuffing, but even so, less than welcome. It must have pained and surprised Dizzy’s chef — to have, as this observer noted, so many guests leave uneaten chicken on their plates. If there is a next time, I would strongly suggest a menu consultation between BMI, JALC and NEA!

As for the music, there was a mighty pretty “Sweet Lorraine” by Heath and the trio. Alas, the dedicatee was absent due to ill health, her award accepted by her daughter, Deborah Gordon, who assists in running the Village Vanguard. The highlight was Randy Weston’s tribute to three Jazz Masters we lost in 2012: Dave Brubeck, Von Freeman, and John Levy. With Carter and Cobb, 2001 Master Randy offered his famous “Hi-Fly,” which I must have heard him do dozens of times, but never better than here. Donaldson offered “Blues Walk,” with splendid assistance from the trio, while Sheila, who looked just great, offered her inimitable, autobiographical “Sheila’s Blues,” always a pleasure.

I had been seated at lunch with Mose Allison and his wife and daughter, among others. It had been a long time since I’d last seen Mose, and I noted that he had aged and seemed a bit distant. That evening, after a warm introduction by George Wein, Mose said not much more than thanks. He then, somewhat tentatively, accompanied his sweet-voiced daughter’s singing of his “Was,” a nostalgic waltz. It was a touching moment.

In stark contrast, another pianist, Eddie Palmieri, was not short on words or notes as he introduced and performed his “Iraddia.” The music ended with a heated version of “All Blues,” on which Dave Liebman on soprano and Pacquito D’Rivera on clarinet joined the house trio. It was quite a night, to which the presence of widows Annette Barretto, Hilma Carter, Diana Flanagan, Maxine Gordon, Billie Allen Henderson, Sandra Jackson, and Joanne Robinson Hill added a special historical and personal dimension.

All in all, the National Endowment for the Arts, personified for jazz by Wayne Brown and Katja Von Schuttenbach, is a class act. Thank you, Lyndon B, and long may it live!

Dan Morgenstern, contributing editor of Jersey Jazz, is former director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutger’s University, Newark.
He is the author of Jazz People (Pantheon Books).
Kurt Elling
at New Jersey City University

Monday, April 29, 2013
7:30 p.m.

Margaret Williams Theatre
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$15.00 General Admission
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The NIJS presents the powerhouse big band DIVA at Morristown’s Mayo Performing Arts Center for an afternoon of swinging jazz at 3 PM on Sunday April 14.

Previously DIVA has headlined at the Society’s Jazzfest in 2009, and drummer/leader Sherrie Maricle recently appeared at our November Jazz Social and last January’s 40th Anniversary All-Star Jam.

DIVA exudes the excitement and force found in the tradition of the historic big bands while keeping an eye on today’s progressive sounds, all packed with fiery improvisation, spontaneity and fun.

Hard-charging and powerful, the group is immersed in the history of their craft and in command of their instruments. DIVA is an ensemble of 15 extremely talented and versatile musicians who just happen to be women. They can’t help it — they were born that way.

The band performs all over the world playing contemporary, mainstream big band jazz composed and arranged to fit the individual personalities and styles of the musicians themselves.

In 2006, DIVA was voted one of the best big bands in the world in both DownBeat magazine’s annual Critic’s and Reader’s Polls and they’ve shared the stage with Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams, Diane Schuur, Carmen Bradford, Marlena Shaw, Dee Daniels, Maurice Hines, DeeDee Bridgewater, Rosemary Clooney, Ann Hampton Callaway, Jack Jones, Clark Terry, Dr. Billy Taylor, Terry Gibbs, Tommy Newsom, Randy Brecker and Dave Brubeck.

DIVA has made an impressive series of recordings, most recently the critically-acclaimed Johnny Mandel: The Man and his Music, recorded live at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola and conducted by Mr. Mandel himself. Other DIVA recordings include Live From Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, featuring supremely swinging vocalist Carmen Bradford (2008); TNT — Tommy Newsom Tribute, a compilation of charts the late Mr. Newsom arranged exclusively for DIVA (2005); Live in Concert (2002); I Believe in You (1999); Leave It To DIVA (1997); and Something’s Coming (1995).

Whether live or on recording, The DIVA Jazz Orchestra always guarantees an performance of spirited and exciting jazz music.

All seats are $20. For more information and to purchase tickets call the Mayo’s box office at 973-539-8008 or visit www.mayoarts.org.

Jazz on an April Afternoon | NJJS Presents DIVA at Morristown’s Mayo Center

STANLEY KAY: The Man Behind the Women of DIVA

By Sanford Josephson

On May 6, 1990, Sherrie Maricle was hired to play with a freelance pickup orchestra at the 75th anniversary celebration of New York’s Schubert Theater. One of the orchestra’s guest conductors was Stanley Kay, whose client, tap dancer Maurice Hines, was one of the performers. Kay had been a backup drummer in the ’40s and spent several years as the manager of the Buddy Rich Band. “Stanley liked the way I played,” Maricle recalled, “and I certainly made a point to talk to him because I knew who he was from the Buddy Rich era. So, we sort of became friends.”

Two years later, Kay called Maricle with an idea. “Hey,” he asked her, “do you know other women who play as well as you do?” “I thought that was an incredibly great compliment,” Maricle recalled, “considering his background. In June of ’92, we had the original audition for the Diva Jazz Orchestra. About 40 women came. We picked the original 17, which then included a vocalist and guitar player, and our first concert was March 1993.” What Kay did with DIVA, Maricle believes, “really changed, in a dramatic way, the perception of women in jazz.”

Kay died in 2010 at the age of 86, but Maricle will never forget him. “My relationship with Stanley,” she said, “was the deepest and most profound relationship I’ve had with anybody. He was like my father and brother and boyfriend and mother, cousin, mentor, guru. I talked to him every day.”
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The Barry Harris Trio at William Paterson University

William Paterson University opened the Spring 2013 season of its Jazz Room concert series, now marking its 35th anniversary, with a performance by the Barry Harris trio. The Detroit native, a longtime New Jersey resident, was ably assisted by Ray Drummond on bass and drummer Leroy Williams.

Harris, a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, is equally recognized as a pianist and educator. His February 10 concert showed how effortlessly the two are combined in his playing. Even when not conducting a master class, Harris can educate an audience of people with his playing alone.

While Harris often makes his performances a mixture of Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell, the Wayne concert was more of standards filtered through the bebop era. On “I Want to Be Happy,” a tune performed by Powell among others, Harris toyed with the melody for his introduction before charging into the tune with Drummond and Williams joining in. Snare breaks by Williams, a decades-long collaborator with Harris, were the equivalent of anything out of the Swing Era, the interplay of the three a perfect example of jazz musicians exchanging ideas.

When the three re-arranged the chord changes of “Cherokee” or engaged in a Monk medley, they displayed a type of interplay that is often missing in younger players: a willingness to explore older music while still imbuing it with their own personal styles.

“Artistry in Edison”

The Stan Kenton Alumni Band
Led by Mike Vax
JP Stevens High School | April 20 | 8 PM
855 Grove Ave, Edison, NJ

The 17-piece Stan Kenton Alumni Band includes 11 players from the 1956–1978 Stan Kenton Orchestras. Many of the band’s members are also jazz educators and their spring East Coast Tour will bring the acclaimed California band to JP Stevens High School on April 20 to perform a benefit concert for the school’s multiple award-winning Jazz Band Program.
The Alumni Band performs some of the best known music of the Stan Kenton Orchestra, plus fresh new material written in the Kenton style, as well as original music written by members of the band.

To purchase tickets visit www.jpsband.org. Tickets: $15/Adults; $12/NJJS Members; $10/Students & Senior Citizens
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There is a lot to cover in the way of new releases this month, so here goes.

■ In 1980, Swedish reedman BERNT ROSENGREN recorded an album titled *Bernt Rosengren Big Band* (Caprice – 21829). Featured along with Rosengren and a band of mostly Swedish jazz players are Horace Parlan on piano and Doug Raney on guitar, both Americans then residing in Denmark. The ensemble is a straight ahead swing/dance band that plays arrangements by Rosengren of nine selections, seven originals plus “How Deep Is the Ocean” and “Naima.” The album is a highly listenable affair. Rosengren is a fine composer who has created melodies that have the feel of classic pop songs. It has taken over 30 years to get the album released on CD, but it is finally available and worth the wait. (www.dustygroove.com)

■ Dave Lalama has been a Professor of Music at Hofstra University for many years. During that time, he has been associated with many students and fellow teachers who have distinguished themselves in the demanding role of professional jazz musician. THE DAVE LALAMA BIG BAND brings together a roster of these associates for *The Hofstra Project*. The program is a mix of Lalama originals and jazz standards arranged by Lalama who leads the band and plays the piano. Among the players are Ralph Lalama on tenor sax, Glen Drewes on trumpet, John Mosca on trombone and Tony Tedesco on drums. Lalama’s arrangements are interesting, and leave ample space for the outstanding soloists spread throughout the band. This is an exciting collection of modern big band jazz at its best. (www.cdbaby.com)

■ Trumpet Summit (MAMA Records – 1043) by the SOUTH FLORIDA JAZZ ORCHESTRA is a feast for big band fans, especially those favoring a strong trumpet section. Led by bassist Chuck Bergeron, the orchestra is home to many of the top players in the Miami area, including many who are associated with the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami where Bergeron is on staff. This album features eight trumpet players, Wayne Bergeron, Augie Haas, Brian Lynch, Greg Gisbert, Jason Carder, Alex Norris, Cisco Dimas and Kim Pensyl. The lineup of tunes includes “Daahoud,” “Everything I’ve Got,” “Sophisticated Lady,” “All the Things You Are,” and five originals, two each by Chuck Bergeron and Brian Lynch, and one by Alex Norris. The band is dynamic, the arrangements swing, and the execution is flawless. You cannot ask for much more from a big band. (www.summitrecords.com)

■ Graham Carter’s Jazzed Media label has been one of the leading sources in recent years for outstanding big band recordings. Lush (Jazzed Media – 1060) by the JOE CLARK BIG BAND FEATURING JEFF HAMILTON is the latest winner from the label. Clark is a Chicago-based trumpeter and arranger who has put together a stellar aggregation of Chicago area musicians to explore eight compositions, three Clark originals plus “Well You Needn’t,” “Lush Life,” “Tenderly,” “Yesterday’s Gardenias” and “Samba de Martelo,” written by guest drummer Jeff Hamilton. All of the selections are imaginatively arranged by Clark. The band is loaded with first rate soloists, with most of the players given solo roles. The ensemble playing is tight throughout. All in all, this is a satisfying and consistently interesting collection of big band sounds. (www.JazzedMedia.com)

■ Every time a SCOTT HAMILTON selection reaches my ears, I rejoice that there are still some players around who recognize that the classic approach to tenor playing established by the likes of Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young and Ben Webster is still a vibrant style that deserves to be explored by those who are playing today. Give a listen to Remembering Billie (Blue Duchess – 003), and you will hear one of the best of the players in this tradition, the aforementioned Mr. Hamilton. He is joined by pianist Tim Ray, bassist Dave Zinno and drummer Jim Gwin, stalwarts on the New Jersey Jazz Scene. (www.FullCountBigBand.com)
England jazz scene. Producer Duke Robillard contributes his guitar mastery on two tracks, “Foolin’ Myself” and “I’ll Never Be the Same.” The album is dedicated to music recorded by Billie Holiday, and in addition to the tunes referenced above, Hamilton assays “When You’re Smiling,” “Good Morning Heartache,” “Them There Eyes,” “Laughing at Life,” “You’re My Thrill,” “This Year’s Kisses,” “God Bless the Child” and “If Dreams Come True.” Hamilton can caress a ballad and swing his forever off with the best of them. The rhythm section is solidly supportive. Put it all together and the result is pure listening pleasure.

(www.cdbaby.com)

There are two relative newcomers to the New York City jazz scene who share the respect for the cats who laid the foundation for the later jazz styles that Scott Hamilton has demonstrated. They are PETER ANDERSON & WILL ANDERSON, and one listen to their new album, Correspondence (Smalls Records – 0053) will quickly convince you that these are two talented and versatile young men. My first exposure to them was at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola where they were in the sax section of the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra. Their solo efforts were impressive on that occasion, and soon I was seeing them in various settings as sidemen and co-leaders of their own groups. Their earlier recorded efforts were devoted to the giants of swing like Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and the Dorsey Brothers. On this outing they give most of their attention to their own original music, mostly in a bebop vein, and several jazz classics of the same genre. As players and composers, they sparkle. Will plays alto and Peter tenor on this album, and they have an all star rhythm section of Kenny Barron on piano, Ben Wolfe on bass and Kenny Washington on drums. These young men can play superbly, and they have that important extra facility to make their music swing like mad. Here are two cats with bright futures who have already arrived to make their statements heard and respected.

(PeterAndWillAnderson.com)

If you are familiar with guitarists FRANK VIGNOLA and VINNY RANIOLO, you know that they can take just about any tune of any genre, and make it exciting. On Melody Magic (Azica Records – 72248), they divide their time between turning classical and rock melodies into jazz journeys that delight. They open with an exciting exploration of “Beethoven’s Fifth,” and then take on “Habanera” from Bizet’s Carmen, Rimsky Korsakov’s “Scherezade” and Grieg’s “Morning.” It is then time for a taste of the Beatles with a medley of “If I Fell” and “Here There Everywhere.” Next up is “Dust in the Wind,” a hit for Kansas. It is back to their classical bag for Bach’s “Violin Partita #2,” Mendelssohn’s “Violin Concerto” and Scene 1 from Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake. Finally they are back to the world of rock for the Survivor hit “Eye of the Tiger,” and Sting’s “Walking on the Moon.”

This is a lot of territory to cover, and they handle it with aplomb. There are occasional contributions from Mark Egan on bass guitar, Julien Labro on accordion, Zach Brock on violin, and Cassidy Holden or Mat Wigdon on bass. The one word that best describes this album is entertaining, just what music in general, and jazz in particular, is supposed to be.

(www.azica.com)

One of the joys of jazz is how adaptable the great players can be. The Magic of 2 (Resonance – 2013) finds two pianists with distinctly different styles performing as a duo as wonderfully as you could like, thank you. The elegantly swinging TOMMY FLANAGAN and the unpredictable JAKI BYARD play wonderfully off of each other on their five duo performances, and give fine demonstrations of their individual approaches to jazz piano on their solo efforts, three for each of them. The performance was recorded on February 7, 1982 at the Keystone Korner, Todd Barkan’s legendary jazz oasis in San Francisco. Thanks to the persistence of Barkan, who had retained the tape of the evening’s proceedings, this magnetic music is finally available for all to hear. Special thanks must go to Resonance Records for bringing this music to market. To hear these gentlemen at the heights of their creative powers in a performance when they are so obviously in tune with their own creativity as well as that of their cohort truly makes for The Magic of 2.

(www.resonancerecords.org)

Upstairs (Justin Time – 249) is a solo performance by pianist MATT HERSKOWITZ recorded at the Upstairs Bar & Grill in Montreal. It is a set that highlights the many influences in his playing derived from his background in both classical music and jazz. He opens with the tender melody from Dave Brubeck’s homage to Chopin, “Dziękuję.” A piece that mirrors the influences mentioned above. Along the way, he explores a piece from another jazz pianist, Michael Petrucciani, “Cantabile;” two selections from classical sources, Schumann’s “Traumerei” and his take on Bach’s “Prelude in C Minor,” a piece that he has named “Bach a la Jazz;” two originals, the lovely “Waltz in Moscow” and a moody melody titled “Bella’s Lament;” and ends the program with two Gershwin songs, a contemplative visit to “But Not for Me” and an adventurous “I’ve Got Rhythm.” Herskowitz is a facile player blessed with taste and imagination. It would have been fun to be there when he was performing this music.

(www.justin-time.com)

For his latest album, Miles Tones (Savant – 2124), vocalist GIACOMO GATES explores 10 tunes associated with Miles Davis, but with a difference. Previous tributes to Davis have concentrated on the instrumental side of the music. In this instance, Gates performs the lyrics, in some cases ones written after the fact for originally instrumental pieces, and for standards like “I Fall in Love Too Easily” and “You’re My Everything,” he sings the lyrics written before they ever became a part of the Davis repertoire. Whatever the origins, Gates, with his resonant baritone, simply nails them. With backing from Freddie Hendrix on
OTHER VIEWS  continued from page 43

trumpet, John Di Martino on piano, Dave Stryker on
guitar, Lonnie Plaxico on bass and Vincent Ector on
drums, Gates shows why he is among the best of
the current male jazz singers. He has a terrific
sense of rhythm and phrasing, and articulates even
the most complex of the occasional vocalese lyrics.
He is also like a sixth instrumental voice when he
scats. Do you get the impression that I dig this
album? Well you are right! (www.jazzdepot.com)

BARBARA ROSENE is a very special singer.
She has devoted her career to resurrecting
unfortunately ignored tunes from the 1920s and
1930s, and giving them new life. Her latest
recording, Nice and Naughty (Stomp Off –
1431), has 22 selections, most of which will be
ew to most listeners. You might have heard
“Easy Come, Easy Go,” “Glad Rag Doll” or “We Just
Couldn’t Say Goodbye,” and you’re the Cream in My Coffee” and “You’re
the Most Complex of the occasional vocalese lyrics.

Johnny O’Neal They address 10 standards with
occasional contributions from tenor saxophonist
Stacy Dillard. Bruhn was born in Denmark, raised
in Germany, educated at Berklee College of Music
in Boston, and has been on the New York scene since
2001. For several years she has been singing
regularly with O’Neal, a pianist with an impressive
resume that includes a stay with Art Blakey, and a
period as the house pianist at the Blue Note. This
ballad heavy album shows Bruhn to be a fine lyric
interpreter who has a natural jazz feeling and sense
of phrasing. The 10 standards that comprise the
program include “I’ll Be Seeing You,” “If I Should
Lose You,” “Just in Time” and “Skylark.” Bruhn and
O’Neal have a weekly gig at Robert, a restaurant
located in the Museum of Art and Design on
Columbus Circle. Based on this album, it sounds
like a trip to catch them would be time well spent.
(www.tinebruhn.com)

Over the last several years, vocalist JACKIE
RYAN has released a series of fine albums. Her
latest is Listen Here (Open Art – 07442), — a
title that should be heeded by those who dig a
singer who infuses all of her work with a jazz flavor
while lending her rich voice to the songs. Ah, the
songs, they are a wonderful mixture of the familiar,
the should-be-familiar, and a few hip surprises. This
is the kind of album that deserves a song by song
treatment, but space and time preclude that
happening, so I will hit on a few highlights.
“Anytime, Any Day, Anywhere” is a tune deeply
associated with Lee Wiley, but Ryan’s version
should earn a place right along side of the Wiley
take. For me, her reading of “I Loves You Porgy” is
as fine as any that I have heard. When I saw “Rip
Van Winkle” on the song list, I assumed that it was
the delightful George

Vocalist SANDY SASSO is a lady from New
Jersey who has garnered a widespread reputation
as a first rate vocalist. Her latest release is titled
Hands On (Charlie Boy Records – 004). She
performs 12 selections in the company of Carlton
Holmes on piano, Bill Easley on saxophone and
flute, Gary Mazzaroppi on bass and Tim Horner on
drums. The songs include standards, “Crazy He Calls
Me,” “You Go to My Head” and “My Ship;” show
tunes, “Jet Song,” “You’ve Got to Be Carefully
Taught” and “Alice in Wonderland;” jazz pieces,

No One Ever Tells You,” a tune that Sinatra sang
on his classic A Swingin’ Affair album, and Ryan
takes on a bluesy trip with some nice help from
saxophonist Ricky Woodard. In addition to Woodard,
Ryan is supported by Gerald Clayton on piano and
organ, John Clayton on bass, Gilbert Castellanos on
trumpet, Graham Dechter on guitar and Obed
Calihari on drums. Once again, Jackie Ryan has hit
one out of the ballpark. (www.jackierayanmusic.com)

Most singers are reluctant to do an album of all
ballads. A Quiet Thing (Mad Kat – 1012) is just
such an album, and vocalist MADELINE
EASTMAN with the solo support of pianist RANDY
PORTER has done it magnificently. Eastman has
gathered together an interesting collection of
songs, most of them normally done as ballads, but
one does not often hear “Pick Yourself Up” done
slowly, and she even slows down one of the Beach
Boys slower songs, “God Only Knows.” This does
not mean that the album drags. Eastman is a fine
interpreter of lyrics, and Porter an accomplished
accompanist, so they involve the listener
throughout. Among the standout tracks are “Spring
Can Really Hang You Up the Most” “The Bad and
the Beautiful,” “All of Us in It,” and “A Quiet Thing.”
I would not choose this disc as a pick me upper, but
I would select it if I wanted to hear some terrific
songs well sung. (www.madelineeastman.com)

Vocalist Diane Perry has hit a few highlights.
“Anytime, Any Day, Anywhere” is a tune deeply
associated with Lee Wiley, but Ryan’s version
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OTHER VIEWS
continued from page 44

“Little Sunflower” and “Sanpaku;” pop songs, “Up on the Roof,” and “Summer in the City;” plus two nicely crafted originals by Sasso, “They Left Me” and “Natural Self.” Sasso is a confident singer who is comfortable with the eclectic program that she has chosen. You might just want to follow the advice of the title, and put your hands on a copy of this disc. (www.sandysasso.com)

MAUCHA ADNET has a dusky voice that lends a special depth to each lyric that she approaches. Her pairing with pianist Helio Alves on Milagre (Zoho – 201302) for a program of 14 songs from Brazil is a perfect match of musicians and material. Adnet, originally from Brazil, was the vocalist with the group of Antonio Carlos Jobim for the last decade of his life, has been living in the New York City area for many years, and is married to the brilliant drummer, Duduka Da Fonseca, another Brazilian native. Alves is also from Brazil, but has been living in this country for almost 30 years. The songs include selections by some of the most well-known Brazilian composers to stateside audiences like Jobim, Dori Caymmi, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Toninho Horta, as well as several others by writers who are prominent in their native country. These stripped down arrangements of Brazilian music are effective, and give a different feeling than one receives from the songs done in a larger instrumental setting. Adnet’s voice is transfixing, and Alves consistently draws you in with his imaginative pianism. This is an album to be listened to many times with additional nuances being discovered each time the music is revisited. (www.zohomusic.com)

Noël and Cole (PS Classics – 1313) is a collection of songs from two masters, Noël Coward and Cole Porter, who are often thought of as similar in many ways, even though they came from very different backgrounds. They were contemporaries, often addressed the same subject matter, and both were expert at creating witty lyrics, but were equally adept at writing deeply passionate romantic songs. This collection addresses songs from both men, and looks at both their humorous and romantic sides. A superb cast of singers was recruited to perform the program, including PHILIP CHAFFIN, SARA JEAN FORD, EUAN MORTON, MATTHEW SCOTT, ELIZABETH STANLEY and BARBARA WALSH. The opening medley of Porter’s “Another Op’nin’, Another Show” and Coward’s “Why Must the Show Go On?” by the full company sets the tone for a delightful program of terrific songs. The Coward selections examine his lighter side with songs like “A Bar on the Piccola Marina” and “I Went to a Marvelous Party,” broken into three separate segments, but also include “If Love Were All,” a song often assumed to be a personal statement by Coward, and the intensely patriotic “London Pride.” Most of the Porter selections are on the more serious side, the primary exceptions being “Well, Did You Evah!” and “Let’s Do It,” although the version here also includes some lyrics later contributed by Coward. The singers are well suited to bringing out the essence of these wonderful songs, and the program seems like it is over almost as soon as it has started, such is the quality of the material and the performances. (www.psclassics.com)

Remember that these albums are not available through NJJS. You should be able to obtain most of them at any major record store. They are also available on-line from the websites that I have shown after each review, or from a variety of other online sources.
Jersey Reviews

Gypsy Chanteuse in Philly

By Schaen Fox

Cyrille Aimee’s performance at the Tin Angel in Philly began on a memorable note; the room was cold enough that she and several members of the band took the stage wearing their coats. While the room remained on the chilly side for the entire set, the music evidently warmed the performers enough that the coats came off when the first number ended. Her animated stage presence may have also helped fend off the cold. Like Anat Cohen, she bopped along with the up-tempo numbers. Her feet remained firmly stationary, but her body dipped, swayed and bounced with the rhythms, a possible explanation for her trim figure.

During the entire set, no one looked at charts, they knew the arrangements cold — pardon the intended pun. The show was mostly music with little talking, with several numbers before Cyrille said anything to the audience. She gave a brief explanation of her background to explain her passion for the guitar — especially gypsy guitar — and jazz. Her youth, she said, was spent in the village of Samois-sur-Seine in France. Every year, gypsies and jazz fans travel there for the yearly jazz festival that honors the memory of former resident Django Reinhardt. She fell in love with the gypsies’ freedom and their music. She studied that music, absorbed it and made it her own.

Her new band, whimsically called Guitar Heroes, consisted of bass, drums and only two of the normal three guitars. One guitarist played gypsy guitar while the other played straight jazz guitar. The effect of her voice and those guitars made for a magical combination; her voice falls between that of Stacy Kent and Nicki Parrott. She sang a nice mix of standards, — “Love Me or Leave Me” and “It’s a Good Day” — with even a selection by The Doors, and one by Michael Jackson. She also included a number of her own originals. All were crowd-pleasingly arranged so that even the well-known classics of the songbook sounded like fresh jazz material.

Cyrille is trilingual and sang a nice balance of the set in French, English and even a few lines in Spanish. One does not have to speak French to appreciate the songs in her mother tongue. As with a good scat solo, I simply focused on the qualities of her voice rather than message of the words. And, scatting is a strong part of her performance; like any good instrumentalist, she used it to tell an interesting — if wordless story — and tell it very well.

When the set ended, Cyrille remained with her audience and a good percentage of the crowd gathered around her to chat, take photos, buy CDs and ask for autographs. One happy fan noted the size of the crowd and assured the well-traveled singer, “Philadelphia loves you.” Others promised to travel to New York to see her during her extended stay at Birdland the following week. The room was cool, but the artists had warmed the audience.
HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ

40TH Anniversary Gala
BMCC TRIBECA Performing Arts Center
February 14, 2013

Highlights in Jazz is the longest running jazz series in New York City. The 40th Anniversary Concert on Valentine’s Day gave a good taste of the kind of programming that has given the series, conceived and produced by Jack Kleinsinger, the ongoing appeal it has had. There was a mixture of upcoming talent like trumpeter/vocalist Bria Skonberg, pianist Ehud Asherie and drummer Marion Felder; established jazz giants like reedman Ken Peplowski and bassist Jay Leonhart; and still formidable older players like the legendary pianist Barbara Carroll and the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band.

Peplowski and Skonberg fronted the opening group with Asherie, Leonhart and Felder in the rhythm section. They got things off to a torrid start with a tune from the Louis Armstrong book, “Hotter Than That,” with Skonberg bringing back memories of the crystal clear notes that emanated from the Satchmo horn. “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” gave Skonberg a chance to vocalize, giving a sultry reading to Cole Porter’s often suggestive lyrics, and Peplowski infusing his solo with a deep blues feeling. Peplowski then took the spotlight for a robust take on “Just One of Those Things.” Skonberg is a lady of many talents, and she showed off her composer/lyricist side with a lovely ballad titled “Have a Little Heart.” This portion of the show closed with a fine “I Can't Give You Anything But Love.”

Carroll and Leonhart have been working in a duo format for many years, and they demonstrated their empathetic relationship during the next segment of the evening’s proceedings. Carroll started off with a stunning interpretation of the song most appropriate for the date, “My Funny Valentine.” She left no doubts that she is still a consummate improviser and interpreter of popular song. They pair took the tempo up a bit on “Who Cares?” Peplowski joined the festivities for a very slow “I Loves You Porgy.” Carroll is also a wonderful reader of lyrics as she demonstrated with her knowing take on “How About You?” The set closed with a haunting “Body and Soul,” and a peppy “Have You Met Miss Jones?”

The second half of the show was a showcase for the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, a group of veteran jazz musicians first organized by Dr. Al Volmer in 1973. The latest incarnation of the group consists of trumpeter/vocalist Joey Morant, trombonist Art Baron, alto saxophonist David Lee Jones, pianist Zeke Mullins, guitarist Bill Wurtzel, bassist Michael Max Fleming, drummer Jackie Williams and vocalist Ruth Brisbane. Their set consisted of a nice variety of classic jazz and pop tunes including “Things Ain't What They Used to Be,” “Struttin' with Some Barbecue,” “Sultry Serenade,” “Deep Purple,” “Alone Together,” “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” and “Caravan.”

Kleinsinger has made it a tradition at his concerts to include a surprise guest or two. In this instance, he brought out a young tenor sax player named Steven Frieder to join the HBJB for a rousing “Chicken Shack.” The young man quickly proved to be right at home playing with his far more experienced cohorts. For the finale,
Peplowski and Skonberg returned to the stage to join in on “Take the A Train.” It provided a satisfying conclusion to a fun evening of wonderful jazz.

The next Highlights in Jazz concert will have taken place by the time this issue reaches you, but you should consider making the scene on May 9 for a tribute to George Wein with Ron Carter, Anat Cohen, Wyckliffe Gordon, Jay Leonhart, Lewis Nash, Lew Tabackin. Info is available at (http://www.highlightsinjazz.org/jazz_fall_2013.htm).

LYRICS & LYRICISTS

Give Me Fever: The Many Voices of Peggy Lee
Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall
92nd Street NYC | February 23-25, 2013

Since 1970, the Lyrics & Lyricists series at the 92nd Street Y, originally conceived by Maurice Levine as a vehicle to present the great lyricists of classic popular song in programs discussing their work with performers singing their songs, has evolved into a series of programs paying tribute to the various aspects of the Great American Songbook. For the second program of the 2013 series, the focus was on Peggy Lee, singer and lyricist.

The program was hosted by singer/pianist Billy Stritch who served as artistic director and co-writer of the script with stage director Mark Waldrop. Assisting Stritch were vocalists Marilyn Maye, Barbara Fasano, La Tanya Hall and Gabrielle Stravelli, with John Hart on guitar, Tom Hubbard on bass and Ray Marchita on drums.

Lee was an iconic figure in the world of popular song for over 50 years. Her singing style was singular, and the four ladies who participated in this program made no attempts to imitate her. Rather they effectively applied their own approaches to material associated with Lee during her career. About half of the songs were ones that Lee had a hand in creating, while the balance of them were tunes penned by others, but given a special life by Peggy Lee. As Stritch pointed out, Lee was the only pop singer on the scene during the period of 1940-1960 who had a strong hand in creating many of the songs associated with her. Of course, this became the norm with the emergence of the Beatles, Bob Dylan and their contemporaries.

Stritch did a superb job of presenting the Lee oeuvre in a roughly chronological order, filling in between songs with biographical information and engaging anecdotes about Lee. He also contributed several superb vocals, including the opening medley of “Things Are Swingin’,” and “It’s a Good Night.”

Maye has had an even longer performing career than Lee, and at 84 is still going strong. Her contributions on this occasion included a swinging “I Love Being Here with You,” a tender and dramatic “When the World Was Young,” a robust “Hallelujah I Love Him So,” a nice duet on “Just for a Thrill” with Stritch, and a wistful “Is That All There Is?”

Fasano was touching in her ballad renditions of “These Foolish Things,” “But Beautiful” and “The Shining Sea.” She also showed her lighter side on duet with Stravelli on “The Siamese Cat Song,” and with the other three ladies on “Mañana.” Her duet with Stritch on “I Don’t Know Enough About You” was just right.

Hall effectively handled the bluesy and sultry numbers like “Waitin’ for that Train to Come In,” “Black Coffee,” “He’s a Tramp,” “I’m Gonna Go Fishin’,” and a duet with Maye on “I’m a Woman.” She has been a welcome addition to several Lyrics & Lyricists programs, and this was no exception.

Stravelli was the jazziest of the four lady singers handling “Why Don’t You Do Right,” “Lover,” “Day In, Day Out” and “That’s My Style” with terrific rhythmic sensibility and confidence.

Stritch hit one of the evening’s highlights with a wonderful take on “There’ll Be Another Spring,” gave “Alright, Okay, You Win” a nice ride, and provided a tender reading to Paul Horner and Lee’s answer song to “Is That All There Is,” “There Is More.”

They closed the show with all hands on deck for “It’s a Good Day,” and it certainly was a fitting ending for a superb tribute to Miss Peggy Lee.

There are three more shows in this series. Taking a Chance on Love: The Music of Vernon Duke will be presented on April 6–8, The Song Is You: Jerome Kern Coast to Coast on May 4–6, and Brush Up Your Shakespeare: The Bard and the Broadway Musical on June 1–3. Further info is available at (http://www.92y.org/Uptown/Concerts/Jazz-Popular/Lyrics-and-Lyricists.aspx).
February Jazz Social

Scott Robinson with Conal Fowkes

By Tony Mottola and Linda Lobdell Co-Editors Jersey Jazz

After picking his way through an “instrumental barricade” of horns arrayed in front of the bandstand — some recognizable, some quite exotic — multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson grabs his tenor sax and breezes through a brisk “One Morning in May.” It may not be May, but for a jazz musician, Scott explains, 3PM is still “the morning,” especially after rising early to judge a high school band competition.

His collaborator today is pianist Conal Fowkes, famous, Scott tells us, for playing every Wednesday night with Woody Allen and the Eddy Davis New Orleans Jazz Band at the Carlyle Hotel ($195 general seating!) — and distinguished also by his four performances on the Grammy winning soundtrack for Allen’s 2011 film Midnight in Paris.

Noting that Valentine’s Day has just passed, Scott stays with the tenor to play Johnny Mandel’s “A Time for Love” in a performance that’s controlled, nuanced and unrushed — simply beautiful.

By now you’ve gotten the feeling…this guy loves his sax. And Scott confirms that he’d be perfectly happy just to play tenor. “I don’t always have to play a lot of instruments,” he says. But for today he’s been asked by Music Committee chair Mitchell Seidel to “bring some of my ‘funny instruments’ and talk about them.”

He eases us in with a little cornet, only to be drowned out by a ringing cell phone. “Play louder,” his wife suggests from ringside. And so he does, prompting Conal to swing out. After a bit Scott switches to something truly odd looking — his 1920s Normaphone, which appears to be a valve trombone that has been unraveled and reshaped like a saxophone. The Normaphone “doesn’t get out of the house much,” Scott admits.

Our next ‘show and tell’ horn is infinitely more elegant, a beautiful Hungarian tárragató, an instrument that looks a bit like a large clarinet that widens from its mouthpiece to its bell. Scott got the instrument from Joe Muranyi, the late clarinetist famed for his work with the Louis Armstrong All Stars and the Village Stompers.

He tells us the instrument was special to Muranyi, who was born to Hungarian immigrants, and plays a solo of a traditional Hungarian song whose lyrics talk about the instrument. It’s a plaintive and moving melody. The tárragató is in the range of a soprano saxophone but its woody tone is far warmer. The tárragató can swing as well, as the duo demonstrates playing “Ole Miss Blues,” a W.C. Handy tune that Muranyi loved to play with Armstrong.

To close the first set Scott picks up the C melody sax (pitched one whole step above a
tenor for those taking notes) for a cheery run through “Sweet Indiana Home.”

After the requisite Jazz Social ticket raffles and schmoozing, Scott returns with his tenor for a couple of tunes and then entertains some questions, one of which is: “Which unusual instrument is the most difficult to get to the point of playing it in public?”

“There’s a lot I probably have no business playing in public; some might be right here in front of me,” he quips. But the bagpipes, he offers, are particularly challenging. With his Scottish heritage he loves the sound. The instrument breathes, and has existed in many cultures, even in the land of the Pharaohs. Blowing four horns at once though, he says, can be pretty daunting.

And then there’s the contrabass saxophone. That colossus (6 feet 8 inches tall) is really hard to play he assures us. And he has one, acquired from an antique shop in Rome where it was in use as a prop, holding canes and artificial flowers. It’s one of only 15 contrabasses thought to exist and was unplayable when he purchased it. This was not an impediment for the musician who simply made his own parts. He is, after all, good with his hands.

And he has gotten good enough on the humongous horn to play it in public, including at the JVC Jazz Festival and on the soundtrack of the Jackie Chan film Operation Condor.

Asked why the C melody sax isn’t played more often he quickly says, “It’s obsolete,” adding, “and that appeals to me.”

Which prompts him to play Eddie Davis’s “My Symphony for Scott’s C Melody Sax,” a rambling and rich sounding tune. He sticks with the C melody for “I Can’t Believe You’re in Love with Me” — with the Normaphone returning for a chorus in the middle.

It’s time for the afternoon’s instrumental piece de resistance. “How many know the great Frank Wess?” he asks. Really Scott, this is the NJJS — all our hands go up. He is, after all, our 2013 Musician of the Year designee.

Mr. Wess it seems has recently sold Scott his bass flute and he’s brought it today. This is a very long flute that doubles back toward the mouthpiece and makes a second U-turn to keep the stops within reach of the player’s fingers.

“I haven’t done anything with it yet…not easy to play.”
He snaps his head a bit like a thought has just arrived and says, “I love my wife. She makes my clothes. She likes this song.”

“This song” is “Some Enchanted Evening” and the sound of the flute is astonishing, low and full of air, like a warm summer breeze. The performance is ever so slow and takes so much breath to play he is panting after his solo.

Sadly, time is up. Scott returns to the tárragató to end the show with Joe Muryani’s “Don’t Cry” (admitting “I’m not very good at that”), as one more tribute to his good friend who, he reminds us, passed away last April.

To view a YouTube video about Scott and his contrabass saxophone Google “Scott Robinson CNN.”
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What’s New? | Members new and renewed

We welcome these friends of jazz who recently joined NJJS or renewed their memberships. We’ll eventually see everyone’s name here as they renew at their particular renewal months. (Members with an asterisk have taken advantage of our three-years-for-$100 membership, and new members with † received a gift membership. Members who have joined at a patron level appear in bold.)

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The New Jersey Jazz Society is a non-profit organization with a number of ambitious programs and a finite level of resources. Event ticket sales and member dues cover only a fraction of our expenses, making it necessary to find sponsors and partners to help us make ends meet. Your donations in excess of basic member dues are a great way of partnering with us, and very much needed.

In an effort to encourage higher-level memberships, New Jersey Jazz Society has defined several new categories of benefits for such donors.

Fan ($75 – 99): acknowledgement in Jersey Jazz
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Bandleader ($500+): acknowledgement in Jersey Jazz, 2 Pee Wee Stomp tickets, 4 Jazzfest tickets, plus preferred, reserved seating at both events

Please consider making an extra donation in one of these amounts, or an amount of your choosing. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. For more information, contact Caryl Anne McBride at membership@njjs.org or call 973-366-8818. To make a donation right away, send a check to NJJS, c/o Larissa Rozenfeld, PO Box 232, Madison, NJ 07940.
Jim Young in Baltimore posted this one on the Web: For anyone who thinks Thelonious Monk was unable to play any style but his own, Leslie Gourse relates this story in her 1997 biography of Monk, Straight No Chaser:

“Unknown to Bud [Powell] and almost everyone else, Monk learned to imitate Bud’s style. Years later, Monk was hanging out with a younger pianist, Walter Davis, Jr. — just the two of them in a room with a piano. Thelonious pushed back the cover on the piano and started to play, sounding just like Bud Powell. Walter’s mouth dropped open. All of a sudden, Monk stopped, put the cover down, looked at the flabbergasted Walter, and said, ‘Don’t tell nobody.”

Trombonist/photographer Bill Spilka, who was on the New York music scene for over 60 years, is now living and playing in Los Angeles. Among other things, he leads a small group of seniors that he calls an Orchestron, which plays for other seniors in the area. At a recent concert, Bill told his L.A. audience, “We rehearse every Monday, and last week, when Hurricane Sandy was devastating New York with winds, flood tides, torrential rain, fallen trees and power outages, I want you to know that every person on this stage showed up in time for the rehearsal!”

Steven Silverstein was playing, in the 1990s, with the Adolphe Sax quartet, which included Bob Ackerman, Tristan Williams and Gary Smulyan. On a trip for a performance and recording in Slovakia, Gary was absent due to previous damage to his baritone sax on a plane trip. A clarinetist from the Bratislava radio orchestra had been enlisted to play baritone with them. So, when a Slovakian news team met the three traveling musicians at the airport in Vienna, and one of them asked the famous question, “How many are there in your quartet?” Steven gave her a hug and a kiss on camera for giving him the opportunity to answer, “Only three!”

A saxophone player had just finished a long club date. Exhausted, he crawled into his car and called his wife on his cell phone to tell her he was on his way home. Out on the highway, his phone rang. It was his wife, who said, “Be careful on Route 80. The guy on the TV news just said there was a guy out there driving on the wrong side of the road.” The saxophone player said, “A guy? There’s hundreds of them!”

Jack Stuckey sent this one to Scott Robinson, who forwarded it to me:

Bob Newhart said, “I don’t like country music, but I don’t denigrate those who do. And for people who like country music, ‘denigrate’ means to put down.”

Bill Crow is a freelance musician and writer. His articles and reviews have appeared in Down Beat, The Jazz Review, and Gene Lee’s Jazzletter. His books include Jazz Anecdotes, From Birdland to Broadway and Jazz Anecdotes: Second Time Around. The preceding stories are excerpted, with permission, from Bill’s column, The Band Room in Allegro, the monthly newsletter of A.F. of M. Local 802.
About NJJS

Mission Statement: The mission of the New Jersey Jazz Society is to promote and preserve the great American musical art form known as Jazz through live jazz performances and educational outreach initiatives and scholarships.

To accomplish our Mission, we produce a monthly magazine, JERSEY JAZZ, sponsor live jazz events, and provide scholarships to New Jersey college students studying jazz. Through our outreach program, “Generations of Jazz,” we go into schools to teach students about the history of Jazz while engaging them in an entertaining and interactive presentation.

Founded in 1972, the Society is run by a board of directors who meet monthly to conduct the business of staging our music festivals, awarding scholarships to New Jersey college jazz students, conducting Generations of Jazz programs in local school systems, and inducting pioneers and legends of Jazz into the American Jazz Hall of Fame, among other things. The membership is comprised of jazz devotees from all parts of the state, the country and the world.

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a qualified organization of the New Jersey Cultural Trust. Visit www.njjs.org, e-mail info@njjs.org, or call the HOTLINE 1-800-303-NJJS for more information on any of our PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

■ Generations of Jazz (our Jazz in the Schools Program)
■ Jazzfest (summer jazz festival)
■ Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp
■ e-mail updates
■ ‘Round Jersey (Regional Jazz Concert Series):
  ■ Ocean County College
  ■ Bickford Theatre/Morris
■ Student scholarships
■ American Jazz Hall of Fame

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■ FREE Film Series — See www.njjs.org and Jersey Jazz for updates.
■ Musical Events — NJJS sponsors and co-produces a number of jazz events each year, ranging from intimate concerts to large dance parties and picnics. Members receive discounts on ticket prices for the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp and Jazzfest. Plus there’s a free concert at the Annual Meeting in December and occasionally other free concerts. Ticket discounts (where possible) apply to 2 adults, plus children under 18 years of age. Singles may purchase two tickets at member prices.
■ The Record Bin — a collection of CDs, not generally found in music stores, available at reduced prices at most NJJS concerts and events and through mail order. Contact pres@njjs.org for a catalog.

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■ Fan ($75 – $599/family)
■ Jazzer ($100 – $249/family)
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■ Bandleader ($500+/family)
■ Corporate Membership ($100)

To receive a membership application, for more information or to join: Contact Caryl Anne McBride Vice President, Membership at 973-366-8818 or membership@njjs.org OR visit www.njjs.org OR simply send a check payable to “NJJS” to: NJJS, c/o Larissa Rozenfeld, PO Box 232, Madison, NJ 07940.

JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS

questions on page 4

1. Toots Thielemans
2. Eddie Durham
3. Mario Bauza
4. Tyree Glenn
5. Jason Marsalis
6. Benny Carter
7. Chuck Redd

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New Jersey Jazz Society
Morris Jazz
The Bickford Theater at the Morris Museum
Morristown, NJ 07960
Tickets/Information: 973-971-3706

Randy Reinhart has been a favorite of NJJS members for years. The star cornetist received national recognition during a stint with Jim Cullum’s band (oddly enough, playing trombone!), but local fans knew him long before his Texas odyssey, and embraced him again upon his return. Other players within the entire brass family look to him for inspiration, since his tone is pure and his solos are brilliant.

For all the above reasons, Randy was selected to open Jazz Appreciation Month at the Bickford with a concert on Monday, April 8. He is shouldering the entire melody load, backing himself with only a rhythm section, although it is one to be envied: Mark Shane at the piano, James Chirillo playing guitar, Brian Nalepka on bass and Kevin Dorn behind the drum set.

“Randy Reinhart is one of the most underrated trumpeters around,” declares The American Rag. “His burnished-brass tone is made to order for ballads and he can reach the melting point on hot tunes.” No surprise that he was invited to play in the Bickford’s Benefit Band, at NJJS’s 40th Anniversary celebration, and in the trumpet section at Bridgewater’s Benny Goodman tributes, to name some recent triumphs. When you are serious about reed instruments, will surely include the Anderson Twins. The true stars of the future within the reed section are brilliant.

A dozen years ago Congress declared April to be Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM, of course!). The Smithsonian Institution was appointed to promote the celebration nationally, even worldwide. All April events described on these pages have been registered with the Smithsonian, and are among those listed on the SmithsonianJazz.org Web site, which has more information about the entire 2013 JAM program.

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are “always the outstanding performers, advancing perfection.”

The Midiris opened the MidWeek Jazz series and have played for it every year. This time they will return on Wednesday, April 3. Joe Midiri (clarinet and saxes) and Paul Midiri (vibes, trombone) will be there of course, backed by Dan Tobias (cornet), Pat Mercuri (guitar), Ed Wise (bass) and Jim Lawlor (drums). Catch them, if you can.

There is a sizeable statewide fan club for jazz guitar icon Bucky Pizzarelli, and they come out in force whenever he visits Toms River. It helps that he brings Aaron Weinstein (“the rebirth of hot jazz violin” — Nat Hentoff) with him on these outings, along with his dry-humored friend Jerry Bruno on bass. The good natured banter between them breaks up the stretches of sophisticated string work and makes the entire evening well rounded and a joy to experience. The only problem is that if you were intent upon reserving a front row seat, they are long gone by now. Best to call soon if you are counting on strategic seating when they return on May 15.

Baby Soda is one of the best jazz bands you have never heard of…unless, of course, you are part of the army of twenty-somethings in New York City who are discovering classic jazz and loving it. For that group, this is the band by which to measure others, if only because they draw their personnel from an equally youthful talent pool. For any given performance, they may field a slightly different group, sometimes even drafting a few already famous players, such as cornetist Ed Polcer, who signed on when they appeared at the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. So far, they have commitments from Emily Asher (trombone), Mike Davis (trumpet), Paul Ford (box bass) and Bobby Henry (banjo), and will probably add a reed player before they appear on June 5.

A second concert is scheduled for June 19, featuring the return of Fête Manouche, which delighted a previous MidWeek Jazz audience with their approach to Gypsy Jazz. This is especially appropriate this year, since it marks 60 years since we lost Django Reinhardt, who single-handedly popularized this genre. Dan Levinson leads this group, substituting his clarinet for the usual violin, as Django himself did in his later groups. Guitarists Tom Landman and Ted Gottsegen provide the expected fireworks with their rapid fingering, aided by Rob Atkins (from Mona’s Hot Four) on bass and Molly Ryan on rhythm guitar, with an occasional vocal. It’s a rare visit to this area.

‘Round Jersey concerts are produced by Bruce M. Gast in conjunction with the New Jersey Jazz Society. Performance photos by Bruce Gast.
Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.
Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!

We want to include any locale that offers jazz on a regular, ongoing basis. Also please advise us of any errors you’re aware of in these listings.

**New Providence**

PONTE VECCHIO RISTORANTE
At Best Western Murray Hill Inn 535 Central Ave. 908-464-4324
Monthly Jazz Nights
3rd Saturday of each month 6:30–9:30 pm

**North Branch**

STONEY BROOK GRILLE 1265 State Hwy 28 908-725-0011

**Oakland**

HANSIL’S BAR AND GRILL 7 Ramapo Valley Rd. 201-337-5649

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The Name Dropper

Recommendations may be sent to editor@njjs.org.

**Mickey Freeman Quintet** at Rhythm in Shoes, Boonton, with Regan Ryzuk/piano, $20 cover charge includes snacks, a great dance floor and lots of friendly people...no partner required! 4/19, 8–11 PM

**Teaneck**

THE JAZZBERRY PATCH AT THE CLASSIC QUICHÉ CAFE 330 Queen Anne Rd. Teaneck, Nj 07666 201-692-5150 MySpace.com/thejazzberry No cover Friday nights.

**Wayne**

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY 300 Pompton Road 973-720-2371 www.wpunj.edu Sunday 4:00 PM

**Weehawken**

SPIRIT OF NEW JERSEY UNIVERSITY 866-483-3866 www.spiritofnewjersey.com Monthly Jazz Cruise; Call for Dates

**Westfield**

16 PROSPECT WINE BAR & BISTRO 16 Prospect St. 07090 908-232-7300 www.16prospect.com Jazz on Tue-Wed-Thu 8 PM

**West Orange**

HIGHLAWN PAULIAN Eagle Rock Reservation 973-731-3463 Fridays

**Westwood**

MARTINI LOUNGE 284 Center Ave., 07475 201-722-6600

**Wood Ridge**

MARTINI GRILL 137 Main St., 07691 201-939-2000 Friday-Saturday

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**Jersey Events Jazz**

April 2013

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**Hatt City Kitchen** 459 Valley St. 862-252-9147

**Private Place Lounge** 29 South Center St. 973-675-6420

**Paterson**

CORTINA RISTORANTE 118 Berkshire Ave. Wednesdays 6:30–10:30, Joe Liar/Mark Shane

**Princeton**

MC CARTER THEATRE 91 University Place 609-258-2787

**Mediterra** 29 Hulth St. 609-252-9680 NO COVER www.terramomo.com/ restaurant/mediterra

**Salt Creek Grille** 1 Rockingham Row, Forestville Village 609-419-4020
www.saltcreekgourmet.com

**Witherspoon Grille** 57 Witherspoon Street 609-924-6011 www.makedas.com

**Sewell**

TERRA NOVA 290 Delaware Drive 856-589-8883 http://terranova restaurantbar.com Fridays & Saturdays Live Jazz

**Somerset**

SOPHIE’S BISTRO 700 Hamilton Street 732-545-7778 NO COVER New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live Jazz Fridays 8–11 PM http://njbp.org or 732-640.0001 for dates/times

**Somerville**

VERVE RESTAURANT 18 East Main St. www.verbystyle.com Occasional Thursdays 6 PM Fridays/Saturdays 8:30 PM

**South Amboy**

BLUE MOON 114 South Broadway 732-525-0014 www.bluemoonhome.com Jazz jams Sundays, 3–7 PM

**Summit**

SUMMIT UNITARIAN CHURCH 4 Waldron Ave. Sunday

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**Orange**

HAT CITY KITCHEN 459 Valley St. 862-252-9147

**Riverton**

THE PORCH CLUB 213 Howard St. 856-234-5147 Tri-State Jazz Society occasional venue www.tristatejazz.org Some Sundays 2:00 PM

**Riverton**

ABOVE RESTAURANT 1 South Orange Ave. 973-762-2683 Fridays

**Roselle Park**

PAPILON 25 25 Valley St. 973-761-5299

**South Orange**

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER 535 Central Ave. 732-255-0400 www. thechurchoftheassumption org

**Teaneck**

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