“Professor” Adrian Cunningham and his Old School Band made their Suncoast Jazz Classic debut and played sets throughout the weekend, including a CD release party for their latest Arbors album, *Swing It Out!* Here the leader pays close attention to bassist Jim Robertson’s solo on November 17. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.

**Everything Old Is New Again**

By Mitchell Seidel

“Everything we’re playing tonight is prior to 1923,” half-seriously joked trumpeter Dave Tatrow of Wally’s Warehouse Waifs, performing in the ballroom for the pre-festival sponsors’ dinner for the 2017 Suncoast Jazz Classic in November. His quip referred to BMI and ASCAP licensing rights, but it could just as easily have meant the repertoire of a good number of repeat performers at the 27th annual event. Indeed, Tatrow and the Waifs have been performing at the event since the turn of the century (21st, not 20th). Despite

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NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

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Prez Sez
By Mike Katz President, NJJS

This marks my final “Prez Sez” column (it’s hard to believe I have written 55 of them), because having served you as your president for five years, I have decided not to seek re-election to that position. As far as I am aware, mine has been the longest consecutive tenure of a president of the Society, and I feel the time has come to turn the reins over to new leadership. Since Kate Casano has decided not to continue as Treasurer, I have agreed to serve going forward in my previously held position. The rest of our new slate of board officers as elected at the December 10 annual meeting are: Cydney Halpin, president; Jay Dougherty, executive vice president; Irene Miller, secretary; Pete Grice, membership vice president; Carrie Jackson, music vice president and Sandy Josephson, publicity vice president. In addition to myself, Ted Clark, Jay Dougherty and Mitchell Seidel were elected to new terms on the board for directors by the membership attending the meeting.

To briefly recap my time as President, we held five successful Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomps, served as co-sponsor of the Princeton JazzFeast, Morristown Jazzfest and various other concerts and events, awarded numerous scholarships to jazz studies students at five New Jersey colleges and universities having jazz studies majors and continued with our Generations of Jazz program which we bring into local schools, as well as published Jersey Jazz magazine 11 times a year. There were also some disappointments, the main ones being the discontinuance of Jazzfest due to budgetary constraints and increased competition, and the continuing decline in our membership numbers despite strenuous efforts to recruit new members. I am, however, happy to report that I leave my post with the Society in better financial shape than it was when I first took office, due in large measure to the institution of an annual fund drive last year and our recent successful 45th anniversary concert at Drew University.

I do want to take this opportunity to publicly thank some of those who have helped me in the governance of the Society during my term of office. First and foremost, Executive Vice President Stew Schiffer, who during that entire time served as my “wingman,” who is also not seeking reelection. In addition to his drumming skills, Stew was a great person to bounce ideas off of, who contributed many of his own ideas, and who helped me address and resolve some occasionally difficult situations. Kate Casano did a great job as Treasurer, keeping the books and seeing to it that funds received were properly accounted for and bills paid on time, and creating easy to understand monthly and annual financial statements. Irene Miller, and before her, Al Parmet, faithfully kept the minutes of the monthly Board meetings. Mitchell Seidel as Music VP programmed all the Pee Wee Stomps during my tenure, as well as the very popular monthly member

NJJS Bulletin Board

Member Discount Claim your member privilege! Get free admission to NJJS socials, discounts to music events, discounts from partners!

NJJS Members Discounts Hibiscus Restaurant, Morristown and The Crossroads, Garwood offer NJJS members a discount of 10% off their check. The Berrie Center at Ramapo College offers NJJS members 5% off event tickets. $5 ticket discount for monthly Salem Roadhouse Cafe jazz nights.

FREE Jazz Socials . . . . ongoing. Join us for music and mingling. Free for members, $10 non-members (applicable to membership) with just a $10 venue minimum. Watch calendar page 3 for upcoming dates and details. Beyond the schmooze, there are some serious musical prizes raffled off at our socials!!

Stay tuned to www.njjs.org
As far as I am aware, mine has been the longest consecutive tenure of a president of the Society, and I feel the time has come to turn the reins over to new leadership.

socials. Pete Grice, and before him Caryl Anne McBride, handled membership, with the assistance of that star recruiter of new members, Sheilia Lenga. As Publicity VP, Sandy Josephson was instrumental in creating publicity materials and maintaining relationships with local media. Cydney Halpin and committee produced an outstanding 45th anniversary concert this year. Lynn Redmile managed our first annual fund drive last year, and is running our current fund drive. James Pansulla, and Jack Sinkway before him, ran our CD bin, shlepping CDs, LPs and books to and from events and overseeing sales, including our recently instituted program selling used CDs donated by members or their families. And last but surely not least, Tony Mottola and Linda Lobdell for putting out month after month our award-winning Jersey Jazz, the finest non-commercial jazz publication in the country. Thanks also to Kate Casano and Lynn Redmile, who are not seeking reelection to the Board. It is always at the risk of leaving someone out listing people deserving of thanks, and I probably have done so, and for that I apologize.

As far as the music side of things is concerned, I am glad to note the continuing high quantity and quality of jazz here in New Jersey and elsewhere in the metropolitan area, as performed by both veterans and emerging new artists, a number of whom have graced our stages and those of events we have co-sponsored. Recognition is due to the increased interest in the past few years in traditional “hot” jazz, largely in Manhattan and Brooklyn and especially among younger audiences. At the same time, it is sad to note the number of jazz luminaries that have passed away during my time in office, who unfortunately are too numerous to mention here, but have been the subjects of obituaries in Jersey Jazz’s “Big Band in the Sky.”

Finally, I do want to give a shout-out to one of our longest standing musician members, the great singer Marlene VerPlanck, who last weekend performed a program of Irving Berlin songs as part of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center’s “American Songbook” Series. Accompanied by Mike Renzi on piano, Jay Leonhart on bass and Ron Vincent on drums, Marlene was in fine form, covering many songs from Mr. Berlin’s extensive stage and movie repertory, and she enthralled the capacity audience in NJPAC’s Chase Room of about 500 people, including former New Jersey governor Brendan Byrne. We are very proud of member Marlene and wish her continued success as she continues her storied career.

Thanks for reading this, and I’ll see you around!

Like this issue of Jersey Jazz? Have it delivered right to your mailbox 11 times a year. Simply join NJJS to get your subscription. See page 51 for details. or visit www.njjs.org.

A New Jersey Jazz Society membership makes a great birthday gift! Plus, if you are already a member, a gift membership costs just $25! See page 51 for details!

for updates and details.

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Funding for the NJJS Jazz Socials program has been made possible in part by Morris Arts through the N.J. State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.
1. The English-born pianist moved to the U.S. after marrying a well-known Dixieland cornetist from Chicago. A Grammy and inductions into the NEA Jazz Masters and National Radio Hall of Fame capped a career that included 33 years hosting a weekly NPR show playing duets with hundreds of other pianists.

2. The tenor giant Lester Young conferred the title “Sir” on this pianist-organist after he played with the Benny Moten band at age 12. Gigs with the Lucky Millinder and Illinois Jacquet big bands ensued before he joined small groups led by Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins and Buck Clayton. His best-known composition is “Robbins’ Nest.”

3. The Tulsa-born, Detroit-raised trumpeter played in bands led by Lionel Hampton, Count Basie and Andy Kirk, then heard Charlie Parker on radio and took up bebop. He played and recorded with Parker before drugs and discrimination derailed his career in the 1950s. Later he taught music and led a big band briefly in New York.

4. The swing-era clarinetist is best-known by a nickname he was tagged with long before a beloved comic strip adopted that same sobriquet. He served in a WW II Army Air Force band, switching from tenor to clarinet because the latter was easier to march with. He played in the Benny Goodman and Jack Teagarden bands, joined Louis Armstrong’s All-Stars (1958-60), led the Glenn Miller ghost band and got TV exposure playing with Lawrence Welk.

5. The Detroit pianist was the oldest of three jazz great brothers, the others playing drums and trumpet. He was named an NEA Jazz Master in 1989 in the midst of an illustrious career that saw him accompanying Ella Fitzgerald from 1948-53 and excel in both swing and bop settings.

6. The Pittsburgh-born tap dancer-turned-singer was an innovator of vocalese, and is credited with putting lyrics to James Moody’s famous solo on “I’m in the Mood for Love.” He was shot to death in 1979 at Baker’s Keyboard Lounge in Detroit by a disgruntled dancer he had fired years earlier, though the suspect was eventually acquitted.

Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 49)

1918’s Jazz Babies (Part I)

Last year was a landmark for celebrating jazz centennials, with Dizzy, Ella, Monk, Buddy and a number of other luminaries having made their first appearances in 1917. Not so many huge stars were born in 1918, but a pair of NEA Jazz Master pianists who entertained us into their 90s will be celebrated on their 100th birth anniversaries during the new year.

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The Editor’s Pick
By Tony Mottola
Jersey Jazz Editor

“NEW” PEGGY LEE FROM AUDIOPHILE RECORDS

The George H. Buck Jr. Jazz Foundation was created by George Buck in 1986 to maintain the catalog of the record labels that he founded and acquired. The collection features Dixieland, big band, blues, R&B, gospel and cabaret music. The Elizabeth, NJ-born Buck, who died in 2013, started his first label, Jazzology Records, in 1949 when he recorded a band in New York City that consisted of three of his favorite musicians — Wild Bill Davison, Tony Parenti and Art Hodes — becoming part of the first wave of small independent record companies. The Foundation operates in the French Market of New Orleans, issuing previously unavailable or out-of-print music and new recordings on nine labels.

A recent release by the Foundation’s Audiophile Records label is the two-disc Peggy Lee World Broadcast Recordings, 1955, featuring music Lee recorded for the World Program Service, a company that provided original music for syndication to radio stations. (Buck acquired the company in 1965.) Lee assembled her nightclub band and over fourteen hours in four sessions in February and August of 1955, recorded 49 short tracks in one or two takes, mainly from head arrangements figured out on the fly. The result is a minimalist gem, the quintessential midcentury nightclub act, without the clinking glasses and murmured conversations, performed by a master of the art at the peak of her powers.

The selections are mostly familiar standards and include songs from the 1920s Lee recorded for the film Pete Kelly’s Blues that same year, pared-down versions of her Decca recordings of the day like “Love Me or Leave Me,” along with her own compositions “It’s a Good Day” and “Sans Souci.”

The singer is backed by a cracklejack combo led by pianist Gene DiNovi, with Bill Pitman featured on guitar and a cleverly used harp played by Stella Castellucci on moptile cuts. Pete Candoli is added on trumpet for tracks on disk two. Many arrangements feature a Latin flavor with Jack Costanzo on bongos. Overall the spare backing allows Lee to stretch out as a jazz singer.

The release is accompanied by a glossy 12-page booklet with informative notes by Lee biographer James Gavin. You can learn more about the Foundation at www.jazzology.com, including their discount memberships and the informative Jazzology newsletter.
Sunday line up:
8-10AM - WBG0 Swing Party with Bob Porter
10AM-2PM - Singers Unlimited with Michael Bourne
2-4PM - American Jazz with Dick Golden
4-8PM - Sunday Afternoon Jazz with Rob Crocker
Big Band in the Sky

George Avakian, 98, record producer/executive, March 15, 1919, Armavir, Russia — November 22, 2017, New York City. In the 1979 Woody Allen movie, Manhattan, Isaac Davis, the character played by Allen, asks, "Why is life worth living?" Then, he answers, "Well, there are certain things that make it worthwhile." One of those things was, "Louis Armstrong's recording of 'Potato Head Blues'." In a 1997 Wall Street Journal article, writer John McDonough recalled the quote and added, "Maybe it was because Mr. Avakian enabled him to hear it at an impressionable age."

Avakian, whose parents moved to the United States shortly after he was born, loved jazz as a teenager. Then, as a sophomore at Yale, he persuaded Decca Records to let him record guitarist Eddie Condon and other musicians who had been headliners on the Chicago jazz scene in the late '20s and early '30s. Up until that time, most jazz records were singles. The resulting Chicago Jazz was a set of six 10-inch 78 rpm discs that is generally considered to be the first full-length jazz album. The album also included a 12-page booklet providing listeners with information about what was on the records. That marked the beginning of liner notes.

Shortly after that, Avakian was hired by Columbia Records and charged with accumulating and releasing a series of jazz reissues featuring artists such as Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Duke Ellington and Bessie Smith. In the late '40s, he pioneered the development of the 33 rpm long playing record, releasing such albums as Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert, Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy (1954), and Ambassador Satch (1956). Among his other accomplishments at Columbia:

• Bringing Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis to the label.
• Signing Johnny Mathis and managing his development into a top selling superstar.
• Persuading Armstrong to record the German theater song, "Mack the Knife".
• Supervising Duke Ellington's career-reviving performance at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival.

He left Columbia to briefly join World Pacific records before becoming head of artists and repertoire at Warner Brothers' new record division from 1959-1962. Then, he moved away from jazz to sign the Everly Brothers and a young comedian named Bob Newhart. In 1962, he moved to RCA Victor Records and returned to jazz by producing albums by such artists as alto saxophonist Paul Desmond and tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins. In the mid-'60s, he became an independent producer and manager, and one of his first clients was the avant-garde saxophonist and flutist Charles Lloyd. He returned to Columbia in the late '90s to oversee a series of jazz reissues on CD.

Every Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 7:15, tuba player and attorney David Ostwald leads the Louis Armstrong Eternity Band at New York’s Birdland jazz club. Ostwald and Avakian were friends, and in recent years, Avakian celebrated his birthday at the club during Ostwald’s weekly gig.

On Wednesday, November 22, 2017, the day Avakian died, the Louis Armstrong Eternity Band celebrated Avakian’s life. Allaboutjazz.com’s Tyran Grillo captured the mood. “Even as tributes to the pioneering producer via written words flooded the internet,” he wrote, “this engagement with the Legacy legacy hit so close to home, it was impossible to imagine what recorded music might have been without him. At the same time, there was enough love in the air that those of us in the audience shed two smiles for every tear. Ostwald and company gave us more than a dose of fun; they gave us something profound... Trumpeter Bria Skonberg, in addition to being a nimble artist, told a full story in every tune, leaving her most indelible brands on “Blue Turning Gray Over You” and Eubie Blake’s “Memories of You”...Adrian Cunningham grabbed a lion’s share of spotlight in ‘Stardust’, which gave the clarinetist plenty of wiggle room for strikingly modern interpretations and artful ornaments...Like all good things, including life, the show came to an end, but not without the virtuosic burst of affirmation that was ‘Swing that Music’... the band sent off Avakian in style, in that way he loved most.”

Among Avakian’s many honors were a Trustees Award for lifetime achievement from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in 2009; and a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters award for advocacy in 2010. In continued on page 10

By Sanford Josephson

Ricky Riccardi, director of research collections for the Louis Armstrong House Museum and author of What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong’s Later Years (Pantheon: 2011) wrote, in a blog post (the day of Avakian’s death), that, “George Avakian’s Louis Armstrong recordings changed my life.” As a teenager, Riccardi bought a cassette of Armstrong’s 16 Most Requested Songs (Legacy Recordings: 1994). “Mack the Knife,” he wrote, “was the opening track, and I was hooked immediately. With each passing song, I found myself getting in deeper and deeper...something shifted in my brain. I knew right then and there I’d never be the same. While listening, I read and re-read the liner notes by someone named George Avakian. Turns out, he not only wrote the notes, but he oversaw the entire reissue and originally produced 15 of the 16 ‘most requested’ songs on the tape.”

Riccardi, “began as a fan, worshiping George and his work, and the next thing you know, you were his friend, a real, true friend, sharing stories of life, politics, sports, everything. This man revolutionized the recording industry and was friends with Louis Armstrong, but he always asked how my wife and kids were doing.”
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JAN 24

Songbook: Steven Page & The Art of Time Ensemble

JAZZ 2017-2018

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 8

2014, Avakian and his wife, violinist Anahid Ajemian, donated their archives, including unreleased recordings by Armstrong and Ellington, to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Ajemian died in 2016.

Survivors include Avakian’s daughters, Anahid Avakian Gregg and Maro Avakian, a son, Greg, and two grandchildren.

■ Muhal Richard Abrams, 87, pianist/composer, September 19, 1930, Chicago – October 29, 2017, New York City. Abrams was known mainly as a leader of jazz’s avant garde movement, but he often performed in a mainstream setting as well. “His adaptable approach,” wrote the Washington Post’s Matt Schudel (November 2, 2017), “could fit comfortably with mainstream jazz musicians, including drummer Max Roach, trumpeter Art Farmer, and saxophonist Sonny Stitt, as well as experimental musicians such as [multi-instrumentalists] Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, and Henry Threadgill.”

Touring with commercial and jazz bands and playing with stage shows in the 1950s, Abrams eventually joined a band led by tenor saxophonist Eddie Harris, and, in 1962, founded the Experimental Band. Three years later, he collaborated with pianist Jodie Christian, trumpeter Philip Cohran, and drummer Max Roach, forming the incubator for the genre-defying group, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, as well as Howard Mandel (November 2, 2017), “presented concerts and conferences [and] became an incubator for the genre-defying group, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, as well as the multi-instrumentalists Anthony Braxton and Henry Threadgill, along with others who channeled the high-energy of ‘free’ jazz of the early 1960s into more organized works.”

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith told the Chicago Tribune’s Howard Reich that Abrams’ help in founding the AACM created “a community of artists who all respected each other; all shared the responsibility of playing with each other.”

Abrams recorded more than 20 albums including Levels and Degrees of Light (Delmark Records: 1968), Things to Come From Those Now Gone (Delmark Records: 1975), and his last album, Made in Chicago (ECM: 2015). He moved to New York in 1977, and, according to Reich, developed into “one of the most uncategorizable composer-pianists of the late 20th century. Jazz, classical, blues, avant-garde, folkloric, and other musical languages coursed through his work — some meticulously composed, some invented spontaneously at the piano.”

When Abrams sat down at the piano, Reich wrote, “Strands of melody and harmony intertwined, orchestral splashes of color emerged from his fingertips, shades of Alban Berg and Claude Debussy met up with jazz riffs and blue-note figurations. It all attested to Abrams’ vast knowledge of the breadth of Western and non-Western music.” The Times’ Mandel described how, “as a pianist, Mr. Abrams could spontaneously weave references to historical jazz styles — including ragtime, stride piano, the compositions of Duke Ellington, swing and bebop — together with his own fleet modernism, far-reaching harmonies and dissonance.”

But not everyone admired his style. Mandel recalled a review of a 1983 solo concert by Abrams at the Guggenheim Museum. "Bernard Holland, a classical music critic for The New York Times, wrote, ‘One had the feeling of a highly literate but isolated meditation between player and piano, but one in which the process of the music seemed clearer and more natural to him than it did to his listeners, or at least this listener.’”

Abrams was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2010. In 1990, he was first recipient of Denmark’s Jazzpar Award, given to an internationally known and fully active jazz artist who is especially deserving of further acclaim.

Survivors include his wife, Peggy; a daughter, Richarda Abrams of New York; two sisters; four brothers; three grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

■ Ben Riley, 84, drummer, July 17, 1933, Savannah, GA – November 18, 2017, West Islip, NY. Riley was the ultimate accompanist. He didn’t make an album as a leader until he was past 60 years of age (Weaver of Dreams, Joken Records: 1996). And he only followed that with two more. “I came up in an era of accompaniment,” he told Modern Drummer magazine in 2005. “I enjoy that more than soloing,” he said, “because each person I’ve worked with has had different attitudes, songs, and styles of playing. I never come on a job thinking, ‘I’m going to play this or play that.’ I wait to see what they’re going to do and then fit into that picture.”

Closely associated with Thelonius Monk, Riley also played on Sonny Rollins’ classic 1962 RCA album, The Bridge. In more recent years, he played regularly with pianist Kenny Barron and was a member of the Monk legacy band, Sphere, which included Barron, saxophonist Charlie Rouse and bassist Buster Williams. Throughout his career, Riley played on more than 300 albums. He also recorded

Ben Riley, Heath Brothers concert at Rockefeller Center, NYC, June 1977. Photo by Tom Marcello.

with pianists Andrew Hill and Abdullah Ibrahim and tenor saxophonists Stan Getz and Johnny Griffin. Riley made his debut with Monk in 1964 on the Columbia album, Its Monk’s Time, having been hired without playing or rehearsing with the band. In Thelonius Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original (Free Press. 2009), author Robin D.G. Kelley pointed out Monk’s propensity to get up from the piano and start dancing during a set. Riley, he said, recognized the importance of Monk’s dancing. “Drummer Ben Riley,” Kelley wrote, knew that when Monk did not dance, it often meant the music wasn’t happening. When he got up from the piano bench, Riley said, it meant that, “he was feeling good and he knew you knew where you were and the music was swinging and that’s what he wanted.”

Nate Chinen, writing on wbur.org on the day of Riley’s death, said his drumming “was noted for understatement, and for a slightly skewed rhythmic conception that could keep the listener off balance. If these seem contradictory, it was perhaps Riley’s greatest gift that he reconciled them.” Drummer Jack Morash, on Facebook, praised Riley’s work with Monk, but added: “I will always remember him live at Bradley’s with Kenny Barron — the world has lost a legend!” Keyboardist Mike LeDonne, also on Facebook, described Riley’s drumming as, “that non-pampered, no nonsense, shut up and play your ass off mindset.”

Riley grew up in New York City and learned his trade at an early age from the musicians who lived or worked in the nearby Sugar Hill section of Harlem. His major influence was the drummer Kenny Clarke. In 1994, he told the jazz writer Ted Panken: “The first time I heard Kenny Clarke…’Uh-oh’ I said, ‘I think that’s it.’ I love the way he accompanied, and I loved the subtleties that he brought to the table.”

Riley’s last years were spent in a nursing home, and his daughter Kim told Chinen that he was still making music. “There was another musician in there with him,” she said, “and every week my father would play with him. He didn’t have drums, but he would beat on the table, or chairs, or whatever.”

In addition to Kim, Riley is survived by his wife, Inez; another daughter, Gina; two sons, Corey and Jason; nine grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Jon Hendricks, 96, vocalist/songwriter, September 16, 1921, Newark, OH – December 22, 2017, New York City. In the early 1950s, Hendricks, unable to earn a full-time living as a musician in New York, was working for a newsprint company. He was having lunch in Washington Square Park when he heard “Moody’s Mood for Love” on the radio. “This opened up possibilities for stretching out,” he told me in 1986. “You didn’t have to stop at 32 bars. I was really excited by this. So, I sat down and wrote a lyric to Jimmy Giuffre’s ‘Four Brothers’. That got me a record date on a little record label, and they asked me who I wanted with me. I said Dave Lambert…”

I was fortunate to interview Hendricks twice. That first interview, in 1986, was for an article in the Sunday magazine of the Toledo Blade newspaper. Hendricks grew up in Toledo where he met Art Tatum while performing at a local club. The Toledo Blade article became the basis for a chapter on Hendricks in my book, Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations (Praeger/ABC-Clio: 2009), and, for the book, I met with him a second time in 2008 over lunch at a riverfront restaurant near his Battery Park City apartment.

Nothing much developed from the Hendricks and Lambert recording of “Four Brothers,” but it began their relationship. At Lambert’s suggestion, Hendricks wrote lyrics for 10 songs that had been recorded by Count Basie, and Creed Taylor, a producer who was starting out with ABC-Paramount Records, agreed to record them. “Dave hired 13 singers,” Hendricks said, “but they couldn’t swing, and we were in the hole for $1,250.” There was a solution, however. One of the singers, Annie Ross, who had come to New York from her native England, could swing. “We figured we could use Annie because she was hip enough.”

The trio’s album, Sing a Song of Basie, was recorded in 1957 using a multi-taping method developed by Lambert that allowed the singers to emulate the horns of a whole big band. “After the recording,” Hendricks said, “we went our separate ways…Then, one day I picked up DownBeat magazine and found that Sing a Song of Basie was Number 13…We went from obscurity to Number 1 in about two months. It was really meteoric.”

Lambert, Hendricks, & Ross not only broke new musical ground, but they also broke ground racially. Hendricks was black; Lambert and Ross were white. Bands and even small groups had become racially mixed by then, but a racially mixed vocal group was somewhat daring. Because of their huge success, however, they overcame the biases of the time. During the peak period of their popularity, LH&R did a tour called Jazz for Moderns, featuring six integrated groups. “We asked for and received non-segregated clauses in all the contracts,” Hendricks said. “This was the 60s, but well before civil rights. But, we were the Number 1 jazz vocal group in the world. If they wanted us, that’s what they had to do to get us.”

The group’s perch at the top of the jazz world lasted five years, from 1958 to 1962. Prior to a 1962 concert in Frankfurt, West Germany, Ross collapsed from fatigue and, soon after that, left the group. A Ceylonese singer, Yolande Bavan, replaced her, but the group broke up in 1964. During our 1986 interview, Hendricks still cherished the memories of their success. “It was an amazing group,” he said. “I’ve never seen anything like it — before or since…It seems like we lasted 20 years, but it was only five.” Lambert was killed in 1966 when he was hit by a tractor-trailer while changing a tire on the Connecticut Turnpike. Ross is still active as a singer, and she and Hendricks would occasionally reunite for a concert together.

After a short stay in Mill Valley, California, Hendricks and his family moved to London in 1968, where he often appeared at the renowned jazz club, Ronnie Scott’s. In 1973, he returned to Mill Valley and opened a musical revue in San Francisco called Evolution of the Blues, which tracked the blues from their origin to the present day. “I expected to be able to work at home five or six weeks,” he said. “It ran five years, plus a year in Los Angeles and eight months in Chicago.” Hendricks moved back to New York in 1980 and formed a new group called Jon Hendricks and Company, which included his wife, Judith. When we met for lunch in the summer of 2008, the 86-year-old Hendricks was leading a vocal group called L, H & R Redux, including himself, his daughter, Aria, and her childhood friend, Kevin Burke. He told me the audiences “were overwhelmingly older people indulging in something nostalgic to them, but they were happy to see and hear it.” Some of the fans of the original Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, he said, brought their adult children with them. “They wanted their children to experience the thrill that they experienced. It was people so glad to hear the music they fell in love with.”

Time Magazine once called Hendricks the “James Joyce of Jazz,” and critic Leonard Feather christened him, “the poet laureate of modern jazz.” The current singing group most influenced by Hendricks, and Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, is unquestionably the Manhattan Transfer. In my recent interview with Manhattan Transfer’s Janis Siegel (“Janis Siegel’s Eclectic Repertoire Favors Harry Warren, Jon Hendricks,” Jersey Jazz, November 2017), I pointed out that Hendricks was asked to write lyrics for Josef Zawinul’s composition, “Birdland,”

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY

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the opening track of the 1980 Manhattan Transfer album, Extensions (Atlantic/wear). That assignment grew into a long-term partnership between Hendricks and the Manhattan Transfer and a special connection with Siegel. Toward the end of her August 30, 2017, solo concert at the Axelrod Performing Arts Center in Deal Park, NJ, Siegel delivered a powerful performance of Hendricks’ lyrics for the Lee Morgan classic, “Sidewinder.”

Five years after “Birdland,” the Manhattan Transfer recorded an Atlantic album, Vocalese, devoted entirely to Hendricks’ lyrics. When the group went on the road with Hendricks, Siegel recalled, “He would push me to go on stage and improvise when I was terrified. He just kept pushing.” Hendricks, she added, “is one of the greatest scat singers ever. Jon and the whole legacy of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross have really had a big influence on the Manhattan Transfer.” This past September, Siegel took Hendricks to see Dee Dee Bridgewater with the Count Basie Orchestra. “You could still see the music in him,” she said. “Everyone came over to say hello.”

In a statement released after Hendricks’ death, vocalist Kurt Elling called him “the greatest of jazz lyricists. I can’t imagine him being surprised that this wife Judith thought of him as a mystical offspring of William Shakespeare.” In a Facebook post, vocalist Roseanna Vitro called Hendricks “the grand master of bebop vocalise. I first sang with Jon in the early ’80s. I recall a night at Greene St. [Green Street Café] in Soho, when Jon, Marian Cowings, and myself all sang together — what a thrill. He lit a torch that will never die.”

In 1961, Lambert, Hendricks & Ross won a Grammy Award for their Columbia album, High Flying; in 1986, Hendricks and Bobby McFerrin shared a Grammy for “Another Night in Tunisia,” a track on Vocalese. In 1993, Hendricks was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. He also served on the Kennedy Center Honors committee under three presidents.

Survivors include his daughters, Aria and Michele; a son, Jon Hendricks, Jr.; three grandchildren; and a niece, Bonnie Hopkins. His wife Judith died in 2015.

Chuck Slate, 84, drummer, January 21, 1933, Morristown, NJ — November 22, 2017, Dover, NJ.

“T here is something like a ‘jazz center’ in New Jersey,” The New York Times’ John S. Wilson wrote in 1972, “it must be here.” The “here” was Chester, NJ, where every weekend, live jazz was heard at two spots — the Chester Inn and Hillside Lounge. The attraction at the Chester Inn was Chuck Slate’s Traditional Jazz Band; the Hillside Lounge often featured ‘name’ guests such as cornetist Wild Bill Davison and alto saxophonist Rudy Powell and guitarist Al Casey, both of whom once played with Fats Waller. Slate, a 39-year-old drummer, was, Wilson said, “the founding father of both jazz rooms.” That support of and enthusiasm for jazz also resulted in the founding of the New Jersey Jazz Society that same year.

Throughout the ’70s and ’80s, Slate, leading a band or a trio, appeared at several New Jersey venues, mostly in Morris County or the Somerset Hills. They included the Ride ‘n Hunt Club and The Bernards Inn in Bernardsville, The Store in Basking Ridge, and Rod’s in Convent Station. In November 1979, the Bernardsville News reported that, at the Ride ‘n Hunt Club, “Chuck Slate has been wowing ‘em with his great Dixieland jazz for God knows how many years. He does it every Thursday-Saturday, and every local music lover owes it to himself to see him at least once.”

In December 1982, the Bernardsville News reported on a benefit Slate performed at for the Northwest New Jersey chapter of the American Heart Association. Describing Slate as “almost a living legend among Dixieland buffs,” the newspaper said the benefit raised approximately $1,000 and was the idea of Slate’s wife Cindy, who was the CPR Coordinator for the chapter. “But,” the article continued, “the jazz musician is no stranger to these events. He recalls similar Morristown Memorial Hospital benefits such as the ‘Mansion in May’ fundraiser on the Dodge Estate that drew more than 2,000…And each March he does it again, with a benefit concert for the Chatham High School Band.”

The reporter, Irene Rich, said that one of the high points in Slate’s career “was when Gene Krupa shared, or in musician’s jargon, ‘split the sets’ with his Chester band one night in 1970. ‘It was a great thrill,’ says Slate, ‘to hear him play China Boy.’ Krupa stayed at Slate’s home that weekend, and, when leaving on Sunday, asked Slate if he’d like one of his drums. ‘This was a great honor,’ says the New Jersey drummer, who had always idolized Krupa, Buddy Rich, and the late George Wettling. So it is with almost deep reverence that Slate shows a visitor an ivory-colored white pearl snare drum with a small golden plaque which reads: ‘Custom made for Gene Krupa’. Other celebrities Slate has shared the bandstand with include Bobby Hackett and Jimmy McPartland.”

In his book, The Invisible Clarinetist (XLibris Corp.: 2004), clarinetist Joe Licari recalled playing with Slate from 1984 through 1989. “Chuck,” he wrote, “was very popular in the New Jersey area. He kept me working three gigs a week with his band. There was a lot of jazz being played in New Jersey at that time, and you had to thank Slate for that. He believed in the music and kept it going. Chuck’s Traditional Jazz Band was six pieces, and we would add extra pieces to play at the local festivals…”

Survivors include his son, Chuck Slate, Jr. and his daughter, Joanne Slate.

Ted Sommer, 93, drummer, June 16, 1924, Bronx, NY — November 5, 2017, Fort Lee, NJ.

Sommer recorded and performed with a long list of major artists including Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, and Tony Bennett. His drumming can also be heard on the soundtracks of several motion pictures such as Bullets Over Broadway, Mighty Aphrodite and Sweet & Lovely.

Pianist/composer Russ Kassoff, who dedicated the November 11th edition of his “Jazz Deli” program on WFDU-FM to Sommer, described him on Facebook as a “stellar musician and trailblazer… You were loved by thousands, if not millions, for your great wit, humor, intellect, and musicianship. You will be sorely missed.”

In his book, It Looked So Good in the Window (Universe: 2008), former NBC staff musician Sid Cooper recalled asking Sommer if there was anything unusual about playing with Ray Charles. “Teddy,” he wrote, “almost never went into tawdris about anything. He hesitated and smiled, saying ‘No, all I did to make Ray happy was to watch his feet beating down and up, while my brushes touched the snare drum down and up with his foot — that’s all.” Sommer is survived by his children, Terry and Kathy.

Sanford Josephson is the author of Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations and Jeru’s Journey: The Life and Music of Gerry Mulligan. He’s written about jazz musicians in a variety of publications.
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Talking Jazz
A Jersey Jazz Interview With John Colianni
By Schaen Fox

I had long been familiar with the great playing of this month’s subject as a sideman with some of the top artists in jazz. Then we saw the 17-piece John Colianni Jazz Orchestra at St. Peter’s Midday Jazz in March of last year, and I wanted to do a phone interview with him about his great new band and career. Naturally, as with so many busy artists, the interview started promptly, but took several months to conclude. Happily, he had a lot to say.

JJ: Is there anything you would especially like to talk about?
JC: I’d like to talk about fairly recent trends in the jazz music world, specifically a downgrade in technical proficiency among instrumentalists, specifically those who play wind instruments. This applies to the jazz world more so than other schools of music. I’ve noticed that I often have to take extra rehearsal time to make sure that the tone quality and attack of the horn section is up to par in bands where I’m the conductor or guest artist — and sometimes when I’m directing my own big band. This is an ongoing issue. The whole notion of how a young player learns in the classroom, as opposed to live settings in clubs and jam sessions, has a lot to with this.

A lot of players who inhabit the big band scene in the New York area are the products of the various jazz institutions and conservatories. What I’m seeing in these players is a lack of immediacy of attack. When you listen back to recordings of any name band that you can think of — Duke, Basie, or Goodman — you will hear a consistent level of fleet proficiency in playing notated scored parts. The earlier approach wins out every time. Indeed, today a lot of players almost have to be re-taught how to play an orchestrated part. The players from earlier eras were stronger, faster, and cleaner in their execution. A big reason for that is there were more working bands in those days, and more opportunities to play. And generally, the musicians were much younger and physically stronger than today’s, who tend to blossom late, if at all. Plus, there were no jazz educator’s around! That helped a lot!

And back to the issue of immediacy of attack — a lot of players are taught to play in a laid-back fashion rhythmically, because, in small doses anyway, it is rather hip. Nice as an occasional effect, the way the original Basie band did it so well. But to apply it to every phrase is the ultimate groove-killer! Horrible! Jazz professors always want to recreate the feel of records like Kind of Blue, but they don’t know how to teach a player to fit correctly in other situations. In jazz ensembles, the point should be to attack the note and let it ring out immediately, and to be quick and agile. But most big bands one hears recently sound terribly arthritic and lifeless, due to trying so artificially to inject hipness into their phrasing and rhythm. It’s all very un-jazz like. It also points out that these aspects of playing music can’t be taught in some weird classroom.

Yusef Ali a wonderful drummer, no longer with us, who I used to work with, was a jazz professor at Rutgers. He described the requirements of playing in a band as, “Let the medicine fit the sickness.” Play your part right, in other words. The result of the co-opting of jazz by institutions has left us with a bunch of players unequipped to do that. Also, jazz professors like to sprinkle in a marginal element of classical terminology in their courses. It comes off as ridiculous and pretentiously ignorant. Its fake, a cheap puppet show to impress kid’s parents and whatnot. Ironically, a musician with a primarily classical background in their music education would be much better trained, and dare I say, better suited for exploring and playing jazz. When you think of it, that was the route that the seminal players of this music really took!

JJ: I would have guessed that college was good for technical proficiency.

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Two virtuoso musician-composers—legendary pianist and NEA Jazz Master Chick Corea, and bebop-bluegrass banjoist Béla Fleck—share the concert stage for an evening of transfixing music.
TALKING JAZZ/JOHN COLIANNI
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JC: That’s true in other fields. In jazz, it’s the opposite of what is happening. In track and field for example, you see records being broken all the time. In the music field, especially in jazz, I see and hear a weakening in technique. Everyone is scared to be out of tune or to hit a wrong note, but there are actually MORE out of tune wrong notes resulting from all this fear and bunching up of emotion, holding back rhythmically, and being reluctant to put one’s heart out there. This is also due to the ways that players are taught to imitate and transcribe old solos. These kids are not learning how to play their instruments with agility or a good sound, and the result is lifeless. I hear this infecting Broadway pit bands as well, because a lot of the players in those bands are jazz musicians who are faulty in these areas.

JJ: When did you organize your jazz orchestra?

JC: Early in 2016. I began at the urging of friends and fellow musicians who were familiar with my work as an arranger and as a pianist. I had taken a couple of stabs at big band leading earlier in my career. So, I talked to Omar Daniels, an alto saxophonist, clarinetist and flutist, about putting together some rehearsals. He, very helpfully, spoke. It seems to be a medium I take to fairly naturally, and I like orchestration a lot. From what you heard at our St. Peter’s concert, I think you might agree that we are moving towards an identifiable sound and style achieved through my arrangements.

JJ: I love your arrangements. Would you tell us how you got into that?

JC: Initially my big band arranging experience was the result of skills acquired mostly by asking questions of older musicians. My training in music consists largely of the private piano lessons I took for three years when I was a teenager. I never received music conservatory training. My arranging skills have been acquired on the streets, so to speak. It seems to be a medium I take to fairly naturally, and I like orchestration a lot. From what you heard at our St. Peter’s concert, I think you might agree that we are moving towards an identifiable sound and style achieved through my arrangements.

JJ: Indeed I do. How much of your band book is composed of originals?

JC: About a third. The rest are mostly tunes by jazz artists like Thelonious Monk, or they are pulled from the great Tin Pan Alley standards.

JJ: When people want to know where you are playing, where should they look?

JC: The John Colianni website is very reliable for listings. They are also posted on Facebook.

JJ: Since you mentioned great writers, did you spend much time with George Duvivier when you were with Lionel Hampton?

JC: Yes I did. George was our bassist for about two months. We headed for a quite extended tour of Europe, but our bass player simply didn’t show up at the airport. It happened that George Duvivier was in Europe at that time, so he joined us. He was a musician of considerable fame, and chose to go his own way when it came to the wardrobe we wore on stage. We all had black tuxedos but George wore a business suite. Great bassist!

JJ: He once told me that Jimmie Lunceford had him update his great arrangements just before Jimmie died, and they disappeared without ever being played. Do you know about this?

JC: I knew Duvivier had been an arranger for the Jimmy Lunceford band, and I’ve met several musicians from that band: Joe Wilder, Eddie Durham, Gerald Wilson and Sy Oliver. I was also a good friend of Sy Oliver’s widow, Lillian. So I knew that Duvivier wrote quite a few jump tunes for that book. I actually have some original arrangements that he wrote for that band. My older brother, Louis, is a drama and speech coach. He works as an artist in residence at universities around the country. He was at the University of Kansas City, and got access to the files of Joe Thomas, the tenor saxophonist in Lunceford’s band. He was able to copy what remained of Joe’s big band book. These included some scores that Duvivier did for Lunceford. I am looking forward to rehearsing them sometime soon.

JJ: Is it correct that you born in Paterson, New Jersey?

JC: It is. When I was an infant my parents left Paterson, but the immigrants from Italy, Germany and Ireland, who comprise my ancestors, were in Paterson for generations going back to the 1890s. I knew next to nothing of Paterson growing up. I was a drama and speech coach. He works as an artist in residence at universities around the country. He was at the University of Kansas City, and got access to the files of Joe Thomas, the tenor saxophonist in Lunceford’s band. He was able to copy what remained of Joe’s big band book. These included some scores that Duvivier did for Lunceford. I am looking forward to rehearsing them sometime soon.

JJ: I wonder if family connections might explain how you knew the Pizzarelli family.

JC: Possibly because my father was an excellent musician. He played piano, banjo, and some sax.
Career-wise, he was a lawyer, author, and activist. He was very much in the forefront of a lot of the social and societal movements, especially around the time when he was managing editor of Ramparts magazine, a very influential, progressive publication in the ’60s. He was also a loyal aficionado of jazz. He was probably responsible for getting me interested in it, with his great record collection and his knowledge of it.

My Dad was quite a good jazz pianist. He had a wonderful rhythmic sense, and a naturally fluent touch and technique, too. He took banjo lessons with the Pete and Bobby Dominic, famed brothers from the Paterson jazz scene, and, not coincidentally, relatives of Bucky Pizzarelli. They also taught Bucky, Frank Vignola, Lou Pallo, and other noted banjo and guitarist from New Jersey. That link meant a lot to Bucky. He would always say, “How’s your dad?” or “Tell your dad I said ‘Hello.’” Whenever they got together they talked about the old days in Paterson, because they were around the same age.

I personally know Bucky more as a peer, having played often with him. I’ve had the pleasure of touring with him. I did a tour of the United Kingdom with Bucky and Phil Flanigan on bass in the late ’90s. Bucky also used to fill in for Les Paul at the Trudium, when I was a member of Les Paul’s trio from 2003 until Les’ death in 2009. He played on my big band’s real first public gig at the Cutting Room as our guest artist, great as ever.

**JJ:** Now I want to learn more about your dad.

**JC:** Right, so first take note that my father’s name is James F. Colaianni. He spelled his name in its original way. I eliminated one “a”, for easier pronunciation. Anyway, he was the editor of Ramparts magazine, and had multiple academic degrees. He was a lawyer, journalist and theologian, and also part of the liturgical conference, which oversaw many changes in the modern Catholic Church. Mel Tormé called him “a hip guy.” It was true. He was and my mom was — and is — a hip lady. They were theater-going, jazz-loving people who led an elegant life-style. That environment influenced and broadened my musical tastes and conception.

The family saw many great Broadway musicals and plays back in the ’70s. In those days they had serious pit orchestras in front of the stage, and you would hear the real sound of those orchestras and great singers, like Carol Channing, John Cullum, Robert Preston, Neil Carter, Jerry Orbach, John Bubbles, who revived his part from the original productions of Porgy and Bess, Mickey Rooney, who I also worked with later, Ruby Keeler, and so many others.

**JJ:** Did your parents have any of these great artists as guests?

**JC:** Yes, including Dick Hyman and his wife Julia, who were good friends of our family when I was a kid, and that friendship continues.

**JJ:** How about people involved in politics?

**JC:** My Dad had disparate friends, like the editor of The Village Voice, Jann Wenner, and William F. Buckley, from the conservative National Review. Dad debated with Buckley in some local forums when I was still a baby. Years later, I was playing at the Rainbow Room, with Lionel Hampton, and I met William Buckley. He was really pleased that my dad had a pianist for a son. It turns out that Buckley was a big jazz piano fan. He frequented a club on the Upper East Side where I played, called Hanraitt’s, a citadel of stride piano. Dick Wellstood, a noted stride pianist, was a good friend, and he arranged for me to sub for him at that club. In any case, Bill Buckley, as may surprise some, actually wrote liner notes for a couple of Dick Wellstood’s albums, and he showed a knowledgeable grasp of jazz.

**JJ:** I read that an important man in your musical development was Lester Karr. Would you talk a bit about him?

**JC:** He was my teacher for the three years of my musical training. Les Karr was a cousin by marriage to Dick Hyman. He was a local musician in the Washington D. C. area. Les was a very fine piano player. He could do everything on the piano that I wanted to do. If he had been in New York or L.A., he would have been a big name, but he chose to stay in D. C. Even so, he was the first-call guy at the Kennedy Center and stuff like that. I’m very lucky to have had such a great teacher. If fact, the John Colianni Piano Method, which I wrote at the encouragement of Dick Hyman, is largely a reconstruction, in both technique and theory, of my lessons with Les Karr.

Les built his technique through the Matthay system. Tobias Matthay was a British classical pianist and piano teacher. The Matthay technique system was taught at Juilliard after World War II. Les Karr studied there when Teddy Wilson was an artist in residence. That was unusual for that period, to have a jazz pianist at a renowned conservatory in a teaching capacity. Les’ classical teacher taught him the Matthay technique, and Teddy Wilson studied it with that same teacher. I can’t fathom Teddy Wilson feeling that he needed a teacher when he was in the middle of his peak period, but the better musicians are probing, self-improving souls. Years later, I used to see Teddy warming up with the Matthay exercises, and we would discuss that. Teddy also held a high regard for Les Karr.

The Matthay system is unique because it is a physically unorthodox approach to piano technique. It is based on freeing the limbs of tension while building strength in the fingers, hands and wrists, and facilitating fleetness of execution and accuracy. It fosters good practice and performance habits that keep your technique very sharp and at the ready for varied situations.

Les Karr saw me play with both Lionel Hampton and Mel Tormé, and took pride in my budding career. I attended his funeral during the blizzard of 1996. It was an odyssey to get from New York by car to D.C. I somehow just made it, but I had to see off Les Karr, who was so important in my development, and such a good friend.

**JJ:** I read that you also played at the funeral of Carlton Drinkard, another man important in your development.

**JC:** I did. Carlton was one of Billie Holiday’s accompanists from the late ’40s until her death. When I was a teenager my family moved to the Atlantic City area and Carlton had lived there for many years. He heard about this white high school newcomer kid who could play. He showed up at my house one day, and introduced himself. He said he had come to check me out. We went into the living room where we had two pianos, and played piano duets for hours. He was an excellent player of the bebop school, and had a spare style in accompanying vocalists that was most effective. Teddy Wilson was also a brilliant collaborator of Billie Holiday’s, but Teddy’s style was much more intricate and technique-based. They were both effective with Billie Holiday in different ways. That’s jazz! Carlton took me under his wing, arranged gigs for me, and helped me put together a trio. He was a coach, mentor and teacher. I was very saddened by his death, and kept in touch with his family over the years. Carlton died in 1991. I played the organ for his ceremony at a wonderful black church in Atlantic City.

**JJ:** Do you have any career souvenirs people visiting your home can see?

**JC:** Absolutely, and some can be seen by looking through my web page. There are photos with Lionel Hampton, Gerry Mulligan, Clark Terry, Mel Tormé, Larry Coryell, and Anita O’Day. I had a busy and all too brief time with her. A continued on page 18
tenor sax player named Tommy Morimoto recommended me to Anita. I was on what turned out to be her last album, *Indestructible*, and played gigs with her at one or two venues in New York City. She autographed her autobiography for me. She was fascinating, not at the peak of her skills, but still an effective performer. One time when we were rehearsing she tapped me on the shoulder and said, “You’ve got some chops my boy.” There are also many shots of me playing gigs and hanging with pop-rockers like Steve Miller, Mick Taylor, Ted Nugent, Robbie Krieger, The Go-Go’s, Chuck Berry, and on and on.

**JJ:** I believe you also have a copy of Ellington’s *Music is my Mistress* that Duke signed for you.

**JC:** Yes. It is in an enshrined spot in my house. When I was a small boy, my parents took us to many performances of jazz as well as any kind of performing arts event that you could imagine. A seminal event among the things that I attended was seeing the Duke Ellington Orchestra in the winter of 1974. He made two appearances at Georgetown University in DC. I was very young and didn’t fully comprehend the music, but nonetheless made a massive impression on me. I was thrilled hearing that avalanche of music from that band. It was a huge life changing experience for a little kid with musical potential within him.

Duke’s book had just come out, and in anticipation to going to this concert, I asked my parents to buy it for me. They did. I brought it with me and went backstage after the concert. I’ll never forget my only encounter with Duke Ellington. I was in a line of people who came to pay their respects or get an autograph. He was sitting on a chair that looked like a throne. On each side of him were pretty females sitting on the armrests as he wrote autographs! It was like being in the presence of a king. So here I am, this little boy with this book, and he said, “Come on over.” I handed him the book and he looked me right in the eye, acting like we were buddies. He made me feel like a cool person on his level, not just a little kid. He said in a conspiratorial tone, “What are you doing with this?” It was awesome. He signed it, “To my good friend John. Good luck, Duke Ellington.”

My upright piano has a relationship to Duke Ellington. A drummer I’ve worked with frequently is Steve Little, who played in Duke’s orchestra in the ‘60s for about a year. He is on some of Duke’s recordings, including that great album, *And His Mother Called Him Bill*. About 15 years ago I didn’t have a piano. Steve owned a Wegman upright piano built after World War I. He offered to give me his for free, out of kindness. I sent a couple of buddies to pick it up. Steve lives in Manhattan and they brought it to my house in New Jersey on a pickup truck. It is fantastic, with a huge sound and very responsive action.

Another notable Ellingtonian association is with one of Duke’s great bass players, Jimmy Woode. Jimmy lived in Switzerland and Germany towards the end of his life. He produced a solo piano album I did for the Swiss Jazz label, Jazz Connaisseur Records, in 1999. It is a boutique label specializing in pianists. Jimmy Woode was the big celebrity figure on their executive committee. He produced and did the liner notes on the album, which is called *Prime Cuts*. Subsequent to that, Jimmy came back to the United States and we did some trio gigs together. A notable one was at a club in Philly called Ortlieb’s in the summer of 2000. Who stroked in on us but Butch Ballard, Dukes drummer in the early ‘50s! Butch sat in with us, so I had playing with me that night Jimmy Woode and Butch Ballard, Duke’s onetime rhythm section, both playing as great as ever…an evening to remember.

Guys like Jimmy Woode and other musician’s I’ve encountered who had an affiliation with Duke seemed to take on a sophisticated manner of expressing themselves, bearing the elegance of world travelers, but sort of hip and street smart at the same time. Another guy with Duke who I played with a lot was Aaron Bell, the bass player. Aaron hired me for a few of his gigs at Michael’s Pub, the Knickerbocker and places like that. Frankie Dunlop who played drums with Lionel Hampton for many years, also played for a time with Duke. He told me great stories about Duke. Art Baron was also with Ellington. Art plays in my big orchestra now. Duke will never be surpassed, as a player, composer, or orchestrator. Never underestimate his skills as a pianist. He would have been an all-time great Jazz pianist even if he hadn’t had a band.

I got a call from Jerry Bruno, the bassist… Jerry said, “I got a hot job for you. Pizzarelli has recommended you for Les Paul. Get down to the Iridium tonight. You are going to play for him, and he might hire you.”

**JJ:** Would you tell us about your years with Les Paul?

**JC:** Buddies of mine played in the Les Paul Trio, like Garry Mazaroppi on the bass, Frank Vignola on guitar, and people who would sub with the band like Jay Leonhart. It whetted my appetite for more knowledge about what Les Paul sounded like. I already knew and loved Les’s trio recordings from the 40’s. He was as good as any jazz guitarist he could be compared to. He was also a great pop artist with a sound that was unique and yet not gimmicky. He made those superlative series of recordings with Mary Ford. She was also exceptional, in her vocal technique and harmonizing skill.

One day in 2003, I got a call from Jerry Bruno, the bassist and an associate and mutual friend of Bucky Pizzarelli and me. Jerry said, “I got a hot job for you. Pizzarelli has recommended you for Les Paul. Get down to the Iridium tonight. You are going to play for him, and he might hire you.” Les had told Bucky that he wanted to recreate the energy he had when his trio featured a piano player. Since the early ’50s, his trio was usually piano-less, but before that he usually had pianists like Paul Smith and Milt Raskin, great players who did great arrangements — some of which I actually knew before I even got the call to work with Les. Bucky said, “Why don’t you try John Colianni?” Bucky told Jerry to call me. I was flattered and honored.

I got dressed up and went to the Iridium and saw the guys in tees or polo shirts. I didn’t realize that Les Paul went for a casual appearance. Les had two guitarists, Frank Vignola and Lou Pallo. Nicki Parrott was his bass player. Frank wasn’t feeling well and didn’t come to work that night. Les welcomed me, and was very gracious and nice. I went up and we just tore through one thing after another. He would feature me on almost every song and let me play a stride piano piece by myself. I evoked for him, in a small way, rest assured, something reminiscent of Art Tatum.

Les and I hit it off. The crowd was with me, and I got the gig. I was in his trio from that night in 2003, until his death in 2009. I took off for things that had

continued on page 20
Five Time Grammy Nominee
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been prearranged in my schedule. So I might have missed between 10 to 20 weeks a year, but some years I was there almost every week. It was an honor and Les grew to be a great friend. When you were with him, you became a family member. He was, in fact, surrounded by great, and not so great, people. There were a lot of hangers on. Some of them were wonderful and some were pests. People were always asking Les to autograph something that might be sold at an auction, or for some other favor. But he handled himself well.

Celebrity musicians were also part of Les’ extended guitar family. We had the greatest from the world of rock and jazz as regular backstage visitors and as guests on stage. We had Larry Coryell, Stanley Jordan, Steve Miller, Mick Taylor of The Rolling Stones, Jimmy Page, Jose Feliciano, Bucky Pizzarelli and Tommy Emmanuel. That may be 1/20 of the list. We played with a huge range of musicians who treated the chance to play with Les as a kind of pilgrimage, in consideration of both his guitar artistry and his pioneering involvement in the development of the electric guitar. Every week we filled both shows invariably, and there would often be big lines of people down Broadway, just trying to get in. I know we circumvented the fire rules more than once; there were just so many people demanding to get in.

We also made a BBC/PBS documentary called Chasing Sound: The Life and Music of Les Paul, while we were doing that gig at The Iridium. There are some nifty clips of the trio in there, but there is one special clip that isn’t on the final cut of the program. If you look up “John Colianni and Les Paul”, you’ll find it. I’m playing a feature number, “Darktown Strutters’ Ball.” In it you get to hear the way Les Paul accompanied a soloing piano player. You feel that great beat, those well-chosen chord voicings, and that fierce attack, all hallmarks of his playing. He was a great all-around musician: a soloist, ensemble player and wonderful arranger. We played a lot of his great arrangements, some influenced by Django and the Hot Club of France, and by other people he worked with like Eddie South, the violinist. He was a big fan of Charlie Christian, too. Les would take his jazz approach and add his own slightly country, hillbilly tinged musical leanings to his arrangements and solos. Out of this you would get a unique, Les Paul-sounding creation.

He went to the head of Baldwin pianos, which was owned by Gibson, the company whose guitars Les officially represented, and said, “Hey, I’m going to put the bite on you. Give me my boy a piano.” Eventually I got a concert grand Baldwin delivered to my apartment. I loved that piano. It was probably the best I’ve ever owned. He also got me my own rehearsal studio, free of charge, at the Gibson guitar studio on West 54th Street in Manhattan. All I had to do was call and say, “I’m coming in to rehearse,” and I’d have the place all day. One day I was rehearsing and the artist relations manager said, “We’ve arranged a TV show for you.” I went to MSNBC and I had a house bandleader gig on the TV show After Hours With Dan Abrams, during the 2008 primaries between Hillary Clinton and Obama. These things happened because of my association with the great Les Paul.

Art Tatum was Les Paul’s idol. They struck up a great friendship dating back to 1939 when Les lived in Jackson Heights, Queens, right near where Bix had cashed it in some years before. Les was a successful musician with Fred Waring’s big band and was starting to appear with his own trio. Les had an automobile, and used to drive Art to cutting contests. Cutting contests were like jam sessions, in these cases groups of pianists taking turns at a piano and trying to top each other. It was like a battle of musical gladiators, and the Harlem scene was famous for these.

Art called Les one morning and said, “Les there is a big cutting contest in Newark, New Jersey.” Les said, “Okay, I’ll drive you out to Newark.” They drove out to an older building, walked up about seven flights and into a large room. Les heard a fabulous stride piano player, probably Don Lambert, and there were similar great players around. Les saw the usual provisions for a cutting contest: a battered upright piano, a metal tub filled with ice and beer, and other refreshments. Then he saw in a corner of the room a nude dead body on a table. He gasped and said, “Art, what the hell, there is a stiff over there.” Art said, “Oh yeah…this place is a mortician’s workroom. He has a piano and lets me have our contests here, because nobody complains about the noise.” It was on a draining board used to drain fluids from a body. Les managed to get used to that, and focused on the session. They stayed there more than 24 hours, drinking beer and making unforgettable music that should have been recorded.

Les Paul was a uniquely gifted story teller. He told that one with pristine consistency, so I’m quite sure that everything he said would be verifiable. That story is so telling of a lot of what jazz is about. First the aspect of the friendly competitive nature of pianists, secondly the willingness to play under whatever circumstances are available. I love that story. It brings out what the scene was really like.

JJ: Do you have any favorite stories of when people would ask to sit in with Les?

JC: [Laughs] Absolutely. He would ask a singer to come up who may have introduced him or herself backstage as a performer. Les liked to play Major Bowes, in his own mischievous way. He would give unknown singers and players a spot during our sets, sitting on his high stool with his arms folded, listening to performers playing an instrument, tap dancing, singing, telling jokes, or whatever. Some were good and some were rather less than so. I remember at least three occasions, when some young lady would sing her heart out but wasn’t that good. The audience might clap a little nervously. Les would just sit with his arms folded letting the tension mount, grinning like the Cheshire Cat that he was. The girl would just be standing there as he put the mic to his lips, and he’d say, “Thank you…you are wanted on the phone.” There would be silence, and then enormous laughter. The young lady would say, “Oh. Thanks very much. Goodnight everybody;” and beat a hasty retreat. Something like that!

He was as sharp as anyone less than half his age. He had no mental infirmity at all. He did have an issue with hearing. Being a tinkerer and a tech guy as he was he was always experimenting with new hearing aids. Yet he still had trouble. He was profoundly disabled in that way, and sometimes it was worse than others. One night, we had in the audience Olivia Newton John. Lou Pallo, our rhythm guitarist, whispered, “Hey Les, Olivia Newton John is out there. We ought to bring her up to sing.” Les thought he said Elton John and announced “We’ve got Elton John.” Olivia was confused, but she still jumped on stage and everybody in the house was applauding with recognition. Les looked at her and asked, “Where is he?” I said, “No, no Les its Olivia Newton John.” He said, “Oh of course. Come here doll.” He called all the chicks “doll.” She gave him a big hug and sang “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” with us in the key that we did it instrumentally, A natural. She sang it beautifully, too.

There were times that there would be someone “big” who just came to hear us, like Paul McCartney. But usually, these celeb musicians couldn’t wait to get up and test their metal and say, “I shared the stage with Les Paul and survived.” One case of a guy that came out a little bruised and bloody, but in a good natured way was Paul Shaffer, from the Letterman show. We were playing at The House Of Blues in Milwaukee, I think, and Paul Shaffer came to
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What Every Student Should Know About Jazz History — and Why It’s Important

By Sanford Josephson

Dr. Lewis Porter realized he was preaching to the choir. “I don’t need to persuade you that it’s important to know about jazz history,” he told a group of music educators at the New Jersey Association for Jazz Education State Conference, held November 17 at the NJPAC Center for Arts Education in Newark. But, he added, “I can model the way you teach or bring up jazz history.” Porter is professor of music and founder/director of the jazz history M.A. program at Rutgers in Newark.

In his presentation, “What Every Student Should Know About Jazz History and Why It’s Important,” Dr. Porter recalled his experience as director of the first jazz band at Tufts University in the late 1970s. “Most of the students,” he said, “even in the jazz band, were not necessarily serious jazz fans. So, there is a need for students to know more about the music they’re playing.” Although it’s a given, he said, that teachers expose students to giants of jazz such as Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Thad Jones, it’s also important to expose them to contemporary musicians. To accentuate that point, Dr. Porter, an accomplished pianist, pointed out that, “I made an album with John Patitucci and Terri Lynne Carrington, with Tia Fuller as a guest. It also must be okay,” he continued, “for students to not like music you’re exposing them to. I know students, for example, who preferred Hank Mobley to John Coltrane.

“My teaching” he added, “is all about asking questions. It’s very useful to have a question as a way in. For example, ‘What happened to Louis Armstrong after 1930?’ Armstrong, after 1930, Dr. Porter said, “still played with tremendous power, but he used less arpeggios and was more linear. It’s different from what it was.” Then, there’s the question, ‘Was Louis Armstrong an Uncle Tom?’ That question is asked, Dr. Porter said, because Armstrong was still using the term ‘darkey’ in 1951. But, in 1957, he added, “Armstrong told President Eisenhower to ‘go to hell’ because he was not defending black people in Little Rock, Arkansas.”

Another question could be ‘Was Art Tatum’s greatest attribute his speed?’ “When it comes to fast,” Dr. Porter said, “the classical people have us beat. The only thing about Tatum can’t be that he played fast. There’s a bi-tonal side to Tatum. He was the guy who introduced the concept that you can re-harmonize.”

Dr. Porter also warned his audience against saying what’s ‘the best’ of any style or instrument. “How can you say what’s ‘best,’ he asked, “if you haven’t heard them all. So, don’t do that.” Another question that’s asked is ‘When did jazz start?’ The best answer, in his opinion, would have had to be around 1910. The word ‘jazz’, he said, “was not used in New Orleans. ‘Jazz’ was some kind of slang word that was used in baseball around 1912 — ‘That pitcher has really got that jazz’. It stood for energy, vigor.”

Joining Dr. Porter as part of the jazz history presentation were Dr. David Demsey, coordinator of jazz studies, at William Paterson University in Wayne, and Adriana Cuervo, associate director at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers Newark. Dr. Demsey said that WPU now houses the personal collections of five major deceased jazz musicians: tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker, trumpeter/bandleader/composer Thad Jones, pianists Mulgrew Miller and James Williams, and trumpeter Clark Terry. Jones, Miller, and Williams were past directors of the school’s jazz studies program, and Terry was on the faculty.

When Terry informed William Paterson that he wanted his archives there, the natural question, Dr. Demsey said, was “Why Wayne, New Jersey? Why not some place like the Smithsonian?” “Clark said, ‘Those places are for dead people. I want to donate them to a school with an active, vital jazz program. That legacy needs to stay alive,’” Dr. Demsey said.

Cuervo pointed out that the Institute of Jazz Studies has more than 200,000 commercial jazz recordings that can be heard in listening booths and the largest collection of personal papers of such artists as pianist/composer Mary Lou Williams, stride pianist James P. Johnson, multi-instrumentalist/composer Benny Carter, and vocalist Abbey Lincoln. That collection, she added, not only includes musicians but also encompasses jazz critics, photographers, managers, journalists, and producers. She also revealed that the IJS is in the process of making its Jazz Oral History Project available online. The JOHP consists of 120 oral histories of pre-swing era and swing era musicians recorded between 1972 and 1983. “For many years,” Cuervo said, “you had to come to the Institute of Jazz Studies to hear them. We are now moving them online.” Between 20 to 30 are currently available online, she said, but eventually all 120 will be. She also said the IJS is expanding its roundtables and other public programs.

Dr. Porter has taken an active role in the NJIS’s Generations of Jazz program, which brings one-day jazz history programs into schools and libraries. He heads the high school program, which also includes multi-reedist Scott Robinson, bassist Kenny Davis, drummer Chris Beck, and vocalist Judd Silvano.

The grades 4-8 program is headed by vocalist Carrie Jackson and includes keyboardist Radam Schwartz, reedist Gene Ghee, bassist Takashi Otsuka, and drummer Erroll Lanier, Jr. The program is made possible by a grant from the Rea Charitable Trust and Wells Fargo Bank.
Retired Monmouth Library Director Reminiscences
About 40-plus Years Presenting Jazz

By Sanford Josephson

In the early 1970s, radio station WRLB 107.1 FM in Long Branch, NJ, aired a jazz radio program called “Art Vincent and the Art of Jazz.” Jack Livingstone, director of the Monmouth County Libraries, was a big fan. “I’d call in with requests, and I got to know Art Vincent,” Livingstone recalled to his audience at “Fall into Jazz: Jack Livingstone’s Jazz 101 Class,” held Saturday, November 18, at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters in Manalapan.

One time when Livingstone called in, Vincent had a request for him. “He had a musician acquaintance, Al Main, who taught jazz guitar at Burlington County Community College and was looking for a venue to present live jazz. I said I could open the library if he could get the musicians.”

The event, at what is now the Eastern Branch in Shrewsbury (Manalapan wasn’t built until 1986) drew a crowd, but the concert was not a success for a couple of reasons — the trumpet player, who was from Philadelphia, got lost; and Main treated the concert more like a class, with a blackboard and lecture, which quickly emptied the room.

However, the experience planted a seed with Livingstone about the possibility of presenting live jazz at the library. Not long after that, he and his wife, Marlene, were at a bar/restaurant in Spring Lake where the Manasquan-based clarinetist/soprano saxophonist Kenny Davern was performing. “Kenny said the boss of the restaurant was complaining that the people couldn’t talk and eat because his music was too loud. I mentioned the possibility of playing at the library but said I didn’t have much money. He said he’d do it, and he brought a quartet that included the trombonist Vic Dickenson. So, we were off and running.”

In the beginning, Livingstone paid the musicians out of the library’s budget, but, eventually, he was able to get grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and other organizations.

The artists who have appeared throughout the years include cornetist Ruby Braff, guitarist George Barnes, pianists Marian McPartland, Dick Wellstood, Dave McKenna and Dwike Mitchell, pianist/singer Dardanelle, trumpeter Roy Eldridge, and French horn player/bassist Willie Ruff.

Davern, Livingstone told his audience, “had his own personality, his own sound. He did not sound like Benny Goodman or Artie Shaw.” Then, Livingstone played a recording of “Since My Best Gal Turned Me Down” (Ray Lodwig/Howdy Quicksell) from Davern’s 1997 Arbors release, Breezin’ Along. The other musicians on the recording were guitarists Howard Alden and Bucky Pizzarelli, bassist Greg Cohen, and drummer Tommy DeNicola.

Livingstone once hired McPartland to play at a New Jersey Library Association event, but the venue didn’t have a piano. “I called Freehold Music, and they delivered a piano, but it was way out of tune. She played the whole concert on an out-of-tune piano and never complained. Of course, most librarians couldn’t tell the difference.”

Eldridge was one of Livingstone’s “all-time favorite trumpet players. He hit notes that nobody else could — real notes, not squeaking.”

Livingstone then treated the library audience to Eldridge’s renditions of Hoagy Carmichael songs, “Rockin’ Chair” and “Stardust.” He played a 1975 recording (Gentleman of the Trombone/Storyville) by Dickenson of “Shine” (Lew Brown/Ford Dabney/Cecil Mack). The other musicians on that recording were pianist Johnny Guarnieri, bassist Bill Pemberton, and drummer Oliver Jackson.

Livingstone loved the way Braff played the cornet — “He had a very melodic sound. Every trumpet player was trying to go high; Ruby would go low.” But, Braff’s irascible personality was another story. Braff first appeared at the library with his longtime partner, guitarist George Barnes. “I tried to book him again,” Livingstone recalled, “and he said, ‘Jack, I’m not going down to that no good library again.’ He didn’t want to drive down to Manalapan.”

Braff finally relented, but then insisted that he be paid in cash. Livingstone played two Braff-Barnes recordings from the 1975 RCA album, To Fred Astaire With Love: Irving Berlin’s “Cheek to Cheek” and “Be Careful, It’s My Heart”.

Wellstood, Livingstone said, “was one of the last of the stride piano players.” McKenna, he recalled, “would never say one word or tell the audience what he was playing.” He then played two selections from McKenna’s 1992 Concord album, Handful of Stars: Frank Perkins’ “Stars Fell on Alabama” and Carmichael’s “Stardust”.

The presentation concluded with a recording of “Autumn Leaves” from the 2000 Dwike Mitchell-Wilkie Ruff CB Baby album, Breaking the Silence -- Standards, Strayhorn & Lullabies. “Autumn Leaves” is an American standard, but it was derived from Joseph Kosma’s 1945 French song, “Les Feuilles Morte.”

Livingstone also related the story of how Mitchell and Ruff met. Both were from humble small-town beginnings — Mitchell from Florida and Ruff from Alabama.

They began playing together in 1947 as part of an Army Air Corps band before later joining the Lionel Hampton Band. They left Hampton in 1955 to form the Mitchell Ruff Duo and stayed together until Mitchell died in 2013. Ruff continues to teach and perform.

The day after his 101 class, the library was hosting the Claudio Roditi Quartet featuring pianist Tomoko Ohno, and on December 10, the featured artist was vocalist Marlene VerPlanck.

You can read Schaen Fox’s April 2008 interview with Jack Livingstone in the Jersey Jazz archive online at www.njjs.org.
Bickford Jazz Showcase

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Monday, January 8, 7:30PM
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6 Normandy Heights Road | Morristown, NJ 07960
Exit 0 Jazz Festival Warms Up a Chilly Cape May

By Sandy Ingham

Jazz a uniter in divisive times. Music brings people together. Several thousand fans from around the Northeast came to Cape May on a frigid November 10-12 weekend for the Fall 2017 Exit 0 Jazz Festival, drawn by the big acts — Gregory Porter, Fourplay, Lizz Wright, Arturo O’Farrill’s Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, the Brian Blade Fellowship — and the opportunity to discover new favorites among the 18 groups playing and singing 49 sets in the festival’s eight venues.

At a time when our country is so divided, the music united us. Fans, black, white and otherwise, clapped and cheered for those on stage, many of them in integrated bands, fulfilling festival producer Michael Kline’s promise in the program book that “music has the incredible power to bring people of diverse races, languages, ages and cultures together.”

THE CUBAN CONVERSATION

O’Farrill’s 18-piece Afro-Latin big band is celebrating its 15th year — something of a miracle — and thrilled a near-capacity crowd at the Convention Center playing excerpts from its three most recent albums. Over the insistent rhythms provided by drums, congas, bongos and other percussion instruments, the undulating waves of sound from the sax section, blaring trombones and blazing trumpets practically lifted listeners out of their seats. Compelling works from the Cuba: The Conversation Continues album and Arturo’s collaboration with another piano genius, Chucho Valdes, in a tribute to their Latin jazz pioneering dads, Chico O’Farrill and Bebo Valdes, kept the excitement at fever pitch.

Also uplifting were comments by O’Farrill, who said he didn’t want to get into politics, but did. He noted his Cuba album was recorded live in Havana in the midst of jubilation, just as the U.S. opened up travel and trade to the island nation in December 2014.

The recent rollback in relations is part of a dark chapter in our country’s history, he asserted. But the music created by cross-cultural bands like his is an expression of our common humanity. “We are all Americans,” he added, noting that rhythms and harmonies from South/Central America and the Caribbean are all woven into the jazz fabric.

BIG HEART, BIG VOICE

Gregory Porter has won two Grammys in the last four years, and his Cape May set made it clear he belongs in that top tier of male jazz vocalists.

His robust baritone voice rang out on selections from those two albums. “On My Way to Harlem” from his 2017 release Be Good is a celebration of the fount of African-American culture, referencing icons from Langston Hughes to Duke Ellington to Marvin Gaye. The soulful “Take Me to the Alley” the title track from his 2016 CD demonstrates Porter’s big heart to go with his big voice, with lyrics expressing compassion for “the lonely, the afflicted, those who somehow lost their way.”

The latest project is a tribute to Nat “King” Cole, whose 1940s and ’50s parade of hits certainly warrant exposure to younger generations. “Mona Lisa” and “Nature Boy” are two of Cole’s tenderest works, but fared very well in jazzy treatments by the more dynamic Porter and the solid quartet he led.

Porter, too, weighed in on world events, noting his latest tour brought him to Berlin where he engaged with German fans who still celebrate the fall three decades ago of their wall. “People don’t want to be separated, they want to be together,” he said, skipping any mention of present-day walls.

ANOTHER ISLAND HEARD FROM

Etienne Charles and Creole Soul brought more Caribbean flair to the festival. Charles, who hails from Trinidad, plays a spicy trumpet and doubles on congas, mixes reggae and calypso into his upbeat compositions, and gives ample solo space to his four sidemen.

In the leader’s “San Jose Suite,” pianist Sullivan Fortner, New Orleans-raised and Juilliard-trained, came to the fore exhibiting those twin influences. On another tune, Ben Williams was remarkably dexterous, plucking deep notes from the bottom of his bass, while several octaves north, his left hand tapped out guitar-like melody and harmony. “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies” has been jazzed up before, and Charles succeeded in a Caribbean version of the Tchaikovsky classic.
The playful Charles — he perched his derby hat over the bell of his horn to serve as a mute on one number — also had his say on a current controversy. He dedicated a composition “to every athlete who feels it necessary to make a statement,” noting the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics podium protest by American track medalists John Carlos and Tommie Smith is approaching. The piece wove snippets of the national anthem and other patriotic standards into the melody.

FOURPLAY AND SAX

“Smooth jazz” leaves me cold, but I quickly warmed up to Fourplay. Their music is totally scripted, with little room for improvisation, but the grooves they dig into so zestfully are irresistible.

The makeup of the 25-year-old quartet is changing. Saxophonist Kirk Whalum stepped in after the recent death of guitarist Chuck Loeb, and bassist Chris Walker is pinch-hitting for Nathan East, who underwent surgery. Bob James on keyboards and Harvey Mason on drums make four.

A highlight was a haunting James-Whalum duet on “Body and Soul.” Another was the encore: It began with trading fours, then twos, at a frenetic pace, and ended with each player getting in just two notes before passing the melody on like a hot potato.

THE WRIGHT STUFF

Lizz Wright isn’t a jazz singer, but what a voice! A rich, earthy alto that turned a broad range of folk, blues, gospel and pop tunes into musical gold. As a guitarist, bassist and drummer created shimmering curtains of sound, Wright conjured up a moonlit bayou on “Southern Nights” and took listeners to church with “Singing in My Soul,” the gospel and blues icon Sister Rosetta Tharpe’s joyous ode. Neil Young’s “Old Man” lingers in our ears, and a luminous “Stars Fell on Alabama” from her new album, Grace, closed the set, sending the crowd out into a night that felt much more like “Wind Blew from Manitoba.”

A DIFFERENT BEAT

Brian Blade is one of the most animated drummers in jazz, so it was a surprise that a mellow vibe prevailed during much of his Fellowship band’s hour-plus on stage. Calming melodies, presumably from their new Body and Shadow album (no titles were announced) were folklike, as though sketched out by Aaron Copland for a heartland of America suite.

Most solemn of all was a duet — elegiac, churchlike chords from Jon Cowherd’s electric keyboard underlying Myron Walden’s solo on bassoon.

Back to Blade’s Louisiana roots, the band launched into a gospel hymn that echoed “I’ll Fly Away,” then cut loose on a down-home blues, and the leader’s ever-present grin grew wider as colleagues in the 20-year-old band took turns baring their musical souls.
taking place in an area known for sunny skies and warm sands, the Suncoast Jazz Classic in Clearwater Beach, Florida, has a lineup that changes with glacial speed from year to year. If you like something you heard this year, odds are the performer will return the next.

But change it does, as is evident in the party’s slogan: “TRAD and new TRADitions.”

Along with the lineup changes, over the years the event’s name morphed to its current one from the original Suncoast Dixieland Jazz Classic. It’s not that the audience for Traditional Jazz is not around anymore, just that as we chronologically get further from the source people’s tastes change.

This year’s “new tradition” was a logical choice for both changing tastes and the time-tested theme of classic jazz: saxophonist Adrian Cunningham.

For his first year at the gulf coast event, Cunningham brought his “Old School” band, an aggregation that easily spans the eras from traditional to swing to jump band.

The addition of the Aussie expat was a perfect fit for a festival that features full groups and then occasionally breaks them down into their various components for some variety during the course of the weekend.

Another change for the better was a decision to make the event more regional, linked to other performances around the Tampa-St. Petersburg area. For example, Clearwater residents had the opportunity to get a free sample of Cunningham’s talents in a local park.

The day before the classic began in earnest, vibist Chuck Redd was presented in a concert in downtown St. Petersburg in advance of his weekend performances at Clearwater Beach.

Looking over the lineup for the three-day jazz party, one could assume a certain amount of redundancy because groups were scheduled for as many as three performances a day.

But that’s where the versatility of the musicians came in. Among jazz fans,
Michigan-based clarinetist Dave Bennett is known for his Swing Era performances, usually in the style of Benny Goodman.

A veteran of the jazz party circuit, a few years ago Bennett began displaying his talents as a rockabilly pianist and singer, performing entire sets in the style of rock pioneer Jerry Lee Lewis. His performances this year included a knock-out-the-jams full-set tribute to the “Killer” as well as his usual supply of swing.

Reedman Cunningham brought his own bag of tricks to the event, including a “record release” set highlighting his new Arbors Jazz album, Swing It Out, which featured a good deal of saxophone and owed more than a bit if style to Louis Jordan.

Like Bennett, the engaging Aussie also is a talented vocalist, although much more in the jazz vein. In his “Old School” band, he doesn’t separate his singing from his jazz, so you’re more likely to get a performance that mixes the two.

Not to be outdone by Bennett’s Jerry Lee Lewis presentation, Cunningham’s band did a tribute to Fats Domino for one of their sets.

If two accomplished clarinetists weren’t enough, a third one was in the mix with New Jersey native Allan Vaché, who co-led a “Florida All-Stars” group with trombonist Bill Allred. The three reedmen had their close encounter at one of the requisite hotel bar jam sessions Saturday night, but also matched musical wits in various combinations through the weekend.

Of course, there were many other audience favorites making repeat visits in attendance, imported from out-of-state. Cornet Chop Suey from St. Louis and the High Sierra Jazz Band of California sated the traditional-minded fans, while San Francisco violinist Tom Rigney and his group Flambeau ran the gamut from cajun to country to blues.

With all those visiting firemen, there were still locals in the crowd. Guitar genius Nate Najar, master drummer Ed Metz, pianist Johnny Varro and former Duke Ellington bassist John Lamb were all welcome returnees.

But the most welcome appearance was vocalist Lorri Hafer, who is still recovering from a stroke suffered at the previous year’s Suncoast Jazz Classic. Singing with her pianist husband Mike and son, drummer Paul and bassist John Lamb, her performance was both an emotional and artistic success.

The 2018 Suncoast Jazz Festival is scheduled next Nov. 16-18 in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Tickets available in mid-February. Information at www.suncoastjazzclassic.com.
SINGERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT NJPAC’S TD MOODY FESTIVAL

Always Reliable Manhattan Transfer Delivers The Goods
By Marian Calabro

A merica’s prime practitioners of vocalese, The Manhattan Transfer, delivered a reliably polished performance at the TD Moody Jazz Festival on November 4. They did not disappoint their legion of fans who packed NJPAC’s Victoria Theater (the smaller of the venue’s two halls).

If you seek out the Transfer in live performance, you know what you want to hear — and you can count on coming away happy. This foursome has endured and toured for 45 years with a steady reliance on vocal jazz repertoire, the Great American Songbook, pop, and a dash of doo-wop. There has been very little change in personnel and no diminution in quality. Janis Siegel is now the de facto leader, following the death of founder Tim Hauser in October 2014 while on tour. (That was not long after the group played South Orange PAC, where this reviewer saw them.) Hauser has been replaced by Trist Curless, formerly of the a cappella group m-pact, while Cheryl Bentyne and Alan Paul remain firmly on board. The transition has been seamless, and the first CD by this configuration of the foursome, The Junction, is due out in Spring 2018.

The pre-show included a video of the group in a clever skit from “I Love Lucy,” worth a viewing on YouTube, and a clip of their appearance with Ella Fitzgerald at the 1983 Grammy Awards. They opened with “Topsy Turvy” and “I Love Coffee,” then basked in the deserved explosion of applause when they announced their anniversary. “We know 45 years’ worth of songs and we’re going to do ‘em all tonight,” Siegel quipped. Indeed, it was an even of Greatest Hits.

Each member took a turn in the spotlight. Siegel proved she still has the stuff during her gospel-tinged “Operator” solo. She also indulged her love for the old TV show Twin Peaks with a self-penned song inspired by that program’s weirdness. That number morphed into a “jazz club from outer space,” culminating in a rendition of “Midnight in Manhattan.” A quieter “On a Little Street in Singapore” gave the male singers their chance to shine.

The group has a secret weapon in musical director and pianist/keyboardist Yaron Gershovsky, ably backed by Conrad Korsch on bass and Ross Pederson on drums. During an extended vocalese medley, the band members traded solos with the scatting singers. For traditionalists, it was the musical high point of the evening, along with a standout performance of “Candy,” based on the arrangement of the Johnny Mercer classic that featured Jo Stafford and the Pied Pipers.

In an effort to stay relevant, the Transfer proclaimed, “Let’s make a vocalese out of a rap song!” However, they obviously know their audience, and they held the rap count to one. They enthusiastically segued to a doo-wop segment that was reminiscent of those moments at wedding receptions when the baby boomers have had too much to drink but won’t get off the dance floor. By the time Alan Paul stripped down to his bare torso, I was more than ready to move on. A native of Newark, Paul sang and danced in the original Broadway productions of Oliver! and Grease in his adolescence, so I guess his doo-wop star turn offered a trip down memory lane.

A quick swoop back to The Manhattan Transfer at its peak came with “The Boy from New York City” — a tour de force for Bentyne — followed by their incomparable “Birdland” as the finale. Cheering and foot-stamping brought them back for an encore, “Choo Choo Ch’boogie.” As Janis Siegel likes to say, they’re not a pop group or jazz group; they’re a vocal group. Their busy 2018 tour schedule, which includes some double-bills with the a cappella gospel group Take 6, could daunt performers half their age. Catch them if you can.

A ‘Musical Conversation’ With Dianne Reeves
By Sanford Josephson

In the mid-1970s, Dianne Reeves’ cousin, the pianist George Duke, took her to a Cannonball Adderley tribute concert at UCLA. “All these great musicians were there,” Reeves told bassist Christian McBride during their “One on One” concert and conversation, held November 10 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. “I see this woman, and she asked me, ‘What’s your name?’ I said, ‘Dianne Reeves’. Then, she asked,’What do you do?’ I said I was a singer, and she asked, ‘Who do you listen to?’ I said, ‘Sarah Vaughan.’ I kept telling her about Sarah Vaughan. She got up and started walking toward the stage, and she started singing ‘Send in the Clowns’. I couldn’t believe I was talking to her.”

Reeves’ uncle, Charles Burrell, a jazz bassist and bassist for the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, had given her a bunch of jazz records, and that’s how she discovered Vaughan, who became a major influence on her singing style. In fact, The New York Times once called her “the vocal heir to
Sarah Vaughan.” She followed that story with a performance of the J. Fred Coots/Haven Gillespie standard, “You Go to My Head,” recorded by Vaughan in 1961 with the Count Basie Orchestra on a Roulette album entitled Count Basie/Sarah Vaughan.

In addition to her chance meeting with Vaughan, Reeves reminisced with McBride about her years with Harry Belafonte and Sergio Mendes. She recalled going to an audition for Belafonte in 1983. “I learned ‘How Insensitive’ (Antonio Carlos Jobim) and prayed that no one who spoke Portuguese would walk into the room.” Mendes’ Brasil ’88 band was Reeves’ “introduction to all the artists of Brazil. He’d say, ‘Here’s this Jobim song you’ve probably never heard…”

The “One on One” format was promoted as a “conversation between two superstars,” but McBride preferred to describe it as “two old friends talking onstage and making some music.” Reeves only sang five songs during the 90-minute set. In addition to “You Go to My Head,” the others were: Mongo Santamaria’s “Afro Blue,” recorded by Reeves on her 2000 Blue Note album, In the Moment/Live in Concert; the Pat Metheny/ Lyle Mays Brazil-inspired “Minuano” featured on her 2016 Spotify album, Light Up the Night – Live in Marciac; her own composition, “Reminiscing About Being 9 Years Old;” and a riveting performance of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer’s “One For My Baby,” previously recorded by Reeves on the 2005 Concord Records soundtrack album from the movie, Good Night, and Good Luck.

As fascinating as the conversation between Reeves and McBride was, this writer would have preferred to hear a little more music. Her story about the chance meeting with Vaughan cried out for a performance of “Send in the Clowns,” and, after hearing about her Belafonte audition, I was all set for her interpretation of “How Insensitive.”

Reeves recalled other musical influences during her formative years growing up in Denver. “I was 12 or 13 when I heard James Brown and Oliver Nelson,” she said, “but when I was a junior in high school, The Temptations came to town. I was madly in love with Paul Williams and Eddie Kendricks.”

Her primary inspiration, though, was clearly Vaughan. “She understood her voice was her instrument. She used it in the way she wanted to use it.”
With a backdrop of gorgeous mountains, upscale stores and restaurants lining the manicured pathways between the venues, swans in the pond fronting the lodge entrance, chandeliers in almost every performance space, and bands and performers who “kill it” on the scene, it’s not surprising that the Sun Valley Jazz and Music Festival is often referred to as the “Cadillac of Jazz Festivals.”

As we drove from Boise, taking in the beautiful mountains on our way to the 28th annual incarnation of this event, I remembered my first experience of this fabulous festival (which you can read about in December 2016’s issue of Jersey Jazz). I was absolutely blown away by the high caliber and quantity of performers. And if it’s possible, this year was even more phenomenal, with forty musical acts playing over 200 sets over five days — and the early bird ticket option makes this festival quite a bargain. Carol and Jeff Loehr, as directors, continue to build on the legacy created by her parents Tom and Barb Hazzard, and they are extremely successful.

It’s a fabulous thing, when the 700-plus seat ballroom for the Big Band Bash, led by New Jersey’s own Joe Midiri, was standing room only, especially considering there were six other well-attended performances taking place simultaneously at other venues!

There are a few things the thousands of attendees notice here. For one, there is a number of blue-polo-shirted volunteers at the entrance of, and inside, each performance space. Festival management strongly emphasizes that there would be no festival at all without the help of over 230 volunteers. Sonnie Kirtley begins coordinating volunteers in March for the October event, encouraging them from every state. Many volunteers travel to Sun Valley year after year — those with Airstreams and other RVs get free RV parking near the River Lodge venue in Ketchum. Each volunteer works three four-hour shifts over the five days, and then gets to enjoy the rest of the festival.

Another thing attendees notice is that every performance starts with a word of thanks to the sponsors and volunteers. Over a hundred donors (the vast majority of them not corporations) contribute to the success of this festival and their generosity is validated with private parties for sponsors and priority seating in front of the bands. Sponsors are clearly identified too, with ribbons attached to their entrance badge — this enables all volunteers (and musicians and attendees) to thank the sponsors when they see them.

One can’t help but be impressed by the resort and its surroundings. Did you know it was the first ski resort in the United States? Averell Harriman (who later became Governor of New York) knew a good thing when he saw it, and capitalized on the Alpen charm of the area. By 1937, Sun Valley Ski Resort had celebrities flocking to visit, including Ernest Hemingway (he apparently completed For Whom The Bell Tolls at Sun Valley), Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman, and others. Even Louis Armstrong skied there in the 1960s. In addition to fabulous accommodation, the lodge features Gretchen’s Restaurant, an indoor bowling alley, fitness center and spa, outdoor heated pools, as well as (of course) an ice rink — all of which are accessible by guests of the resort. In addition, throughout the resort there are additional restaurants, and high end stores selling items such as fashion, jewelry, gifts and chocolate.

Jazz has been a constant of Sun Valley. Since the resort was first built, a beautiful grand piano has graced the Duchin Lounge. This was actually not
named after Eddy Duchin, premier band leader of the ‘30s and ’40s, but after his wife, Marjorie Oelrichs Duchin, who was best friends with Harriman’s wife, Marie, and who died just six days after giving birth to son Peter Duchin in 1937. Eddy Duchin left Peter to be raised by the Harrimans (he died when Peter was 13). But Peter followed in his father’s footsteps, becoming a society band leader whose band has played the inaugural balls and White House dinners of every president from Lyndon B. Johnson through Bill Clinton. He now has a home in Connecticut.

For decades a pianist has performed nightly at the Duchin Lounge, playing jazz, Broadway show tunes, and other enjoyable pieces. Joe Vos has been the pianist in residence for the past 37 years, but announced that this year would be his last, bringing tears to the eyes of many festival attendees and performers.

This jazz and music festival has something for everyone — traditional jazz, Sinatra and Motown hits, blues, western swing, Hot Club Gypsy, Zydeco, Louisiana Cajun, big band, ragtime and stride, acoustic guitar, vocal ensembles, dueling pianos, gospel, live piano accompaniment to silent movies… the list is quite extraordinary. I loved every performance I saw as did the audiences, if the standing ovations are anything to go by, and it’s impossible to choose any favorite. But when you attend this festival (and I say “when” because you really should!), if you can’t make it to every act, don’t miss Yve Evans’ humor and her impeccable vocal styling evoke every emotion. And her phenomenal solo piano skills make it seem like you’re listening to a trio. New Jersey’s own Midiri Brothers Sextet is a popular festival fixture, with each concert ending in a standing ovation. The fabulous chemistry of We Three — Bob Draga, Danny Coots and Jeff Barnhart will have you clamoring for more. Jacob Miller and the Bridge City Crooners, each member not even 30, blend early jazz, country blues and jug band swing, and their tight harmonies and high level of musicianship are seriously impressive. John and Kristi Cocuzzi, with Steve Pikal on bass, are a fabulous fun trio, with fantastic audience rapport. Jeff Barnhart and his lovely wife Anne are Ivory and Gold — despite being based “just up the road” in Connecticut, we don’t see them nearly often enough in the tri-state area.

The festival presents new acts each year — this year, one of the newcomers was Paris Washboard, with leader Daniel Barda, trombone; Alain Marquet, clarinet; Dr. Philippe Carment, piano; and Stéphane Séva (now based in New York City) on washboard. Their repertoire from the ’20s and ’30s plus some original compositions, and mischievous humor, were very well received. Another newcomer was continued on page 34
SUN VALLEY JAZZ FESTIVAL
continued from page 33

the award-winning Carolyn Martin Swing Band, playing Western swing. Carolyn, on vocals and guitar, is a member of the Western Swing Hall of Fame and a winner of the 2016 Ameripolitan Music Award. Together with her husband Dave Martin, bass; Rory Hoffman, accordion; guitar and clarinet; Michael Sweeney, steel guitar; Paul Kramer, violin; and Ray von Rots, drums they swing hard and had their audiences cheering.

Each year, the festival has special concerts and I was really impressed with one in particular (and over 700 concert attendees seemed equally thrilled) — Ladies Sing. Sherri Colby with her band Blue Renditions was joined by Anne Barnhart, Kristi Cocuzzi, Meloney Collins, Yve Evans, Marilyn Keller, Carolyn Martin, Jaime Roberts and Shirley Van Paepeghem. The concert comprised solo performances and then an ensemble finale — yes, nine-part harmonies!

But perhaps one of the most noteworthy accomplishments of the festival was their grand finale, thirteen acts in 90 minutes, culminating with grande dame Yve Evans together with Brian Holland on piano leading the standing audience in a rousing rendition of “America the Beautiful.”

I can’t recommend this event more strongly. The dates have already been set for the 29th Annual Sun Valley Jazz and Music Festival — October 17-21, 2018. Don’t miss out. Details for attending and/or volunteering are at SunValleyJazz.com. See you there!

Carolyn Martin (guitar) and Dave Martin (bass) of the Carolyn Martin Swing Band.

—Photos by Lynn Redmile
MULLIGANESQUE!
L.A. Jazz Institute Pays Tribute to Gerry Mulligan

By Sanford Josephson

It was indeed an honor when I was asked by Ken Poston, director of the Los Angeles Jazz Institute, to moderate a panel on “Gerry Mulligan’s Influence” at Mulliganesque, a tribute to Gerry Mulligan, held from October 27-30 at the Four Points by Sheraton at LAX. As I embarked on my book, Jeru: In the Words of Gerry Mulligan (Hal Leonard Books: 2015) in 2012, Mulligan’s widow, Franca, lent me the tapes of Jeru: In the Words of Gerry Mulligan, interviews conducted by Ken with Mulligan in 1995.

I was delighted to learn that one of the “Gerry Mulligan’s Influence” panelists would be pianist Mitch Forman, who played in Mulligan’s ‘new’ concert jazz band of the early 1980s. I had seen Forman play many times, but we had never met, although I interviewed him by phone for my book. The other panelists were the outstanding Los Angeles-based saxophonists Doug Webb and Bob Efford, and all of us, of course, agreed that Mulligan’s influence was enormous. Forman was introduced to Mulligan in the late ‘70s by his friend from high school, Rich DeRosa, who was already playing drums and arranging for Mulligan’s band. “I was just a kid,” Forman recalled, “but Gerry was very supportive, nurturing. It was probably my first major jazz gig. It was an amazing opportunity.”

Earlier in the conference, multi-reedist Scott Robinson participated in several of the sessions including a Western Reunion celebrating the music of Mulligan’s sextet and A Concert in Jazz, playing music of the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band. Robinson played Gerry’s baritone saxophone in 1999 at a celebration of the Library of Congress’ acquisition of the Gerry Mulligan Collection. He told me that, while he was more influenced on baritone by Harry Carney and Leo Parker than by Mulligan, “Mulligan just emphasized the solo nature of the instrument to such a great degree. He did more in that area than those other players did. He brought the baritone forward as a real solo instrument because of his melodic sense.”

I was only present for two days of the conference, arriving in the middle of a big band performance conducted by Bill Holman, who wrote many of the Concert Jazz Band’s arrangements. When the original CJB started, Mulligan brought Holman to New York from California. Holman told me he was “very flattered that Gerry asked me to help out… I really jumped at the chance to be in New York for awhile to be around all of these guys.” At Mulliganesque, Holman conducted the band for two extended works: his “The Missing Man,” a tribute written after Mulligan’s death; and Bob Brookmeyer’s “Celebration,” written for Gerry as a featured soloist.

The vocalist Pinky Winters sang a number of songs that Mulligan and Judy Hollday recorded together on the 1980 DRG release, Holliday and Mulligan. There were four Mulligan-Holiday originals — “What’s the Rush,” “Loving You,” “It Must Be Christmas,” and “Summer’s Over” — plus standards such as Irving Berlin’s “Supper Time” and Ted Koehler’s “I Got a Right to Sing the Blues.” And, rarely heard Mulligan big band compositions were played in an excellent concert by the California State at Long Beach Concert Jazz Orchestra, led by Jeff Jarvis.

The highlight for me was a big band performance that mixed selections from Mulligan’s 1971 A&M album, The Age of Steam, a Grammy Award nominee, and his 1980 Grammy Award-winning DRG album, Walk on the Water. The performance featured such Mulligan originals as “K-4 Pacific,” “Song For Strayhorn,” “42nd and Broadway,” and “Walk on the Water,” along with a Forman original, “Angelica.” Forman was on piano for this concert as well as a Baritone Summit that followed. The original Age of Steam band had a five-piece rhythm section, plus anywhere from four to 11 horns. And, it featured all-star caliber personnel — Brookmeyer on trombone, Harry Sweets Edison on trumpet, Tom Scott on tenor sax and Bud Shank on alto sax, among others.

Walk on the Water was the only recording made by the new big band Mulligan assembled in 1979, and Mulligan’s only Grammy Award. In addition to The Age of Steam, Soft Lights & Sweet Music (Concord Jazz: 1992), recorded with tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, was nominated for a Grammy; and, Mulligan’s composition, “For an Unfinished Woman” from Walk on the Water, was nominated for Best Instrumental Performance by a Group.

It’s always been widely accepted that Mulligan changed the way the jazz world looked at the baritone saxophone — something both Webb and Efford attested to. But people are often surprised when they learn, for example, that six of the 12 tracks on the historic Miles Davis Birth of the Cool album were either composed or arranged by Mulligan. (Birth of the Cool is in the Grammy Hall of Fame). And, there are myriad stories of how Mulligan would rearrange a piece of music on the fly, while the band was in rehearsal.

The magnitude of Mulligan’s abilities was perhaps best described (in Jeru’s Journey) by pianist Bill Charlap. “Mulligan,” he said, “knew the orchestra, knew the players, knew how to write for them. He had a complete understanding of the players. Like Ellington, he was a real arranger, the real thing. And, he just loved leading a band — bandleader, bar player, composer, arranger, I think they’re all equal. They’re just part and parcel of each other.”

Thanks again to Ken Poston and the L.A. Jazz Institute for shining a light on the remarkable triumphs of one of the true giants of American music.
Back in 1955, a friend and I set out to define jazz. Dr. Alan P. Merriam, then an ethnomusicology professor and amateur saxophonist at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and this amateur bassist in Newark worked by airmail. The outcome was an “operational definition” — meaning that if the factors numbered below are there in any piece of music, that music is jazz. Our definition was published in the journal *Ethnomusicology*. Readers are welcome to react to editor@njjs.org or to: fradleygarner@gmail.com.

**JAZZ**: A contemporary urban music emerging as an identifiable form in the late 19th Century among marginal black groups* in the Mississippi Delta region and traditionally associated with the dance. Integrating European harmony and Euro-American melody with West African concepts of rhythm, phrasing and tone color, jazz is usually performed by dance musicians playing standard European instruments. Jazz is distinguished from non-jazz (popular song hits, academic or “classical” and ethnic music) by the following factors operating in conjunction:

1. A constant basic beat in duple meter or some variation within a duple framework.
2. Continual offbeat phrasing of melodic accents.
   a. Phrase patterns in which melodic accents fall between dominant percussive beats.
   b. Melodic cycles of three beats superimposed on a fundamental rhythm of two or four beats, the beats themselves remaining equal in value.
3. Emphasis on rhythm and the percussive use of melody instruments.
4. Frequent extended solo and/or collective improvising on the melody, rhythm and harmonic structure.
5. Affinity for the flexible “blue scale” (scored as diatonic major with added minor thirds and sevenths).
6. Theme-and-variations chorus structure.
8. Vocal vibrato, portamento and a wide variety of tone color derived from folk speech inflections.

Shift of emphasis and interpretation is evidenced by a variety of styles and developments within the overall form: blues, New Orleans, ragtime, Dixieland, Chicago, Kansas City, swing, boogie-woogie, bop, cool. Jazz at best is creatively spontaneous, allowing great freedom in individual improvisation and stimulating an intense, direct emotional response among performers and listeners.

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* The original published version read, more pompously, “marginal socio-economic Negro groups.”
"peace" in swahili

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These Apples Didn’t Fall Far From The Tree
Sons of jazz legends coming to the Bickford Theatre

By Don Jay Smith

Many performers are children of musicians but it is not always easy to carve an independent path in entertainment world. Think of Frank Sinatra, Jr., or Natalie Cole, or even Louis Prima, Jr.

But this winter, the Bickford Theatre will present two sons of jazz legends who have become musical stars in their own right: Dave Brubeck’s son Chris and Thelonious Monk’s son T.S.

Chris Brubeck’s Triple Play will perform on Saturday, January 20. The group brings together three exceptional musicians whose good-time music draws on folk, blues, and jazz.

A Grammy-nominated composer and musician Chris Brubeck has been called “one of the finest jazz trombonists around today” by DownBeat magazine and “one of the most capable electric bassists” by the Los Angeles Times.

He began touring and recording with his legendary father when he was young and has gone on to become a performer, composer, and bandleader in his own right.

He’s worked with a cross section of artists including opera stars Frederica von Stade and Dawn Upshaw, pop stars Willie Nelson and B. B. King, and jazz greats Gerry Mulligan, Stephane Grappelli and Bobby McFerrin.

His trio Triple Play delivers an epic sojourn through American music unlike any other band today and includes Peter Madcat Ruth, considered one of the best and most versatile harmonica players in the world and singer/guitarist Joel Brown a much in-demand soloist and chamber musician.

Chris Brubeck explains that Dave was always just dad to him. “I remember a couple of experiences when I was very young that got me thinking differently about my dad. One night after a concert with the famous quartet, we went to a classic New Jersey diner where they had a jukebox. I remember sitting in the booth and noticing “Take Five” on the playlist and being amazed.

The other time it hit me that my dad was famous was when the Beatles came to America. When I heard them say in an interview that they listened to Dave Brubeck, I knew that dad was important.”

Triple Play has one foot in the jazz world and another in blues but their repertoire includes many famous Dave Brubeck tunes including “Take Five,” “Blue Rondo a la Turk,” “Unsquare Dance,” “It’s A Raggy Waltz” and the beautiful “Thank You.”

Drummer T.S. Monk and his group will pay tribute to his famous father in concert on Thursday, February 22. Thelonious Monk is the second most recorded jazz composer (after Duke Ellington) and many of his works have become jazz standards, including “Round Midnight,” “Blue Monk,” “Straight, No Chaser,” “Rudy, My Dear,” and “Well, You Needn’t” to name a few.

T.S. got his first drumsticks from a regular visitor to their family home, Max Roach, and eventually joined his father’s trio, touring with him until he retired in 1975.

Setting out on his own, Monk had two hit records with his R&B group, Natural Essence, before returning to jazz in 1992.

He now heads up the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz to promote jazz education, provide scholarships for music students, and promote his father’s legacy.

“Thelonious Sphere Monk was just daddy,” says T.S. Monk. “He took me and my sister, Boo Boo everywhere, and taught me how to treat girls, spin tops and change my sister’s diapers, among many other things. I can’t recall even one time in my life when I ever called him Thelonious, or Monk, or pop, or anything other than daddy.”

Both Dave Brubeck and Thelonious Monk were family men and raised their children well. You can see the results in these two great concerts in January and February.

Tickets may be purchased by calling the box office at 973-971-3706 or visiting www.morrismuseum.org/jazz-showcase. The Bickford Theatre is located at 6 Normandy Heights Road in Morristown.

You can find more information about the Bickford Theatre Jazz Series on page 38 of this issue.
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BUS TOUR ROUNDTIP LOS ANGELES - MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL MARCH 1-4
**Dan’s Den | A Long And Rich Life In Jazz**

**By Dan Morgenstern**

Please read George Avakian’s obituary in “Big Band in the Sky” before entering the January Den.

George Avakian’s long and rich life in jazz began publicly began when he was just 16 and, as editor of the paper of the Horace Mann School for Boys, pulled the coup of an interview with Benny Goodman, in and of itself an achievement, but enhanced by his subject’s friendly response. It was the prelude to a lifelong professional and personal relationship between the just budding King of Swing and the man whom I regard as the King of Jazz Advocates, the title created by the National Endowment for the Arts for its award to non-musicians and rightfully bestowed on George, whom I happily knew well enough to call him by his first name.

Even before I met George, I felt as if I knew him, from his fine writings about the music, notably his excellent liner notes, first on the many 78 reissue albums so well assembled by him as a youngster, then more extensively on the multi-volume 12-inch LPs of Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith retrospectives — as well as his contributions to jazz magazines.

He was of course the initiator of new jazz recordings made especially for album issue, with his Chicago Jazz, when he was not yet 20 and concerned that the musicians associated with so-called Chicago Style (a term no longer in style), heavy drinkers almost all, would not be around that much longer and needed to be captured in time. As it turned out, most of the ones involved in the project stayed around for quite a while, some of them, notably Eddie Condon, recorded again by George more than three decades later.

It should be made clear that Chicago Jazz was NOT the first collection of jazz records in album form. Decca, the label in question, had been releasing albums collecting performances featuring specific instruments, and RCA Victor, with its 1936 Bix Beiderbecke memorial album, which included first-rate annotation by compiler Warren Scholl, came first, but it was the first album of jazz music newly recorded for that purpose.

And that innovation quickly led to follow-ups for New Orleans and Kansas City jazz, suggested by George but produced by others, Steve Smith and Dave Dexter. George declined to do it again due to the fact that Decca had only paid him $75 for his labors, which included a trip to Chicago, as a result of which he wound up in the red. But Columbia quickly engaged him to produce reissue albums — something he had suggested before the Chicago album’s release and the label now picked up on. Perhaps the biggest finds George made in the label’s extensive archives were a few unissued Louis Hot Fives and Sevens, and the sole recording by a 10-piece band led by the great man. Characteristically, before notifying the label of his finds, George decided to seek out Louis and ask for his approval first. This was their first encounter and the beginning of a truly beautiful friendship and collaboration ended only by Louis’ death.

The first stage of George’s career was ended by the draft. He would spend the next five years in the Army, something only in passing in the obits, but a considerable time, all in the Pacific Theater and involving him in Leyte, the Philippines, and the occupation of Japan, fortunately without seeing combat, but including a harrowing encounter with post-atomic bomb Hiroshima.

At what was to be my last encounter with George, one of many at the home of David Ostwald, he spoke of this, David said, for the very first time in their long and close friendship — perhaps triggered by the ominous present, George was a beloved presence of David’s annual pre-Christmas party, always featuring informal live music made by some of the guests and enjoyed by all including George, whose visible reaction to the music I loved to observe, marveling at how, after so many decades of listening, including some of the major ones in history brought about by himself, he still found jazz such a source of joy. And so did his wife of more than fifty years, the major classical violinist Anahid Ajemian, member of the American String Quartet, which introduced works by every contemporary American composer of note. Her younger sister Marjo was an exceptional pianist, and George shared their involvement in that branch of music. (There was a wonderful exhibit paying tribute to George and Anahid at the Lincoln Center Library of Performing Arts, where their archives are housed.) His wife preceded George in death by a year and a half, a loss he braved with the help of their devoted children.

Speaking of David Ostwald, who shared George’s love of Louis, the birth and berth of David’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band was an Avakian co-creation. George engineered the band’s weekly booking (Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7 p.m.), now in its 18th year at Birdland!

And both George and David were present at the annual Satchmo Summerfest in New Orleans, from the start 16 years ago. George was often involved in the seminars that are a feature of the event (highly

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**George Avakian looking at his Chicago Jazz notes at David Ostwald’s home in April, 2017. A mint copy of the recording can be seen on the table between George and the quiche. Photo by Dan Morgenstern.**

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**Jersey Stories Jazz**

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**January 2018 Jersey Jazz**
Jersey Stories Jazz

recommended in spite of the heat; it’s always held the first weekend in July).

I’ll not forget the one where he listened for the very first time to an interview with Louis that he’d conducted decades before.

Speaking of Louis: All the obits referred to “Mack the Knife” as a “German theater song,” a superficially correct designation that overlooks its function as the theme song of The Threepenny Opera, a big success in its second English translation, not so incidentally by Mark Blitzstein, composer of the famed Depression-era musical The Cradle Will Rock, the revival of which was brought about by none other than George. There was nothing very “German” about “Mack the Knife” in its vernacular English, to which Louis took instantly, and which became a lasting part of his repertory. Incidentally, the arrangement for the All-Stars was the work of Turk Murphy, who has not been mentioned in the posthumous listings of artists brought to Columbia by George; neither was Eddie Condon, perhaps a sign of prejudice against traditional jazz by the obiturists, or just that there was space only for famous names. But Murphy even more than Eddie was a sign of the breadth and consistency of George’s musical universe. He never bowed to fashion. In this context, we should not forget about Sonny Rollins, for whom George obtained, from RCA Victor, what was then the highest signing fee accorded a jazz artists — and created some wonderful recordings.

George’s lifelong love affair, as we have noted, began with Benny Goodman, whose Let’s Dance broadcasts he listened to when he was supposed to be asleep, which led to that interview. Years later, it was George who, having been made aware of the existence of recordings of the famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert (found in a closet in the Goodman home), brought about Columbia’s issuing of the remastered music — a milestone in the history of jazz recordings. It was followed by more vintage Goodman from airchecks.

And then, lo and behold, George was put in charge of Goodman’s Russian tour, the first by a jazz artist in the Soviet Union (officially, that is, as sponsored by the State Department) in 1962. It was, as those of us old enough to remember, the source of much controversy in the jazz press, but George did not follow suit but wrote the honest and insightful notes to the double LP of live recordings from the tour — which not so incidentally proved that the music was far less controversial than the critical brouhaha. George and Benny remained friends, as I was privileged to witness when attending a session for what would be the final recording date by the original B.G. quintet — proof of George’s talents as a diplomat.

There is so much to say about this great and good man that I could go on, but the Den is not all that roomy and I must end this tribute by just adding that getting to know and spend time in the company of George Avakian has been one of the blessings in my long life blessed with special friendships.

His gifts to the music he loved will never wither.
BILL ZAVATSKY ON BILL EVANS

A poetry reading that I did at the Museum of Modern Art in 1977 led to a meeting that summer with my hero Bill Evans. That night I read the first poem I had written about Bill, “To the Pianist Bill Evans,” and a friend of his approached me after the reading. Soon after I and my wife were invited to Closter, NJ where Bill and Nenette Evans lived with their daughter Maxine and their son Evan. Bill was welcoming, friendly, funny. That year (or maybe on another birthday) I gave him some of his own records, which he didn’t own. He stopped in the middle of the living room with a drink he was carrying to listen to himself spinning through the chord changes of “Oleo,” from the Everybody Digs Bill Evans album. He chuckled and said, “Ah, you can always tell a black player, now can’t you?” Bill had suffered deeply when both he and Miles Davis were criticized when Miles hired him. Both he and Miles believed that it was the value of a musician’s talent that mattered, not the color of his skin.

Phyllis and I saw Bill and Nenette frequently over the next year or two, and I proposed that we collaborate on his life story, a project that was never to be realized. I began to hear that Bill had returned to drugs and was killing himself with speedballs, a mixture of heroin and cocaine. (This he told me one night when I surprised him at the Village Vanguard.) Bill’s manager Helen Keane and Nenette asked me to write something for the first posthumous release, You Must Believe in Spring, which the trio had recorded a couple of years earlier. I listened to a copy of the album over and over again, letting it tell me what I ought to write. The music is so beautiful that I don’t think I could have written a bad poem if I were the worst poet in the world.

Not long after that the pianist/composer Egil Kapstad discovered Spring with my poem on the jacket and set it to music, bringing over to Oslo the sublime Sheila Jordan to sing his melody. A couple of years ago filmmaker Bruce Spiegel finished his beautiful, heartbreaking documentary about Bill called Time Remembered. You can find it at billevanstimeremembered.com and hear me talk a little more about one of the greatest pianists who ever lived.

ELEGY (For Bill Evans, 1929-1980)

By Bill Zavatsky

Music your hands are no longer here to make
Still breaks against my ear, still shakes my heart.
Then I feel that I am still before you.
You bend above your shadow on the keys
That tremble at your touch or crystallize,
Water forced to concentrate. In meditation
You close your eyes to see yourself more clearly.

Now you know the source of sound,
The element bone and muscle penetrate
Hoping to bring back beauty.
Hoping to catch what lies beyond our reach,
You hunted with your fingertips.

My life you found, and many other lives
That traveled through your hands upon their journey.
Note by note we followed in your tracks, like
Hearing the rain, eyes closed to feel more deeply.
We stood before the mountains of your touch.
The sunlight and the shade you carried us
We drank, tasting our bitter lives more sweetly
From the spring of song that never stops its kiss.

ABOUT THE POET

Poet, jazz pianist, translator, educator, journalist and magazine editor Bill Zavatsky was born and grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1943, but has lived in New York City since 1965. He studied music at the New School, advancing his knowledge of the blues and jazz which grew from his childhood admiration for Fats Domino and Alan Toussaint. That group of illustrious pianists came to include, among others, Marc Copland, Keith Jarrett, Thelonius Monk and Bill Evans, about whom he has written three poems. “Elegy” appears on Evans’ CD You Must Believe in Spring.

Zavatsky’s poem “Voices,” is on Marc Copland’s CD of the same name (2006) and “Told, Told” is on Night Whispers (2007). His eminently readable books of poetry include Where V Marks the Spot, Theories of Rain and Other Poems and Haiku and Co., which is augmented by his own drawings. In an interview in 2012 with Michael Allen Zell, Zavatsky said, “...playing jazz has given me the courage to write, and that writing has given me a certain kind of courage when I make music.”
MELISSA ERRICO SINGS SONDHEIM
Feinstein’s/54 Below, NYC | Nov. 17-18/Dec. 4

The bond between performers who have appeared in shows with scores by Stephen Sondheim and the catalog of songs by this genius of the Great White Way is almost a given. Melissa Errico has performed in productions of Sunday in the Park with George, Passion and Do I Hear a Waltz?, the first two with both music and lyrics by Sondheim, while he provided the lyrics to music by Richard Rodgers in the third. At Feinstein’s/54 Below, she assayed 17 songs from 12 different scores.

Errico’s selection of songs was interesting, not filled with most of the Sondheim songs that have become familiar to wider audiences through performances by a variety of singers, songs like “Send in the Clowns,” “Maria,” “Tonight,” “Being Alive,” “Losing My Mind,” “Johanna,” “Pretty Women,” and “Good Thing Going.” Yes, there were “Do I Hear a Waltz,” “I Remember,” “Take the Moment,” “Somewhere,” “Children Will Listen” and “Not While I’m Around,” all of which have had some life outside the confines of the shows for which they were written, but there were also selections like “Everybody Says Don’t” “Everybody Loves Louis,” “The Miller’s Son,” “Marry Me a Little” and a cut song from Follies, “It Wasn’t Meant to Happen.”

As the show progressed, Errico was consistently impressive, her voice strong, flexible and lovely, her patter entertaining, and her acting ability shine through. No matter the mood or content of the song, she was equal to the task of getting to the heart of the material. Her most theatrical moments came when she sang the song from Company, “Getting Married Today.” She performed both female roles convincingly, employing the dexterity of an experienced comedienne as she added much physical humor to her approach. Assisting her with the male voice that was offstage until the end of the number was Richard Troxell who had previously appeared with her in productions of Do I Hear a Waltz? And Kiss Me Kate. He lingered on stage long enough to give a solo take on “Take the Moment” from Do I Hear a Waltz?, and joined Errico for a lovely reading of “Somewhere” from West Side Story.

When Errico finished her show with “Move On” from Sunday in the Park with George, move on was about the last thing that the audience wanted to do. They were ready for some more magic from Melissa Errico, but had to be satisfied with having just experienced an exceptional hour of musical excellence, enhanced considerably by the pianism of Tedd Firth

VERONICA SWIFT
Birdland, NYC | Nov. 21-26

The meteoric rise of Veronica Swift to the ranks of select jazz vocalists has been impressive indeed. She graduated from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami last December, moved to New York City in April, has already appeared several times at Birdland, including the weeklong engagement covered in this piece, has recorded two new albums, one with saxophonist Jeff Rupert that has just been released, and one with pianist Benny Green’s Trio to be released early in 2018, and has become a featured artist with popular trumpeter Chris Botti at his concert and club appearances.

Her stand at Birdland in November follows one-evening gigs at the club last February and July, plus a continuing Saturday evening set whenever her busy schedule finds her in town. For this series of appearances at Birdland, the Benny Green Trio, with Green on piano, Yasushi Nakamura on bass and Carl Allen on drums, provided the instrumental support.

The first set on November 21 opened with the trio playing three instrumental numbers “Blue Minor” by Sonny Clark, “Minor Content” by Hank Jones and “Idle Moments” by Duke Pearson. Green is an impressively fluent player who overflows with ideas, taste and technique.

With the arrival of Veronica Swift on stage, Green demonstrated that he is also an empathetic accompanist. Swift opened with a spirited take on “I Get a Kick Out of You” which included a scintillating scat interlude that was greeted with a lot of oohs and ahs from the highly receptive audience. She followed with a knowing reading of the sardonic Dave Frishberg tune, “A Little Taste.”

Swift is equally adept at infusing a ballad with sensitivity and emotion. This was clear as she sang Pete Rugolo’s “Interlude,” most notably associated with one of her major influences, June Christy.

When performing medleys, it is important that a vocalist chooses songs that complement each other. Swift did exactly this by pairing “You and the Night and the Music” with “The Gypsy in My Soul,” with the latter receiving an interesting treatment as Nakamura’s bass provided the initial support for Swift’s vocal before the full trio joined the fray. Next she combined a Dietz and Schwartz rarity “Confession,” a humorously suggestive ditty with “The Other Woman,” a statement on the shallowness of the life of a mistress.

When listening to Veronica Swift, it is obvious that she has the kind of hip presence and attitude that was a hallmark of the performance personas of Anita O’Day. Her performance of “You’re Gonna Hear From Me” put this front and center.

She is a young lady with confidence, and the belief that her remarkable rise to prominence is just the beginning of some special days ahead.
One of the most impressive talents in the world of jazz is that of the people who can conceive of and create the arrangements for a big band. The ability to hear in one’s mind how the blending of a variety of instruments might sound, and then to capture these musical ideas in the concrete form of a chart for the musicians to execute is awe inspiring. Among the most impressive of these arrangers is one Willis Leonard Holman, known to his many enthusiasts as Bill Holman. From August 15-20, 2011, Bill Dobbins, Professor of Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media at the Eastman School of Music sat down with Bill Holman for a series of conversations. These occasions are collected in Conversations with Bill Holman: Thoughts and Recollections of a Jazz Master. This absorbing, fascinating and informative volume presents Bill Holman, man and musician in a way that captures the keen intellect and subtle sense of humor that informs the music that he creates.

Holman is essentially self-taught, although he did attend the Westlake College of Music in L.A. for a few years. As a teenager, he started playing clarinet, but eventuallyswitched to tenor sax. It was as a tenor saxophonist that he made his initial foray into the world of professional music, and he was a much admired participant in the West Coast jazz scene, but it was not until 1975 that he formed the Bill Holman Big Band, an ensemble that is still active today. It has primarily been a rehearsal band, but has made several recordings, including Brilliant Corners, a highly regarded album of Monk songs arranged by Holman that includes some of his most adventurous charts.

They do perform in public occasionally, mostly at jazz festivals and in concert. Holman has also spent time arranging for and fronting big bands in England, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands, as well as performing similar tasks with several domestic college jazz ensembles. In 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts designated him as a NEA Jazz Master.

Reading the conversations that took place between Holman and Dobbins is enlightening, educational and entertaining. Both are extremely knowledgeable about the world of jazz and the intricacies of the arranging process. They convey a wealth of information in ways that reach readers who are simply jazz enthusiasts with little technical musical background, as well as trained musicians. The topics covered are wide-ranging, and include biographical information, influences, working methods, writing for different types of situations, jazz education, and a variety of other topics.

As you read through the pages, Holman comes across as warm, informed, humorous, and opinionated; and a person with whom it would be fun to spend some time. You will more fully understand the role of an arranger. Having the added dimension of the knowledge and opinions of Bill Dobbins is a definite plus.

At the end of the book, there is an 18-page section that contains comments from a variety of his peers and associates about Bill Holman. These words fill out the picture of the genius who is Bill Holman that comes through when you read his own words. The book concludes with a Selected Discography of recordings led by Holman, and recordings containing his arrangements.

To this writer, who considers Bill Holman the finest of big band arrangers, it was exciting to discover this book. Having read it, the reality exceeded the anticipation, and that is as good as it gets.
NEA Jazz Master Performs With Princeton Student Ensemble

By Schaen Fox

On Saturday, December 2, octogenarian Archie Shepp fronted the Creative Large Ensemble at Princeton University’s Richardson Auditorium and thoroughly belied his age. The special event was organized by the university’s Director of Jazz, Rudresh Manhanthappa to perform selections from Mr. Shepp’s Grammy nominated I Hear The Sound: Attica Blues Orchestra (Live).

The program was impressive. Darcy James Argue conducted; Amina Claudine Myers and Marion Rampal were special guests and the ensemble totaled 28 students. A large, diverse crowd quickly filled the auditorium. One woman told me her party had driven there from Connecticut. A young couple said they had recently moved to the area from Hungary, and were so happy to learn of the event. There were even some young children, but the vast majority of the audience was closer to Social Security than to Sesame Street.

The program started with a brief recording of Mr. Shepp’s讲话 eloquently about the deplorable events at Attica and other prisons so long ago. Then came “Quiet Dawn” a piece that rhythmically echoes Charlie Shavers’ “Dawn on the Desert.” For the next two hours we were treated to a dozen compositions, mostly penned by the guest jazz master. There was no intermission, and Mr. Shepp played or sang wonderfully on every number.

Some years ago we attended another student event at the august institution and were decidedly underwhelmed. This grabbed us. These kids can play, and be in the moment. The best example of that was trombonist Rajeev Erramilli’s enthusiastic solo on “Mama Too Tight.” He danced in place as he played, and the audience roared their approval. Later the maestro said that while many of the students were very talented, they were not music majors. He was only at Princeton for a few days to help the students, but he was very pleased with the performance.

At the reception afterwards, Mr. Shepp was surrounded by a large crowd of students, fans, friends and family. He graciously engaged everyone who approached, and was still with them when we left.

Diane Moser’s Composers Big Band Celebrates 21st Anniversary at Trumpets Jazz Club on January 17

Among the tri-state area’s most versatile jazz ensembles, Diane Moser’s Composers Big Band salutes two decades of developing and presenting new music on January 17 with a concert at Trumpets in Montclair. Formed by composer/pianist Diane Moser and a dedicated group of musicians and composers the band has had a mission to explore big band music since its debut gig in January 1997.

The DMCBB plays classics and pushes boundaries. Any given set might contain traditional big band charts, straight-ahead jazz, Latin, funk, blues, Indian raga and flat out experimentation. They have visited hip-hop territory, performed a jazz opera, and paid tribute to legendary composers such as Charles Mingus, Jaki Byard and Oliver Nelson and presented special guests like singers, poets, spoken word artists, actors, filmmakers and many others artists. The band even ventured into the cosmos with “Science Meets Music” and “The Music of the Spheres” gigs featuring Moser originals and George Russell’s “Jazz in the Space Age,” making them the only band besides Russell’s to ever play the suite.

In the past two decades, the band has hosted more than 100 guest composers, from internationally acclaimed jazz icons such as Jane Ira Bloom, Mark Dresser, Howard Johnson, Oliver Lake, and Michele Rosewoman to student writers hearing their compositions performed by a large ensemble for the first time. The 2018 resident composers roster includes Dennis Argul, Barbara Cifelli, Jim Cifelli, Marty Fogel, Matt Haviland, Rob Henke, Rob Middleton, Diane Moser, Chris Rogers, Erick Storckman, Russ Vines, Ed Xiques, and Craig Yaremko.

It’s impossible to separate the band’s music and mission from the vision and contagious energy of leader Diane Moser, a.k.a. “D-Mo.” Moser has released six CDs as a leader or co-leader, with a new trio CD scheduled for release in March, and including one with the DMCBB; a second album with the big band is in the works. Moser’s talents have been recognized with numerous awards, grants, and fellowships, including from Chamber Music America, New Music USA, the MacDowell Colony, Virginia Center for the Arts, and the Millay Arts Colony. She has worked with dancers, written scores for award-winning documentary films, composed for musical theater and more.

Keeping a big band together for 20 years is no small feat, especially when it’s made up of players who lead their own bands and/or are in-demand sidemen. And after two decades, some of the original band members still on the bandstand at every gig. In addition to pianist Moser, the current lineup includes: saxes: Ed Xiques, Rob Middleton, Marty Fogel, Barbara Cifelli, Craig Yaremko, Tom Colao; trombones: Erick Storckman, Ben Williams, Matt Haviland, Dennis Argul; trumpets: Mike Spengler, Jim Cifelli, Chris Rogers, Rob Henke; rhythm: Larry Maltz (guitar), Andy Eulau (bass), Scott Neumann (drums). The DMCBB will delve into its enormous and enviable repertoire on January 17th, with the focus on works by resident composers. There are bound to be some surprises, including new music, and surprise guests onstage and in audience.

Wednesday, Jan. 17, sets at 8 and 10 pm; $20 cover at Trumpets Jazz Club
973-744-2600 | www.trumpetsjazz.com

Archie Shepp. Photo by Fred Toulet.
Other Views
By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

I do not know why I still get so many CDs to review when I keep hearing that they are a thing of the past. I am pleased that lots of new ones arrive that are perfect to recommend to you. As a bonus, there is the news that a fine jazz documentary is now available on DVD.

DVD

In the November 2012 issue of Jersey Jazz, I reviewed the film The Savoy King: Chick Webb and the Music That Changed America. Now that wonderful film is available for purchase on DVD. This is a condensed and edited version of my review.

If you have been having a hard time getting going lately, a sure cure for what ails you would be obtaining a copy of The Savoy King: Chick Webb and the Music That Changed America. In it you will hear some of the most swinging sounds imaginable, and learn about the life of drummer/bandleader Chick Webb, a true jazz giant. Though short of stature, his talent and determination were immense, his influence on the world of jazz drumming was great, and his musical legacy continues to inspire musicians and jazz fans to the present day.

Producer/director/screenwriter Jeff Kaufman undertook a labor of love several years ago when he began researching The Savoy King, and his efforts have paid off with a truly superior jazz documentary. Kaufman effectively ties together many threads, the story of Webb’s life, a picture of Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s, with specific emphasis on the Savoy Ballroom, the racial climate in America during Webb’s lifetime, the effect of jazz on American culture, especially on race relations, and a plethora of other subjects, into a coherent and informative whole.

There is scant existing footage of Webb in action, so Kaufman has relied on a magnificent collection of still photos, some relevant film clips, and interviews with a variety of people, some from his hometown of Baltimore, some who knew him from his days in Harlem, the son of the owner of the Savoy Ballroom, Dr. Richard Gale, and three master jazz musicians, Joe Wilder, Louis Bellson and Roy Haynes. He also enlisted an interesting group of actors and musicians to speak the words of several people from the jazz world, people like Corey Hawkins providing the voice for Chick Webb, Janet Jackson as Ella Fitzgerald and Tyne Daly as Helen Oakley Dance. This is an effective device used throughout the film, which is narrated by Rocky Carroll.

From start to finish The Savoy King keeps the viewer engaged by the fascinating story of Chick Webb and the people and events that surrounded his life. The film is chock full of fascinating characters, information and music. Oh, the music! There are ample examples of why the Chick Webb bands were so revered, and why he was considered one of the most creative and influential drummers in jazz history. You will find your toe tapping throughout viewing the film, and if you do not finish watching it with a smile on your face, you need real help. (www.thesavoykingdocumentary.com)

CDs

2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Division of Jazz Studies Program in the College of Music at the University of North Texas. In celebration of that milestone, a series of recordings has been released on the school’s label. They include Lab 2017 by the ONE O’CLOCK LAB BAND, the latest in a series of annual releases highlighting the current edition of the band; Legacy: Neil Slater at North Texas, a four-disc set containing all of the compositions and arrangements that Slater, who served as the chair of the UNT Jazz program and director of its renowned One O’Clock Lab Band from 1981-2008, wrote for that band; Perseverance: The Music of Rich DeRosa at North Texas, a single disc featuring arrangements penned by DeRosa, Director of Jazz Composition and Arranging at UNT, for the various ensembles at the college; Airstream Artistry: Jim Riggs’ Best of the Two, a three-disc set that contains 40 pieces recorded by the Two O’Clock Lab Band, the band that Riggs directed from 1973-2008, while also serving as a Professor of Saxophone; and Nice! Jay Saunders’ Best of the Two, A two-disc collection of tracks from the six albums recorded by the Two O’Clock Lab Band while Saunders was its director.

The University of North Texas has been recognized as one of the best destinations for students who wish to pursue college level jazz studies. Its graduates have filled many chairs in the big bands of leaders like Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Buddy Rich, Maynard Ferguson, and most of the other major contemporary big bands. Many have also carved out careers as leaders, while others have become jazz educators. As students at UNT, they were exposed to a rigorous program of studies, and participated in the various ensembles that are part of the program. The music contained on these eleven discs demonstrates the high level of musicianship maintained by students at UNT. The demanding charts are executed with precision, and the student soloists are consistently impressive. These discs provide a wealth of outstanding and varied big band music. The Lab 2017 disc gives a diverse look at the current band, and includes several pieces composed and arranged by members of the band. The other four titles give a sampling of the unique perspectives provided by the four educators whose work is featured. There is a lot of music here to savor and enjoy. (http://jazz.unt.edu)

The name HARRY SOUTH is not a familiar one to most people, even jazz enthusiasts, outside of England. He was a prominent figure on the British jazz scene, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, but his fame did not spread as far as that of some of his contemporaries like Tubby Hayes, Humphrey Littleton, Ronnie Ross, Ronnie Scott, Dick Morrissey and Joe Harriott. The Songbook (Rhythm and Blues Records – 040), a four-disc compilation of his work as a pianist, composer and arranger, should open up some eyes and ears to some too long ignored music by a creative and talented musician. The music comprises tracks from small group sessions led by Hayes, Littleton, Ross, Morrissey and Harriott, selections by the Harry South Big Band which are a majority of the tracks, and a few other miscellaneous tracks. While there are some examples of South’s piano playing, it is his composing and arranging talents that are at the center of most of the music contained in this set. He was known for his jazz charts through the 1960s, and later did some writing for films, but it was his composing a theme for the British television series The Sweeney that brought him wider recognition, and financial security. There is a lot of music to explore in this set, and it proves to be an extremely satisfying and musically eclectic experience. Label owner and producer Nick Duckett has done an exceptional job in compiling the recordings, and enlisting Mark Baxter and Simon Spillett to provide the notes that can be found in the accompanying 36-page booklet. Take the plunge, and discover the pleasures to be found in the music of Harry South. (amazon.com)

When one thinks of the music of Thomas “Fats” Waller, the first word that often comes to mind is joyful. Well that is certainly an appropriate word to apply to the new album by the HOLLAND-COOTS JAZZ QUINTET. This Is So Nice It Must Be Illegal: A Tribute to “Fats” Waller and His Rhythm
A new album from HOUSTON PERSON is always welcome. For Rain or Shine (HighNote – 7309) Person has returned to his blues and soul jazz roots for a nine-song program that is right in the groove, no matter the tempo. There are five ballads, “Come Rain or Come Shine,” “Everything Must Change,” “I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone,” “Never Let Me Go” and “Danny Boy.” The tempo picks up on “132nd and Madison,” “Learnin’ the Blues,” “Soupbone” and “Our Day Will Come.” Warren Vaché on cornet, Lafayette Harris on piano, Rodney Jones on guitar, Matthew Parrish on bass and Vincent Ector on drums are there to support Person magnificently. The blues feeling innate in Person’s playing even permeates the Irish traditional song “Danny Boy.” This is Person at his get-down best, and is a treasure trove of listening pleasure. (www.shanesmohawk.com)

Alto saxophonist RICHIE COLE has recorded dozens of albums as a leader, but Latin Lover (Mark Perna Music – 005) is the first where he has chosen to explore an eclectic program of songs with an ear toward Latin musical influences. Some of the tunes have a Latin soul, “Cilento Lindo,” “The Lonely Bull” and “Serenata.” Others are of pop origins, “Laughter in the Rain” and “Harlem Nocturne.” He also cast his net toward Hollywood and Broadway for “If I Only Had a Brain” and “Almost Like Being in Love.” French classical composer Claude Debussy was tapped for “L’Eclipse de Lune.” Cole himself contributed four originals, “Girl from Carnegie,” “Island Breeze,” “Indicted for Love” and “Malibu Breeze.” As he proceeds through the program, he exhibits the classic Cole vibrancy and originality. When you finish listening to the album, there is a feeling of just having experienced about an hour of music that just feels good. You will love Cole’s Latin Lover. (www.markpernamusic.com)

If you are familiar with the Woody Herman band of the mid-1960s, you are aware of tenor saxophonist SAL NISTICO. He was the most prominent soloist on the band during the first of several stints with Herman until 1971. For the balance of his 20 years of life he freelanced, sometimes working as a leader, sometimes as a sideman. Despite having some poor personal habits, it rarely surfaced in his playing. Live at Carmelo’s 1981 (Fresh Sound – 941) captures Nistico leading a quartet with Frank Strazzeri on piano, Frank De La Rosa on bass and John Dentz on drums at the Sherman Oaks club that featured many top jazz players during its six years of presenting jazz. Nistico was a resourceful player at any tempo. This two-disc set has 13 tracks, a mix of standards like “My Old Flame,” “How Deep is the Ocean,” “Sweet Georgia Brown,” “You Stepped out of a Dream” and “Close Enough for Love” with jazz tunes from a variety of players. The band is cohesive, with Nistico and Strazzeri each having plenty of space to demonstrate their solo chops. This is a nice documentation of an evening of straight-ahead jazz played with creative intensity. (www.freshsoundrecords.com)

At the age of 75, alto saxophonist GIL SPITZER has finally recorded his first album, Falando Documente (Zoho – 201709). There is not much information about his playing background, but bassist Nilson Matta dug Spitzer’s sound at a music camp in Maine, had Spitzer sit in with Matta’s own group on several gigs, and finally served as the producer of this album. Spitzer has a light lyrical sound much inspired by Stan Getz. His playing immediately captures you attention, and leaves you wanting more. This album finds Spitzer mostly surrounded by musicians of Brazilian backgrounds, but there are also contributions from tenor saxophonist Harry Allen, pianist Julian Shore and drummer Steve Johns, as well as a string quartet which is present on three tracks playing lovely arrangements by Shore. The three tunes on which Spitzer is paired with Allen, Spitzer’s “Blues for Harry A.,” Hank Mobley’s “This I Dig of You” and “Early Autumn” are particularly impressive for the way that these two play in an empathetic manner that suggests that they might have played together many times before, rather than having their first meeting at this recording session. The strength of Matta’s bass is the one constant from track to track. It might have taken Spitzer quite some time to record his first album, but there are sure to be more to follow. (www.zohomusic.com)

Fresh Sound Records has done much to bring some wonderful jazz players who have been unjustly overlooked in recent times back into public consciousness. Such a player is French trumpeter ROGER GUÉRIN who was an important part of the Paris jazz scene in the
OTHER VIEWS  
continued from page 47

1950s. Le Formidable Roger Guérin: Paris
Meetings (Fresh Sound – 942) contains 19 tracks gathered from six separate session recorded between July 27, 1951 and December 18, 1958. There are a variety of players present including the likes of James Moody, Jimmy Raney, Martial Solal, Christian Chevalier, Benny Golson and Bobby Timmons. Guérin is the constant element on all of the tracks, and his playing is impressive throughout. He is a strong player who stays pretty much in the middle to lower registers of his horn. His style reflects the bebop and hard bop jazz that predominated during the 1950s, but there are occasional nods toward the cool school. Each session has its own dynamic, and the variety gives a rather good representation of the jazz of that decade. My first inclination when I listened was to play it again. It remained a thoroughly satisfying listening experience. (www.freshsoundrecords.com)

□ New Jersey guitarist BRUCE HECTOR had a chance meeting in 2000 with Bucky Pizzarelli at a guitar workshop at the Cape May Jazz Festival. Hector’s playing caught Pizzarelli’s ear, and a friendship developed that included Hector studying with Pizzarelli. Eventually, in 2014, they recorded the six tracks to be found on Three’s a Crowd (Dodtdown Records – 00071). The balance of the tracks on the album were recorded earlier this year, four with guitarist Joe Carter, and four with bassist Earl Sauls. The remaining selection is a lovely solo take on “Come Sunday” by Hector. The difference in partners for Hector is immediately recognizable. Pizzarelli and Carter have distinctly different sounds and approaches to the guitar, while Sauls and his bass provide a nice contrast to the guitar selections. If you are a jazz guitar fan, you will find that Hector has produced a highly listenable and enjoyable collection that will quickly become a favorite in your collection. (store.cdboy.com)

□ Tenor saxophonist JEFF RUPERT and vocalist VERONICA SWIFT began collaborating while she was still a student at the University of Miami. Rupert, who is Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Central Florida, became aware of the talented young singer at Miami, and they began doing gigs around Florida. Earlier this year, they entered Starke Lake Studios in Ocoee, Florida, accompanied by pianist Richard Dreier, bassist Charlie Silva and drummer Marty Morell, and laid down the ten tracks to be found on Let’s Sail Away (Rupe Media – 10311). It is an eclectic collection, full of surprises and superb musicianship. The latter word applies to Swift, who not only sings superbly, but is a complete musician, as can be heard on her wordless vocals, scat interludes, and writing of vocalese lyrics for a couple of the tunes. This is an impressive outing from all involved highlighted by an imaginative ten-plus minute take on Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue.” (store.cdboy.com)

□ For You (Welcar Music – 369) is the result of an interesting idea from vocalist/pianist CAROL WELSMAN. Welsman recorded 23 songs on which she accompanied herself on piano for most of the tunes, but enlisted guitarist Paulhino Garcia to provide the instrumental support on “Beseme Mucho,” “Corcovado” and “Gota De Ipanema.” She then asked her fans to vote for 15 of the 23 selections, and chose to include the tunes with the most votes on the album. She sings most of the songs in English, but also chose to sing songs in their original language, thus also singing in French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. No matter the language, Welsman has a warm voice nicely supported by her sparse self-accompaniment. This approach leaves no margin for error, and her execution is flawless. Her reading of lyrics is sensitive and knowing. Over all, Carol Welsman has produced an album with a nice variety of material, and has made each selection sound fresh, and like it was written for her special artistry. (www.amazon.com)

□ What a nice formula! Gather together first call cats from the L.A. scene, get several of the to contribute arrangements, select good songs, and have the vocal chops to do it all justice. That is the case with vocalist LYN STANLEY on The Moonlight Sessions, Volume One (A.T. Music – 3105) and The Moonlight Sessions, Volume Two (A.T. Music – 3106). The first collection includes songs like “Willow Weep for Me,” “Embraceable You,” “Girl Talk,” “Crazy” and “In the Wee Small Hours,” while the latter program has tunes like “That Old Feeling,” “The Summer Knows,” “Angel Eyes,” “Love Me or Leave Me” and “Since I Fell for You.” Among the players participating are Mike Garson, Tamir Hendelman and Christian Jacob on piano; Chuck Berghofer on bass; Joe LaBarbera, Ray Brinker and Bernie Dresel on drums; John Chiodini on guitar; Chuck Findley on trumpet and flugelhorn; Ricky Woodard on tenor saxophone; Bob McChesney on trombone; Hendrik Muerkens on harmonica; and Corky Hale and Carol Robbins on harp. The second set also has some added strings from the Budapest Scoring Symphonic Orchestra. No matter the setting, Stanley gives the lyrics the attention that they deserve, and does so with a voice that recalls the vocalists one associates with film noir flicks. The Moonlight Sessions are dreamy indeed. (lynstanley.com)

□ One for My Baby (self-produced) is an intimate album by vocalist TONY DESARE and guitarist ED DECKER. The program has nine tracks, with two being solo guitar selections by Decker, “Cottage for Sale” and “I’ll Get You through the Night,” an original tune by DeSare. Bucky Pizzarelli joins the team for “Memories of You.” DeSare and Decker have been working together for several years, and their musical empathy is apparent throughout the other vocal tracks, “Angel Eyes,” “You Go to My Head,” “When She Loved Me,” “Deep in a Dream,” “One for My Baby” and “She’s Always a Woman.” DeSare has always shown a strong influence from Frank Sinatra, both vocally and in his selection of tunes, and that influence is evident in both ways on this album. DeSare has a rich baritone voice that is complemented by Decker’s sensitive comping. One for My Baby is one for you. (www.tonydesare.com)

Singing trumpet players are not unusual in the world of jazz. IT ONLY TAKES TIME (Jeru Jazz – 9) is the latest from a young gentleman in that tradition, ANDREW DISTEL. The musicians who join him on the album are mostly from Chicago, where he hangs his hat. Distel has a light baritone that he uses effectively at any tempo. The songs are a mix of standards, “Speak Low,” “Allie,” “Who Cares,” “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” and “Into Each Life;” “Amor” by Ivan Lins; the lovely Johnny Mandel/Dave Frishberg song “You Are There,” two more contemporary pop tunes, “One Morningstar Away” and “Too Soon to Tell;” plus two songs by Distel and Adams Oaks, “Wait for Me” and “Your Last Song,” the latter based on a tune by Kenny Dorham. It is a nicely paced and interesting program that shows off Distel’s vocal versatility. He also gives several tastes of his trumpet artistry. Among the supporting cast, the rhythm section of Peter Martin on piano, Carlos Enriquez, from the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, on bass and George Fludas on drums is particularly notable. Distel indicates that the title of the disc reflects the several years it took to get this project together and released. It was worth the time and effort. (www.andrewdistel.com)
Teen Jazzzer Marks 300th Gig
By Lynn Redmile

There’s something special about hearing a live band playing tunes you remember your elders singing when you were coming up. It’s even more special when the bandleader is a fifteen-year-old who simply loves old jazz. Florian Schantz was only six when he started playing cornet, in part because his arms were not long enough to use a mute on a trumpet. Nowadays he also plays trumpet and flugelhorn. He played in a band in school, and practiced technique daily with his father, Lowell. By nine, he formed the Florian Schantz Jazz Combo. Specializing in traditional jazz, they play venues all over the tri-state area and recently celebrated playing their 300th paid gig!

The intense young man is a gifted improviser who works to improve with daily practice and takes lessons from Warren Vaché. He’s performed internationally and won the Louis Armstrong Award for Trumpet at age 11. His band has an repertoire of over 350 pieces. He also has an impressive collection of vintage horns.

Florian’s older sister, and father, are also band members. Margaret plays flugelhorn and trumpet. Lowell plays guitar and assists with bookings and promotion. Younger sister, Annika, although not in the band, plays drums and has started learning trumpet. Their mother Ines supports the band and the regular home rehearsals.

A multitude of set lists are tailored to the theme of the performance, choosing popular music of the period and adding improvised solos. I recently saw the band perform a program of WW1 tunes, and also loved the entertaining narrative content of the show The diverse audience loved it too. The show opened with “Panama” and included pieces like “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary,” “For Me and My Girl” and many other favorites. The audience seemed to get a kick out of yelling “hold that tiger” while the band played “Tiger Rag.”

If you’d like to attend one of their concerts, or hire the band to perform for your celebration, their schedule and contact details are on their website at VFSjazz.com.

JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS
questions on page 4

1. Marian McPartland
   (born March 20, died in 2013)
2. Sir Charles Thompson
   (born March 21, died in 2016)
3. Howard McGhee
   (born March 6, died in 1987)
4. Michael “Peanuts” Hucko
   (born April 7, died in 2006)
5. Hank Jones
   (born July 31, died in 2010)
6. Eddie Jefferson
   (born Aug. 3, died in 1979)

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

A New Year of unique entertainment at the Bickford Theatre. Let's ring it in with the sounds of American jazz from legendary to next generation. At 92 years old, legendary guitar master, Bucky Pizzarelli continues to make great music. His protégé, Ed Laub will once again join him on the Bickford stage on January 8 at 7:30 pm to celebrate Bucky’s Birthday Bash 2018. These two guitarists will not be alone in this year’s celebration. Bucky’s son, Martin Pizzarelli will join the party on bass.

Russ Kassoff will take the seat behind our Kawai stage to round out the trio. Joel is a virtuoso harmonica player who is equally at home playing jazz, blues, folk, country and just plain rock and roll. He studied with the legendary Chicago bluesman Big Walter Horton and has developed a reputation as one of the best and most versatile harmonica players in the world. He performs all over the world with Triple Play and with guitarist/singer Shari Kane in the duo Madcat&R. Singer/guitarist Joel Brown rounds out the trio. Joel is a much in-demand soloist and chamber musician, who has appeared with a variety of groups including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, and the Boston Pops.

Join us for a rollicking good time as three virtuoso musicians capture the American Spirit with their joyful blend of jazz, blues, folk, and classical music in this special concert.

Tickets: $45 museum members, $45 non-members in advance, $50 non-members at the door

UPCOMING MUSIC:
Feb. 10 - Marcia Ball
Feb. 22 - T.S. Monk
Feb. 26 - Dan Levinson’s Roof Garden Jazz Band
March 12 - Big Bix Beiderbecke’s Birthday Salute with Mike Davis and Friends — Eric Hafen

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

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

Few nights in the history of jazz have the importance of January 16, 1938, the evening Benny Goodman roared into Carnegie Hall and made the hallowed venue swing like it never swung before. Everything about the evening was magical.

Goodman’s big band, featuring heavyweights such as Gene Krupa, Harry James, Jess Stacy and Ziggy Elman, guest star giants of jazz Count Basie, Lester Young, Johnny Hodges and Buck Clayton; the thrilling Goodman Quartet with Goodman, Krupa, Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson; the songs themselves, including swing era anthems “One O’Clock Jump,” “Life Goes to a Party” and the climax of the evening, “Sing, Sing, Sing.” Twelve years after the concert, Columbia Records issued a 2-LP album, produced by the recently departed George Avakian, and it’s been in print ever since, a mainstay of any serious jazz library.

Needless to say, there is a lot to celebrate about such a historic evening. Some years ago, Ocean County College favorites Joe and Paul Midiri performed a tribute to the Carnegie Hall show and the result is such a success, we have devoted January to the Midiris’ and to Benny Goodman ever since. But this coming January will be different: this will be the 80th anniversary of Benny Goodman’s Carnegie Hall show and thus demands a more spectacular tribute. Fortunately, The Midiri Brothers agreed and have put together a full big band for a one-night-only show on January 24, 2018! Showtime begins at 8 pm and advance tickets can be purchased at www.grunincenter.com. The combination of the popularity of the Midiris in Toms River, the allure of Goodman’s historic concert and the specter of a big band will make this a tough ticket so advance purchase is encouraged.

If you’ve never encountered the Midiri Brothers in live concert before, you’ve missed out on one of the most exciting groups on the classic jazz scene. Both brothers are talented multi-instrumentalists with Joe a virtuoso on all the reed instruments and Paul a rare triple threat on vibraphone, trombone and drums. In recent years, they’ve performed in Toms River with their tight, swinging sextet, usually featuring top-notch musicians such as Danny Tobias on cornet, Pat Mercuri on guitar, Jack Hegyi on bass and Jim Laval on drums. On January 24, the sextet will increase by ten, making it a 16-piece big band that will grace the Grunin Center stage.

Anyone can stay home and listen to the recordings of Goodman’s Carnegie Hall concert, whether on LP, CD, as a digital download or even in the 21st century era of streaming. But opportunities to hear this music live are few and far between. Once experienced in the flesh, attendees will soon realize that this isn’t just old-fashioned music or nostalgia but rather a living, breathing music that packs the same punch as it did 80 years ago. Our first MidWeek Jazz show of 2018 is one of the most exciting events in the history of the series. Don’t miss it!

After the Midiris burn down the house in January, Midweek Jazz will take the month of February off but we’ll return in March with two exciting shows, one featuring soon-to-be 92-year-old legend Bucky...
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.

DECEMBER:

Sat – Jan. 6, 8 PM: Pyrenesia. Vintage jazz, Gypsy, klezmer and folk. Alan Rigoleto (guitar/vox), Patrick Knapp (upright bass), Daniella Fischetti (fiddle), Tony Kovatch (accordion)

Fri – Jan. 12, 8 PM: B.D. Lenz Trio. Modern Jazz. B.D. Lenz (guitar), James Rosocha (bass), Joe Falcey (drums)

Sun – Jan. 14, 3 PM: Luiz Simas. Brazilian solo piano jazz

Sat – Jan. 20, 8 PM: Jack Furlong Quartet. Original Contemporary Jazz. Jack Furlong (sax), Sean Gough (piano), Jon McElroy (bass), and John O’Keeffe (drums)

Sat – Jan. 27, 8 PM: Stephen Yee Quartet. Straight ahead jazz and standards. Stephen Yee (alto sax), Jonathan Kirschner (guitar), Ryan Permaul (bass), Kyle Duppstadt (drums) — Bob Kull

$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.

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

Founded in 1972, the Society is run by a board of directors who meet monthly to conduct the business of staging our music 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)
- Jazzer ($100 – $249/family)
- Sideman ($250 – $499/family)
- Bandleader $500+/family)
- Corporate Membership ($100)

Members at Jazzer Level and above receive special benefits. These change periodically, so please contact Membership for details.

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.
From the Crow’s Nest

By Bill Crow

When I first moved to New York City in 1950, I had very little income for the first year I was here. I came to town playing a valve trombone, but was soon transformed into a bass player by Buzzy Bridgeford, the drummer who had talked me into coming east from Seattle. I finally fell into some work with a trumpet player named Glen Moore, who had me doubling on bass, trombone and drums (an instrument I had played a little in high school and the army.) Glen’s clarinet player was Carl Janelli, who served, many years later, as an officer of Local 802.

We played a few jobs in Toronto and New York, and then were hired for one cruise from New York to Argentina and back on the SS Uruguay, of the Moore-McCormack lines. In our five piece band I played bass on the North American music, drums on the Latin music, and trombone at the rail of the ship when we entered and left our ports of call.

One of those ports was Santos, Brazil. By the time we got there, I had resurrected some of my high school Spanish and was able to wander around the city, exploring. As I passed through a semi-industrial neighborhood, I walked by the open garage doors of a factory building, and when I looked inside I was amazed to see, hanging on the walls, dozens of valve trombones! And instead of the regular trombone bells, some of them had animal and fish heads where the music was to come out. Fantastic lions and tigers and sharks and birds of prey, all with open mouths to let the sound out. They must have been especially made for Carnival bands.

I wasn’t to be paid until the end of the trip, and I had brought very little money with me, so I was unable to buy one of those wonderful looking trombones, but I spent a couple of hours looking at everything there and watching the workmen fashion some of the horns. I was delighted to discover that such a place existed.

Josh Omaits told a story on Facebook about a New Orleans-style funeral service for a military veteran in Troy, Ohio. The band was to play as the casket was put into an antique hearse drawn by two horses, and then they were to lead the procession to the grave. Everything went smoothly until they arrived at the graveside.

The casket was unloaded and the horses and carriage were moved a few yards away. A twenty-one gun salute was to take place, followed by the playing of Taps. The rifles were raised, there was a loud explosion, and both horses took off at full speed. Then there was a tremendous crash, and more galloping.

The terrified horses had toppled the empty carriage, smashing it into a hundred pieces. The ceremony had to continue, and the trumpeter now had to play Taps while the two horses ran across the background pursued by groundskeepers in a gator tractor and an ATV. The trumpeter said that all he was thinking was “Don’t laugh and mess up, don’t laugh and mess up.”

He managed to play Taps correctly, the horses were caught, and nothing was hurt except the carriage. The caterer made a note to hire deaf horses if such an event was scheduled in the future.

One night when Herb Gardner was playing at the old West End Café, near Columbia University, he returned to the one-way street near the club, where he had found a nice parking spot for his Volkswagen Karmann Ghia, and discovered that his car had been picked up and turned facing the other way around. He said he hoped the college pranksters who did it saw him laughing.

Trace Deaton posted this one on Facebook: A keyboard player I was gigging with was having trouble with his cable. It went on for two nights. I asked, “Are you going to do something about that cable?” He said very seriously, “I don’t think it’s the cord. I’ve had it for twenty years, and never had a bit of trouble with it.”

Kirby Tassos told me that one of his favorite New York musicians was tenor player Frank Basile. He told about a time when Frank was playing with the Concord Hotel Band. During an intermission Frank got into an argument with the bass player, a pretty big guy, who grabbed Frank and said, “I’m gonna throw you out the window!” Frank grabbed hold of the bass player and said, “If you throw me out the window, you’re going with me!”

When Bill Wurtzel was driving to a gig with his wife Claire, and Les Lieber and his wife Edie, the car suddenly reeked of cigar smoke. They pulled over to the curb and everyone searched the car, even looking in the engine compartment, but they didn’t find anything. Claire said “Close, but no cigar.”

Also on Facebook, Jeanie Perkins posted a conversation overheard by Scott Eckert at a rehearsal: Sound Tech: Testing, one two one two…

Crew: Why is it that sound guys can’t count past two?

Sound Tech: If I get to four, the band starts playing.
What’s New?

Members new and renewed

We welcome all those 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 took advantage of our three-years-for-$115 membership; new members with a † received a gift membership. Members who joined at a patron level appear in bold.

Renewed Members

Dr. & Mrs. G. W. Allgair, Jr., Sarasota, FL *
Douglas G & Inge K Baird, Wayne, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. C. Graham Burton, Ridgefield, CT
Mr. Alexander James Cox, Redding, CT *
Loren Daniels, Teaneck, NJ
Mr. Tony Feil, Whitehouse Station, NJ
Mr. Bruce M. Gast, Watchung, NJ * - Patron
Ms. Faith Giovino, Bound Brook, NJ
Neil Gordon, New City, NY *
Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Griggs, Westfield, NJ
Mr. Robert Gunhouse & Jean Crichton, Summit, NJ
Mr. Sandy Ingham, Morganville, NJ
Mr. Severn P. Ker, Brookpark, OH
Ms. Ginny Llobell, Maplewood, NJ *
Mr. Karl N. Marx, Morristown, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Nathaniel H. Morison, III, Middleburg, VA
Daniel Muccia, Glen Ridge, NJ
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Mr. Larry Peterson, Wyckoff, NJ
Mr. C. Douglas Phillips, Rahway, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Pat Pratico, Trenton, NJ
Mr. Jack Reilly, Beachwood, NJ *
Barbara and Stacy Roth, Fairless Hills, PA

Alan Routh, Chatham, NJ *
Gail Schaefer, Brick, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Bud Smith, Boynton Beach, FL
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Stemmle, Piscataway, NJ
Mr. Jerry Swanberg, New Brighton, MN
Howard Tavin, Fort Lee, NJ
Marlene VerPlanck, Clifton, NJ

New Members

Steve Braunner, Mahwah, NJ
Ed Decker, Ho Ho Kus, NJ
Christian DiGirolamo, Mattituck, NY
Russell and Evelyn Fibraio, Union, NJ *
Ms. Karin Greene, Teaneck, NJ *
Ms. Michal Holzman, Madison, NJ
Stevie Kozlowski, Waldwick, NJ
W. Ronald Lilly, Fanwood, NJ
Mr. Peter Lin, Bloomfield, NJ *
Mark and Merri Neidoff, River Edge, NJ
Mr. Reggie Pittman, Hackensack, NJ
Dr. and Mrs. Israel and Joan Plasner, Watchung, NJ
John Sheehy, Middletown, NJ
Harold and Seema Tepper, West Orange, NJ
Mr. Robert J. Tokarz, Piscataway, NJ
Tom Toronto, Leonia, NJ
Dale and Tyler Unger, Nazareth, PA
David Voorhees, Hopewell, NJ

Jazz With A View

Brunch On Lake Hopatcong

By Andrea E. Tyson

I had the good fortune to attend a recent Sunday brunch at Stone Water on Lake Hopatcong where a friend and I were up close and personal with the baby grand — at which sat the estimable Rio Clemente. The ebony and ivory keys sounded fantastic, handled expertly by Rio with playful alternative riffs thrown in for the careful listener as is his style. His renditions of “Sophisticated Lady,” “Autumn Leaves” and “Honeysuckle Rose” were just a few of our favorite selections.

There is ample seating either at high tops and conventional tables or at the U-shaped bar. The selection at the buffet brunch was plentiful and varied, hot and cold selections, with salads, a breakfast omelette station, carving, bagels with lox, cream cheese and all the fixings — oh, it goes on and on! Suffice it to say, nobody goes home hungry. Everything we tried was very good, leading up to a dessert table fit for a king (or Queen)! Just dive in and enjoy.

The restaurant is right on the lake, and can be reached by car or by boat for those so inclined. The decor is handsome with many windows — which I understand roll back in the summer. Even when we went in November, the sun was shining on the water as we watched and listened to Rio’s ear-catching playing.

The restaurant has special brunch pricing for the buffet ($29 adults/$15 children) and special cocktails for brunch. If interested, call, make reservations and please mention Rio and the NJJS. This jazz brunch started in October, so since we all love live music let’s get out there and hear some while enjoying a great new hang.

STONE WATER
125 State Route 181, Lake Hopatcong | 973-810-3858
See music lineup at: facebook.com/stonewater3peaks
Somewhere There’s Music

You can find jazz all over the state in venues large and small. Here are just some of them.

Listings alphabetical by town. We continually update entries. Please contact editor@njjs.org if you know of other venues that ought to be here.

Allamuchy
RUTHERFORD HALL
166 County Road 517
908-852-1894 ext. 335

Allentown
JAZZ VESPERS AT ALLENTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
20 High Street
609-259-7239
1st Saturday February-June

Asbury Park
HOTEL TIDES
408 7th Ave.
732-887-7744

LANGOSTA RESTAURANT
100 Ocean Ave.
732-455-3275

TIM McCOOEN’S SUPPER CLUB
1200 Ocean Ave.
732-744-1155

MOONSTRUCK
517 Lake Ave.
732-988-0123

THE SAINT
401 Main St.
732-775-9144

Atlantic City
ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1213 Pacific Ave.
908-348-1941

Bernardsville
BERNARD’S INN
27 Mine Brook Rd.
908-766-0002
Monday – Saturday 6:30 pm – 1 am

Boonton
MAXFIELD’S ON MAIN
713 Main St.
973-588-3404
Music Wednesdays through Sundays

Cape May
VFW POST 386
419 Congress St.
609-884-7961
Cape May Jazz Society
Some Sundays, 2 pm
Live Dixieland

MAD BATTER
19 Jackson St.
609-884-5970

MERION INN
106 Decatur St.
609-884-8363
Jazz piano daily 3:30–9:30 pm

Carteret
ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH HALL
712 Roosevelt Ave.
908-541-6955
Somerset Jazz Consortium
Usually 3rd Monday, 7–9 pm

Chatham
CONCERTS ON MAIN – OGDEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
286 Main St.
973-635-5567

Cliffside Park
VILLA AMALFI
793 Palisade Ave.
201-886-8426
Piano Jazz Fridays & Saturdays

Closter
MUSICLAB – TEMPLE BETH EL
221 Schraalenburgh Rd.
201-766-5112

Convent Station
THE COZY CUPBOARD
4 Old Tumpke Rd.
973-998-6676

Cresskill
GRiffin’S RESTAURANT
44 East Madison Ave.
201-541-7575

Deal Park
AXELROD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
100 Grant Avenue
732-531-9106

Dunellen
ROXY & DUKES ROADHOUSE
745 Bound Brook Rd.
732-529-4444

MAGGIE MURRAY’S PUB HOUSE
119 North Washington Ave.
732-629-7140
Jazz nights 1st and 3rd Wednesdays

Edgewater
MITCHELL’S FISH MARKET
541 River Rd.
201-840-9311
Jazz with a skyline view, Thursday 6–11 pm

ORAHA
595 River Rd.
201-945-2020
Curtis Lundy Group
Thursdays 7:30–10:30 pm

Edison
THE COFFEE HOUSE
591 Amboy Ave.
732-486-3400

Englewood
BERGEN PAC
30 N. Van Brunt St.
201-227-1030

BLUE MOON MEXICAN CAFÉ
23 E. Palisade Ave.
201-848-4088

Ewing
VILLA ROSA RESTAURANT
41 Scotch Rd.
908-882-6641

1667 SANCTUARY AT EWING ARTS AND CULTURAL HAVEN
101 Scotch Rd.
908-295-7739
Regular jazz concerts – check their website for details

Fairfield
CALANDRA’S MEDITERRANEAN GRILLE
118 US Highway 46
973-575-6500
Piano – Fridays & Saturdays
CALANDRA’S CUCINA
216-234 Route 46
973-575-7720

Florham Park
PULIO’S BRICK OVEN
162 Columbia Tumpke
973-822-0800
An accordionist Eddie Monterro with drummer Buddy Green,
Thursday, 7–10 pm

Gladstone
GLADSTONE TAVERN
273 Main St.
908-234-9055

Green Brook
FISHBONE GRILL
210 Route 22 East
732-926-8000

Hackensack
SOLARI’S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE
61 River St.
201-487-1969
Big band swing first Tuesday of the month

STONY HILL INN
231 Polly Rd.
201-342-4085
Friday & Saturday evenings

Hackettstown
Mama’s Cafe Baci
240 Mountain Avenue.
908-852-2820
Saturdays, 9:30 – 11:30 pm,
full bar and tapas menu

Lake Hopatcong
STONE WATER
125 State Route 181
973-810-3588
Jazz piano/Sunday brunch,
11 am – 3 pm

Haddonfield
HADDONFIELD METHODIST CHURCH
29 Warwick Rd.
Tri-State Jazz Society
usual venue
Some Sundays, 2 pm

Haddon Township
GIMBELLE’S RESTAURANT & BAR
329 Haddon Ave
856-856-9400

Hoboken
PILSENER HAUS & BIERGARTEN
1422 Grand St.
201-683-5465

Linden
ROBYN’S NOCTURNAL
3103 Tremley Point Rd.
908-275-3043

Madison
SHANGHAI JAZZ
24 Main St.
973-882-3999

Bistro at Madison Bistro at Madison
2 South St.
908-684-3368

Methodist Church
123 W. Main St.
908-971-3706

Monmouth County Library
125 Symposium Dr.
973-785-4300

Manalapan
MAMBO’S RESTAURANT
269 Riegelsville Warren Glen Rd.
908-995-7800

Manasquan
ALGONQUIN ARTS THEATRE
173 Main St.
973-528-9211

Mendham
BLACK HORSE TAVERN
1 West Main St.
973-543-7300

Metuchen
NOVA
269 Riegelsville Warren Glen Rd.
908-875-7800

Milton
ALBA VINEYARD
269 Riegelsville Warren Glen Rd.
908-875-7800

Montclair
DLV LOUNGE
300 Bloomfield Ave.
973-783-4988
Open jam Tuesdays

Palo Alto Restaurant
11 South Fullerton Ave.
973-549-2209

Trumpets
6 Depot Square
973-744-2600

Tri-State Jazz Society
201 South St.
866-497-3638

Rod’s Steak & Seafood Grille
One Convent Rd. (Madison Ave.)
973-539-6666

Newark
27 MIX
27 Halsey St.
973-648-9643

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH
275 Market St.
973-623-8167
Jazz vespers, 1st Sunday

CLEMENT’S PLACE
15 Washington St.
888-466-5722
NAPAC & US jazz sessions

De Boras Jazz Cafe
16 Green St.
973-648-0040
Thursday evenings & Sunday afternoons

Ideal Lounge
219 Frelinghuysen Ave.
973-824-9308

Institute of Jazz Studies – Rutgers University
John Cotton Dana Library, 185 University Ave.
973-353-6595
Frequent free concerts.

Memorial West United Presbyterian Church
236 South 7th St.
908-242-1015
Jazz vespers monthly

New Jersey Performing Arts Center
1 Center St.
888-466-5722

Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.

Jersey Jazz
January 2018
Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!

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

TASTE VENUE
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 pm, No cover

New Brunswick
DELTA’S
19 Dennis St.
732-296-1600
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.
732-873-1233
New Brunswick Jazz presents live jazz Thursdays, 8 – 10:30 pm, No cover

INC BAR AND KITCHEN
362 George St.
732-640-0553
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz Wednesdays 8:00-11 pm

STATE THEATRE
15 Livingston Ave.
732-246-7469

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

Newfield
LAKE HOUSE RESTAURANT
611 Taylor Pl.
865-694-5700

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

North Bergen
WATERSIDE RESTAURANT
7806 6 River Rd.
201-861-7767

North Branch
STONEY BROOK GRILLE
1285 State Highway 28
908-726-3011

Oak Ridge
THE GRILLE ROOM
(Bowling Green Golf Course)
53 Schoolhouse Rd.
973-679-8688

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

Pennington
HOPEWELL VALLEY VINEYARDS
46 Yard Rd.
609-737-4465

Pennsauken
GREENWOOD INN
4457 Marlton Pike
856-663-9868
Blues open mic Mondays

Philipsburg
MARIANNA’S
224 Stockton St.
908-777-3000
Fridays

Princeton
MCCARTER THEATRE
91 University Pl.
609-258-3787

MEDITERRA
29 Hulst St.
609-252-9680
No cover

RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM
ALEXANDER HALL
68 Naissau St.
609-258-9220

SALT CREEK GRILLE
1 Rockingham Rd.
Forrestal Village
609-419-4200

WITHERSPOON GRILL
57 Witherpoon St.
609-924-6111
Tuesday night jazz, 6:30–9:30 pm

Rahway
UNION COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
1601 Irving St.
732-499-0441

Randolph
THE CORNER BISTRO
477 Route 10
862-251-7274
Every 1st and 3rd Thursday

Red Bank
COUNT BASIE THEATER
99 Monmouth St.
732-542-9000
JAZZ ARTS PROJECT
Various venues throughout the year. Refer to www.jazzartsproject.org for schedules and details

MOLLY PITCHER INN
88 Riverside Ave.
800-221-1372

SIAM GARDEN
2 Bridge Ave.
732-224-1233

Somers Point
STANHOPE HOUSE
45 Main St.
973-347-7777
Blues

Succasunna
ROXBURY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
Horseshoe Lake Park
72 Eyland Ave.
862-219-1379

Teaneck
THE JAZZBERRY PATCH AT THE CLASSIC Quiche CAFE
330 Queen Anne Rd.
201-692-0150
Friday nights 7-10 pm, $12

PUFFIN CULTURAL FORUM
20 Puffin Way
973-720-2371

South River
LA TAVOLA CUCINA
700 Old Bridge Turnpike
839 Springfield Rd.
862-251-7274
No cover, half-price drink specials

Stanhope
STANHOPE HOUSE
45 Main St.
973-347-7777
Blues

Somerville
PINOY FILIPINO RESTAURANT
18 Division St.
908-450-9878

South Amboy
BLUE MOON
114 South Broadway
732-525-0014
Blues jam Thursdays

South Orange
PAPILLON 25
25 Valley St.
973-761-5299

RICALTON’S VILLAGE TAVERN
19 Valley St.
973-763-1006
Tuesdays

South Orange
UNION COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
One SOPAC Way
732-235-1114

South Jersey Jazz!
Burlington
CENTRAL AVE. CAFE
298 Central Ave.
856-701-2064

Woodbridge
BARRON ARTS CENTER
562 Rahway Ave.
732-634-0413

Wood Ridge
MARTINI GRILL
187 Hackensack St.
201-939-2000
Live jazz Wednesday through Saturday

For the link to each venue’s website, please visit www.NJJS.org, and click on “Jazz Support”

Also visit Andy McDonough’s njjazzlist.com

The Name Dropper

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

BRUCE WILLIAMS – A transplanted bopper from Washington, DC, who wields tasty alto and sopranino saxes, has a release party for his new CD “Private Thoughts” at Trumpets on Jan. 5 at 8-11 pm, with fellow Jazz House Kids faculty member Oscar Perez on piano. $20 music charge, $12 minimum, 973-744-2600.

KARRIN ALLYSON – Afternoon Music presents the five-time Grammy nominated artist in Summit at 4 pm on Jan. 14, performing at the Unitarian Church’s beautiful Beacon Hall. A steal at $25 ($19 seniors, FREE for students), 908-273-2899.

BILL CHARLAP – New Jersey’s modern master of jazz piano in elegant Rutherfurd Hall, Allamuchy at 3 pm on Jan. 21, with bassist Peter Washington, 908-852-1894 x338, $30 adv./$35 door.

FREDA PAYNE – This sounds interesting. Centenary Stage presents the big voiced “Band of Gold” singer (1970, #3 on Billboard’s Top 100), who once did two nights with Duke, in yet another tribute to Ella Fitzgerald. Jan. 14 at 2 pm in the Sitnik Theatre of the Lackland Performing Arts Center, $30 advance/$35 door, 908-979-0900.