Marlene VerPlanck
A Voice Like a Summer Breeze
1933 - 2018
Remembering a beloved singer, pages 8 and 14.

NJJS Dedicates 49th Annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp to Chuck Slate (see page 28)
As March brings with it the advent of Spring and its promise of renewal, I encourage you to get a jump on celebrating the new season by attending NJJS’s 49th Annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. This swinging music and dance party will take place Sunday, March 18 at The Birchwood Manor in Whippany, starting promptly at noon. The following lineup of top jazz musicians will bring this party to life: The Daryl Sherman Sextet, Professor Cunningham and His Old School Septet, the Warren Vaché Quintet and the George Gee Swing Orchestra. This is going to be a party that you’re not going to want to miss!

This year’s Stomp honorees are: 2018 Jazz Musician Joe Licari and 2018 Jazz Advocate Will Friedwald. The Stomp will also serve as a memorial tribute to musician, longstanding NJJS friend and Stomp forefather Chuck Slate, Sr.

Program ads/salutations and event sponsorships are still available. Please contact me ASAP at pres@njjs.org for more information.

This year’s party has all the makings for a “Sold Out” event. Ticket information is available on page 29. Should you be unable to attend, tax deductible donations are always welcome via our website through PayPal, credit card or check. Costumes and dancing shoes are strongly encouraged. See you there!

I’m delighted to announce that the first Jazz Social of the New Year made for a wonderful afternoon of music. Under the programming of newly elected Vice President Carrie Jackson, a jam-packed audience was treated to the vocals of Kate Baker along with jazz legend Norman Simmons on piano and Rick Crane on bass. Kate kept the audience well entertained as the trio shared their interpretations of songbook standards and jazz favorites.

March has NJJS offering two times the musical enjoyment with the Memorial Stomp and the March 11 Jazz Social at Shanghai Jazz, featuring the Andrea Brachfeld Trio with Bill O’Connell on piano and Harvie S on bass. A jazz and Latin jazz flutist, composer and educator, Andrea has worked with many noted musicians, including Paquito D’Rivera, Joe Newman, Tito Puente, Rufus Reid, Winard Harper and Wynton Marsalis. She is the recipient of numerous awards with the Chico O’Farrill Lifetime Achievement Award and the Pionero Award for her contribution to Latin music being among them. Attendees are in for a varied and lively afternoon of incredible music. You will not want to miss this event. Doors open at 3 PM, music begins at 3:30.

As a reminder, one of the amazing benefits to NJJS membership are our Jazz Socials — which are scheduled 10 times per year and have no music charge. Shanghai Jazz requires a $10 food
PEE WEE RUSSELL MEMORIAL STOMP
TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!
Details on page 29

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See page 51 for details!

for updates and details.

March 11
NJJS JAZZ SOCIAL
Andrea Brachfeld Trio
FREE NJJS members, $10 public, $10 minimum
Shanghai Jazz | Madison
2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
www.njjs.org

March 18
PEE WEE RUSSELL MEMORIAL STOMP
Daryl Sherman Sextet, Professor Cunningham and His Old School, Warren Vaché Quintet, George Gee Swing Orchestra
$30 members, $35 non-members advance ($40/$45 door), cash bar and hot and cold buffet
Birchwood Manor | Whippany
Noon – 5:00 PM | www.njjs.org

April 15
NJJS JAZZ SOCIAL
Gene Bertoncini/Roni Ben-Hur Trio
FREE NJJS members, $10 public, $10 minimum
Shanghai Jazz | Madison
2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
www.njjs.org

NJJS Calendar

Funding for the NJJS Jazz Socials program has been made possible in part by Morris Arts through the N.J. State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

or drink minimum.
A listing of performers scheduled through April is available online at www.njjs.org. Be sure to mark your calendar and attend.

For those of you who haven’t yet been to the newly remodeled Shanghai Jazz, you are in for a treat! New owner Tom Donohoe has worked diligently to create a revitalized club atmosphere filled with warmth and sophistication while remaining devoted to bringing world class live jazz to this incredible Madison venue. Along with the décor changes, Tom has expanded the “stage” space and significantly improved the acoustics — all resulting with a greater focus on the music. The relationship between the NJJS and Shanghai Jazz is a longstanding one. We so value this partnership and want to thank Tom for his continued commitment to this organization. Join me in congratulating him on a “job well done” and wishing him and the staff much continued success!

The New York Hot Jazz Camp, for adults 18 and over, returns for its third year to the historic Greenwich House Musical School April 2 - 8. Founded and co-directed by Molly Ryan and Bria Skonberg, NYHJC is a participatory experience with some of New York’s finest trad jazz musicians and recording artists. Faculty includes several NJJS favorites, including: Catherine Russell, vocals; Randy Reinhart, trumpet; Jim Fryer, trombone; and Nicki Parrott, bass. Notable guest lecturers, master classes, jams and nights on the town round out the experience that culminates with participation at the Gotham Jazz Festival. The NJJS strongly supports this effort to help adult musicians hone their chops and perfect their performance skills while helping to preserve and perpetuate the great American artform that is jazz. Spaces are still available for campers. Please see the NYHJC ad in this issue for more details and contact information.

Many of you know that the jazz world has lost one of the most accomplished interpreters of the Great American Songbook with the death of singer Marlene VerPlanck this past January. Others will speak to her greatness and career in the pages that follow, but allow me, along with my fellow board members, to extend our most sincere condolences to her family, all of you who knew her, worked with her and loved her, for the loss of your dear friend and colleague. We share your grief. A Society favorite, Marlene will be sorely missed.

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See page 51 for details!
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 49)

“Themes” like old times

Big bands of the Swing Era opened their radio broadcasts and other appearances with their theme songs. Take a nostalgia trip down memory lane — extra credit if you can hum the melody and recall the lyrics to these bands’ signature tunes:

1. Benny Goodman
2. Glenn Miller
3. Jimmy Dorsey
4. Duke Ellington
5. Harry James
6. Woody Herman
7. Claude Thornhill
8. Glen Gray (Casa Loma)
9. Les Brown
10. Tommy Dorsey
11. Artie Shaw
12. Count Basie
13. Louis Armstrong

Howie also welcomes suggestions for future questions — or comments from readers. Contact him at jazztrivia@njjs.org.
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**fri 3/2:** BOBBY HARDEN
**sat 3/3:** ELIAS BAILEY’S AVALON GROUP
**fri 3/9:** SOLOMON HICKS QUARTET RETURNS! (reservation required)

**tue 3/6,23,20,27 & fri 3/16:** JOHN KORBA
**sat 3/17:** ROB PAPAROZZI (reservation required)
**sun 3/25:** PETRA VAN NUIS & ANDY BROWN WITH DAN BLOCK

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on the town.”
The Editor’s Pick
By Tony Mottola
Jersey Jazz Editor

“IT’S FOR THE MUSIC LOVER”

A Jersey Guitarist Fiddles with Django

Stephane Wrembel: The Django Experiment III (Water Is Life Records - WIL13)

S tephane Wrembel, who honed his guitar skills playing at Gypsy campsites in the French countryside, now lives in suburban New Jersey. Although these days he’s frequently off touring the world playing his unique style of jazz guitar — he’s wildly popular in India. The French-born musician is probably best known to the general public for “Bistro Fada,” the infectious theme song of the 2011 Oscar-winning film, Midnight In Paris, but he’s been actively touring and recording since he graduated from Berklee College of Music in 2002.

His musical background also includes classical piano training and heavy metal doses of Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. “I just play my own music,” Wrembel says. “I like to believe that it is beyond any one genre and that there is something in it for everyone. It’s not only for the rock music lover, or for the music lover.”

He is among the best of the many contemporary Django Reinhardt guitarist disciples and he’s also one of the most adventurous, embracing modal melody lines and Middle Eastern harmonies alongside psychedelic rock guitar licks. Appropriately his recent Gypsy jazz albums are titled The Django Experiment, and the third volume in the series has just been released. The collection ranges from the conventional, Joseph Reinhardt’s gentle “Melodie au Crépuscule,” to the controlled frenzy of “Swing Gitan/Apocalypse.” The combination Gypsy jazz classic/Wrembel original, with its heavy metal shredding, drum breaks and Arabic fligrees, is quite a departure, and a revelation of the guitar’s possibilities. Stephane can also be applauded for reclaiming “Nuages” from its usual wartime melancholy and remaking it here as a light-footed, carefree Parisian jaunt.

Gypsy jazz was a mashup in the first place, with Django weaving Romany folk music and French Musette with the hot American jazz of Louis Armstrong. Stephane Wrembel’s additions only enliven the genre; La Pompe still provides the beat and the music still springs from the soul.

On The Django Experiment III, Wrembel is accompanied by longtime collaborators Thor Jensen (guitar), Ari Folman Cohen (bass), Nick Anderson (drums) as well as a standout special guest, Nick Driscoll, on saxophone and clarinet. In addition to three songs composed by Django Reinhardt, the nine tracks include compositions by Joseph Reinhardt, Titi Winterstein, Georges Ulmer, Tony Murena and two traditional songs.

The collection ranges from the original, with its heavy metal shredding, drum breaks and Arabic fligrees, to the controlled frenzy of “Swing Gitan/Apocalypse.” The combination Gypsy jazz classic/Wrembel original, with its heavy metal shredding, drum breaks and Arabic fligrees, is quite a departure, and a revelation of the guitar’s possibilities. Stephane can also be applauded for reclaiming “Nuages” from its usual wartime melancholy and remaking it here as a light-footed, carefree Parisian jaunt.

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Comments?

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Quarter page: $50; Half page $75; Full page $110. Biz card size $25. $10 discount on repeat full-page ads. To place an ad, send payment at www.PayPal.com using code: payment@njjs.org, or mail check payable to NJJS to NJ Jazz Society, c/o Michael A. Katz, 382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217, Summit, NJ 07901; please indicate size and issue. Contact art@njjs.org or 201-306-2769 for tech information and to submit ads.

NJJS Deadlines
Submit press releases and event notices five weeks prior to issue date. Advertising space reservations are due five weeks prior to issue date. Final advertising art is due four weeks prior to issue date. EARLY SUBMISSIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

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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NEWPORT JAZZ
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WBGO Travel welcomes you to join us on a day trip to one of the best festivals of the world: The 64th Newport Jazz Festival in Newport, Rhode Island! Choose a fun filled day of your choice! The festival takes place Friday August 3rd, Saturday August 4th and Sunday August 5th. Buses depart from locations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Newark, NJ & Boston and bring you right to the door step of the hippest, jazziest music filled event of the year!

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Big Band in the Sky

Marlene VerPlanck, 84, vocalist, November 11, 1933, Newark, NJ – January 14, 2018, New York. “You may know her as the voice behind the classic Campbell’s Soup jingle… you know, ‘Mm-m-m Good…” But she was also a spectacular jazz singer of immense musicality and an incredibly supportive fan of the music and the musicians who played it. We will miss her.” That comment on Facebook by violinist Aaron Weinstein, echoed the sentiments of musicians and fans throughout the Tri-State area when they heard the news of VerPlanck’s death.

Her passing was a surprise because she kept her pancreatic cancer diagnosis secret and performed, amazingly, up until the end. Her last performances were on December 12 and 13 at the Greenwich Village jazz club, Mezzrow. She also appeared at the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan on December 10, at NJPAC in Newark on December 3, and at the New Jersey Jazz Society’s 45th anniversary concert at Drew University in Madison on October 22. These last gigs, according to Mark Myers, writing on the jazzwax.com blog, “resulted in complete exhaustion,” but, “she would sing as many songs as she could in perfect form, never once letting on that she was gravely ill. Her sparkling eyes never betrayed her fear or the illness that had taken hold of her. She always delivered a good time at clubs and wasn’t going to let her illness get in her way.”

VerPlanck told Jersey Jazz’s Schen Fox (March, 2008) that she realized she wanted to sing when she was 19 years old. Her first gig was at a place called The Well in Caldwell, NJ. “I worked every Saturday,” she said, “and, since I learned the whole fake book, I sang different songs every weekend. That drove the band nuts. I sent a little article from the local paper to some bandleaders, and I got a couple of calls.” (A fake book is a collection of melody and chord lead sheets intended to help performers quickly learn new songs).

The first call was from Tex Beneke. Later, VerPlanck said, “one of the guys recommended me to Charlie Spivak. That’s where I met Billy [future husband Billy VerPlanck]. Then, Billy got a call that Tommy Dorsey needed a trombone player and a singer. We both went with Tommy, and six months later, we were married.” As the demand for jazz vocalists declined in the early ’60s, VerPlanck began singing jingles for radio and TV commercials. “I would take the bus into New York, visiting agents or managers,” she told Fox. “One day, I struck up a conversation with a man in the Brill Building. He had a jingle company and asked me to audition, so I did — five jingles an hour for $10. I made a small presentation tape and sent it around. I got a call from the producer of Campbell Soup, and that really started my studio career. My commercials must number in the thousands. I did Campbell Soup for 12 years, Michelob Beer for seven, and all the rest in between.”

The most famous, of course, was, “Mm-m-m Good, Mm-m-m Good. That’s what Campbell’s Soups are…mm-m-m good.” But there were also, “Weekends were made for Michelob,” “Winston tastes good like a cigarette should,” and “Nationwide is on your side.” Speaking about the Michelob commercials, she once told The New York Times that, “When we had finished, they asked me to put a ‘Yeah!’ on the end. I did it. And, on all the Michelob spots since then, with Billy Eckstine, Vic Damone, Brook Benton, they edit my ‘Yeah!’ on at the end. I’ve never gone back to do the ‘Yeah!’ again. But I collect every time it’s used.”

VerPlanck believed commercial recording enabled her to refine her phraseology. “In the jingles business,” she told the Chicago Tribune in 1989, “you deal in words, messages. If you can’t understand the words, what’s the point in doing the commercial?” “On jingles,” wrote Myers, “her voice had an unmistakable optimism and came across either as the consumer’s young mom or a female best friend.”

Before building a solo career in the late ’70s, VerPlanck often sang backup for other vocalists including Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra and Mel Torme. Her specialty has always been the American Songbook with such albums as Marlene VerPlanck Sings Alec Wilder (1992: Audiophile Records) and Marlene VerPlanck Loves Johnny Mercer (1997: Audiophile Records). She recorded more than 20 albums. Her last recording, The Mood I’m In (Audiophile) was named one of the best releases of 2016 by DownBeat. In the magazine’s April 2016 issue, reviewer J. Poet wrote that VerPlanck “continues to showcase her impeccable phrasing, sinuous melodic sense and flawless diction. She’s a quiet vocalist, but she conveys an encyclopedia of emotion with every word…VerPlanck’s voice is like a summer breeze, warmly caressing the simple, poetic lyric, especially when delivering the

continued on page 10
March 2018

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APR 
11

MAY 
16
BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 8

pensive vocal that enhances Duke Ellington’s ‘It Shouldn’t Happen To A Dream’… At 82, she still has most of her range, lending these timeless standards a heartwarming grace.”

Tributes to her singing and the warmth of her personality came flowing in after her death — from within and outside the music industry. Radio producer Ray Hoffman, host of CEO Radio on WCBS Newsradio 880 in New York, was a friend of VerPlanck’s for 40 years. On Facebook, he called her “an extraordinary singer with devoted fans worldwide,” pointing to the 1980 quote on her website from John S. Wilson of The New York Times, which said: “She may be the most accomplished interpreter of popular material performing today.”

Vocalist Holli Ross, also on Facebook, spoke of VerPlanck’s “amazing spirit and love of song. She was someone I always thought of as the Energizer bunny — always going. She sang from the heart and was so dear. She will be truly missed.”

Tenor saxophonist Harry Allen told Jersey Jazz that VerPlanck, “was a beautiful person and a singer of endless talent. She could sing absolutely anything.” Trumpeter Claudio Roditi was “honored that I played and recorded with her, an incredible artist and a wonderful human being.” And vibraphonist Warren Chiasson simply said: “What a joy it was working with her. She was such a professional in every way.” DIVA Jazz Orchestra music director/drummer Sherrie Maricle recalled working with VerPlanck “in bands big and small. I could feel the enthusiasm, spirit and energy radiating from her…She generously shared her joy of music with the world, and she will be forever missed and remembered with a lot of smiles.”

Her husband Billy died in 2009. She is survived by her sister, Barbara Marshall of Parsippany, NJ; brother Phil Pampinella of Clifton; nieces Janus Strazza and Kristin Depee; nephews Paul Pampinella and Steven Strazza.

**Hugh Masekela, 78, trumpeter/vocalist, April 4, 1939, Witbank, South Africa — January 23, 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa.** At age 11, Masekela decided he wanted to play the trumpet after seeing Kirk Douglas portray a character based on Bix Beiderbecke in the movie, *Young Man With A Horn,* adapted from a novel of the same name by Dorothy Baker.

When his boarding school youth orchestra, Huddleston Jazz Band, visited the United States, he met Louis Armstrong, who sent a trumpet to the band, and it became Masekela’s. As a young man, he also got to meet Dizzy Gillespie. When British broadcaster and journalist Jon Snow asked him if it was “overwhelming” to meet Masekela’s, as one of his heroes, Masekela replied, “People would say, ‘Ah Dizzy, you’ve got your little brother with you!’ But I was never overwhelmed. I brought my own ‘whelm.’”

In 1956, Masekela began playing in dance bands around Johannesburg and other South African cities. Then, he and pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (then known as Dollar Brand) formed a sextet known as the Jazz Epistles. According to The New York Times’ Giovanni Russonello (January 23, 2018), it was “South Africa's first bebop band of note. With a heavy, driving pulse and warm, arcing melodies, their music was distinctly South African, even as its swing rhythms and flittering improvisations reflected affinities with American jazz.”

In his 2004 autobiography, *Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela,* written with D. Michael Cheers (Crown Archetype), Masekela said, “There had never been a group like the Epistles in South Africa. Our tireless energy, complex arrangements, tight ensemble play, languid slow ballads, and heart-melting, hymn-like dirges won us a following, and soon we were breaking all attendance records in Cape Town.” The book title refers to Masekela’s biggest hit, “Grazing in the Grass,” composed by Philemon Hou and recorded by Masekela in 1968. Russonello described it as, “a peppy instrumental…with a twirling trumpet hook and a jangly cowbell rhythm.”

Masekela and Ibrahim left South Africa in 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre in which Afrikaner police, using submachine-guns, killed 69 unarmed black South African demonstrators and wounded 180 in the black township of Sharpeville. Masekela initially went to London but moved to New York when Harry Belafonte and Miriam Makeba helped him obtain a scholarship to the Manhattan School of Music. He studied classical trumpet there for four years. His first album, *Trumpet Africaine,* was recorded on the Mercury label in 1962, followed in 1964 by another Mercury album, *Grrr.* He also wrote instrumental arrangements for Makeba whom he married in 1964. The marriage only lasted two years, but they continued to work together.


When Paul Simon released *Graceland,* his Warner Bros. album of mostly South African music, featuring South African musicians, in 1986, Masekela suggested they tour together in a show with black South African musicians including Makeba. At the time, he told The Guardian’s Robin Denselow he was pleased the Graceland tour was giving South African musicians global exposure. “South African music,” he said, “has been in limbo because of apartheid. Exile and the laws have parted us and caused a lack of growth. If we’d been free and together all these years, who knows what we could have done?” After Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, Masekela returned to South Africa. In 2010, he was awarded South Africa’s highest medal of honor, the Order of Ikhamanga. Since 2014, an annual Hugh Masekela Heritage Festival has been held in Soweto. Last year, Masekela revealed that he has been fighting prostate cancer since 2008.

Upon hearing of his death, Nathi Mthethwa, South Africa’s minister for arts and culture, said: “A baobob tree has fallen. The nation has lost a one-of-a-kind musician. We can safely say ‘Bra Hugh’ was one of the great architects of Afro-Jazz, and he uplifted the soul of our nation through his timeless
continued on page 12
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Alexis Morrast
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Tickets: $20
At the tender age of 16, New Jersey native Alexis Morrast has taken the Jazz world by storm. She won an appearance on the syndicated Showtime at the Apollo, and is poised to make the leap to Jazz phenomenon.

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March 2018 JerseyJazz
music.” South African president Jacob Zuma added that Masekela “kept the torch of freedom alive globally, fighting apartheid through his music and mobilizing international support for the struggle for liberation…raising awareness of the evils of apartheid.” Survivors include a son, Sal Masekela; a daughter, Pula Twala; and his sisters, Elaine and Barbara Masekela.


Peress also pointed out that Dvorak taught Will Marion Cook and Rubin Goldmark, both of whom became teachers of Ellington, Aaron Copland, and George Gershwin. “All the stories in my book,” he said, “are about the transfer of the center of creative power from Europe to America, Dvorak being the prophet and Ellington its fulfillment.”

Ellington and Peress met in 1965 during a cultural festival at the White House where Peress was conducting a performance of the Joffrey Ballet. In Dvorak to Duke Ellington, he recalled that, “Polite applause covered our exit. And then Ellington came on with his band and brought what had been a rather stiff audience alive. I was fired up, wondering how a symphony conductor like myself could take part in this important music, music that reached out and embraced everyone.”

After the concert, Peress approached Ellington about arranging his extended work, “Black, Brown and Beige,” for a symphony orchestra. That was the beginning of several collaborations between the two. In July 1989, Peress recreated Ellington’s 1943 Carnegie Hall debut, and, in February 2014, celebrated its 90th anniversary at Town Hall.

Saxophonist Loren Schoenberg, director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, described Peress, in a Facebook post, as “a great champion of Ellington’s. His research led to many concerts and a wonderful book shedding new light on Duke’s connections to Dvorak.”

As a teenager, Peress played trumpet in a Catskills dance band before enrolling in NYU as a music major. Drafted into the Army during the Korean War, he was assigned to a regimental band that had historically consisted of black musicians but was becoming integrated after President Harry Truman desegregated the military. According to *The New York Times* (January 4, 2018), “Mr. Peress’s children said they thought his love of jazz and interest in African-American influences in music really took hold when he was surrounded by black musicians in the Army.”

Peress also studied at the Mannes School of Music, and, in 1961, received a one-year appointment as one of Leonard Bernstein’s assistant directors. He was selected, along with Seiji Ozawa, and they jointly conducted Charles Ives’s “Central Park in the Dark,” following Bernstein’s specifications. Peress became a protégé and, in September 1971, conducted the premiere of Bernstein’s “Mass” at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. For 12 years, Peress conducted the Corpus Christi and Austin, TX, symphony orchestras. Then, in 1974, he conducted the Kansas City Philharmonic for six years. For the last 33 years of his life, he conducted the student orchestra at the Queens College Aaron Copland School of Music.

Survivors include his son, Paul Peress, a drummer and composer; two daughters, Lorca Peress, a theater director; and Anika Paris, a singer; a brother, Herbert; two stepdaughters, Jennifer Waldron and Wendy Waldron; a granddaughter, and four step-grandchildren. His first marriage, to Gloria Vando, ended in divorce in 1980; his second wife, Ellen Waldron, died in 2010.

**William Hughes, 87, trombonist/ bandleader, March 28, 1930, Dallas – January 14, 2018, Staten Island, NY.** When Count Basie called Hughes in 1953 he thought it was a prank. “I first thought he was a practical joker,” he told Victor L. Schermer 2005. “He called back two hours later and said, ‘I want to give you some information about rehearsals.’ I said, ‘Are you really Count Basie?’ He said, ‘Yeah! The guys recommended you for an opening I have on trombone. I’d like you to come up and rehearse with the band and let me hear what you got.’”

Hughes, who started playing trombone in junior high school, was in his third year as a pharmacy major at Howard University when one of his friends, tenor saxophonist Frank Wess, recommended him to fill an empty trombone seat in the Count Basie Orchestra. After rehearsing with the band, Hughes was hired and spent the next four years as a member of the CBO, leaving in 1957 but then returning in 1963 and staying for 47 more years. In 2003 when trombonist Grover Mitchell, who was fronting the band, died, Hughes took over as the leader until retiring in 2010. (Basie died in 1984).

One of Hughes’ most memorable moments with the band was playing and recording with Frank Sinatra at The Sands in Las Vegas. For *Basie and Sinatra at the Sands* (Reprise: 1986), “We would tape every show, straight ahead, no revisions,” Hughes told Schermer. “And it came out to be a pretty good album. Sinatra always seemed to be very relaxed with the band. He loved Basie. There would be a lot of humor between him and Basie.” He also recalled to Schermer some special touring “Birdland” shows put together by an executive from the famous jazz club.

They reunited the Basie band with former Basie tenor saxophonist Lester “Pres” Young as well as featuring vocalist Sarah Vaughan, vibraphonist Terry Gibbs, and trumpeter Roy Eldridge, among others. “My greatest thrill,” Hughes said, “was being able to talk to the ‘Pres’.”

Hughes is survived by his wife of 65 years, Dolores; his daughter, Gwendolyn Hughes; his son, Steven Hughes; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Another son, David, died in 2014.
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January 16, 2018. Losing a friend is always a painful experience. It was particularly painful yesterday when I learned that Marlene VerPlanck had left us the previous evening. I knew she was seriously ill, but had seen her only a week earlier, and she seemed determined to beat whatever it was that she was fighting. I say that because she was not forthcoming about her health issue, even to close friends. Right to the end, Marlene remained a strong and brave lady, determined to deal with the challenge on her own terms.

My first awareness of Marlene’s artistry was on American Popular Song, a radio show hosted by Alec Wilder. The series first aired in 1976. It was a show that introduced me not only to Marlene, but also to Barbara Lea and other marvelous singers. Marlene was the guest on one of the first shows. I was immediately struck by her singing, especially the way she articulated the lyrics. It was a part of her artistry that once led me to write that she was “a lyricist’s best friend.” A year or two later Marlene appeared at Michael’s Pub in New York City as part of a series highlighting many of the performers who appeared on the radio series. She was even more exciting in person than she had been on the radio.

Not long afterward I read about a new Marlene VerPlanck album. I went to a favorite record store, Crazy Rhythms in Montclair, to order it. The owner said that he had an earlier album by her in the closeout-stock he had bought from Savoy Records. It was a 1955 album credited to simply “Marlene,” no last name, titled I Think of You With Every Breath I Take. I bought a copy. I was going to see her at Gulliver’s in West Paterson that evening, so I took the album along. We had not previously met, and she was most gracious. I showed her the album. She asked me where I had bought it and what I had paid for it. I said Crazy Rhythms charged $5. Amazed, she informed me that it was a collector’s item that was selling for $75. When I told her that they had about a half-dozen more copies, she said that she would go there to buy them. She was proud of that album, and wanted copies to share with friends.

As the years went by, we went to see Marlene at every opportunity. We became two of her most loyal fans. Soon a personal friendship developed between the Langs and the VerPlancks. We were enthralled with her special talent, but equally enjoyed her warm and welcoming friendship. One of the most endearing things about seeing Marlene was watching Billy watching her perform. They were a deeply devoted couple, and Billy truly believed her to be the most talented person in the world. He would gaze at her in complete adoration, and softly utter words like, “Wow, she’s marvelous” or “I don’t believe how wonderful she is.” It was sincere and touching Marlene was equally devoted to Billy. He arranged all of her charts, and often provided her with original tunes with lyrics penned by friends and associates. Billy had a gift for melody, and Marlene brought out the best in each his tunes.

I have fond memories of the times that we spent together on strictly social terms. In particular I remember attending their annual New Year’s Eve parties. Another VerPlanck enthusiast, Ray Hoffman, and I used to spend much of these evenings hanging with Billy as he tended the bar, listening to his engaging band stories. Billy and Marlene had met on the Charlie Spivak band when she was just starting out in the business. They moved to Tommy Dorsey’s Orchestra, and soon got married. As the evening wore on, and Billy had served himself a few drinks, the stories became better and funnier. I wish his stories had been written down and preserved.
Marlene was completely devoted to the music that she loved. Early in their marriage, Billy encouraged her to learn about the technical side of music, so that she would be prepared to handle any kind of musical challenge that came along. This was especially important in the world of commercial jingles of which she became involved. She had to be able to read down a chart, and execute it precisely within very tight time frames. She had the voice capable of singing just about anything, but it was her technical acumen that set her at a special level. Such was her commitment and talent that she became one of the most in-demand jingle singers in the business. Long before I was aware of her name, I was hearing her sing things like “Mmm, mmm good, that’s what Campbell’s Soups are,” “Winston tastes good, like a cigarette should,” and “I love New York.”

When this specialized segment of the business began to decline, Marlene turned more and more to singing what she loved most, the Great American Songbook. Her catalog of over 20 albums for Audiophile could form the basis for a course on the Great American Songbook. Her albums devoted to Johnny Mercer and Alec Wilder remain among my favorites.

In 1997, I was privileged to present a program of songs by Alec Wilder at the New York Sheet Music Society, in celebration of his 90th birthday year. My choice of singers to perform the material was easy: Marlene VerPlanck and Barbara Lea. They were both eager to participate, and with the support of Tony Monte at the piano, these two ladies, the most accomplished interpreters of the Wilder catalog, performed an enchanting and memorable program. Long afterward, Marlene remembered that afternoon as one of her special memories.

I have reviewed many albums and performances by Marlene during my years of writing for Jersey Jazz. It became an increasing challenge to write something fresh and different about her as I was running out of superlatives. It was, however, a pleasure to hear her performing new material. She never felt satisfied to rely solely on the wonderful catalog of songs that she knew, rather was always seeking out new songs, and invariably came up with gems that made you shake your head at her magnificent taste.

Another impressive aspect of Marlene’s character was her toughness. Johnny Mercer’s centennial was celebrated in 2009. Marlene was invited to participate in a concert devoted to Mercer in his hometown of Savannah. While at Newark airport to take the flight to Savannah, Marlene tripped and broke her ankle. Airport personnel brought her a wheelchair. She boarded the plane, performed at the concert, and then had her injury addressed. For the next few months she worked from a wheelchair.

That year she also lost her beloved Billy. Many of her friends were concerned about how she would respond to being on her own after over 50 years having Billy at her side. She proved to be resilient, busier than ever. She aggressively sought bookings, and expanded the range of venues where she performed.

Each year for many years, Marlene spent the month of March touring in Great Britain and Europe. A few years ago, she had a fall at the end of January that resulted in several broken bones, including her pelvis. She was determined to rehabilitate herself in time to make her scheduled trip overseas, a month away. When the departure date arrived, she boarded the plane for England. During the following month she performed over 20 concerts across England.

She faced her final illness with the same determination, but this time she could not overcome the relentless challenge she faced. Her family and friends prayed she would win again, but pancreatic cancer is an unforgiving foe.

Marlene VerPlanck will be much missed by everyone whose life she touched. There will be a massive void for each of us, but we will always have her music to remind us what a great lady Marlene VerPlanck was, right to the end. RIP dear Marlene!

I MISS HER ALREADY
By Ronny Whyte

I miss her already as a singer, being such an incredible interpreter of the Great American Songbook. Everyone talks about how she learned to phrase by doing commercials. She also learned a lot from Mable Mercer. I know she loved Mabel, because Mabel was a good friend of both of ours. One time Mabel did a concert at Carnegie Hall, and Marlene was Mabel’s escort. The last time I heard Marlene sing, I said, “You’ve really got it down with making the lyric the most important thing, not just how pretty your voice is, but actually telling the story of the song.” That is what Mabel did so well.

For many, many years, Marlene and Billy were a big part of my life. For example, Billy liked my Porgy and Bess medley, so he said, “I want to orchestrate that.” I said, “Unless we have a performance for it, what’s the point?” We happened to talk about it to Maurice Levine who did Lyrics and Lyricists at the 92nd Street Y. He said, “I can get you at least a read through with the YHMA

continued on page 16
REMEMBERING MARLENE VERPLANCK
continued from page 15

workshop orchestra.” Billy went ahead, and it was a big expense to copy all those parts. We did the reading. Everybody loved it so much they decided to book it.

A month or so later we premiered the Porgy and Bess for Jazz Trio and Orchestra. Billy also did some Gershwin numbers for Marlene, so she was on the same program. It was received with wonderful enthusiasm. The conductor for the YHMA orchestra also conducted for both the Walla Walla and Colorado Springs Symphonies. We ended up taking the package to both places. I played “Rhapsody in Blue” as well as Porgy and Bess, and Marlene did the Gershwin songs. So we were together a lot as I traveled with them, which was a great joy for me.

I will always remember their pool and dinner parties. There was at least one pool party every summer and during the year, one or two sit-down dinner parties for about 16 people. There were always major jazz musicians there. She was a good cook and she loved good wine. She put me in charge of opening and serving the wine. There was always way, way too much food.

She was always so positive and so upbeat, just so wonderful. It is hard to imagine life without her. Not that we were in constant touch, but I knew that she was always there. For years, she was a regular at St. Peter’s Midday Jazz even before I took it over. Marlene recorded one or two of my songs on the last ten years of her CD’s, which was very important for me. She was always so generous and supportive of my song writing, and I’m very grateful for it.

THE CONSUMATE PRO
By Schaen Fox

Marlene was the consummate professional. For her, a gig was close to a sacred obligation. The story of her breaking a bone while getting on a flight to a festival in Savannah but still performing in a wheelchair is well known. Here are two more.

One summer she was booked to play an outdoor gig in Westfield, New Jersey. There was a horrific traffic tie-up that made it almost impossible to enter the town from most directions, and she was in it. She finally arrived exceedingly upset and apologetic about being late, even though few fans were able to get there before her. We walked around a bit to calm her enough to begin. Of course, when she went on, she focused only on doing her exceptional best – and did. A gig by the shore had greater problems. That evening her band consisted of Bucky Pizzarelli, Tomoko Ohno, Jay Leonhart, and Sherrie Maricle; five great reasons to attend. There were also challenges. The gig occurred late in the season on a park’s elevated stage. They started, and as the sun sank to the skyline, they discovered the stage had no lighting. But, as visibility faded, the wind grew stronger. Holding the music became more difficult than struggling to read it. Some charts were blown to the floor, but Jay’s sailed far off into the gloom. Finally, the park was beside the train station, and New Jersey Transit became the surprise “guest.” As they gamely struggled on, trains blasting their whistles smothered the music. Afterwards, Bucky said, “It was a disaster.” It was also a testimonial to her professionalism. Adversities were to be overcome. Fans were not to be disappointed.

Her love of the Great American Songbook was constant. Once when introducing a classic, she noted that it was an Academy Award winner. She then bemoaned the decline in the quality of later recipients, asking if anyone could even name a recent honoree. When Sherrie Maricle said, “It’s Hard Out Here For A Pimp,” the look on Marlene’s face said that not only was the enemy at the gate, but the gate was wide open and unattended. Who will attend it as well as Marlene?

SHE INVITED US INTO HER WORLD
By Jena Fox

Marlene wasn’t just a phenomenal singer. She wasn’t just a dedicated artist and a brilliant musician. She was the kind of person you want as a friend. She was the kind of person you want in your family. Growing up in a jazz-loving family, I got to hear her sing any number of times as a child. As a teenager, my health took a turn for the worse and late nights in jazz clubs were suddenly much more challenging. I began staying home while my parents went to concerts, and they always relayed my best wishes to her, and hers back to me.

One morning, not long after my parents attended one of her concerts without me, a package addressed to me arrived on our doorstep. Inside was a handwritten get-well card from Marlene — and a beautiful bracelet, the kind that she would wear onstage.

While I recuperated from the illness, Marlene would call my parents’ house and check in on me. After a few months, I was back at the jazz clubs, and when I saw Marlene for the first time in person after all this time, she presented me with a homemade cake to celebrate the reunion. Of course, I was wearing that bracelet while we ate the cake.

Marlene took care of the people in her life. She invited us into her world and then made sure that we wanted to stay there. She gave us her music and her wit, and she gave us her heart as well. The art she and Billy created will live on and will inspire new generations of jazz artists to create more music. But those of us who got to know her, who got to talk with her, who ate the food she prepared and wore the jewelry she gifted — we know that her heart will live on as well, and will inspire more kindness and love.

Thank you, Marlene.

You can read Marlene’s March 2008 interview with Schaen Fox online at the Jersey Jazz archive at www.njjs.org.
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JIM CZAK: CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Story and photos by Mitchell Seidel

Arriving at the offices of Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians in Manhattan late in the afternoon November 30 you would have been met by a crowd of people on the building’s ground floor hallway. Waiting for the elevator? Attending an important union meeting? No, it was an overflow throng of music business people paying tribute to one of the unique characters in the jazz world: recording engineer Jim Czak.

The fact that nearly 300 people would show up in the union’s Club Room for an engineer spoke volumes about the nature of Jim Czak: in a profession often populated by persnickety button-pushers with pocket protectors, he stood out from the crowd, or, more correctly, swung along with the band.

Czak, who died March 15, 2017, not only left a void in the recording world, but also a trove of fond memories from almost anyone who crossed his path. With his widow, Judy, in the front row, a succession of friends and musicians took to the small stage to offer their condolences and recollections.

A touring musician earlier in his life, he got into the recording business in the 1960s and eventually took over Nola Recording Studios in Steinway Hall on West 57th Street in Manhattan in 1977. After being forced to close when the building was sold in 2014, he continued his work as a recording engineer. In addition to countless recordings, his career also included two daytime Emmy Awards earned during his 30 years of sound work with Sesame Street.

Everyone who worked a recording session at his Nola studios said it was less like working a date and more like dropping in on an old friend for music and a schmooze. And once you knew him, you’d be on a list of people he’d call for a long talk or an invite to his holiday party or present with a tchotchke out of friendship.

“Jim had a way of making you feel you were the most important person in the world,” said pianist Bill Charlap, who performed at the tribute with his mother, vocalist Sandy Stewart.

Charlap recalled Czak as a man unfailingly generous with his time and help. “If I was ever in jail and I only has one person to call, the person I’d want to call would be Jim Czak.”

Vocalist Don Sheldon recalled Czak as a gregarious personality, in and out of the studio. “He was America’s guest; he was the world’s guest.”

Sheldon said one time called while on vacation: “He called me from Italy. ‘Where are you?’ ‘I’m in a cab. I’m going for Chinese food…asked a cab driver. I’m tired of eating pasta.’”

Mary Pizzarelli, sister of John and Martin, also brought “regards from (their parents) Bucky and Saint Ruth.” If you spent time with Czak, “you know you were in for a guaranteed great night.”

“His spirit and humor will be with us every day,” Pizzarelli said.

The robust engineer was such a consistent source of information that “Martin and I have a running gag at home — it’s called ‘Call Czak.’” She rattled off a list of things he could be counted on as a source, from restaurants to phone numbers to traveling

Reedman “Blue Lou” Marini of the Original Blues Brothers Band and drummer Dennis Mackrel perform at the tribute to recording engineer Jim Czak in Manhattan.
directions, “and Martin’s favorite one: ‘How did I get home last night? Call Czak.’”

“He always returned phone calls,” said bassist and singer Nicki Parrott, who like just about everyone in attendance, appreciated Czak’s generous sense of humor. “You’d call him up — he’d have you laughing within minutes.”

Those in attendance recalled how a visit to Nola with Czak on the control board seemed to be as much fun for the engineer as it was for them because he had heartfelt love for the music he helped record. While some engineers might frown and require extra takes, Czak’s appreciation of swing resulted in smiling encouragement.

Parrott said a typical recording studio exchange with Czak was asking for a second take on a tune and his replying: “Waddayah want to do that for? Let’s go eat.”

Saxophonist Harry Allen performed with pianist Mike Renzi and bassist Joel Forbes, “We all feel the same way,” he said. “Jim was our best friend. I still have Jim’s voice in my head: ‘Hash’ — he used to call me ‘Hash,’ — ‘Don’t play a ballad. Play somethin’ swingin.’”

Composer and arranger Artie Butler flew in from his Los Angeles home for the memorial. He spoke of Czak as if he were still alive. “He must watch the shopping channels because he buys the things that old ladies buy,” he said of Czak’s proclivity for handing out small gifts, like miniature flashlights. “I still have two — I go around clicking with both hands, I feel like Jose Greco.”

His niece, Maryann Czak remembered her godfather as “a straight-shooter…absolutely honest, but never mean,” quick-witted and “always ready with a comeback.” She described her uncle as a voracious reader who would send her books or articles he thought she’d find interesting. Then, “he would call you a few weeks later to see if you read them.” Summing up, she said, “simply put, he was one of the coolest guys I’ve ever known. And needless to say, my family misses him very much.”

Jim Czak was awarded the New Jersey Jazz Society’s “Jazz Advocate” award in 2012.

Bassist Jerry Bruno is greeted by Jim Czak’s widow, Judy, after he performed at the tribute for her late husband.

Vocalist Sandy Stewart performs with her son, pianist Bill Charlap.

Producer Ed Berger, left, and trumpeter Joe Wilder, center with Jim Czak during a recording session at Nola studios in one of the many snapshots displayed at the engineer’s memorial. Photographer unknown.

Saxophonist Harry Allen is accompanied by pianist Mike Renzi and bassist Joel Forbes at the Jim Czak memorial.
Talking Jazz
A Jersey Jazz Interview with…
By Schaen Fox

I feel I’ve been a fan of Giacomo Gates for my entire life, which isn’t possible as he only began his singing career about a quarter century ago. He is a compelling baritone, whose voice was admiringly described as “silk-backed sandpaper.” Growing up in Bridgeport, Connecticut he absorbed the hip jazz of his youth and today both lovingly preserves and advances that style. He is also an engaging storyteller with a wonderful sense of humor.

At St. Peter’s Midday Jazz this past July, he explained to the audience that one selection was a bus song because, “If we do this right, somebody is going to want to step in front of a bus later.” We spoke soon after that gig.

JJ: I saw that your father was a violinist. Was he a professional?
GG: No. My father did a lot of things. He was a welder, body man, did aluminum work, built racing cars from the ground up, and did torch metal sculpture. He played the classical and gypsy violin, and he played it well, but he never pursued it as a profession. He played around the house, pretty often. He liked big bands, Basie, Fletcher Henderson and Ellington. He liked Louis Armstrong, and that’s what I heard. When I was a young kid watching television, it was Loony Tunes, Bugs Bunny, and Daffy Duck. They played classical music, but if you watch the old black and white ones, the music was by Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and Fletcher Henderson. I never realized that until I hit about 20 years old. Fortunately I got turned on to great music, classical and big band jazz music.

JJ: When did you actually become involved with music?
GG: I took guitar lessons when I was about eight. I wasn’t interested in guitar, actually, I was interested in a horn, but my father said, “No wind instruments for you.” I took lessons for about five or six years. The teachers gave me standards. That perked my interest. I could play the blues and read music. I played in a wedding band, that helped me become aware of the Great American Songbook. I was maybe 16, and the guys I was playing with were maybe 23 or 24. I had a fake book and would read the changes, but the lyrics always distracted me. I would screw up, and they would holler at me. But, I couldn’t play on guitar what I heard in my head. I didn’t really learn to play the guitar as well as I wanted to, or should have. I was 16 and other interests came into my head. So I played guitar for a while, but I didn’t become Joe Pass or Vic Juris either.

JJ: Would you tell us about your first gig at the dance recital.
GG: When I was six or seven years old, my parents enrolled me in a tap dancing school. I didn’t want to do it. I should have stayed with it. I look at tap dancers today and I think it is great. I took lessons for maybe four or five months. They were going to have a recital. I told the teacher, “I’m not doing this in front of people.” She said, “If you don’t dance, you’ll have to sing.” I said, “Okay.” I was already singing pop tunes, so I learned “Pretty Baby,” and I sang it while there were eight or nine kids a little older than me behind me tap dancing to an out of tune piano. [Laughs] That was my first gig. I always heard music in my head and on the radio. When I was a kid, there was no FM radio, but AM

continued on page 22
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TALKING JAZZ/
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continued from page 20

radio was strong, and I could pick up New York stations.

JJ: Did you think about making music your career?

GG: I never thought about being a musician. My father wasn’t a big fan of college. It was always learn a trade or craft. As a young kid I saw roads being built and paved, and storm sewers put beneath the roads. Large equipment fascinated me. The first real job I got when I was 18 or 19 years old was working city construction. I started as a laborer, learned how to drive ten wheel trucks, tractor trailers and how to run equipment. I did that for about five years. Then in the mid to early ’70s, I heard about the Alaska pipeline. I always like something remote, and Alaska, was fascinating. I had about $250 to $300 dollars in my pocket, a bag of work cloths and a one way plane ticket to Fairbanks, Alaska.

I thought I’d get work right away, but it took 11 months to get the job I wanted out of the International Union of Operating Engineers Hall, a union job. In the interim, I did a lot of different things. I worked in a liquor store, was a carpenter’s helper, put roofs on log cabins, worked in a gambling joint which was illegal, but there was more money in Fairbanks than in Las Vegas, so a lot of gambling casinos came up to Fairbanks. It was like the “Wild West” in 1975. When I finally got work, I was going to stay for a year. I worked construction, usually road work, dams, landing strips, pipeline work. It was gorgeous country. I worked very hard, six days a week, sometimes seven, at some remote camp, but that is what I went up for. I didn’t go to party, I went to put some money away, but past the money, I liked it. It was better than anything else, the real deal: fascinating, adventurous and extremely beautiful. I stayed.

JJ: What did you do for music when you were weeks away on a remote construction site?

GG: There was no radio reception. There was satellite television, but MTV was just starting, and not playing Dexter Gordon and Charlie Parker. I just had music in my head. Then I worked for three years on the DEW line sites, the Distant Early Warning radar sites. They were built in the 1950’s by people who spent time there. They left LPs of big bands, Monk, Dave Brubeck, Mose Allison, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, Mantovani and even more obscure recordings from the 50’s and 60’s. I would listen to it. Then some places were either knocked down or completely automated. They said, “Take this and burn and bury it.” I said, “Can I buy them?” They said, “No, but after you take it out of here, I don’t care what you do with it.” I still have it. It cost a lot to ship it, but I have some albums that I couldn’t get otherwise. Not only does it bring back the music, but it brings back working on the Artic coast. That was amazing. I would not trade that for anything. I was in places the average civilians are not allowed.

JJ: What finally shifted your focus to singing?

GG: I lived in Fairbanks, but worked all over the state. The first summer I was really in town for any extended period there was a two week summer arts festival. Someone said, “Hey you sing, play guitar and harmonica, you should get involved.” I thought it would be fun to take a cabaret class. It was every day, five days a week with instructors from all over the world. I met Grover Sales there. He was a writer, educator, and Dizzy Gillespie’s road manager and publicist in the early 1950s. He was a very interesting guy, funny and bright, and I never thought about being a musician. My father wasn’t a big fan of college. It was always learn a trade or craft. As a young kid I saw roads being built and paved, and storm sewers put beneath the roads. Large equipment fascinated me. The first real job I got when I was 18 or 19 years old was working city construction. I started as a laborer, learned how to drive ten wheel trucks, tractor trailers and how to run equipment. I did that for about five years. Then in the mid to early ’70s, I heard about the Alaska pipeline. I always like something remote, and Alaska, was fascinating. I had about $250 to $300 dollars in my pocket, a bag of work cloths and a one way plane ticket to Fairbanks, Alaska.

I thought I’d get work right away, but it took 11 months to get the job I wanted out of the International Union of Operating Engineers Hall, a union job. In the interim, I did a lot of different things. I worked in a liquor store, was a carpenter’s helper, put roofs on log cabins, worked in a gambling joint which was illegal, but there was more money in Fairbanks than in Las Vegas, so a lot of gambling casinos came up to Fairbanks. It was like the “Wild West” in 1975. When I finally got work, I was going to stay for a year. I worked construction, usually road work, dams, landing strips, pipeline work. It was gorgeous country. I worked very hard, six days a week, sometimes seven, at some remote camp, but that is what I went up for. I didn’t go to party, I went to put some money away, but past the money, I liked it. It was better than anything else, the real deal: fascinating, adventurous and extremely beautiful. I stayed.

JJ: What did you do for music when you were weeks away on a remote construction site?

GG: There was no radio reception. There was satellite television, but MTV was just starting, and not playing Dexter Gordon and Charlie Parker. I just had music in my head. Then I worked for three years on the DEW line sites, the Distant Early Warning radar sites. They were built in the 1950’s by people who spent time there. They left LPs of big bands, Monk, Dave Brubeck, Mose Allison, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, Mantovani and even more obscure recordings from the 50’s and 60’s. I would listen to it. Then some places were either knocked down or completely automated. They said, “Take this and burn and bury it.” I said, “Can I buy them?” They said, “No, but after you take it out of here, I don’t care what you do with it.” I still have it. It cost a lot to ship it, but I have some albums that I couldn’t get otherwise. Not only does it bring back the music, but it brings back working on the Artic coast. That was amazing. I would not trade that for anything. I was in places the average civilians are not allowed.

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JJ: How difficult was it to work your way into New York’s jazz community?

GG: I would go into New York, because there were a lot of musician and singer sessions in the 1980s. I learned a repertoire, hung out and met people. I met Walter Bishop Jr, Max Roach, Lou Donaldson, John Faddis, and Dizzy. And I met Joe Williams in New Jersey. I didn’t just try to get some gigs and be the leader. I started to sit in, and tried to learn about what I was doing. I had always sung, but you’ve got to polish your craft. Then I thought, “If I’m going to try to get a gig some place, I’ve got to have a recording to hand to somebody.” There was a famous recording studio in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and I said, “I want to put ten tunes down.” They laughed and said, “You can’t do ten tunes in one afternoon.” I said, “Why not? You can do 20 tunes on a gig.” I didn’t know what I was doing, but I ended up putting ten down in one day. I had some good musicians, but the only players of note were Johnny Morris played piano and Brian Torff played bass.

From there I tried to work locally, tried regionally and make some noise. People from the DMP record company heard me. They said, “We like what you do. You come up with a recording, and we will put it out.” So Grover Sales hooks me up with Helen Keane, who was managing Art Farmer and used to manage Bill Evans. She wasn’t interested in some unknown newcomer, but she finally said, “Come to my apartment, bring whatever you’ve got recorded and we will have a conversation.” I went into her little office, and on all the walls were LP covers which she had produced. Not intimidating a bit. I gave her my cassette and she listened for like 30 seconds. “I don’t like any of this. I don’t like the way it is recorded. I don’t like the way you sound. I don’t like nothing. Sing me a song.” I sang something and she said, “That’s very interesting. We have to talk about a band. The piano player you should know, but the rest of the guys I’m going to put behind you.” I said, “I know Harold Danko.” She said, “Harold is a wonderful player. We’ll get Rufus Reid, Akira Tana and Jerome Richardson. You’re going to choose the repertoire, but you’re going to learn ‘Just a Lucky So and So’ for me.” I practiced these tunes on gigs, we did a rehearsal, went into the studio and bang.
Helen Keane was a real producer. I never saw nothing like that before or since. She was amazing. She said, "I’ll produce this album for you for peanuts because I like what you do. Got to pay the musicians fairly, but I’m going to give you a bargain. But the first time we bump heads, I’m walking." She recorded my first real recording. Hopefully I have grown a lot, but there is nothing on that album I’m embarrassed about. I was knocked out to have those musicians and Helen Keane as the first producer I ever worked with. Blue Skies was the name of the recording. After that I just tried to move forward. Sharp Nine Records, Fly Rite [CD], with another great group: Peter Washington on bass, Ben Riley on drums, Jim Rotundi on trumpet and David Hazeltine on piano.

**JJ:** Please tell us more about Helen Keane.

**GG:** She knew what she was doing. She was very experienced, and one of the few women in the business at the time. I heard stories that she was difficult and hardnosed. I loved everything about her. She was terrific, and I learned a lot from her. She passed away shortly after my record came out. I found out from her son that Helen at that time was managing Art Farmer, and she was working to have me open for Art. That would have been a big, big deal, and introduced me to a bunch of people who I still have never met, because I never really had potent representation, just scuffling on my own, but there has never been a place that I have performed at that I haven’t been invited back two, three, four and five times.

I woke up in places I’d never thought I’d be. I got to go to Russia four or five different times. I went to Spain to do a Pepsi Cola commercial about 15 years ago. I went to Australia several times. Is that a big deal? No, but for somebody who never had heavy machinery behind them it’s a big deal. I never had anybody hand me an itinerary saying, “You’re going to be on the road for five weeks,” but I’ve put myself on the road for five weeks.

**JJ:** Do you recall any of those early sitting-in events?

**GG:** I remember sitting in with the great Buddy Tate, who played tenor for Count Basie. I sang “The Outskirts of Town,” because I knew he played with Jimmy Rushing on that song. I was knocked out to meet him. I said, “Mr. Tate it was an honor to sit in with you.” He said, “Young fella, I haven’t heard that song in a long time.” I said, “I chose it because I know you did it with the Basie band when Jimmy Rushing recorded it.” He smiled and said, “Son I’ve been around so long that Joe Williams was a replacement.” That knocked me out.

Those guys were all bright and funny, and told you the truth. I worked at Sonny’s Place in Long Island several times. The first time I called him he said, “You’ve got to come to our jam session and sit in. If we like what you’ve got, maybe we will give you a date.” I went. Billy Mitchell, again of the Basie band, was running the jam session. The rhythm section was very, very good, of course. They did a set and then started to invite people up. I approach Billy Mitchell, and he said, “You hang around until the last set. Maybe we will bring you up.” He started to bring up horn players, and intimidated them right away. “I see we have a bunch of horn players tonight. There are a lot of people who want to sit in. When you get up here, don’t play more than one or two choruses. Charlie Parker was a [expletive] genius and he never played more than four. Right away people start putting their horns back in their cases. [Laughs]

He lets a bunch of people sit in, and then brings me up. He said, “What do you want to sing?” I said, “Can we do ‘In Walked Bud?’” I said, “Is F Minor okay?” Billy said, “Never mind what key, just sing it.” I sang the tune, he played a solo, I scatted the chorus and we finished. I said, “Thank you very much,” and go to walk off. He grabbed me by the shirtsleeve and said, “As long as you are here you might as well sing another one.” I said to myself, Oh yes, I passed the test. I sang another tune, and Sonny gave me a date.

Three months later, I was back, and who walks in but Billy Mitchell, with his horn under his arm. He said, “From the two tunes you sang with me I figured you’d have to have a pretty good rhythm section. Would you mind if I sit in?” I said, “Grab a chair, put it on the bandstand, and stay as long as you like.” He did. It’s stuff like that, to hang out with some of these guys who were the best of the best, Frank Foster, Lew Donaldson. I felt validated by them, and that is what led me to continue to pursue this. Doctor Billy Taylor heard me sing at the Friars Club, and got me a gig at the Kennedy Center.

I got to do a gig with Freddie Hubbard. Wow, what’s better than that? Freddie Hubbard! "What are you going to sing man? I’ll bring you up." I said, “Let’s do ‘Night in Tunisia.’” The band was Louis Hayes and a couple other heavyweights. It was exciting. When they got to the break, I started to sing the Dizzy Gillespie solo, but Freddie put his horn up to his lips. When he heard me, he stopped, and looked at me with a big grin. Man there is nothing better than that, Freddie Hubbard grinning at me while I’m trying to sing a Dizzy Gillespie solo. He had me sing two more tunes. That was so much fun. I never dreamed that I would be standing next to Freddie Hubbard.

I got to sit in and did a gig with Jon Hendricks. I had a singing conversation with Betty Carter, sang with Sheila Jordan and Mark Murphy. I’m not bragging, I’m just knocked out to have been able to be with those people. Betty Carter, sang with Sheila Jordan and Mark Murphy. I’m not bragging, I’m just knocked out to have been able to be with those people. That was the real deal to me. I got to touch some of the folks I listened to as a teenager.

**JJ:** When did you meet Artt Frank?

continued on page 24
TALKING JAZZ/ GIACOMO GATES

continued from page 23

GG: I did a radio interview many, many years ago, and when I walked in, Artt was finishing his interview. I sat down and listened and said, “Man this cat is interesting. He played with Chet Baker. We got introduced, and he liked where I was coming from, because I’m trying to come from where he came from. I said, “Tell me some stuff about Chet Baker.” That was like putting a quarter in the machine. We got together and would bat the breeze. He and his wife would hang out at gigs I would do, and sometimes he would sit in. He lived not far from me for 15 or 20 years. Maybe 10 years ago he moved to Arizona. That song I sing, “A Few Bucks Ahead,” he wrote.

JJ: How and when did you start working with John Di Martino?

GG: I think I met John in the ‘90s. Then I didn’t work with him for a very long time. When I did a record called Luminosity, I had Bob Kindred playing tenor. I was looking for a pianist, and he said, “I work a lot with John Di Martino.” I called him up, and we did Luminosity. Then we did four records on High Note together. If he is available, I’ll call him. I like the way John plays, and we get along well. He is a lot of fun. A lot of singers dig John because he’s got ears. He’s not busy playing, he is busy listening. When he does play, it counts.

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

GG: A real musician? There was a movie that came out in the ‘70s or ‘80s called The Gig. It’s not about real musicians, it’s about guys that have day jobs, and they have been playing together in somebody’s basement for years. They finally get the opportunity to do three weeks at some place in the Catskills. They take time off from work, and go do it. There is one real musician on it, Warren Vaché. I’ve played with Warren. He’s a great player. You get to see kind of the inside of a gig, and what musicians have to go through.

To see a real movie about a musician, I recommend Straight No Chaser, the film about Thelonious Monk. That is a great film. And I recommend Dexter Gordon in Round Midnight. Dexter was nominated for an Academy Award for that film. I heard that some people who knew Dexter said, “What’s the big deal? He wasn’t acting. He was just playing himself.” Well, let me take anybody, put them on a soundstage, put a bunch of cameras, lights and people standing around and then they clap this board in front of your face and say, “Okay, take four. Go ahead.” You try to be yourself. It’s not easy.

JJ: Has anything of importance in your career taken place in New Jersey?

GG: I used to do many more things in New Jersey and WBGO has been very supportive over the years. I’m very grateful. I love Jack Livingston and the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan. They have been bringing me back there for I can’t tell you for how many years. It’s a great audience, a great stage and the people who work at the library are supportive.

JJ: By chance, do you have synesthesia?

GG: When you hear a tone you see a color? I don’t know, but certain keys have colors to me. If you are going to sing a sad ballad, and one can sing it in a dark key, then I suggest they sing in the dark key. That makes the song sound more like a sad song. But no, I don’t have synesthesia. I have amnesia sometimes. [Laughs]

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

GG: I have a couple of letters from Dave Brubeck. I wrote to him in 1993 because I wrote a lyric to Paul Desmond’s solo on “Take Five.” I sent it to him along with a cassette of me singing it. I just wanted him to know I was on the planet. I got a letter back. I never thought I’d get a letter from Dave Brubeck. It said, “I listened to your lyric to Paul’s solo, and you sing the solo correctly and the words are true to what happened. I think you should send it to the Desmond Publishing Company along with my lyric and maybe you can record it.” I sent it to the company and they sent back a letter also saying, ‘We dig your lyric. You have our permission to record it. You just have to get it by the attorney who runs the estate.’ So, I sent it to him, and called him and called him and finally got him. He said, “Well “Take Five” has been recorded twice vocally; once by Al Jarreau and once by Carmen McRae. That is enough.”

Helen Keane calls him and said, “You are representing Paul Desmond. This is a tribute to Paul Desmond. The lyrics are about him. He said, “Well I don’t know if I like the lyrics.” She said, “What do you know about lyrics? You’re an attorney.” That ended the conversation because we were stepping on his toes. So I couldn’t do it. Then 25 years go by, and we are going to record my CD Everything Is Cool. I want to record “Take Five,” and I tell Joe Fields about it. Joe contacts the attorney and the same thing happened. So I recorded it without the solo, but they can’t stop me from singing it live. I don’t care anymore about the attorney, or the BS that goes on behind the business

continued on page 26
Bickford Jazz Showcase

TRIO DA PAZ*
Thursday, March 1, 7:30PM
Only area appearance of a group that has redefined Brazilian jazz with dazzling rhythms and exciting improvisations.

BIX BEIDERBECKE’S BIRTHDAY BASH
Monday, March 12, 7:30PM
Our annual Bickford tradition continues—this year’s bash features Mike Davis and the New Wonders.

JERRY VEZZA AND GROVER KEMBLE TOGETHER AGAIN*
Thursday, April 5, 7:30PM
We guarantee that you will have as much fun as the musicians do when Grover and Jerry take the stage for an evening of great music and lots of laughter.

KEN PEPLOWSKI’S BENNY GOODMAN TRIBUTE*
Thursday, May 3, 7:30PM
The spirit of Benny Goodman lives on in this great clarinetist. Ken is an international favorite who will salute the 80th anniversary of the famous Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert.

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Morristown NJ, 07960
*Reserved seating
All photos courtesy of the artists.

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TALKING JAZZ/GIACOMO GATES

continued from page 24

scenes. I care about the music. They only hurt themselves when they stop someone from putting a lyric to a solo. It just makes that solo more accessible to the listening public.

I also have a letter from Steve Allen, because on my first recording, I recorded one of his tunes. That knocks me out, because Steve Allen was a very, very talented man, funny, bright, a writer, musician, composer, a comedian all those things. I've got photos with Mark Murphy, Jon Hendricks, and probably Lou Donaldson and Sheila Jordan. Lou is so much fun, the same with Sheila Jordan.

I did something with The Four Brothers that was put together by Kurt Elling. At the time it was made up of Kurt, Andy Bey, Mark Murphy and myself. That was great fun. We went to Amsterdam and two or three different venues, private parties and clubs. I had only met Kurt and sung with him a little bit. I knew Mark; I had met Andy but never worked with him. We all learned different parts of the tune “Four Brothers” that Jon Hendricks put lyrics to. We did a couple of things as a group and a couple of things individually. It was a lot of fun and musical.

JJ: You've been to Russia also. Please tell us about that.

GG: One time I got a phone call, “My name is Yakov Okon. I’m piano player from Russia. Would you like to come to Russia to sing?” I said, “Come on man, who is this?” He said, “No, no, for real, my name is Yakov Okan. I play piano. I have trio. We can do tour of Moscow, Siberia and several cities.” I said, “How did you get my name?” He said, “We had Lou Tabackin here. I said, “I would like to bring an American male singer here. Do you have any suggestions?” Lou said, “Yeah, call Giacomo Gates.” I called Lou and said, “Hey, thank you so much.” Lou said, “I like what you do.” Lou Tabackin is the real deal. I was knocked out.

They sent me tickets and I flew to Moscow. I met this guy at the airport holding a piece of paper the size of a business card with my name on it. What attracted me was he was wearing a black tee shirt with a bass clef on it. He didn’t speak English. He just said, “Yakov coming.” The piano player showed up, and was a very nice cat and a wonderful piano player.

We did Moscow and St. Petersburg and then Siberia. That was amazing, an airplane ride and an eight hour train ride on a sleeper train. I thought Siberia was the place they sent prisoners, but it is tundra. Then all of a sudden you get to this big metropolis, and people are stylish. I saw billboards with my name on them, and played concert venues with 600 or 700 people, and they dug it. If I’m invited to go somewhere, I’m going, but I’m not that fond of airplanes or airports. I’ve got to tell you European or Russian audiences are a whole different story or at least it used to be.

I haven’t gone overseas in about five years, and things change. Music now is everywhere. People take it for granted, and passively listen; it is on your phone and your earbuds. I’m happy doing what I’m doing. I’m teaching at Wesleyan University a couple days a week. I teach at Sacred Heart University a little bit, I’m on the road occasionally. I’m still coming out with a record every couple of years, and they are very well received. I’ve had four records on HighNote, and two reached #1 on National Jazz Radio, one for six weeks and one for four weeks. Again, it is not because I have a manager, publicist and booking agent. It is because of the music. I can say that with earned arrogance.

In July, when I sang at Saint Peter’s Church, Ronny Whyte took a look at my tunes, and said, “Gates I dig your music, but there is nothing familiar for anybody. These people want to hear standards.” I said, “Everything is going to be fine. I’m not singing something brand new. This stuff has the vibe of 1940/1950. It’s not some vamp repeated over and over. There are real melodies; real harmonies and they are all interesting stories.” Part of what I do is I’m a storyteller. If I can’t tell the story and just sing, I feel like I’m doing a lounge act. He just smiled and said, “Okay, they dug you the last time you were here. I guess they will again.”

JJ: And we certainly did. How did you start teaching?

GG: When I first came back here, I took some workshops with some people. I didn’t think there was anything going on in their workshops. There was a place in New Haven called The Neighborhood Music School, and I knew some local musicians who teach there, so I went and said, “I’ve got a couple records out, and I sing this music. If you can find anybody willing to take lessons, I’d be willing to teach.” The first year I did one day clinics for five hours. A dozen students would sign up. I did that for a while.

I’ve been teaching at Wesleyan for 17 years. They approached me and said, “We can have students who are interested in this.” I don’t teach how to sing jazz. I teach how to sing, breathe, shape notes and how to tell stories. I’m not a voice teacher. I’m glad to work with college students. I don’t work with kids, because what I teach is not what kids get. I can’t teach an 11 year old girl how to sing “You Don’t Know What Love Is,” because she doesn’t know what love is. You can’t sing “Angel Eyes” unless you’ve had your heart stepped on three or four different times. I’m not talking about acting. I’m talking about being able to relate to a lyric. I get a lot of students who are not majoring in music, but they sure can sing.

This music is very accessible to anyone. All you’ve got to do is listen to it. When students graduate, they visit me and say, “I just wanted to say thanks. I learned all about music that I never thought I’d be singing or even listen to. Jazz didn’t interest me. I took the class because I thought it would be easy, I’d get to sing and learn something about jazz. I got all of that, but before I took this class, no matter where I would go, whoever was playing music, no matter what they were playing was fine with me. Now it’s not. I can’t listen to junk anymore. I know what good music sounds like.” All I really do is educate their ears.

JJ: That is a good thought to end on. Thank you for doing this. I really enjoyed it.

GG: It was a pleasure to talk with you. Thanks for your interest.
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David Berkman on piano, Chris Berger on bass, & Pete Van Nostrand on drums

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$25 Advance & $30 Door

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CHUCK SLATE TO BE HONORED AT THE 49TH ANNUAL PEE WEE RUSSELL MEMORIAL STOMP

If clarinetist Pee Wee Russell is the quirky, cantankerous musical muse who inspired the creation of the New Jersey Jazz Society, then drummer Chuck Slate is the cornerstone on which the group was founded. His Traditional Jazz Band’s regular Friday and Saturday night performances — beginning at the Hillside Lounge in 1966 and continuing at the Chester Inn in the early 1970s — drew a coterie of jazz deprived music fans to the Chester bars, spurring a bit of a jazz revival in the northwest Jersey hills. Some of the cachet of those packed house appearances came from Chuck’s knack for attracting famous guest artists to sit in with his group — like Wild Bill Davison, Al Casey and Gene Krupa. Over time a crowd of listeners would push tables together to form a group and, led by co-conspirators Jack Stine and Bill Cleland, the two dozen plus hardcore fans determined to form an organization to present and promote jazz in the Garden State, and in 1972 the New Jersey Jazz Society was born.

Chuck Slate’s Traditional Jazz Band performed at the first Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp at the Martinsville Inn on February 15, 1970, alongside Kenny Davern’s Can o’ Worms and the Red Onion Jazz Band, and then for a number of the subsequent Society’s events over the next two decades. He was awarded the NJJS’s “Musician of the Year” honors at the 1980 Stomp. The musician, who passed away in November, will be honored once again by the Jazz Society on March 18 when this year’s 49th Stomp is dedicated in his memory.

Doing the musical honors to salute the late musician will be four top-flight bands led by Daryl Sherman, Adrian Cunningham, Warren Vaché and George Gee. Also being honored at the event are “2018 Distinguished Musician” Joe Licari, a longtime New Jersey clarinetist and student of Bob Wilbur who also played with the Red Onion Jazz Band and the Smith Street Society Jazz Band, and “2018 Jazz Advocate” Will Friedwald, author of several books on jazz and a Wall Street Journal music and popular culture reporter. The event begins at noon and presents four extended musical sets ending at 5 PM. The Grand Ballroom of the Birchwood Manor in Whippany boasts a large hardwood dance floor and the Stomp features a full cash bar and a large hot and cold food buffet. Tickets can be purchased online or on the phone. (See ad on facing page.)

JAZZ SOCIETY FOUNDERS — The occasion of the 49th Annual Stomp is also a good time to remember the visionary jazz fans who created this organization nearly a half a century ago in those jazz friendly Chester gin mills. For the record, the thirty-four NJJS Founding Members are: Dee Bess, Nick and Dottie Bishop, Bill and Dorothy Cleland, Harry and Hazel Gerard, Bill and Frances Henry, Al and Dot Kuehn, Dr. Hamilton, Rudy and Ellie Leuthauser, Jack and Bert McSeveney, Bob and Dorothy Miller, Dick and Judy Neeld, Bill Sayre, Hubie and Dorothy Scott, Jack and Audrey Stine, Red and Carrie Squires, Warren and Madeline Vaché, Tom and Emilie Williams, Bill Wyman, and Roger and Bette Yard. — Tony Mottola

pee wee russell — “No jazz musician has ever played with the same daring and nakedness and intuition. He took wild improvisational chances, and when he found himself above the abyss, he simply turned in another direction, invariably hitting firm ground.”

— Whitney Balliett

CHUCK SLATE: Forty-eight years after he performed at the first Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp, the drummer, who died on November 20, 2017, will be honored when the 2018 Stomp is dedicated in his memory on March 18.
The 49th Annual
Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2018

From noon to 5 pm at THE BIRCHWOOD MANOR
111 North Jefferson Road, Whippany, NJ 07981 (Off Route 10)

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• online: njjs.org • by phone: 1-800-838-3006; select option 1
• by mail: send a check payable to NJJS, including a $3 per order handling fee, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:
NJJS, c/o Mike Katz, 382 Springfield Avenue, Suite 217, Summit, NJ 07901
Your order must be mailed no later than March 5.

For directions call Birchwood Manor at 973-887-1414.

(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.)
‘Artist-in-Residence’ Dan Levinson Builds a Jazz Tradition at Manasquan’s Algonquin Arts

By Sanford Josephson

In December 2013, the Algonquin Arts Theatre in Manasquan, NJ, presented a performance called “Songs and Letters of World War II” featuring vocalist Maggie Worsdale. “There were actors onstage reading letters home, along with music from the era,” says David Applegate, director of marketing and public relations. One of the performing musicians that day was clarinetist-tonor saxophonist Dan Levinson. “We met afterwards,” says Applegate, “and began to plan a Benny Goodman tribute for the following summer.” On August 24, 2014, the Algonquin presented Clarinet A La King: The Benny Goodman Tribute. It featured Levinson, James Langton’s New York All-Star Big Band, and Levinson’s wife, vocalist Molly Ryan. “It was a huge success,” Applegate recalls. “We were blown away by the quality of the band and the music, and sales were great. So, I said to Dan, ‘What else do you have?’

The answer was another concert in August 2015 called Dan Levinson & His Swing Wing, featuring venerable songs from the 1930s such as Rodgers & Hart’s “Ten Cents a Dance” and George & Ira Gershwin’s “The Lorelei.” Beginning with the 2015-2016 season, the Levinson appearance became a three-concert series with a variety of themes — always one big band performance, but also including Fete Manouche, a concert of Gypsy jazz; Four on the Floor, a re-creation of the original Benny Goodman Quartet; and A Swingin’ Affair, the music of Frank Sinatra. The series has been a winner, Applegate says, for three main reasons: “The quality of the music; an audience that likes the content; and the musicians, who are incredibly engaging and accessible. Dan and Molly are out in the lobby during intermission. Dan has become an artist-in-residence.”

The Algonquin is known for its productions of Broadway musicals such as Guys & Dolls, Peter Pan, and West Side Story. It also presents classical concerts led by Father Alphonse Stephenson and the Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea. “We also presented a performance called ‘Swingin’ in the Hall,’ an 80th anniversary celebration of Benny Goodman’s big breakthrough, Langton and Levinson have released a new Hep Records album, The Unheard Benny Goodman, containing selections from the Artie Shaw archive that were never recorded in his lifetime. The album was available for sale at the Goodman Theatre and received a wider release on February 11 at the Cutting Room in New York. Applegate is considering an Artie Shaw concert at the Algonquin, although nothing has yet been scheduled. However, the next concert in the Algonquin’s Dan Levinson series is scheduled for March 25 at 3 pm. It’s called Swingin’ on a Star: Hot Jazz from the Golden Age of Hollywood by Dan Levinson’s Gotham SophistiCats with Molly Ryan. It will feature songs performed in the movies by such Hollywood stars as Fred Astaire, Bing Crosby and Judy Garland.

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6/2 - A program of Classical & Jazz music. (sponsored by NJSO)

www.bethany-newark.org/jazz
Fox’s News

By Schaen Fox

BILL MAYS AT ST. PETER’S CHURCH

On January 17, in New York’s St. Peter’s Church, Ronny White introduced Bill Mays as “One of the mainstays of the Midday Jazz” program, and the large crowd immediately showed their enthusiastic approval. The California native now lives in Florida, but still has loads of fans from his years in this area, and his playing with Sarah Vaughn, Mark Murphy, Gerry Mulligan, Phil Woods and so many more. He bowed, sat and quickly swung into an up-tempo “Embraceable You,” showing undiminished skill after five decades plus in jazz. He then spoke of playing that same number in the same room at the service for his departed friend Red Mitchell so long ago. That personal reflection was his first oblique reference to the long and deep connection the church has with the city’s jazz community. After playing Billy Strayhorn’s “Chelsie Bridge” he noted that the church’s piano he was using had been Mr. Strayhorn’s. (Just thinking of the hundreds of musical greats that have played those keys made the piano sounded even better.) With few exceptions, there was only brief talk between songs. Beautiful music filled the hour. He sang several songs, among them “Get Out of Town” and “The Best Thing for You Would be Me,” and his voice reminded me of Dave Frishberg. Many musicians believe that to properly convey the emotions of a song one must know its lyrics. Before playing “Roundabout,” Mr. Mays read to us all of Ogden Nash’s lyrics and his tone revealed a strong appreciation for their beauty. He not only respected the lyrics. Every selection warranted mentioning at least its composer’s name. Monk’s “Eronel,” however, was accompanied by a humorous story about the idiosyncratic genius’s legendary lateness. (A club manager called Monk’s hotel to tell him he was an hour and a half late, Monk replied, “I know, and you are hanging me up.”)

When the hour ended I’m confident all felt their $10 entrance donation was money well spent. I also wonder if I could talk to someone about getting a piano key as a souvenir.

RHODA SCOTT LADY QUARTET AT DIZZY’S CLUB COCA COLA

I love the jazz organ. It is the instrument that sounds most like an entire big band, and I love big bands. New Jersey’s own Rhoda Scott was one of the stars of the long gone Newark organ combo scene. Indeed, for many decades the lady has lived in Paris and rarely came home. Happily on this Martin Luther King holiday she brought her Lady Quartet into Dizzy’s Club Coca Cola as part of the French Quarter Festival 2018. It was the fitting location. Paris personifies sophistication and elegance for the world, as Dizzy’s does for the Big Apple’s jazz scene.

Before the music, a staff member read part of Dr. King’s famous, and still applicable, remarks on the importance of jazz. Then Sebastian Vidal, the artistic director of the Parisian jazz club DUC DES LOMBARDS, introduced the musicians: Sophie Alour [tenor], Geraldine Laurent [alto], Julie Saury [drums], and the lady herself, noting that she “personifies the love we French have for jazz.” Smiling, she walked to the Hammond B3, gracefully slipped off her shoes, and “the barefoot lady” made music.

Her three musicians were unknown to us and the lineup of instruments was intriguing and exciting. Long ago, Jimmy Smith discovered how to make the organ replace the bass. Ms. Scott did that and often played in sync with the two saxophones for a different and satisfying sound as original in its way, as the “locked hands” popularized by George Shearing so long ago. The music, mostly from their latest CD We Free Queens, was a bright mix of originals by Sophie Alour, among them “Joke” and “I Wanna Move,” and standards including “You’ve Changed” and “I Wish You Love.” For the latter Ms. Scott noted that several classics of the American Popular Songbook are by Charles Trenet and other French composers. Perhaps Ms. Alour’s originals will grace some future “American Jazz Songbook.”

The crowd was international enough that afterwards when I asked the price of We Free Queens, Ms. Scott’s agent said, “20 Euros.” Happily he also took US dollars.
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Vocalist Kate Baker, “one of the most impressive performers to come along in years,” (L.A. Times) with “an unmistakably original voice that is smooth and hypnotic” (Boston Globe) performed for a packed house at the NJJS’s monthly Jazz Social on January 21 at Shanghai Jazz in Madison. Legendary jazz pianist Norman Simmons was a last minute substitute accompanist, sitting in for Baker’s husband, guitarist Vic Juris, who had to bow out of the show to fulfill another commitment. Kate’s distinctive vocal style resonates with diverse musical inspirations including jazz, Latin and the blues and at Shanghai she offered a program of standards and boss nova.

The singer’s other career is as a sought after voice teacher who specializes in the development and restoration of the voice, especially the abused voice. Having personally overcome a damaged voice, Kate has dedicated herself to the study of vocal therapy and technique. In her studio in New York, she currently coaches several singers under contract to major record labels, American Idol stars, Grammy Award winning artists and Night at the Apollo winners. She also teaches privately at The City College of New York and The New School University of Jazz and Contemporary Music. Kate has been invited to present her vocal workshop in an affiliated program with the New School in Italy.

Kate often teamed with fellow singers and educators Sheila Jordan and Mark Murphy in co-led master classes.

More info at www.katebakerjazz.com

**UPCOMING SUNDAY AFTERNOON JAZZ SOCIALS**

will feature flutist Andrea Brachfeld’s trio with Bill O’Connell (piano) and Harvie S (bass) on March 11, and guitarist Gene Bertoncini’s trio featuring Roni Ben-Hur on April 15. Socials are free for NJJS members and $10 for the public. ($10 food/bar minimum all events)

_Funding for this program has been made possible in part by Morris Arts through the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts._

New Jersey Jazz Society board member Mike Katz receives a plaque honoring him for his tenure as president from his successor, Cydney Halpin at the January members’ social in Madison. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.
MARTÍN ESPADA — Much of Martín Espada’s poetry bares injustice, misfortune, and the fight for civil rights, both local and international. His sequence of poems inspired by the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 — reminding us of working people’s struggles everywhere — provides the title for his latest book, Vivas to Those Who Have Failed (Norton, 2016).

Espada was born in Brooklyn in 1957. His father, from Puerto Rico, was a political activist and exposed his son to the inequities of being “invisible.” In the poem, “The Year I Was Diagnosed with a Sacrilegious Heart,” he describes his first political stand when, at twelve, he “quit reciting the ‘The Pledge of Allegiance’ and could not stand to salute the flag.”

His deeply-rooted social conscience led to a law degree from Northeastern University, after which he became a legal advocate for marginalized tenants.

He wrote his first book of poetry, The Immigrant Iceboy’s Bolero, in 1982. Unlike the Irish poet Paul Muldoon, who questioned the capacity of poetry to influence political life in “Lunch With Pancho Villa,” and English poet W.H. Auden who wrote that “poetry makes nothing happen,” Espada believes such poetry can empower.

A professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, the Guggenheim Fellow has written some fifteen books of poetry, three books of essays, and has edited and translated others. In 1998, for the 100th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico, Espada’s convincing argument for Puerto Rican independence was printed in The Progressive magazine, an essay that one hopes will be updated to consider the calamities that have been visited on the island by a triplet of storms: Irma, Maria and Trump.

SHAKING HANDS WITH MONGO

There is no record that Cuban congueros Mongo Santamaría and Chano Pozo ever met, though they were born within two years of one another, 1917 and 1915 respectively, and came to New York in the late ‘40s to blow up the jazz scene with African-influenced Cuban rhythms.

But Martín Espada shook Mongo’s hand — between sets at a Boston club — and the experience crystallized into this poem.

In Espada’s “Shaking Hands With Mongo,” Pozo, despite being shot dead at age 33 from a drug buy gone bad, was so affected by Mongo’s magic — which reached him at “a distant coro” (a heavenly choir?) — that he was moved to forgive the man who murdered him.

Pozo, descended from ethnic Yoruba of Nigeria — a rich source for slave traders — brought Afro-Cuban rhythms north, then met up with Dizzy Gillespie with whom he co-wrote Cubop standards “Manteca” and “Tin Tin Deo,” arguably the most spirited and buoyant music ever to cross an ocean since Ravel’s “Bolero” Latin jazz.

The book from which “Shaking Hands With Mongo,” is taken, Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover’s Hands, is a bilingual English-Spanish edition of thirty-four poems published by Curbstone Press in 1990.
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Fraddy Garner International Editor Jersey Jazz

**YES YOU CAN SING AND PLAY THE BASS...2017: HURRAH YEAR FOR WOMEN MUSICIANS...WAS ELLA FITZGERALD THE ONLY IMPROVISER ON PAR WITH ROY ELDRIDGE AND OSCAR PETERSON?**

**AT A WYOMING FESTIVAL** several years ago, Kristin Korb, a Montana native who sings and accompanies herself on bass, sang “It’s Impossible to Sing and Play the Bass.” Suddenly she spotted Jay Leonhart, a prominent bassist and the song’s composer, sitting in the front row. “I knew what he looked like from pictures on CD covers,” Kristin told me, “still it was quite a shock. Afterwards, he came up and was very nice. It turned out we were staying at the same hotel, and the next morning we went jogging together. Jay has given me lots of inspiration since then.”

Ms. Korb moved to Los Angeles in 2002. There she met her “Danish Viking,” Morten Stove, whom she married in 2011. That year the couple moved to Denmark, where Kristin formed a trio with Magnus Hjorth on piano and Snorre Kirk on drums. “I send lots of emails — most Danish clubs prefer to hire by email. In the States, you just phone the clubs, but Denmark has a different booking system running from September through April. They pay better here than in the States — 2,000 kroner ($331) per gig, instead of $100 per hour in the States.” She has only played on the west coast, but would like some gigs in the east — especially in the tri-state region.

Kristin, 48, also works in a duo with the outstanding guitarist Jacob Fisher. In America, it was no less than the renowned bassist Ray Brown who was her mentor. “Ray told me, ‘You have to be able to sing the melody as you play.’ And he did that always — in private.” Kristin’s first album was *Introducing Kristin Korb with the Ray Brown Trio*. (Telarc, 1996). Seven others followed, the latest in 2016, *Beyond the Moon* (DoubleK). This is an 11-song tribute to the iconic songwriter Johnny Mercer. “You sit and listen to it, and it’s like honey in the ears,” says Milady Hanne. We interviewed Kristin at home in Allerød before attending a Kristin Korb Trio concert in January at Copenhagen’s magnificent new aquarium Den Blå Planet (The Blue Planet). The roomy cafeteria was packed. Nearly all the tunes were Mercer standards. Standing in high-spiked shoes and never using a bow, she plucked forcefully with two to four fingers.

Kristin warmed up the crowd with a tune many Danes know, “Jeepers Creepers.” She told little anecdotes between numbers. There was the lady who had invited the trio to play a gig in the Danish provinces and she had a special request. “Something out of Mary Poppins.” Kristin ran down all the songs she knew from the animated film, but couldn’t think of a suitable one — until she remembered “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.” The bassist wrote a special arrangement for her trio and the lady was pleased. The audience loved it. Kristin Korb is far from a self-taught lady singer. After Eastern Montana College, she attended the University of California, San Diego. Later she taught at Azusa Pacific and the University of Southern California, where she was Coordinator of Vocal Jazz Studies. More and more women are singing while playing the bass. In America there’s Espranza Spalding, a professor of music at Harvard University, and Australian transplant Nicki Parrott, the belle of the New York swing scene. In little Denmark, there are also Ida Hvid and Helle Marstrand. Kristin says, “It’s getting to be like, ‘So you are a bass player? What songs do you sing?’” Visit: kristinkorb.com. Email: korb@kristinkorb.com

**2017 MAY HAVE BEEN THE LAST YEAR** that jazz festival presenters could get by with booking one or maybe two women musicians “next to a heap of men,” writes Giovanni Russonello in the December 1, 2017 *New York Times*. He quotes a respected drummer, Terri Lyne Carrington, 52, a long-time critic of sexism in the music industry: “The awareness of it not being equitable for men and women in jazz has really come to a bit of a head. As far as it resulting in more female instrumentalists becoming recognized, whether it’s albums or festivals or gigs, that’s steadily getting better.” Search the *Times*’ article nnder the title, “For Women in Jazz, a Year of Reckoning and Recognition.”

**“BY 1956, ELLA FITZGERALD WAS A SEASONED ARTIST** who performed in a variety of settings,” writes Tom Cunniffe on his Jazz History Online site. “She was a regular part of the Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts — and was probably the only vocalist who could improvise at the same level as Roy Eldridge, Charlie Parker, Lester Young and Oscar Peterson. She also did her own concert and nightclub tours, and was a fixture on radio and television. Fitzgerald tailored her repertoire to fit each medium, a freedom she did not have in her recording career at Decca. But after years of negotiation, her personal manager Norman Granz was finally able to get Fitzgerald released from her seemingly iron-clad contract. He celebrated by creating Verve Records as her new recording home, and scheduled a full docket of recording projects, including live sessions, studio recordings and an ambitious collection of Songbooks — double LP sets which featured the music of great American songwriters.” If you are into the history of jazz, you should subscribe to Jazz History Online. It’s free. Tell Tom I sent you!
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Dan’s Den | Michael Cogswell: At Home with Satchmo

By Dan Morgenstern

The Louis Armstrong House Museum’s Annual Gala has long been one of the year’s most enjoyable jazz events. To be sure, it’s not inexpensive but considering the price of a good Broadway theater ticket, it’s a good deal, as in addition to great music, you get enough good stuff to eat and drink to require a couple of days of dieting in the aftermath.

The venue for the past few years has been Capitale, down on the Bowery and housed in a monumental building that once was a bank. The high ceilings and thick walls make you think you’re inside a castle, but the acoustics in the sizable dining room are OK if handled properly (last year’s visiting New Orleans R&B band, a loud one, bounced its sound all over the place, causing some to flee temporarily to the reception area, your correspondent included). But this year’s music presented no such problems. It was a pleasure to the ears.

And to the eyes as well; the special guests were the members of the Interschool Orchestras of the New York Wind Symphony, backing honoree Wyckliffe Gordon in a special arrangement of (you guessed it) “What a Wonderful World,” celebrating its 50th anniversary. Playing trombone and singing, Wycliffe — long a favorite of ours — visibly delighted his young accompanists, and the audience as well. I’ve never been a big fan of this song, tolerable to me only in Louis’ inimitable hands, but this performance was a touching exception.

The orchestra exited to big applause and Wyckliffe stayed on to present his International All-Stars, rightly named as they consisted of Adrian Cunningham (Australia), clarinet and tenor sax; Ehud Asherie (Israel), piano; Yasushi Nakamura (Japan), bass, and Alvin Atkinson (USA), drums. The United Nations could take lessons from this spirited ensemble, in which Wycliffe played a lot of trumpet, which he does well indeed, also treating us to a bit of slide trumpet, as well as his trombone and voice. Wycliffe is the perfect choice for a tribute to Louis, an impression fortified by his own “Hello Pops,” the highlight of a set in which all the participants distinguished themselves. Adrian, alias “The Professor”, is not only a more than accomplished instrumentalist (and occasional singer) but also, like Wycliffe, a most engaging bandstand personality. Ehud has been a favorite of mine since I first encountered him, someone who uniquely combines firm command of stride piano and the language of Bud Powell, Nakamura is a more than solid bass man, and when it comes to showmanship as well as drum mastery, Atkinson is in a class by himself, as animated as his beat. Louis would have loved the spirit of this band — and of course its music. These two were genuine tributes to the Armstrong legacy.

It was an honor to be asked to pay tribute to Michael Cogswell, the Founding Executive Director of LAHM, who recently announced his retirement and could unfortunately not be present. Finding words in tribute to this extraordinary man, without whom the House and Archive would not be what it is today as well as being assured of a future growth, was not hard. Of those present, I’ve probably known Michael the longest. I first encountered him at the University of North Texas, a pioneering institution in jazz education and then famed for its several big bands, where he would soon earn a Masters degree in Musicology, also having been a professional saxophonist for more than a decade. He had submitted a most interesting article to the Annual Review of Jazz Studies, an offspring of the Institute of Jazz Studies, which we had accepted but not yet published when I visited UNT for a panel. By the time it appeared, Michael was installed at LAHM and earning a second Masters, this one in Library Science, from Queens College. The title of Michael’s article was “Melodic Organization in Two Solos by Ornette Coleman,” and it contains one of the best, if not the best, explanation of Coleman’s theory of harmolodics.

It’s appealing to think that his interest in and understanding of what was then, and in my opinion still is, the most genuine innovation in jazz prepared Michael for his life-changing encounter with the spirit of Louis Armstrong. That spirit, not just the legacy, imbues the house, and it took hold of Michael — something beautiful to observe for this old Louis fan. Michael was the best thing that happened to the House after it came under the wing of Queens College. With the best of intentions, people put in charge had failed to perform, but once Michael took over, things changed. His love for his work is reflected in the book he wrote about it, Louis Armstrong: The Offstage Story of Satchmo, and by everything the House and Archive stands for today, not least its dedicated staff.
Sarah Partridge
Jazz Vocalist

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Many and varied were the thoughts of those thousands or so who had been fattened up for embarkation that sulky evening when I went aboard the SS Booker T. Washington, headed for New Delhi.

It had been something like a year and a half since my enlistment that spring morning at Fort Monmouth. I had had four months of studying the first two volumes of the Friedman/Callimamahos 4-volume set of military texts then in use. Included were such mouth watering subjects as cryptology, cryptanalysis, IBM methodology in codebreaking, and, finally, military Portuguese. This last item was an acknowledgement that we took serious note that a Nazi lunge from North Africa to South America via Brazil might well be on Hitler’s wish list.

In fact, nothing went well the Führer and his gang for some time. The Russian invasion (some 3 million men, 2,500 aircrafts, 3,000 tanks, and 7,000 artillery pieces) soured as Moscow appeared in view and the Russian winter fell over the land like an icy blanket. Goering could not come up with a reason for his vaunted Luftwaffe air force’s failure to rule the air space above London and Britain itself. Forces commanded by Patton (U.S.) and Montgomery (Great Britain) knocked Rommel (German) and the famed Afrika Korp out of North Africa completely, and in the Pacific, the recovering U.S. Navy under Admiral Nimitz had ruined any ambitions the Japanese might have had for dominance of the Pacific waters.

The seven guys who lasted the full course at Fort Monmouth with me all were sent to familiar bases around the globe. A couple went to Britain and the revered Bletchley Park and some wound up at base command in the Pacific. My own destination was Washington now that the headquarters in Brazil never took place.

Did I feel a sense of being left out? Not really. D.C. was a place you could get used to, until a note from General Stilwell arrived asking for an intelligence office to be set up ASAP in New Delhi. This had not been in my plans at all, but staunch patriot that I was, I saluted and said, “Yes, sir!”

So there I was in the damp evening air in Virginia, lugging a bursting at the seams duffel bag aboard the SS B.T. Washington on my way to a spot in the ship’s lower level.

Before going up the plank, a grey-haired lady volunteer placed a well-used paperback into my hand. “To help enjoy the trip,” she said. They were the collected articles by Aldous Huxley entitled “Music at Midnight.”

How could anything possibly go wrong now?
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LYRICS & LYRICISTS
The Bobby Darin Story

Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall - 92nd Street Y
NYC, January 20-22

Ted Chapin, the new producer of the Lyrics & Lyricists series at the 92nd Street Y, got his initial season off to a rousing start with The Bobby Darin Story, a tuneful and spirited juke box musical that would be right at home on Broadway.

Most of the L&L programs have been reviews, with a running narrative from the evening’s host setting the songs into their proper perspectives. The Darin program had the cast of performers integrating the connective narrative with their performances of songs from Darin’s career.

Bobby Darin was a versatile, brash, dynamic, egotistical, brilliant and talented performer. This show effectively captured these attributes, highlighting his singing, songwriting and business acumen.

To bring this all together, Chapin put together a creative team that included director Alex Timbers, and co-music directors Andy Einhorn and Andrew Resnick, who also served as the pianist and leader of the fine sextet that provided the musical accompaniment for the excellent cast. Chapin also took the lead in drafting the script that touched upon all of the significant events in Darin’s life.

The show featured a true star turn by Jonathan Groff in the role of Bobby Darin. Groff’s voice, charismatic presence and acting chops captured the spirit of the Darin character, much like Hugh Jackman did while playing Peter Allen in The Boy From Oz. The supporting cast of David Pittu, George Salazar, Elena Shaddow and Stephanie Styles were winningly effective portraying various characters in Darin’s life.

As the evening progressed you heard most of Darin’s biggest hits like “Beyond the Sea,” “Splish, Splash,” “(Up a) Lazy River,” “Artificial Flowers,” “Mack the Knife,” “Dream Lover” and “18 Yellow Roses.”

Darin had a career that found him exploring many genres of music including rock, pop standards, country, soul and folk music. He knew that his early bouts of rheumatic fever were likely to make his life a relatively short one, so he crammed as much as he could into the available time, famously vowing early in his career to become as big a star as Frank Sinatra. He never achieved Sinatra’s legendary status, but he was a major star with a large and rabid following. While only 37 when he died, he outlived by many years the predictions of the doctors who cared for him as a youth.

At the conclusion of the performance, the audience arose almost as one to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the show that they had just witnessed.” Reviewer Joe Lang says The Bobby Darin Story seems destined to go on to become a big Broadway hit. Photo by Richard Termine.

MATT RAY PLAYS HOAGY CARMICHAEL
The Appel Room, Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC | January 27

Hoagy Carmichael is among the most iconic of the composers of the Great American Songbook. His songs were full of surprises like harmonic shifts, unusually wide intervals between notes, and melodies that took unexpected turns. His output was large, and the range of his songs, from tender ballads to quirky novelty numbers, provided a wealth of material from which to choose when addressing his catalog.

All of this was in evidence as Matt Ray hosted and led a tribute to this musical Hoosier magician at the Appel Room as part of Lincoln Center’s American Songbook series.

In this undertaking, Ray had support from his regular trio-mates bassist Danton Boller and drummer Aaron Thurston, plus vocalist Kat Edmonson, trumpeter Antoine Drey, and cellist Marika Hughes.

Ray and Edmonson shared the vocal chores, and proved to be excellent interpreters of the Carmichael ouvre. Ray has a pleasant and smooth voice that finds his jazz roots reflected in his phrasing, and playing a bit with the melodies. Edmonson has a distinct sound, what most would probably describe as a little girl voice, much like Blossom Dearie, but somewhat less mellow. She also reflects a jazz influence in her approach to the songs that she performed.
On the selections where they performed duets, they nicely complemented each other’s style and sound.

Ray is also an accomplished pianist with a gift for improvisation that was in evidence from the opening trio take on “Ole Buttermilk Sky,” through the remainder of the program.

During the course of the concert, Ray chose 18 songs for the program. Many of them were the most famous from the Carmichael catalog, songs like “Star Dust,” “Skylark,” “Georgia on My Mind,” “Two Sleepy People” “The Nearness of You” and “I Get Along Without You Very Well.”

Others were familiar, but less often performed like “How Little We Know,” “Small Fry,” “Judy,” “Memphis in June” and “New Orleans,” the last performed with the infrequently sung lyric. Then there were a few that are rarely heard such as “Put Yourself in My Place, Baby,” “The Couple in the Castle,” “Lyn’ to Myself” and “Shh, The Old man is Sleeping.” It made for a nice mix that had some surprises for all but the most knowledgeable of Carmichael enthusiasts.

Edmonson was particularly effective on “Put Yourself in My Place, Baby,” nicely playful; “Rockin’ Chair,” which she performed at a dirge-like tempo, bringing out the pathos of Carmichael’s lyrics; and an evocative reading of “Memphis in June.”

Ray did a fine job interpreting the familiar lyrics to “Star Dust,” and was at his jazzy best singing “New Orleans” and “Lyn’ to Myself,” both of which featured trumpet work from Antoine Drye.

When they performed duets, as they did on “The Couple in the Castle,” “Two Sleepy People” and “Baltimore Oriole,” their musical and personal empathy shone through.

In the middle of the program, the other players left the stage to leave Ray, Edmonson and the piano to perform a half dozen numbers that proved to be the most intimate and memorable portion of the concert. In this segment, Edmonson sang “Small Fry,” “The Nearness of You” and “Memphis in June,” Ray was the vocalist on “Judy” and “Star Dust,” while they joined forces on “Two Sleepy People.”

Special guest Bridget Everett made a brief appearance to give a bravura performance of “Skylark,” and then returned to join in on “Georgia on My Mind” for the ostensible conclusion of the program.

As is customary for almost every show these days, there was time for an encore, with Ray and Edmonson returning with the band to leave the audience with “I Get Along Without You Very Well” and “Shh, The Old man is Sleeping.”

This was an evening where Carmichael’s music was well served by a crew of younger musicians who performed the material with understanding, respect and affection.

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Other Views
By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

Lots to cover, so let’s get started!

■ It is hard to believe that THE DIVA JAZZ ORCHESTRA has been offering up swinging big band sounds for 25 years. To celebrate the fruits of the vision of founder Stanley Kay and leader Sherrie Maricle, the band has released 25th Anniversary Project (Artist Share – 166), a collection of ten original compositions and arrangements penned by various members of the band. The contributors include leader and drummer Maricle, trumpeter Barbara Karson, trombonists Jennifer Krupa and Sara Jacobino, saxophonists Alexa Tarantino, Janelle Reichman and Leigh Pilzer, pianist Tomoko Ohno and bassist Noriko Ueda. The results show that in addition to being excellent players, these ladies are also talented writers. Throughout the album the band is tight and swinging, and the soloists sparkle. This aggregation is the equal of any big band currently on the scene, and this album is convincing proof that the odds are high that they have at least another 25 years of creative excellence to anticipate. (www.divajazz.com)

■ Tasty Tunes (Tall Man) by the IBA LISS BIG BAND JAZZ MACHINE is tasty indeed. This San Diego-based aggregation presents an 11-song program that includes pop and jazz standards like “You Don’t Know What Love Is,” “Early Autumn,” “Oleo,” and “Over the Rainbow.” Special guests include saxophonists Bob Mintzer and Eric Marienthal, guitarist Dean Brown and flautist Holly Hoffman, with Mintzer’s “When the Lady Dances” and Brown’s “Recon” included in the program. Janet Hammer nicely contributes her vocal stylings to “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was,” “Nature Boy” and “You Turn Me on Baby,” a rarity by Cy Coleman that was written for a 1963 American Airlines promotional film. The band is impressive in its ensemble playing, and the soloists measure right up to the guest soloists. This Big Band Jazz Machine is well oiled and hums along smoothly. (bigbandjazzmachine.com)

■ Saxophonist ANDREW NEU has released his first album fronting a big band with Catwalk (CGN Records – 82601). Featuring a lineup of stellar Los Angeles area musicians, Neu has composed and arranged eight original pieces, and also provided charts for “Body and Soul,” “What Is This Thing Called Love” and “Cinema Paradiso.” As guest soloists, he recruited trumpeters Randy Brecker, Wayne Bergeron and Rick Braun; saxophonists Bob Mintzer, Eric Marienthal and Gordon Goodwin; and bassist Brian Bromberg. There are several influences in Neu’s writing, including Latin and funk. He is at home in all of these styles, and provided the band with charts that are both challenging and interesting. His initial foray as a big band leader should lead to further similar ventures. (AndrewNeu.com)

■ One of the many attributes of reedman DAN BLOCK is the wide range of music with which he is familiar. His new release, Block Party (A Saint Louis Connection) (Miles High – 6628), where he is joined by Rob Block on guitar, Tadataka Unno on piano, Neil Caine on bass and Aaron Kimmel on drums, includes early pop tunes like Ferde Grofé’s “Wonderful One” and two Walter Donaldson compositions, “Beautiful Changes” and “Ain’t No Land Like Dixieland,” as well as a couple of tunes written by two of the hippest and most acclaimed composers in the world of jazz, Thelonious Monk’s “Light Blue,” and Gigi Gryce’s “Smoke Signal.” Moving between tenor sax and clarinet throughout, Block gives each selection a fresh reading that reflects the eclecticism in his playing. His original composition, “Option Click,” sounds a bit like a tune that could have been conjured up by Monk. It is quirky engaging, and welcomes repeated hearings. The Blocks and Caine came from St. Louis, thus the subtitle of the album, so they have a common musical heritage that Unno and Kimmel nicely complement. Dan Block has made each album on which he has been the leader a special listening experience, and Block Party adds another gem to his catalog. (www.danblockmusic.com)

■ Small group swing has an ardent advocate in ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM. He has a working group called PROFESSOR CUNNINGHAM AND HIS OLD SCHOOL. They have a new album appropriately titled Swing It Out! (Arbors – 19459). It features the leader on clarinet, tenor sax, flute and vocals, Jon Challoner on trumpet, Danilons on trombone, Alberto Pibiri on piano, John Merrill on guitar, Jim Robertson on bass and Paul Wells on drums. These cats make it sound like a larger aggregation. The program of 16 tunes is varied and interesting. There are standards like “All of Me,” “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love,” “Caravan” and “Dinah.” “Melancholy Serenade” brings back memories of the band. If you have a gathering where swing dancing is a part of the mix, this album will be a perfect fit, or you can just put it on for some pure listening fun. (www.arborsrecords.com) (Note: Adrian Cunningham brings the Old School to your city this year’s Pee Wee Stomp on March 18. See page 28.)

■ New Jersey is the home base for the REGGIE PITTMAN-LOREN DANIELS QUARTET. They have just released their second album, Smilesence (IvyHormz – 4002), a collection of nine originals by keyboardist Daniels, one original by trumpeter/flugelhornist Pittman, and one standard, “There Is No Greater Love.” Joining the leaders are bassist Mike Richmond and drummer Jonathan Peretz. The music covers many bases, a touch of swing, some bebop, nice ballad playing, and even some traces of calypso. Pittman is at his mellow best on the slower pieces, and has a crisp excitement to his approach as the tempi increase. Daniels plays piano, electric piano and Hammond B3 organ, all with equal facility. Richmond and Peretz provide solid support. The group exhibits the tightness that comes from being together as a working group. The original compositions are all catchy tunes that should find other musicians welcoming them into their repertoires. Smilesence is definitely a smile-inducing album. (www.lorendaniels.com)

■ If you, like me, love great trumpet playing, Collaboration (Summit – 713) by MIKE VAX & RON ROMM is a must have album. Vax is best known for his time spent as the lead trumpet on Stan Kenton’s Orchestra, and his subsequent efforts to keep the Kenton legacy alive through many educational projects and leadership of the Stan Kenton Legacy Orchestra. Romm was a founder and longtime member of the Canadian Brass and currently serves as Professor of Trumpet at the University of Illinois. These two gentlemen have been friends for decades, and have talked about recording together for much of that time, but until recently circumstances stood in the way of that happening. Now that it has occurred, the world is a better place. They laid down twelve tracks, most of them with Jack Peterson on guitar, Ioannis Goudelis on piano, Selwyn Reams on bass and Clive Huff on drums. There are guest appearances by Dr. David Hickman on trumpet, Tony Vacca on reeds, Scott Whitfield on trombone, Joel
Robin on piano, and Avis Romm on piano. Trying to single out any of the tracks for special mention is unfair to those not so recognized, so just suffice to say that no matter which track you hear, “The Shadow of Your Smile,” “Cornet Chop Suey,” “My Pal Vachee,” “I Remember Clifford,” “Up Jumped Spring,” “Hayden Trumpet Concerto, Movement Two – Andante,” “Collaboration,” “Lenny Leaps Out,” “The Brave Matador,” “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” “The Summer Knows” or “Sweet Emma,” you will be transported to a magic place where trumpets rule the day. As the titles indicate, a lot of musical ground is covered, all of it as tastefully and musically adept as possible. A collaboration in the best sense of the word.

When you mention drummers on the West Coast, one name sure to be mentioned is JEFF HAMILTON. In addition to being the co-leader of the heralded Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, he leads the trio, including pianist Tamir Hendelman and bassist Christopher Luty, that is on display on Live from San Pedro (Capri – 74147) a ten-tune delight recorded at Alvas Showroom in San Pedro, California. This group is simply among the premier piano-bass-drum trios on the scene today. They have been playing together for 17 years, and the musical empathy that develops over that kind of extended time period is palpable throughout their performances. Here they address some familiar selections, “Poinciana,” “I Have Dreamed,” “In Walked Bud” and “Gary Indiana,” plus originals by Hamilton, Hendelman, George Robert, John Clayton and Joe LaBarbera. Hamilton’s artistry as a drummer is remarkable. While he is as supportive as his fellow musicians could hope for their drummer to be, never overpowering, his contributions to the proceedings are always evident for their sensitivity, musicality and the exemplary manner in which he keeps the music moving forward. His cohorts are equally adept in their roles. It all adds up to a collection that will welcome you back repeatedly. (www.caprireords.com)

■ There are quite a few female vocalists, generally in the age range associated with the term millennials, who are singing songs that came to life during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. One of the most engaging is Toronto-based ALEX PANGMAN. She has taken her devotion to this music to a unique level on her new release, Alex Pangman’s Hot Three (Justin Time – 8610). Pangman traveled to New Orleans to record seven songs using the direct to acetate 78 rpm disc recording method using a 1930s portable Presto lathe. She was abetted in this venture by three New Orleans musicians, Matt Rhody on violin, Tom Saunders on bass sax and Nahum Zdybel on guitar. It was a new and demanding experience for all involved as there could be no mistakes, and the results were the results, no editing of the completed product. These results are pleasing indeed. Sure, they do not approach the sound achieved by the use of modern recording techniques, but they are charming and capture the material in a way that reflects nicely the era when it was the music of the day. The songs are “Sweethearts on Parade,” “It’s the Talk of the Town,” “Sweet Lotus Blossom,” “Blues My Naugthy Sweetie Gives to Me,” “You’ve Got the Right Key But the Wrong Keyhole,” “Little White Lies” and “Hurry on Down.” Pangman has the style of the period down pat, and the voice to perform in that style effectively. This is a joyous celebration of a bygone era, and kudos to Alex Pangman for having the vision and courage to bring the concept to fruition. (www.justin-time.com)

Note: Speaking of courage, I encourage you to go to her website, www.alexspangman.com/bio/, and read about the courage that Alex Pangman has shown in her personal life.
When one mentions a coffee table book, it usually conjures up a large volume, filled with pictures and just enough text to provide context. Even in cases where there is more extensive text, the text is there to be absorbed over an extended period of time. If you pick up *50 Years at the Village Vanguard*, and start to read the text, the only reason to set it down is to rest your hands and arms from dealing with the weight of it. The text provides “cannot stop reading” content.

Dave Lisik and Eric Allen provide an in-depth look at one of the great big bands ever to come on the scene. If someone told Thad Jones and Mel Lewis on the night of February 7, 1966, the date of the first appearance of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra at the Village Vanguard, that this would mark the beginning of a band that would, under three different names, continue to exist for over 50 years, they would almost certainly have looked at you like you were crazy.

Still, that is the reality. On almost every Monday night since their initial Monday night gig, the band, first as the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra for 13 years, then for the next 11 years as the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, and finally, following the death of Lewis in 1990, as the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, has been playing at the Vanguard. They have also recorded acclaimed album after acclaimed album, and have toured extensively, bringing their exciting brand of big band jazz to countless jazz enthusiasts around the world.

The book has 14 chapters that explore every aspect of this amazing aggregation. There are individual chapters about each incarnation of the band, one about each band member, the departure of Jones, Bob Brookmeyer and Jim McNeely; a chapter about life on the road; one about the emphasis on soloists in the band; a look at the importance of original compositions to the band’s book, especially charts contributed by band members; a chapter about how the 50th Anniversary of the band was celebrated; a brief history of the Village Vanguard; a comprehensive discography, including reproductions of the album covers; and a chapter giving a thumbnail sketch of most current members of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

Lisik and Allen have done a marvelous job of telling the story of the band, integrating extensive comments from Jones, Lewis and members of the band throughout its existence. Supplementing the text is a stunning array of photographs that capture intimate moments as well as the excitement engendered during the band’s performances.

One special aspect of the band is the personal connection that each band member feels toward the organization. It is a family, with section leaders, Dick Oatts for the saxophones and John Mosca for the trombones each having served in those positions for over 40 years. Many of the other players have been on the band for in excess of 20 to 30 years.

This is simply one of the finest books about jazz to be released in the last decade. It is well researched, highly readable, beautifully designed, and a fitting tribute to a remarkable musical entity. It is available at skydeckmusic.com.

Note: A fitting companion to the book is *All My Yesterdays* (Resonance – 20323), a two-disc set that documents the opening night performance of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, that was reviewed in the April, 2016 issue of Jersey Jazz.
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

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

March is known for many special events: Pi Day, St. Patrick’s Day, the Ides of March, and the Day of the Dude. But the most important events of the month are happening at the Bickford Theatre with our jazz showcase, especially this season, with tradition and international flair.

Thursday, March 1 at 7:30 PM, the Bickford will be dancing with Trio da Paz, three of Brazil’s most in-demand musicians, and bringing new life to the infectious spirit of jazz-oriented Brazilian music. Formed in 1990 by Romero Lubambo (guitar), Nilson Matta (bass) and Duduka da Fonseca (drums), this group redefines Brazilian jazz with their harmonically adventurous interplay, beautiful improvisations, and dazzling rhythms. Between them they have worked with some of the best names in jazz including Diane Reeves, Diana Krall, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Joe Henderson, Bill Charlap and Gerry Mulligan. Having them together is something special for the Bickford. You may recall how they delighted the crowd at the Morristown Jazz & Blues Festival a couple of years ago so don’t miss this opportunity to enjoy their spirited South American journey in the intimate setting of the Bickford. Tickets in advance are $35.00.

Born in Davenport, Iowa on March 10, 1903, having lived a very short 28 years, Leon Bismark “Bix” Beiderbecke was one of the most influential jazz soloists of the 1920s. His innovation and beautiful tone on the cornet made him a legend among musicians during his life. Every year, celebrations honoring this young prodigy occur in his home town of Davenport, Iowa in July, and in Racine, Wisconsin. Every year we also celebrate his birthday where we honor the memory and the music of Beiderbecke at the Bickford. Monday, March 12 at 7:30 PM, cornetist Mike Davis and the New Wonders will lead the celebration. As tradition would have it, you don’t have to wait until August or travel halfway across the country to see that Bix Lives! Mike Davis is in the forefront of young musicians bringing this classic jazz to prominence on the New York scene and he has become a very popular player for Jazz Society events. Joining Davis for the birthday bash will be Dan Levinson (clarinet), Joe McDonough (trombone), Jared Engel (banjo), Dalton Ridenhour (piano), Jay Rattman (bass saxophone), and Jay Lepley (drums). Mike promises both well known as well as some lesser known Bix and once again the boys will be singing some “Chicago Looper” tunes.

Tickets are only $18 in advance.

UPCOMING MUSIC
April 5 – Jerry Vezza/Grover Kemble: Together Again
May 3 – Ken Peplowski’s Benny Goodman Tribute
May 5 – NYC City Slickers
May 8 – Dick Hyman
June 4 – Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers

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

Quick! When you think of the “Golden Age of Jazz,” where would you assume more jazz musicians lived than anywhere else? Harlem? New Orleans? Chicago? Nope, the answer is Queens, New York. And on March 28, MidWeek Jazz is proud to present clarinetist Dennis Lichtman's Queensboro Five to pay tribute to the rich history of jazz artists who once called Queens their home.

Beginning in the 1920s, jazz musicians — primarily African-Americans — realized that Queens offered them the chance to have an actual home with a yard and a driveway, while simultaneously being a short ride away from the action of Manhattan (not to mention the airports). Clarence Williams and Eva Tollefson are said to be two of the first to make the move and were quickly followed by the likes of Fats Waller, Bix Beiderbecke (who died in Sunnyside, Queens), Glenn Miller, James P. Johnson, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie and many more.

In 1943, looking for a place to call home, the newly married Louis and Lucille Armstrong chose a modest home in the working-class neighborhood of Corona to be their new residence. Today, the Armstrong’s home is open to the public as the Louis Armstrong House Museum (full disclosure: I am the Director of Research Collections for this fine establishment). Back in 2015, we were approached...
by Lichtman, who had received a grant from the Queens Council on the Arts, to write original compositions inspired by the work of prominent Queens jazz musicians of the past. Lichtman did just that, in addition to writing new arrangements of songs associated with Queens residents such as Armstrong, Waller and Charlie Shavers. The concert took place in August 2015 and was a smashing success.

As 2018 begins, Lichtman — who is best known to many for leading the now legendary jam sessions at Mona’s every Tuesday in New York — is continuing to explore the Queens connection, recording a brand new CD of his compositions and arrangements, hopefully to be released at the time of his March 28 concert at Ocean County College.

Lichtman will be heading a star-studded quintet in Toms River, featuring Gordon Au on trumpet, Dalton Ridenhour on piano and Sean Cronin on bass and Rob Garcia on drums. I was honored to be asked to write the liner notes for Lichtman’s new CD and can attest the Queens-inspired music he is creating is dynamite in every way — fresh, exciting, surprising, swinging — that you can name. And there’s favorites like Louis Armstrong’s “Someday You’ll Be Sorry” and Fats Waller’s “Squeeze Me” but also memorable originals such as Lichtman’s “Dear Bix” and the John Kirby-esque “7 Express.”

Queens might be quite a distance from Toms River, but a ticket to see these marvelous musicians on March 28 is the better than a trip on the Long Island Expressway. Showtime is at 8 pm and tickets are available at grunincenter.org. And while you’re there, grab a ticket for the MidWeek Jazz return of guitarist Glenn Crytzner on August 11, who will paying tribute to the team of Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang, accompanied by Andy Stein, Jay Rattman and Conal Fowkes! We’ll have more on that in the next issue of Jersey Jazz. — 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.

MARCH JAZZ EVENTS

Mar 2, 8 PM: Alex Otey Trio

Mar 9, 8 PM: A Tribute to Cole Porter

Alexander Hiele Paris Jazz Combo w/ vocalist Michelle Lordi

Mar 18, 7:30 PM: Steve Sandberg (piano) and Rob Thomas (violin)

Mar 24, 2 PM: Danny Tobias/George Rabbai Trumpet Summit!

— Bob Kull

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

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

About NJJS

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

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

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

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a qualified organization of the New Jersey Cultural Trust.

Visit www.njjs.org, e-mail info@njjs.org for more information on any of our programs and services:

- e-mail updates
- Student scholarships
- Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp Collaborative Jazz Concerts:
- Ocean County College
- Bickford Theatre/Morris 1867 Sanctuary at Ewing

NJJS supports JazzFeast presented by Palmer Square, Downtown Princeton.

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

Member Benefits

**What do you get for your dues?**

- **Jersey Jazz Journal** — a monthly journal considered the best jazz society publications in the country, packed with feature articles, photos, jazz calendars, upcoming events and news about the NJ Jazz Society.
- **FREE Jazz Socials** — See www.njjs.org and Jersey Jazz for updates.
- **Musical Events** — NJJS sponsors and co-produces a number of jazz events each year, ranging from intimate concerts to large dance parties and picnics. Members receive discounts on ticket prices for the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. Plus there’s a free concert at the Annual Meeting in December and occasionally other free concerts. Ticket discounts (where possible) apply to 2 adults, plus children under 18 years of age. Singles may purchase two tickets at member prices.
- **The Record Bin** — a collection of CDs, not generally found in music stores, available at reduced prices at most NJJS concerts and events and through mail order.
- **FREE listings** — Musician members get listed FREE on our website.

Join NJJS

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

- **Family/Individual $45:** See above for details.
- **Family/Individual 3-YEAR $115** See above for details.
- **Youth $15:** For people under 21 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 gifttee. Good for new memberships only.
- **Fan ($75 – $99/family)**
- **Jazzfer ($100 – $249/family)**
- **Sideman ($250 – $499/family)**
- **Bandleader $500+/family**
- **Corporate Membership ($1000)**

Members at Jazzfer 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

This note from Sarah Seiver was published in the New York Times’ Metropolitan Diary last December:

Dear Diary,

When I was born, my brother thought I looked like a doll. He nicknamed me Dolly. It stuck. My mother was an amateur cellist, and when I was 6, she started me on the cello. By the time I was 9, I had had enough of my nickname. I told everyone to stop calling me Dolly.

When I was 12 or so, I was big enough for a full-size cello. My mother said she would give me hers if I agreed to let her call me Dolly for the rest of my life. I’m a professional cellist now. And since March, I’ve been playing that cello in the Broadway revival of “Hello, Dolly!”

I’ve been enjoying posting and reading other posts on Facebook. Now and then a musical anecdote shows up. Here are a few that I’ve collected recently:

Jodi Wright posted a comment from Chris Crook: At a funeral I was playing a prelude as family members and friends were paying their respects at the open casket. Someone had evidently used their phone GPS to get them to the funeral home. Just as they approached the casket, the phone blared out, YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR FINAL DESTINATION!

Carolyn Hiestand told her friends on Facebook about an acquaintance of hers who found a Loree oboe d’amore at a yard sale. She only paid $30 for it. The person who owned it thought it was a funny-looking clarinet that was found while they were cleaning out their grandparents’ house.

Julie Leder posted on Facebook that the drummer in her band had some electric drum pads stolen from his home. He found them in the local second-hand shop labeled Electric Pie Warmer.

Gaye Kurtz told about a gospel quartet for which her husband was the pianist. The lead singer, a young man who had an amazing voice, but who was rather naïve, came to a practice session one day and said excitedly, “I just heard the best gospel song on the radio. We’ve got to learn it. It’s called ‘One Toke Over the Line, Sweet Jesus.’”

Margo Guryan was a student at the Lenox School of Jazz one summer long ago. She told this story on Facebook: Ornette Coleman really shook up everyone at the Lenox School of Jazz. One night there was a jam session. It started with the teachers and filtered down to the students. Everyone was trying to get as far out as possible. I was standing next to a student bass player when he was called to play. He did…admirably. When he returned to the observers, his friend asked…“How did you know what to play?” He replied…“I just played my exercise book… when I finished one key, I went on to the next!”

Dan Wilensky sent me a note from the Pacific Northwest:

When I was eighteen, I had the privilege of traveling with Ray Charles. I was playing lead alto, and was flanked by tenor players Rudy Johnson and Don Wilkerson. Rudy practiced all the time, even on airport tarmacs, and could play anything in any key. Don came from a different school. He took me aside one day and said, “All ya gotta know is two keys, C and C sharp. That covers all the notes.”

Peter Zimmerman came across this in the Wikipedia entry about trombonist Vic Dickenson, who played with Count Basie, Sidney Bechet and Earl Hines, among others:

For all his lively musical talent, Dickenson was a laconic man who often liked to be alone between sets. During his long association with bands at Eddie Condon’s, he would often retire to a single chair that sat in a small alcove outside the men’s room, instead of gathering with fellow musicians in the band room. When men mistook him for the men’s room attendant and offered him money, he took it.

On a restaurant gig, the musicians played “As Time Goes By.” A guest came over afterward and asked Bill Wurtzel if she could sing a tune. Bill said he had to let her…he couldn’t turn down Lauren Bacall.

Bill once played a holiday season gig with Alex Gressel last year at the American Folk Art Museum. Bill’s guitar tuner had been flashing red and green, and at the end of a set, a lady pointed to it and asked what it was. Alex said: “It’s for Christmas.”

Bill also told me about a night that guitarist Charlie Byrd came to his gig. On a break Bill asked if Charlie had some advice for a tremolo piece he was studying. “Recuerdos de la Alhambra.” Charlie said, “It’s very hard. I practice it every morning...for 40 years.”
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
Mrs. Joan Bauer, Bethlehem, PA
Ms. Ann Bergquist, Morris Plains, NJ
Kevin Bleach, New Providence, NJ
Mr. Jay Dougherty, Maplewood, NJ
Ms. Joan Hecht, Fair Lawn, NJ
Ms. Edythe Hittcon, Iselin, NJ
Phil Hunt and Julie Mac, Long Valley, NJ *
Mr. Carmen Irvolino, Woodridge, NJ
Richard Jenkins, Nicholson, PA
Jane Kalfus, Fair Lawn, NJ
Mr. Michael Kolber, Union, NJ
Arnhard Kuhk, Mendham, NJ *
Mr. Robert Kurz, West Orange, NJ
Mr. Joe Lang, Chatham, NJ
Mr. Stephen Lilley, Branchburg, NJ
Peter Lin, Bloomfield, NJ *
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Marrapodi, Watchung, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Olson, Daniel Island, SC
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Orleman, Brick, NJ
Dominic Palombi, Bound Brook, NJ
Janet Roth and Stuart Weiner, Summit, NJ
Ellen Rothseid, West Orange, NJ *
Mr. Frederick Salmon, Sparta, NJ
Ms. Marcia Nutting Samuel, Hackettstown, NJ *
Tony and Joan Scalera, Rockaway, NJ
Mr. Bob Seeley, Flemington, NJ
Lorraine Seidel, Springfield, NJ
Mr. Mitchell Seidel, Bayonne, NJ *
Ms. Daryl Sherman, New York, NY
Don & Sharey Slimowitz, Livingston, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert D. Strauss, Miami, FL
Dr. & Mrs. Wayne Tamarelli, Basking Ridge, NJ *
Wayne & Barbara Thoen, Teaneck, NJ
Mr. John B. Wehrlen, Toms River, NJ

New Members
Emily and Lisa Ertle, Ridgewood, NJ
Mr. Bruce Balbach, Morris Plains, NJ
Andrea Carlson, Doylestown, PA
Ms Carol Hemington, Edison, NJ
Mrs. Brenda Jones-Murray, East Hanover, NJ
Diane Mann, Madison, NJ
Pat Thones, Hillside, NJ
Charles Tutino and Jane Witkin, Maplewood, NJ
David Yager, Philadelphia, PA

FREE for NJJS Members!
(limitations apply)
For information contact music@njjs.org
(please note new address)
Somewhere There’s Music

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

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

Allamuchy
RUTHERFORD HALL
164 County Road #57
908-852-1894 ext. 335

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

Asbury Park
HOTEL TIDES
408 7th Ave.
732-897-7744

LANGosta restauranT
100 Ocean Ave.
732-455-3275

TIM McCOoNE’s SUPPER CLUB
1200 Ocean Ave.
732-744-1155

MoostRouCk
517 Lake Ave.
732-988-0123

THe SAINT
401 Main St.
732-775-9144

ArTicLc city
ASbury UnIteD MethoDISTRN CHURCH
1213 Pacific Ave.
908-348-1941 Jazz Vesper 3rd Sunday of the month, 4 pm

Bernardsville
BERNARD’s INN
27 Mine Brook Rd.
908-768-0002
Monday – Saturday 6:30 PM – to late

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

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

MAD BATTER
19 Jackson St.
609-884-5970
Wednesdays 7:30–10:30 PM

MERION INN
106 Decatur St.
609-884-8363
Jazz piano daily 5:30–9:30 PM

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

Chatham
CONCERTS ON MAIN – OGDEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
286 Main St.
973-935-5567

Clifffield Park
VILLA AMALFI
793 Paliase Ave.
201-886-8626
Piano Jazz Fridays & Saturdays

Closter
MUSICLAB – TEMPLE BETH EL
221 Schraalenburgh Rd.
201-768-5112

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

Cresskill
GRIFFIN’S RESTAURANT
44 East Madison Ave.
201-541-7575
Tuesdays & Wednesdays

Deal Park
AXELROD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
100 Grant Avenue

Dunellen
ROXY & DUKES ROADHOUSE
745 Bound Brook Rd.
732-529-4464

MAGGIE MURRAY’S PUB HOUSE
119 North Washington Ave.
732-629-7160
Jazz nights 1st and 3rd Wednesdays

Edgewater
MITCHELL’S FISH MARKET
541 River Rd.
201-840-9311
Jazz with a skyline view, Thursday 6–10 PM

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

Englewood
BERGEN PAC
30 N. Van Brunt St.
201-227-1039

BLUE MOON MEXICAN CAFÉ
212 Paliase Ave.
201-484-4088

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

1967 SANCTUARY AT EWING ARTS AND CULTURAL HAVEN
101 Scotch Rd.
908-295-7739
Regular jazz concerts – check their website for details

Fairfield
CALANDRA’S MEDITERRANEAN GRILLE
118 US Highway 46
973-675-6000
Piano – Fridays & Saturdays

CALANDRA’S CUCINA
216-234 Route 46
973-575-7720

Florham Park
PULIV’S BRICK OVEN
162 Columbia Turnpike
973-822-0800
Accordianist Eddie Monteiro with drummer Buddy Green, Wednesday, 7–10 PM

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

Hackensack
SOLAR’S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE
61 River St.
201-487-1969
Big Band swinging first Tuesday of the month

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

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

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

Haddon Township
GRIMMEL’S RESTAURANT & BAR
329 Haddon Ave
856-858-9400

Haddonfield
DEANNA’S RESTAURANT
54 Franklin Street
908-397-8597

Lake Hopatcong
STONE WATER
125 State Route 181
973-810-3858
Jazz piano/Sunday Brunch, 11 am – 3 PM

Lambertville
DEANNA’S RESTAURANT
54 Franklin St.
908-397-8597

Linden
ROBIN’S REST RHYTHM & BLUES
310 Tremely Point Rd.
Linden, NJ
908-275-3043

Madison
SHANGHAI JAZZ
24 Main St.
908-882-2899

Weekly Tuesdays/Thursdays, 7 PM
Sundays, 6 PM – no cover charge

Hoboken
PILSENER HAUS & BIERGARTEN
1422 Grand St.
201-683-5445
Live music Thursdays, 8–12 PM, no cover charge

Hopatcong
PAVING RESTAURANT
453 River Styx Rd.
973-770-4300
Big Band, 3rd Tuesday of the month

Hope
THE INN AT MILLBASE ROAD
313 Hope Johannesburg Rd.
908-459-8684

Manalapan
MONMOUTH COUNTY LIBRARY
125 Symmes Dr.
732-431-7220
Free monthly jazz concerts September – June

Manasquan
ALGONQUIN ARTS THEATRE
173 Main St.
732-528-9211

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

Metuchen
NOVITA
New & Pearl Sts.
732-549-5306
No cover

HAILEY’S HARP & PUB
400 Main St.
732-321-0777

Milford
ALBA VINEYARD
269 Regezuville Warren Glen Rd.
908-995-7800

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

PALAZZO RESTAURANT
11 South Fullerton Ave.
Fridays/Saturdays, 7 PM

TRUMPETS
6 Depot Square
973-744-2600

Clarinet Thursdays, 7 PM

Morristown
THE BICKFORD THEATRE
AT THE MORRIS MUSEUM
5 Normandy Heights Rd.
973-971-3706
Some Mondays, 8 PM

HIBISCUS RESTAURANT
At Best Western Morristown Inn
270 South St.
866-497-3638

Tuesday, Fridays, Saturdays, Sunday brunch

ROD’S STEAK & SEAFOOD GRILLE
One Convert Rd. (Madison Ave.)
973-539-6666

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

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH
275 Market St.
973-623-8151
Jazz vespers, 1st Sunday

CLEMENT’S PLACE
15 Washington St.
888-466-5722
NAPC & US Jam sessions

DE’BORAH’S JAZZ CAFE
18 Green St.
973-648-0404
Thursday evenings & Sunday afternoons

IDEAL LOUNGE
219 Freehold Avenue.
973-824-9308

INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES
– RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
John Cotton Dana Library, 185 University Ave.
973-353-6595
Frequent free concerts.

MEMORIAL WEST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
286 South 7th St.
973-342-1015
Jazz vespers monthly

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
1 Center St.
973-539-8008

Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.
### 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.
973-249-1551
Saturdays, 7 – 11 pm

**DUE MARI**
78 Albany St.
973-296-1600
Saturdays, 7 – 11 pm

**New Brunswick Jazz Project**
973-383-2408
378 George St.

**973-369-0553**
**302 George St.**

**Newfield**

**LAKE HOUSE RESTAURANT**
611 Taylor Pl.
854-694-5700

**Newton**

**THE NEWTON THEATRE**
234 Spring St.
973-383-3700

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**36x674**

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