Finding jazz at a so-called jazz festival these days is a bit like looking for gold in 1840s California — good nuggets are there, but a bit of prospecting is required.

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival, where the definition of that four-letter term as been stretched to include rock, folk, blues and R&B. The nine-day event encompasses a massive schedule at some 14 venues in and around downtown Rochester. This is the festival whose musical director, John Nugent, proudly proclaims “It’s not who you know, it’s who you don’t know.” Indeed, you’re equally likely to encounter a tunesmith from the Faroe Islands or a Toronto alt-rock trio as you are to find an American bebopper or swinging saxophonist. Fine if you have the time to pan through the nine-day schedule, but what if you don’t? Sometimes you want to go with who you know. Fortunately, they’re always on the schedule, and to no surprise, they’re also the best-

Digging (for) Jazz in Upstate New York

Sometimes you want to go with who you know

By Mitchell Seidel
It seems the summer has flown by and we’re almost into fall. I hope that many of you got to attend and enjoy some of the numerous jazz concerts and festivals that took place in July and August, and are now ready to partake of the fall jazz scene here in the Garden State.

While not in chronological order, I want to first mention the upcoming 45th anniversary of the New Jersey Jazz Society, which will be celebrated with a concert on Sunday afternoon, October 22, at the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts at Drew University in Madison, a location many will recall from past Jazzfests. An anniversary committee headed by board member Cydney Halpin has been hard at work assembling the talent for the concert, which is also going to constitute NJJS’s tribute to guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli in recognition of his years of performing at our events as well as his many other achievements.

Others who will be on the program include Don Braden, on saxophone and flute, who is serving as music director for the event, and, to name a few, Martin Pizzarelli on bass, Dave Stryker and Ed Laub on guitar, Tomoko Ohno on piano, and Marlene VerPlanck, vocals. Rhonda Hamilton of WBGO will serve as emcee, and Dorthaan Kirk, Newark’s “first lady of jazz,” will also participate. Get your tickets soon as this concert will surely sell out.

I’d like to also direct your attention to several other events which NJJS is co-sponsoring in the weeks ahead. On Friday, September 15, we will again co-sponsor a free concert in Jersey City, the Fifth Annual New Jersey City University Alumni Jazz Big Band Concert, on the J. Owen Grundy Pier at Exchange Place. This concert is one of the most spectacular events of year, with the New York skyline and the Statue of Liberty serving as backdrops for some incredible big band jazz.

This year’s concert pays tribute to the centennials of Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Buddy Rich and Thelonious Monk. Music Director Dick Lowenthal always puts together an entertaining program and has invited several guest solists including Gillespie protégé Jon Faddis and Cyrille Aimée. The music starts at 6 PM and there are several parking garages right in the neighborhood. You may also take the PATH to the Exchange Place station.

The Bickford Theatre celebrates its Opening Night for the 2017-18 season on September 28 with the sounds of the George Gee Orchestra. This big band, which has played for NJJS many times, is one of the most popular in the country and has some great musicians, including singer John Dokes, trombonist David Gibson, tenor saxophonist Michael Hashim, trumpeter Freddie Hendrix and bassist Marcus McLaurine. The 17-piece big band draws on the great music of the swing era covering a wide range of well-known tunes by everyone from Benny Goodman to Count Basie.

I’m told that the food trucks, so popular at the Theatre’s shows this summer, will continue into the fall. Note that under a recent change, all seating at the Bickford is now reserved, so get your tickets early to assure a good seat. For tickets you can call 973-971-3706 or order online at www.morristown.org/jazz-showcase.

Looking ahead, the Bickford has some terrific jazz lined up.

Prez Sez
By Mike Katz, President, NJJS
up for the fall and winter seasons. The calendar includes Bickford regulars like Nicki Parrott, Rossano Sportiello, Dan Levinson, Bucky Pizzarelli, Grover Kemble, and the Bix Beiderbecke Birthday Bash. There are also several new additions, including Swingadelic, Chris Brubeck, T.S. Monk and Ken Peplowski.

The annual Princeton JazzFeast takes place on Sunday afternoon, September 17, beginning at noon. This free event, under the musical direction of Ed Polcer, always attracts a large crowd. This year’s lineup features: Alan Dale and the New Legacy Jazz Band, The Houston Person Quartet, The Ben Polcer Septet, Fifteen Strings, and The Stan Rubin Orchestra. The one-day festival draws thousands of people to downtown Princeton’s Palmer Square, which is ringed for the day by food stands provided by many area restaurants. JazzFeast goes on rain or shine.

Some of you may have heard of the serious accident that befell the great guitarist Frank Vignola last spring. Frank is recovering from multiple broken bones and surgeries, with more surgery to follow. He will continue to be out of action for some time to come, and friends have established a crowdfunding page in the Internet to raise funds to help replace lost income and defray medical expenses not paid by insurance. Those who wish to help Frank and his family should go to gofundme.com/frankvignola. All donations in whatever amount will be deeply appreciated. The NJJS wishes a speedy and complete recovery for this great musician who has entertained us so many times over the years, and we hope that he will be back up performing really soon.

I also bring you the news that, after 22 years in business, David Niu and Martha Chang have decided to pursue other interests, and have sold Madison’s Shanghai Jazz restaurant to Tom Donohoe. Several of us have met Tom, an experienced restaurateur who intends to continue the restaurant as a place for outstanding jazz and Asian cuisine, as well as to make this great venue, one of the very finest jazz spots in New Jersey, available for our socials and annual meeting. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Shanghai Jazz under its new ownership for a long time to come!

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See page 46 for details!

French singer Cyrille Aimée will perform with the NJ City University Alumni Big Band in Jersey City on September 15. Photo by Anna Webber.

September 17
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2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
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October 15
NJJS JAZZ SOCIAL
Artist TBA
FREE NJJS members. $10 public, $10 minimum
Shanghai Jazz | Madison
2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
www.njjs.org

October 22
NJJS 45th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Honoring Bucky Pizzarelli, Don Braden, Musical Director.
(see page 15 for artist lineup)
Dorothy Young Center for the Arts
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NJJS Calendar

Funding for the NJJS Jazz Socials program has been made possible in part by Morris Arts through the NJ State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 52)

“PseudonyMusicians” Part II

Continuing last issue’s theme here are seven more jazz performers whose given names weren’t their stage names. Can you come up with their nom de jazz?

1. Luigi Paulino Alfredo Francesco Antonio Balassoni: Drummer who replaced Sonny Greer in the Ellington band in 1951 was unorthodox in using two bass drums. Married to Pearl Bailey, he led big bands on both coasts, remaining active well into the 2000s.

2. Lillie Mae Jones: The bebop songstress’ scatting skills won early recognition from Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, but it was her duet with Ray Charles on “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” that put her on jazz fans’ radar.

3. Mary Loutsenhizer: A leader of the “cool school” of jazz singers, she broke in with the Claude Thornhill and Stan Kenton bands in the early 1950s, then went off on her own, recording dozens of albums on Bethlehem, Atlantic and High Note.

4. Clementine Dinah Bullock: A jazz and pop singer with a four-octave range who starred in musical comedies in her native England and on Broadway, she was honored as a Dame of the Empire. Her husband, the late composer and bandleader John Dankworth, was knighted.

5. William Emmanuel Huddleston: The flutist and tenor saxophonist also mastered oboe and bassoon and a wide range of wind instruments from other countries, and pioneered the blending of jazz and world music. His autobiography, The Gentle Giant, shares a title with one of 19 albums he led.

6. Gertrude Pridgett: One of the earliest blues singers was enormously successful in the 1920s and ’30s and was a role model for the even more famous Bessie Smith. August Wilson depicted one of her recording sessions in a play named for her.

7. Eleanor Fagan: A beloved singer from the 1930s until her early death in 1959, whose tragic life was depicted in a film starring Diana Ross.

Jazz trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 52)

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sun 9/10:  MARLENE VER PLANCK
thu 9/14:  WARREN VACHÉ  (to be confirmed)
sat 9/16:  BRAZILIAN JAZZ
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Seven years ago Swedish filmmaker Kasper Collin came across a YouTube video of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers performing Bobby Timmons’ “Dat Dere” in Tokyo. It’s a famously catchy tune and Collin played it over and over, finding himself deeply moved by the playing of Lee Morgan. So moved in fact that he embarked on a multi-year odyssey to make an extraordinary film about the trumpeter.

At the outset, like most jazz fans, Collin knew only Morgan’s capsule bio. A 17-year-old prodigy bursts onto the scene in Dizzy Gillespie’s Big Band, is signed to Blue Note, records with Coltrane, and becomes a star in Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. Along the way a bad case of heroin addiction crashes his career and then, on a snowy winter night in 1972, Morgan is shot to death at age 33 by his common law wife, Helen, at a gig at Slug’s, a jazz dive bar on New York’s Lower East Side.

But then Collin learned that Helen Morgan had recorded an interview in February 1996, a month before her death, with jazz writer/radio host Larry Reni Thomas in Wilmington, North Carolina, where she had been living quietly in the decades after the murder. The interview, which became the narrative arc of the documentary, is compelling and gives the audience an intimate peek into Morgan’s personal life and musical career. The film makes masterful use of many vivid still photographs, notably those by Blue Note’s Francis Wolff, Van Wilmer and Chuck Stewart. But the grainy 16mm filmed “memory” sequences, created by cinematographer Bradford Young, are what give the film its poetry. The footage depicting an ominous evening on a bitter February night, when New York was snowed in by a blizzard, is particularly compelling. (The road conditions caused a long delay in an ambulance’s arrival and resulted in Morgan bleeding to death [lying unattended on Slug’s floor].) In the end Lee Morgan’s story remains one of jazz, drugs and murder. But there is also forgiveness and redemption in the tale and it’s well worth seeing this moving and elegant film to learn the whole story.

I Called Him Morgan, which is filled with amazing music, is now streaming on Netflix and is also available on iTunes. More info: www.icalledhimmorgan.com.
Big Band in the Sky


In 1994 at the Caramoor Center for the Music & Arts in Katonah, NY, Allen shared the stage with pianist Kenny Barron. David Adler, writing on wbgo.org the day after her death, singled out that performance as a “striking” moment of the many times he had seen her live. “She parsed Monk and other material, including her own,” he wrote, “and encored in a riotous two-piano showdown with Barron on ‘Tea for Two’, dealing impressively with a tune of older vintage.”

Barron, in a tribute on the dlmusicmedia.com website, also recalled that moment: “I realized how fearless she was,” he said, “and, at the same time, how focused she was. It was a lesson that I took to heart. Geri is not only a great musician, composer, and pianist, she is a giant and will be sorely missed.”

An artist who respected the past, Allen never hesitated to venture into new territory. Adler said she “defied classification while steadfastly affirming her roots in the hard-bop tradition of her native Detroit.” The New York Times’ Giovanni Russonello (June 27, 2017) said her style “formed a bridge between jazz’s halcyon midcentury period and its diffuse present.”

Attempting to describe her own style in a 1996 Detroit Free Press profile, Allen said, “My interest today is to try to be very thorough and educated in terms of what’s been laid down by Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, and Cecil Taylor, because I think where they have set the piano is at the edge, as far as it’s gone. My challenge is to continue to try to find my voice within the context of those three voices. The point is to make the best music you can along the way, but to do all of those things is not that easy. It’s a lifelong process.”

Allen, who began playing piano at age 7, graduated from Cass Technical High School in Detroit, the alma mater of many other jazz greats including trumpeter Donald Byrd and bassists Ron Carter and Paul Chambers. Early mentors were the late trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, who directed Detroit’s Jazz Development Workshop, and the late drummer Roy Brooks. Allen was one of the first students to graduate from Howard University with a jazz studies degree, in 1979. She received an M.A. in ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh in 1982.

Her first recording was The Printmakers (Minor Music Records: 1985), a trio session with bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Andrew Cyrille. In a review for AllMusic, Ken Dryden singled out, “Eric”, her tribute to the late Eric Dolphy, describing it as “a dissonant melody reminiscent of the compositions of Dolphy’s associates, Jaki Byard and Charles Mingus.” (Dolphy was the subject of Allen’s master’s thesis at Pittsburgh). A solo album, Home Grown (Minor Music Records: 1985), followed. On it, she played six original pieces, plus two Monk compositions, “Bemas

Swing” and “‘Round Midnight.” According to Adler, Allen “developed a deep love for Thelonious Monk, whose compositions she masterfully interpreted.”

Through the years, Allen performed and recorded with alto saxophonist Steve Coleman, bassists Ron Carter and Dave Holland, and drummers Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette. In 1996, she played with alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman on the albums, Sound Museum: Three Women and Sound Museum: Hidden Man (Harmolodic Records). It was significant, according to Adler because, “The piano had little use in his [Coleman’s] free-floating music…it tended to impose a conventional chordal fixity. Not with Allen on the bandstand. She played a multifaceted textural and contrapuntal role, her ocean-deep harmonic knowledge guiding but never limiting her, from gorgeous and evocative rubato episodes to urgent free blowing. Her melodic voice, too, sometimes moving in unison with Coleman, brought a clarion intensity that remains unique in his output.”

Allen taught jazz studies for 10 years at the University of Michigan, and, in 2013, became director of jazz studies at her alma mater, the University of Pittsburgh, succeeding another of her mentors, multi-reedist Nathan Davis, who played with Dolphy as well as drummer Art Blakey and trombonist Slide Hampton.

In 1995, Allen became the first recipient of Soul Train’s Lady of Soul Award for jazz album of the year, Twenty-One (Blue Note Records: 1994). The following year she became the first woman to win Denmark’s esteemed Jazzpar Prize. Other awards included a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2008 for music composition, Spellman College’s African-American Classical Music Award and a Distinguished Alumni Award from Howard University.

The news of her death, due to cancer, apparently came as a shock to...
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Saxophonist Melissa Aldana

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 8

many of her peers and protégés, and many of them joined Barron in posting tributes on the dlmusicmedia.com website. Among them:

• Drummer Terri Lynne Carrington, who described Allen as “an inspiring maverick and exemplary creator that I’m proud to have been able to call my friend and band mate. You’ve positively touched so many, and my life and art will always reflect your vision and influence.”

• Pianist Jason Moran, who recalled “the first time I heard a Geri Allen phrase. She was in the piano chair on a recording, and early into the first track there was an eight-bar piano solo before the melody returned. In a flash, she played the most amazing free wheeling eight bars full of gesture and nuance. I had never heard anything like it before.”

• McCoy Tyner, saying she was, “a wonderful musician, educator, and beautiful spirit,” adding that he “felt very grateful to work with her during the recent performances we had together. She will be greatly missed, but her spirit and legacy will live on forever.”

In a Facebook post, Australian baritone saxophonist Lisa Parrott recalled seeing Allen perform in Sydney in 1988. “The music,” she recalled, “was incredibly inspirational to me as a young musician…amazingly potent music! I’ve heard her many times over the years, and the last time was in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park with Ornette Coleman, at his tribute. I have wished over and over again that I could have played music with her, as I loved her playing and spirit. The fact that she was a female instrumentalist who held her own on such a high level with my musical heroes will be a constant inspiration.”

Allen is survived by her father, Mount Vernell Allen, Jr; a brother, Mount Vernell Allen III; and three children, Laila Dean, Wallace Vernell, and Barbara Ann. Her marriage to trumpeter Wallace Roney ended in divorce.

Clem Moorman, 101, pianist, March 20, 1916, Newark --July 21, 2017, Passaic, NJ. Moorman’s professional music career began at age 13 when he played piano at the Sunday School of Newark’s Thirteenth Avenue Presbyterian Church. By age 22, he was performing with Johnny Jackson’s Society Orchestra in the Newark Symphony Hall’s Terrace Ballroom.

In the 1940s and 50s, Moorman played in bands that recorded on the Apollo, Columbia, Decca, and Savoy record labels. His biggest hit was “Don’t Stop Now”, recorded with the Bunny Banks Trio. Released on Savoy Records in 1942, it was Number 1 on the Harlem Hit Parade for five weeks. The Bunny Banks Trio was actually a fictitious name allowing Moorman and other union musicians to record during the American Federation of Musicians’ strike, which lasted from 1942-44. Another fabricated band with Moorman on piano was the Piccadilly Pipers Trio, which played at Newark’s Piccadilly Club and recorded 14 songs on the Savoy label.

Moorman’s early influences were Teddy Wilson and Emory Lucas, a Washington, DC-based music instructor who taught him about harmony, scales, and arrangements. Throughout his career, Moorman appeared on television and in films and played and conducted music for live musicals. He appeared on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and The David Frost Show, among others. He was in several movies including Legal Eagles with Robert Redford and Trading Places with Eddie Murphy and Dan Aykroyd. He was the musical director for the national tour of the Broadway musical, Blues in the Night, conductor and pianist for Ain’t Misbehavin’ at the Pioneer Theater in Salt Lake City, and pianist on the road with Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill in Maine and Texas.

From age 70 through his late 90s, Moorman played piano at several upscale restaurants in New Jersey and was organist and choir director at the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montclair. He worked with the Sunday school and adult choirs at the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford until after his 101st birthday. One of the restaurants at which he performed was Bareli’s in Secaucus. Tom Stabile, a customer who later bought the restaurant, described Moorman to northjersey.com’s Kelly Nicolaides as, “an old school performer and gentleman, dressed in a tuxedo, always prim and proper.” His widow, Kris, told Nicolaides that, “Live performances were his thing, especially when piano bars were big all over . . . He told old vaudeville style jokes and took requests. People kept coming to see Clem, and he knew the songs they wanted to hear individually and would start playing them when they walked in.”

In addition to his wife, Moorman is survived by his children and stepchildren: vocalist Melba Moore, Clementine Bettis, Elliott Moorman, Gerard Moorman, Kathy Romano, Randy Bigness, and Kerry Martin.

Joe Fields, 88, record producer, June 21, 1929, Jersey City -- July 12, 2017 Roslyn, NY. In a Facebook post, jazz guitarist Bob DeVos described Fields as, “the ultimate survivor of the jazz record business…He was a walking encyclopedia of the business, but, more than that, you could count on Joe for straightforward opinions and dealings.” Jazz producer Michael Cuscuna, in his post on Mosaic Records’ Jazz Gazette, called Fields “the last of the old school record men.” WBGO’s Bob Porter concurred with that description. “Fields,” he wrote on the wbgo.org website (July 18, 2017), “was an industry character out of the old school. Joe was a salesman and a promotion guy, although I doubt that he ever separated things that way. He was a record man — someone who knew all facets of the business. See the distributor. Take the DJ to lunch. Show up at the record store. He loved his work.”

Fields got his start in the music business by selling records for the London label to music stores in Brooklyn, where he grew up. By the 1960s, according to Jazz Times (July 16, 2017), “he had held various positions at MGM, Verve (where he was head of sales), Prestige, and Sue Records.” He became an owner in 1972 when he and producer Don Schlitten bought Cobblestone and changed it into a jazz label. Among artists who recorded on the ‘new’ Cobblestone label were saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Sonny
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Champian Fulton

Geoff Gallante
BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 10

Stitt, and guitarist Pat Martino.

During the same year, Fields and Schlitten created Muse Records, which remained a significant label through 1996 when it was sold to 32 Jazz. Muse “succeeded where many others failed,” according to Porter, “because Joe had a firm grasp of the bottom line.” In a profile published online by Red Bull Music Academy, Fields stressed that, “You can’t be all things to all people, but you can make everything of quality in its own particular groove. It was always important to me to find a balance and to cater to the many different tastes in jazz.” Artists who appeared on Muse recordings included alto saxophonist James Moody, trumpeter Woody Shaw and pianist Cedar Walton.

In 1996, after selling Muse to 32 Jazz, Fields and his son, Barney, founded the HighNote and Savant labels, both of which remain operating today, under Barney’s management. The labels’ rosters include tenor saxophonists Eric Alexander and Houston Person and trumpeters Tom Harrell, Jeremy Pelt and Wallace Roney. Person was one of the first musicians recorded on HighNote. Asked by Porter about his relationship with Fields, Person said, “Joe was a wonderful guy, and we had great rapport. I learned about producing other artists, and he gave me an understanding of how the record business operated. He trusted me, and I had complete freedom to do things my own way.” DeVos recorded three CDs as a leader on the Savant label. Remembering that Fields “shared many stories about his working his way up at Prestige Records,” DeVos added that, “I will miss our many conversations and his insights, and I will miss Joe…The jazz world will be poorer for his passing.”

In addition to his son, Barney, Fields is survived by his wife, Joan Nancy; three daughters, Christine Jenne, Suzanne Fields, and Laura Tralongo; a grandchild, Allison Passero; and a great-grandson, Julius Passero III.

Sanford Josephson is the author of Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations and Jenu’s Journey: The Life and Music of Gerry Mulligan. He’s written about jazz musicians in a variety of publications.

Fox’s News
By Schaeen Fox

GIL EVANS PROJECT AT JAZZ STANDARD

When I first heard Gil Evans’s distinctive concepts, it was like finding a hidden wing in a palace. So when the Grammy-winning Gil Evans Project, directed by Ryan Truesdell, returned to the Jazz Standard on May 25, we saw the first show. Truesdell is something of the late maestro’s artistic grandson. For years he was Maria Schneider’s assistant; she worked for years as Evans’s assistant. Why was able to study Gil’s archives and found a wealth of never recorded pieces. That led to his Grammy-nominated Centennial, and Mr. Truesdell’s yearly gig at the Jazz Standard.

This celebration attracts Evans devotees from around the world to hear known and unknown works by the master. (About 50 unrecorded works are waiting to be heard.) That night the room was packed with fans from as far as Switzerland, Japan and France. Ryan said that Gil’s widow and two sons, as well as Don Sebesky, Creed Taylor, Lee Konitz, Gunther Schuller, Helen Merrill and Slide Hampton have all been part of the supportive.

The leader clearly enjoys his project. When vocalist Wendy Gilles sang, he smiled and silently mouthed the lyrics. Also, he had 18 of New York’s finest musicians at his command. For example, the rhythm section was Frank Kimbrough (piano), Jay Anderson (bass) and Lewis Nash (drums). Mr. Truesdell’s comments were brief and informative; almost like fine appetizers before grand meals.

Many numbers, such as “Time of the Barracudas,” were from the Project’s Grammy-nominated Lines of Color. While the arrangements are Gil’s, the solos are the creations of the musicians. And with soloists like Steve Wilson and Donny McAslin, their solos are the creations of the musicians. And with soloists like Steve Wilson and Donny McAslin, their quality was assured. The last number was John Lewis’s “Concorde.” Ryan described it as “a sort of jazz fugue.” It made for a great closer. We left with the cares of the world pushed aside, and planning for the band’s return.

HELEN SUNG AT THE JAZZ STANDARD

We returned to the Standard the evening after Memorial Day for Helen Sung’s preview of her new recording, Sung With Words. All of her CDs features at least one example of her compositions. This project, however, consists of all new songs inspired by new poems from Dana Gioia. Mr. Gioia is California’s State Poet Laureate, a past chairman of the NEA and a friend of Ms. Sung’s. We’ve enjoyed her performances for many years and noted she had a larger band than usual: Ingrid Jensen (trumpet), John Ellis (reeds), Ricky Rodriguez (bass), Kendrick Scott Oracle (drums) and Samuel Torres (percussion). She also had three guest vocalists, Carolyn Leonhart, Christie Dashiell and Vuyo Sotashe.

I expected a light turnout on a chilly, damp evening after an important holiday. I was wrong. When the gig began, the room was almost filled. The show’s structure was unusual. We first heard the poet read his piece, and then the musicians played Helen’s interpretation of the poem. Mr. Gioia loves jazz, so the set began with “Convergence,” a poem set in California’s mythic Lighthouse jazz club of years ago. Another, “The Stars On Second Avenue,” is the poet’s love letter to New York. In all, the musicians were able to perform seven of the CD’s ten works, all very warmly received.

In an interview Helen described composing this project as “a really painstaking journey.” She felt that it was “all worth it in the end, because to participate in creativity and making art…is participating in the divine.”

FRED HERSCH AND ANAT COHEN AT MEZZROW

Smalls Jazz Club opened Mezzrow to have a place “for music lovers to have an intimate experience with the artists who are performing.” Did I ever! For one night in June, Fred Hersch and Anat Cohen filled the narrow space with fans and filled our hearts with beautiful music. Fred played the club’s gorgeous Steinway, and Anat played only her clarinet. The set was a mix of Mr. Hersch’s originals such as “A Lark” and “Lee’s Dream,” and classics such as “The Peacocks” and “Isfahan.” The crowd hung on each note and no one applauded a solo, but all clapped loud and long after each number.

The artists were a study in contrasts. Fred’s demeanor was uniformly studied concentration. When the music takes Anat, it’s like watching the effervescence of fine Champagne. She bobs, dips, sways and seems to dance with her feet anchored in place. Joyous emotions played across her face as Fred soloed. As the set progressed, my notes became just cryptic words like “marvelous” and “inspiring.” When they finished “O Grande Amor,” Anat quietly said, “That was fun,” an interesting evaluation of a beautiful achievement.

Afterwards, I asked Anat if it had been difficult to set this up since it seems she is constantly hopping around the globe. She replied that Fred merely called to see if she’d be in town and available. It only took a few minutes to decide on a set list.

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Talking Jazz

A Jersey Jazz Interview With Alan Broadbent

By Schaen Fox

Not too long ago, Alan Broadbent left California and made New Jersey his home. His skills as both a pianist and arranger have long been celebrated, so as soon as I had the chance, I arranged to do a phone interview with him last February. I first asked about a quote by Henry Miller that was at the bottom of his email.

“The thing is to become a master, and in your old age to acquire the courage to do what children did when they knew nothing.”

JJ: Do you have any interest in Eastern philosophies? Your Henry Miller quote is a Taoist ideal.

AB: Not really. I did at one stage of my life. I’m more interested in Nietzsche, Western philosophy, German culture, classical music and jazz of the United States.

JJ: Well, do you have favorite quotations about music?

AB: Well Nietzsche’s famous quote, “Without music life would be a mistake.” My favorite of all is by my hero Gustav Mahler, “What’s best in music won’t be found in the notes.” That is from a guy who wrote an incredible amount of notes.

JJ: Is there anything special you would like to tell us about?

AB: Since I was 16 or 17, I’ve been writing what I believe to be original contributions to the standard song that are independent of the passing styles of the entertainment industry. A couple of years ago I met a wonderful English jazz singer and lyricist, when we did some gigs together in London. Her name is Georgia Mancio. She asked if she could try her hand at writing words to a tune I wrote for Quartet West, “The Long Goodbye.” She really understands the tradition with the same ear as I do. We have now produced over 14 songs together: songs of mine that span 50 (gulp) years, that I feel have a timeless quality to them, and that have been waiting all this time for Georgia to illuminate. Our album Songbook, with Oli Hayhurst on bass and Dave Ohm on drums, excellent jazz musicians, is to be released in a few weeks. [The Cd was released in April on Roomspin Records]

One day, about 2 years ago, I got a call from a German producer, Ralf Kemper, who recently produced a much lauded documentary on Little Jimmy Scott, I Go Back Home. In his younger days, Ralf loved an album I did with Woody and the Houston Symphony orchestra, The Children of Lima, and wanted to know if I had any more stuff like that that I hadn’t recorded yet. Well, I said, “I have never stopped writing for myself, but the chance of hearing my symphonic work performed or recorded was financially out of my reach.” He said, “Why don’t we go ahead and record it all at Abbey Road with the 65 members of the London Metropolitan Orchestra?” Of course I almost dropped the phone, gasping for breath. The album is called Developing Story. It is conducted by me, and features my trio with Harvie S and Peter Erskine. The title piece is a half hour long composition that I wrote over the course of 30 years. Other pieces are grand orchestral versions of some of my favorite jazz ballads like “Naima” and “If You Could See Me Now,” tributes to their composers who meant so much to me. Included is a new orchestral version of “Children of Lima,” dedicated to Woody. It’ll all be released as a double LP and CD the first week of June. [Developing Story: Alan Broadbent with the London Metropolitan Orchestra is available on Eden River Records.]

JJ: Have you noticed any differences in the jazz cultures of Auckland, LA and New York?

AB: Yes. Among jazz musicians it is pretty universal, I think because we are all interested in finding some kind of truth in ourselves and in the music. That requires a certain openness to each other and a sense of discovery, even at my age. It is part of the jazz experience, the improvised life. As for Auckland there is only so far you can go, playing in a pub for X amount of dollars or teaching

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kids in the Auckland University how to play jazz. I learned from some very serious guys when I was in my mid-teens: Tony Hopkins, the drummer, and Kevin Haynes. They had played with quite a well-known New Zealand pianist Mike Nock. They taught me how to swing and to get that feeling of Bud Powell, that deep swing of bebop that I fought hard to get.

LA is another scene. It is all about being a studio musician. You play jazz on the side, but there are no real clubs to speak of. There is a small cadre of jazz musicians, whom I love very much, and I played with a lot, but if you want to work, it is a studio town. That means you have to play in whatever style that is required by the person who is hiring you. I was introduced to the studio scene through Nelson Riddle, when I had just gotten off Woody’s band. I originally got called to do a casual. I didn’t even know who it was beforehand. An earlier generation of guys like Nelson Riddle, David Rose, a wonderful musician, and Billy May liked jazz players who could sight read. I never had a problem sight reading, technique was another matter. So Nelson basically said to the contractor, “Well, if he is doing these gigs, he might as well do some of my TV work.”

I ended up learning how to be a second hand studio musician. I couldn’t get into it because of my training and love of jazz. It’s my hang up. It was too much stress for me. It tailed off just about the time synthesizers became prominent in the business. There again, I use synthesizers as a tool for composing. As a means of expression they are useless to me. They produce their own feeling. Since I was a child, I knew if I was feeling some way, the piano expressed it for me. I couldn’t do that on a synthesizer. I would play the synthesizer, and still, to this day, it plays its own sound. As long as you have the technique to do that, it’s fine. I didn’t. I hated it.

Those were the people I admired most. David Rose did all the Little House on the Prairie things. He had me do some writing for him. I really felt lost when he left, and Nelson too, of course. Nelson just finished his last album with Linda Ronstadt. Had Nelson known that 15 years later I would be conducting his charts with Linda, he probably would have rolled over in his grave laughing his ass off. [Laughs] He was always patient with me, but he was an enigmatic man.

New York, whatever gigs brought me to the city, it is that old cliché: every time I saw that skyline, there was that flutter in my heart and that feeling of needing to be here. It never left me. And every time I’d go back to LA, I’d become so despondent. Every time I go back now it’s a little creepy.

JJ: How long were you in LA?

AB: I don’t like to think about that. I was there when I got off Woody’s band in ’72 with $200 in my pocket and a quizzical look on my face. The weather seemed nice. Forty five years later, I got an opportunity, thanks to my wife, to move here during that slump in the housing market. We didn’t find anything we could afford though, so we rented in Nyack for four or five years. We found this house in Orange, New Jersey, that we are very happy with. We have lovely neighbors, and I’m getting a sense of community here, which I never had. Now I’m 30 minutes by New Jersey Transit right into Penn Station and I’m home. I teach adjunct at NYU a couple days a week. Right now, it’s one long day, but every time I go in, it is the same thing. I’m 70 years old in April and my heart starts to flutter, not from any fibrillation, but from the energy and love I have for this place.

JJ: In your teaching at NYU, do you use Lennie Tristano’s theory for studying jazz solo’s since you did study with him?

AB: Actually I do. What is being lost is that essence of jazz to me, the art of time. Bud Powell changed that for all of us. Like Lenny said, “Jazz is not a style, it’s a feeling.” That’s my favorite axiom of his. Even Bill Evans talked about this. It is something that transcends temporal time. Bud Powell through Nat Cole, taught piano players how to sing the notes being generated by a deep commitment to this feeling. Bud has been quoted as saying he wished his art was received for the seriousness of purpose in which it was created. Now I hear many piano players playing in a more ornamental style, being piano players, in other words. My preference is for a horn-like approach, like a saxophone player, or trumpet player.

All the eight notes are not created equal. Each has this moment to moment articulation to them. Lennie taught this simpler approach, but it is a key to understanding the essence of the music. He taught singing Lester Young solos and Lester is directly related to Louis Armstrong in terms of that beauty and intensity of time, the elasticity of time. And from Lester we can find the link to Nat Cole and what Bud took from Nat, that singing style translated directly to the piano. I don’t think even Oscar Peterson understood that and who wouldn’t want to play like Oscar? When Oscar played, though, it was an older feeling based on triplet.

Bud had this essential 16th feeling this note to note discovery which Lennie wanted his students to understand. Now I do understand it. When I listen to Bud Powell I hear those moments when he is on the very edge of creation. He was a sick man, but those
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moments when he had clarity, there is nothing like it. The early Bill Evans, New Jazz Conceptions is like that to me. Or some of the wonderful things by Tommy Flanagan like Trio Overseas, the young Brad Mehldau, but again, it all becomes diluted by this need to impress people, unfortunately, so it is reverting back to ornamentation, which is much easier to understand and to play for that matter.

**JJ:** I’m envious. You clearly hear so much more in music than I ever do and I love music.

**AB:** It is something you can learn. When I hear an improviser now I can listen to the line in the moment and so can a lot of my fellow musicians. It is a dangerous place to be, because you can step all over it, and an audience in general doesn’t know. They just hear a mistake. I can hear that person going for something that has a thrill; I can’t explain it. Whereas I can figure Oscar out, because Oscar has figured it out too, and when he puts everything together, though it is incredibly dynamic and fantastic, I’m not listening for that. I want somebody showing me another path. I’ve been down that path, now what if we go down this one. What kinds of flowers and things are down here? All of this expressed in a beautiful line embedded in “bebop” time. That is where the truth of jazz is, to me. That is what I get from Bud, the epitome of this feeling. I got to know Lou Levy, a great jazz pianist, a little bit in LA. As a young man he played with Bird when Bird would come to LA. Lou told me that he asked him for some advice one night. Bird said three words to him, “Listen to Bud.”

Lenny was showing me ways to get to this point. He told me that in those days, at the Three Deuces, you had a gig for weeks, months at a time. Lennie’s trio played opposite the Bud Powell trio. He spent all his breaks literally sitting under Bud’s piano. He could not believe that a human being could get that intensity of feeling out of metal strings and wood, that he was breathing music into this instrument. Lenny went back to his studio, sat down with his metronome at quarter note equals 60. This was when he used to say to me that he would try to outpace Art Tatum to the end of an Art Tatum solo. He could do all that. He played his scales very slowly concentrating on every note so that each one had intensity and meaning. So when you’d speed it up, it still had that clarity of thought.

That has been my goal and way of improvising for all these years. It is a dangerous place to be. The piano can affect me, somebody yawning can affect me, and all those things can break my concentration, when I just need to be in that moment. Then I feel I am creating something for sensitively intelligent people. Without that it is just music, I can’t stress that enough. I want to hear that in people, taking them on this emotional artistic ride, the art of time again.

This was when he used to say to me that he would try to outpace Art Tatum to the end of an Art Tatum solo. He could do all that. He played his scales very slowly concentrating on every note so that each one had intensity and meaning. So when you’d speed it up, it still had that clarity of thought.

Because of this being in the moment feeling, I wake up every day with, “Will I be able to play today? Will I be able to express myself as I want?” There is always this question mark, every day. There are days when you are ecstatic and days when you are pulling teeth. It is like that for every creative person. I just didn’t have someone around when I was young to say, “You are a creative person. That is what you do. Hang in there.” I took it all upon myself.

**JJ:** Do you remember the last time you saw Lennie?

**AB:** There is a photograph on The New Tristano: Lenny, a blue curtain in back of him, the piano is open. My lessons with him were in his kitchen, on a little old Steinway. He already knew I needed a gig and was going with Woody, so on my last lesson he said, “Come with me.” We went up to what essentially was his recording studio in his attic. Here is this giant and this 21/22 year old punk; “Sit down and play,” he said. My lesson consisted of him lying on the couch and me playing on the piano that he recorded The New Tristano on, with the ping in the B flat. It was still there. He would at times laugh and giggle, right there with me in the moment. Then I went with Woody and he never spoke to me again. He had some difficulty with Woody, I don’t know what it was, and he felt that whatever gift I had would destroy me if I didn’t honor it. He was right. It took me a long time to find myself again.

**JJ:** Would you share some memories of your time with Woody?

**AB:** Being on the road with Woody had its advantages and disadvantages; which I was soon to discover. Around 1971, we had a three week stint at Caesar’s Palace in Vegas. Our set was at 3:00 AM and the band that preceded us, at 2:00 AM, was — Duke Ellington and his Orchestra! On the last night of our stay, the powers that be decided that Woody and Duke should alternate tunes for the full 2 hours. Duke would do one; we would do one, etc. When Johnny Hodges died the year before, Duke wrote a moving eulogy in DownBeat magazine, signing off with “Bless Johnny.” I loved Duke and had intensely studied his music and that of Strayhorn when I went to Berklee. So I was inspired to write a piece to feature Woody, which we played a few times, called “Bless Johnny.” Well, bless Woody. That last night he called my tune. He really turned it on, sounding just like his idol and friend, Johnny. Duke just stood there, staring at me with my long blond hair half way down to my waist. I was so nervous. After the chart was finished, Duke walked straight over to the piano, slapped his hand on the soundboard, looked at me and said, “We’ve got a sleeper here!” Well, not aware of the term, I was devastated, thinking I had put him to sleep, bored as could be. It was only later that someone explained what it meant.

**JJ:** In the notes of your CD America the Beautiful you wrote, “Woody…lived a tough life that…he faced with courage and resignation.” Would you elaborate on that?

**AB:** The IRS wanted to take the house that Woody had bought from Humphrey Bogart, and that I got to visit a few times. In Woody’s heyday, his

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manager took all of Woody’s tax money and spent it in Vegas. Woody had this tax bill that he spent the rest of his life paying off. Basically his new manager gave him and his wife salaries and paid his rent. That is why Woody was on the road until his dying day and would end up on a Greyhound bus in the middle of southern Illinois at a truck stop with no gas at three o’clock in the morning. Our road manager would be calling to wire a bit of money so we could get to the next gig. How many times I slept in my seat, with my bottle of NyQuil and three pillows directly behind the bus driver. That was my home for three years. I didn’t have a home to go to. The dignity this man had if facing all of it, I’ll never forget.

When I joined, I figured that I was getting on a hot band. Woody had just had an LP released of pop tunes that his record company decided he should do. I joined them in South Carolina at an army base, and we were playing all this silly dance music. I thought, “What am I doing here? I’ve just been with Lennie Tristano, and here I am playing with a mediocre dance band.” That is when a few of us got together, me Tony Klatka and Bill Stapleton. Blood Sweat and Tears was happening right then, and it was pretty easy to adapt Blood, Sweat and Tears into a big band. When we played our first prom, we started playing these things, and the kids danced and had a great time. Everything I had learned at Berklee, I had to unlearn and figure out how to write for a big swing band.

**JJ:** You also had an important association with Charlie Haden. How did Quartet West form?

**AB:** It was all serendipity. I went back to New Zealand one time and decided to do my first trio record. I recorded with my friend Frank Gibson. We grew up playing jazz together. The bass player was Andy Brown. I came back to LA and gave it to Chuck Niles at KJazz the radio station there. They played it. Charlie had just moved to LA, and was driving on the freeway and heard it. As soon as he got home, he called the station and found out it was me. He called and said he was looking to get a group together, and did I know Ernie Watts? I said I went to Berklee with Ernie and have known him for years. Then Larance Marable and I had played gigs together locally, and Larance and Charlie had a history together going way back. That is how that group formed.

**JJ:** And what was Charlie like on and off stage?

**AB:** Charlie was one of those guys that besides being one of the great bass players of all time was a band leader like Woody. He had this talent for putting diverse musicians together and making music of his own out of it. That is what happened with Quartet West. As great as he was, he wasn’t just a soloist. He was always listening when you were playing. I would vary a chord change and he would go right with it. He was always there in that moment with you. That is a very humble and humbling thing. He was a real jazz artist.

He was very loyal too. One time we were in the Paris airport in one of those systems where you had to wait for the bus to take you to the plane. The plane was delayed, so I strolled off to get a coffee, and I came back to an empty waiting room and the bus was full. Charlie was waving to me but security wouldn’t let me on the bus. I spent the day trying to get to this little town in Italy and when I did there was Charlie with the promoter waiting for me. He didn’t have to do that but he cared about his band members. It was like family to him.

**JJ:** Quartet West’s CD *Haunted Heart* is a favorite of mine. Would you share any memories of doing that?

**AB:** I believe we were in Sete in the south of France, Jean-Philippe Allard, the producer and Daniel Richard had this little studio that they wanted us to record in. It was like any project with Charlie. Charlie putting together things and hearing things, but I had the flu and wasn’t feeling well at all. I guess I got a little testy so at a break I came out to the waiting room area and Daniel Richard had a tray of about a hundred shucked oysters laid out in front of me. My favorite treat. “There you go Alan. Hope you feel better.” That is my memory of recording *Haunted Heart*. That has always been one of my favorite tunes since I heard Bill Evans play it, and I got to do a string arrangement for Shelia Jordan.

**JJ:** One Grammy you have is for the arranging you did for Natalie Cole. How did you get to work with her?

**AB:** I have a parallel musical life. Since I was a kid, the romantic classical orchestra has great meaning to me too. When I needed something that jazz didn’t fulfill, the orchestra did. I always wanted to learn how to write for it. It took me years of studying scores and that moment came when I was playing some blues in an old club called Donte’s. Natalie Cole and her husband at the time Andre Fischer, Clare Fischer’s son, heard me and invited me over to their table. They said they were in the middle of recording this album and weren’t quite satisfied with a piano solo on a track. Would I like to have a shot at it?

A little bell went off in my head because of Nat King Cole, Lester Young and that whole thing. I went in and they liked what I did. I started

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TALKING JAZZ/ALAN BROADBENT

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going on the road with Natalie for the Unforgettable album. I'm on a few tracks on that as a player. We were at some sound shell outside of Portland, Oregon, and she was asking about arrangements and mentioned “Crazy He Calls Me.” I sort of meekly raised my hand, “Could I do a chart on that please Natalie?” She gave me the go ahead. At that time I also had access to all of the scores for the Unforgettable album, mostly by Johnny Mandel or Marty Paich. Finally I got to see how I could apply my orchestral learning to a pop orchestra. Natalie loved “Crazy He Calls Me.” From that I had a small arranging career until the music business died.

[Chuckles]

JJ: Is there any film, novel or play that you feel captures the life of a musician?

AB: Oh LA LA Land. No, no that's a joke [Laughs] People have tried to write movies about jazz musicians, but it is really a big joke to all of us because the hard, lonely parts are left out: practicing, and trying to find yourself. There are moments in films that come close. When I was 14, I did an album with the great Torrie Zito just all these great ballads. I learned a lot of tunes from him. My last solo album Heart to Heart got five stars in DownBeat and not one phone call. [Chuckles] You just go on about your business.

I just got nominated this year for an album I had a wonderful time writing and recording with Kristin Chenoweth. They were doing her first standards album with a small orchestra. The producer was Steve Tyrell, who has given me gigs over the years. Suddenly I was doing all these standards I know. I'd done a few of the charts three or four times over, but always differently. I was given a real free hand. Suddenly I was doing all these standards I know. I'd done a few of the charts three or four times over, but always differently. I was given a real free hand. No. I did get to meet him. I was with Charlie Haden in the early '90s. We played a jazz festival in Warsaw, Poland, and we arrived at the airport coming home from the gig. I looked down a bit and there waiting for a cab was Dave. I had to say something, and I walked toward Dave, and as I got close, I said, “Dave my name is Alan Broadbent.” I didn’t say anything more or he opened his arms wide, grabbed and hugged me. His cab came and he left. No words were spoken. That was my experience with Dave. He knew what he did to people. After I heard him in New Zealand, I wrote him one of those standard young person's letters. Should I come to America if I practice hard, blah, blah, blah? He wrote back a very mature answer, and I still have the letter. He didn’t want to give the wrong advice, but was very sweet.

JJ: I remember an actress saying her winning the Academy Award really made no difference in her getting more work. Have your awards opened doors?

AB: I have two Grammys, one with Charlie Haden and one with Natalie. Nothing ever came from those. I have six solo nominations in the company of such artists as Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. I couldn’t believe it. But no work ever came of that. It’s the nature of the business. I’m not a person who gets on the phone. I admire people who can do that, but I just can’t. I’m very proud of it. She was a champ, every idea that I had, “Yeah; let’s go for it.” I ended up being nominated for the Sinatra tune, “I’m a Fool to Want You,” that she sang beautifully. She is a real singer, not a Fortunately, she wasn’t afraid. She knows how to do it, and that kind of collaboration I enjoy very much.

The whole business has changed. Record companies used to pay for all that. They don’t want to pay a dime now. They don’t want to pay for an orchestra, or if they do it is going to be very low budget, but we made it sound pretty good.

JJ: How did the ban on smoking in clubs affect you?

AB: I was a very heavy smoker from about the age of 20 to 30, so it was a tremendous relief that I didn’t have to deal with smoking in clubs anymore. You remember if you didn’t smoke, you would go to a club, you’d come home, and the closet where you hung your coat would reek of cigarettes for the next few days. It was nice to be free of that. Alcohol will kill you. Cigarettes for sure will kill you, and we have an Attorney General who is going after pot smokers for God’s sake. I don’t get it.

continued on page 24
38th Annual NORTH CAROLINA JAZZ FESTIVAL

Wilmington Hilton Riverside • Wilmington, NC

February 1-3, 2018

The Line-Up

All evening concerts start at 7:30 pm

Thursday, Opening Night (Feb. 1)

3 Hour Special Event: “Styles of Jazz” featuring:
★ MANGROOVE — Tribute to Horace Silver ★
★ NICKI PARROTT TRIO — Presents their “Road Show” ★
★ PROFESSOR CUNNINGHAM’S Old School Traditional Jazz Jam ★

Friday & Saturday Nights (Feb. 2 & 3)

4½ hour concerts of 7 sets featuring our All-star Musicians:

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Saturday, February 3

our PATRONS’ BRUNCH at 10:30 am

When we treat our patrons to a musical brunch featuring our All-Star musicians. Patron/musicians may “sit in” with the All-Stars during the “jam” session.

For information: www.ncjazzfestival.com
Online general admission ticket purchase may be made through our website.
910-793-1111 • ncjazzfest@yahoo.com
**Talking Jazz/Alan Broadbent**

*Continued from page 22*

JJ: Why did you decide to move to New Jersey?

AB: It was the closest we could afford to be next to the city. We found a house that we like. Instead of being almost an hour from the city, I’m a mile from the train and I get on the train and I’m in the city in half an hour. I hear there are a lot of great musicians in this neighborhood of Maplewood, South Orange, and West Orange. I am just discovering the community. I have been here for two weeks. I wish I had more to say about New Jersey.

JJ: You’re here now and that should raise property values in the state.

AB: Yeah sure.

JJ: By any chance do you have Synesthesia, where hearing a sound causes you to see a color?

AB: No, that doesn’t happen. I have perfect pitch. I know already the pitch of my train and the whistle that it makes. The sound of a car horn I can reproduce immediately. I’m on a plane waiting for the thing to take off and if music is blaring, my world is destroyed. I have this inner world, always of music. I unfortunately suffer from tinnitus. I have a high F sharp constantly in my ear. Thank goodness it doesn’t interfere with my playing. At least I’m not aware that it does. Maybe somebody someday will say to me, “Why do you keep playing that high F sharp?” [Laughs] Another thing that I learned at a very early age, but didn’t understand was when I feel something and I’m in a particular emotional place, it generates notes. I couldn’t tell this to my schoolmates as they would have thought I was insane. “What are those notes buzzing around in my head?” “Oh you’re a musical kid that’s why.”

JJ: Would you share any memories of 9/11?

AB: I was doing a tour of New Zealand with Gary Foster, Frank Gibson and Putter Smith. I got a call and Frank sounding stunned said, “Turn on the TV. Turn on the TV.” I was still jet lagged, and there were the twin towers, and I’m thinking, “What movie is this?” Then it all happened and my first reaction after how many years of living in LA, was, “I have to be there.” And here I am 30 minutes away.

JJ: Bill Veeck said Satchel Paige was “born to be everybody’s most memorable character.” Do you have a most memorable character that you have worked with?

AB: Jack Sheldon. I used to work with Jack a lot at Donte’s. A very funny man who could tell the same joke every night to an audience and I’d be under the piano hysterical with laughter every time.

JJ: I love the musical conversations you and Harvie S have on the bandstand. How did you meet and start playing together?

AB: We went to Berklee College together. Harvie tells the story that when he heard me playing piano, he gave up and picked up the bass. That’s probably not true. I can fake my way through being a piano player quite a bit, but my technique was all to hell. We did that early recording with Sheila Jordan called *Heart Strings* with a string quartet. Harvie got me that gig and that is one of my favorite albums. I was finally starting to get the hang of writing when we recorded live *Better Than Anything*. That was just released a few months ago, but was recorded in the early ‘90s. That swings and that deep swinging thing with jazz is part of my well-being. If I don’t have that artful relationship with time, I don’t feel right.

JJ: That is a good thought to end with. This has been a pure pleasure. Thank you.

AB: I hope we see each other soon. Bye-bye.

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**Friends Rally to Aid Frank Vignola’s Recovery After ATV Accident**

Like Johnny B. Goode of old, Frank Vignola could play the guitar just like ringing a bell. But the master musician, a longtime friend of the NJJS, has been sidelined from performing for up to a year following an ATV accident at his home last May.

To date, Frank has had several surgeries to repair multiple broken bones. He’ll need more in the near future. Frank and his family are focusing on his full recovery, but they also face the burdens of ongoing living expenses and medical costs.

To help the Vignolas, friends and fans are raising funds through an online appeal at the website GoFundMe:

As press time the campaign is nearing its goal of $40,000 with almost $33,000 donated by 428 people in 19 days. If you’d like to help to put the campaign over the top, and send Frank a greeting, just visit gofundme.com/frankvignola.

Any amount is welcome, and it only takes a minute to make a contribution and offer words of encouragement as Frank works to get back to performing for his many fans, here in New Jersey and all around the world.
JazzFest at Sea
MSC Divina
Roundtrip from Miami, Florida
January 3 – 14, 2018
Featuring

Houston Person – tenor sax
Allan Vaché – clarinet
Bill Allred – trombone
Charlie Silva – bass
Harry Allen – tenor sax
Mark Shane – piano
Frank Tate – bass
Howard Alden – guitar

Warren Vaché – cornet
Rossano Sportiello – piano
Danny Coots – drums
Duke Heitger – trumpet
Mike Pittsley – trombone
Johnny Varro – piano
Butch Miles – drums

Vocalists
Rebecca Kilgore  Yve Evans  Banu Gibson

In addition to our internationally acclaimed artists, we will once again be offering more than thirty hours of opportunity for our guests who are amateur musicians to jam both with our pros and in your own JazzFest Jammer sessions led by Phil Stone and Bill Parthe. Tim Allan will also be onboard with his Banjos at Sea program. This is in addition to our regular schedule. Plus, if you would appreciate some instruction and critique during the jam sessions feel free to ask!

Ports include Puerto Rico, Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts, Tortola and the Bahamas.

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On Thursday, July 6, rain was in the forecast for most of New Jersey. The Jazz Arts Project in Red Bank decided to roll the dice and refrain from canceling its first Jazz in the Park concert for the 2017 season—the Mike Kaplan Nonet. As the concert began, in Red Bank’s Riverside Gardens Park, that decision looked a little shaky. A few minutes into Duke Ellington’s “The Jeep is Jumping,” tenor saxophonist and bandleader Kaplan took the microphone and announced that the music was going to stop so the musicians could cover their instruments during the rain. After a short break, though, the rain stopped, the band resumed, and, miraculously, the rain never returned.

The sparser than normal crowd (because of the forecast) was treated to an evening of swinging jazz that ranged from tunes by Ellington (“The Jeep is Jumping” and “Stompy Jones”), Jaki Byard (“Just Rollin’ Along”), Wayne Shorter (“Lester Left Town”), and Cedar Walton (“Dear Ruth”) to original compositions by Kaplan (“How’s That?”) and band alumnus, alto saxophonist Bob Hanlon (“New Exes”).

The Nonet has existed since 1982 when Kaplan was a student at William Paterson University and wrote five arrangements for his senior recital. There are now 150 arrangements/charts, most of which have been written by Kaplan. The goal, he said, is “diversity in our music and presentation. It keeps things interesting for the band, myself, and our audiences.” The personnel changes, depending on musicians’ availability, but four veteran Nonet members were part of the ensemble in Red Bank — trumpeters Rob Henke and Bill Mobley, keyboardist Matt King, and trombonist Ben Williams. They appeared on the band’s CD, How’s That, recorded in 1999 and were joined in Red Bank by Todd Bashore on alto saxophone, Frank Basile on baritone, Andy Eulau on bass, and Pete McDonald on drums.

The Jazz Arts Project’s Jazz in the Park series was held every Thursday in July and August and also included such artists as guitarist Stephane Wrembel, clarinetist/saxophonist Dan Levinson, and pianist Oscar Perez with his Afro-Cuban Fusion band.

About eight years ago, the DIVA Jazz Trio created some noise with a jazz interpretation of the Harold Arle/Yip Harburg tune, “If I Only Had a Brain” from The Wizard of Oz. So, it wasn’t surprising when drummer Sherrie Maricle, leading the DIVA quintet, Five Play, introduced another tune “that you normally don’t associate with jazz,” at the group’s July 13th concert, part of the Newark Museum’s Jazz in the Garden series. The tune was the Sonny & Cher hit, “The Beat Goes On,” and the quintet showed the same ability as the trio to turn an unconventional selection into a swinging, innovative jazz performance. By now, though, the audience, which was inside the museum because of the sweltering heat outside in the garden, was already in a rollicking mood, having been treated to the quintet’s performances of Thad Jones’s “Don’t Get Sassy” and the Count Basie hit, “Doodle Oodle,” written by Billy Byers.
Then, Maricle invited a fellow musician to come up from the audience, Scheila Gonzalez, a multi-instrumentalist who’s currently touring with Zappa Plays Zappa, a Frank Zappa tribute band led by Frank’s son, Dweezil. Gonzalez brought her tenor saxophone to the bandstand and joined Five Play on the Sonny Rollins classic, “Tenor Madness,” highlighted by a duet and friendly cutting contest between her and Five Play tenor saxophonist Roxy Coss. In addition to Maricle and Coss, the band included regular DIVA members, pianist Tomoko Ohno and trumpeter Jamie Dauber and bassist Amy Shook, who plays with another Maricle-led group, 3 DIVAS.

The concert also featured two Jimmy McHugh/Dorothy Fields favorites — a “Basie version” of “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby,” and “I’m in the Mood for Love.” Quipped Maricle, “Nothing puts me in the mood for love like a drum solo.” Maricle formed the DIVA Jazz Orchestra in 1992 after former Buddy Rich manager Stanley Kay asked her, “Do you know other women who play as well as you?” That conversation and the ensuing audition, she once told me, “really changed, in a dramatic way, the perception of women in jazz.”

The Newark Museum Jazz in the Garden series, curated by WBGO’s Sheila Anderson, included five concerts, featuring, among others, alto saxophonist Antonio Hart and vibraphonist Stefon Harris.

To see pianist Tomoko Ohno once during the month of July would have been a treat. Seeing her twice was an unexpected pleasure. Five days after the Five Play concert at the Newark Museum, the energetic Ohno was back at the keyboards as part of Brazilian trumpeter Claudio Roditi’s quartet at the July 18 edition of the Downtown Westfield Corporation’s Sweet Sounds Jazz Festival held on Tuesdays in July and August. Roditi’s quartet actually became a sextet with two “guests,” Belgian alto saxophonist Julien Hucq and flugelhornist/vocalist John Dukich, joining Roditi, Ohno, veteran bassist Marcus McLaurine and young drummer Samuel Martinelli.

Roditi, who arrived in the United States in 1970 to study at the Berklee College of Music, recalled to the Westfield crowd his early days of learning about jazz trumpet. “When I first began to listen to the music,” he said, “people were telling me about Chet Baker. I was 12 years old, and I went into a record store and asked to look at jazz trumpet records. The album I bought was Dizzy Gillespie and Roy Eldridge with Oscar Peterson.

Next, came Chet Baker, and third was Miles Davis.” That was the lead in for the Miles Davis classic, “So What” from his landmark Kind of Blue album.

For several years, Roditi has been experimenting with a smaller piccolo trumpet. “I decided to write a blues for the piccolo trumpet,” he said. It’s called ‘Piccolo Blues.’ I’m dedicating it to the late drummer Bobby Durham.” No Roditi set would be complete without some music from the Brazilian composers, and he didn’t disappoint. The Westfield performance included Luiz Boná’s “Theme from Black Orpheus” and Antonio Carlos Jobim’s “Desafinado.”

Chicago jazz critic Neil Tesser once wrote that he could, “think of only a handful of modern trumpeters who combine brain and soul, technique and wisdom in a way that matches Roditi’s.” This writer was fortunate to have Roditi perform twice during my six-year run as curator of the “Music in the Moonlight” series at the Luna Stage in West Orange. He is truly one of the giants of American jazz.

The Downtown Westfield Sweet Sounds festival completed its 21st season, featuring five bands every week in July and August. Among other attractions were: pianist David Leonhardt, a quartet led by saxophonist/flutist Don Braden and drummer Karl Latham, and the Mike Kaplan Nonet.

Pointing out that he studies improvisation only on reed instruments, saxophonist/clarinetist Will Anderson quickly added, “The greatest improver of all time played the trumpet.” The reference, of course, was to Louis Armstrong, and the occasion was the July 22 concert by Will and his twin brother Peter at the Louis Armstrong House in Corona, Queens. The Andersons are unabashed fans of the American Songbook. They presented a four-week Songbook Summit in August at the 59E59 Theaters in Manhattan, saluting the music of Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, George Gershwin, and Richard Rodgers.

At the Louis Armstrong House, the two-set concert was full of standards, as the brothers alternated on saxophone and clarinet, with an occasional flute thrown in. They led off with “Jeepers Creepers,” the Harry Warren/Johnny Mercer song that Louis Armstrong sang in the 1938 movie, Going Places. George Gershwin’s “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,” with Will on clarinet and Peter on tenor sax, was a salute to the many Songbook duets by Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. The program also included the McHugh/Fields tunes, “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby” and “I’m in the Mood for Love,” Fats Waller’s “Honeysuckle Rose” and Henry Mancini’s “Moon River.” Guitarist Adam Moezena was featured on “Stars Fell On Alabama” (Frank Perkins/Mitchell Parish), backed by the other members of the quintet, bassist Neal Miner and drummer Phil Stewart.

The Andersons performance was one of three concerts held at the museum this past summer. The others featured the New Orleans band, James Williams & the Swamp Donkeys and vocalist Brianna Thomas. An added bonus on my visit was discovering our tour guide was the celebrated cornetist Ed Polcer. At any moment, I expected him to pull out his horn and start playing “King Porter Stomp.”
attended shows.

Although Rochester charges fans for individual big-name performances and offers reasonably priced multi-day “club pass” tickets, the general outdoor scene, with free stages and pedestrian-friendly closed streets is one of buskers and big bands. Add to that a dozen or so food trucks and the early summer commerce from restaurants and shops in the region of the Eastman School of Music and you have a festival that appeals to both the baby boomer and the millennial. In its 16th year, it seems to have settled into a pattern that has local patrons less anxious to plunge for the full nine days but more apt to spring for three-day passes. Single-admission concerts with not necessarily big jazz names serve as headline attractions to attract the masses, which explains how the likes of Joss Stone, Sheryl Crow (sold out before the festival schedule was even printed) and King Crimson played Kodak Hall at the Eastman Theatre. Fortunately, the lineup also included a Ray Charles tribute with saxophonist Maceo Parker and longtime pop diva Mavis Staples.

The first weekend in June northern tier jazzers helped ebullient producer Frank Malfitano celebrate 35 years of the M&T Bank Syracuse Jazz Festival. (It should be stressed that the financial institution has a major hand in producing both events, being a naming sponsor for Syracuse and a “presenting” one for Rochester, quite an investment for one corporate entity). And while Rochester’s event requires tickets for some events, Syracuse is free.

In earlier years, the Syracuse festival took up several streets in the downtown area, but has since decamped to the hillside campus of Onondaga Community College overlooking the city.

At 35, the event is less grand than it once was, but is no less popular. Always a tireless cheerleader for the local music scene, producer Malfitano’s photograph could be seen in more places than John Dillinger’s in Depression-era post offices, but with less notoriety. The mood this year was come and hang. Sponsors handed out tchotchkes and food trucks circled in the parking lot like Conestogas in a John Ford movie. Since it was free (almost, $5 per carload parking), you couldn’t complain if not everything was to your liking.

Ramsey Lewis’s Electric Band presented a set that harkened back to the days when his music made it to the mainstream pop charts. While he doesn’t play as much as he used to, he is extremely generous with his sidemen, particularly guitarist Henry Johnson, whose playing is a pleasure. The band was the penultimate group of the festival’s first night, preceding a fireworks display and an encore performance by an act from the previous year, The Mavericks, a high energy Grammy-winning Miami-based rock-com-country group with an enthusiastic fan base.

The festival had its requisite Louisiana flavor with the inclusion of bluesman Marc Broussard and New Orleans’ Rebirth Brass Band, as well as guest emcee, Hurricane Katrina expatriate Michael “Mr. Jazz” Gourrier, a former WWOZ jazz DJ now plying the airwaves on WRIR in Richmond, Va.

If there was ever a band that

Hungry jazz fans in Rochester line up at one of the many food trucks that appear as often as musicians at upstate New York festivals.
fit the Syracuse mood of party with jazz, it’s Asleep at the Wheel, a long-running country swing aggregation that helps keep alive the spirit of Bob Wills. There were some old-school standards (“I Can’t Give You Anything But Love” and “Route 66”), a Louis Jordan and Thelonious Monk mash-up, a furiously-paced “Tiger Rag,” a ripping rock (“Hot Rod Lincoln”), a little Boots Randolph-style tenor sax and some Roy Rogers (a finale of “Happy Trails”).

Singer-songwriter-guitarist-producer Todd Rundgren, while a name brand in rock and roll, isn’t one in jazz, yet he was the headline act in Syracuse this year. In the weeks leading up to the festival he was quoted as saying that people who like the current president shouldn’t come to his shows. Not true. People who don’t like preachy, pedantic lyrics should stay home. Still, it was interesting to see a quasi-legendary rocker jump about the stage and make a variety of costume changes.

Because of its sheer size, it’s easy to find more mainstream music in Rochester during the course of an evening. Plus, bands sometimes play multiple nights at different venues, adding to their availability.

The multi-pianist 4 by 4 by Monk featured George Cables, Cyrus Chestnut, Benny Green and Kenny Barron paying tribute to the 100th birthday of the aforementioned Thelonious on two pianos. The nicely paced concert demonstrated how well the master’s music has been absorbed into the jazz canon that four players of different generations can exchange ideas so seamlessly and humorously in a series of solos, duos and ultimately, quartets. “Monk is one of my favorite ballad writers,” said Barron, who some 30 years ago was part of the group Sphere, devoted to his music. “When you hear Monk, you know it’s Monk,” Chestnut said of the highly individual style.

In playing Monk’s music, said Green, “I keep noticing things I never noticed before.”

At a panel discussion following their first concert, the four were asked if “another Monk” was on the horizon. “I don’t think anyone’s going to be the next Monk,” Cables said. “A genius like Thelonious Monk comes along every 200 years,” added Green.

Monty Alexander was presented in different settings over successive nights. “It’s great to have a job, ladies and gentlemen,” he said to an overflow house before a trio set at the Eastman School of Music’s Kilbourn Hall. The previous night he performed in solo recitals. “They call it solo piano, but I call it alone piano.”

Reedman Bobby Militello, who added spark to Dave Brubeck’s ultimate quartets, performed two sets at the Montage, a local club. As good as his alto sax and flute playing (and a little singing) were, it was fun to hear him reminisce about his time with Brubeck, which he called “some of the best years of my life…we toured the world.”

“The most profound experience of my life I had with Brubeck,” he said, adding that the pianist and his wife Iola “were the consummate statesmen.”

With all the importing of talent Nugent does for Rochester, sometimes his best bands come from…Brooklyn. Taking over

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NY JAZZ FESTIVALS

continued from page 29

the big tent venue for one night of the festival were Sammy Miller & The Congregation, whose music is equal parts avant garde, Spike Jones and good old fashioned jump band. It’s got more than a bit of traditional jazz seasoned liberally with modern age theatricality, resulting in a lot of foot-tapping entertainment, no matter what your taste in jazz.

Another Big Apple import was the Django Festival All-Stars, a band that can usually be heard at Birdland’s annual Django Reinhardt Festival. This summer they took their Gypsy music on the road for a one-month tour. They also performed in stately Kilbourn, but the range and expression of their music could have fared just as well on a less formal club stage.

Both festivals had their share of extracurricular activities. In Rochester there were free jazz programs around town during the daytime hours and at night after the stages and clubs shut down there was an organized jam session in a nearby hotel, less exciting than previous years in part due to a shift of venue from a lobby bar with a patio to a second-floor ballroom. In downtown Syracuse the local Onondaga County Historical society featured an exhibit of photographs from more than three decades of the jazz festival while up at the college campus a small festival of jazz films was held indoors afternoons before the live performances. In addition, an exhibit of jazz festival ephemera looked like Malfitano emptied his attic and scrapbooks for the occasion. Both events offered free performances by local jazz groups and talented youngsters.

By now, preparations for next year’s festivals are well under way, complete with the usual annual tweaking that accompanies such planning. That said, perhaps a little more jazz from the mainstream could be heard from?

— Photos by Mitchell Seidel
JAZZ ARTS PROJECT PRESENTS

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Psst, can you keep a secret?
By Jack Stine

Right up to the Sunday of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, I’m not absolutely certain that most of the fellows I grew up with here in the States fully understood that their futures were soon not to be in their own hands — and had not been for some time. Two hastily draw pieces of legislation here, the United States National Service Act of 1939 and the Selective Training Service Act of 1940 were enacted to remind the disputing nations of Europe that peace was very much to our interest. But Japan apparently did not subscribe to those newspapers, as imminent events would reveal.

Pearl Harbor changed my thinking drastically. First I noticed that crowded trucks of recently drafted men became more and more commonplace on our highways, and more and more faces of fellows I grew up with were not around. I was shocked to sense a similarity between the human cargoes here and the herds of cattle being led to the stockyards in Chicago. Not good I thought; not good at all.

Without a second thought given I decided to do an end run around the whole mess and enlist. It was perhaps a matter of wistful thinking, but I welcomed the freedom to make a choice. I’ve never had reason to regret the move.

And so there I was on Monday, January 5, 1942, doing what I thought was the right thing. I bundled the clothes I thought I’d need, stowed them in the trunk of my ’36 Chrysler, and took off down Route 35 for Red Bank, Fort Monmouth, and the enlistment service there.

It was an ordinary ride. The car was filled with smoke from the new red and white pack of Luckies on the passenger seat beside me. Remember the tobacco company’s boast that “Lucky Strikes Have Gone to War!” while the Hit Parade Orchestra wailed away on the nation’s top tunes, mostly patriotic: standard arrangements, with plenty of drum rolls.

The air in the Chrysler, musically at least, was somewhat easier to take, when Bunny Berigan played one of the greatest hot trumpet solos of his or anyone’s career on Tommy Dorsey’s “Marie.” And then Martin Block showed it was no fluke by having Bunny repeat his prowess of the horn playing the opening melody for Sinatra’s vocal on Dorsey’s “East of the Sun.”

So okay I’m dating myself, but that’s already been done by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor.

Anyway it was a great way reach the main gate at Fort Monmouth and to be welcomed by four or five immaculately uniformed attendants, immaculate right down to their white leggings — and just as sharp as Dick’s hatband — asking how they could help.

“Enlistment office?” I asked. My man said there wasn’t much of a one set up yet, but he knew there’d be someone there to help if I drove to the Headquarters Building.

I did, and was met by a single captain, another handsomely attired soldier who was knocking off a bagel and coffee. “You eaten?” he asked, and before I could take off my jacket, say “no” and hit the head after my long ride, there was a fresh pair there on the table.

“How so fast? I didn’t see any machine.”

“Lady volunteers,” he answered. “Best thing since radar. You want more, just say so. They have eyes like hawks. And so willing to be of service.”

But I wasn’t there for breakfast, and after imaginable formalities, we got down to work. First things first, and in no time the captain knew all I could or wanted to tell him about my stats.

Why had I chosen Fort Monmouth? It was the closest place to my home, Plainfield.

Do you have any special experience in signal work? No

Any interest in telegraphy or short wave radio? No.

What use could you be to the Signal Corps? Can you think of anything? No.

I see. Do you like to study? Are you a quick learner? I wouldn’t say so.

What special interests do you have? What I mean is, what do you like to do when you’re not being asked questions like this? I like to read and listen to music. I’m a big music fan.


You got me there. Never heard of Delius. Really? You’re missing some good stuff. I can give you a list if you want…Oh, and I forgot something. There’s one description of a character in a book I kind of like because I think it describes me pretty well.

You going to tell me?

Of course: “He was born with the gift of laughter, and a sense that the world is mad.” I can live with that; as a matter of fact I do.

I think I’m about out of questions and that’s a good place to stop. Anything else you want to say for the record? Nope.


Good. I’d like to see how you like our GI mess hall.

That’s how the interview ended and I have to say it was a good lunch and conversation. As we walked to his office, out of a blue sky he
asked if I ever did crossword puzzles. Did I even attempt to solve cryptograms or look for hidden meanings in messages.

Courteously, I hope, I told him that none of those things were generally in my waking thoughts. But if push gave way to shove I suppose I could hold my own.

The reason I asked, he said, was that I had a memo from the Crypt School here on the Post. Said they were looking for possible candidates. You interested?

I said, why not? And he sent me with directions on how to find the place in the restricted part of the Post. No sign identified the building, but the fact that an armed guard outfitted like the guard at the Post entrance permitted entrance only through a break in the barbed wire coil that encircled the place gave a clue that this was the highly protected cryptographic school.

“Stine?” he asked when I approached, and I said I was. “Been expecting you,” he said, “go on in.”

Beneath a QUIET PLEASE sign on the wall behind his desk, a much decorated master sergeant sat and gave a pretty explicit meaning to the sign’s message. In not many decibels above a whisper, he gave me a little booklet and sotto voce said, “Here’s your entrance exam. Take it into that room there and do as much as you can. You got a half hour.”

I did, and gave it back to him in about 20 minutes. While somebody checked my work, I had a chance to read up on the history of the Signal Corps, the youngest Corps in the US Army. It seemed to have been formed during the Civil War when messages were exchanged via Wig-wag flags. [The name reflects the concept of back and forth movement as a means of signaling through motion. — Editor] By the start of World War I, messages were entrusted to carrier pigeons and some messages were concealed inside the heels of heavy boots. This is when encryption took precedence over the manner of transmission and the word “intelligence” assumed a more enhanced meaning than it ever had in general usage.

During War I, flyers in the Signal Corps made use of aircrafts flying low over enemy lines to photograph troop positions. After a bit German soldiers started to throw stones at the low flying planes and pilots responded with pistol shots. That’s about when air warfare was perfected. The Signal Corps created the US Air Force and photography became a legitimate arm of the Secret Branch of the Signal Corps.

I encountered an interesting account of an encryption procedure supposedly developed by Julius Caesar. By now it’s pretty early doing, but it could well have been of prime importance when Hannibal crossed the Alps. When Caesar wanted to conceal meaning, he would substitute letters for others three positions down the alphabet. It’s the first example of simple substituting I ever came across.

Many more sophisticated methods developed quickly as secrecy became more and more important, but about then the quiet sergeant came in to say that, yes, the Signal (now Intelligence) Service would like to have me, and the major would like to meet me for a talk. J

Next month, more secrets... more jazz.
Dan’s Den | Making Up For Lost Time

By Dan Morgenstern

A way from my Den recently ‘cause I didn’t have enough to say — and now I’ve got too much. So apologies to those I have to leave out.

I can’t possibly recall how many times I’ve been at Birdland on a Wednesday from 5:30 to 7 pm to enjoy David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band. David draws on a pool of first-class musicians conversant with the extensive Armstrong repertory, and the band is now in its 17th year at the same location, something to marvel at and very probably a record. The music is never less than fine but there are of course special moments to remember, to hint at a song that Louis recorded, and a recent gig was one of those. The cast was Bria Skonberg, trumpet and vocals; Jim Fryer, trombone and vocals; Adrian Cunningham, clarinet and alto sax; Jared Engel, resonator guitar (about which more below) and Rajiv Jayweera, drums. It is of interest to note that Adrian and Rajiv are Australian, but that faraway and fascinating continent has produced a fair share of excellent jazz musicians, and it’s certainly good to have these two in New York. Usually the program, which opens with “Indiana” and closes with “Sleepy Time Down South” (in the Armstrong All-Stars tradition) sticks strictly to the great man’s repertory, so it was nice to witness a departure from this norm via the inclusion of “Hindustan” (an old favorite) and “Anything For You” (ditto, by way of Hot Lips Page). The seldom heard from this band “Undecided” was a Trummmy Young feature with the All-Stars, and a Cunningham alto sax feature, “All By Myself,” another gem not done by King Louis.

But “West End Blues” most certainly was, and Bria’s flawless command of this test for any trumpeter was most impressive — by no means the first time I’ve heard her do it and she never fails. How impressive that is can be gleaned from recorded attempts. I once made a demonstration of this on an evening at Columbia U. with an appreciative Jon Faddis in attendance. The renditions ranged from earliest and most awful (Louis Metcalf) to pretty good (Cootie Williams), but maybe best by Charlie Parker (on alto, of course), captured at a Carnegie Hall concert. Bird did it faster than Louis, as his instrument allows. Bria also shone on her feature (David, an excellent leader-programmer, lets everyone have their special moment, “Them There Eyes,” instrumentally and vocally, and trading fours with drummer Rajiv, who keeps fine time. (This charming British Columbia native was recently signed by Sony; she also writes songs of her own, music and lyrics. We hope that she will continue to dip into the Ostwald pool as she moves on.)

We’ll also keep an eye on Adrian, known as “The Professor.” (Don’t ask me why; Will Friedwald’s notes to Cunningham’s debut CD, a Neal Hefti tribute on Arbors (Ain’t That Right, recommended) uses it constantly but never explains its origin). He is equally adept on clarinet and alto, with fine tone and fluent execution on both. This was evident throughout in ensemble and solo on clarinet, but his two features, “Star Dust” and “All By Myself,” (the former shared with Bria) were on alto, from which he coaxes a strong, Hodges-inflected tone.

Fryer, almost a fixture Ostwaldian, offered “Sunny Side of the Street” as his feature, with his Trummmy-influenced trombone and pleasant singing. He also ventured “A Kiss to Build a Dream On,” always good to hear. (When I was in the Army, ca. 1952 and stationed in Germany, this Louis special, then a hit, was a favorite of the Frauleins, via jukeboxes. (Don’t ask me why, but maybe because that was indeed in their dreams. Louis speaks to everyone!)

Of more than passing interest was Jared’s instrument — a resonator guitar in exceptionally fine condition. They long ago stopped making these instruments with a metal body, most notably played by Eddie Durham before he turned electric and Mike McKendrick in his Louis big band days, and thus most appropriate for this band. It has a sound that somewhat resembles Hawaiian guitar, but less elongated, and adds a strong bottom to a rhythm section in good hands, such as Jared’s.

Altogether, to the concluding “Swing That Music,” always preceding the “Sleepy Time” recap, a very fine turn by the never less than capable and by now nearly eternal Armstrongites. Catch them if you can (the Birdland food is above jazz club average.)

What could not be said about the Metropolitan Room until recently, when the fare progressed from nuts and crackers to a full-fledged menu. It is the scene of an almost as long-running attraction as the Ostwald band, and attraction is indeed the right word for the incredible Annie Ross and her companions. She, and her main bandstand companion, the great Warren Vaché, have held forth here for 11 years, with about four more prior to that at Danny’s Skylight Room (gone from 46th Street). We should have been there long before (and were long, long ago), but were lucky to be there for the celebration of Annie’s 87th (it’s not nice to speak of a lady’s age, I know — but only up to a point, and Annie is at such a one).

It happened to fall on the actual birthdate, and the house was packed with enthusiastic celebrants. We (Daryl Sherman and I) had two of the best seats and relished every moment of a superb set starring (and a star Annie is, for sure) an artist who has managed to conquer a naturally reduced singing voice by way of a still clear and remarkably strong speaking voice, employed somewhat in the manner of what in opera is called “parlando,” but uniquely her own, as is her treatment of a well-chosen and diverse repertoire. In addition to the Vaché horn (among the finest to be heard today), Annie was supported by Tardo Hammer’s piano. Neal Miner’s bass and Leroy Williams’s drums, all well attuned to the star, but none more than Warren. Their long association must be a record for singer and instrumentalist, and can be compared to that of Billie and Lester in closeness. But Warren is discrete in support and takes few solos, though when he does, they don’t compete but complement. It is a unique relationship.

Hammer’s role should not be underestimated. He has fine taste and touch. The rhythm duo is gentle but lifting. From the set’s start I became too entranced to take my best notes, but with help from Daryl can offer some highlights, not in order of appearance, though the pacing of the program was perfection. One of the most touching was “A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square,” making us glad to be there and a sterling example of Annie’s impecable clarity of diction and perfect pacing. These attributes were in evidence throughout. I had forgotten the verse to “Just One of Those Things,” it is special, as was Annie’s original treatment of the well-worn chorus. Equally moving was John Latouche’s “Lazy Afternoon” (Annie making sure to mention composer and
lyricist if not so well known as Porter.) The fitting non-musical prelude to “Sweet Marijuana” was the passing of a fake joint between Annie and Warren; the tune was memorably introduced in Murder at the Vanities, a film in which Duke Ellington offered “Ebony Rhapsody.” Turning to the Gershwins, Annie repeatedly requested Hammer to make his introduction slower to what became the slowest “I Got Rhythm” ever heard by these ears, but swinging nevertheless, a unique treatment of this perhaps most frequently heard set of jazz changes that are used under numerous different titles.

There was more, but the remarkable evening ended with a long and almost entirely spoken revival of “One Meatball,” a socially conscious song associated, for my generation and Annie’s, with the great Josh White, who took it seriously, while this interpretation played around with the title, thus making a somewhat incongruous but happy ending. It ended with a long and almost entirely spoken interpretation played around with the title, thus making a somewhat incongruous but happy ending.

Speaking of unique, that certainly applies to Scott Robinson, whom we had the pleasure to encounter in two entirely different settings in very rapid succession, The first was at the venerable Ear Inn, self-proclaimed as the oldest still operative bar in New York City, which it well may be. It also serves very good food. Offering music on Sundays, it has long been the special domain of Jon-Erik Kellso, trumpeter of note. On this occasion, his Earnoters consisted of Scott, James Chirillo on guitar and Pat O’Leary on the bass, there being no room on the non-bandstand (the near corner on the left, barely housing the bass) for drums, by no means a disaster. Scott mostly played tenor, on which he is a master, but as is his want, he also brought some other outlets for his practically limitless creative impulse, in this case an E-flat clarinet, and the ophicleide, a weighty brass horn from which he elicits a trombone-like sound, its bell of near-tuba depth. Needless to say he makes perfectly fitting musical use of it. I didn’t take notes but had the pleasure of being seated right behind James, one of my favorite musicians, and thus privy to his great skill as an ensemble voice as well as soloist. I think they played “Moonlight on the Ganges,” of which I’m very fond.

Astonishingly, about a week later, having been asked to participate in the Third International Historic Brass Symposium, held at NYU as well as other locales, an unexpected honor, I encountered Scott again, with the same instrument, as half of a duo with Douglas Yeo on the serpent (not a live one, I hasten to inform, but a snaky and visually fascinating fellow obsoleter horn). What they performed was the premiere of a piece dedicated to the memory of Gunther Schuller (whom I had seen for the last time at a Historic Brass event), by Jaron Lanier, who aside from being a composer is also a computer scientist and inventor of the term “virtual reality.”

Alas, he may be a mastermind (he’s also a noted futurist and was listed by TIME as one of the 100 most influential people in the world) but the piece, called “Caduceus Mixtus,” was pretty well devoid of any interest aside from the unique combination of instruments. This was mainly due to the absence of what I, at least, was unable to discern as thematic content and unchanging tempo (slowish). The combination of two instruments with a deep bottom range was almost entirely confined to that, which some listeners might have thought as limitations, but while I can’t speak for the serpent, having heard the ophicleide in Scott’s hands just days before gave me the rare advantage of knowing that it has quite a range and can be made to sound much more impressive and interesting than the brilliant Lanier was able to prescribe. I mentioned my reaction, confined to the limited use of range, to Scott, and he agreed — I didn’t diss the piece in other respects to him, but my opinion stands and I seriously doubt it will ever be heard again.

As for Gunther, whom I had the great pleasure of knowing quite well, he would no doubt have been flattered but, I would wager not greatly impressed. That, of course, is merely a guess, but I would have loved to hear these two exceedingly rare horns in such expert hands in music more worthy of this perhaps unique opportunity.

For those of my dear readers intrigued by what I might have to offer at such a learned event (there was much brilliant playing on less unusual instruments, especially cornets, of which I never knew there were so many variants, both in solo and ensemble), I was asked to speak about and play recordings to illustrate the theme “Jazz Brass History in Six Tracks.” Assisted by a fine gentleman of Welsh extraction, a retired classical trombonist and professor of music, the six of my choices met with his approval. Aren’t you eager to learn how I met this near impossible but fun challenge? So here they are: “Ory’s Creole Trombone” (Professor. Herbert’s only, and excellent, suggestion); “Diane,” by Vic Dickenson (a beauty but little known, on Blue Note and Mosaic); “Blue Again” by Louis you-know-who, and incidentally a Gil Evans favorite; “Shaw ‘Nuf” by Dizzy and Bird, and “Braggin’ in Brass” by Ellington, featuring Rex Stewart and Cootie Williams as well as a fascinating trombone trio, and a glimpse of Lawrence Brown.

It was an early event and thus met with nice applause — had it been later in the four-day event, probably less favorably due to tired ears.

And that, my friends, is surely enough for one Den!
RHYTHM & RHYME

Poetry editor Gloria Krolak explores the world of jazz in verse. This month she presents a nostalgic poem of childhood by Ntozake Shange, a poet, Obie Award-winning playwright and leader of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and ’70s.

NTOZAKE SHANGE

The childhood that Ntozake Shange describes in the poem “Mood Indigo” is an enviable one. Imagine the solid foundation of a loving, educated and well-traveled family, early exposure to the wider world of arts and ideas, and the safety to explore them.

Duke Ellington, civil rights activists W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson were real people who sat in her living room. Ray Barretto had not yet achieved his peak and Dizzy was still a young man when they met. Singer Sonny Til of The Orioles, a 1995 inductee into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, on the other hand, was famous, as were The Clovers, a vocal group which owns membership in four different Halls of Fame.* Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian freedom fighter who served as that country’s prime minister and president, was a familiar figure to the band of card players and friends who stopped by to eat and socialize. So was Virgil “Honeybear” Akins, winner of the Welterweight Champion of the World in 1958 when Shange was ten.

In her own words, Shange explained that, “I was always aware that there were different kinds of black people all over the world. So I knew I wasn’t on this planet by myself.”

Born Paulette Williams in Trenton in 1948, one of four children, she and her family spent eight years in St. Louis. She was one of the first children to integrate the schools there. The family returned to New Jersey in 1971 and she published her first poems in her high school newspaper. That year the rebellious Williams adopted her Zulu name. Ntozake (En-toe-ZAH-kee) means “she who comes with her own things,” and Shange (SHAHNG-gay), “one who walks with lions.”

Coming to the realization that the larger society in which she lived punished women who were intelligent and goal-oriented was painful. From that arose her fiercely feminist perspective, learning to turn self-hate into its opposite. She presented her first successful theater production in 1975 — for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is not enuf. The story, told in poetry and dance, of eight black women identified by colors, all of whom had been subjected to racism and sexism, has since been made into a television film. The 1976 production was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play, only the second ever by a black woman to reach the Broadway stage.


Shange has written fiction as well, after graduating from Barnard College, and earning a master’s degree in 1973 from the University of Southern California. She has taught women’s studies at universities around the country and was artist-in-residence for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. She now lives in Brooklyn after suffering from strokes and a debilitating nerve disorder, and is celebrated as a leader of the Black Arts Movement.

MOOD INDIGO

By Ntozake Shange

it hasnt always been this way
ellington was not a street
robeson no mere memory
du bois walked up my father’s stairs
hummed some tune over me
sleeping in the company of men
who changed the world

it wasnt always like this
why ray barretto used to be a side-man
& dizzy’s hair was not always gray
i remember i was there
i listened in the company of men
politics as necessary as collards
our house was filled with all kinda folks
our windows were not cement or steel
our doors opened like our daddy’s arms
held us safe & loved

children growing in the company of men
old southern men & young slick ones
sonny til was not a boy
the clovers no rag-tag orphans
our crooners/ we belonged to a whole world
nkrumah was no foreigner
virgil aikens was not the only fighter

it hasnt always been this way
ellington was not a street

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Ntozake Shange’s poem “Mood Indigo” was used as the narrative for the 2004 children’s book, Ellington Is Not A Street. Beautifully illustrated by Kadir Nelson, the book was the 2005 recipient of the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award.
Fifth Annual NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band Concert
Richard Lowenthal, Conductor
Featuring Jon Faddis and Cyrille Aimée
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LYRICS & LYRICISTS  
From Camelot to California:  
The Worlds of Lerner and Loewe  
Teresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall - 92nd St. Y | NYC  
June 3-5

Lyricist and book writer Alan Jay Lerner and composer Frederick Loewe had one of the biggest musical hits ever to play the Great White Way with My Fair Lady. Prior to that they had a flop with What’s Up?, a fairly well received but short-lived production of The Day Before Spring, a hit with Brigadoon, and a disappointment with Paint Your Wagon. Subsequent to My Fair Lady, they had an Academy Award-winning film with Gigi, and another hit musical with Camelot. All of the theater pieces except What’s Up? and The Day Before Spring were also made into films, while Gigi was eventually adapted for Broadway with disappointing results.

Their six major works provided source material for the lyrics & Lyricists program hosted by Rob Berman, who also served as artistic director and writer. To perform the selections, he chose a talented quintet of vocalists, including Chuck Cooper, Lilli Cooper, Bryce Pinkham, Ryan Silverman and Lauren Worsham. They were supported by an instrumental quintet, led by pianist Mark C. Mitchell, who played orchestrations by Joshua Clayton and Larry Moore.

With material like this, it is not surprising that the evening was a pleasant one indeed. All of the performers have terrific voices, and are experienced musical theater performers, so they did a superb job of presenting the songs in appropriate ways.

The concert opened with an overture comprising “Brigadoon,” “God’s Green World,” “Wouldn’t It Be Loverly” and “I’m On My Way.”

Songs from the several source musical were mixed throughout the program, with two from The Day Before Spring, six from Brigadoon, seven from Paint Your Wagon, seven from My Fair Lady, four from Gigi, and eight from Camelot.

As the concert progressed, there were many tunes that would be familiar to most listeners, songs like “They Call the Wind Maria,” “The Heather on the Hill,” “Almost Like Being in Love,” “With a Little Bit of Luck,” “The Night They Invented Champagne,” “Camelot,” “If Ever I Would Leave You,” “Show Me,” “How to Handle a Woman,” “On the Street Where You Live,” “I’ve Grown Accustomed to Her Face,” “Gigi” and “I Could Have Danced All Night.”

Others are rarely heard outside the context of the shows, including “I Love You This Morning” and “God’s Green World” from The Day Before Spring; “Waitin’ for My Dearie” and “From This Day On” from Brigadoon; “How Can I Wait,” “Whoopee-Ti-Ay,” and “What Do Other Folks Do” from Paint Your Wagon; “You Did It” from My Fair Lady; “She Is Not Thinking of Me” and “The Parisians” from Gigi; and “Lusty Month of May” and “Before I Gaze at You Again” from Camelot.

This all gave a nice overview of the memorable output from this masterful pair of Broadway musical creators. It is likely that most of those who attended had several of these tunes recurring in their minds for days afterward, and many probably dug out recordings that they had of this material to revisit it again.

NICKI PARROTT  
Birdland, NYC | June 8-9

Birdland is a premier jazz club and Nicki Parrott is among the select bassists and singers in jazz, so having Parrott headline at Birdland was a natural pairing. Those who made the scene for any of Parrott’s four sets at the club will confirm that this was a match made in jazz heaven. This report is based on the first set of the second night.

Parrott, with support from pianist John di Martino, drummer Alvin Atkinson and special guest Ken Peplowski on clarinet and tenor sax, performed a well-conceived program.

After an opening instrumental medley of Billy Strayhorn tunes, “Passion Flower,” “A Flower is a Loversome Thing” and “Johnny Come Lately,” Peplowski joined the crew as Parrott sang “It’s a Great Day,” a tune that set the mood for the evening.

Among the many albums that Parrott has released in recent years, several are dedicated to the music of noted performers. On this occasion, she gave a nod to Blossom Dearie (“Tout Doucement” and “I’m Hip”), Doris Day (“Fools Rush In”), The Carpenters (“For All We Know” and “There’s a Kind of Hush”), and Nat “King” Cole (“Straighten Up and Fly Right”), each of whom she has saluted on discs.

Ken Peplowski has a knack for reviving good songs that have escaped attention from most current artists. He was featured on tenor sax assaying a nifty Walter Donaldson tune, “Changes,” a song recorded by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra with Bix Beiderbecke and The Rhythm Boys with Bing Crosby, but rarely revived today. Peplowski performed on clarinet in a duet with Parrott on “I Found a New Baby” and “Duet,” another rarity, this one written by Duke Ellington as a feature for clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton and bassist Wendell Marshall.

Parrott’s husband, Brian Wittman, is nicely adept at writing updated lyrics for songs that include current topical references, as was evident when Parrott included some of his words when she performed “I’m Hip” and “Let’s Do It.”

This was a set filled with joy, on the parts of the performers and the enthusiastic audience. It should presage some further Birdland gigs for the engaging Ms. Nicki Parrott.

PETER AND WILL ANDERSON  
Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, NYC | June 13

Peter and Will Anderson are a remarkable pair of musicians. The twin brothers have an impressive résumé since finishing their studies at Juilliard in 2011. Among their most notable accomplishments is the recent release of Blues for Joe (Gut String Records – 026), an album dedicated to their mentor, the late Joe Temperley, the amazing man whose baritone sax anchored the sax section of the Jazz at Lincoln Orchestra from its inception until health problems took their toll. The proceeds from this album have been used to establish a scholarship in Joe’s name at Juilliard.

This evening at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola was a celebration of the release of Blues for Joe. As on the album, Peter on tenor sax and clarinet, and Will on alto sax and flute were joined by Pat Bianchi on Hammond B3 Organ, Peter Bernstein on guitar and Kenny Washington on drums. They formed a tight group that produced joyous music.

The album contains ten selections, four infectious original tunes by each of the Andersons, plus “Lush Life” and “Body and Soul.” On this occasion, they played four of the originals, “Relaxed Beauty” and “Exceptional Elegance” by Will, and “The Royal Standard” and “Blues for Joe” by Peter. They also added songs that were particular favorites of Temperley, “In a Mellow Tone,” “Body and Soul,” “Cottontail” and a lovely solo rendering by Peter on clarinet of “Single Petal of a Rose,” a Duke Ellington composition that became a signature song for Temperley.

This was an evening of sublime music, wonderfully executed by these exceptional musicians. The Andersons have swing in their blood, and it is evident with every note that they play. Bianchi’s playing is similarly infused with...
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CAUGHT IN THE ACT

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music that keeps your toes tapping. Bernstein provides strong rhythm accompaniment, and his solo lines are always exciting and well conceived. Kenny Washington is a rhythmic rock who is as musical a drummer as one could find.

There is no doubt that Joe Temperley was smiling down from the Celestial Jam Session, and enjoying the fruits of the hours that he spent with the Andersons sharing his musical insights with them.

Note: The album Blues for Joe is available at cdbaby.com as a physical CD or as a download.

VIKTORIJA GEČYTĖ

with the GO TRIO

Miller Symphony Hall, Allentown | June 16

Vocalist Viktorija Gečytė is from Lithuania, and currently lives in Paris, but her appearance at the Jazz Upstairs series at Miller Symphony Hall in Allentown was something of a homecoming. Gečytė is a graduate of Lafayette College, a few doors down the road in Easton, and this is her fourth visit to this series.

It was evident from the reception that Gečytė received that she has made a lasting impression on the Allentown audience. She had support from the Go Trio, pianist Sean Gough, bassist Gene Perla and drummer Nic Cacioppo, and trumpeter Ben Seacrist.

The program opened with a sparkling instrumental take on “If I Were a Bell,” with Seacrist providing some nice solo work that had traces of influences from both Chet Baker and Miles Davis.

When Gečytė approached the mic, she warmed things up immediately with “Steam Heat.” As the evening progressed, she varied the tempo from song to song, and chose a program that included a few surprises like Thelonious Monk’s “Pannonica,” “After the Lights Go Down Low” and “Straight Ahead,” a Mal Waldron tune with lyrics by Abbey Lincoln.

When you listen to Gečytė sing, there is no hint of any accent. She has an attractively dusky quality to her voice, and a true jazz feeling in her interpretation of the songs that she selected.

The Go Trio was a strong presence. Gough, who attended Lafayette while Gečytė was there, is a man with imagination and technique to spare. Perla is a master bassist who has played with many jazz greats during his 50-plus years on the scene, and he still plays with the spirit and enthusiasm that has always marked his performances. Cacioppo anchored the rhythm section, and showed great flair when given the solo spotlight. Seacrist played with a maturity that belied his 22 years.

Unfortunately for her fans over here, Gečytė does not perform stateside often enough, so this gig, one of only 11 gigs on her two-week U.S. tour, was a rare opportunity to hear this talented singer in person.

She certainly hit the right notes on this evening.

STEVE ROSS

“C’mon and Hear!” – An Irving Berlin July 4th Celebration

Birdland, NYC | June 26

Steve Ross returned to Birdland to celebrate the 4th of July a few days early with a scintillating program of songs by Irving Berlin, the man about whom Jerome Kern stated, “Irving Berlin has no place in American music, he is American music.”

Ross has an encyclopedic knowledge of the Great American Songbook, both the songs and their creators. This enables him to put together the kind of delightful compendium of song that he presented for this Berlin program, one that mixed the familiar with the rare.

Fittingly, Ross opened with Berlin’s first hit song, “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” into which he interpolated a ragtime take on Stephen Foster’s “Old Folks at Home.” Sticking with the ragtime theme, he paired “Ragtime Violin” with “When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam.”

As the set progressed, Ross frequently chose to perform songs in medley, most two at a time like “Say It Isn’t So” with “How Deep Is the Ocean,” “It’s a Lovely Day Tomorrow” with “Blue Skies,” “Let Me Sing” with “With You,” “All By Myself” with “How About Me,” “Puttin’ on the Ritz” with “Steppin’ Out With My Baby,” and “Cheek to Cheek” with “Let’s Face the Music and Dance.” At one point he went four deep on a medley, “Let’s Go Back to the Waltz,” “I Can’t Remember,” “Remember” and “All Alone.”

Among the other tunes that he included were “When I Lost You,” “I Love a Piano,” “Mandy,” “Cohen Owes Me $97,” “Russian Lullaby,” “Harlem on My Mind,” “Always” and “Let Yourself Go.”

This was a wonderful retrospective of the earlier Berlin years, most of the songs performed having been written prior to 1940. Ross is a consummate performer, an effective interpreter of lyrics who is a master at self-accompaniment on the piano. On this occasion, he had fine support on the bass from Jared Egan.

When called back for an encore, it seemed inevitable that Ross would choose to lead the audience in singing “God Bless America,” setting the stage for the coming celebration of Independence Day.

MARILYN MAYE

Marilyn By Request

Metropolitan Room, NYC | June 27-28

There is always an air of expectation in the audience at a Marilyn Maye performance. At the age of 89, she is still as vibrant and enthusiastic a performer as you can experience. Her sets usually last about an hour and a half, during which time she belts out song after song while tossing in countless humorous asides. While on stage, she is constantly on the move, even tossing in an occasional Can-Can kick, exhibiting more energy in one set than many performers show in a week.

Maye returned to the New York City nightlife scene at the Metropolitan Room about ten years ago for a one-night appearance that attracted a crowd far in excess of what the room could hold. The word spread quickly, and soon she was performing to sold-out crowds at a variety of venues in New York City, and that continues to be the case. It is in the intimate space of the Metropolitan Room, however, where she connects most directly with her audience, one normally filled with fans who return to see her again and again.

Usually Maye has a theme to her shows, but on this occasion she relied on requests made by customers at the time that they made their reservations, so the show had a nice spontaneity to it.

One characteristic of Maye’s shows is her clever gathering of tunes into medleys. When she arrived on the stage, the audience greeted her with a roar, and she responded with three songs that expressed her appreciation for their obvious affection, “Today I Love Everybody,” “Let There Be Love” and “It’s Love.” She immediately followed with a trio of “happy” tunes, “Get Happy,” “I Want to Be Happy” and “Sometimes I’m Happy.” Her joining of “Lazy Afternoon” and “Bye, Bye Country Boy” was touchingly effective. The highlight of the evening was an interval where Maye paired “Paradise Café” with one of the great story songs, “Guess Who I Saw Today,” followed it with “Fifty Percent” from the Broadway musical Ballroom, and concluded what was in effect a three act playlet with “Something Cool.” She invested each song with a dramatic intensity that was stunning.

By the time that Maye finished her performance with a song that has become a staple for her, “Here’s to Life,” everyone in the room lifted their glasses to join in this toast to living and enjoying
each moment. Spending time with Marilyn Maye is certainly one way to make your day feel particularly special, and makes you look forward to crossing paths with her again soon.

**NANCY ANDERSON: Ten Cents a Dance**

*Feinstein’s/54 Below, NYC | July 5*

Nancy Anderson is one of those special performers who puts smiles on the faces of those who are wise or fortunate enough to experience her on stage. With the revival of her “Ten Cents a Dance” cabaret show at Feinstein’s/54 Below, she has called attention once again to her outstanding 2006 album with the same title. The album comprises songs from the 1920s and ’30s. From an early age, Anderson was attracted to this music, and she relates how the songs and performers of those decades influenced the selections on her program.

Anderson opened with three songs that she came to know through recordings by vocalist Teddy Grace with the Mal Hallett Orchestra, a band that was based in Anderson’s home town of Boston. They were “The Trouble with Me Is You,” “The You and Me That Used to Be” and “I’m So In Love With You.”

Another singer who became a favorite of Anderson was Peg LaCentra who was most known for a series of sides that she recorded with Artie Shaw in the mid-1930s. From LaCentra’s years with Shaw, Anderson chose to sing “You’re Giving Me a Song and Dance,” “It Ain’t Right” and “Darling, Not Without You.”

Anderson’s musical theater experience, and natural comedic flare were evident throughout her program, especially on “Allib Baby” and “How’dja Like Ta Love Me?” She also gave a sensitive, dramatic reading to “True Blue Lou,” a gem from 1929 that was recorded by the likes of Ethel Waters and Annette Hanshaw.

The tunes of Rodgers and Hart Have a particular attraction for Anderson, and she addressed “My Romance,” “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was” and “It Never Entered My Mind” in a well conceived medley.

The show closed with another Rodgers and Hart classic, “Ten Cents a Dance.”

At the conclusion, the audience roared it approval, with many rising to their feet in a standing ovation. It impelled Anderson to reappear and sing “With One Foot,” a star turn from *Sunset Boulevard*.

The initial offerings on Winkler’s program were from his 2011 release, *The Company I Keep*. Before an audience that included several of his peers, Winkler gave all present a taste of the tunes from the new disc, and a few selections from his past releases.

Winkler called upon reedman Matt Garrison, pianist Allen Farnham, bassist Bill Moring and drummer Alvester Garnett to lend musical support for the evening. Winkler called upon reedman Matt Garrison, pianist Allen Farnham, bassist Bill Moring and drummer Alvester Garnett to lend musical support for the evening. The tunes of Rodgers and Hart Have a particular attraction for Anderson, and she addressed “My Romance,” “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was” and “It Never Entered My Mind” in a well conceived medley.

The support from musical director Ross Patterson on piano, J.J. McGeehan on guitar, banjo and ukulele, Aaron Heick on reeds and Don Falzone on bass was swinging and spot on.

This was an evening filled with joy on both sides of the lights. Anderson’s vintage program fit perfectly in the environment that has been created for this welcoming room.

**MARK WINKLER**

*Birdland, NYC | July 13*

It was fitting that the ultra hip vocalist Mark Winkler had his New York CD release event for *The Company I Keep* at the equally hip jazz boîte Birdland. Before an audience that included several of his peers, Winkler gave all present a taste of the tunes from the new disc, and a few selections from his past releases.

Winkler called upon reedman Matt Garrison, pianist Allen Farnham, bassist Bill Moring and drummer Alvester Garnett to lend musical support for the evening. Also on hand was vocalist Roseanna Vitro to join Winkler for a couple of duets.

The initial offerings on Winkler’s program were from his 2011 release, *The Company I Keep*, at the equally hip jazz boîte Birdland. Before an audience that included several of his peers, Winkler gave all present a taste of the tunes from the new disc, and a few selections from his past releases.

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**NANCY VALENTINE**

*Birdland, NYC | July 2*

Vocalist Nancy Valentine has a passion for the music of Billy Strayhorn that led her to dig deep into his catalog for the program of songs that she recorded on her album *Lovesome*. In celebration of the release of the album, Valentine was joined by Dan Block on reeds, Joe Magnarelli on trumpet, John di Martino on piano, Marco Panascia on bass and Vince Cherico on drums for a sprightly set at Birdland.

The songs included familiar selections like “A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing” and “Something to Live For.” Others were more obscure including “You Better Know It,” “So This Is Love,” “Oo, You Make Me Tingle,” “You’re the One,” “Wounded Love” and “Maybe.”

Four of the songs are more familiar as instrumentals. “Pretty Girl,” with lyrics by Strayhorn, was most noted as “The Star Crossed Lovers,” the nod to Romeo and Juliet in the Such Sweet Thunder suite composed by Strayhorn and Duke Ellington. “My Flame Burns Blue” has lyrics by Elvis Costello set to Strayhorn’s last composition, “Blood Count.” “U.M.M.G. (Upper Manhattan Medical Group)” was a song dedicated to the doctors who tended to Strayhorn during his terminal bout with cancer. Valentine performed a wordless vocal for this tune. Edmund Anderson wrote lyrics for “Lotus Blossom” that resulted in a song titled “Thank You for Everything.” Valentine performed her program with great enthusiasm and confidence, giving each selection a personal touch, with her voice nicely complementing Strayhorn’s lyrics, as well as those by others as noted above. She carried off the wordless vocal on “U.M.M.G.” with aplomb.

The band was exceptional. John di Martino flawlessly served as musical director. Nine of the arrangements were his work, with the other three penned by Tamir Hendelman. Block and Magnarelli sparkled when given the solo spotlight, while Panascia and Cherico were rocks of rhythmic support.

Strayhorn deserves wider recognition for his songwriting genius. When Valentine returned for an encore of “Take the ‘A’ Train,” perhaps Strayhorn’s most familiar composition, using three different lyrics, the reception from the audience indicated that they greatly appreciated this opportunity to enjoy Strayhorn on a deeper level than is usually available.

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The last year has been an emotional roller coaster for Winkler, as he lost his partner of 35 years to cancer, but found the strength to create this new collection that shows a continuation of his artistic acumen.

JAZZ IN JULY

Kaufman Concert Hall | 92nd Street Y
DICK HYMAN FOREVER! CELEBRATING HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY | JULY 18
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Dick Hyman (piano), Ted Rosenthal (piano), Walter Blanding (tenor sax), Randy Sandke (trumpet), Ken Peplowski (clarinet), Howard Alden (guitar), Jay Leonhart (bass), Dennis Mackrel (drums), Sandy Stewart (vocals)

BENNY GOLSON & JIMMY HEATH: MEETING OF THE MAESTROS | JULY 19
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Benny Golson (tenor sax), Jimmy Heath (tenor and soprano sax), David Wong (bass), Kenny Washington (drums)

GUYS & DOLLS PLAY THE GREAT LOESSER | JULY 20
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Renee Rosnes (piano), Jane Monheit (vocals), Jon Gordon (alto sax), Ingrid Jensen (trumpet), Gary Smulyan (baritone sax), Sean Smith (bass), Carl Allen (drums)

COLE PORTER: EASY TO LOVE! | JULY 25
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Cecile McLorin Salvant (vocals), Harry Allen (tenor sax), Peter Washington (bass), Kenny Washington (drums)

THE ART OF TATUM | JULY 26
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Harold Mabern, Roger Kellaway and Aaron Diehl (piano), Eric Alexander (tenor sax), John Webber (bass), Joe Farnsworth (drums)

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD | JULY 27
Bill Charlap (host and piano), Dick Hyman (piano), Warren Vaché (Cornet), Jon Faddis and Brian Lynch (trumpet), Ken Peplowski (clarinet), John Allred (trombone), Peter Washington (bass), Paul Wells (Drums)

This was the 33rd year that the acclaimed Jazz in July series has been presented at the 92nd Street Y. Once again Bill Charlap served as artistic director and host for six concerts featuring outstanding jazz players, with each evening centering on a different theme. This series has been remarkable for the consistent quality of the programming and the performers for each concert, and 2017 proved to be another sparkling success.

(Note: In the discussions of the individual concerts, no mention is made of the instruments played by the various players as that information is supplied in the headers above.)

The opening concert for 2017 was a celebration of the 90th Birthday of the man who served as the founder and guiding light of the series for its first 20 incarnations, pianist Dick Hyman.

Due to recent health issues, Hyman was unable to attend the festivities in person, but was able to participate through a satellite hookup from his studio in Sarasota, Florida. This was an instance where modern technology was equal to the task, and Hyman’s contributions to the evening were varied and fulfilling.

Anticipating that Hyman would be in New York City to appear at this concert, the Mayor of the City of New York proclaimed July 18 to be Dick Hyman Day “for Mr. Hyman’s incalculable contributions to the art of jazz and the sound track of New York City.” New York City Council member Ben Kallos read the proclamation to the appreciative and beaming Dick Hyman prior to the start of the concert.

The full band kicked off the music with a take on Hyman’s “Sweet Sarasota,” followed by all except Rosenthal joining in on a song associated with Louis Armstrong, “I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music.”

While he is an outstanding creator of original music, Hyman is also a brilliant interpreter of the music of others. Charlap transcribed Hyman’s variations on Scott Joplin’s “The Entertainer,” and those he created on “Back Home in Indiana,” and performed them with the kind of verve and elan that has been a hallmark of Hyman’s pianism. A memorable album in the catalog of Hyman is the duet collection of Jerome Kern songs that he did with vocalist Sandy Stewart who just happens to be Charlap’s mother. Stewart joined Ken Peplowski, Ted Rosenthal, Jay Leonhart and Dennis Mackrel to sing the opening song from that album, “Nobody Else But Me.” Stewart and Charlap then performed a stunningly touching reading of “All in Fun,” a too-rarely revived gem from the vast Kern library of song.

Hyman has been one of the foremost exponents of duo piano performances. In this instance Charlap and Rosenthal dazzled the audience with their take on “Rap Number Three” from Hyman’s Three Raps for Piano. Having an opportunity to hear the interaction of two of the best jazz pianists on the scene today was special indeed.

“Shadowland” is a lovely Hyman tune that served as a feature for Randy Sandke. He played it with deep feeling and a gorgeous tone. The set closed with a rousing version of “Swing Is Here.”

After the intermission, there was an interlude that was definitely a highlight of the evening. Charlap engaged Hyman in a conversation centering around a series of slides that gave the audience a look at Hyman’s studio, his music library, both recordings and sheet music, and various items of memorabilia that gave Hyman an opportunity to discuss different aspects of his expansive career. The segment concluded with Hyman playing a solo version of “‘S Wonderful,” and it certainly was exactly that.

Back to the music on stage, Charlap and the full band romped through “Stompin’ At the Savoy,” and Charlap, Jay Leonhart and Howard Alden gave their impression of Hyman’s “Baby Boom.”

There is only one piece of film footage with sound of Charlie Parker playing. It is from a 1952 television show with Parker and “Dizzy” Gillespie playing “Hot House” supported by a rhythm section that included Hyman on piano, Sandy Block on bass and Charlie Smith on drums. This five-minute video evoked an enthusiastic response form those present. Extending the excitement brought about by the film clip, Charlap and Rosenthal returned to a duo piano format to
assay tunes by Bud Powell and Oscar Peterson, as well as Duke Ellington's "Jubilee Stomp." During the two-piano segments, the hands and keyboards of both players were projected on a large screen at the back of the stage. This gave the entire audience an opportunity to enjoy a clear view of the dexterity possessed by these remarkable artists.

There were still three numbers to come. Stewart and Charlap returned to the Kern material for a heartfelt take on "Remind Me." Rosenthal and the full band expertly played a cleverly titled original piece by Rosenthal dedicated to Hyman, "Y's Man," in recognition of the special place that Hyman has in the cultural life of the 92nd Street Y. In 1969, Hyman had a pop chart hit with an item of what was then known as space age electronica, "The Minotaur," on which he played a Moog synthesizer. With Hyman joining in via satellite, the full band closed with a much jazzier take on this curiosity. This was a special evening for a special man, beautifully conceived and executed under the direction of Bill Charlap. The memories of this concert will linger for a long time.

The second concert of the 2017 Jazz in July series was dedicated to two more giants of jazz, saxophonist/composers Jimmy Heath and Benny Golson. The 90-year-old Heath and the 88-year-old Golson, both of whom were born and raised in Philadelphia, are still active musicians and composers. Like the previous evening honoring Dick Hyman, the audience was full of warm regard for the subjects of the concert, and their appreciation for the reception that they received was written in the smiles that stayed on their faces throughout the evening.

The program had three aspects, with the two sax masters joining forces to play pop and jazz standards, Heath fronting the segments featuring his compositions, and Golson assuming a similar role when the music comprised his compositions. Jeremy Pelt participated at various times in all three setups. The rhythm section of Charlap, David Wong and Kenny Washington was simply superb throughout the program.

To open the concert, all hands were on deck to address Jerome Kern's classic melody, "All the Things You Are," long a favorite of jazz players. Heath was the first to assume the spotlight, with Pelt joining him on his jazz standard "CTA." Heath introduced the next tune as one inspired by Coleman Hawkins, "The Voice of the Saxophone." His initial foray into this tune was on the soprano sax, the only time that he took that horn in hand this evening, while he later transitioned to the tenor sax, the instrument of Hawkins. Both tunes were wonderfully conceived and engaging.

When Golson came front and center, he and Pelt turned their attention to two of Golson's most familiar composition, "Whisper Not" and "Stablemates." Golson gave the latter an extended introduction, explaining with great humor how it came to be written, and how it ended up being recorded by the Miles Davis Quintet. Golson and Heath then closed out the first set sharing their impressions of Cole Porter's "What Is This Thing Called Love."

Heath and Pelt started the second set exploring Heath's "Gingerbread Boy," perhaps his most recorded composition. Golson then returned to play two more of his classics, "I Remember Clifford," a tune that he wrote upon hearing of the tragic death of the great trumpet legend Clifford Brown, and "Along Came Betty." Pelt's playing on "I Remember Clifford" was exquisite and moving.

Heath has a wonderful sense of humor, one that is often reflected in his choice of titles for his tunes. His next contribution was the wryly-titled "A Sound for Sore Ears," and it was an easy tune to absorb. To bring things to a fulfilling conclusion, the full crew jammed on the Milt Jackson evergreen, "Bag's Groove."

It was a joy to see and hear these two jazz heroes. Their interaction was heartfelt. It was wonderful to see how both of these jazz masters showed open admiration for Charlap's amazingly facile pianism. They were also visibly taken with the artistry of Wong and Washington. This was an evening of good

Artistic Director Bill Charlap is at the piano, with Jimmy Heath and Benny Golson on tenor saxes, David Wong on bass as trumpeter Jeremy Pelt records the proceedings on his cell phone camera, at their Jazz in July rehearsal. Photo by Fran Kaufman.
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vibes all around, and a fitting tribute to two gentlemen who have contributed so much to making jazz the magic music that it is.

Songwriter Frank Loesser was the subject of the third 2017 Jazz in July concert. Loesser is best known for writing the words and music for one of the iconic Broadway musicals, Guys and Dolls. His catalog of tunes was extensive. His earliest songs were written for films in the ’30s and ’40s, where he started as a lyricist with composers like Burton Lane and Hoagy Carmichael before he started to write lyrics for songs that he composed both for films and as stand alone pop tunes. Beginning with Charley’s Aunt in 1948, he wrote the songs for five Broadway musicals. The others were Guys and Dolls, The Most Happy Fella, Greenwillow, and How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying. He did return to Hollywood in 1952 to write a wonderful collection of songs for the Danny Kaye vehicle Hans Christian Andersen.

Bill Charlap chose a nice mix of songs from all aspects of the Loesser catalog to present an eclectic exploration of the work of this giant of the Great American Songbook.

He opened the evening with a playful take on “Guys and Dolls” with Sean Smith and Carl Allen.

While vocalist Jane Monheit was on hand to give a taste of Loesser’s talents as a lyricist, it was the instrumentalists who shined on this occasion, giving his tunes imaginative journeys that would surely have pleased him.

Jon Gordon has been a regular participant in these events for many years, and this time out he concentrated on demonstrating that he is one of the current masters of the alto sax. He provided lovely accompaniment for Monheit’s singing of “I’ve Never Been in Love Before.” His imaginative playing on “Inch Worm,” a feature for him and Ingrid Jensen, who also sparkled, was a highlight of the evening. They were wonderfully supported by Renee Rosnes, who wrote the arrangement, Smith and Allen.

Ingrid Jensen proved to be the surprise hit of the evening. While she has been playing around New York for better than two decades, she has worked more often in contemporary jazz settings rather than in the mainstream styles featured at Jazz in July, so she was a new face for much of the audience. She played with fiery intensity, and exhibited an intriguing imagination.

Gary Smulyan is one of the first names currently associated with the baritone sax. His robust sound is instantly recognizable. On this occasion he was featured on a tour de force reading of “Slow Boat to China” that heated the house up considerably.

Charlap and Rosnes, the Mister and Missus Jazz of the keyboards, performed two piano duos. Their first offering was the wryly chosen “Never Will I Marry.” Later in the program, they selected a song whose sentiments accurately reflected their true feelings, “No Two People.” Their musical empathy is always evident, and these two performances reemphasized that reality.

When the major contributors to the Great American Songbook are listed, Loesser is often overlooked, but this concert certainly made the case for his being right up in the top tier. The concert gave ample evidence of why that is the case.

The first night of the second week of the Jazz in July series was titled Cole Porter: Easy to Love! The exclamation point was easy to justify for along with the wonderful and much loved Porter songs, there was the presence of artistic director Bill Charlap and his trio, including Peter Washington and Kenny Washington plus Harry Allen.

Emblazoned on the evening’s poster were the gratifying words “Sold Out,” a tribute to the drawing power of the featured singer of the evening Cécile McLorin Salvant who was returning to the Y stage, and who is arguably the most lauded young jazz singer of the last decade. Salvant was wonderful! If she was more low-keyed and restrained in her interpretations than is sometimes the case, her gorgeous voice with its wide range of colors, her expert use of dynamics, and her natural charm were on full display. Clearly, many in the audience were fans and were there to see her. She and her musical compatriots did not disappoint those lucky enough to be in attendance.

The concert began with Charlap playing a one chorus reflective version of “After You, Who?” before being joined by his trio for “Dream Dancing.” Kenny Washington’s masterful playing and powerful attack on the drums drove the group to deliver a strong swing performance.

Salvant was wonderful! …her gorgeous voice with its wide range of colors, her expert use of dynamics, and her natural charm were on full display. Clearly, many in the audience were fans and were there to see her.

Charlap then spoke of the composers Kern, Berlin, Arlen, Rodgers and Porter, designating them the “Mount Rushmore of theatre writers.” Calling Porter’s lyrics “emotional, sexy, risky,” he compared Porter’s writing process to Beethoven’s with regard to developing a song from an opening theme, using the latter’s famous Fifth Symphony as an example.

In introducing Salvant, Charlap called her “A star! As far as vocalists go today, she’s peerless, a miracle.” Salvant had no trouble living up to that buildup as she and Charlap delivered “You’re The Top,” in a medium swing tempo. Salvant was obviously enjoying delivering the clever and witty Porter lyrics, getting laughs when she compared the object of her affection to “Mickey Mouse” and “cellophane.” After this, she sang an appropriately moody “So In Love” to a slightly Latin-tinged arrangement. On “All Through The Night” Salvant started with the release to sole accompaniment from Charlap before the trio joined in, and picked up the tempo considerably. With Harry Allen arriving on stage, Salvant and crew gave a moving and appealing “Every Time We Say Goodbye.”

Allen and the trio performed “It’s Alright With Me,” beginning in a medium swing tempo before Allen took the solo spotlight, swinging harder with each subsequent chorus, his musical imagination never flagging. Allen concentrated on the lower registers of his instrument for “I Concentrate On You,” playing the melody in a straightforward manner.

Next up was a relatively unknown Porter song “It’s Bad For Me,” with Salvant giving the lyrics an appropriately playful reading. Salvant’s quiet rendering of the verse to “I Get A Kick Out Of You” preceded Allen and trio turning up the heat, delivering the chorus at a blistering tempo.

The first half closed with everyone joining in on a lightly swinging “You’d Be So Nice To Come Home To,” featuring a beautifully constructed Charlap solo.

Charlap opened the second half performing a solo take on “Anything Goes,” marked by his left hand striking unexpected bass notes for comic effect.
The other members of his trio joined him to play “In The Still Of The Night,” each chorus varying in tempo, with each member given a chance to shine in a solo spotlight.

“Where Have You Been?,” a rarely performed gem, was delightfully swung by Salvant, showcasing the wide range of vocal colors that she possesses, and using her lower register to highlight the words “love” and “despair” to good effect. “Most Gentlemen Don’t Like Love,” a song that’s long been in her repertoire, found Salvant on familiar ground, allowing for a nicely relaxed version that had a bit more spontaneity than on her other selections. Allen returned to assist Salvant on a slow, questioning version of “What Is This Thing Called Love?,” Allen answering Salvant’s questions with heartfelt obbligatos.

Charlap and Allen played a duo version of “Everything I Love,” with Charlap’s accompaniment keeping the focus on Porter’s lovely melody. The two then segued into “You Do Something To Me.” Charlap unleashed some nifty stride playing and Allen demonstrated his gift for constructing logical and highly appealing solos. At the conclusion of the number, Charlap gestured to his musical partner, calling him “the best there is.”

Salvant returned to join Charlap for a slow, rueful sounding performance of “Just One Of This Things.” Her somewhat sad and elegiac reading of the lyric was a highlight of the evening.

With everyone called back onstage, “Easy To Love” was done in an up-tempo fashion. The evening concluded appropriately with “Night And Day.” Charlap opened the chorus at a beguine tempo, moving into a relaxed medium swing groove. Allen’s appealing solo was effective and full of feeling.

Answering the audience’s request for an encore, they responded with a breathlessly, fast paced “From This Moment On,” which sent the audience home smiling and happy, having witnessed a most enjoyable and musically satisfying evening.

Pianos and pianists were the centers of attention for the fifth night of Jazz in July. The occasion was a program titled The Art of Tatum. Art Tatum was a giant among jazz pianists. He combination of technique and imagination was unique, and has served as a beacon for virtually all who followed him.

To honor his memory and legacy, Bill Charlap engaged three of his peers, each a distinctly different stylist. They were two veterans on the scene, Harold Mabern, 81 and Roger Kellaway, 77, and one of the brightest stars among the younger players, 31-year old Aaron Diehl. Charlap and the others played solo, and in various combinations, sometimes with a rhythm section of John Webber and Joe Farnsworth. Also on hand for occasional contributions was Eric Alexander.

Diehl was given an initial challenge, playing a transcribed version of an early Tatum recording of “Tiger Rag.” His execution was masterful, and an eye-opener to those in the audience who were unacquainted with him. When he played a two-piano version of “Tea for Two” in tandem with Charlap, they pushed each other to exciting heights. Charlap then played a very hip take on “Sophisticated Lady,” accompanied by Webber and Farnsworth.

It was now time for Mabern and Diehl to man the twin pianos, and with assistance from Webber and Farnsworth they behaved like two match play golfers challenging each other as they played on “Ain’t Misbehavin’.”

Diehl returned to play on Art Tatum’s version of Dvorák’s “Goin’ Home.” Once again, he demonstrated a deep affinity for the artistry of Tatum.

Kellaway wrote a number that is widely recognized, “Remembering You,” which served as the closing music for the widely popular television show All in the Family. Charlap opted to use this song to close the evening with Charlap and Mabern at one keyboard, while Diehl and Kellaway were seated together at the other, with Alexander, Webber and Farnsworth adding their musical thoughts as this enjoyable nod to Art Tatum concluded the evening to a heartily enthusiastic reception.

When the word jazz is mentioned, the first name that most true jazz enthusiasts should think of is the man who has consciously or unconsciously influenced every jazz player who arrived on the scene after him, Louis Armstrong.

To honor Armstrong, the man and his music, at the closing concert of the 2017 version of Jazz in July, Charlap assembled what was truly an all-star aggregation. The players included Warren Vaché, Jon Faddis, Brian Lynch, Ken Peplowski, John Allred, Nick Russo, Peter Washington and Paul Wells.

Much of the program was devoted to tunes played by Armstrong in the earlier stages of his amazing career. The opening number found the full cast blowing on an Armstrong classic from his Hot Seven group, “Potato Head Blues,” recorded in 1927. With Peplowski and Allred leaving the stage, Vaché, Faddis and Lynch shared the spotlight on a tune that Armstrong recorded on King Oliver’s band in 1923, “Chimes Blues.”

In the 1950s, Armstrong recorded many pop tunes that he turned into little masterpieces. One of the most popular was “A Kiss to Build a Dream On,” in this instance a feature for Faddis and Lynch.

Armstrong also contributed many compositions that became jazz standards. Vaché and Allred were front and center for the Armstrong classic “Swing That Music.” When memorable recorded tracks continued on page 46
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Armstrong are considered, at the top of many lists is his 1928 version of "West End Blues." His opening cadenza and scat vocal chorus are often mentioned as seminal moments in jazz history. Brian Lynch was given the honor of presenting the tune on this occasion, and he was merely superb. When the full band returned to the stage, they played "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," and lots of musical love was what the audience was receiving. They then closed the first set by tearing into "Cake Walking Babies From Home," with a band vocal, on this number that Armstrong recorded with Clarence Williams’s Blue Five in 1925.

To open the final set of Jazz in July 2017, another classic recording by Armstrong, his 1928 duet with Earl Hines on "Weather Bird," was considered by Vaché, Faddis, Lynch and Charlap. Inspired by Armstrong’s 1931 recording of "Stardust," Charlap, Washington and Wells played this standard of standards magnificently.

For those whose exposure to Armstrong initially occurred in the 1960s and beyond, the song that most would associate with him is "What a Wonderful World." John Allred gave it a beautiful rendition.

It was back to early Armstrong for the next selection by the full band, "Willie the Weeper," a tune that Armstrong recorded in 1927. It was a robust addition to the evening’s program.

"Sleepy Time Down South," a song that he first recorded in the 1930s, eventually became Armstrong’s theme song, one that he invariably played at his concerts. Vaché and Lynch were the cats given the privilege of addressing it for this concert.

To close the evening, another early Armstrong tune, "S.O.L. Blues," gave everyone a final opportunity to give their musical nods in the direction of the man affectionately known as Satchmo. (For those curious about the title, I recommend that you read Ricky Riccardi’s blog about the song that can be found at http://dippermouth.blogspot.com/2012/11/85-years-of-hot-seven-sol-bluesgully.html.)

This concert proved to be a special way to close this Jazz in July series. The players were universally in fine form. The horn arrangements provided by Dick Hyman were inventive and oh so easy on the ears. While the trumpet/cornet section received most of the attention, Peplowski’s clarinet and Allred’s trombone contributed mightily to the evening’s music. Charlap was his usual exceptional self, while Russo, Washington and Wells anchored the evening by providing outstanding rhythmic support.

Each of the 33 years that this series has been held, there has been one evening after another of outstanding mainstream jazz. The transition of the leadership of the series from Dick Hyman to Bill Charlap 13 years ago was a smooth one, as both of these gentlemen possess the knowledge, good taste and acute understanding of musicianship necessary to create interesting programs and to engage musicians of the highest quality to execute the them. It is the good fortune of those living in the metropolitan New York area to have this series available to them, and to have a location like the 92nd Street Y willing to provide the venue and support necessary to make it all happen.

Another commitment made it impossible for me to attend the concert on July 25. My good friend, Roger Schor, provided a sketch of the evening that I adapted for this review. Many thanks to Roger for his willingness to take the time to contribute his perceptive commentary to this piece. — Joe Lang

Other Views
By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

With two months having passed since my last column, I have accumulated a number of new releases that are worthy of your consideration.

It is almost a certainty that any album featuring arrangements by SAMMY NESTICO will be full of interesting charts that are accessible, yet full of surprises. On A Cool Breeze (SWR Music – 19039), the music is performed by the SWR BIG BAND from Germany. This is the fifth album that has resulted from collaborations between Nestico and the SWR Big Band. Six of the 14 tracks are Nestico originals, while the remaining selections are three jazz standards, “Along Came Betty,” “Round Midnight” and “Tippin’ In,” and five pop standards, “I’ll Follow My Secret Heart,” “Close Enough for Love,” “Moonlight on the Ganges,” “Frankie & Johnny” and “Poor Butterfly.” Never one to stand still, Nestico gives a contemporary feeling to each piece. The band is tight, swinging, and possesses a wealth of talented soloists. Sammy Nestico and a big band — perfect together! (www.amazon.com)

The music of Thelonious Monk is unique, and demanding for both the listener and the musicians who take on the challenge of playing it. One thing to accept right up front is that the Monk versions of his tunes are unique to him, and any attempts to capture his vision precisely are doomed to failure. It is the artists who think as distinctly outside of the box, as Monk did, who most effectively find their own ways to adapt his compositions to their visions. On MONK’estra, Volume 2 (Mack Avenue – 1125). JOHN BEASLY shows that his impressive first series of arrangements of Monk tunes was just a small taste of his genius for reimagining this music in ways that are exciting and surprising. Beasley does not go for the easy answers, rather, like Monk, he challenges his musicians, and those wise and brave enough to listen to his concepts. There are times when you will shake you head, and others when you will utter a “wow!” but ultimately you will be glad that you opened up your ears to his imaginative approaches to the 11 Monk compositions that he has included in this collection. (mackavenue.com)

DIASPORA is a self-produced album by Australian multi-instrumentalist MICHAEL MCQUAID containing 15 tracks of exuberantly joyous music. On this disc he plays clarinet, and is joined by American-born, but London-based pianist Andrew Oliver, and British drummer Nicholas D. Ball. McQuaid has a lovely tone with none of the shrillness that is sometimes present with this horn. Oliver is a perfect complement for McQuaid, and Ball keeps things right on time. They specialize in vintage tunes, and only a few, like the two Hoagy Carmichael classics “Star Dust” and “Lazy River,” would be familiar to the general listener, but once you hear these gentlemen play “I’m Walking Through Clover,” “Isn’t There a Little Love,” “Bright Star Blues,” or their fitting closer, “Farewell Blues,” and find your toe tapping uncontrollably, you will be hooked. Here are three cats from different origins making wonderful music together. (www.mcquaidjazz.com)

The DIVA Jazz Orchestra is a tight, swinging big band that is filled with players of individual brilliance. Three of them, drummer SHERRIE MARICLE, pianist JACKIE WARREN, bassist AMY SHOOK felt a particular musical affinity, and have formed a new offshoot from the big band, a trio that can be heard on 3Divas (DIVA Jazz Orchestra – 2017). It is an exciting and eclectic collection of seven tunes that cover much musical territory. There are three standards, “Beautiful Love,” “I Thought About You” and “In the Wee Small Hours of the
Morning; a country/pop classic, “Tennessee Waltz;” a bossa nova tune, “Favela;” and two more contemporary pop songs, “Sunshine on My Shoulder” and “The Beat Goes On.” Maricle has been leading the big band since its inception in 1992. She is the heart of the band, and one of the premier drummers in all of jazz. Warren has been a mainstay on the Cleveland jazz scene for many years, and her relatively recent association with the big band has met with critical acclaim. Based in the Baltimore/Washington area, Snook is also a recent participant on the big band. These three ladies can knock your socks off with their up tempo playing, yet are also capable of showing their sensitive sides in an equally impressive manner. The 3Divas is a welcome addition to the DIVA roster of groups. (divajazz.com)

■ THE BRAIN CLOUD brings classic jazz together with down home country music to create a unique fusion that is a pure delight. The leader, multi-instrumentalist Dennis Lichtman, who plays clarinet, mandolin and fiddle, is joined by the singular vocalist, Tamar Korn, guitarist/vocalist Skip Krevens, lap steel guitarist Raphael McGregor, bassist Andrew Hill and drummer Kevin Dorn to produce music that is fun and swinging. Their latest album, Live at Barbès (Triple Treble Music – 006), is a live recording that captures the excitement that they generate at their weekly appearances at one of the most venerable of Brooklyn’s music spots. Korn has a voice that is immediately recognizable, full of spirit, flexible, and unique. She uses it to swing the tunes, and create effects that seem to spring from her on a whim. Lichtman has swing in his soul no matter which instrument he takes in hand. The other players are equally adept at adding their voices to the overall sound of the band. They offer a program that mostly comprises country tunes, but they do sneak in a vintage pop tune here and there, as they do with “Comes Love,” “Lonesome and Sorry” and “If You Want the Rainbow” on this album. They are also liable to throw in an old jazz tune like “You Were Only Passing Time With Me,” a staple of King Oliver’s repertoire. If you are seeking a way to put a smile on your face, Live at Barbès is a terrific way to do so. (www.braincloudmusic.com)

■ It is fun to put on a disc by a performer who is new to my ears, and be blown away by what comes out of the speakers. This being the centennial year for Ella Fitzgerald, it seems that there will be no limit to the number of Ella tribute albums being released. When Ella Lives (Prophone – 168) by VIVIAN BUCZEK arrived in the mail, her name was unfamiliar. On reading the one-sheet I learned that she is from Sweden, so the expectations were limited. Well, there was a pleasant surprise when the music started. It was immediately apparent that Buczek was a lady who not only could sing, but was one of the finest singers to reach my ears in recent years. She handles lyrics in English like it was her native language. She has an instantly appealing voice. She reads lyrics with feeling and understanding. She has a wonderful jazz sense. Best of all, she sings songs that Ella Fitzgerald sang, like “Prelude to a Kiss,” “The Man I Love,” “Caravan” and “Lady Be Good,” but makes no attempt to imitate the First Lady of Song. Her support from an all-Swedish lineup of musicians is superb. The basic trio is pianist Martin Sjöstedt, bassist Niklas Fernqvist and drummer Johan Löfcrantz Ramsay, with occasional contributions from Mattias Stählin on vibraphone, Fredrik Lindborg on bass clarinet and tenor sax, Peter Asplund on trumpet and flughorn, and Karl-Martin Almqvist on tenor sax. Listen to Ella Lives, and you will want to find more albums by Vivian Buczek. (www.amazon.com)

■ In talking to singers about other singers who have influenced them, a name that is often cited is June Christy. Bassist/vocalist KATIE THIROUX must be a Christy fan, as she has chosen to name her new album Off Beat (Capri – 74146), the title of a 1961 album by Christy that contains the title song that Thiroux uses to open her program. Christy had a propensity to choose many songs for her albums that were relatively unconventional, and Thiroux does the same here. The vocals are “Off Beat,” “When Lights Are Low,” “Why Did I Choose You,” “Ray’s Idea,” a wordless vocal, “Some Cats Know,” “When the Wind Was Green,” and “Willow Weep for Me.” Her own “Slow Dance with Me,” “Brotherhood of Man” and “Happy Reunion” are instrumental selections. Thiroux has a laid back, jazzy vocal style with a voice that is easy on the ears. She has Justin Kaufflin on piano and Matt Witek on drums, with Ken Peplowski, tenor sax and clarinet, and Roger Neumann, tenor and soprano saxes, joining in on many tracks apiece. Two tracks worth noting are the two-tenor front line version of “Happy Reunion,” and Thiroux’s interesting take on “Willow Weep for Me,” where she supports her vocal with just her bass. Katie Thiroux has played many prestigious gigs, and has received critical acclaim in her still young career. Off Beat should add to her already significant following. (www.capricord.com)

■ Day Time on the Radio (Real Gone Music – 0590) is the latest release from Real Gone Music of tracks from radio and television from great pop vocalists. In this case it is DORIS DAY, and the selections are from Day’s radio show that aired in 1952 and 1953. The selections are duets with a variety of people, singers like Howard Keel and Gordon McRae, and others not known as vocalists like Kirk Douglas, John Agar and Broderick Crawford. While much of the program is not classic vocalizing, it is a lot of fun that should be particularly enjoyable for those of a certain age who remember the personalities involved. The patter is somewhat dated, but should bring smiles to your faces. This is a step back in time, and some innocent nostalgia is always welcome. (www.realgonemusic.com)

■ By 1950 NAT “KING” COLE had primarily focused his career on the vocal side of his talents, but the concert on Nat King Cole Trio Zurich 1950 (TCB – 024320), taken from an archived Swiss radio broadcast, his pianistic artistry is extensively on display, with vocals on only five of the 15 tracks. Ironing Ashby on guitar, Joe Comfort on bass and Jack Costanzo on bongos accompany Cole, and he gives each of them ample solo opportunities. This album gives a nice taste of why Cole was considered such an exceptional jazz pianist. He was a wonderfully articulate player, and swung like mad. His bandmates were also fine players who perfectly complemented him. On the vocal tracks he carries his jazz instincts into his singing. Cole was at the peak of his powers when this live performance was captured, and having it finally available in permanent form, with good sound quality, is a welcome gift for those who dig the sounds of greatness. (www.challengerecords.com)

■ When choosing songs for his new album, At the Movies (BOS Entertainment – 6823), UK vocalist GARY WILLIAMS made a lot of interesting choices. He looked as far back as 1935 and Top Hat for “Isn’t This a Lovely Day,” and forward to 2005’s MirrorMask for “(They Long to Be) Close to You,” a song that was actually written in 1963. He dug into the Disney catalog to find “Baby Mine” from Dumbo (1941), “He’s a Tramp” from Lady and the Tramp (1955), “The Bare Necessities” from The Jungle Book (1967), “Ev’rybody Wants to Be a Cat” from The Aristocats (1970), and “When She Loved Me” from Toy Story 2 (1999). Also making the cut were songs from four Elvis Presley films, Girl Happy (“Puppet on a String”), Viva Las Vegas (“I Need Somebody to Lean On”), Kid Galahad (“Home Is Where the Heart Is”), and G.I. Blues (“Pocket Full of Rainbows”). The other selections came from Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (“Spooky”), Live a Little, Love a Little (“Almost in Love”), Love Actually (“Both Sides Now”), and Saturday Night Fever (“How Deep Is Your Love”). This is an eclectic collection, but Williams has found a way to make it all work. He has a smooth baritone that is easily accessible, and the ability to bring out the best in each song. A one-word review would be “Delightful!” (www.garywilliams.co.uk)
Morris Jazz

The Bickford Theatre at the Morris Museum, Morristown
Tickets/Information: 973-971-3706

So, the annual Bickford Summer JazzFest has come and gone, leaving in its wake so many happy and satisfied jazz enthusiasts. Great crowds, great music and even great food trucks! Now onto the new 2017-2018 season of the Bickford Jazz Showcase.

The season opens on Thursday, September 28 at 7:30 PM with the big band, big sound, high energy George Gee Swing Orchestra.

A native New Yorker, George Gee always loved music. He grew up with rock ’n’ roll and R&B but in his teens, he also developed a powerful passion for jazz — especially the big band styles of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Benny Goodman, Cab Calloway and other legends. This passion continued into his first year at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. George created a big band music hour for the school’s radio station; off-air, he often spoke of his true long-time dream: leading his own big band. The station manager asked George to interview William “Count” Basie before a campus concert in 1979. This inspiring conversation changed George’s life… the very next day, he reached out to fellow jazz players to create a 17-piece big band. The rest as they say is history.

Music by the George Gee Swing Orchestra sets new standards for modern big band performance, elegantly balancing genuine big band traditions with exhilarating modernism. The orchestra has played for Ozzy Osbourne’s 50th birthday party, the Royal Family of Jordan, the Zurich Swing City Festival, the “I Love Jazz” Festival tour in Brazil. And so many more! They play weekly at the Swing 46 Jazz & Supper Club in NYC. Now, they’ll play at the Bickford. Tickets are $25 for Morris Museum members and $30 for non-members.

Plan on picnicking with us before the George Gee concert as we once again provide food trucks to welcome in the new season.

We keep the music swinging on Thursday, October 4 at 7:30 PM with Swingadelic, the best little big band, as they honor the 100th anniversary of the birth of one the greatest jazz singers of the 20th Centur with “A Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald.”

Swingadelic began in 1998 as the neo-swing movement was cresting. Upright bassist Dave Post gathered his jazz and blues playing friends together to play engagements at New York City’s Supper Club, Swing 46 and Windows On The World, the former restaurant atop of the World Trade Center. Swingadelic has performed at Lincoln Center’s Midsummer Night Swing, NJPAC, and at many festivals, including Bele Chere (Asheville NC), MusikFest (Allentown PA) the CD 109 Jazz & Blues Festival (Red Bank, NJ), the Sanofi-Aventis JazzFest (Madison NJ) and the Morristown Jazz & Blues Festival (Morristown, NJ). Tickets are $20 Morris Museum members/ $25 for non-members. — Eric Hafen

All shows start at 7:30 PM and are assigned seating; for best seats, order early.

COMING EVENTS:
Nicki Parrott Trio in October; November 13, Annual Bickford Benefit Band; Dick Hyman in December

Jazz For Shore

Midweek Jazz at the Arts & Community Center at Ocean County College, Toms River
Tickets/Information: 732-255-0500

For several decades, a common narrative in the music press has been “Is Jazz Dead”? Worrying writers point to aging musicians and aging audiences and diminishing album sales and wonder how long can the music last. Considering those articles have been written for (at least) the past 50 years, I’m happy to report that there’s no funerals for the music on the MidWeek Jazz schedule at Ocean County College. Instead, upcoming concerts will showcase some young, emerging artists who aim to ensure that jazz remains a vibrant, living, breathing music well into the 21st century and beyond.

Vocalist and pianist Champian Fulton also started performing as a child; her debut gig as a bandleader was at Clark Terry’s 75th Birthday when she was only 10-years-old! Now all grown up, Fulton has been called “the most gifted pure jazz singer of her generation” by Mark Stryker of the Detroit Free Press and is a mainstay on festivals around the world. She will be making her MidWeek Jazz debut on September 19. She’ll be leading a quartet with father Stephen Fulton on flugelhorn, Dor Samoha on bass and Fuku Tainaka, performing songs from her two most recent acclaimed albums, After Dark, a tribute to Fulton’s hero, Dinah Washington, and Speechless, a collection of swinging originals.

Fulton is not only a gifted pianist and singer but she’s also the living embodiment of how a young jazz musician can use the tools of social media to her presence felt on a very competitive scene.

Followed by over 10,000 people on Facebook, Fulton posts often, shares videos from performances, uploads daily video diaries of her goings-on in her life and has frequent “Facebook
Jazz At The Sanctuary
1867 Sanctuary at Ewing | 101 Scotch Road, Ewing
Tickets/Information: 609-392-6409
The NJJS co-sponsors jazz events at 1867 Sanctuary and members receive a $5 discount on admission. This Romanesque Revival church hall has exceptional acoustics, padded seating and is wheelchair-accessible. Concerts have varied start times and are either one 90-minute set, or two sets with intermission. Free light refreshments (including cookies!) are served.

SEPTEMBER:
Sun – Sept. 10, 7:30 PM: B.D. Lenz Trio. Modern jazz with B.D. Lenz (guitar), James Rosocha (bass) and Joe Falcey (drums)

COMING SHOWS:
Fri – Oct. 13, 8 PM: Alex Otey Trio
Sun – Oct. 29, 3 PM: Wenonah Brooks
Fri – Nov. 10, 8 PM: Ben Rosenblum
Fri – Dec. 8, 8 PM: Eric Mintel Quartet
Fri – Jan. 12, 8 PM: B.D. Lenz Trio
Sun – Jan. 14, 3 PM: Luiz Simas
Sat – Jan. 20, 8 PM: Jack Furlong Quartet
Sat – Jan. 27, 8 PM: Stephen Yee Quartet

$20 for general admission and $5 for students with ID. Group tickets (10 or more in advance) are $15 each. Tickets are available online, at the box office 609-392-6409 or by email: 1867sanctuary@preservationnj.org.

*Round Jersey concerts are produced in conjunction with the New Jersey Jazz Society.

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.

Founded in 1972, the Society is run by a board of directors who meet monthly to conduct the business of staging our music events, awarding scholarships to New Jersey college jazz students, and conducting Generations of Jazz programs in local school systems, 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 for more information on any of our programs and services:
- e-mail updates
- Student scholarships
- Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp Collaborative Jazz Concerts
- Ocean County College Bickford Theatre/Morris 1867 Sanctuary at Ewing NJJS supports JazzFeast presented by Palmer Square, Downtown Princeton.

NJJS is a proud supporter of the Morristown Jazz & Blues Festival, the NJCU President's Jazz Festival in Jersey City, and more.

Member Benefits
What do you get for your dues?

- **Jersey Jazz Journal** — a monthly journal considered the best jazz society publications in the country, packed with feature articles, photos, jazz calendars, upcoming events and news about the NJ Jazz Society.
- **FREE Jazz Socials** — 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. 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.
- **FREE listings** — Musician members get listed FREE on our website.

Join NJJS
**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS** Member benefits are subject to update.

- **Family $45**: See above for details.
- **Family 3-YEAR $115**: See above for details.
- **Youth $15**: For people under 25 years of age. Be sure to give the year of your birth on the application where noted.
- **Give-a-Gift $25**: Members in good standing may purchase one or more gift memberships at any time for only $25 each. Please supply the name and address of giftee. Good for new memberships only.
- **Fan ($75 – $99/family)**
- **Jazzzer ($100 – $249/family)**
- **Sideman ($250 – $499/family)**
- **Bandleader $500+/family**
- **Corporate Membership ($100)**

To receive a membership application, for more information or to join:
Call 973-610-1308 or email membership@njjs.org or visit www.njjs.org
OR simply send a check payable to “NJJS” to: New Jersey Jazz Society, c/o Mike Katz, 382 Springfield Ave. Suite 217, Summit NJ 07901.

——— Bob Kull

Live” conversations with her fans. Her engaging personality is a breath of fresh air, as his her music, a joyful brand of swing that conjures up her heroes such as Red Garland and Erroll Garner. Visit www.grunincenter.org to purchase ticket to MidWeek Jazz shows (you can now subscribe to the entire series) and invest in jazz’s very future!  —— Ricky Riccardi

All shows 8–9:30 PM; $22 regular admission, $18 for seniors and $12 for students.

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B.D. Lenz
From the Crow’s Nest
By Bill Crow

When I was a child, the only musical entertainment in our house other than my mother’s upright piano was an old Edison windup cylinder record player. We owned about a dozen cylinders, one of which was a 1917 World War One song by Emil Breitenfield called “The Last Long Mile.” The chorus went:

Oh, it’s not the pack that
you carry on your back
Or the Springfield on your shoulder,
Nor the five inch crust
of Clinton County dust
That makes you feel
your limbs are growing older,
And it’s not the hike
on the hard turnpike
That wipes away your smile,
Nor the socks of sister’s
That raise the blooming blisters,
It’s the last long mile!

I learned that song around 1930. Some 80 years later, I read Doug Ramsey’s excellent biography of Paul Desmond, in which I discovered that Paul’s birth name was Breitenfield, and that Emil — the composer of that song — was his father. How I wish I had known that fact while Paul was still with us! He always appreciated good jokes and stories, and I can hear him laughing as I imagine singing him his father’s song.

Scott Robinson sent me this note: “Kathy Ridl is a fine violist/composer/arranger who also does excellent graphics work, and helps me with the CD covers for ScienSonic Laboratories. Last night she was making up a photo collage of musicians playing at the Lab, and I was bothered by the bright yellow foam ear plug that stuck out of Pat O’Leary’s ear. I’m very much in favor of using earplugs, and wear them all the time myself, but this bright yellow thing sticking out of his head among the mostly brown colors was very distracting. Kathy tried to Photoshop it out, but couldn’t get it to look natural. So I found another shot of Pat, without the earplug, and asked if she could just take that ear, or part of it, and drop it into the other shot…to which Kathy replied, ‘I’m charging you extra for cartilage!’ (She did the job, though, and it came out great!)”

In Westchester County, Ron LoPinto gets together regularly with several trumpet players who like to exchange stories. One of them told of a Christmas concert at the Garden City Cathedral back in the late ’90s where Jerry Marshall and Joe Greco were performing Handel’s Messiah with the Long Island Choral Society. Marshall was in the first chair, and they were all settled in comfortably, waiting for the downbeat, when Greco said to Marshall, “By the way, Bill Vacchiano is in the audience.” (For those who don’t know, Vacchiano was the supreme trumpeter and teacher of his day.) Reportedly, Marshall came out of his comfort zone quickly, and under that kind of pressure, did his best ever performance of that marvelous piece, later receiving kudos from Vacchiano.

Jason Ingram once got a call to play Sammy Davis Jr.’s show. Davis had just closed a two-week run at Harrah’s Tahoe and planned to surprise the audience and Bill Harrah by showing up the next day, unannounced, as the opening act, in honor of Harrah’s birthday. (Jason got the call because the trombonist who had just finished the two-week run wasn’t available to play the extra show.) Jason was on the bandstand a half hour before the show, looking nervously through Sammy’s four-inch-thick trombone book. George Roberts, the bass trombonist, tried to put him at ease by pointing out a few charts that he thought Sammy would perform. It was impossible to really prepare for the show because the conductor would just call out tunes as the rhythm section vamped. Roberts told Jason to relax and enjoy the experience. “These kind of opportunities don’t come by every day.” Jason took his advice and, as the audience went wild, he enjoyed what he says was a truly amazing show.

Years ago Kirby Tassos had a gig at a dinner theater that served wine. There was a refrigerator in the green room where the wine was stored in large cardboard boxes. At intermission Kirby would discreetly pour himself a glass, trying not to be seen by the producer or get busted for drinking on the job. One day, after a few trips to the green room that he thought had been undetected, the producer said, “Kirby, the next time you get up to get a glass of wine, would you get me one?”

Kirby also sent me another story about the great flutist Julius Baker: At one of his flute camps, Baker, age 80, played a Bach flute sonata and received thunderous applause. He replied, “Hey, you should have heard me when I was 7!”

Herb Gardner treasures the association he has had with many legendary older jazz musicians. But some people may have thought Herb was also one of the old guard. One lady came up to him and asked, “Didn’t you die?”
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-$115 membership, and new members with a † received a gift membership. Members who joined at a patron level appear in bold.

Renewed Members
Mr. Rod Anderson,
Princeton, NJ *
Dr. Jack Aylward,
Watchung, NJ
David Bailin, Morristown, NJ
Mr. John Becker,
Whippany, NJ
Richard Berggren,
Maplewood, NJ
Mr. Robert J. Bialy,
Cedar Grove, NJ
Irwin Blake, Somerset, NJ
Dr. Robert Bloom,
Mountain Lakes, NJ
Peggy Burke, Morristown, NJ
Robert Bush,
Burlington Flats, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Carr,
Neptune City, NJ
James Clarke, Chatham, NJ
Ms. Patricia C. Curry,
Vauxhall, NJ
Robert Donlan,
Mountainside, NJ
Mr. Charles H. Engler,
Clinton, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fick,
Taneytown, MD
Jan & Bob Findlay,
Flanders, NJ
Stephen Fuller, Newark, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Vito Gallo,
Summit, NJ
Howard & Barbara Gerver,
Montville, NJ
Peter Grice, Flanders, NJ *

Paul Gutheil, Glen Rock, NJ
Ms. Barbara Hann,
Bridgewater, NJ - Patron
Ms. Lorelei Harris,
Morristown, NJ
Barbara Hassenfeld,
Fort Lee, NJ
Mr. Scott Heavner, Wayne, NJ
Mr. John Herr, Syracuse, NY
Ms. Judith Jacob,
Stanhope, NJ
Mr. Michael Katz
& Jackie Wetcher,
Chatham, NJ - Patron
Mr. Charles W. King,
Florham Park, NJ
Dr. & Mrs. Richard L. Klein,
Tenafly, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Krug,
Normandy Beach, NJ

New Members
Lawrence Berman,
Wyckoff, NJ *
Donald Braden,
South Orange, NJ
Dale Caswell,
Hillsborough, NJ
Susan Head, Far Hills, NJ
Ian Heisler, Denville, NJ
Patrick Higgins,
Willow Grove, PA
Maitland Jones, Hopewell, NJ
William McGreevy,
Barnegat, NJ
Dhalil Sadiq, Pennsauken, NJ
Michael Yaw, Jersey City, NJA

Moving? Please e-mail your new address to: editor@njjs.org; or mail to: NJ Jazz Society, c/o 382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217, Summit, NJ 07901.

After 15 years of trying, WBGO host Sheila Anderson, curator of the Newark Museum’s Jazz in the Garden, finally corralled Russell Malone for the series. On July 20, the guitarist and his quartet gave a worth-the-wait 90-minute performance in the museum’s sunny atrium that included bluesy jazz, jazzy blues, standards (“Put On a Happy Face,”), pop (“Don’t It Make My Brown Eyes Blue”), and a soft and pretty, you-could-hear-a-pin-drop solo rendition of “A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square” — all finished off with a raucous rock guitar outro.
Fellow guitarist Dave Stryker was in the house, standing at the top of the atrium’s entry stairs, enjoying a piece of chocolate cake and nodding his head in approval.

— Tony Mottola

JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS
questions on page 4

1. Louie Bellson
2. Betty Carter
3. Chris Connor
4. Cleo Laine
5. Yusef Lateef
6. Ma Rainey
7. Billie Holiday

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47 Edison Pl., 2nd floor
973-642-8400
Jazz Mondays 8:00 - 11:00 pm

THE PRIORY
233 West Market St.
973-242-8012
Fridays, 7-No Cover

New Brunswick
DELTA’S
19 Dennis St.
973-204-1551
Saturdays, 7-11 pm

DUE MARI
78 Albany St.
973-296-1600
Saturdays, 7-11 pm
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz Fridays 6:30-9:30 pm

THE HYATT REGENCY
NEW BRUNSWICK
2 Albany St.
732-873-1234
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz Thursdays, 8-10:30 pm, INC BAR AND KITCHEN
302 George St.
973-640-0553
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz Wednesdays 8:00-11 pm

STATE THEATRE
15 Livingston Ave.
973-246-7469

GARDEN STATE ALE HOUSE
378 George St.
732-543-2408
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz & jam session, Tuesdays, 9:30 pm

Newfield
LAKE HOUSE RESTAURANT
611 Taylor Pl.
856-694-5700

Newton
THE NEWTON THEATRE
234 Spring St.
973-383-3700
Occasional jazz concerts – contact venue for schedule

The Name Dropper
Recommendations may be e-mailed to editor@njjs.org.

NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI JAZZ BIG BAND – The 5th annual performance, under the direction of Richard Lowenthal at 6 pm on September 15 at the J. Owen Grundy Pier at Exchange Place in Jersey City. The NYC skyline and Statue of Liberty will have to compete for attention with guest artists Cyndy Aimée and Jon Faddis. Rain or shine, FREE.

BRAZILIAN JAZZ WITH HELIO ALVES – at Shanghai Jazz, Madison on September 16. Sambas and spring rolls, what more could you want on a Saturday night? Two sets at 6:30 and 8:30 pm. No cover.

SANDY SASSO – at the Ocean Township Library on September 20 at 2:30 pm. Browse first, then while away a Wednesday afternoon hour with some sweet jazz, sung by a lady with “a rich and darkly hued voice paired with an unerring sense of swing” (Hot House Magazine). FREE.

BUCKY PIZZARELLI, JERRY BRUNO AND RUSS KASSOFF – at the Glen Rock Inn at 7 pm on September 28. Bucky, Jerry, and one of Frank’s last piano players. Thursday is Prime Rib Night! For reservations, call 201-819-1870. $15 cover.

Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!

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