The Chicken Fat Ball presented another outstanding band on January 7. On stage at The Woodland in Maplewood were (l-r): Conal Fowkes, Nicki Parrott, Adrian Cunningham, Paul Wells, Randy Sandke, Randy Reinhart and John Allred. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

Jazz On a Winter’s Day…
The Chicken Fat Ball!

Once again Chicken Fat Ball organizers Al Kuehn and Don Greenfield reeled in a full house of loyal jazz fans to The Woodland in Maplewood for a swinging three-hour musical feast that warmed a cold January day. Jersey Jazz was there and brings you the story and Lynn Redmile’s pictures beginning on page 26.
Prez Sez

By Cydney Halpin President, NJJS

It is with great enthusiasm that I write my first Prez Sez column as the newly-elected president of the New Jersey Jazz Society. I am looking forward to working with the rest of the new executive committee — Jay Dougherty, Executive VP; Mike Katz, Treas.; Pete Grice VP/Membership; Sanford Josephson VP/Programming; Irene Miller, Recording Secy., — and the rest of the board directors as we endeavor to seek new and creative ways to expand our membership and to fulfill our mission to promote and present jazz music here in New Jersey.

We have an exciting and challenging year ahead. Together, through planning and hard work, we can make 2018 a year of evolution and growth for our Society.

I’d like to thank Mike Katz for his long-standing dedication and service to the Society. Mike served as president for the past five years and as treasurer for several years before that. You’d be hard pressed to find a more dedicated advocate for the New Jersey jazz scene. And the Society is very fortunate he will to stay on as a board director and again serve as our treasurer.

Those who attended the NJJS’s 45th Anniversary celebration last October at Drew University were treated to several multi-media presentations created by board member Stephen Fuller. His time and attention to these special presentations really added depth and detail to this historical event and we thank Stephen for a job well done. We look forward to expanding our website and its capabilities in the future so we’ll all be able to feature more of his video work.

Thanks to the dedication of board member James Pansulla, December 18, 2017, marked the relaunch of our Generations of Jazz program with a presentation at Parsippany Hills High School. GOJ is a musical history lesson performed by a jazz band and singers, demonstrating the evolution of jazz, from its roots in the music of African-American slaves and European immigrants through the emergence of traditional jazz, swing, bebop and beyond. Students participate in several parts of the program.

The informative concert was under the direction of Lewis Porter, musical director and narrator, with Kenny Davis on bass, Scott Robinson on tenor sax and trumpet, Chris Beck on drums and Judy Silvano on vocals.

The 350-plus student attendees were all musicians, with many raising their hands and identifying as “jazz” musicians. The enthusiasm shown at this assembly makes us hopeful that our nation’s original art form can be discovered by a new generation of Americans, performers and listeners alike.

Stay tuned to www.njjs.org

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!!
The program that is suited to many venues — schools, libraries, senior centers, etc. — for all ages with adaptations to accommodate any age group.

GOJ is funded in part by the Arts Council of the Morris Area through the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For information or to book a performance, contact James Pansulla at JazzEducation@NJJS.org.

On Sunday, March 18, we will present the 49th annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany, New Jersey. As in past years the event will showcase a stellar lineup of musicians, this year presenting the Daryl Sherman Sextet, Professor Cunningham and His Old School, the Warren Vaché Quintet and the George Gee Orchestra. This event will also serve as a memorial to the late Chuck Slate, the musician who is virtually the founding cornerstone of our Jazz Society. This Stomp is sure to be well attended so you will want to purchase your tickets early — $30 for members/$35 for non-members in advance, $40/$45 at the door, Noon – 5 PM. For more information see the ad on page 15 of this issue.

Lastly, thanks to all who participated in our annual fund drive directed by board member Lynn Redmile. Thanks to Lynn’s hard work and your generosity, these appeals have been very successful and will be an important factor in the growth and development of the Society as we move forward. For those who wish to donate but have not yet done so, or did not receive our donation materials in the mail, we are still accepting donations by check, credit card or through PayPal on our website www.njjs.org. Checks and credit card information (including the three-digit security code) may be sent to: New Jersey Jazz Society, 382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217, Summit, NJ, 07901.

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See page 47 for details!
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 45)

1918’s Jazz Babies (Part II)

More jazz stars whose centennials will be, we hope, celebrated in the coming year:

1. The epitome of tough Texas tenor players came to fame with Lionel Hampton’s big band, succeeding Illinois Jacquet in 1942. His big hit was “Flyin’ Home No. 2.” After spinal surgery and a car crash in the 1950s he relied on crutches, but his stomping style never waned.

2. The Newark-born tenor player excelled in the 1940s Barons of Rhythm swing band and later with Cab Calloway. Blue Note head Alfred Lion was a big fan and issued hit albums in the late ’50s and early ’60s before the saxman’s untimely death.

3. The Los Angeles-based pianist was best known for accompanying jazz’s most revered singers. He toured with Ella Fitzgerald from 1981-83, backed Billie Holiday and Peggy Lee decades earlier and recorded with Sarah Vaughan and Carmen McRae. His song, “The Peacocks,” became a standard.

4. A big band leader for seven decades in Los Angeles, the Mississippi native learned his craft with the Jimmy Lunceford band from 1939-42, stepping in for Sy Oliver as arranger, composer and trumpet soloist. He arranged for dozens of jazz luminaries and was named an NEA Jazz Master in 1990.

5. The jazz pianist and singer was better known as an actor in the 1970s TV series “Emergency” that also starred his real-life wife Julie London. His compositions include the classic “Route 66.”

6. The Georgia-born singer grew up on Chicago’s South Side, where he absorbed the blues and gospel the city is renowned for. After years as a big band singer, he joined Count Basie (1954-61) with glorious results.

7. Duke Ellington’s bassist from 1939-41, he introduced the use of the bass as a solo instrument with his pioneering technique and dazzling imagination. Tragically, tuberculosis took his life at age 23.

8. His Jazz at the Philharmonic jam sessions started in Los Angeles in 1944 and grew into world tours featuring greats of the swing and bop eras — Ella Fitzgerald, Lester Young, Freddie Hubbard, Oscar Peterson, Charlie Parker and many others. He insisted his integrated bands would not play to segregated audiences. Later he founded a series of record labels like Verve and Pablo.

9. Like Frank Sinatra he got his start at WAAT radio in Jersey City. Then the 18-year-old guitarist joined the George Hall Orchestra in a rhythm section with Nick Fatool, Doc Goldberg and Johnny Guarnieri. In the early ’40s he was on staff at CBS radio where he reunited with Sinatra, played in Raymond Scott’s experimental jazz band and began a long association with singer Perry Como. He went on to a five-decade career as a legendary NYC studio musician and recording artist.

Howie also welcomes suggestions for future questions — or comments from readers. Contact him at jazztrivia@njjs.org.
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The Editor’s Pick
By Tony Mottola
Jersey Jazz Editor

Frank’s Back!

Frank Vignola at The Iridium | 1650 Broadway, NYC | February 12 at 8 PM
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It’s been almost a year since master guitarist Frank Vignola was catapulted from an all-terrain vehicle into a tree at his home in Warwick, NY in a serious accident that nearly took his life. After being airlifted to area trauma center, Frank’s family learned of his extensive injuries, which included four broken ribs, a broken clavicle, shoulder (in two places) and arm — injuries which required multiple surgeries. He also suffered two collapsed lungs and massive internal bleeding.

Now, after enduring a long but steady recovery of medical treatment and physical therapy, a courageous and determined Frank Vignola returns to the stage this month, appearing with the John di Martino Trio (Nicki Parrott, bass and Dag Markhus, drums) at New York’s Iridium. Frank says he’s grateful and excited to be back and Jazz Promo’s Jim Eigo tells us he’s playing as great as ever. He can expect a packed house of his many fans to greet his return.

Here in New Jersey, Frank is booked to perform at The Folk Project’s Minstrel series in Morristown on Saturday, June 16.

NEW JERSEY GUITARISTS TAKE NOTE:
Frank has announced the “Big Jersey Guitar Camp” to take place in Morris County on July 30 – August 4. The camp includes training, recording session, performances and more. For reservations and more information, contact Joni Forte at JoniForte@verizon.net.

Comments?
Jersey Jazz welcomes your comments on any article or editorial. Send email to editor@njjs.org or mail to the Editor (see masthead this page for address). Include your name and geographical location.

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10AM-2PM - Singers Unlimited with Michael Bourne
2-4PM - American Jazz with Dick Golden
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Big Band in the Sky

■ Mundell Lowe, 95, guitarist, April 21, 1922, Shady Grove, MS -- December 2, 2017, San Diego. As a young boy growing up on a farm in Mississippi, Lowe decided to play the guitar after hearing recordings of Charlie Christian playing with Benny Goodman. He began playing professionally at age 13 and became a full-time musician after serving in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Many years later, Lowe would actually play with Goodman, not an altogether pleasant experience. He reportedly once said: “I worked with Benny five times — he fired me three times, and I quit twice! He was a rough guy to work with. But, he was a wonderful musician. So, you kind of put up with the bad to get the good.”

After being discharged from the Army, Lowe was about to tour with Ray McKinley’s big band, but he was in Hammond, LA, and happened to hear the piano playing of a Southeastern Louisiana College student named Bill Evans. According to Peter Pettinger in his book, Bill Evans How My Heart Sings (Yale University Press: 1998), Lowe told Evans: “When you come to New York, you find me and call me, because after I spend a while with Ray, I want to form a group, and I’d sure like for you to play piano in it.”

Evans looked Lowe up in New York and Lowe described what happened in Pettinger’s book: “So, we met at the old Café Society downtown, Bill Evans and a young kid from New Jersey he had known, a bass player by the name of Red Mitchell. We put this trio together, and it was really a good group...We continued together for a while but we had a rough time getting enough work.” About nine years later, in 1956, Lowe played a recording of Evans over the phone for producer Orrin Keepnews, which resulted in Evans being signed by Riverside Records.

From 1948 to 1965, Lowe was the guitarist and arranger for NBC-TV’s The Today Show. In 1965, he moved to Los Angeles to work as a guitarist and composer for NBC’s News & Special Events department. During his years with NBC, he played and recorded with Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Charlie Parker and many other jazz stars. He made seven albums with vocalist Carmen McRae and also accompanied such vocalists as Ruth Brown, Barry Manilow and Johnny Ray, appearing on his 1951 hit recording, “Cry”.

Flutist Holly Hofmann described Lowe to the San Diego Union Tribune as, “one of the most important guitarists in jazz history. He was musically ahead of his time and was one of the most generous artists in supporting females in jazz.” Hofmann and Lowe were friends and collaborators and last played together over the Thanksgiving weekend, just days before his death.

Vibraphonist-drummer Chuck Redd last played with Lowe in 2015 at The W.C. Handy Music Festival in Florence, Alabama. “Well into his 90s, he was still playing completely in the moment with great spirit,” Redd told Jersey Jazz. “He was interacting with the other musicians and playing with great intelligence and spontaneity.”

In addition to playing guitar, Lowe wrote arrangement for big bands and composed movie and television scores. Among his TV and film credits are the TV series Hawaii Five-0 and Starsky and Hutch and the Woody Allen movie, Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask).

In the 1970s and ’80s, Lowe taught at the Grove School of Music in Studio City and the Guitar Institute of Technology in Los Angeles. In 1998, he became musical director of the Monterey Jazz Festival but resigned in 1987 when he and his third wife, vocalist Betty Bennett, relocated to San Diego.

His last album, Poor Butterfly, was recorded on his own label, Two Helpins’ O’ Collards, in 2015. Dan Bilawsky, reviewing the album for allaboutjazz.com, said it showed that Lowe’s “warmth, taste, intelligence, and technique are still fully intact.” Pointing out that he teamed up with two musicians he’d worked with in the past, guitarist Lloyd Wells and bassist Jim Ferguson, Bilawsky added that the trio delivered “a collection of classics-in-miniature. Nothing breaks the five-minute mar — more than half the songs clock in under three minutes — no wasted notes or passages.” In April 2017, at his 95th birthday concert at the San Diego club, Dizzy’s, Lowe was just supposed to play a few songs. But, according to the Union Tribune’s George Varga, “He performed for nearly an hour with a band that included fellow guitarists Jaime Vallee, Bob Boss and Ron Eschete.”

Pianist Mike Wofford described Lowe to Varga as, “one of the most sophisticated guitarists in jazz. Mundy was more interested in harmonic creativity than just traditional jazz soloing.” Clarinetist-tenor saxophonist Ken Peplowski told Jersey Jazz that “everyone who played with him, myself included, became a fan after the first encounter — he was one of the greats.”

In addition to his wife Betty, Lowe is survived by a son, Adam Lowe; daughters Debbie Lowe, Jessica Lowe-Wilson and Shari Lowe; and stepdaughters Alicia Lowe and Claudia Previn Stasny.

■ Kevin Mahogany, 59, vocalist, July 30, 1958, Kansas City -- December 17, 2017, Kansas City. “Kansas City,” wrote Eugene Holley, Jr. on WBGO-FM’s website (December 19, 2017) “had been home to a booming and influential jazz scene that included Count Basie, Lester Young, and Charlie Parker. It was,” he added, “in Mahogany’s DNA.” As if to confirm that, Mahogany’s sister, Carmen Julious, told C.J. Janovy of local radio station KCUR-FM, her brother, “loved the continued on page 10
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BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 8

jazz legacy of Kansas City, he loved the environment; he was a Kansas City guy through and through.”

In 1996, Mahogany portrayed a character based on the blues singer Big Joe Turner in the Robert Altman film, Kansas City. Holley, Jr. pointed out that “while Turner’s name wasn’t mentioned in the film, Mahogany sang a song associated with him, ‘I Left My Baby’, from behind the bar.”

Mahogany grew up playing baritone saxophone and piano, and his first professional job, as a 12-year-old in 1970, was as a saxophonist with Eddie Baker’s New Breed Orchestra.

Although he sang in high school, he did not decide to become a vocalist until he heard Al Jarreau’s 1977 live Warner Bros. album, Look to the Rainbow. After that, according to The New York Times’ Giovanni Russonello (December 19, 2017), “he began to explore jazz vocalists more fully. He worked his way back to Kansas City’s lineage of male singers, while also internalizing the more erudite styles of Jon Hendricks and Eddie Jefferson.”

After graduating from Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, in 1981, Mahogany formed two rhythm & blues bands in Kansas City — the Apollos and Mahogany — and sang with a nine-piece jazz ensemble called Robinson-Pike.

His first album, Double Rainbow, was released on the Enja label in 1993. All Music’s Ken Dryden, in his review, called it “a stunning CD debut as a leader, accompanied by a first-call rhythm section consisting of pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Ray Drummond, and drummer Lewis Nash, plus tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore on selected tracks.”

Mahogany recorded several other albums for Enja before moving to Warner Bros. in the latter half of the ‘90s. He also recorded one album for the Telarc label and two albums on his own label, Mahogany Music.

In a Facebook post, pianist-organist Mike LeDonne recalled working with Mahogany, “when he first hit the scene…I really enjoyed the humor in his music and the sense of fun he had about performing.” WBGO’s Holley, Jr. described Mahogany’s style as a combination of “the formal intricacies of bebop with the emotional depth of the blues.” Mahogany’s Enja albums, Holley, Jr. said, display “a versatility evidenced by his interpretations of Antonio Carlos Jobim, Wes Montgomery, Billy Strayhorn, and Charlie Parker.”

Clint Ashlock, artistic director and conductor of the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, told KCUR’s Janovy he was taken with Mahogany’s “warmth and jubilant sound…He was always swinging and such a wonderful representative of Kansas City — both the historical legacy of its music and the soul it still embodies in today’s scene.”

In recent years, Mahogany often performed with New Jersey-based guitarist Dave Stryker. One of his last performances was in November 2017 with Stryker and a 16-piece big band at the Vermont Jazz Center in Brattleboro, Vermont. A benefit to help VJC’s students attend ensembles, private lessons, and its annual summer jazz workshop. Reporting on the event, jazznews.com said, “Kevin Mahogany’s voice is reminiscent of Johnny Hartman’s: sultry, big and beautiful.

Originally from Kansas City, he has internalized that city’s historic connection to swing and blues.” Stryker, in a Facebook post, described Mahogany as “a beautiful person and a beautiful singer.”

Although he lived in Miami in recent years, Mahogany moved back to Kansas City in 2017 after the death of his wife, Allene. In addition to his sister, Mahogany is survived by a brother, Craig Mahogany; and a niece, Lawrenca Mahogany.

Their big break came in 1954 when the entertainment director of Las Vegas Sahara Hotel offered them a two-week engagement. They became one of the hottest acts in town, and their popularity led to appearances on television and in nightclubs all over the country. They were a contrast in personalities. Sandomir described Prima as “the ebullient, frenzied bandleader.” Smith, he added, “played the straight woman, offering little reaction except for rolling her eyes at Mr. Prima’s exhuberant singing, dancing, and gesticulations.”

NPR’s All Things Considered devoted a segment to Smith two days after her death. Host Ray Suarez recalled Prima and Smith this way: “He’s trying to get a pretty, aloof, almost bored-looking woman to jump into the number. He yanks her arm. She ignores him. He mugs. She rolls her eyes. And, finally, Keely Smith steps up to the mic and lets it rip.”

Suarez’s guest, Tom Clavin, author of That Old Black Magic: Louis Prima, Keely Smith, and the Golden Age of Las Vegas (Chicago Review Press: 2010), described their act as “kind of controlled chaos … You know, Keely Smith wasn’t as famous as, say a Peggy Lee or an Ella Fitzgerald, but she had this wonderful, wonderful voice, this unique look to her with the short, black hair. And, I think a lot of performers were influenced by her. You look at Louis Prima and Keely Smith, and there’s a direct connection to Sonny and Cher.”

Prima and Smith won a Grammy Award in 1959 in the Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group for “That Old Black Magic.” In 2001, Smith was nominated for a Grammy for her Concord Records album, Keely Sings Sinatra.
After divorcing Prima in 1961, Smith pursued a solo career. She moved to Palm Springs in the late '70s but continued to visit New York where she became a regular at Manhattan cabarets. In 2003, The New York Times' Stephen Holden reviewed one of her performances, pointing out that, "Her voice still conveys a lush sensuality tinged with sadness...Most important, she balances the roles of zany, deadpan cutup and torch singer." In 2008, Smith told the San Francisco Chronicle's Joel Selvin that Diana Krall and Bette Midler attended the same night during her month-long run at New York's Carlyle Hotel in 2007.

She is survived by her daughters, Toni and LuAnne Prima, a brother, Norman; and a stepbrother, Stephen Smith.

Roswell Rudd, 82, trombonist, November 17, 1935, Sharon, CT – December 21, 2017, Kerhonkson, NY. Rudd got his first taste of jazz while playing with a student Dixieland band at Yale. His professional career flourished at the opposite end of the jazz spectrum, as he became a leading avant garde trombonist, playing with such leading proponents of free jazz as pianist Cecil Taylor and saxophonist Archie Shepp.

Rudd was featured on Shepp's radical mid-1960s Impulse albums, Live in San Francisco and Four For Trane. He also played with bassist Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra and recorded several albums with pianist-composer Carla Bley.

In the late 1970s, Rudd dropped out of jazz. "I wasn't making much money anyway," he told The Ottawa Citizen's Doug Fischer in 2004. "I thought I might as well see what else was out there." He lectured on musical anthropology at Bard College in Annadale-on-Hudson, NY; joined the music faculty at the University of Maine in Augusta; delivered bread in Woodstock, NY; trained as a nurse for people with disabilities; and spent about seven years as an entertainer at the Granit Hotel in Kerhonkson.

"I played for the different acts that came through," he told Fischer, "dancers, singers, puppeteers, fire-eaters, comedians, all kinds of things that take you back to the days of vaudeville." These entertainers, he said, were "great improvisers. They're like jazz soloists the way they can work on an idea and mesmerize an entire room of people."

He returned to the jazz world in 1999 and recorded an album, Broad Strokes, on the Knitting Factory Works label. In his AllMusic review, Steve Loewy described the album as "a mixed bag, an odd-ball collection of Rudd-led sessions over nearly a year...Rudd fans will not wish to pass this recording up, although it is much more an oddity than anything definitive or enduring." The album featured original compositions by pianists Thelonius Monk and Herbie Nichols and a cover of an Elvis Costello song, "Almost Blue."

In 2000, Rudd traveled to Mali to play with a group of West African musicians. The result was an album called Malicool (Universal Music Jazz France: 2002) which featured the well-known Malian kora player Toumani Diabate. His last album, Embrace, a collaboration with vocalist Fay Victor, was released on the Rare Noise label in November 2017. On a December 22, 2017, segment of NPR's Fresh Air, jazz critic Kevin Whitehead said Rudd "paces himself well and doesn't waste a move. Like other greats who've reached a certain age, he packs a lot of wisdom into every note...Embrace is vintage Roswell Rudd, and that is saying something."

Rudd, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2013, is survived by his partner, Verna Gillis; a sister, Priscilla Wolf, a brother, Benjamin Rudd; a son, Gregory from his first marriage to Marilyn Schwartz, which ended in divorce; and a son, Christopher, from his second marriage, to Moselle Galbraith, who died

continued on page 12
BIG BAND IN THE SKY

continued from page 11

in 2004.

Willie Pickens, 86, pianist, April 18, 1931, Milwaukee – December 12, 2017, New York City. Pickens died from a heart attack while in the practice room at the jazz at Lincoln Center club, Dizzy’s Coca-Cola. He was scheduled to perform the next night with a protégé, trumpeter Marquis Hill.

The Chicago Tribune’s Howard Reich, in an obituary the day after Pickens’ death, said the pianist was “revered in Chicago — and around the world — not only as a colossus piano virtuoso but as a symbol of Chicago jazz...his generosity in mentoring generations of young musicians placed him alongside such Chicago jazz icons as tenor saxophonists Von Freeman and Fred Anderson.”

Pianist Jason Moran recalled to Reich that Pickens “used his energy to get kids into the music. I feel like all the work I’ve done in the past few years in Chicago has been because of my relationship to him.” Moran wrote an extended piece, “Looks of a Lot” for the jazz band at Kenwood Academy, a local school where Pickens started the music program in the 1960s. Moran and the Kenwood students played the piece last February at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, where Moran is artistic director for jazz.

Pickens’ style, according to Howard Mandel, writing on artsjournal.com (December 13, 2017), “is hard to pin down...He seems to have been influenced by or akin to such jazz innovators as McCoy Tyner, Thelonious Monk, and, perhaps, Herbie Nichols... He was melodically and rhythmically exciting and harmonically investigatory.” Pianist Ramsey Lewis described Pickens to Reich as “one of the foremost piano players in jazz. He had technique, the knowledge of the instrument and jazz in general.”

In 2015, Pickens told the Tribune he didn’t have to go on the road because, “…the road came to me. Everyone came through Chicago or lived here, so I was working with [James] Moody, Dexter [Gordon], Gene Ammons, Roy Eldridge, Johnny Griffin, Johnny Hartman, Art Pepper, Max Roach, you name it. It was terrific for me because I could play with the greats at night but still stay in town and have a chance to raise my family.”

The one exception was in 1990 when drummer Elvin Jones invited Pickens to tour the world with his band, the Jazz Machine, and he accepted the gig at the urging of his wife, Irma. Pickens was going to ask for a leave of from his teaching job, but Irma told him, “Just retire and go out on the road,” Pickens told the Tribune in 2016. “She wanted me to have that experience.” Irma Pickens died in October 2015.

In addition to founding and teaching at Kenwood Academy’s jazz program, Pickens taught at Northern Illinois University and established the Ravinia Jazz Mentor Program in suburban Highland Park. Lewis, artistic director of jazz at the Ravinia Festival, said Pickens was the “heart and soul” of the program. “The students and teachers and Ravinia bigwigs all looked up to him.”

Pickens is survived by his daughter, Bethany Pickens, a prominent Chicago pianist and teacher at Kenwood; two sons, David and Kiron Pickens; and grandchildren, Olivia Bethany Pickens and Selden Willie Pickens.


Coates was a regular at the Deer Head from the 1960s through 2010 and is widely credited with launching a lively jazz scene in the Poconos.

In 1956, the 18-year-old Coates was discovered by Savoy Records and recorded his first album, Portrait, on that label. In the ‘50s, he appeared on television programs such as The Steve Allen Show and The Merv Griffin Show, toured with tenor saxophonist Charlie Ventura, and played at several well-known jazz clubs including Birdland and the Blue Note.

In the ‘60s and ‘70s, he worked as an arranger and composer for bandleader Fred Waring, who moved to the Poconos and started a music publishing company as his performing career came to an end. During Coates’s long-running gigs at the Deer Head Inn, he attracted a number of famous “sidemen” including alto saxophonist Phil Woods, who lived in Delaware Water Gap, tenor saxophonists Coleman Hawkins and Stan Getz, and trumpet Clark Terry.

“Word got out, it was just a regular thing,” George Graham, on-air personality at Scranton’s WVIA-FM, told the Times-Tribune. “He was very innovative. He had a distinct left-hand technique, very swinging, a combination of swinging left hand and a very melodic way of writing pieces.”

Pianist Keith Jarrett, an Allentown native, played drums with Coates at the Deer Head before he blossomed into one of the world’s leading modern jazz pianists.

Coates recorded several albums on the Japanese Omnisound label in the ’70s and early ’80s, including one called Pocono Friends that featured Woods and trombonist Urbie Green. He also recorded two albums with Woods — Giants at Play and Giants at Work — on the Pacific St. Records label. According to the Times-Tribune, Scranton Mayor Jim Connors asked Woods what he thought of Coates. His response: “People don’t know how good he was.”

Allmusic.com’s Scott Yanow once described Coates this way: “He has been creating worthy music for several decades in general obscurity.”

No information was available regarding survivors.

David Cayer, 89, educator/broadcaster, November 14, 1928, Newark – November 15, 2017, New Haven, CT. After retiring from a 26-year career as a political science professor and administrator at Rutgers University, Cayer taught jazz history in the American Studies department and helped bring the Institute of Jazz Studies to Rutgers Newark.

From 1973-2004, he was co-editor of the Annual Review of Jazz Studies, an English-language scholarly periodical devoted to jazz and related music. Cayer presented more than two dozen broadcasts for UIS’s long-running radio program, Jazz From the Archives on WBGO-FM. He was also the first executive director of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

Under the NIHCH sponsorship, he lectured on jazz history and directed a symposium, “James P. Johnson: A Centennial Salute”.

In 1991, Cayer helped launch Rutgers’ program of non-credit courses for senior citizens, called the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. A member of the advisory board, he taught several courses including jazz history, the music of Cole Porter, and Louis Armstrong on film.

Survivors include his wife, Elizabeth; a daughter, Susan Cayer and her husband, Robert Stout; and grandchildren, Amanda and Zachary Stout.
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Talking Jazz
A Jersey Jazz Interview with Bob Porter

By Schaen Fox

**JJ:** How was your Jazz Cruise experience?

**BP:** Excellent. I do two a year for this group, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise. I'm an emcee and give lectures. It is just a wonderful time. They depart Fort Lauderdale, and usually the East Coast cruise goes to the Caribbean. This one went to Curacao and Aruba. Sometimes they go to Key West, over to New Orleans and then to Cozumel. They also have a West Coast tour occasionally, down the west coast of Mexico.

**JJ:** What would you like to talk about?

**BP:** Well, let’s talk about Jersey Jazz. The founding of the Jersey Jazz Society back in the early '70s opened something I wasn’t aware of before. Most of my professional life has been involved with jazz from the black community, the organ groups, Jazz at the Philharmonic stars, people like that. I looked around a little bit when Jersey Jazz was formed and discovered groups like Soprano Summit, the Ruby Braff and George Barnes group and the Classic Jazz Quartet (called the “Bourgeoisie Scum” with Dick Wellstood, Dick Sudhalter, Joe Muranyi and those guys). There was more interesting stuff being done by groups on that side of this street than in the modern jazz stuff. I was very bored with modern jazz in the '70s, all that model playing and such, so I started back peddling. The Society opened my eyes to a lot of stuff.

Red Squires [longtime NJJS Music Chair] was a kind of mentor to me, in that he pointed me toward certain people. I knew about Vic Dickenson. Vic was my favorite trombone player for years, but guys like Red and Don Lass pointed me towards Wild Bill Davison. I had known about him, but I never paid much attention to him. When I got a chance to hear him, and started to understand what he was all about I said to myself, “God I’ve been asleep on this guy.” And I loved some of the stride oriented players like Ralph Sutton and Wellstood and even guys that were not quite that locked in like Dave McKenna, who is still a favorite of mine.

The shows they had at Waterloo Village were just great. [NJJS co-founder] Jack Stine really knew how to program concerts. There were some spectacular shows. There was a lot of common ground between the swing and traditional guys, more than than between the swing and modern approaches. Sammy Price could work well with just about anybody, and he was a hell of a boogie-woogie piano player, but more than just a great blues player. Jack put together a jazz group with him and Sammy just knocked it out of the park.

They asked me to become an advisor to the society after a while, and I've always enjoyed whatever they asked me to do, like emcee the 50th Anniversary Concert of Benny Goodman’s concert at Carnegie Hall. That was quite an event, and I learned a lot that day. They used a vocal mic, and the overhead mic from Carnegie Hall as the only amplification. I had friends who were sitting in the center of the balcony. They said the sound was perfect; better than anything they remember. In those years concerts at Carnegie tended to be engineered by sound guys who thought you needed a mic on every instrument. So often the sound mix was a mess.

It is nice to see the society moving forward. Tony Mottola does such a great job with the journal. If you see publications from other jazz societies and even some of the commercial publications, the NJJS Journal is right up there.

**JJ:** How did you get involved with WBGO?

Bob Porter at the microphone at radio station WBGO studios in Newark, NJ

continued on page 16

Schaen Fox is a longtime jazz fan. Now retired, he devotes much of his time to the music and shares his encounters with musicians in this column.
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The New Jersey Jazz Society is qualified as a tax-exempt cultural organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to NJJS are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Proceeds of the event help support scholarships.
I cut my teeth in large measure on the corner of Williams and Halsey streets in Newark. Newark was very hot in the early ’70s. There was a lot of activity, and about half a dozen organ clubs just cooking like crazy. They all had good sound systems.

“Portraits in Blue” the initial idea was to collaborate with Joe Rosen, a wonderful New York photographer. We were going to call the book Portraits in Blue. It would be Joe’s photographs and my text. I had a good agent who sold the idea to Little, Brown. We worked on it about three years and, all of a sudden, they changed editors on us. They did that two other times, and the last editor decided he didn’t want the book. So, after about seven years we were out there with nothing — back at square one. Some of Joe’s photos in Soul Jazz were originally done for that project.

After a couple of years trying to float the idea again, unsuccessfully, we decided to go our separate ways. My agent sold the idea of Soul Jazz to Oxford University Press. I was signed by one of the great editors in the history of jazz books, Sheldon Meyer. I had a couple of meetings with Sheldon and we agreed to an approach, essentially the one used in the book. Then Sheldon died. So, after 13 years of starting a project, it was still in limbo. I was in need of editorial assistance to help organize the material. I went two years after Sheldon died without any editor from Oxford University Press. They finally gave me a guy after I complained for such a long time, and the guy didn’t want the book. So here I was after 17 years, back at the same stage. I finally decided, the hell with this. I’m going to do it myself. I’ve invested too much on this project not to finish it.

There is a story in this book that isn’t available in other histories. Most conventional jazz histories deal with the influence a musician would have on other musicians. As a result, if Lester Young or Charlie Parker is a brilliant player, it is understood they would be influential on other musicians. In the black community, there was another element at work. They would applaud great music, but if you were not successful, they would forget about you quickly. The conventional histories don’t credit the black community and their attitudes towards jazz in the same way they did with white audiences, and the musicians that appealed largely to white audiences.

Stanley Dance went to Harlem to hear music on many occasions, and Dan Morgenstern went a few times, but most critics writing about jazz in the ’60s and ’70s didn’t go to black neighborhoods to hear music. They went to the Village Vanguard, Birdland, or The Half Note places like that. I’m not suggesting any conspiracy, that was just the way it was.

Jazz critics don’t care about commercial success. They care about getting there first and discovering somebody new. If you find the right guy, and tell the world about his ability and that musician achieves great success, you will ride on those coattails.

Because I was working in the record industry and my job was to record black musicians in the soul jazz idiom, I went where the guys worked, and the audiences responded much differently. A white audience would sit patiently listening to solo playing, and give often enthusiastic applause after a solo. A black audience reacted differently. They were participants in the project. If a guy started cooking, they’d yell, “Work, baby, work,” or something like that, to spur him on. You would never hear that in a white club.

The soul jazz organ club had great utility. You could come to the club just to meet someone and converse while the band was on the bandstand. Nobody minded. That was part of the scene. You could dig it and really get into it, or you could back off, have a taste and a conversation. It was entertainment first. It was the preferred social music of black adults.

I cut my teeth in large measure on the corner of Williams and Halsey streets in Newark. Newark was very hot in the early ’70s. There was a lot of activity, and about half a dozen organ clubs just cooking like crazy. They all had good sound systems.
was 90 cents a pop. The bandstand was in the middle of a circular bar in both clubs. If the audience didn’t like what the band was playing, they simply got up and walked across the street. [laughs] The band had to be good. I loved to have my bands play on that corner, because those audiences would make you work, and you would find out what you had in a band. The first time I heard Grover Washington Jr, he was playing the Key Club with Charles Earland. I tell the story in the book.

I used to kid Gene Ammons that when he would play in a club in a white neighborhood; he had a very different book from what he would play in the south side of Chicago. In the south side they wanted his hits, if he was at the Jazz Showcase, not necessarily the case. People would want to hear what he recorded with Woody Herman or something like that. I think this has been told only from one point of view. If I accomplished anything in Soul Jazz, at least I put it out there was another way of viewing this music. When you get certain histories that don’t even mention Buddy Johnson, Illinois Jacquet or Donald Byrd, people who were hugely popular in the black community at one time or another, that is a mistake. If someone is successful playing music often they will have more influence than somebody who happens to be great, but not successful.

**JJ:** I enjoyed your piece on Gene Ammons, but was surprised about his drug history.

**BP:** He was relatively late getting into drugs. Dexter Gordon used to talk about the Billy Eckstine reed section as the “Unholy Four.” That was everybody but Gene, because Gene was straight in those years. Frank Wess thought that when Gene went with Woody Herman in ’49, that was when he picked it up. That band had an awful lot of junkies. Gene went to prison in 1958, but as soon as he got out he went back on drugs. Ultimately it caught up with him. He told me that he felt that the second prison sentence saved his life. He was denied drugs for seven years, and by the time he got out he didn’t have any need for it any longer.

Gene was a very interesting, gregarious, prince of a guy. He loved to tell stories. One time when he came back from Philadelphia he told me, “I ran into Charlie Ventura. We went to have a beer, and spent about four hours talking about the old days.” In large measure, people have forgotten his gift. He could play a well-known tune, say, “Exactly Like You” and put a personal stamp on that tune through his treatment. In jazz you have people who are gifted improvisors. Ira Sullivan would certainly be one of them. Other guys are stylists. They took whatever they could do and adapted it in such a way to translate it to a general audience. That is what Ammons was able to do. This is a guy who sold records in astonishing quantities in all conceivable context.

**JJ:** I was impressed with your detached writing style. I didn’t feel your opinions in the stories you tell.

**BP:** That is the way you have to do it. Lay it out there as it is, let people listen to the music and make up their own minds; but before they can do that, they must know what to listen to. My first order of business was to determine the jazz that was popular in the black community. If anybody wanted to check it out, they would at least know what to look for.

**JJ:** How much of the material you talk about in *Soul Jazz* is in your own collection?

**BP:** Virtually all of it. There is another thing to remember, jazz radio at that time was heavily marketed towards the black community. To a certain extent, in the best jazz years from the late ’50s to the mid ’70s, what was bought by the black community tended to be what they heard on the radio. What was bought by the white community tended to be what they read about in *DownBeat*, *Metronome* or something like that. The White audience tended to pay more attention to critics, while the black audience paid more attention to DJs.

**JJ:** I hadn’t thought about the 1973 oil embargo for some time, and was surprised to read how that affected the jazz community.

**BP:** At the time I was working for Westbound Records, a Detroit label, in their New York office and everybody was talking about the vinyl shortage. A guy from Chess Records told me they were melting down old telephones, anything to get something to press on. The pressing quality of the stuff that came out in ’73 was probably the worst in history.

**JJ:** You also have a remarkably concise analysis of the economic dilemma jazz musicians face.

**BP:** Nowadays there are just a handful of musicians who don’t have to teach just to keep bread on the table. In the old days guys worked in clubs all year long. The standard gig was one week long, now it is one night. I don’t have any solution for this. I mentioned in the book the attitude that you hear towards music in New Orleans is ideally what it ought to be everywhere. If you are a new musician coming to town, you need to know not only the traditional jazz background of New Orleans, but you need to know the R&B background of New Orleans. If you know them well enough, and can add something on top of that, then you’ve got something.

The difficulty for jazz is that it is largely an interpreter’s music; composition being less important than arranging. If you had nothing but the Great American Songbook and the blues, you would probably have 85% of the great performances ever recorded. Not to say that there are not great jazz composers, there are, but they are few and far between. There is more mediocre jazz composition out there than you or I or anybody else should spend any time talking about. The money is made by the composers not by the players. So it is tough for jazz players to make it without being a writer.

I’m not a firm believer in music education producing great jazz. We joked that the music programs of the ’70s produced nothing but clones of Sonny Rollins and McCoy Tyner. Everybody now thinks the music started with Coltrane and Monk. That is what you hear all the time, all kinds of clones playing Coltrane and Monk. As somebody who saw both of the originals several times, and knows how great they were, it is sad to see the imitations. You say to yourself, “Okay you can imitate them, but what can you do on your own?”

To me, music education has always been, “Learn your instrument upside down and backwards, and learn about 600 standards in all the keys.” When you are
TALKING JAZZ/BOB PORTER
continued from page 17

good at that, I would send you out with a blues band for about three weeks. In a blues band you might get one solo a night, and if you didn’t get over on that solo, you wouldn’t have it the next night. You need to learn how to perform before an audience. That is the thing people don’t get in the jazz programs. I have one standing rule: if I go to any club and see a six-piece band using music stands, I leave. I’m not paying to see a rehearsal. If they don’t know the music well enough to play for an audience, they shouldn’t be playing it. There is too much of that going around.

JJ: You mention a lot of people I had completely forgotten about. One that I loved is Onzy Matthews. Now I’m again enjoying his work, especially “Blues Non-Stop.”

BP: I saw that band in person in L.A. when I was in the army, and stationed at Fort Ord in California. I had gone to Whittier College in California, and I’d go down to see old pals on the weekends. If I didn’t have a place to crash, sometimes I’d sleep at the all-night jazz theater on West Washington Blvd. I went one night in 1964 specifically to see Onzy Matthews and ended sleeping there until 6:00 AM. Onzy’s band in those years had a lot of guys who were legends in L.A. that they talk about 50 years later.

I believe he went to Europe for a while. When I was with Atlantic in the late ’80s, Onzy came by. He had done the arranging for an Esther Phillips album and was looking for a CD of it. I introduced myself. I said I remembered his band and the albums he had done for Capitol. He was pleased, but he didn’t go into what he was doing. That was the last time I saw him.

JJ: I was impressed by your noting that in the early days, that musicians were the heroes of the black community. Then I thought, “Of course, segregation was law; that should be obvious.”

BP: When people talk about success or why somebody is loved in a certain community while other people never heard of them, that’s part of it. In large measure the opportunity to make something of yourself was available to musicians, where it may not have been in other fields.

JJ: It was also interesting to read why record companies did not list their house musicians in those early years.

BP: That was true in the rhythm and blues years, when labels were making singles. The competition was so fierce that the identity of sidemen was a closely guarded secret. If you had a great tenor soloist, such as Sam “the Man” Taylor, he was rarely ever billed. He is on hundreds and hundreds of records where there was no credit given to the saxophone soloist. It wasn’t until Allen Freed started mentioning him, because he was part of Allen’s stage shows, that he began to become a celebrity for what he had accomplished. One thing I discovered when working for labels like Savoy and Atlantic, I would find union contracts on sessions that would give personnel. Most of them had never been published before, and time after time the big blasting rhythm and blues solo was Sam “the Man” Taylor.

JJ: You have a nice section on the once controversial Allen Freed.

BP: The greatest radio voice I ever heard. He knew how to speak to people, to program music and to create excitement. Because I grew up in Massachusetts, I didn’t hear him that often but when we were on Cape Cod, the sound would come in clear as a bell. Whenever I had the opportunity to hear Freed, I paid attention, because he was somebody who did give out information. DJs in those days would name the record and the group, but Freed would credit the musicians, and that I appreciated. I never saw one of his stage shows, but I know lots of people who did.

I think it is important that people realize that the artificial lines of division that are created by critics are not necessarily those that register with an audience. If you like tenor sax playing, you might like Lester Young or Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, but there is nothing that says you can’t like Sam “the Man” Taylor too. I’m one of those people who really got into the crazy kind of players of the rhythm and blues years. I still love that stuff.

I’ve had occasion to talk to some of the old-line record men, and payola was very much a part of the way business was done in the ’50s. The major record labels Columbia, Decca and RCA were in control and were really promoting white music to the exclusion of everything else. Because the big labels had all the power, they would take pot shots at anyone who threatened their place in the world. It really started with rock and roll. When rhythm and blues was the sound of the black community, they didn’t necessarily pay that much attention to it. But, when you had this fusion of country and rhythm and blues starting with Elvis, then something big was happening, and it wasn’t of their doing. They had to figure out how to get rid of it, or join the club.

I think in many respects payola was absolutely necessary. Some of the DJs were paid a pittance for working two hour shows five days a week. Whatever payola came in helped keep them together. They talk about the $50 handshake. You shook the hand of a record industry promotion guy, and there might be a $50 bill in his hand. That tied over a lot of people during those years. It wasn’t a big money business. People think of money these days in terms of thousands and millions. In those days it was tens and twenties.

Bob Weinstock told me that the way you found out what records to promote was you would look at the Cashbox regional charts. If Cashbox said it was hot on Central Avenue that was the one you would promote in Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia. If it was hot in Harlem that was the one you went out to the West Coast with to get things moving nationally. In the ‘50s regional responses to music was much more prevalent than it is now; today everything is national. Prestige, for example, had certain breakout markets. If we could get a record started in Detroit, Philadelphia or Chicago, we could spread it because those markets had that kind of clout. If you started a record in Pittsburg or Cleveland, maybe it never got outside those areas. Understanding record distribution is the key to understanding how things operated in those years.

The major labels are major labels because they are vertically integrated. They have their own wholly owned distribution system. Everybody else worked with a series of independent distributors and by independent that meant a distribution entity might have as many as 60 or 70 labels that they dealt with. They would have to service the radio stations and the jukebox community as well as the retail stores. That was part of the job. If you had the right record, the right distributor, the right retail situation, and the right radio station you could sell a lot of jazz records, but if anyone of those components fell apart, the whole thing fell apart. It was my life for a long period of time. After I left Prestige, I picked up jobs working for Savoy and Atlantic, largely in a reissue capacity, but I did some new things as well. I always had this independent producer scene going on the side. I produced about 175 albums. While I don’t like all of them, I think I made some pretty good records.

JJ: You don’t?

BP: One of the curses of this is when a mistake gets on an album you hear that before you hear anything else. Other people may not notice it, but you tend to remember things like that. On the other

continued on page 20
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hand, when Gene Ammons did his version of “Didn’t We,” Bernard Purdie, who is still active, was so overcome at the end of the tune that he leaped off the drum chair ran over, picked Gene up and gave him a bear hug. It was an incredible moment, and could only happen when a guy really nails something. It affects the other musicians like that.

I have other favorite record dates. I remember a date with Red Rodney and Ira Sullivan. They had a working band for a while in the early ’80s. Some of the greatest jazz I ever heard was played by that group. Ira was devilishly difficult to record because of his gift of being incredibly creative. You couldn’t get a second take on anything that was remotely close to the first take. He is that gifted an improviser on any instrument he picks up. Sometimes musicians who seem so compatible on stage don’t even like each other. I don’t want to get specific about it, but you admire the professionalism of musicians who can put their personal differences aside, and just concentrate on the task at hand. I used to run into that in the recording studio. Musicians would get to arguing, and you would have to cool it out to keep everybody on the same page. It didn’t happen often, but when it did, it could be ugly. If you are producing a record, you are responsible for the amount of time spent doing that.

**BP:** I could have amplified the Civil Right situation a little more, but I wanted to make sure that people would view this as a music book, not a black history book. I used sports figures and the political situation largely to color the atmosphere or to explain the surroundings that the music existed in. I included the sections on Martin Luther King and Muhammad Ali because people may not have viewed of them in that context before. Ali lit the Olympic torch in 1996. He couldn’t have done that in 1976. Just as music evolves over time, so do attitudes. That is the one thing I wanted to show. White America’s thoughts about Muhammad Ali changed over time.

In writing this I’m hoping to give people an alternative universe. I’d like to speak about the book to some college jazz classes. Some of the musicians featured in the book are not covered in their classes.

**BP:** That is very difficult, largely because drug laws are different depending on what state you are in. When Gene Ammons got busted in 1962, he got busted in Kansas City, but the narks who busted him followed him from Chicago. Today that would be a clear case of entrapment, in 1960s that didn’t matter. Gene went to jail for seven years. There is inequity in the laws. If there was a way to solve the problem just through the legal system that might be the best answer but the way things stand now you can’t do anything without including some form of rehab. I wish there was a way to get the problem solved. You hate to see lives thrown away. My God, jazz had that problem for years, happily there is not that much of it going on these days, but at one time there sure was.

**BP:** I don’t understand the word genius, or use it very frequently. It is overused, but there was genius in what he did. He had an ability to make music sound better than you would have thought possible. I am very grateful for the hundred or so sessions I was able to do with him. His ability to get the best possible sound probably helped my career. He was exacting. He wanted things done in his way, and if you did things his way, there were great benefits. You didn’t argue with him. You let him do his thing, and he would give you what you wanted. You may not have been able to articulate it to him, but he understood instinctively what the music was supposed to sound like. I think it is because he was always a jazz fan, and he understood the process of making that kind of music.

He liked reverb, no question about that. During the time I worked for Savoy Records in the ’70s one task I had was transfer to tape a lot of the original acetates recorded back in the ’40s. Rudy had been working exclusively for CTI up until 1976. When his deal with them was over he called me. I wasn’t doing any new record dates, but I was doing the transfers. I said, “Do you want to do this?” He said, “Sure.” One time we were doing the Boyd Raeburn band. My plan was to always record everything flat so that if a producer down the road wanted to make enhancements they would be working with the original sound as originally recorded. When we did the Raeburn band, Rudy said, “Please let me put some reverb on this. If Boyd Raeburn were standing here he would want me to do it.” [Laughs] He had that kind of interest in getting the music as perfect as possible. He was usually very guarded about what equipment he used, and his setup. He had a big line drawn in the control room, and you were not supposed to go past that point. When he was doing a job, he was totally focused on it.

I didn’t have much interaction with him on a personal level. He invited me into his house one time. I had never been in there before despite the fact that I’d worked for him for years. My wife and I are fans of Frank Lloyd Wright, and when we travel, we like to go and see Wright’s buildings around the country. I happened to realize that Van Gelder’s studio had to be Wright inspired, cement floors, cinder block construction, the kinds of things that Wright did. Rudy told me, “Yes the architect, who designed the building,” which contained not only the studio, but his living quarters, “was a protégé of Wright’s.” I think Van Gelder was there to serve the producers that made so many records with him. The first credit he got on a record was in 1953, and he was working up until the week that he died. That’s a long, long haul, better than 60 years. A great man in my estimation, and sadly missed. I’m afraid that now that Rudy is gone, the studio will be torn down. The real-estate is much too valuable, but I was there a little while ago and Maureen Sickler, Rudy’s assistant for many years, is still doing sessions.

**BP:** I was surprised to read that Ellington and Basie had to keep the other’s theme in their books.

**BP:** It is true. In fact Basie recorded “A Train,” and Ellington recorded “One O’clock Jump,” but Basie didn’t play Duke’s arrangement, and Duke didn’t play Basie’s. When Duke did it, it was largely a feature for Jimmy Hamilton on tenor. You didn’t hear Jimmy on tenor on Duke’s own stuff. He usually played clarinet. I guarantee that each of those gentlemen had someone request the other one’s theme, and I’m sure it happened more than once. If you’re a band leader you there to perform music people want to hear. You’re not there to argue that you are not who they think you are.

**BJ:** That is a good place to end this. It has been a real pleasure talking to you.

**BP:** Nice conversation Schaefer. Thanks very much.
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Ken Peplowski Imports International Flavor To Jazz Club of Sarasota's Annual Festival

By Sanford Josephson

Clarinetist-tenor saxophonist Ken Peplowski has been performing at the Jazz Club of Sarasota’s annual festival since the mid-1980s. Last year, he played in a duo concert with pianist Dick Hyman as part of a program honoring Hyman on his 90th birthday. This year, Peplowski is the festival’s music director, and the event, from March 7-10, will take on an international flavor. It will feature such global artists as Japanese organist Akiko Tsuruga, Brazilian guitarist Diego Figueiredo, and the Scandinavian Jazztrio (drummer Kristian Leth, bassist Hans Backenroth, and pianist Ole Kock Hansen). These international artists will be teamed with an all-star lineup of U.S. jazz musicians such as Peplowski, tenor saxophonist Houston Person and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt.

“What I’ve tried to do,” Peplowski explained to Jersey Jazz, “is take the best of both worlds and put some people in unfamiliar territory. Each night, we’ll do some jam session music and some preplanned music. Some of the musicians will stay over for more than one day and play in different settings.” For example, one night the first set will feature the Scandinavian Jazztrio with Danish vocalist Sinne Eeg. In the second set, the trio and vocalist will be joined by American saxophonist Jimmy Greene, Pelt, and Peplowski. On another night, the first set will showcase two members of the Jazztrio, drummer Leth and bassist Backenroth, with Israeli-American pianist Ehud Asherie and Peplowski; in the second set, American drummer Jeff Hamilton will be joined by Tsuruga on organ, U.S. guitarist Graham Dechter and Person on tenor sax.

“We’ll be featuring people from all over the world who play this universal language called jazz,” Peplowski says. “It should be very interesting for the audience. A lot of what happens is going to be left to the performers. I like to think of myself as the benevolent dictator.”

Peg Pluto, Jazz Club of Sarasota president, says the club is honored to have Peplowski, “one of our audience favorites,” as the festival’s music director. Many of the performers, she points out, “have never played together before, and they may never share the same stage again. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime event.”

The festival logistics will change as well. In the past, most concerts were held in a performing arts theatre. This year, with the exception of the annual jazz trolley & pub crawl, which kicks off the festival on March 7, all performances will be held at Sarasota’s Art Ovation Hotel. “We’re hoping to get a little bit of a night club atmosphere,” Peplowski said. Ticket prices will peak at $49, but there will be several combination packages for people staying at the hotel.

Peplowski recalls, in addition to playing with his own band and Hyman at previous Sarasota festivals, he was fortunate to play there with “the last of the old guard of straight ahead jazz,” including drummer Bobby Rosengarten, bassist Milt Hinton, tenor saxophonist Flip Phillips and pianist Derek Smith. “His goal this year is “to try to put together a great weekend of music. I want to bring back the former days when people would fly out from anywhere. Every night, there will be something a jazz fan will know and something they won’t know. I like bringing different things to the audience.”

THE SCHEDULE

March 7: Jazz Trolley and Pub Crawl, a continuous loop by trolley to several local jazz venues, featuring Sarasota-based jazz musicians, 6-10 PM with the trolleys starting at 5:30.

March 8, 7:30 PM: Scandinavian Jazztrio with vocalist Sinne Eeg, joined in the second set by Jimmy Greene, Jeremy Pelt, and Ken Peplowski. Finale will be an all-star jazz jam with all of the evening’s musicians.

March 9, 11 AM: Screening of Django, a French film about legendary jazz guitarist, Django Reinhardt.

March 9, 7:30 PM: guitarist Diego Figueiredo, Italian vocalist Chiara Izzi, and saxophonist Jimmy Greene (first set); Scandinavian Jazztrio, Houston Person and guitarist Graham Dechter (second set); all-star jazz jam.

March 10, 2 PM: Two sets of mix-and-match with Scandinavian Jazztrio, Graham Dechter, Akiko Tsuruga, Jeff Hamilton, Houston Person, Diego Figueiredo, Chiara Izzi, Ehud Asherie, and Ken Peplowski, followed by the all-star jazz jam.

March 10, 7:30 PM: Kristian Leth, Hans Backenroth, Ehud Asherie, and Ken Peplowski (first set); Jeff Hamilton, Akiko Tsuruga, Graham Dechter, and Houston Person (second set); all-star jazz jam.

For more information about tickets and hotel reservations, log onto www.jazzclubsarasota.org, email admin@JazzClubSarasota.com, or phone (941) 366-1552.
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One of the wonderful things about living in the metropolitan area in the 20th century has always been the access to the arts, whether visual or performing. People have taken the song “New York, New York” to heart, knowing that if they can make it there, they’ll make it anywhere. Starry-eyed Rhode Islander Daryl Sherman thought she’d give it a try in the early 1970s, jumping into the Manhattan cabaret and jazz scene.

She wasn’t alone, of course. The cabaret scene was loaded with enormously talented artists, and Sherman found herself performing with — and to — the likes of Dorothy Donegan, Hazel Scott, Sylvia Sims, Bobby Hackett, Jay Leonhart and many others.

Taking her parents out one night to the room where she was working — Jilly’s — she was almost turned away due to a private party until the owner, Frank Sinatra’s good friend Jilly Rizzo, invited her to come in and meet the Chairman of the Board himself.

It can be said that Sherman was born into a musical family. Her father Sammy was a talented trombonist who entered the restaurant business with his brother after World War II but continued to perform locally, often with his daughter in tow. His appreciation of swing and big bands was not lost on Daryl, who possesses an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the American popular songbook. Arbors records released the only album under his own name shortly after his death in 2004.

Much of Daryl’s playing in New York was at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where she was something of a 14-year fixture performing at Cole Porter’s Steinway piano, which he left to the venue after his death. She maintains an active touring schedule around the country and the world, particularly with frequent visits to England and Japan. About one of her visits to England, Clive Davis wrote in the London Times: “In Sherman’s imaginary world, Rodgers and Hart are still scribbling furiously, Duke Ellington is on the road again and 52nd street still has plenty of life left in it…A touch of class…irresistible”

Ah, Australia. Massive island continent where they speak a language similar to our native tongue, water exits the drain backwards, yet people still drive on the wrong side of the road. Aussies in jazz tend to be a rare breed outside their native land, much like kangaroos and koalas. Sheer distance alone is what keeps the Wallaby away. That goes double for jazz, where one has to show serious chops to make it to America, more specifically New York City.

The buzz about Adrian Cunningham, a handsome Sydney native, began about ten years ago when he settled in New York, starting first as a busker in Central Park, then, forming a solid career for as a mainstream reedman from down under. He fit nicely into the reed section of Vince Giordano’s Nighthawks and before long he began getting favorable notices from swing fans around the region, eventually leading quartets and septets, the larger group performing more New Orleans-style music as “Professor Cunningham’s Old School.”

The multi-instrumentalist’s recording output has been rather prolific by jazz standards, the latest Arbors albums being Swing It Out from Professor Cunningham’s group, featuring jump band tunes and Dixieland style music, and the earlier Ain’t That Right featuring small group versions of Neil Hefti film scores.

He has recently added more vocals to his act, although not the type somebody would expect from a handsome crooner. For example, “A Pretty Girl, a Cadillac and Some Money” is much more of a Louis Jordan call-and-response jumper than an old-school New Orleans tune.

It’s rare these days when you encounter jazz musicians with an appreciation of melody and harmony, those hallmarks of an earlier era when the term “swing” was commonplace. When it comes to horn players, audiences in the 21st century are more likely to hear performers more influenced by what is called the “post-bop” school. Not that there’s anything wrong with that, but if
you want to experience the luxurious richness of Tin Pan Alley and the American popular song, there’s nothing like listening to it via someone steeped in it.

Warren Vaché is one of those musicians. The odd thing is, he grew up as the swing era was on the wane and Miles Davis and John Coltrane were on the rise. But his bass-playing father was a big swing and trad fan who helped found the New Jersey Jazz Society and played a role in the development of the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp.

In fact, people who attended the earliest stomps and NJJS events can literally say they watched young cornet-playing Warren and his clarinet-playing brother Allan grow up on stage.

Over the years Warren has assembled an impressive discography, performing with string quartets, like-minded saxophone melodists Scott Hamilton and Harry Allen, and musical legends like Benny Goodman and Benny Carter. Although his approach to the horn is rooted in an earlier approach of folks like Bobby Hackett, Clifford Brown and Ruby Braff, Vaché is no slave to the past. He is always listening, intent on building on a foundation of earlier styles rather than living in them.

Indeed, today Warren Vaché is an in-demand performer at jazz festivals and parties around the world. Those who saw him back in the day when he was better known as Warren Sr.’s son must feel very proud that the kid from Rahway got his professional start some 45 years ago here in New Jersey.

GEORGE GEE

Going to hear the George Gee Swing Orchestra is literally like trip back in time: dancers don their best saddle shoes and wide lapel suits to visit a band playing music their grandparents used to enjoy.

As a conductor, the effervescent Gee wears his heart on his sleeve and expects the same from his musicians. Suffice it to say they deliver. And please don’t expect the band to play familiar tunes. Yes, the selections can be warhorses, but the arrangements will be supercharged.

Undoubtedly, it’s a spirited band with spirited musicians who come to play and take no prisoners.

All of this spirit comes from the top, with Gee noting the personalities he picks for sidemen. “How can we play happy music if we’re not a happy bunch of folks to start with?”

“Our enthusiasm onstage is obvious and infectious. Swing music generally is upbeat and cheerful — it was created during a challenging era expressly to uplift audiences. And it continues to uplift us today!”

He recalls the words of his all-time idol and mentor, Count Basie about audiences: “If they are dancing, that’s the highest compliment they can give you. But if they are not dancing, I look for that single cat snapping his fingers, tapping his toes. Then I know we’re OK!”

Expect equal parts foot stomping and foot tapping.
The Chicken Fat Ball: Maplewood’s Musical Winter Feast

“Next to jazz music, there is nothing that lifts the spirit and strengthens the soul more than a good bowl of chili.” — Harry James

There are two traditional music and food events on New Jersey’s annual jazz calendar. In September, Princeton’s JazzFeast pairs a trad and swing jazz festival with offerings from a score of upscale local restaurants. But January’s Chicken Fat Ball in Maplewood is strictly a BYO affair where longtime attendees fill The Woodland’s picnic style tables with an abundance of food and drink, setting up their feasts an hour before the musicians take to the stage.

Take, for example, the table of Jerry Rizer, a pioneering foodie of the Chicken Fat Ball. He and wife Harriet preside over a cornucopia that includes a large platter of Sloppy Joe sandwiches from the famed Nana’s Deli in Livingston, wedges of Swiss cheese, pickles, big tins of Ritz crackers and more. And always a birthday cake — this year a large multi-layer rectangular chocolate one — for tablemate Don Slimowitz whose January 9 birthday always falls within a few of days of the CFB’s traditional first Sunday of the year date. (What do I have to do to wangle an invitation to sit at this table?)

It’s much the same all around the hall, where we spotted potato chips, nachos, salsa, Havarti, cheddar, brie and bleu, Italian breads, prosciutto, salamis, pepperoni pizzas, oranges, grapes red and green, and assorted nuts. All accompanied by, as singer Billy Joel would say, bottles of white and bottles of red. The house supplies free soda and ice. (Having learned my lesson from previous years of wallowing in hungry self-pity I picked up a tuna salad sandwich and a bag of chips at the Town Hall Deli in South Orange on my way to the show.)

Oh yeah, the music. Yes, there is music too — and like the food, plenty of it. Organizers Al Kuehn and Don Greenfield know how to plan a four-star musical menu. This year’s all-star septet had Randy Sandke (trumpet), Randy Reinhart (cornet/trombone), John Allred (trombone) and Adrian Cunningham (tenor/clarinet/flute) in the power-packed frontline and a terrific rhythm section of Conal Fowkes (piano), Nicki Parrott (bass/vocals) and Paul Wells (drums).

The music program is also unique, presenting three sets over three hours with a different musician in the leader’s role for each. So each set has its own vibe, it’s almost like seeing three different groups.

Randy Sandke was leader for the first set and opened with (what else?) “Struttin’ With Some
Barbecue.” “We’re gonna start out with some tunes associated with Louie Armstrong. Some good old good ones like he would say,” Sandke said. “Basin Street Blues” followed, showcasing the leader’s lyrical melody lines and sugar sweet tone.

The next number, “Someday You’ll Be Sorry,” came to Armstrong in a dream while he was on the road, Sandke said.

“I got up in my pajamas and got me a piece of paper and pencil out. I say, ‘I’m gonna lose it if I don’t write it down,’” Armstrong told a reporter about the song in 1955. “And she [Louis’ wife Lucille] wakes up and say, ‘Are you all right?’ I said, ‘I’m all right.’ But the next day I had it, and we looked at it... and everybody liked the tune.” This day’s version was highlighted by a smooth trading of trumpet/cornet fours by the two Randys.

The set’s repertoire drifted momentarily to the Earl “Fatha” Hines book for pianist Conal Fowkes’ tour de force turn on “My Monday Date,” and then returned to Satchmo with “New Orleans,” featuring Cunningham’s bluesy tenor horn and a short but sparkling Satchmo-like closing cadenza from the leader.

After a rousing “Muskrat Ramble,” Cunningham took his first vocal of the day on “Mack the Knife” (“the greatest song ever written about a serial killer,” he deadpanned). The set closed with a breakneck run through 1936’s “Swing That Music.”

Reedman Adrian Cunningham was designated leader of the second set and quickly shirked his duties. “I’m going to let each player have a feature,” he declared.

The Aussie had the first turn, taking a vocal on Romberg and Hammerstein’s classic pop tune “When I Grow To Old to Dream.” He then passed the baton to trombonist John Allred who, noting his wife in the audience, rendered a lovely “Girl of My Dreams.”

Randy Sandke chose the Bob Haggart/Johnny Burke 1939 standard “What’s New” for his spotlight. The tune, originally an instrumental titled “I’m Free” written as a showcase for the Bob Crosby Orchestra’s trumpeter Billy Butterfield, was recorded on the day it was written in 1938. It’s a shimmering melody that includes a memorable midsection that dramatically rises up a fourth to repeat the main melody. The tune really needs no embellishment and Sandke played it straight, soulfully wringing out its full measure of melancholic emotion. I’m sure Butterfield and Haggart would have approved.

Before her feature Nicki Parrott engaged in some fast-talking patter with fellow countryman Cunningham in native “Australian” that surely no one in attendance understood a word of. “I’m going to play something in keeping with the weather and it’s dedicated to my dog Humphrey whose birthday is today,” the bassist offered before singing “I’ve Got My ‘Dog’ To Keep Me Warm.”

After Randy Reinhart’s “You Do Something to Me” pianist Fowkes took the day’s only solo performance on Duke Ellington’s “Back Beauty,” a simple symphony in stride and one of the afternoon’s highlights. This followed by perhaps the highlight of the day, Paul Wells’ feature on “Caravan,” a duet with Cunningham on flute with the drummer sticking to his snare, alternating

Chickens Fat Ball co-founders Don Greenfeld and Al Kuehn welcomed the crowd. Kuehn announced that this year’s event was dedicated to drummer Chuck Slate and pianist Derek Smith, both of whom died in 2016, noting that Smith had performed many times at the Ball in years past. He also saluted the New Jersey Jazz Society on its recent 45th anniversary. Kuehn and his wife Dot were founding members of the Society and served on its first Board of Directors.

Conal Fowkes was a replacement for pianist Rosanno Sportiello who has played most of the recent Chicken Fat Balls but was unavailable this year due to a conflict. Conal quickly won over the crowd in a performance highlighted by his splendid playing of pieces by Earl Hines and Duke Ellington.
THE CHICKEN FAT BALL

bare hands, brushes and timpani sticks to highlight the tune’s exotic rhythms — a crowd favorite. All seven players were back on stage for Sophie Tucker’s signature “Some of These Days” to close the set.

With time running short the third set led by Randy Reinhart was kept to four tunes. “In A Mellow Tone” featured a mellow Allred trombone solo, and Nicki Parrott’s vocal on “Skylark” took flight aided by Cunningham’s airy flute fills. “Creole Love Song” featured a sweet Reinhart/Allred trombone duo before the septet closed out with a brisk “Tea For Two.” Calls for “more” went in vain, but you can’t fault the band for heading for the exits after serving up nearly two dozen tunes over the afternoon’s three-hour long program.

People order their tickets for the Chicken Fat Ball months in advance and once you’ve had the experience you’ll know why. The first Sunday in 2019 will be here before you know it, check next November’s issue of Jersey Jazz for details and start planning your menu. The Town Hall Deli in South Orange, where they claim to have invented the Sloppy Joe sandwich, is open Sundays and just five minutes away from the Ball’s Maplewood venue. But order ahead, the sandwich, which will feed four, is a complex construction that takes a good twenty minutes to assemble.

Special thanks to The Syncopated Times’ Bill Holland for help with song titles and leader comments. Fine musicians though they all may be, the stage announcements were universally mangled throughout the show. Maybe the musicians got hungry looking out at all that food in the audience and couldn’t help eating the mic.

— Tony Mottola

— Photos by Lynn Redmile
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These Jazz Masters’ Horns Are Still Heard In Copenhagen

By Fradley Garner

If some horns in this year’s Copenhagen Jazz Festival evoke shades of the past, it may be because they really were the instruments played by jazz masters — musicians on the order of Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Dexter Gordon, Thad Jones and Sahib Shihab. Many top American jazzfolk toured through Copenhagen in the 1950s and ’60s. Some, like the pianist Duke Jordan (1922-2006), settled and lived out their lives here, sparking a lively jazz scene. In passing, some left more than their musical influence — they left their horns. Local musicians claim that the special timbre of the American giants’ instruments can still be heard today.

Tenor saxophonist Carsten Meinert plays the same axe Hawkins used when he recorded his eternal version of “Body And Soul” in the 1930s. “It’s an old Selmer Balanced Action, handmade in Paris in the ’30s,” says Meinert, who has played Hawkins’ tenor since the early ’60s. “Hawk sold the horn at the end of the ’50s, when he was in Denmark as part of a world tour with Benny Carter’s band,” said Meinert, an early Danish Coltrane disciple. “He may have sold it to a member of Kai Julian’s orchestra, who later peddled it to the Marne Sorensen music store. They reconditioned the horn and sold it to me for 800 kroner (today about $129). I’ve had it ever since, and I love it. It has a very special tone, maybe Hawk’s soul landed in there.”

Over the years, tenor saxophonists Stan Getz (who settled for a spell in Denmark), Dexter Gordon and David Liebman made generous offers on the horn, but Meinert refused to part with it. According to Meinert, it’s the sound, not the money, that counts. “I really don’t know if I could play on another horn,” he said.

Tenor saxophonist Webster, who moved to Copenhagen in the late ’60s, lies interred not far from Hans Christian Andersen in Assistens Cemetery in downtown Copenhagen. Still in the capital as well, in the hands of saxophonist Jesper Thilo, is one of Webster’s less-than-favorite alto saxes. Since Thilo’s main instrument is tenor, just like his old friend Webster, he hasn’t played the alto much, either.

Jens Søndergaard, a Danish dentist by day and prominent soloist after hours, plays Sahib Shihab’s old handmade alto. Shihab (born Edmund Gregory, 1925-1989), an alumnus of the Fletcher Henderson and Dizzy Gillespie big bands, married a Danish woman and worked out of Copenhagen in the 1970s and early ’80s. He divided his last years between Copenhagen and New York, and died in Nashville, Tennessee.

“It’s my baby,” Søndergaard said of the alto sax. “All my life I’ve changed saxes the way others change their underwear, but now I play exclusively on this lovely Selmer Mark VI which I bought from Sahib’s widow. Everybody’s crazy about the sound — it’s tight and sparse — and even after many years the horn stays in perfect tune. Sahib would have liked that.”Søndergaard also bought Shihab’s baritone sax, but since he rarely used it, he sold the horn to Michael Hove, who played it in the Danish Radio Big Band and at concerts in Tivoli Gardens.

An American psychologist in Copenhagen, Arthur Buchman, owns the great Serge Chaloff’s baritone saxophone. Buchman brought it to Denmark when he moved here in 1990. “It’s a Buescher baritone from probably the late 1940s or early ’50s,” says Buchman, “as the G-sharp key is not articulated.” He bought it in the early 1970s through Serge’s mother, the prominent piano teacher Margaret Chaloff. My friend Arthur played the horn for several years in the 1990s with the Christiania Hornorkester, a big band based in Copenhagen’s “free town.”

Lars Stiigvad plays traditional jazz on Dexter Gordon’s violet-colored Selmer-VI tenor sax. The color, says the Copenhagen-based tenor player, was a novelty back in Gordon’s day. “When the grandson of the original Selmer in Paris took over the business, he wanted to try something new and daring,” Stiigvad says. “So he came up with a colored saxophone and it made quite a sensation. Later, they tried black and other colors, but Dexter’s was the first, or one of the first, and he got it down at the factory.”

Amateur trumpeter Søren Damving recalls a how he got hold of the Getzen cornet owned by the late Thad Jones. Jones settled in Copenhagen, where he died and was buried in 1986. “Around 1983-’84, Thad sometimes led a big band that I played in,” Damving says. “The Fredensborg Big Band was an amateur group. Like all the players, I had a warm relationship with Thad Jones. The rehearsals and concerts were always attended by his wife, Lis, and their son, Junior. Our son was about Junior’s age — and the two were always around on the floor and playing together at rehearsals. When Thad married Lis, our Fredensborg band played at the wedding. And when Thad was buried in Vestre Cemetery, I was asked to give a talk at the funeral.”

Lis Jones offered Damving the Getzen cornet, which showed clear signs of use. The lacquer was worn and the bell was cracked. “All slides and valves, though, are in perfect shape,” Damving said. “I play it often.”

This is an update of an article, “Giants’ Axes Resurface in Copenhagen,” by the late Jack Lind and Fradley Garner, published in DownBeat in August 1999.
Bring Us Sunshine Jive Aces!

Story and photos by Lynn Redmile

If you’re ever looking for a cure for the doldrums, England’s “The Jive Aces” are it!

A few years ago, I was introduced to them when their award-winning video “Bring Me Sunshine” went viral on YouTube. With their high energy jump jive style, and irrepressible joy and exuberance, one can’t help but smile and feel good, regardless of what’s going on in the world. So I couldn’t miss them when they came to the New York area for a couple of shows in December.

Their performance at Manhattan’s Swing 46 Jazz and Supper Club on December 8 was non-stop fun from beginning to end. Opening with an original “Jive Jive Jive Aces,” followed by “Mack the Knife,” their repertoire featured songs made famous by such greats as Louis Prima, Cab Calloway, Benny Goodman, Bobby Darin, Louis Armstrong, Sammy Davis Jr., and Ella Fitzgerald, along with superb originals you can find on their albums.

In addition (no surprise here) they incorporated holiday favorites. In their three sets, they performed their own renditions of “Winter Wonderland,” “The Lady is a Tramp,” “Too Darn Hot,” “Just a Gigolo,” “La Vie En Rose,” “Singing in the Rain,” and “White Christmas,” to name a few.

The venue was packed, in the bar as well as in the restaurant, and the focus was definitely the Jive Aces’ performance. Many patrons flocked to the dance floor for each number — but those left seated seemed quite happily mesmerized by the spectacle.

Lead vocalist and ukulele/trumpet player Ian Clarkson has a wonderful banter, enthusiastically received by a totally attentive audience, even if some of the British terms had to be “translated”!

I had expected them to be in their hallmark yellow suits, but for the holidays, they chose red and white costumes reminiscent of Santa’s helpers. The sextet has been playing together for almost thirty years, creating their band in London based on a shared passion for jive and swing music, as well as the vintage/retro swing scene.

Frontman Ian has championed the classic 1940s/50s aesthetic for years, providing a solid foundation for the look of the band, and his skilled musicianship and vocal styling (not to mention his sense of humor) is a driving force.

Bassist Ken Smith (also a phenomenal swing dancer and sharp dresser) loves the works of Elvis Presley and Bill Haley, and employs a rare playing method — he’s left-handed but plays a right-handed bass.
But this certainly doesn’t seem to affect his fast slap technique and showmanship.

“Big” John Fordham on reeds may have lost his original New Zealand accent but will never lose the influence of great swing tenor players like Lester Young and Ben Webster, as well as the rock ‘n’ rollers like Sam Butera and Red Prysock.

Drummer and songwriter Peter “Bilky” Howell is strongly influenced by Gene Krupa, as well as Big Sid Catlett, Papa Jo Jones, Chick Webb, Dave Tough, Sonny Greer, Barrett Deems, Ray Bauduc, Earl Palmer, and Panama Francis to name a few – but his biggest influence is the great Louis Armstrong.

Vince “Professor” Hurley received an honors degree at the London College of Music but plays in an energetic style reminiscent of Jerry Lee Lewis, complete with demanding physical feats. Rounding out the sextet is Alex Douglas on trombone, washboard and blues harp. And his comedic tangles with Ian, inspired by the Three Stooges, are a giggle to watch.

A couple of guest artists were also on the bandstand — Hollywood actress/vocalist Makinna Ridgeway added a level of glam to the lineup, and Chris Wilkinson on guitar rounded out the rhythm section. This hard-working band of skilled musicians and merry-makers are in great demand, and perform over 300 shows a year, most recently touring Europe and South Africa before embarking on this, their sixth tour in the USA.

They have just released their brand new album celebrating the origins of their sound, Diggin’ The Roots Vol. 1 - Rockin’ Rhythm & Blues, their 10th studio album, and also released a Hollywood production music video Rock n Roll Movie Star. They’ve received numerous awards for their philanthropic efforts.

If sadly you missed seeing The Jive Aces in December, they will be back in the USA in March — check their website at www.JiveAces.com for their gig schedule.
“VIDEO-STREAMED JAZZ has arrived on television. Thelonious Monk, a pioneering jazz musician, claimed that ‘the piano ain’t got no wrong notes.’ That is the kind of willful attitude that divides lovers of syncopated, improvised music, played in challenging modal keys, and the rest. For those with an ear for it, Qwest TV launched this week. It is a new video-streaming service (inevitably dubbed the ‘Netflix of Jazz’), co-founded and partially curated by Quincy Jones, a producer and musician who began his career in the 1950s as a jazz trumpeter, arranger and conductor. Qwest hosts a collection of concerts, documentaries and interviews; cool cats will be able to binge on everyone from Oumou Sangare to Sonny Rollins. It will not be for all. Many see jazz as a relic; Nicholas Payton, a musician, declared that it died in 1959 (‘when cool stopped being hip’). But thriving scenes remain in cities like New York and London, where some say musicianship has never been higher.”

AND WHAT IS VIDEO-STREAMING? I asked Marc Myers, jazz book author and proprietor of the online daily JazzWax blog. “Anything video related on the web is ‘streaming.’ So, all YouTubes, Netflix, Amazon Prime (video) and all other sites that feature video is a ‘streaming service.’ New TVs today are called ‘smart TVs,’ in that they feature the ability to go online. Which means on your TV, you can watch YouTube, Netflix (and even JazzWax) from the comfort of your bed. So, the item is saying that those video streaming services you see on your computer now can be found on your new ‘smart TV.’” As the Danes say, Mange tak for det! (Many thanks for that.)

“A GREAT CROSS-GENRE American barn dance in a box” is what reviewer Steve Leggett calls How Low Can You Go: Anthology of the String Bass, a three-disk, 79 track box set of vintage string bass sides recorded between 1925 and 1941 and produced, along with a charming little booklet, by the Dust-to-Digital company in Atlanta, Georgia. There are two ways of listening to it, according to Leggett. “It works as a survey of 78-rpm era bass players…including cuts from Bill Johnson, Walter Page, Al Morgan, and many others, but due to its wide-ranging inclusion of jazz, swing, blues, country, jug band, Western swing, and gospel material, it can also work as a wonderfully upbeat set of vintage American roots music…” And please note: You don’t need to play the bass or be a music historian to get into it. That’s because this is no compendium of bass solos. Those are where they’re played in the recorded tunes. Rather, this is a look at how the bass viol was used in a wide variety of settings. Just listen to how the bull fiddle was played in a variety of bands. Among the high points, writes Leggett, are ”Dinah” by Jean Goldkette & His Orchestra, a funky ”Bull Frog Blues” by Charles Pierce & His Orchestra, a blistering “Tex’s Dance” from the Prairie Ramblers, a delightfully loose version of ”Mama Don’t Allow” called “Don’t ‘Low” from Washboard Sam, and two takes by the Midnight Rounders of “Bull Fiddle Rag.” Google “Dust-to-Digital” to order this wonder box — published way back in 2006.

IN SPRING 1958, the U.S. State Department launched an experiment in “cultural diplomacy.” The famous Dave Brubeck Quartet was hired to give 12 performances near Poland. There followed a long tour around the perimeter of the Soviet Union. They went on to thrill audiences in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. “Other tours would allow jazz legends like Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie to trumpet American values in newly decolonized states in Africa and Asia, writes Time magazine, adding: “The idea was always the same: keep communism at bay by whatever means possible.” Brubeck’s first concert, on the border between Poland and East Germany, was described as “rapturous.” The pianist’s son, Darius Brubeck, who was there as a teenager, told Time, “Our whole era of propaganda and demonization just evaporated in seconds.” A new film, Jazz Ambassadors, directed by Hugo Berkeley, is set to premiere on PBS this spring. For the whole article, search online for “How the U.S. Used Jazz as a Cold War Secret Weapon.”
Fox’s News
By Schaen Fox

KEN PEPLOWSKI AT BIRDLAND

Deep into the January deep freeze, we happily braved the weather to hear Ken Peplowski’s quartet of Ehud Asherie (piano), Martin Wind (bass) and Matt Wilson (drums) at Birdland.

It was well worth the effort, because the virtuoso musician is not only a jazz star, but also a complete entertainer. If he decided to do only standup comedy, I’d miss the music, but still get tickets. As long as he is playing either his clarinet or saxophone, or delivering a spontaneous quip, my worldly cares vanish.

In addition to playing classics from the Great American Songbook, he also finds neglected gems, such as “I’ll Follow My Secret Heart,” and plays them so well you marvel that they are neglected at all.

Often his introductions include comments that serve like the appetizer before the main course.

Before playing Bernard Herman’s love theme from Vertigo, he commented on the piece and noted that Mr. Herman reworked that into “Madeleine,” in the hope it would become a standard. He then played both beautifully.

The set actually opened with “An Affair to Remember” which he noted is on his newest CD Enrapture that features these same musicians.

He said it has “…sold well into the tens of copies,” but he hadn’t brought any to the gig because, “My lawyer said I can’t show any extra income.” That brought a big reaction from the crowd that combined a laugh and sympathetic groan.

Mr. Peplowski smiled ruefully, confirming his Facebook post about his pending divorce, and that he had a roomful of fans that follow him on that site.

Later he said he actually did have four copies remaining from those he had been selling on tour. “The record company had pressed five.”

“IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS” closed the set, and many of their fans stayed to speak to the musicians. (Matt Wilson explained that he had just rushed to the gig from the epic chaos at Kennedy Airport.)

Most were drawn to the leader, perhaps to offer both support as well as thanks, as I did. I also left determined to get his Enrapture CD because there are too many worldly cares.

THE HAROLD MABERN QUINTET AT SMOKE JAZZ CLUB

When we saw the Smoke Jazz Club would have Harold Mabern (piano), Eric Alexander (tenor sax), John Webber (bass), and Joe Farnsworth (drums) and special guest George Coleman (tenor sax), we got tickets to see them on January 4.

Then, the weather forecast turned ominous. On the 3rd, I sent an email to InstantSeats; the club’s ticketing service, requesting to change the reservation to that night. They did it quickly, and we avoided traveling in the following day’s “bomb cyclone.”

The great Harold Mabern gigs there several times a year; most notably in their December “John Coltrane Festival” that began as a week-long celebration in 2011, but now lasts three weeks.

Mr. Coleman walked slowly to the stage, and sat on a tall chair the entire time he performed. If that showed his age, his playing belied it.

The stoic Eric Alexander stood next to him, and their similarities bespeak their long ago teacher/student relationship. This was a mix of Jazz Masters, and first-call sidemen. Their music was a gift that banished all thoughts of the disturbing outside world.

The opener was “Strike Up the Band,” done at a fast clip, as was most of the set. The elder master saxophonist took the first solo and Eric Alexander followed.

As he listened, Mr. Coleman smiled, bobbed his head, and then patted Eric’s back approvingly.

“But Beautiful” followed and when it finished, half of the set was over.

Only then did Harold Mabern speak. He noted his lifelong friendship with George Coleman and how he still considers the NEA Jazz Master his teacher.

He also boasted of their hometown’s musical importance, noting that he had studied music in a program started by Jimmy Lunceford, and listed other jazz notables from Memphis.

He remembered a young local Anna Mae Bullock dancing for a dollar per night, who long ago transformed into the exceptionally wealthy Tina Turner.

Then it was back to music. He concluded the set by dedicating the last number, “Feliz Navidad” to the club’s food handlers, a nice seasonal touch.

That and the music fortified us for the frigid air that awaited us outside the club.
At the end of a year, we always think of our losses, and, alas, there is never a shortage. The Big Band In the Sky is reaching Mahlerian proportions. But while we mourn the recently departed, it is also good to see attention paid to some of those long gone and nearly forgotten. Such a one is the German pianist Jutta Hip (1925-2003). Exceptionally gifted, with a last name made for jazz, she came into view shortly after the end of World War II, having at first listened surreptitiously to jazz via “enemy” radio (she had studied piano from age 9). Also highly gifted as an artist (drawing and painting), she studied art in her native Leipzig and also began to play jazz with like-minded contemporaries.

But Leipzig was in the Russian-occupied zone. She was part of a trio patterned on the Benny Goodman model, and the threesome fled across the border to the American zone. The promise of a job fell through and they wound up joining a circus band. On her own, she managed to secure a job entertaining the American soldiers, in what was called a NCO (non-commissioned officers’) Club.

Soon, she joined what was then the leading combo in Germany, a quartet led by terror saxophonist Hans Koller. Their first recordings were issued in the U.S. on the Discovery label (we are still in the 78 era) and were highly praised in DownBeat and Metronome, with Jutta singled out as the biggest surprise.

I had not heard these when I first encountered this quartet in the flesh. I was drafted in early 1951 and after basic training in Georgia my entire outfit (a freestanding field artillery battalion with its own peculiarities that I will not get into here) was sent to Germany as part of what was still called the Army of Occupation.

At that point in time, I had only been in the U.S. four years and was less than delighted to find myself back in Europe, and in Germany at that. But never mind all that — if I ever finish my memoir you can read all about it. In the present context, the point is that encounter. It was outdoors, on a sunny afternoon, at a weekend performance for G.I.’s in the outskirts of Frankfurt, then the jazz center of Germany. With Shorty Roder on bass and Karl Sanner of drums, they were indeed surprising in their command of the jazz language. They swung, Koller was then much under the spell of Stan Getz and was able to make commendable use of that demanding influence.

But Jutta was already an original. (My female readers will, I hope, forgive me if I add that she was also a beauty.) We had a pleasant conversation (German was my first language, but wasn’t needed). She asked if I knew certain musicians, including Lennie Tristano and Monk — an indication of her range, and I said I hoped to see and hear her again.

That indeed came about, after she had become a star of European jazz, then (and alas still) a rarity for a woman. Among those who heard, and liked what they heard, was Leonard Feather, who, perhaps due to his British origins, had by then become a champion of European jazz. He arranged for Jutta to come to the U.S., where she would spend the rest of her life. She had been leading her own combo for some time, and not long after her arrival in late 1956, she opened with her trio (Peter Ind, bass; Ed Thigpen, drums) at the Hickory House, one of the last jazz bastions on 52nd Street. Colleagues like Billy Taylor and Marian McPartland became fans and supporters, and Blue Note’s Alfred Lion signed her to the label.

There were two LPs recorded live at the club. She appeared, with Eddie Jones replacing Ind, at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. Then came a Blue Note date with Zoot Sims, plus Jerry Lloyd on trumpet, Ahmed Abdul-Malik on bass, and Thigpen — the only of her LPs of some longevity, due to Zoot’s presence. That would be her last recording. All the Blue Notes were made in the span of four months in 1956.

When Jutta first came to New York she thought it would be for a two-week engagement. But as it turned out, what seemed a promising start soon became the
abrupt end of Jutta’s musical life. Her reason for withdrawing from the jazz life can be better understood today than then, for aside from understandable feelings of insecurity at suddenly finding herself smack in the middle of the center of the jazz life without time for proper preparation she was, as an attractive woman, subjected to the kind of male behavior now making headlines.

So she withdrew, supporting herself as a seamstress, still painting and following, now purely as a listener, the music she had loved since her teens. She was especially fond of Horace Silver, but not of what was developing as so-called avant garde or whatever. She compared it to abstract art, for which she had no sympathy, finding both essentially boring.

Her own drawings and paintings were anything but, as can be seen in blessed abundance in the 2016 self-described coffee table book plus 6 CDs and a DVD, housed in a box of 12-inch LP dimension but considerably greater heft. The book, of 208 pages, is beautifully produced, loaded with photos, reproductions of contemporary magazine and newspaper pages, and the aforementioned samples of her artwork. Also letters. The biographical text, in German but with much English-language ancillary material, is exemplary as a record of a life. It is issued by BE! Record Productions (that’s an exclamation point after B), entitled Hipp Is Cool: The Life and Art of Jutta Hipp. I regret having no contact information or cost as it was a generous gift from a filmmaker who interviewed me for her Hipp project. [The boxed set is available at Amazon, Discogs and elsewhere at a pricey $165 and up. — Editor]

I would occasionally hear from Jutta, who lived in Queens. Our last talk was about the trombonist Matthew Gee, whom she wanted to contact; I had to tell her he was no longer living. And she presented me with a painting. All this was before something of a miracle occurred. Jutta was friends with Lee Konitz and his wife Gundula, who had become aware Jutta had never received royalties for her Blue Note recordings. They knew a Blue Note administrative assistant who investigated and found that $40,000 that never had been acted on.

The label’s then president, Bruce Lundvall, took immediate action and Jutta got the check, hand delivered by a Blue Note executive and the facilitator. She was clearly happy but did not seem overly excited to her guests, who stayed for two hours of conversation and a look at her art work.

Jutta Hipp died of cancer on July 30, 2005. As she’d wished her ashes were scattered over Long Island Sound.

Postscript: A few years later, a student in the Rutgers Jazz History and Research Masters Program chose Jutta for her thesis. Katja von Schuttenbach, German-born, did intense and productive research, found family members, and amassed enough material for a book, hopefully to be published. She has long been the main jazz person at the National Endowment for the Arts, a prime mover in the NEA Jazz Masters program.
Hearing the lyrics of “Fascinating Rhythm” without its music is a little like describing the beach without hearing the hypnotic sound of the rhythm of the sea. But with such an enduring classic, there is probably not a soul reading this who can’t easily conjure up its melody.

Together the Gershwin brothers, composer George and lyricist Ira, published over 700 songs. The music for show Lady Be Good, in which “Fascinating Rhythm” was introduced, was their first Broadway collaboration. Brother and sister team, Fred and Adele Astaire, danced and sang their way through the 1924 production. George had given it the working title of “Syncopated City,” showing that the tune was inspired by New York, although it was actually begun in London. Ira wrestled with the lyrics, calling the music’s polyrhythms “tricky” but fascinating, and thereby giving the tune its permanent name.

His lyrics of someone obsessed by a rhythm and who feared it might drive him crazy had nothing to do with the actual play, except that it might also drive the Astaires crazy dancing to its challenging meter.

“Fascinating Rhythm” has been covered by musicians as diverse as Tony Bennett (under the pseudonym of Joe Bari), Stéphane Grappelli, Judy Garland and Motown’s Four Tops. Perhaps the most recent is the most unique. Young Englishman Jacob Collier performs all of the 14 voices and instruments heard on his arrangement. Check it out on YouTube.

THE GERSHWINS

Products of Russian Jewish immigrants and New York’s Lower East Side, the Gershwin brothers, pianist George and older sibling and lyricist Ira, wrote some of the most enduring American music ever. George Gershwin’s first major work was “Rhapsody in Blue,” written when he was merely 26. Ira named the piece after a painting by Whistler. That same year Ira became his brother’s lyricist, creating a perfect storm of a songwriting duo. Ira’s lyrics were fresh, witty and full of energy.

Although “flivver” — an old, cheap car of dubious transportation qualities — has long passed from mainstream English, many of Ira’s phrases have a life all their own, like “Nice work if you can get it,” and “It ain’t necessarily so.” “I Got Rhythm,” published in 1930, has spawned at least 44 new tunes based on its chord progression, called contrafacts, including Dizzy Gillespie’s “Salt Peanuts,” and Thelonius Monk’s “52nd Street Theme.”

Even a short biography of the pair would not be complete with mentioning their 1935 folk opera, Porgy and Bess. After George’s early death in 1937 at the age of 39, Ira went on to establish the Gershwin Collection for the Library of Congress and write with Kurt Weill, Jerome Kern and Harold Arlen.

FASCINATING RHYTHM

George Gershwin, music/Ira Gershwin, lyrics

Got a little rhythm, a rhythm, a rhythm That pit-a-pats through my brain. So darn persistent, the day isn’t distant When it’ll drive me insane Comes in the morning without any warning And hangs around me all day I’ll have to sneak up to it, someday and speak up to it I hope it listens when I say Fascinating rhythm, you’ve got me on the go Fascinating rhythm, I’m all a-quer Fascinating rhythm, what a mess you’re making, the neighbors want to know Why I’m always shaking, just like a flivver.

Each morning I get up with the sun Start a-hopping, never stopping To find at night no work has been done I know that once it didn’t matter, but now you’re doing wrong When you start to patter, I’m so unhappy Won’t you take a day off, decide to run along Somewhere far away off, and make it snappy Oh, how I long to be the gal I used to be Fascinating rhythm, oh won’t you stop picking on me? I know that once it didn’t matter, but now you’re doing wrong When you start to patter, I’m so unhappy Won’t you take a day off, decide to run along Somewhere far away off, and make it snappy Oh, how I long to be the gal I used to be Fascinating rhythm Fascinating rhythm Won’t you stop picking on me?

Lyricist Ira Gershwin at work with pencil and pipe. Photo courtesy of gershwin.com.
The President Emeritus writes…

Getting Even (Part IV)

By Jack Stine

You wouldn’t say it was either heavily misting or just being characteristically damp that Columbus day evening back in 1942 but you could say it was I, anything but a seasoned traveler, gazing upward through the dimmed lights of Norfolk Harbor, wondering how long it would be before we’d be underway. A couple hours at least, I’d allow, showing my newness at such things.

Half hour later we’d actually slipped all restraints and drifted with the tide to a place reserved for us in the convoy.

Next stop, Oran on North Africa’s north coast.

Our ship was one of those 2,700 emergency wartime crafts the government had caused the nation’s shipyards to rush through to carry fuel, personnel, arms, and other materiel to war. They were called Liberty Ships even before the first one was launched; after the war, they were referred to as “the ship that saved a nation”.

There was not much to argue about there.

Of course the Liberty’s were all alike. Time had not allowed for visual distinction as such, but ours (mine in no time at all) had found our own in her name: Booker T. Washington. The nation had taken the moment’s chance to honor one of its great Negro educators by giving his name to a latter day freedom seekers of his own.

Then, to make the point even more timely the Booker T. was christened by the important black contralto Marian Anderson and captained by the only black master in the entire Merchant Marine Service, Hugh Mulzac…and to cap all climaxes, the purser of the Booker T. Washington was the great grandnephew (white) of Harriet Beecher Stowe whose novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, was credited with being important in urging the national racial tension into full view. Think more, now, of Armstrong, Ellington, Basie, and Ella, and what we’d be without them.

Now, back to the convoy, and all that jazz…

[The President Emeritus had to cut this month’s installment short in order to focus on some necessary physical therapy at his home in Pluckemin. He expects to be back next month to continue the saga of his time on the staff of Gen. “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell in India during WWII, where in addition to his intelligence duties he spun jazz disks for his fellow G.I.’s and British Army comrades on a base radio station. — Editor]
THE FABULOUS DORSEY BROTHERS: Peter Anderson and Will Anderson

With Brianna Thomas (vocals), Bruce Harris (trumpet), Wyckiffe Gordon (trombone/vocals), Jeb Patton (piano), Clovis Nicholas (bass) and Aaron Kimmel (drums)

The Appel Room, Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC | Dec. 1-2

For the last several years, reedmen Peter and Will Anderson have presented a series of theme programs that have mostly concentrated on the music of a given songwriter or musician. The Fabulous Dorsey Brothers revisited a subject that they had addressed in an earlier show. There was a vast difference between their former approach, and their recent show at The Appel Room. Their prior show was a multi-media show that delved extensively into the biographical background of their subjects, and most of the music performed consisted of songs that were most familiar to the audience, performed in a style that reflected the original performances, with the brothers sharing the host duties. In this last December the performance included only live music, the selections were far more esoteric, and while the brothers provided some commentary, Clarke Peters served as the host and narrator, using a script penned by Loren Schoenberg.

A feature for Jimmy Dorsey with the original Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, “Oodles of Noodles,” was addressed early in the concert with an arrangement that gave both of the Andersons the opportunity to show off their nimble fingers. Jeb Patton was featured on “I’m Getting Sentimental Over You,” and his creative pianism sparkled brightly. Brianna Thomas is a lady full of personality with a strong, supple voice. These strengths were put to good use on “How Are Things in Glocca Morra,” recorded by Tommy Dorsey in the late 1940s, and “I’ll Be Seeing You,” a tune that was a hit for Frank Sinatra with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra in the early 1940s.

A couple of other songs that were recorded by Tommy Dorsey in the early 1940s were features for Wyckiffe Gordon. “Swanee River (Old Folks at Home)” found Gordon in the spotlight, while he provided accompaniment for Clarke Peters on “It’s All in the Game.” The latter song was strictly an instrumental tune when Dorsey recorded it. It was composed in 1911 by Charles T. Dawes, who later served as Vice President of the United States under Calvin Coolidge.

AMANI HOLIDAY CONCERT AT WATCHUNG ARTS CENTER

On a snowy Dec. 9 evening, the Watchung Arts Center presented its 14th annual holiday concert, featuring Marty Eigen’s new band called “Amani” (Swahili for “peace”), dedicated to “sharing the concept of peace through music, performing for people of all ages, races and religious affiliations.”

The band featured Marty on tenor sax/flute; Fred Fischer, piano; Flip Peters, Stephen Fuller, vocals; guitar; Nick Scheuble, drums and Ben Rubens, bass.

The program opened with a jazz version of the March from Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker Suite,” and then proceeded to a varied selection of popular holiday favorites, including “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town,” “Winter Wonderland,” “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” Mel Torme’s “The Christmas Song,” “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” “Hava Nagila” and “Feliz Navidad.” Singer (and NJJS Board member), Stephen Fuller, a regular with the band, contributed “Merry Christmas Baby” utilizing his smooth baritone, and, in a slight deviation from the holiday theme, guest artist Hollis Donaldson performed “Route 66” and another guest, Michelle Zangara, sang “I Remember You.”

The concert in the Arts Center’s intimate performance space was much enjoyed by a small but most appreciative audience, many of whose members got up and in the holiday spirit danced in a conga line to the strains of “Feliz Navidad” at the close of the program. We look forward to future performances here and elsewhere by this fine group.

— Mike Katz
Sea Island Gullah Meets Jazz

Take the Southern coast, West African rhythms of the Sea Island Gullah music, add a New Orleans-style rhythm, with a taste of jazz and R & B and “the result is irresistible!” says SpoletoUSA. An acclaimed new band called Ranky Tanky is doing just that, and winning fans from Lincoln Center to Norway’s Moldejazz and New York’s Carnegie Hall. The band will perform for one night only at the Centenary Stage Company’s Lackland Performing Arts Center in Hackettstown, Saturday Feb 10 at 8 PM.

Founding musician Clay Ross is an Artist in Residence at Carnegie Hall, and has been a Musical Ambassador for the U.S. State Department for over 13 years. From early training in classical music to a stint in the Charlestown, S.C. jazz scene, and the musical melting pot of his current Brooklyn home, Ross has gathered some of the best talents in his world to form Ranky Tanky. Trumpeter Charlton Singleton is the artistic director of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra, Quiana Parler — one of low-country’s most celebrated vocalists — made it to the final 29 on American Idol in 2003, and toured with Clay Aiken and Kelly Clarkson. Bassist Kevin Hamilton and percussionist Quentin Baxter round out the band as two of the brightest stars of the Charleston jazz scene.

The unique sound of the Gullah music comes from the descendants of enslaved Africans living on the coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Florida. It was the name of the language they spoke on the island, and became the name of their culture and music. The term “Gullah” comes from the Gola tribe in West Africa, where many Sea Island Africans were from. They brought much of their culture with them and it became known here as “Gullah”. It’s regarded as the most authentic African music in the U.S. and is a form of spirituals, which lead to all the music we consider to be “American”—jazz, swing and blues.

Tickets for the Feb. 10 Ranky Tanky show at Centenary Stage are $25 in advance and $30 on the day of the performance. You can purchase online at www.centenarystageco.org, or call the box office at 908-979-0900.

The 2017-2018 season of performing arts at the Centenary Stage is made possible through the generous support of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the NJ State Council on the Arts, the Shubert Foundation, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, the Sandra Kupperman Foundation, and CSC corporate sponsors, including Premier Season Sponsor Heath Village Retirement Community, Silver Sponsors Hackettstown Regional Medical Center, Home Instead Senior Care (Washington), The Holiday Inn in Budd Lake, and Fulton Bank of New Jersey, and Centenary Stage Company members and supporters.
Other Views
By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

As I have mentioned a few times before, there has been a steady interest in older jazz styles, with newly recorded albums featuring these vintage sounds. This month’s column will start with a look at a few of the latest.

THE NEW YORK ALL-STAR BIG BAND, led by James Langton and featuring Dan Levinson on clarinet, has just released a collection titled The Unheard Artie Shaw (HEP – 2104). The impetus for this album was a suggestion that Langton made to the SiriusXM’s 40s Junction satellite radio channel for an Artie Shaw special. His idea was to present a program of charts that were written for the Shaw band, but which Shaw never recorded. The program that resulted included 15 tunes like “How Deep Is The Ocean,” “I’ve Got The World on a String,” “The Moon Looks Down and Laughs,” “Royal Garden Blues” and “In the Mood.” Langton bookended the program with Shaw’s theme song, “Nightmare,” and probably his most famous recording, “Begin The Beguine,” to put the collection into context. One listen, and you will understand why Langton wanted to get this music documented and before the public. The charts, about half by Jerry Gray, are wonderful, and the band just nails them. Levinson shines in the role of Shaw, his clarinet sensitive and soaring as the charts demand. Surely, the often-difficult personality that was Artie Shaw would have approved of this swinging disc. (www.hepjazz.com)

The New York All-Star Big Band will have a CD release gig at The Cutting Room, 44 East 32nd Street, NYC on Sunday, February 11 at 7:00 P.M. Tickets available online at tickets.thecuttingroomnyc.com or call (212) 691-1900.

Pass the Bounce (self-produced) is a 16-song collection of music made for dancing by the Austin, Texas-based BROOKS PRUMO ORCHESTRA. The program includes a mix of selections from the books of bands like Count Basie, Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa, a few originals by Jonathan Doyle and Laura Glaess, and some new arrangements of older songs. No matter the source material, the band swings its forever off! A fine discovery for listeners of this album is vocalist Alice Spencer who sounds like she comes straight from a big band era stage. Her take on “Pass the Bounce” captures the saucy vocal that Anita O’Day offered up on her recording with Gene Krupa. Another track that will catch your ears is a hip chart on “Jumpin’ with Symphony Sid,” the classic Lester Young musical nod to the New York jazz disc jockey. This is a set that is equally fine for listening or dancing. (www.brooksprumoorchestra.com)

Reedman/composer/arranger KEENAN MCKENZIE first came to my attention with the Durham, North Carolina-based Mint Julep Jazz Band where he engages in all three roles mentioned above. His talent for creating new tunes in the style of the vintage jazz that formed the repertoire of the MJJB is an important element in their success. When he decided to record as a leader, he chose 15 of his original tunes, opted to record the album in Los Angeles, brought along vocalist Laura Windley and trombonist, co-leaders of the MJJB, had trumpeter Gordon Au come in from New York City, and used an all LA rhythm section with Jonathan Stout on guitar, Chris Dawson on piano, Seth Ford-Young on bass and Josh Collazo on drums. All of these players are steeped in the music of the 1920s-1940s that is favored by swing dancers. The result, Forged in Rhythm (self-produced) is an out-and-out swingfest! McKenzie has written some superb songs. Laura Windley shows why she is among the top vocalists for this kind of music, and the players sound like they are having as much fun as the listeners. It does not get any better than this! (keenanmckenzie.bandcamp.com)

THE JIVE ACES are a band from England that specializes in hot jazz and rhythm ‘n blues. Diggin’ the Roots – Volume 1: Rockin’ Rhythm & Blues (Golden Age Recordings – 004) features their R&B side. The sextet of Ian Clarkson on lead vocals/trumpet/ukulele, John Fordham on tenor sax, Vince Hurley on piano, Peter Howell on drums, Alex Douglas on trombone/cowbell/blues harmonica and Ken Smith on bass are a good-time, enthusiastic cast of players who give tunes like “Choo Choo Ch’Boogie,” “Alright, OK, You Win,” “Ain’t Nobody Here But Us Chickens” and “Jump, Jive and Wail” rollicking rides that are filled with pure joy. Guest vocalist Cassidy Jackson adds some spirited life to “I Want You to Be My Baby” and “Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean.” This is music for party time — rockin’, fun and full of life. (jiveaces.com)

[See Lynn Redmile’s story about a recent Jive Aces show on page 24.]

In the late 1960s and on into the 1970s, there were many memorable albums released by the German MPS label. Many are now being rereleased, and the following three are the latest to reach the market.

During the 1960s, vocalist MARK MURPHY lived most of the time in Europe, mainly in England. Midnight Mood (MPS – 0212419) was recorded with an octet of outstanding players from the Kenny Clarke-Francy Boland Big Band: Jimmy Deucher on trumpet, Åke Persson on trombone, Derek Humble on alto sax, Ronnie Scott on tenor sax, Sahib Shihab on baritone sax and flute, Francy Boland on piano, Jimmy Woode on bass and Kenny Clarke on drums, an international all-star team. Murphy is a singer who is without a doubt a jazz singer. His interpretive imagination is boundless, his voice is a rich baritone, and his feeling for lyrics is deep and expressive. This 10-song collection gives a taste of the many aspects of his artistry. He always swings, no matter the tempo, he can scat with the best of them, but never does it to excess, he reads a ballad with as much intensity as the song can support, and he even contributes a couple of well-conceived lyrics to Deucher’s “Why and How,” and Boland’s “Hopeless.” The program includes five original tunes contributed by the musicians on the session, and five solid standards, “Jump for Joy,” “Alone Together,” “You Fascinate Me So,” “My Ship” and “I Get Along Without You Very Well.” This is one of Murphy’s lesser-known albums, but deserves the new attention that this reissue will hopefully engender. (www.amazon.com)

Among the artists who recorded for MPS were the OSCAR PETERSON TRIO and THE SINGERS UNLIMITED. Peterson recommended this fabulous vocal group to MPS, and it was a natural fit that they
would eventually record an album together. The album was in Tune (MPS – 0212400), and it is wonderful news that it is once again available. The Singers Unlimited were the brainchild of Gene Puerling who also founded The Hi-Los. He brought together Don Shelton, also an ex-member of The Hi-Los, Len Dressler and Bonnie Herman to form The Singers Unlimited, a jazz vocal combo that expanded their range with the overdubbing techniques available at the MPS studio. Peterson’s nimble pianism was a perfect complement to the unique vocal arrangements by Puerling. They assayed ten songs, “Sesame Street,” “It Never Entered My Mind,” “Children’s Game,” “The Gentle Rain,” “A Child Is Born,” “The Shadow of Your Smile,” “Catherine,” “Once Upon a Summertime” and “Here’s That Rainy Day,” a nicely eclectic program. In Tune is aptly named, and should be in tune for anyone who enjoys subtle artistry. (www.amazon.com)

■ Pianist MONTY ALEXANDER has recorded close to 70 albums during his 50-plus year career. If you chose one album sums up the range of his talent, Here Comes the Sun (MPS – 0212406) would be a suitable selection. Eugene Wright on bass, Duffy Jackson on drums and Montego Joe on conga drum join him for a seven-tune jaunt that indicates the variety of influences in his playing. His Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on his Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on his Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on his Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on his Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on his Jamaican roots give him a natural Caribbean influence, his admiration for Nat “King” Cole’s pianism is always evident, but he is no mere Cole clone, and he has surely paid heed to a range of top jazz pianists on. (www.amazon.com)

■ It is kind of strange to think of a guitarist being classified as enshrined, but I had no idea of what to expect when I popped the disc into my player. Well the album proved to be a delight from start to finish. A group of musicians whom she has dubbed the Love Police are used in various combinations on the album. They include Dave Posmontier on piano, Larry McKenna on tenor sax, Stan Slottar on trumpet and flute, Kevin MacConnell on bass, David “Bopdrummer” Yager on percussion, Alfonso Ponticelli on guitar, Mac Given on clarinet, Rick Shryok on violin, Jaques Pellarin or Steve Rice on accordion, Ken Ulanski on alto sax and Cecilia Zabala on guitar and vocal. On most tracks Carlson plays acoustic guitar as well as singing. The program includes a variety of standards, French chanson and well-crafted Carlson originals. Carlson has a distinct voice that adapts nicely to the jazz style standards and original songs, as well as the French material that she sings in a manner that is at once comfortable and appealing. Her sound is distinct, at times reflective of the influence of Billie Holiday, and with a timbre that occasionally is reminiscent of Wes Whitfield. Love Can Be So Nice is nice indeed! (www.AndreaCarlsonMusic.com)

■ Japan has produced a steady stream of fine jazz pianists. TAKAAI OTOMO is one of the most recent arrivals in this country. Now residing in New York City, Takaa has teamed up with Noriko Ueda, recognizable as the bassist with the various DIVA ensembles, and drummer Jared Schonig to record New Kid in Town (Troy -1689), produced by composer Bernard Hoffer. The program is an interesting mix of five originals, two each by Takaa and Hoffer, and one by Ueda; four jazz tunes, “Django,” “Repulsion,” “In Your Own Sweet Way” and “To You,” a classic from Broadway, “People,” and two movements from Gustav Holst’s orchestral suite The Planets. Takaa is technically talented pianist with a marvelous touch, who has taken his classical training and combined it with an improvisatory grace that is deeply appealing. Having the support of Ueda and Schonig is a definite plus. They have created an album filled with imagination and consistently interesting playing that will bear repeated listening by those who make the wise choice to add it to their collection. (www.albanymusic.com)

■ Recently I was introduced to vocalist ANDREA CARLSON at a social event. She took the occasion to give to me a copy of her recent CD, Love Can Be So Nice (self-produced). She was a pleasant young lady, but I had no idea of what to expect when I

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Book Review

THE GREAT JAZZ AND POP VOCAL ALBUMS

By Will Friedwald | Pantheon Books, New York | 432 pages, 2017, $40.00

Will Friedwald has written extensively about jazz and pop vocalizing and the Great American Songbook, in books, newspaper and magazine articles and liner notes. His writing is incisive, insightful, knowledgeable, opinionated, and sometimes controversial.

When writing a book titled The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums, he is setting himself up for some controversy. By great albums, he is referring to ones that he kept referencing when doing his other writing over the years.

They are ones that he believes have been especially influential for containing definitive versions of particular songs or for influencing the way that subsequent singers absorbed the nuances of some particular vocalist’s style.

He has selected 57 albums to analyze in depth, usually with an individual chapter for each one, but in a few cases he covers a couple of related albums in a single chapter.

For most albums, he devotes six to eight pages to discussing the artist, the context of the album, the reasons he selected the album for inclusion, and a track-by-track analysis of the program performed.

The longest chapter is about The Astaire Story, a four-disc career retrospective by Fred Astaire performed with a small jazz group fronted by Oscar Peterson.

Friedwald has done a lot of research and listening to create the kind of detail that he includes in his analysis of each album. This is not a book that you can or should sit down, read cover-to-cover, and even begin to appreciate and understand all of what he has to say.

To most fully absorb what he has achieved, it is ideal to have a copy of the album under consideration to visit while reading Friedwald’s observations. It is the rare person who will have enough familiarity with these albums to be able to recall the details that Friedwald references, and understand all of the specifics that he mentions.

Of course, this requires a major commitment of time and resources on the part of the reader. I suspect that most readers will do what is suggested selectively, depending on their individual interests. The most likely approach to reading the book is to glance over the list of albums on the contents pages before going any further.

Many of the albums like Frank Sinatra’s Songs for Swingin’ Lovers and In the Wee Small Hours, Chet Baker’s Let’s Get Lost: The Best of Chet Baker Sings, Johnny Hartman’s John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman, Peggy Lee’s Black Coffee and June Christy’s Something Cool would probably be on most people’s lists.

It is likely that all readers will have many questions about why certain albums were selected and others not included, especially as regards why he chose a particular album by a particular artist.

That is to be expected when approaching this type of collection. Among the included albums likely to bring some raised eyebrows are the Doris Day/Robert Goulet recording of Annie Get Your Gun, Barb Jungr’s Every Grain of Sand: Barb Jungr Sings Bob Dylan, Della Reese’s Della Della Cha Cha Cha, Jo Stafford’s Jo Stafford Sings American Folk Songs and Jo Stafford Sings Songs of Scotland, and Tiny Tim’s God Bless Tiny Tim.

Many would likely question the lack of albums by Mark Murphy, Mabel Mercer, Chris Connor, Joe Williams, The Four Freshmen or Jeri Southern.

Among the albums that would have been included in a similar list compiled by this writer, they are David Allyn’s A Sure Thing – David Allyn Sings Jerome Kern, Hugh Shannon’s True Blue Hugh, Willie Nelson’s Stardust, and The Four Freshmen’s Love Lost, while I would have chosen Close As Pages in a Book as the Maxine Sullivan selection.

This is part of what makes Friedwald’s book such a fun read. As you read his reasons for including the albums that made the cut, there are times that you will agree, and others when you will just shake your head.

One thing that you will conclude is that he is an individual who is decisive, and yes, sometimes quirky, in his judgments, but who usually makes a convincing case, although it is difficult to take seriously his chapter on the Tiny Tim album.

If you love the vocalists who were at the forefront of making the Great American Songbook live on and on through their timeless recordings, The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums will give you much pleasure.

It will likely impel you to catch up with the albums included by Will Friedwald that may have escaped your ears in the past. At the very least, it will cause you to relisten to many that you own in a completely new light.
The New Jersey Jazz Society is a non-profit organization with a number of ambitious programs and a finite level of resources. Ticket sales and member dues cover only a fraction of our expenses, making it necessary to find sponsors and partners to help us make ends meet. Your donations in excess of basic member dues are a great way of partnering with us, and very much needed.

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

- **Fan** ($75 – 99): acknowledgement in *Jersey Jazz*
- **Jazzer** ($100 – 249): acknowledgement in *Jersey Jazz*, 1 Pee Wee Stomp ticket plus preferred, reserved seating
- **Sideman** ($250 – 499): acknowledgement in *Jersey Jazz*, 2 Pee Wee Stomp tickets plus preferred, reserved seating
- **Bandleader** ($500+): acknowledgement in *Jersey Jazz*, 4 Pee Wee Stomp tickets plus preferred, reserved seating

Please consider making an extra donation in one of these amounts or an amount of your choosing. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Contact Pete Grice at membership@njjs.org or call 973-713-7496. To make a donation right away, send to NJ Jazz Society, c/o Mike Katz, 382 Springfield Ave. Suite 217, Summit NJ 07901.

### 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

### JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Arnett Cobb  
   (b. Aug. 10, d. 1989)
2. Ike Quebec  
   (b. Aug. 18, d. 1963)
3. Jimmy Rowles  
   (b. Aug., d. 1996)
4. Gerald Wilson  
   (b. Sept. 4, d. 2014)
5. Bobby Troup  
   (b. Oct. 18, d. 1999)
6. Joe Williams  
   (b. Dec. 12, d. 1999)
7. Jimmy Blanton  
   (b. Oct. 5, d. 1942)
8. Norman Granz  
   (b. Aug. 6, d. 2001)
9. Tony Mottola  
   (b. Apr. 18, d. 2004)

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**Changing Of The Guard**

Mike Katz (on right) hands over the ceremonial gavel to new NJJS president Cydney Halpin at the Society’s annual meeting at Shanghai Jazz in Madison on December 11. Mike served as president for the past five years. Although stepping down as president he will continue as an officer in his former post as NJJS treasurer. After Ted Clark, Jay Dougherty, Katz and Mitchell Seidel were elected to new three-year terms as Directors by the members present, the board adjourned to select officers and executive committee members for 2018 (see page 2)
‘Round Jersey

Morris Jazz

The Bickford Theatre

at the Morris Museum, Morristown

Tickets/Information: 973-971-3706

If we must endure the winter weather, let’s endure it with America’s music at the Bickford.

The phrase, “Let’s have a ball” could never be more appropriate than on Saturday, February 10 at 8 pm when Marcia Ball takes the Bickford Theatre stage. The famous singer/pianist knows how to raise roofs and tear down walls with her infectious, intelligent and deeply emotional brand of southern boogie, rollicking jazz, roadhouse blues and heartfelt ballads. Over the course of her three-decade career, Marcia has earned a huge and intensely loyal following all over the world. Her exquisite piano playing and passionate, playful vocals fuse New Orleans and Gulf Coast R&B with Austin’s deep songwriting tradition. Marcia has received numerous Blues Music Awards and five Grammy Nominations for her outstanding keyboard work and vocals. No one throws a better party than Marcia Ball and there is no better way to celebrate Mardi Gras on the weekend before Lent begins!

This is her only area appearance, so don’t miss this great evening of music.

Tickets: $35 in Advance/$40 non-museum members at the door.

Drummer, bandleader, and composer T. S. Monk and his group will pay a centennial tribute to his famous father, Thelonious Monk, on Saturday February 22 at 8 pm. Thelonious Monk is the second most recorded jazz composer (after Duke Ellington) and many of his works have become jazz standards: “‘Round Midnight,” “Blue Monk,” “Straight, No Chaser,” “Rudy, My Dear,” and “Well, You Needn’t” to just name a few. T.S. Monk first studied the drums with the great Max Roach, eventually joining his father’s trio, touring with him until he retired in 1975. T.S. then pursued his own path, touring with his R&B group, Natural Essence, and having two hit records under his own name. In 1992 he formed his jazz sextet and received raves from critics and fans virtually immediately. Such sympatico! Such back-and-forth! Though cities like Harlem and Chicago are often most associate with “The Golden Age of Jazz,” it was Queens, New York that was home to more jazz musicians per square mile than anywhere else in the United States. Clarinetist Lichtman, leader of the fabled Mona’s jam session in New York City, will be bringing an all-star quintet to pay tribute to past denizens of Queens such as Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Bix Beiderbecke and many more!

Guitarist Glenn Crytzer will be paying tribute to the music of Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang on April 11. The teaming of violinist Venuti and guitarist Lang was one of the great partnerships of early jazz, producing dozens of classic records before Lang’s untimely death at the age of 31. For this special concert, Crytzer has organized a star-studded quartet with violinist Andy Stein, pianist Conal Fowkes and bass saxophonist Jay Rattman to make the music of Venuti and Lang come alive again.

Stephanie Trick and Paolo Alderighi are without a doubt two of the greatest exponents of classic jazz piano, specializing in the exciting sounds of ragtime, stride, swing and boogie-woogie. For this special concert on May 16, the husband-and-wife team will join forces to play a series of intricate “four hand” duets on a single piano. “I love to hear Stephanie and Paolo together,” says pianist and NEA Jazz Master Dick Hyman. “They are an inspiration. Such sympatico! Such back-and-forth!

For more information and upcoming events, visit the Morris Jazz website at morrisjazz.org.

UPCOMING MUSIC

Mar. 12 - Annual Big Bix Beiderbecke’s Birthday Bash
Apr. 5 - Jerry Vezza and Grover Kemble
May 3 - Ken Popolowski’s Tribute to Benny Goodman
May 5 - NY City Slickers
May 8 - Dick Hyman

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

Happy New Year and welcome to 2018, dear Jersey Jazz readers. Our MidWeek Jazz series got off to a bang this year with a big band tribute to Benny Goodman’s 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, led by The Midiri Brothers. But after such fireworks, the series is quieting down for a bit and taking off the month of February. Our scheduled March 7 show with the legendary Bucky Pizzarelli had to be canceled as the now-91-year-old legend is understandably slowing down and taking less gigs that require much traveling. We wish him the best and treasure all of our memories of seeing Bucky at Ocean County College over the years.

But we do want to offer some quick previews of the four remaining MidWeek Jazz shows in the 2017-18 season, each of which will be the subject of more in-depth coverage in future issues of Jersey Jazz.

On March 28, 2018, Dennis Lichtman’s Queensboro Five will perform a mixture of standards and originals associated with the jazz musicians who called borough of Queens, New York home through the years (as Lichtman does today). Though cities like Harlem and Chicago are often most associate with “The Golden Age of Jazz,” it was Queens, New York that was home to more jazz musicians per square mile than anywhere else in the United States. Clarinetist Jahiel Lichtman, leader of the fabled Mona’s jam session in New York City, will be bringing an all-star quintet to pay tribute to past denizens of Queens such as Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Bix Beiderbecke and many more!

On April 11, 2018, Glenn Crytzer will be paying tribute to the music of Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang on April 11. The teaming of violinist Venuti and guitarist Lang was one of the great partnerships of early jazz, producing dozens of classic records before Lang’s untimely death at the age of 31. For this special concert, Crytzer has organized a star-studded quartet with violinist Andy Stein, pianist Conal Fowkes and bass saxophonist Jay Rattman to make the music of Venuti and Lang come alive again.

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Individually they are marvelous musicians — we’ve known that, but together they play 4-handed stride as it’s never been done. Brava, bravo!”

The 2017-18 MidWeek Jazz season ends with another scintillating performance by the ever-popular Jazz Lobsters Big Band on June 20, made up of some of the finest musicians in the tri-state area. From the swinging sound of Benny Goodman to the modern arrangements of Quincy Jones, the Jazz Lobsters will demonstrate the timeless appeal of a big band firing on all cylinders.

Tickets can be purchased in advance to any and all of these shows at www.grunincenter.org. Keep watching this space for more details about these shows and about our upcoming 2018-19 season.

— Ricky Riccardi

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

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.

FEBRUARY/MARCH:
Feb 9, 8 PM: Phil Orr & More/Pardi Gras Jazz: with Adam Weitz
Feb 18, 3 PM: Nate Philips/Solo piano jazz
Feb 25, 3 PM: Jump, Jive and Wail
Mar 9, 8 PM: Alexandre Hiele Paris Jazz Combo with Michelle Lordi/ A Tribute to Cole Porter. Michelle Lordi (vocals), Steve Rice (piano), Jim Stagnito (trumpet), David Stier (drums), Alexandre Hiele (bass)
Mar 18, 7:30 PM: Steve Sandberg and Rob Thomas/World Jazz
Mar 24, 3 PM: Danny Tobias/George Rabbai Trumpet Summit!

$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**

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

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**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)**
- **Jazzzer ($100 – $249/family)**
- **Sideman ($250 – $499/family)**
- **Bandleader $500+/family)**
- **Corporate Membership ($100)**

Members at Jazzzer 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

I usually have my car radio set to one of the two jazz radio stations in the New York City area. The music seems ageless, but the disc jockeys seem to be getting younger and younger. I suppose some of them have never heard anyone pronounce the names of many of the jazz artists on the albums from which they choose their programming. That is understandable, but some of their mispronunciations really set my teeth on edge.

Osie Johnson, who was one of the city’s most recorded drummers during the 1960s (he died in 1966) pronounced his name “OH-see.” I heard a young man on WKCR announce him as Ozzie Johnson. And recently a young woman on WBGO said, after a piano trio number, that the leader was George Shearling. If this gets any worse, I may have to ask Phil Schaap, the New York jazz announcer emeritus, to record all the names in the Encyclopedia of Jazz for reference purposes.

At the funeral last November for my old friend Ted Sommer, some of the stories he loved to tell were repeated by several of the speakers to illustrate his wonderful sense of humor. I remembered one that Ted told me back in 1989. It was a play on the old musicians’ joke about the band that went down with the Titanic. That band had been providing two-beat dance music for the passengers, and kept playing as the ship sank. The bassist is said to have whispered to the drummer, “Screw ‘em, let’s go into four!”

Ted’s story was about a trip he made on the old S.S France. The ship had been reconditioned, and set out for a cruise of the Caribbean with Rita Moreno as the star entertainer. She had Ted and Irv Joseph with her as accompanists to augment the band on the ship. The show and a late buffet, Ted and his wife were in their stateroom watching TV. Suddenly the screen went blank, the lights went out, and they could hear that the engines had stopped and the watertight doors were sliding shut.

“What happened?” cried Ted’s wife. “What are we going to do?”

“I’ll show you!” said Ted, and he grabbed the phone, which was still working. He dialed Irv Joseph’s room.


“I don’t know, but screw ‘em, let’s go into four!”

Herb Gardner has sent me many stories over the years about funny things that happened on the New York City music scene. Now that he lives in Massachusetts, I don’t hear from him so often, but every now and then I get another gem from him.

One Thanksgiving morning found Herb at the Hancock NH store, buying a pan. “A little late to be buyin’ a turkey pan, ain’t it?” asked the old Yankee behind him. Herb explained, “I just found out this morning that the kids had used the old one to change the oil in their car.” He pondered this and then said, “Well, it would keep the bird from stickin’…”

That reminded me of a comment from the old Fred Allen radio show. One of the characters on Allen’s Alley was a Yankee named Titus Moody. Fred asked Titus, “What do you think of this new invention, television?” Titus replied, “I don’t hold…with fu’niture… that talks.”

On a break at Jimmy Nottingham’s Sir James Pub, the waitress said that someone was buying the band drinks, and asked what Bill Wurtzel was drinking. Bill said, “No thanks,” One of the other musicians quickly poked him and said, “You’re drinking scotch.”

Wurtzel said that when he was in Eric Emory’s big band, Emory wore a 45 Magnum pistol, and once brought an automatic rifle to rehearsal. Bill encouraged Artie Miller not to play any wrong notes. He also (quietly) renamed the leader Eric Armony.

Around the time that Wurtzel’s daughter Nina was born, there was a famous piano ad which read “Gee Dad, it’s a Wurlitzer.” So, for a birth announcement, Bill penned “Gee Mom & Dad, it’s a Wurtzelher”

And, while listening to his car radio, Wurtzel said he liked the sound of a guitarist playing with an organ group but he couldn’t identify who it was. Then the announcer said it was the Bill Doggett group with Bill Wurtzel on guitar.

John Simon told me that he took up the baritone horn in Junior High School. He said that after a couple of months on the horn his tone suddenly got really lousy. The teacher struggled with him, telling him to put more wind into it. Weeks later, exasperated, the teacher ran a hose through the horn and a ping pong ball came out. John’s guess is that it was the work of some school band prankster. The good part was, because he’d had to blow so hard for awhile, he developed a nice big tone. John says he recommends the “Ping Pong Ball Tone Production Method.”
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
Mr. Peter Ballance, Upper Montclair, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. J. Kent Blair, Jr., New Providence, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Boardman, Mahwah, NJ
William Brown, Rutherford, NJ
Louis Cain, Branchburg, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Peter R. Caldwell, Pine Beach, NJ *
Mr. Sandy Catz, Ambler, PA
Mr. David Colby, Princeton, NJ
Rick Crane, Verona, NJ
Mr. Thomas L. Duncan, Hackensack, NJ
Mr. Joe Esser, Bridgewater, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald and Maryanne Gordon, Troy, NY
Thomas Gubar, Hackensack, NJ
Mr. Robert J. Haines, Roselle, NJ
Howard Holtz, Maplewood, NJ
Mr. Fred J. Howlett, Brick, NJ *
The Jersey City Public Library, Jersey City, NJ

Paul Kahn and Catherine Russell, New York, NY
Robert F. Kirchgessner, Jr., Rockaway, NJ
Mr. David Levy, Delray Beach, FL
Mr. & Mrs. Kent Lindquist, Portage, IN
Mr. Vincent E. Lobosco, Fanwood, NJ
Neil R. Manowitz, Morris Township, NJ
Frances McCann, Somerset, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. John Mintz, Rockaway, NJ
The New York Public Library, New York, NY
Patricia O’Keefe, Sparta, NJ
Ed Salomon and Linda Steiner, South Orange, NJ *
William & Janet Scheerer, Freehold, NJ
Nick Scheuble, Rockaway, NJ
Ira Schilit, Metuchen, NJ
Jeanne Seigle, Morristown, NJ
Mr. George W. Siver, Marlboro, NJ
Mr. Roland E. Smith, Bethlehem, PA

Viola Smith, New Providence, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Dixon Stearns, Hackettstown, NJ
Willie and Sheila Thorpe, Somerset, NJ
John Vayda, Maplewood, NJ *
Ms. Wendy Zoffer, Plainsboro, N

New Members
Anthony Carolei and Marianne Borowik, Pompton Lakes, NJ
Rebecca Chubay, Madison, NJ
Mr. Thomas Clark, Lyndhurst, NJ
Mr. Avi Duvdevani, South Amboy, NJ
Loup-garous Productions, New York, NY
Arthur Mathews, Summit, NJ
Mrs. Anne K. Ndiaye, Newark, NJ
Peter Wenger and Karen Jones, West Orange, NJ
Stephane Wrembel, Maplewood, NJ

Musicians, watch your gigs take off…

FREE for NJJS Members!
(limitations apply)
For information contact music@njjs.org
(please note new address)
Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.
We want to include any locale that offers jazz on a regular, ongoing basis. Also please advise us of any errors you are 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.
973-398-1551
Sat., 7 – 11 pm

DUE MARI
78 Albany St.
973-294-1400
Saturdays, 7 – 11 pm
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz Fridays 6:30 – 9:30 pm

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

STATE THEATRE
15 Livingston Ave.
973-359-1400

GARDEN STATE ALE HOUSE
378 George St.
973-543-2408
New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz & jam session, Tuesdays, 9:30 pm

Newfield
LAKE HOUSE RESTAURANT
611 Taylor Pl.
609-694-5700

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

North Bergen
WATERSIDE RESTAURANT
7800 6 River Rd.
201-861-7767

North Branch
STONEY BROOK GRILL
1285 State Highway 28
908-751-0011

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

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

Pennington
HOPEWELL VALLEY VINYARDS
46 Yard Rd.
609-737-9465

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

Philipsburg
MARIANNA’S
234 Stockton St.
908-777-3300

Princeton
MCCARTER THEATRE
91 University Pl.
609-258-2787

MEDITERRA
29 Hulfish St.
609-258-9220
No cover

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

SALT CREEK GRILLE
1 Rockingham Row.
Forestal Village
609-419-4200

WITHERSPOON GRILL
57 Witherspoon St.
609-924-6011
Tuesday night jazz, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Rahway
UNION COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
1601 Irving St.
732-499-0411

Randolph
THE CORNER BISTRO
747 Route 10
862-252-9147
No cover, half-price drink specials

South River
LA TAVOLA CUCINA
760 Old Bridge Turnpike
South River, NJ 08882
732-642-8400
open jam session Thursday, 7 – 10 pm
No cover, half-price drink specials

South Orange
PAPILLON 25
25 Valley St.
732-651-5999

RICALTON’S VILLAGE TAVERN
19 Valley St.
732-763-1006
Tuesdays

SOMERVILLE
PINNY FILIPINO RESTAURANT
18 Division St.
908-450-9878

Somerville
BLUE MOON
114 South Broadway
732-525-0014
Blues Jam Thursdays

South Orange
PAPILLON 25
25 Valley St.
609-924-6011
Tuesday night jazz, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

West Orange
HIGH LAWN PAVILION
Eagle Rock Reservation
973-731-3463
Fridays

SUZYQUE’S BARBECUE 
& BAR
34 South Valley Rd.
973-736-7899

Westwood
BIBI’Z LOUNGE
284 Center Ave.
201-722-8600

Woodbridge
BARRON ARTS CENTER
582 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

RANKY TANKY – And now for something completely different! Ranky Tanky is an update of the Gullah tradition of the Georgia/Carolina sea islands mixing gospel vocals, jazz trumpet solos and a rockin’ R&B rhythm section. At Centenary Stage in Hackettstown on Feb. 10 at 8 pm. $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Call 908-979-0900 or purchase online at www.centenarystageco.org.

RUSSELL MALONE QUARTET – Chinese New Year Banquet at Shanghai Jazz. The best Asian food in New Jersey with maybe the best jazz guitar player on the planet. And a traditional good fortune lion dance to bring you good fortune in the Year of the Dog! Two seatings/two nights at 6:15 & 8:35 pm on Feb. 16 ($65) and Feb. 17 ($75). All seats by reservation only, call 973-822-2899.

PHYLLIS BLANFORD – With the David Brahan Trio at Mr. J’s Southern Style Cafe, 16 South Center Street, Orange, 8 pm – midnight on Feb. 17, no cover. Jazz for the heart and food for the soul. Think chicken and waffles, grits, biscuits and gravy, fried catfish, mac ‘n’ cheese. Are you hungry yet? Plus free parking and full bar. What more could you ask for.

Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!