Jazz, despite its relatively young age and singular designation, goes through generational changes every twenty years or so. Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk cut their musical teeth in the Swing era and then blazed their own trails in bebop, a musical style flexible enough to morph into yet another while still maintaining connections to what came before. Granted, the evolution of jazz is not all swing basics and chord change variants, as one can see from the likes of reedmen Ornette Coleman or Anthony Braxton, but musicians of adjoining generations do share roots common enough to have the ability to meet on common ground.

Face it, in the 1950s it was easier for a bunch of younger musicians to exchange ideas and jam with some of their slightly older contemporaries. The learning process was based on the practicality of performance and the musical vocabulary was far more common.

continued on page 26

A mixture of the generations prepares for a Highlights in Jazz performance at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center on March 22, from left: Dominick Farinacci, Félix Lemerle, Buster Williams and Will Anderson. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.

**HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ ACROSS THE GENERATIONS**

By Mitchell Seidel
it is with great pleasure that I announce NJJS has a newly designed, multimedia website. If you haven’t yet seen it, go to www.njjs.org and to get acquainted. Many thanks to Steve and Andrea Kirchuk at Computer Images Web for their professionalism and patience as we transitioned to this new format. Thanks also to board members Stephen Fuller, James Pansulla, Pete Grice, Ted Clark, Carrie Jackson, Peter Lin and Jay Dougherty and NJJS member Tom Salvas for their input and hard work in bringing the new site to life. Check the website often for information and updates as it will continue to evolve as we work toward greater growth and development.

On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to extend our gratitude to former webmaster Steve Albin, and former board members Kate Casano and Lynn Redmile for many years of volunteer service and expertise with the communication needs and former website for NJJS.

The 49th Annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp has come and gone and plans are already underway for next year’s “Golden Anniversary” event. But before putting this year’s Stomp in the history books, I’d like to thank Daryl Sherman, Adrian Cunningham, Warren Vache and George Gee and their bandmates for their support. Each band’s spirit filled the ballroom with joy and made for a musical feast! Thank you to former VP of Music Mitchell Seidel for a stellar lineup.

Events of this scale don’t just “happen”, they require a team of dedicated individuals committed to success. I want to thank the following: our generous $500 and above sponsors — Arbors Records, WBGO, Nan Hughes Poole, Studio 1200, America’s Mortgage Lenders — the 22 program book sponsors, Birchwood Manor’s staff, NJJS board of directors, Stew Schiffer for loaning and lugging the drums, Joe Lang, volunteers Sheilia Lenga, Jack Sinkway and Janice Stevens, also Chuck Slate Jr., Tom Salvas, Joe licari and his three daughters, Will Friedwald and his New York pose/ride, Joe Cristianini and crew at Precision Audio Visual Services, Fred Altenburg and staff at Altenburg Piano House, Ken Sebesky, Dave Hanright, Scott Ricketts and all of you who attended. Lists are precarious, if I’ve missed anyone, it’s my lack of mental acuity, not lack of gratitude! Thank you ALL for a job well done.

While this year’s event was a marvelous afternoon of music and dance, I have every confidence that the 50th Anniversary event will prove itself stellar in every way. As ticket revenue is not sufficient enough to finance an event of this caliber, soliciting for its sponsorship has begun. If you, or someone you know, are interested in being a sponsor for the “Pee Wee Turns 50” event, please contact me at pres@njjs.org or at 973-229-0543.

■ Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 20 and join us at this month’s Jazz Social featuring the

NJJS Bulletin Board

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

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

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

Stay tuned to www.njjs.org
May 20
NJJS JAZZ SOCIAL
NJJS 2018 Jazz Studies Scholarship Winners
FREE for NJJS members, $10 public, $10 minimum
Shanghai Jazz | Madison
2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
www.njjs.org

June 24
NJJS JAZZ SOCIAL
Artists TBA
FREE for NJJS members, $10 public, $10 minimum
Shanghai Jazz | Madison
2 sets, doors open at 3 PM
www.njjs.org

August 18
MORRISTOWN JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL
Rhythm in Blue, Bria Skonberg, Labamba & the Hubcaps, The Bernard Allison Group, Davy Knowles
FREE | NOON – 10 PM
On The Green in Morristown
www.morristownjazzandblues.com

September 16
PRINCETON JAZZFEAST
In its 26th year, JazzFeast is an open-air festival that swings with the joy of great music, and great food too! Artists TBA
FREE | NOON – 6 PM
Palmer Square, Princeton
www.palmersquare.com

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.
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 45)

Name That Contrafact?

Do you know what a “contrafact” is? No, it’s nothing to do with the cacophony emanating from Washington, D.C. A contrafact is a musical composition consisting of a new melody overlaid on a familiar harmonic structure. And there are hundreds of them in the jazz repertoire. The chord progression of George Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm” appears to have inspired the most spinoffs, more than 40 according to a list in Wikipedia. Can you name any of the “I Got Rhythm” contrafacts composed by these artists?

1. Thelonious Monk
2. Charlie Parker
3. Duke Ellington
4. Dizzy Gillespie
5. Benny Goodman (co-composer)
6. Horace Silver
7. Tadd Dameron
8. Lester Young
9. Sonny Rollins

There’s a new crop of NJJS and Pee Wee Stomp t-shirts!

At $15, they make great gifts for yourself and your friends. You can buy them in person at some of our events, and we can bring them to Jazz Socials on request. But if you don’t want to wait, order via mail and get your shirt within days! Shirts are 100% cotton, crew-neck, short-sleeved shirts; they may run slightly snug.

Cost is $15 per shirt + $4 shipping fee.

**Styles** — choose from:
- white shirt with red NJJS logo
- black shirt with red NJJS logo
- white shirt with red+black Pee Wee art

**Sizes** — choose:
- unisex S, M, L, XL, or XXL
- ladies’ S, M, L (slightly more open neckline, smaller sleeve cut, slightly tapered body)

Make check payable to NJJS. Mail to NJJS, c/o Linda Lobdell, 352 Highland Ave., Newark NJ 07104. BE SURE to specify style and size, and give us clear mailing instructions. Please also provide your telephone number and email address in case we have questions about your order. Do YOU have questions? contact Linda Lobdell at 201-306-2769 or LLobdell.L@optonline.net.
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- 8:30 pm

wed 5/9: DAN LEVINSON AND STEPHAN SEVA

thu 5/10: OLLI SOIKKELI

fri 5/11

& Sat 5/12: VICTOR PROVOST (reservations required)

fri 5/18: CLAUDIO RODITI

sat 5/19: MARK PETERSON

thu 5/24: HAAN PANDIRI QUARTET

fri 5/25: KING SOLOMON HICKS

sat 5/26: SARON CRENSHAW

thu 5/31: ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM

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LOCAL 802 AWARDS $40,000 GRANT TO JAZZ QUINTET

New York’s AFM Local 802, the world’s largest association of professional musicians, is a stalwart supporter of its jazz playing members. Its Justice for Jazz organizing project, Jazz Mentors series, Jazz in the Afternoon emergency relief fundraising program are some examples of that commitment. Most recently the union selected a young jazz ensemble, The Roxy Coss Quintet, as the first recipient of its $40,000 Emerging Artists Project Grant. The four-year grant program, launched in partnership with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, is designed to provide support to help more firmly establish one band in New York City and to further efforts to ensure that all professional musicians can afford to live, work and raise a family in New York.

Launched in December, the competition garnered over 52 applicant ensembles comprising over 400 musicians whose submissions were evaluated by a jury of distinguished professional musicians. “Our ensemble is thrilled that we’ve been selected,” said saxophonist and bandleader Roxy Coss. “Musicians across New York City know how difficult it can be for an emerging ensemble to get a firm foothold in the industry and make a living, but this grant is going to go a long way towards helping us thrive.”

The competition was open to bands and ensembles of three or more musicians in any genre with at least a one-year history of performances. The winner will receive $10,000 per year to help pay fair wages, access health care and pension benefits, gain access to business support, mentorship, the union’s rehearsal space and other resources, as well as discounted rehearsal space and recording studio access provided by the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, the rehearsal, recording and performance facility they own and operate in Hell’s Kitchen.

The Roxy Coss Quintet is a New York-based modern jazz ensemble led by saxophonist/woodwind player Roxy Coss, with guitarist Alex Wintz, pianist Miki Yamanaka, bassist Rick Rosato and drummer Jimmy Macbride. The band performs Coss’ original compositions, along with her arrangements of tunes from the modern jazz, pop and standards songbooks. The quintet has performed at the Newport, Earshot and Ballard Jazz Festivals, Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Appel Room for the 2016 ASCAP Foundation Awards, and was featured at the 2017 Midwest Clinic’s Music & Arts Reception. Ms. Coss is also a winner of the ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award.
NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL® DAY TRIPS FROM WBGO

Fort Adams State Park, the site of the iconic Newport Jazz Festival, is picturesque, pristine and, well, kind of a pain to reach. What's the best way to enjoy a full day of the music without feeling drained? WBGO provides the solution with the only "straight-to-the-gate" transportation option to the festival.

Arrive at the festival as the doors open, rested and ready to take on a day of fun, fresh air and jazz! With convenient departure locations in Boston, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Newark, there's sure to be a day trip package that fits your needs.

We've laid out all the options so you can make the best choice.

DRIVE YOURSELF

Assuming you have a car, which is a big assumption in the Big Apple and most other major urban areas, we outline the costs in time and money for driving yourself to the festival:

- Gas $50
- Tolls $5
- Festival Parking* $15
- Festival ticket + fees $88
- Total cost $158 + 8 hour drive RT

*The parking lot is about a one mile walk to the festival entrance.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transportation doesn’t go directly to the festival site, so to get there from the NYC metro area, one has to take a train then grab a cab for the final 30 miles.

- Round Trip Train $100+
- Round Trip Taxi $150+
- Festival ticket + fees $88
- Total cost $338+

WBGO BUS

Board one of WBGO’s luxury coaches from Manhattan, Brooklyn, Boston or Newark, and arrive rested and ready to hear a great day of music. Packages include round trip transportation on WBGO’s bus plus one general admission festival ticket.

Pricing:
- Boston $200 (Fri), $210 (Sat/Sun)
- Manhattan $240 (Fri), $250 (Sat/Sun)
- Newark/Brooklyn $250 (Sat only)
- Total cost $200-250*

*Depending on date and departure location - student rates also available

WBGO.ORG/NEWPORT
Big Band in the Sky

Cecil Taylor, 89, pianist, March 25, 1929, Long Island City, Queens — April 5, 2018, Brooklyn. “Visionary,” “Uncompromising,” “Controversial,” “Brilliant.” Those are all words used to describe Cecil Taylor, a pianist credited with leading the free jazz movement in the 1950s.

The poet A.B. Spellman once described Taylor as “Bartok in reverse.” In Four Lives in the Bebop Business, a collection of essays on jazz musicians published in 1966, Spellman wrote: “There is only one musician who has, by general agreement, even among those who have disliked his music, been able to incorporate all that he wants to take from classical and modern Western composition into his own distinctly individual kind of blues without in the least compromising those blues, and that is Cecil Taylor…”

Taylor studied piano at the New York College of Music in Manhattan and the New England Conservatory in Boston. While at the latter, according to The New York Times’ Ben Ratliff (April 6, 2018), “he started going to jazz clubs, which he said helped him develop ideas about his music more than anything he learned in school. He prized Ellington for his orchestral approach to the piano and Horace Silver for his rough, vernacular energy; he saw Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Sarah Vaughan, and the relatively little-known pianist Dick Twardzik, all of whom would contribute to his conception of music, as did Stravinsky.”

The diversity of opinion about Taylor’s music is perhaps best described in an article by The New Yorker’s Whitney Balliett following a performance at the Great South Bay Jazz Festival on Long Island in 1958. “A few were mesmerized,” Balliett wrote, “while others fidgeted, whispered and wandered nervously in and out of the tent, as if the ground beneath had suddenly become unbearably hot.”

By 1966, when Taylor recorded the Blue Note album, Unit Structures, his music, Ratliff wrote, “was forming a syntax where none had existed. He was using blues tonality and dissonance in his improvisations and original structures in his written music, organized in ways that were not traditional for jazz, even for the relatively new avant-garde sort with which he was generally associated.”

Taylor often performed in duo settings with other improvisers. Ratliff pointed out “a clashing concert with the swing-era pianist Mary Lou Williams in 1977; memorable performances with [drummer] Max Roach in 1979, 1989 and 2000; and collaborations with the Japanese butoh dancer Min Tanaka. In 1979, he collaborated with the dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov and Heather Watts in a short ballet.”

According to Ratliff, Taylor’s influence on other musicians is widespread. “A list of pianists alone,” he wrote, “would include Marilyn

A few were mesmerized,” Whitney Balliett wrote of a Cecil Taylor performance, “while others fidgeted, whispered and wandered nervously in and out of the tent, as if the ground beneath had suddenly become unbearably hot.”

By Sanford Josephson

Crispell, Vijay Iyer, Craig Taborn, Chucho Valdes, and Jason Moran.”

Taylor received a Guggenheim fellowship in 1973; a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters award in 1990; a MacArthur fellowship in 1991; and the Kyoto Prize in 2014.

For the last 35 years, Taylor lived alone in a three-story house in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn. There were no known survivors.

Buell Neidlinger, 82, bassist, March 2, 1936, New York City -- March 16, 2018, Whidbey Island, WA. The word “eclectic” could have been invented to describe Neidlinger’s career. He is perhaps best known for his work with avant-garde jazz musicians such as pianist Cecil Taylor, saxophonists Steve Lacy and Archie Shepp, and trombonist Roswell Rudd.

But, he began his career playing with a Dixieland band, was the bassist on Tony Bennett’s iconic 1962 recording of “I Left My Heart in San Francisco,” and appeared on recordings by a long list of pop and rock artists including Chuck Berry, Dolly Parton, and Barbra Streisand.

Growing up in Westport, Connecticut, Neidlinger was a child prodigy on cello, learning to play it by age seven. To strengthen his hands, he was encouraged to study the upright bass, and, fortuitously, his teacher was Walter Page, a veteran of the Count Basie Orchestra.

Neidlinger enrolled at Yale to study classical music, but left after one year to join the Dixieland band, Eli’s Chosen Six, followed by a stint with another traditional jazz musician, trumpeter Max Kaminsky. He also became a regular sub for his mentor Page at Eddie Condon’s in New York City. He met Lacy at a Yale alumni event in New York, and Lacy introduced him to Taylor with whom he recorded six albums between 1956 and 1961. His best-known album with Taylor was probably New York City Rè-B (reissued on the Candor label in 1989). Allmusic.com’s Scott Yanow calls it “quite advanced for the period, although more accessible to the average listener than Taylor’s later recordings.” In addition to Lacy, Rudd, and Shepp, Neidlinger worked in the 1960s with pianist Herbie Nichols and clarinetist Jimmy Giuffre, among others.

In 1967, Neidlinger joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra, then directed by Erich Leinsdorf. He also became a founding instructor in the jazz department created by Gunther Schuller at the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1971, he relocated to Los Angeles to accept a position with the California Institute of the Arts and also became the principal bassist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In the late 1980s, he performed with pianist Les McCann and alto saxophonist Anthony Braxton. He is survived by his wife, Margaret Storer.

Sanford Josephson is the author of Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations and Jeru’s Journey: The Life and Music of Gerry Mulligan. He’s written about jazz musicians in a variety of publications.
For the full Spring 2018 performance schedule, visit grunincenter.org

Our 2018 - 2019 Season will be announced on June 18. Join our Mailing List to be the first to hear about our new season of exciting shows!

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THE JAZZ AMBASSADORS
America’s most unique Cold War diplomacy initiative is recalled in a new PBS documentary

During the chilliest days of the Cold War, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev dispatched the Bolshoi Ballet to the world’s stages to demonstrate the USSR’s cultural superiority. American President Dwight D. Eisenhower, at the urging of Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr., countered the famed ballet company with Dizzy Gillespie, and the Jazz Ambassadors Program was born.

But unrest at home forced the musicians to face a moral dilemma: how could they promote the image of a tolerant America abroad when the country practiced Jim Crow segregation and equality remained an unrealized dream? Told through striking film footage, photos and radio clips, with iconic performances throughout, the documentary reveals how the U.S. State Department unwittingly gave the burgeoning Civil Rights movement a major voice on the world stage just when it needed one most. Leslie Odom Jr., who recently portrayed Aaron Burr in the Broadway hit show Hamilton, narrates the film.

Among those interviewed are musician/arranger Quincy Jones, drummer Charlie Persip (1965 Dizzy Gillespie Tour), Adam Clayton Powell, III, Darius Brubeck and bassist and Jersey Jazz contributor Bill Crow, (Benny Goodman USSR Tour).

Spurred by host Willis Conover’s hugely-popular Voice of America Jazz Hour radio show, audiences worldwide developed a passion for American jazz. When Louis Armstrong played before more than 100,000 people in West Africa, U.S. diplomats took note, thinking that jazz could give America an edge in the Cold War.

In January 1956, trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie kicked off his tour of the Middle East and Turkey to help counter Soviet stories about American racism. Over the next 10 years, more than 20 tours featuring renowned jazz musicians visited more than 100 countries, giving Civil Rights an international platform even while the performers themselves questioned representing a nation still rolling with segregation and intolerance.

Notably, Benny Goodman and his mixed-race band’s 1962 tour of the Soviet Union was the first time that the Russians permitted a foreign jazz band to tour the region. The U.S. State Department ended the Jazz Ambassadors program when Duke Ellington’s tour of the Middle East and India was tragically cut short by John F. Kennedy’s assassination.

The film features Louis Armstrong performing in the British West African colony of The Gold Coast (now Ghana), where he dedicates the iconic song “Black and Blue,” about the agony of racism, to Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS
- Quincy Jones shares his experiences at age 22 as Dizzy Gillespie’s musical director, arranger and trumpet player with the band, performing in countries including Iraq, Iran, Syria and Pakistan.
- In a press interview after the shameful September 1957 incident in Little Rock, Arkansas, where white crowds prevented African-American children from entering their school, Louis Armstrong discusses racism in American homes and says he refuses to lie about it overseas.
- In a rare interview on Swedish Television amidst the U.S. struggle towards Civil Rights, Duke Ellington discusses the sacrifices and cultural contributions made by African-Americans, as well as jazz being recognized as “the American Music” while the genre was “mostly Negro.”

The Jazz Ambassadors is a co-production of WNET and Antelope South Limited and Normal Life Pictures, in association with the BBC and ZDF, in collaboration with Arte. The film is directed by Hugo Berkeley and produced by Mick Csáky.

Premieres Friday, May 4 at 10:00 pm on PBS (check local listings); streaming will be available to the general public on pbs.org and PBS apps for 28 days beginning Saturday, May 5.
Monday July 16 • 7:30 p.m.
The Jazz Workshop Faculty featuring
James Weidman

Tuesday July 17 • 7:30 p.m.
Ken Peplowski and Diego Figueiredo

Wednesday July 18 • 7:30 p.m.
Pete McGuinness with Big Beat

Thursday July 19 • 7:30 p.m.
The Angelica Sanchez Trio featuring
Steve LaSpina and Kevin Norton

Friday July 20 • 7:30 p.m.
The Heath Brothers Quartet with Antonio Hart

SHEA CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
973.720.2371 • WP-PRESIENTS.ORG • WAYNE, NJ
Jazz House Kids Announces Montclair Jazz Festival Lineup
Eddie Palmieri, Christian McBride, Oliver Lake Trio 3 and Royal Bopsters Project set to appear

Jazz House Kids helps students gain an artistic edge through music, mentoring, education and apprenticeship, offering pre-professional, year-round musical training along with community engagement and education programs for young people from all backgrounds. Jazz is used as a teaching tool to enhance academic achievement, dedication and teamwork. JHK programs have served more than 50,000 students performing before half a million people.

Joining this year’s lineup is a “magnum opus of jazz and song” (WBGO), the Royal Bopsters Project, which includes Darmon Meader (founder of New York Voices), Holli Ross, along with JHK instructors Amy London and Dylan Pramuk. Calling them “extraordinary,” DownBeat writes, “The Royal Bopsters Project vividly makes the case for a revival of the art of vocalese.”

Jazz House Kids is also thrilled to announce that MJF has been named “Favorite Music Festival” in the 2018 JerseyArts.com People’s Choice Awards. Presented by Discover Jersey Arts, a program of the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation and the state Council on the Arts, the annual awards highlight the work of the state’s vital and diverse arts community.

The festival has grown from a gathering of 300 friends to more than 10,000 attendees from across the region. The event's live-stream is available to jazz fans worldwide.

In another MJF tradition, Jazz House Kids unveiled the artwork to be featured in the 2018 promotional campaign. This year's artwork will feature a piece by artist Andres Chaparro that pays tribute to Billie Holiday. "I'm proud that the painting 'Lady Day' will serve as the face of the Montclair Jazz Festival this year," said Chaparro. "Billie Holiday continues to be one of my favorite subjects. I feel her music and I try to serve as a conduit between the spiritual energy, the music, and the canvas."

The Bravitas Group/The Silver Family Foundation returns as Presenting Sponsor of the 2018 festival. Other major supporters include the NEA. The festival is also supported in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.

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Festival Art Selected: MJF’s 2018 poster features iconic vocalist Billie Holiday in a painting by Andres Chaparro.

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Peter and Will Anderson Quintet

Led by two astonishing virtuoso brothers on saxophone and clarinet, the Peter and Will Anderson Quintet has recently taken the jazz world by storm with their tighter-than-tight postbop rhythms and vivid improvisations.

Saturday June 23 at 8 pm
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THE
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RICHARD TANG YUK | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
FOX’S NEWS

BILLIE AND BLUE EYES

In mid-March, Catherine Russell and John Pizzarelli performed a matinee in Princeton’s McCarter Theater. We quickly got tickets because I expected these two great talents would sell out the house, which they did.

I was also intrigued about the nature or their gig, because their own shows are quite different. I asked Catherine to enlighten me. She said their duo began in 2016, when she guested on an episode of John’s show, Radio Deluxe. The theme was the music of Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday. Their common booking agency has been successfully promoting the concept ever since, and they now have several shows on that theme.

She added, “The set-up is John and his band, do the first half of the show with Sinatra tunes, several of which he has recorded. Then he introduces me. I sing tunes with [them.] Some we sing together, he’ll sing one, then I’ll sing one, and so on… and we do a couple of tunes as a duo with just voice and guitar. John is a lot of fun and a great musician! He just comes up with funny things off the top of his head, like I used to see Robin Williams do when I worked in a comedy club many years ago. He is a great showman, and it is nice to still be around that talent these days. We get along very well. The more we do the show, the more we enjoy working with each other. And I do different repertoire than I do in my own show.”

At the theater, John, Konrad Paszkudzki (piano), Andy Watson (drums) and Mike Karn (bass) immediately maunched into “Just the Way You Look Tonight.” John then announced, “…those two words a jazz musician never says, ‘Good Afternoon.’” That started an atypical concert. Rather than music, he emphasized the former.

Their 90-minute long show was filled with 15 complete American Songbook classics, (among them “You Make Me Feel So Young,” and “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,”) plus a medley of six more, most of which are irrefutably war horses if that term is meant to invoke a beautiful and powerful creature decked out in its finery.

Three outstanding selections were “It’s Sunday,” originally recorded and performed by Sinatra and Tony Mottola, but here done by John alone, “You Go to My Head,” and “Go God Bless the Child,” both sung beautifully by Ms. Russell with John’s guitar her only accompaniment.

It was an outstanding homage to two icons by two wonderful keepers of the flame.

Before the show, the woman next to us said she had never seen Catherine or John. She came because she loved the Great American Songbook. When it ended, I asked her opinion. “Wonderful,” was her only comment, and we agreed.

JALC FAMILY CONCERT — WHO IS MARY LOU WILLIAMS?

The great Jeff Hamilton lauds jazz education as an important factor maintaining the jazz audience. Certainly Jazz at Lincoln Center is an important factor in jazz education. Their efforts are so extensive, that I doubt that any other institution does more. One part of their effort puts professional jazz musicians into schools for three concerts a year on the theme of jazz and democracy. Another is their Jazz for Young People series. This consists of “narrated hour-long concerts” presented in the Rose Theater by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra or by “traveling professional jazz ensembles presenting interactive performances for New York City students.” Each is designed for grades 2 and up — “to introduce key musical concepts and other jazz fundamentals.”

On March 23 and 24, the program was “Who is Mary Lou Williams?” The first day it was exclusively for the students, but the Saturday repeat was for the general public. Since the program was streamed via both Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Livestream network, I watched it from home.

Catherine Russell hosted and was joined by a 15 piece big band led by drummer LaFrae Sci. Among her talented ensemble were Chihiro Yamanaka (piano), Cynthia Sayer (guitar), Liesl Whitaker (trumpet), Alexa Tarantino (alto), Roxy Cross (tenor), and Claire Daly (bari sax).

First to appear, however, was a student band “The Young Woman’s Jazz Orchestra,” composed of 15 students from schools all over the city. Then Ms. Sci’s band opened with Mary Lou’s “Chunka Lunka.”

Immediately after that Ms. Russell spoke, in a manner easily assessable to a young audience, about the great Mary Lou Williams. In doing so, she and Chihiro Yamanaka explained and demonstrated both stride and boogie woogie piano styles.

That was the format for the hour, a nice mix of explanation and demonstration. Ms. Russell touched on the highlights of Mary Lou Williams. In doing so, she and Chihiro Yamanaka explained and demonstrated both stride and boogie woogie piano styles.

The presentation was not a dry pedagogic exercise, but a good way to introduce a child to the music and still competely entertain a grown jazz fan.

By Schaen Fox

Mary Lou Williams c. 1946, photo by William P. Gottlieb.
DIVA AT DIZZY’S

Sherrie Maricle’s DIVA Jazz Orchestra is 25 years old, a fact worth righteously celebrating, and they have been.

A key part is their first fan-funded CD, The DIVA Jazz Orchestra 25th Anniversary Project, on the ArtistShare label. All 10 of the recordings’ numbers are composed, and arranged, by the band’s members. It is a great collection of superior music that I play often. WBGO had the full CD on their Radar feature, and Gary Walker praised its “great charts, articulate and soulful playing, and sound unification.”

They recently (March 29 – April 1) had their yearly extended gig at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, their posh “New York City home,” to celebrate the album’s release and give fans the chance to hear the music live. And, we were there.

We always enjoy dining at Dizzy’s. The menu is both NOLA influenced and never static. I also enjoy a ritual new audience members go through. As the room fills, someone walks to the massive windows to photograph the captivating view of Central Park and the skyline. Quickly, more follow and do the same.

We finished eating just before the music started. The set opened with the CD’s first three numbers: Leigh Pilzer’s “East Coast Andy,” Janelle Reichman’s “Middleground” and Noriko Ueda’s “Seesaw.” As grand as they are on the CD, hearing them live was something like the difference between looking at a good photo of Niagara Falls and being there to feel the spray and hear the roar.

And this band can roar. It has always attracted and retained serious talents, because among musicians it enjoys the reputation of being a good gig and an important career boost. About half of the 15 musicians are members of long standing; among them are Tomoko Ohno (piano), Noriko Ueda (Bass), Jami Dauber (trumpet) Leslie Havens (bass trombone) and Jennifer Krupa (trombone).

Impressively, two original players, Sherrie Maricle (leader/drums) and Liesl Whitaker (trumpet) remain on the bandstand. During their nights at Dizzy’s, several former band members returned as special guests. We saw Anat Cohen at the April 1 show. When Anat walks onto a stage, she should fence it off, because it becomes her property. She and Jami Dauber started with “In a Mellow Tone,” playing a long duo stretch before the entire band kicked in.

Next Anat and Janelle Reichman previewed the Goodman classic “Slipped Disc,” that, Sherrie promised, will be on the band’s next recording. Ms. Cohen was obviously enjoying herself. I believe the grin never left her face.

She also spoke of her love for, and indebtedness to, the band. For her it was “a serious school.” Perhaps to keep the mood light, Sherrie happily told a story from Anat’s early days with the band. Ms. Maricle confessed that once she was upset and barked that the band had to do what the leader wanted. Anat asked, “But what if the leader is an asshole?”

Anat added that was when she learned that Sherrie could take a joke.

Then it was back to music, and the band did two more classics from their great book. Their final was the new CD’s last selection, Sherrie’s own “The Rhythm Changes.”

The audience wanted more, so they played the first song Stanley Kay, their founder, ever wrote for the band, “Three Sisters and a Cousin.” Then we hurried through the happy crowd to catch our train, buoyed by a grand evening’s music.

At press time the band’s exuberant new CD was Number 2 on the JazzTimes charts. The recording is available at divajazz.com, www.artistshare.com, Amazon and iTunes.
Talking Jazz
A Jersey Jazz Interview with Steve Wilson
By Schaen Fox

Sax master Steve Wilson is someone I think of when I hear the word sideman. Over the years he’s enhanced the bands of Maria Schneider, Ron Carter, Chick Corea and many, many others. His discography is an impressively long testimonial to the faith others place in him to bring their music to life. We spoke about his early years and some career highlights in the spring and fall of 2017.

JJ: Is there anything special you wish to talk about?

SW: I had a fun-filled summer, probably the busiest I’ve had since my Chick Corea days in the early 2000s, and it was in some of my favorite places. I was in Italy at the Perugia Festival for ten days. I was part of some great music with Lewis Nash and also the Gil Evans Project. I also saw some great music, and had a couple of days off. I haven’t had a real vacation in I don’t know how many years. When I can get a couple of days, it gives me a bit of a breather. It was a perfect working vacation. I was in Japan twice; early in the summer with Maria Schneider at the Blue Note in Tokyo, and again for two weeks in August with Chick Corea. We played Sapporo, the Tokyo Blue Note, and the Tokyo Festival. I have a long love affair with Japan.

Also I toured the Pacific Northwest with Buster Williams. We started in Winnipeg, a favorite city. I have friends there and there is a great jazz community. They are creating some world class musicians there. Then in California we played the Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society at the Douglas Beach House in Half Moon Bay. That is my favorite gig in the world. It is literally right across the street from the Pacific Ocean. Since the 1970s, they have had everybody; Dexter Gordon, Woody Shaw, Bobby Hutchinson (who lived just down the road from there), Art Pepper, Stan Getz, and they have photos of everyone who has been there. It is a who’s who of the music. Between sets, or

JJ: Did any new talent impress you?

SW: I wouldn’t call her a new talent, but Linda May Han Oh is an amazing bassist and composer. I’ve known her since she was at the Manhattan School after the gig, you step out and the sun is setting on the ocean. It doesn’t get any better than that. [Laughs] No disrespect to the Atlantic Ocean because I’m from the East Coast, but the Pacific Ocean has got something else. [Laughs]

Then we went up to the Jazz Alley in Seattle, another one of my favorite gigs and great city. Then to Victoria and Vancouver, and taking the ferry between those two cities is like being inside a painting. I was also at the Brubeck Colony in Stockton, California for my third time teaching there. They get the crème de la crème of high school students in the country, and the UK. I heard some kids who are going to be heard from in the next few years. There is no shortage of talent, and it’s always inspiring to be around it. It was a really special summer, busy but rewarding. I can still savor it, and I’m very grateful for it.

Schaeen Fox is a longtime jazz fan. Now retired, he devotes much of his time to the music and shares his encounters with musicians in this column.
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of Music a few years ago. She is very special and highly in demand. She is always coming up with interesting music. Musically she is wide open, another genre busting artist with a firm foundation in the jazz world. Hearing her band and where she is going with our music is really a delight. I’ve been following her, and playing with her a bit for the last few years. I am very proud of and happy for her. She is a good soul and dedicated artist. Also Sammy Miller, the drummer has a group called The Congregation. Sammy is a Juilliard student I have known for five or six years. I have watched him and his project develop and become a festival favorite at Umbria, both summer and winter sets, for the last couple of years. They are fan favorites who get the audience involved in what they are doing.

JJ: On average, how much of the year are you on the road?

SW: Much less than I used to, in recent years, probably two to three months collectively a year, if that much. That is a big change from what used to be six to eight months collectively, or even eight to ten months 20 years ago. Things have changed so much in the industry. There is just not as much touring, especially in the states and in Europe. Some of the presenters are not in business anymore, and economically it is hard to put extended tours together. In the ’80s and ’90s it was common to go out for three to six weeks several times a year, but it very seldom happens now. These days a two-week tour is an extended tour.

JJ: I feel bad when artists like you talk about the bleak economics of the music business.

SW: Yes. It has changed significantly over the last ten years. Everything has changed. It is such a different — well I can’t call it a model now, there is no model. There are only a few record companies now and there is obviously no shortage of talent. There are a lot of great young musicians emerging every year, but we don’t have enough venues to accommodate them. There are always a few that defy whatever the given logic is at the time, but yeah, we all have to get more creative in enabling our creativity and finding venues for that. That goes for artists and presenters alike. We are in a different dynamic.

What do you like to do away from jazz?

JJ: Do you have hobbies?

SW: Nothing active in terms of real hobbies. I try to read and stay up on geo-political events. That is a very painful endeavor these days. [Chuckles] I’m not an avid reader because of the constraints of time, keeping a crazy, busy schedule. Lately I have been reading biographies. Right now I’m more than halfway through Gigi Gryce’s biography, Rat Race Blues, and that is really interesting. He was a great artist whose contributions have been undervalued on a bunch of levels. Before that I read Joe Wilder’s biography. I knew Joe and worked with him. What a beautiful man he was. [Softly, With Feeling: Joe Wilder and the Breaking of Barriers in American Music by Edward Berger. Temple University Press, 2014]

I do like to listen to a lot of old school R&B music like Motown. I grew up on that, and there is great craftsmanship in that music. We take it for granted as just commercial music, but there is great musicianship in it. I listen to all kinds of music to check out whatever is brought to my attention. Hopefully one day I can develop real hobbies or outside interests.

JJ: Since you mentioned Gigi, is there any film novel or story that you feel captures the life of a musician?

SW: I think it was the American Masters Duke Ellington profile that probably came out in the ’90s or early 2000s. It has footage of him and his band on the bus, the train, the plane and Duke talks about sleep being a luxury. That is a great insight. Many non-musicians associate our life with this romantic vision that I had as a young musician [laughs] of a musician traveling all over the world, the musicians you dreamed of playing with, the places you dreamed of being at, the music you dreamed of playing. Certainly a lot of that has come true in terms of people and places, but as I’ve told people in recent years, partly in jest, the romance is gone from the process of getting there. I used to love getting on planes when the service was nice and you didn’t go through the hassle of security, and the cattle call to board the planes. Pre-9/11 it was a much better experience. I think that comes to mind because Duke Ellington was among the

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greatest to play this music obviously. The images we usually see of him, are of this very articulate, elegant genius always dressed in the highest style. Then you see him away from the public eye in his room trying to work on some music with the bags under his eyes, getting off the plane, and walking slowly after traveling all night to get to the next gig; that is where the rubber hits the road.

People see that real side of doing what we do, and we do it because we love it. It is not quite the romantic life that people think. People say, “Oh man you are going to Paris or London or Japan.” This is not a vacation. [Laughs] Yeah, these are all beautiful, wonderful places, but I tell them many times it is just the airport and the hotel room for an hour and the hall and then back to the hotel room sometimes for like three hours to get a nap before the next plane out. It is not this romantic life that many people think it is. I don’t say that complaining. We are very fortunate to be doing what we do. To share music with everyone from all over the planet is a privilege.

**JJ:** You once said you had an interest in social work. How did that come about?

**SW:** That is what I wanted to do before I became a musician. Part of that may have come from my mother being a nurse. When I was very young, my father would campaign for the political candidates in my hometown, particularly the mayor and city council. He had this bullhorn. He would take me around to different neighborhoods and, “Vote for this guy, vote for that guy.” Then he would give me the bullhorn and, “Okay now you say it.” [Laughs] So I guess just having a sense of civic duty, understanding that we are part of a community, and seeing that there are some people that need help out here.

I always wanted to figure out how I could help people. I guess becoming a musician was part of that, because I have come to understand that music can really have an impact on people’s lives. Even now there is still that sense of community about being a musician and an artist. Part of our obligation is to raise the consciousness of world and local communities. That is a big responsibility. It doesn’t mean that we have to take a particular political position, but just to raise the consciousness and spirituality of our audience. That is a big part of what we do, and why we do it.

**JJ:** You moved to New York in 1987, how difficult was it to find your place in the city’s jazz community?

**SW:** It wasn’t particularly difficult finding a place, but the level was so much higher then what I anticipated. So the hardest part was to wrap my head around the level of musicianship, especially around the younger musicians who had been raised in New York. I was 26 when I got here, and I heard some guys who were 19 or 20 and were just off the scale. I really had to do a lot of practicing and catch up, just in terms of repertoire and language. That was a healthy process. It scared me into shape. It was difficult, but great because that was probably where I saw the most growth in those first two or three years in New York, because I was around those musicians and the older musicians who I learned from. I certainly didn’t hit the ground running, in terms of working. I was part of the group OTB [Out of the Blue] that was on Blue Note Records, and when I moved here, the band had little or no work. I was starting from scratch, but I was fortunate enough to get a few opportunities that really helped. The first gig I did in New York was in a band led by Tom Pearson. He has now been in Japan for maybe 25 years, but Tom had quite a bit of success in Hollywood’s film and TV scoring scene. He became disillusioned with it, and moved to New York and had a big band. It was like a reading/rehearsal band with a little gig here and there. Mike Mossman, who was also in OTB, got me the call for that. I started with Tom, but I met some musicians who were on the scene, cats who could read well and play their butts off.

The second gig I had was when Dick Oats called me to sub in the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. Mel Lewis was still there. I had been a fan of Oats before I moved to New York, and Mike Mossman put me in touch with him. He was doing a Broadway show, and I went there to meet him. He said, “I might need a sub. Would you be interested and available?” I said, “Yeah, of course.” I didn’t think he was going to call me. When he did, I was scared to death. [Laughs] I went and did the gig, sitting between Joe Lovano and Ted Nash. I just felt like, “What am I doing here?” I made it through, and Mel Lewis was very kind. He said, “Kid you did very good. I’m going to call you again.” It was just a step by step process, probably the process that most of us take when we come to New York. There are a few people who do hit the scene with a smash for whatever reason but mine was step by step, and I’m glad it happened that way. I think I learned the most that way from both the younger and the older guys. The process wasn’t easy, but it made me focus more, and appreciative of what I needed to do to reach the level of some of those players. There are just so many wonderful musicians in New York. I did not find it competitive per se, but I was inspired to get myself in shape, because I knew that if I was going to be a working musician, I had to get myself together. It wasn’t easy and it was worth every minute.

**JJ:** When and how did you start teaching?

**SW:** I had been in New York for three or four years, and I got a call out of the blue from Rufus Reid. Rufus had been one of my heroes because of his work with Eddie Harris and Dexter Gordon. He was still at William Paterson at the time. He said, “Joe Lovano has just stepped down, because he is pursuing his career. Would you like to come in and be a saxophone teacher?” I’m thinking of all unbelievable saxophone players in New York, guys I would want to study with, is calling me. I said, “I’ve never really taught at a college before.” He said, “One of our saxophone students, Bruce Williams, really likes you’re playing. He thought you would be really great. Why don’t you come out and give it a try for a semester. If it doesn’t work out, no problem.” That was my first teaching gig in the New York area, and that was from ’90 to ’97. After that I was adjunct at a bunch of other places: New School, City College, 2Manhattan School, Juilliard and SUNY Purchase. Then four years ago, I started full time at City College.

**JJ:** What is the greatest surprise you have found about your students?

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**TALKING JAZZ/STEVE WILSON**

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**SW:** We, right now, are living through a cultural shift. I’ve been here 30 years. In my first 20 years here much of that was having contact with so many of my heroes: the Cedar Walton, the Billy Higgins, the Kenny Barrons, the Jackie McLeans; and then meeting musicians from Europe and Japan. They were intelligent and culturally aware of not just the music of where they were from, but of everything. Now, and I don’t want to paint with a broad brush, there is less and less of a connection with the roots of our music and of what we do. I don’t mean just the blues or even of jazz history, but just in terms of the cross fertilization of European and African cultures, and how we got to this point from slavery and the great migration. That wisdom that the older musicians talked about, that goes back to the African griot and other oral traditions. And that is the difference, because this music has always progressed through that system. That goes back to the African griot and other old traditions. You learn the history from your elders, you walk beside them, you observe them, you absorb from them. You learn from the masters. Then you figure it out, find yourself and then go to the next level. Our biggest responsibility and challenge is to bring as much of that history, and oral tradition, into the academic setting as we possibly can. It is going to be completely lost if we don’t.

**JJ:** Do you have a favorite quotation about music that you tell your students?

**SW:** Oh yeah, speaking to what I just said, the first time I met Jackie McLean. I moved to New York in ’87. One of my first trips after I got here was to Japan. I’m standing in line at the airport ticket counter and I see Jackie. I go over and said, “Oh Mr. McLean, Nat Reeves is a friend of mine...” “Oh yeah, he told me about you and I’ve heard your recordings. You sound good. Keep up the good work, but just remember one thing: all the new music is behind us.” He looked me dead in the eyes when he said that, and then he walked away. [Chuckles] I stood there like a deer in the headlights. I knew he had just dropped some heavy stuff on me, and I didn’t really know what he meant. It took me years to process what he said. Basically he was telling me, “Look I hear where you are trying to go, but you need to understand where it comes from. All you need to do is go back and dig deep into the history of the music and you’ll find it.” I started listening more, and transcribing more, particularly to some of his music. It was, “Wait a minute! Jackie was doing that back in 1958. Wow!”

Then it got me digging back deeper and deeper and digging pieces like “Queer Notions,” a Coleman Hawkins composition that he played with Fletcher Henderson in the 1920s. It is a piece built on a whole tone scale. So I’m looking for all these exotic sounds and concepts thinking that this is the modern thing, but that has already been covered. That is what Jackie was telling me; you think you are looking forward, but you have to go back to look forward. That was one of the most important pearls of wisdom I’ve gotten from anybody.

**JJ:** Besides teaching at William Paterson, has anything else of importance in your career taken place in New Jersey?

**SW:** Oh yeah. A few weeks ago I was part of the Wayne Shorter celebration at NJPAC. Christian McBride, who has been a dear friend for many years, asked me to be part of a group with, Omar Hakim, Rachel Z and Joe Lovano. We did the music of Wayne Shorter and Weather Report. That was one of my biggest career honors because I was working with great musicians who are all heroes of mine. That was the first time I got to work with Omar and Rachel. I’ve been a longtime admirer of their work, particularly Omar going back to my teen years knowing his work with Weather Report, Sting and other people. He is a brilliant drummer, and a sweetheart of a guy as is Rachel. Being there collectively to celebrate Wayne, and all of us working together was so beautiful, because we all put that at the center of what we were doing. No one had any ego. It was just a beautiful experience to be sharing that music. That was one of the highlights of my career, certainly.

I have recorded at least five or six dates at Rudy Van Gelder’s, and I feel very fortunate on a couple of levels. One, recording at Rudy’s speaks for itself. It is the standard of jazz recording since the 1950s, and I had very good rapport with him. Rudy was not a man of many words, [laughs] but I must say with all the things we have heard of Rudy being very particular about what he did, and not always the warmest person, I had nothing but pleasant encounters with him. I feel very lucky in that respect. The first record date may have been one of Donald Brown’s dates. He was very kind and pleasant to me. I didn’t try to engage him a lot because I had been informed, “Don’t get in his way, and don’t ask him any stupid questions.” He complemented me, “Man you’ve got a nice sound.” Given everyone he’s worked with I thought, “Well I’ll take that.”

**JJ:** Of all you jazz heroes which are the most interesting to you as a person?
If I could go back in time I would love to talk to Duke Ellington. Duke was more than the epitome of our music. He was the epitome of the great American spirit...He always represented himself and his band, the music and our country in the highest level.

SW: I have to think about that one. Of the folks I’ve worked with, I’d say Chick Corea. He is well read and always thinking about the process of composition across genera. He listens to everything, and his body of work demonstrates that. Just a few days ago we were talking about his approach to classical music and how much he dug Paul McCarthy’s song writing. If you get him on the subject of Bud Powell or Thelonious Monk, that is a conversation of another style. It is always very stimulating to talk to him, because he is always searching, and every time there are new ideas. He is really into movies, books and the whole process of creating.

If I could go back in time I would love to talk to Duke Ellington. Duke was more than the epitome of our music. He was the epitome of the great American spirit. If we only had that in the White House now to raise the level of our consciousness, our humanity, culture, and our common thread. He always represented himself and his band, the music and our country in the highest level. He was in touch with the finest strains of our culture, and had the highest intellect to present all of that through different prisms, and yet he was grounded in the people. That is what we have all attempted to do on some level. He is the beacon for that.

One of my favorite moments is in that PBS American Masters when he is at the piano, and a guy asks him about the project My People, which he had just recorded. The guy asks, “Who are your people?” Duke was so slick. He knew the guy was trying to bait him. Duke said, “Well my people are the people. You know I’m from many groups, the piano players, and the group that appreciates a fine Beaujolais.” [Laugh] “Oh man,” I said, “This is the most masterful stuff you will ever see.”

JJ: How and when did your association with Maria Schneider begin?

SW: I would also have to put her on the list of most interesting heroes, because she is a hero in addition to being a friend and bandleader for me. I was somewhat there from the beginning, when she and John Fairchild put the band together. I subbed one night on a rehearsal at the Vanguard. Mark Vincent, who was lead alto player, and one of the finest alto players around said, “Maria this works” giving me his approval. I was very flattered. When they first started, I was subbing in the band quite a bit. Then when Tim Ries transitioned out of the band, she asked me to join. That was 2003 or 2004. It has been steady since then, and one of the most rewarding associations in my career, musically and personally, because Maria is passionate about music, art, justice for artists and social justice and an advocate for the environment. She is also a great thinker. She is grounded in her Minnesota roots, and you can hear that in her music. It is so visual. Even now, I experience that music as if I am playing it for the first time because you always hear something in the music you didn’t hear before. It is a gift that continues to give.

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

SW: I would have to say Lionel Hampton. I had been in town for about six months when I got the gig with him. He was changing his band, and had an open audition. I went to the studio and got the gig. And of course you hear the stories about how colorful Lionel Hampton was, and some not so nice things about the way he would treat the band. When I was with him we didn’t have such a hard time, but I was younger then. I wouldn’t tolerate some things now. He was colorful, especially on stage. The guy did not want to leave the stage. I had heard the legends about a two-hour first set, and him calling everybody “Gate.” That sounded cartoonish, but sure enough, that is who he was.

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

SW: Oh my goodness, I am so happy there is no smoking. It has been life changing. We live a healthier lifestyle, and I’m saving a lot of money on dry cleaning bills. [Laughs] That is one part of the romance we can do without, the smoky jazz club. You very seldom see that in Europe now. It still turns up in Japan, in the smaller clubs. The big clubs don’t have it. I did a tour a couple of years ago in Japan and I had to ask the bandleader to please make an announcement well before the set that there would be no smoking because I cannot play in a smoke filled room now. I’m sorry to be a drag, but I don’t want to die because of that. They have the right to kill themselves, but not me.

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

SW: I have a smattering, but most of that stuff is in storage. I’m sure I have posters from different tours I’ve done with different people; probably going back to touring I did with Buster Williams in 1991. And numerous photos, sketches and programs that people have given me from different places, Japan, South America, Europe and the states. I should probably catalogue it at some point. I could have opened a tee shirt store with all the festival shirts we used to get, but I don’t have room for that stuff. I give them away or donate them to a charity like the Salvation Army. I usually get rid of some clothing a couple of times a year.

JJ: Do you happen to have synesthesia?

SW: I don’t, but I’m glad you asked. I have a former student, Patrick Bartley a very brilliant alto and clarinet player. I would give him an assignment, and he would come back the next week with ten other things figured out from what we talked about. I said, “This is an interesting choice of notes you have chosen to play on this. Where do you find these notes?” He said, “When I play this note I see orange, and then I’ll see blue.” I said, “Wait you have synesthesia?” He said, “Yeah,” kind of matter-of-factly. He just saw the other notes that most players wouldn’t think of playing as a set of chord changes or passages of melodies or whatever. To him it was no big deal. To me it was another insight. I’m fascinated by that. I know a few major composers had it.

JJ: I read that Duke Ellington was one.

SW: That would make total sense, because he was a painter, and his music is visual. I know this from having played a lot of this music and researched it,
and asking people who are more well-schooled in Ellington than I am. James
Chirillo is an amazing arranger, and Ellington scholar. I asked him once about
an arrangement of “Chelsea Bridge,” “James can you tell me what the chord is
at this particular spot?” He had the score and said, “I can tell you what the
notes are, and I can tell you there ain’t no name for this chord.” [Laughs] That
let me know right away that Duke wasn’t thinking about chords. He heard
sounds and colors.

**JJ:** Do you have any memories of 9/11 that you would share with
us?

**SW:** I was home that day. I was living in Washington Heights, on 186th
street. It was a picture perfect day and I got up right around nine o’clock. The
first thing I would normally do is turn on NY1 News, because I’m a news junkie.
I just sat and watched, thinking, “What is going on? Are we in Armageddon?” I
decided to give blood at St. Vincent Hospital on 14th. I got there and they
weren’t taking any blood, because there weren’t any victims coming in. There
was no traffic, except for emergency vehicles. I saw people still walking from
the downtown Wall Street area covered in dust. All I could think was, “This isn’t
real. It isn’t real.” I was supposed to leave for Europe a few days later with
Michele Rosewoman’s band. We were all talking to each other by phone, and
she said, “I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to go on this tour.” None of
us felt like going.

I didn’t touch my horn for two weeks because it felt so inappropriate and
insignificant. I know others felt compelled to play to put some beauty back into
the world. I have no argument with that, but the grieving and the reality hit me
so hard. New York just shut down. We are accustomed to New Yorkers walking
around with this energy and urgency. I remember New York just being very
quiet and people slowing down like some zombie world.

**JJ:** Do you remember when you did start playing again?

**SW:** It may have been three or four weeks after 9/11. I felt, “Okay I’ve got to
get back on this horse. I picked up my horn and started playing. It still didn’t
feel right. It took maybe a couple of days to feel some sense of normalcy
having the horn in my hands. Once I got with other musicians and started
playing I felt, “Okay, we can do this.”

**JJ:** Have you ever played the White House or any comparable
location?

**SW:** I’m so glad and blessed that I played the White House during the Obama
administration. They brought in more music and culture than any other
administration. Just in terms of music, they brought in everybody and
everything; classical, blues, gospel, jazz, country and everything. I did the Ray
Charles tribute with the Christian McBride Big Band. While we were playing, the
Obamas were seated in the front row, and just let their hair down. It was a
genuine feeling and festive atmosphere. They enjoyed the show like any other
citizens. It was the real deal.

I feel very fortunate to have been there and seen the president of the United
States who was genuine, and had an appreciation for the importance of the
arts and their contribution to American culture. This was several months before
the election. We all said, “Let’s savor this moment because this will probably
never happen again in this house in our lifetimes.” That didn’t get lost on us. It
was edification of the best of who we are and who we could be.

Of all the venues and places that I have been privileged to play at, that for me
was, if not the most significant one, it was certainly in the top five. That was
something that goes beyond being a musician and artist. That spoke to our
humanity. It was such a positive atmosphere. You can see the video on
YouTube. To see all these dignitaries just being there to celebrate, it was,
“Wow we are all just human beings.” I should say of the stars that they brought
on, not one displayed any ego. Every one of them gave the band respect. They
turned around to us as they walked off and said, “Thank you guys. You were
great.” The POTUS set the tone. It was a very beautiful and edifying experience.

**JJ:** Did you get any photos?

**SW:** They told us, “We are going to take a cast photo with the president and
first lady.” We gathered in the Blue Room and waited. We were told, “They are
on their way. Everyone get into position.” We were facing the photographer,
and heard this voice behind us, “Hey everyone.” It was them. Collectively there
must have been about 30 of us, and they greeted every one of us personally.
They looked you in the eye, shook your hand and thanked us for being there.
Then we took the photo. It was great.

**JJ:** That is a good place to stop. Thank you so much. I really
enjoyed talking to you.

**SW:** Thanks for your interest in talking to me. All the best man.

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**MADLOM 20th Anniversary Gala Honors Reggie Workman**

MADLOM, the Montclair Academy & Laboratory of Dance, Drum, Drama,
celebrates its 20th anniversary in style with a Gala Benefit Concert honoring its
co-founder and legendary jazz bassist Reggie Workman. The event will take place on
Sunday, May 20 from 6:45-9 PM at Bangz,
23 South Fullerton Avenue in Montclair.

Reggie will perform, joined by rising music star Adan Carlo Feliciano, a Montclair
native and MADLOM alumnus, Robin Baytas, MADLOM drummers, William Pew,
Ayana Workman, Asaf-Even-Zur, Alon Benjamini and Zachary Kirschmae.

Wine, soft drinks and light refreshments will be served and there will be a silent auction.

Reggie co-founded MADLOM with Maya Milenovic Workman. Their daughter Ayana
Workman, who grew up in Montclair, has become a successful actress on the New
York stage and on television.

Regular tickets are $50. MADLOM alumni and student tickets are $35. Tickets can be
purchased at www.madlom.org or during MADLOM studio hours, M-F, 5-7 PM at
First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Avenue in Montclair.

For more information about the event, visit www.madlom.org, email madlommail@
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Travel with: High Sierra Jazz Band, Dave Bennett Quartet, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Tom Hook Quartet, Cheryl Thurston for the Jam Sessions.

2019 JAZZ ALIVE Sept 28 - Oct 10 on the Crystal Symphony Los Angeles to Caldera, Costa Rica
Although Rhoda Scott has lived in France for nearly five decades and is a star throughout Europe the celebrated jazz organist has deep roots here in New Jersey, and she looked right at home on the altar of Bethany Baptist Church in Newark where she performed at the church’s monthly Jazz Vespers on April 7.

And well she should. Scott first came to love the organ playing in the South Jersey churches where her father, a traveling African Methodist Episcopal minister, preached on Sundays when she was a young girl. In church she learned to play the bass lines on the organ’s pedals with bare feet, a practice which became her trademark and earned her a nickname — “The Barefoot Lady.”

The self-taught musician later played at Newark’s Key Club where she came to the attention of producer Ozzie Cadena who recorded her first two LPs for Tru-Sound Records, Hey, Hey, Hey (1962) and Live at the Key Club (1963). It was also in Newark, playing Saturday night dancehall intermissions, where she caught the ear of headliner Count Basie who brought her to Harlem to perform at his club. At Basie’s club she came to the attention of French record producer Eddie Barclay and club manager Raoul Saint-Yves. They invited her to Paris to perform but she declined and took time off to earn a master’s degree at the Manhattan School of Music.

But in 1967 she did travel to Paris to study with classical composer Nadia Boulanger, whose students had included Aaron Copland, Astor Piazzolla and Quincy Jones. While there she accepted Saint-Yves’ invitation to play at Le Bilboquet, the club where Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier and Louis Armstrong shot scenes for the 1961 film Paris Blues. She became a regular at the popular club and the naturally expressive and charismatic performer soon began appearing on television and at festivals all over Europe.

“I was really riding a wave,” she told the Star-Ledger’s Tim Wilkins in a 2011 interview. “People were ready for something new, and there I was. It was like a happening; I got a lot of exposure.” She married Saint-Yves in 1969 and eventually would record dozens of albums for his friend Barclay’s label, including 1976’s Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra With Rhoda Scott.

While she’s lived in Paris since the late ’60s, Scott has returned to the United States regularly to visit family and to perform, often in years past to appear at the former Newark Jazz Festival alongside fellow jazz organ stars like Jimmy McGriff and Trudy Pitts.

In 2011 Scott returned to New Jersey to study for a second master’s degree at Rutgers in the Jazz History and Research program led by Lewis Porter, and also reacquainted herself with the local jazz scene — performing at an old style All-Star Organ Jam at Symphony Hall in December 2011 and at the Newark Museum’s Jazz in the Garden series in August 2012.

Rhoda Scott was back in Newark again last month for a return visit to Bethany Baptist Church, where her longtime friend Dorthaan Kirk curates the monthly Jazz Vespers series, and members of congregation and other guests were in their seats an hour before the 6 pm start time. Late arrivals had to scurry for on-street parking, as the church’s large lot was full up. By the time the musicians appeared on the altar at the appointed hour the last few seats had been snatched up.

The program began without introduction and Scott took up a church appropriate Bach-like prelude, which continued until, with two sharp raps on Earl Guise’s snare drum, Bobby Timmons’ “Moanin’” burst out, from Baroque to bop in a trice. As the Hammond B3 organ’s big sound boiled out from the altar the crowd eased back in their seats. This is what they came to hear.

Two unannounced numbers followed, one swinger and one jazz waltz, before Ms. Kirk took to the podium for introductions, which included WBGO host Bill Daughtry who was making his first visit to the Vespers. She also noted that NJPAC was sponsoring this year’s January to June Vespers programs and announced that the organization’s support for the series would continue in 2019.

Scott’s next number was “Come Sunday,” with Ellington’s venerable hymn’s melody laid down gently over solemn pedal chords and quiet brush work on the snare drum before transforming into a soulful blues. But the sanctified mood was momentary and the jazz was back on with more Ellingtonia, Juan Tizol’s exotic “Caravan”
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Calling “All the Things You Are” to a bunch of non-related musicians was a much less risky proposition in 1958 that it is 2018.

All of this rather lengthy introduction is to bring us to the beginning of Jack Kleinsinger’s 46th season as producer of the Highlights in Jazz series, which bridged the age gap with “The Millennials Meet the Masters.” It demonstrated that, under the right circumstances, there is no generation gap in jazz.

What makes HIJ concerts special is that they rarely feature somebody’s set band, but rather a group of musicians who share a common aesthetic and an appreciation of each others’ performances. To help audiences grasp the concept, the presentations are usually given thematic titles. March’s concert was hardly a battle of the ages, but more like a mutual admiration society, in this case focused on octogenarian Jimmy Cobb, the 89-year-old drummer who most notably anchored Miles Davis’ landmark Kind of Blue session in 1959.

Highlights in Jazz is often like the comfort food of jazz concerts: large, filling portions of entertainment with not much unexpected and few disappointments. That’s what you had in this presentation. Joining Cobb for the senior representation were Buster Williams on bass, longtime Saturday Night Live band member Steve Turre on trombone and barely-60 pianist Tardo Hammer filling in for the ailing George Cables. The younger generation was represented by reed-playing twins Peter and Will Anderson, trumpeter Dominick Farinacci and the “surprise guest” for the evening, guitarist Félix Lemerle.

“I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart,” a time-tested tune, served as the introduction of the evening’s group, with the horns engaging in pleasant interplay. The one shortcoming was Lemerle’s guitar, which was too loud for the traditional role you would expect on a Swing era tune. Instead, it was as bright as any of the brass, making for a somewhat jarring accompaniment.

Lemerle sat out on “Moanin’,” and the four-horn front line lit into the bluesy Bobby Timmons chestnut, bringing to mind the tight, small group hard bop swing of the Jazztet or Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. It also was another reminder of how musicians of different generations can meet on the common ground of classic tunes.

In the tradition of Norman Granz’s “Jazz at the Philharmonic,” one of Kleinsinger’s key influences, everyone in the lineup got a feature at some point in the show.

Backed by the rhythm section, Farinacci showed classic jazz stylings in “You Don’t Know What Love Is.” His fat, rich tones were very much in the tradition of Clark Terry and more than a bit of Clifford Brown.

Will Anderson distinguished himself with his flute work at the start of the concert’s

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Producer Jack Kleinsinger, left, joins the audience in cheering his “The Millennials Meet the Masters” concert headliners, from left: Kleinsinger, Tardo Hammer, Steve Turre, Félix Lemerle, Dominick Farinacci, Buster Williams, Will Anderson, Peter Anderson and Jimmy Cobb.

Jimmy Cobb brought his well-honed drum skills to the March Highlights in Jazz concert.

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Will Anderson distinguished himself with his flute work at the start of the concert’s
second half that featured everyone in the show, a round robin that had everyone show their talents.

It wouldn’t be a Steve Turre performance without a demonstration of his virtuosity on the conch shell. He did a lovely rendition of Miles Davis’ “All Blues,” which also was entirely in keeping with the theme of Cobb’s association with that classic.

Similarly, Cobb’s familiar cymbal work was featured on another of his Davis catalog tunes, “Some Day My Prince Will Come.”

The theme of the next Highlights in Jazz concert is “Dick Hyman and Friends,” headlining the 91-year-old pianist who last year, like Cobb, was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. Also scheduled to appear are trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, bassist Jay Leonhart, clarinetist/saxophonist Ken Peplowski and drummer/vibist Chuck Redd. The concert will be Thursday, May 10 at 8 pm, at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers Street, Manhattan. Tickets are $50.

“Jesus Appears to Thomas” and the apostle’s famous doubts. “Faith and doubt are intertwined,” said Rev. Adkins-Jones. Maybe so, but there were only believers in the pews where Ms. Rhoda Scott was concerned.

The musician then spoke for the first time that evening offering that, although she has appeared all over Europe, in France and Germany and Hungary and beyond, “I always hear the love when I come home.”

“Bear with me, I’d like to see if this is gonna work,” Scott says before beginning her last number, and then leads the church in a spirited and surprisingly on-pitch and in-tempo sing-a-long of a Vespers appropriate “When the Saints Go Marching In” — of which one chorus is played, to the crowd’s delight, with bare feet only.

— Tony Mottola
RALPH SNEEDEN

Ralph Sneeden begins and ends “Looking for Ice,” an essay describing his complicated and often contradictory relationship to the allure of water, in its frozen state and natural, with the experience of a single skater. The first, a teacher, drowned while exploring the outer reaches of a frozen river alone, lured by fresh snow and clean ice. Sneeden understands the challenge felt by his fellow teacher. The second is Sneeden’s own experience when he skated away from his wife and three children on the pond in Wenham, Massachusetts they could see from their home’s windows. He’d been skating and playing ice hockey for much of his life, before skateboarding and then surfing’s enchantment. Sneeden has even coached hockey. But this time he’d “opened up,” astonishing his family, who’d not seen this side of him, with his acceleration and finesse. A few nights later he woke to a dream in which his daughter slid from his grip “down a dark watery hole in the ice,” illustrating the fear that accompanies joyful, open-air skating. The essay is alive with the poet’s recollections superbly rendered of his life on the ice.

Born in Los Angeles in 1960, Sneeden’s parents traveled, infant Ralph in tow, to as many of the regional high spots as they could before heading back east when Sneeden was two. Another two years at the Jersey shore, Seaside Heights specifically, left its indelible mark, including his near drowning which he describes with great clarity in his 2014 essay “Stepping Off.” At first, perhaps superficial, readings, “Coltrane and My Father” seems to be a poem about abandonment, that both Coltrane and the elder Sneeden “went too far out and never came back.” But how could that be when the poet refers to a conversation he shared with his father about Coltrane, presumably as an adult? Keeping in mind that poetry’s nuances are always open to interpretation, there’s a hint that both men admire Coltrane. They’ve looked at the true nature of the man behind the legend as far as possible. Coltrane makes his own way and does — not what is expected of him — but what calls to him. He is reaching toward his true self, like it or not, and many do not.

The questions hanging in the air then are; how far is too far in the choice between convention and authenticity? Is it a choice or a need? How much of our ourselves do we sacrifice…a question that becomes particularly focused in the floodlights of parenthood. These questions perplex Sneeden in his own quest for balance.

Sneeden takes us from his present pondering, as he listens to Coltrane on a tape deck* late one night, to his infancy and a home movie his father recorded of a family trip to a California ski resort in summer.

Like Coltrane on vinyl, Sneeden’s father is unknowable in this form. He too, the poet realizes, has had to make his own way between what’s done and what is undone.

*Tape deck: a personal listening device popular after vinyl records and before the Walkman, iPod, Smartphone and whatever is next.

THE POEM

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RHYTHM & RHYME

Poetry editor Gloria Krolak explores the world of jazz in verse. In this month’s poem John Coltrane’s challenging and groundbreaking music is a touchstone for the poet to explore the distance that arises between the quest for authenticity and our conventional expectations.

COLTRANE AND MY FATHER

By Ralph Sneeden

Late one night I hear his breath between runs, something the mikes couldn’t hide, what vinyl makes us forget: the man behind the instrument. My father had seen him once, said that on a solo he went too far out and never came back. People started leaving.

Across the room the tiny lights of the tape deck blink in sympathy with the horn’s voice but register nothing when he pauses to inhale, or sigh with sudden joy, fatigue, disbelief.

A home movie: the barren snowless slope at Squaw Valley, summer, 1961; my mother grows smaller as a swinging chairlift carries her and the infant in her arms slowly into invisibility, and for a moment, a stream of blue cigarette smoke glides in front of the camera from nowhere, then out of sight to the left.

“Full of musical twists and turns that make the album entertaining.”
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Proceeds from the sale of “Here’s to Life” support Lyme Disease research.
Boarding the SS Booker T. Washington went smoothly enough and I found myself a deck below with a bunkmate named Waring, a pleasant enough chap, already settled down in his sack and reading the book he’d been given stepping on the gangplank, Young Man with a Horn by Dorothy Baker.

I noted, “Ah, I see you did better from the book lady than I. I got a collection of Aldous Huxley essays, and you…”

“Yeah, this jazz musician Rick Martin, you read it?” he asked.

“A couple of times and I’d like it again when you’re through with it,” I offered.

It was settled and shortly later he asked what I thought about the book.

“Story, 8; writing, 8. No Hemingway and certainly no Great Gatsby. But a good read if you liked that stuff,” I summarized.

“Stuff meaning jazz?” Waring inquired.

“Yeah, and a great white musician of the 1920s named Bix Beiderbecke. Really took over, took over big time,” I expounded.

Waring was a good listener, and I was always a good talker, especially about a wonderful horn that lived now only on old 78 rpm recording, themselves disappearing fast enough these days. He wanted to know how and why I got started and lost in the subject.

But a small note. I’ve written most of all this before for older or charter Society members. How I was gifted a hundred or so old 78 10-inchers early on when I was starting out and how certain levels of performances guided me, in turn, in discarding many of them for having no jazz interest. There remained plenty to build a house of jazz with, plenty to learn about the subject itself. Old stuff to old timers. Rejoin us a few lines ahead.

One thing the Baker book could not do was capture the Beiderbecke sound in print. It could never be. Even jazz’s best wordsmith, Eddie Condon, gave up after simply saying it was a sound “like that of a beautiful woman saying yes.”

Waring continued reading but for some time kept prodding for more of the legend itself. I think my bunk mate had been hooked, and I foresaw there would be plenty of idle hours afloat for that.

I went back up for some of the good air up top to ponder a personal thing that had my attention.

It was this. I’d always been a nosey guy and my service in Washington had given me access to some information I probably shouldn’t have and didn’t need. It happened to refer to this voyage ahead and was surely classified.

The gist of it was that the British mathematician Alan Turing had been sent to New York for a few months in late 1942 to solve a problem in voice encryption between FDR and Churchill. For three months he worked the labs of IBM, NBC and Kodak before he succeeded. While he was in the States, his Bombe machine back in Bletchley Park, England spewed out information that resulted in Germany’s losing control of the Atlantic and the war itself. It was a ruined fleet of submarines, 84 in all, that Admiral Dönitz ordered away from the Atlantic and the Persian Gulf to the wild tides of the north, thus rendered not to be a threat to our convoy for the whole passage — bon voyage indeed!

And so it was a well-rested, well-tanned and well-fed (from Captain Mulzac’s larder) bunch of soldiers that was put ashore at Oran Harbor in northwest Algeria in late November, 1942. And I knew all along that’s the way it would be so.

Oran turned out to be a pleasant experience despite being totally tented. The fare was okay, prepared by a crew of Italian prisoners of war from stores left by the retreating and routed Germans. Wonderful field baked breads and whatever could be scrounged from the exhausted surrounding terrain. The star of what Oran yielded was a tiny bitter orange that grew wild on weed-like trees wherever you looked.

We weren’t there long enough to manage to like the spot when finally word came. We were once again ordered to board ship in Oran’s harbor at Merz-el-Kebir. It was to be on Thanksgiving Day, echoing FDR’s 12-month earlier famed reference to “a day of infamy” big time.

But keep the faith dear readers, believe it or not that’s India we can see just ahead.
Bickford Jazz Showcase

KEN PEPLOWSKI’S BENNY GOODMAN TRIBUTE*
Thursday, May 3, 7:30PM
The spirit of Benny Goodman lives 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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Monday, June 4, 7:30PM
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IT SEEMS TO TAKE HALF THE EVENING to find 106 Merchant Street. Our taxi driver insists there is no such address. But street numbers in Malta don’t make sense. Number 106 could be on either side of the one-way alley. He is about to drive us back to the hotel when milady Hanne barks, “Stop the car!” She walks into a bar and asks for 106. The bartender jerks his thumb across the street.

We walk into Offbeat Music Bar, a small room full of young people. The warm-up sounds are promising. A couple stands up and offers us their seats. A sign on the wall reads: JAM SESSION EVERY WEDNESDAY. The tall, lean leader, Joe Debono, ticks off “It Might As Well Be Spring.” He plays electric piano with his right hand and lays down a bass line on a small keyboard with his left hand. Drummer Joseph Camilleri falls in fast.

A lovely young lady in black sweater, paisley patterned skirt and long, elegant boots picks up the microphone. Mariele Zammit sings the lines, “I’m as restless as a willow in a windstorm…” The audience claps after every solo and song.

We are impressed. These young people could have been our grandkids. Back home in Denmark, the audience would be gray or white-haired. Jazz is dead? Not on this little island forty-three and a half miles south of Sicily.

During the first set, we’ve noticed a young man in the audience wearing a T-shirt with broad pink and brown stripes. He moved nervously on his chair. Now Will Wegner takes out a soprano saxophone and glides to the floor microphone. When he opens with “There Will Never Be Another You,” milady’s jaw drops. “All the Things You Are” makes a deep dent on us all. Wegner signals vocalist Mariele to join him. They wind up the second set with “Autumn Leaves.” The audience laps it up.

Hanne and I often leave a club after the second set, but these songs and the whole scene have hooked us, so we stay for set three. And a full-bearded electric guitarist makes us glad we did. “Hit the Road, Jack” fails to drive us away.

Promptly at eleven o’clock the music stops. Instruments are put to rest in their cases. A bunch of happy faces stream out the door of 106 Merchant Street. Our only regret: We won’t be here to join them next Wednesday.

But the six-day Malta Jazz Festival 2018 might just lure us back to these rocky shores, July 16-21 are the dates, and the main events are on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The festival has been held every year since 1990 outside Our Lady of Liesse Church on the town of Valletta waterfront. It shifts this year to Palazzo de La Salle in Valletta. Chick Corea is the headliner and coordinator. His trio will play Saturday, July 21. The Chick Corea Acoustic Band unites the leader with longtime brothers-in-music, American bassist John Patitucci and drummer Dick Weckl. The superb Montclair, New Jersey bassist Christian McBride will be there, as will Brazilian guitarist and songwriter Joao Bosco.

The festival embraces jazz guitar master classes at the Offbeat Music Bar. Monday, July 16, Hugo Lippi is the teacher. Tuesday, Philippe Soirat and Philippe Hertz share the honor. Wednesday, Yotam Silberstein takes over. Thursday it’s Olivier Zanot’s turn. Fridays master is Stjepko Gut. Saturday belongs to Vincent Jacqz.

More information at www.maltajazzfestival.org
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✓ List your name and contact info on our website’s Musician’s Page
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To learn more or inquire about joining the NJJS as a Member Musician please e-mail Stew Schiffer at stewschiffer@comcast.net.
CHERYL BENTYNE
Birdland, NYC | March 5
Vocalist Cheryl Bentyne was thoroughly engaging at Birdland where she celebrated the release of her recent album, reArrangements of Shadows: The Music of Stephen Sondheim.

Approaching Sondheim’s music from a jazz perspective takes courage, perception and imagination — qualities that Bentyne possesses in abundance. She had kindred spirits supporting her in pianist Yaron Gershovsky, bassist Matt Aranoff and drummer Clint De Gannon, with occasional contributions from Aaron Weinstein on violin.

Bentyne eased into her program by singing “It Might As Well Be Spring,” a song with lyrics by Sondheim’s mentor Oscar Hammerstein II. She returned occasionally to the Hammerstein catalog with nice takes on “Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise” and “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair.”

The Sondheim album contains 10 selections, six of which were included on this program, “I Remember,” “Everybody Says Don’t,” “Not a Day Goes By,” “I wish I Could Forget You,” “Sand” and “The Ladies Who Lunch.” She also addressed two Sondheim songs not on the album, “Losing My Mind” and “Not While I’m Around.”

This is demanding material, musically and lyrically. Bentyne found ways to make each song her own, bending notes, playing with time, and finding the essence of each lyric.

She was passionate when required, and humorous when appropriate, usually taking the songs to places where they had not been before. She made the Sondheim enthusiasts realize the new possibilities that she unveiled in his music, and jazz fans understand how satisfying the Sondheim material could be with a creative force like Bentyne giving them the kind of rhythmic impetus that she provided. It was truly an awesome experience to hear her artistry in full bloom.

Just to remind those present that she has long been a special presence on the jazz scene, as a solo performer, and as a member of the group Manhattan Transfer, she closed with two tunes from the more standard jazz repertoire, “It’s Alright with Me” and “Señor Blues.”

Cheryl Bentyne did right by Sondheim on this occasion, and the audience responded with enthusiasm. It would be nice to hear more jazz artists discover the joys to be found in his rich catalog.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA with special guest MARILYN MAYE: Nursery Song Swing
Frederick P. Rose Hall, NYC | March 9-10
Over the years, with so many concerts to present, and themes to choose, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra has come up with some interesting programs.

Nursery School Swing was among the most original ideas for a program, and the approach to it was fascinating. Songs like “Old MacDonald,” “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” “Bein’ Green,” “Conjunction Junction” and “The Muffin Man” were assigned to various members of the band to create original arrangements. They let their imaginations run wild, and what they created was fun to experience. At times there were hints of the kind of whimsy that often crept into the arrangements that predominated on the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra.

Among the highlights were the Wynton Marsalis exploration of the “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Vincent Gardner’s vocal on Ali Jackson’s arrangement of “Bein’ Green,” Paul Nedzela’s baritone sax solo on “The Muffin Man,” Chris Crenshaw’s chart on “Puff the Magic Dragon,” featuring his vocal and Elliot Mason’s trombone solo, and the Vincent Gardner take on “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” a chart that had me softly giggling aloud.

The ageless vocalist Marilyn Maye, along for the ride, and made a few contributions on each of the two sets. In the first half she sang the song that brought Ella Fitzgerald to prominence with the Chick Webb Orchestra, “A-Tisk, A-Tasket,” with a chart by Chris Crenshaw. Sherman Irby had everyone smiling with his arrangement of “The Wheels on the Bus,” with Maye providing the setups for Irby’s musical onomatopoeia simulating the sounds of wheels, horns, wipers, motors and the cries of a baby.

The final words of the mommy and the daddy saying “I Love You” to the baby led into Maye singing Cole Porter’s “I Love You,” a nice conclusion to the opening set.

Maye returned in the second half to punctuate Marcus Printup’s nifty take on Bob Dorough’s “Conjunction Junction.” She brought the evening to a close with a song that expressed what happened at the onset of the program when each audience member “Put on a Happy Face,” and those grins continued right up until the end.

Those nursery songs had never been put through these kind of paces before, and they surely enjoyed the adventure.

ANDREA McCARDLE and DONNA McKECHNIE
Hamlisch and Sondheim
The Chase Room, NJPAC, Newark | March 10
Broadway tunes comprise much of the American Songbook. Two composers who contributed to this oeuvre were Marvin Hamlisch and Stephen Sondheim. Two performers who have starred in two of the biggest Broadway hits are Andrea McCardle, the original lead in Annie, and Donna McKechnie, one of the stars of A Chorus Line. They shared the stage at The Chase Room in the New Jersey Performing Arts Center to address the songs of Hamlisch and Sondheim.

Music director/pianist Steve Marzullo, bassist Mary Ann McSweeney and drummer Ray Marchica provided strong instrumental support.

The first part of the show concentrated on the Sondheim catalog. The concert included songs from Saturday Night, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Company, Follies, A Little Night Music, Marry Me a Little and Merrily We Roll Along.

They opened the show joining together to sing “Another Hundred People” and “Old Friends.” Later they paired up again for “Everybody Ought to Have a Maid” and “The Girls of Summer.” McKechnie soloed on “You Could Drive a Person Crazy,” a trio number from Company where she was one of the trio in the original production. Here she took on all three roles, bringing some engaging humor to the affair. Her other selections were two numbers from Saturday Night, “What More Do I Need” and “So Many People,” and a touching “Send in the Clowns” with “Night Waltz” from A Little Night Music as an instrumental intro.
BROADWAY’S BEST WITH SETH RUDETSKY

Victoria Theater, NJPAC, Newark | March 16

When Seth Rudetsky comes onto a stage, it is like a tornado arriving. He is energetic and overwhelming, but unlike a tornado, he is also entertaining. His world is that of Broadway, as a radio host on Sirius/XM, a pianist in Broadway pits, a performer, and a writer, in sum a Broadway Renaissance man.

For his show at NJPAC, he brought with him three performers who have starred in Broadway musicals, Rachel York, Andrea Burns and Manoel Felciano. Over the course of about an hour and a half, they sang songs from a variety of Broadway shows, with Rudetsky providing commentary, often humorous, and occasionally outrageous.

Rachel York is a glamorous presence with a strong and rangy vocal instrument. She put it to good use singing her big number from *City of Angels*, “Lost and Found,” and “I Dreamed a Dream” from *Les Misérables*. She also has a terrific sense of humor that was especially on display as she did an impression of Julie Andrews singing “My Favorite Things,” and of a variety of singers performing “I Will Always Love You.”

Manoel Felciano has a powerful voice and a charismatic presence. Among his selections were “Music of the Night” from *Phantom of the Opera*, and “Something’s Coming” from *West Side Story*. He played Tobias in the revival of *Sweeney Todd* where the performers played instruments in lieu of an orchestra. He brought out his violin to add the music for “Not While I’m Around.” *Tales of the City* is a series of novels written by Armistead Maupin. A musical is in the works based on Maupin’s writings. “The lyrics for one of the songs comprise the text of a letter to his mother that Maupin wrote to come out about his sexual preference.” It is a touching piece of material that Felciano put across most beautifully.

Andrea Burns has personality to spare. She gave just the right touch to “I Feel Pretty”. Off-Broadway, Burns appeared in the Jason Robert Brown musical *Songs For A New World*. From this show, she sang “Stars and the Moon.” Her comedic timing came to the fore with “100 Easy Ways to Lose a Man” from *Wonderful Town*.

York was part of two duets, joining Burns on “For Good” from *Wicked*, and with Rudetsky assayed “Suddenly, Seymour” from *Little Shop of Horrors*.

In addition to his role as the host, Rudetsky supplied the piano accompaniment throughout the evening, and did so winningly and effectively. Spending time with Seth Rudetsky and his guests proved to be a delightful experience. Between the music and the patter, there was a constant flow of engaging entertainment from four marvelous performers.

LYRICS & LYRICISTS

Irving Berlin: American

Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall/92nd Street Y, NYC | March 24-26

Ted Chapin, the new producer of the Lyrics & Lyricist series at the 92nd Street Y has taken an outside-the-box approach to planning the programs for this season. For Irving Berlin: American, he selected Noah Racey to direct and choreograph, and co-wrote the show with Cheryl L. Davis. Rather than following the usual L&L format of having a host who presents a connective...
narrative, the writers conceived of
an approach that had Stephen
DeRosa assuming the role of Berlin,
and Jada Temple playing the role of
an aspiring young songwriter who
approaches Berlin to get some
advice about the art of creating
songs. Through their interaction, the
story of Irving Berlin is related in
dialog and song. DeRosa did a nifty
job of capturing Berlin, and Temple
possessed the wide-eyed innocence
of youth that fit her character.

The rest of the performing cast was
Holly Butler, Danny Gardner, Emily
Hsu and Richard Tiaz Yoder who
comprised the ensemble, with
Bryonha Marie providing superb solo interludes. The musical support came
from Justin Smith on violin, John De Simini on reeds, Leo Huppert on bass and
Dan Weiner on drums. The modest group often sounded like a larger ensemble
thanks to the arrangements of Ross Patterson, Aaron Gandy and Dan Garmon.

The program opened with the ensemble and Temple performing a rousing
song, “Marching Along with Me,” written for Ethel Merman in the 1938 film
Alexander’s Ragtime Band, but which ended up being used only as part of the
instrumental accompaniment to the credits. The story line opened with a series
of tunes with ethnic themes, a format that was popular as Berlin was emerging
as a songwriter. Among them were “Cohen Owes Me Ninety-Seven Dollars,”
“Oh, How That German Could Love,” “When You Kiss an Italian Girl,” “Ephraham
Played Upon the Piano” and “Spanish Love.” Berlin’s first major success arrived
with “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” He followed with many more songs with a
ragtime theme, like “Everything in America Is Ragtime,” “That Mysterious Rag”
and “That International Rag.”

Among Berlin’s best known songs was “Always.” For this show it was preceded
by a little known tune from an unproduced 1963 musical Say It with Music
titled “Always the Same.” Three more familiar tunes, “Say It Isn’t So,” “Puttin’
on the Ritz” and “Let’s Face the Music and Dance” preceded the finale of “God
Bless America,” with the revised lyrics that were used when Kate Smith
introduced this version on her radio show in 1938.

Special mention must be made of the fact that this program had more
choreography than a typical L&L show, and much of it was spectacular, adding
a welcome element to this performance. This can be traced to the participation
of Noah Racey who is a brilliant choreographer. The ensemble members were
equally adept with their feet as they were with their voices.

Berlin’s catalog of songs offers an overflowing basket of musical riches.
It was well mined for this charming show.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT
continued from page 35

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BOOK REVIEW

**THIS IS HIP:**
The Life of Mark Murphy

By Peter Jones

(Equinox, Sheffield, UK/Bristol, CT 2018 | 247 pages, $29.95)

The title that author Peter Jones chose for his well researched and engagingly written biography of jazz vocalist Mark Murphy, *This Is Hip*, is an appropriate one. If anyone deserves the designation of being hip, Murphy certainly qualifies. While he desired wide fame and success, his innate artistic sensibility precluded his making the kinds of compromises that might have brought that result to him.

Murphy was a creative force who never was able to harness his talent in a way that would engender mass popularity. He was truly a jazz artist. If you went to see him repeatedly, he never sang a song quite the same way from gig to gig. He took liberties with his material that were always daring, usually interesting, but not always easily accessible, even to some of his most enthusiastic fans. While there is much debate as to what defines a jazz singer, it would be difficult to deny that Murphy was exactly that, no matter how narrowly or broadly you choose to limit your definition.

Murphy was born in 1932, and grew up in Fulton, New York, located about 30 miles northwest of Syracuse. His father was an attorney who loved to sing, and his mother was a jazz fan. The radio shows that his mother favored, and the influence of his aunt Mary, a pianist who played many jazz and pop pieces, gave him an early exposure to jazz, but it was when he was about 14, and his uncle played an Art Tatum record for him, that he became a committed jazz enthusiast. Mark developed his talents as both a pianist and singer, and eventually began performing in public, mainly with a group that included his brother Dwight on bass. He attended Syracuse University where he majored in Speech and Dramatic Arts.

After graduating from Syracuse, he decided upon a career as a vocalist. His lack of success in pushing toward his goal in Syracuse led him to try his luck in New York City where his brother had already relocated. Things were not easy, but he eventually landed a contract with Decca Records. They released two albums by Murphy, *Meet Mark Murphy* and *Let Yourself Go*, but the sales were disappointing.

Feeling a need to explore new ground, Murphy moved to Los Angeles. He gigged where he could, got some television exposure on Bobby Troup’s *Stars of Jazz* show and on the *Tonight Show* with Steve Allen. A producer at Capitol Records, impressed with Murphy’s Decca output, signed him to a three-album deal. His first Capitol recording, *This Could Be the Start of Something* had arrangements by Bill Holman. Again the sales were disappointing, as were those for his next Capitol releases, *Mark Murphy’s Hip Parade* and *Playing the Field*.

While the albums on Decca and Capitol were aimed at garnering a pop audience, Murphy’s jazz edge precluded their achieving the kind of sales desired. Once again it was back to New York where he landed a deal with a smaller jazz label, Riverside. His first Riverside release, *Rah*, remains a favorite among Murphy enthusiasts to this day. Surrounded by players like Clark Terry, Blue Mitchell, Urbie Green, Wynton Kelly and Jimmy Cobb, Murphy was clearly headed in a more jazz-oriented direction. It was followed by *That’s How I Love the Blues*.

Despite gathering many fine reviews for his recordings, Murphy was not making the kind of career progress that he desired. A combination of factors contributed to this. There was his somewhat erratic personality. He had an unbounding artistic vision that pushed him in ways that were not likely to result in a mass audience. His insistence on choosing the material for his recordings, and nudging the arrangers to create charts that were more concerned with his musical concepts, contributed to the lack of acceptance of his work by a mass audience. He arrived on the scene at a time when the musical environment he entered found rock on the upswing while jazz and classic pop were headed in the other direction. The fact that he was gay, although not out of the closet, at a time when the general population did not accept this life style, was also a factor.

The next phase of his career centered around his move to England in 1963. He expanded his career in other directions, pursuing acting in addition to continuing to develop as a singer, both style wise, and as a performer. During the almost a decade that he spent in England, he made occasional recordings, grabbed gigs where he could, found acting roles here and there, and met the partner who would be his companion for the next 25 years, Eddie O’Sullivan.

His mother’s death in 1972 brought him back to the United States, and he was ready for another change, moving back to his native country, settling initially in Buffalo, New York. Through his ex-manager, Helen Kane, he met Joe Fields who had recently started Muse Records, the label that would become Murphy’s home between 1973 and 1991. His initial album was *Bridging the Gap*, a vocal...
BOOK REVIEW
continued from page 37

adventure that met with mixed reviews ranging from raves to dismissive. One thing that was apparent was that Murphy was becoming even more of a chance-taker, and a distinctly individual musical personality. During his Muse years, he recorded albums that were diverse in their content, especially his immersion in Brazilian music, and included some of his classic outings like Stolen Moments and Bop for Kerouac.

One side project in this period was his appearance on the legendary American Popular Song series hosted by Alec Wilder. The show, broadcast in February 1978, resulted the release of one of Murphy’s most straight-ahead, yet effective albums, Mark Murphy Sings Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman, a collection of the vocal tracks from the broadcast. It was released by Audiophile records, and was expanded when released on CD. This is the Murphy album that remains his most accessible work for the listener who is unable to get on the wavelength of his more out jazz releases.

Murphy was always pushing the button. He continued to explore new music and new settings for his artistry. Starting in the late 1980s, his music found a surprising audience among young dancers in England, where some of his recordings were being sampled by disc jockeys in dance clubs. He performed several times in front of wildly enthusiastic crowds comprising this constituency.

He and Eddie O’Sullivan moved to San Francisco in 1977. O’Sullivan passed away in 1989, and Murphy was devastated. It affected him emotionally, and resulted in a few years of drug and alcohol abuse. He eventually overcame the drugs, but retained an often excessive fondness for alcohol.

During the final two decades of his career, he experienced many ups and downs. The kind of fame and recognition that he he obtained was diverse in their content, especially his immersion in Brazilian music, and included some of his classic outings like Stolen Moments and Bop for Kerouac.

During the final two decades of his career, he experienced many ups and downs. The kind of fame and recognition that he had always sought still eluded him, but he did have some successes. His 1997 album, Song for the Geese, garnered for him his fifth Grammy nomination, but once again he was disappointed when he was not the winner. In 1999, he reunited with Joe Fields

who had started a new label, HighNote, and it resulted in five quality albums, the last being a tribute to Joe Williams, Memories Of You, in 2003.

He recorded two albums for Verve, produced by trumpeter Til Brönner in Berlin with large ensembles, which were well received. His last full studio album, Never Let Me Go, showed that he still was able to produce moments of magic. (Disclosure: this writer wrote the liner notes for this album.)

During his later years, his club appearances both domestically and internationally usually drew enthusiastic audiences, but he never reached a point where he obtained enough gigs to make him feel financially secure.

He had settled in San Francisco with Eddie, and later spent some time in Seattle, but in 1998, he decided to return to the East, settling in the Poconos where he found a home where he could relax and enjoy the natural environment that surrounded him.

Unfortunately, in his last ears, he showed signs of developing mental issues, initially diagnosed as the onset of Alzheimer’s. Eventually a second medical opinion was obtained that indicated he did not have Alzheimer’s, and that the combination of the medications prescribed for treating dementia and his excessive intake of alcohol caused him to exhibit characteristics of dementia.

There was also the fact that he was always an individual who marched to a different drummer. He finally had to give up living alone, and spent his last years living unhappily at the Actor’s Home in Englewood, New Jersey.

Fortunately, he had several loyal friends who gave him what support they could, including visiting him, taking him out of the home to enjoy some life outside of the environment that he despised, and helping him to obtain and get to whatever gigs he was still able to obtain, remaining surprisingly active for an individual in his mental state.

Peter Jones has done a thorough job of researching Murphy’s life. He is a jazz bassist and singer, as well as a jazz journalist, so has the benefit of having an inside the industry perspective. He demonstrates a thorough familiarity with Murphy’s recorded work. He has gathered his information from many written sources, as well as through interviews with many friends and professional associates of his subject.

The result is a well-written biography that is inclusive, but not filled with the kind of excessive details that often bog down biographies, particularly of jazz artists.

In addition to his chronological delineation of Murphy’s life, and incisive comments about his art, he has included two appendices that greatly help to round out his portrait of Mark Murphy.

The first expounds upon jazz singing and Murphy’s place in and contributions to this artform. Murphy was unique, and Jones gives informed insight into what made him so.

The second examines Murphy’s involvement with jazz education. While not trained as a teacher, Murphy had an innate sense of how to communicate to his students the elements that he believed to be important to their developing as a jazz singer. He did not take a cookbook approach, rather gave each student the kind of specific instruction and help that he perceived to be appropriate for the specific individual he was addressing.

When considering a subject as complex and uniquely individual as Mark Murphy, it is a challenge to examine what contributed to his life evolving as it did, and to do so in a manner that carries the reader along comfortably, making the information vibrantly come to life. Jones has succeeded in doing so with This Is Hip.

If you are a Mark Murphy enthusiast before reading this book, you will find many of your existing impressions confirmed, and likely will discover some new elements to consider in your appreciation of him.

If this is essentially your introduction to him, it should inspire you to open up your ears to the artistry of one of the select jazz singers ever to grace the scene.

Fortunately, most of Murphy’s recorded output is still commercially available to assist you in your journey of discovery.
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Sunday, 6/17, 7:30 pm: Richie Cole Alto Madness Orchestra
Thursday, 6/21, 8 pm: B.D. Lenz Trio
Saturday, 6/23, 8 pm: Jack Furlong Quartet
Saturday, 7/7, 8 pm: Luiz Simas Brazilian Piano Jazz
Saturday, 7/14, 8 pm: Alex Levin Smoke Rings Quartet
Wednesday, 7/18, 8 pm: Michelle Lordi

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Other Views
By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

It is another month, and another stack of CDs to cull for ones that I believe will appeal to the readers of Jersey Jazz. Among the best of them are several tribute albums, to Thelonious Monk, Eddie Jefferson, Arthur Prysock and Gloria Lynne.

There is a pleasant phenomenon occurring in recent years on the jazz scene, young jazz musicians being drawn to the sounds of classic jazz from the ‘20s and ‘30s. It has gained a particularly strong foothold in the New York City area. One of the prime movers in this movement is cornetist MIKE DAVIS, an acolyte of Bix Beiderbecke who has absorbed his style, musically and sartorially. He leads THE NEW WONDERS, a septet that has released their eponymous first album, The New Wonders (self-produced). The players are Davis on cornet, Ricky Alexander on clarinet and alto sax, Joe McDonough on trombone, Jared Engel on banjo, Dalton Ridenhour on piano, Jay Rattman on bass sax and Jay Lepley on drums. Davis, Alexander, Rattman and Lepley share the vocals. The program comprises 15 vintage tunes, most of which are probably unfamiliar to all but those who share their commitment to this music. Well, it is worth your time digging what they do, and discovering or rediscovering these tunes. The band plays with a remarkable feeling for the period style. If you were to be told that these were recordings from the day, you would not be surprised. The recording, while clear, has the ambience of the period. This is a joyful celebration of a time when the music was direct and upbeat. It is not surprising that much of the support for these musicians, and their peers, is an audience of an age similar to the players. This is music that is accessible, fun and smile inducing. You might even find yourself grabbing a partner and cutting a rug to these sounds. (www.mike‑davis‑jazz.com)

Jerome Kern: The Master (Wolf Trap Recordings – 015) is the tenth in a series of recordings, titled The American Popular Song, by pianist JOHN EATON with bassist JAY LEONHART. Eaton is not only a superior jazz player, but an erudite expert on the creators of the Great American Songbook. In this series, he and Leonhart perform the music of the subject, and engage in informative, often witty, discussions of the material being covered. In this case they turn their attention to the great melodist Jerome Kern who, along with Irving Berlin, were the songwriters who produced the compositions that created a new direction for musical theater music. On this album, they touch upon 13 of Kern’s melodies like “They Didn’t Believe Me,” “The Song Is You,” “All the Things You Are” and “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.” They also perform a medley of songs introduced by Fred Astaire, “The Way You Look Tonight,” “I’m Old Fashioned,” “A Fine Romance” and “Pick Yourself Up.” Eaton is a wonderful interpreter of this music with an exquisite touch, and nicely effective on his occasional vocals. Leonhart is one of the go-to cats on bass, and hearing him here lets you know exactly why. They are great musicians, and equally entertaining raconteurs. It all makes for an hour plus of pure listening pleasure. (www.cdbaby.com)

CY COLEMAN is primarily known as a songwriter, having written the music for several Broadway hits, and several pop standards. But his first taste of success was as a jazz pianist, and A Jazzman’s Broadway (Harbinger – 3401) gives an ample sampling of this aspect of his talent. In the late 1950s, there was a wave of albums featuring the scores of Broadway shows performed by jazz groups. Coleman recorded two of these. His was one of five jazz recordings of Harold Arlen and E.Y. “Yip” Harburg’s Jamaica, a 1957 recording noteworthy for its critical acclaim as well as being the first recording containing examples of Coleman’s charming vocal stylings. A year later he addressed the score of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Flower Drum Song, again, garnering critical praise. Harbinger, a label that has been instrumental in preserving the heritage of Broadway musicals by reissuing seemingly lost gems like these, is to be commended for their dedication to this music. To fill out the album, they have included 1949 solo piano radio transcriptions by Coleman of four selections from South Pacific. This album is the third in a Harbinger series dubbed The Cy Coleman Project., the other two being Cy Coleman: You Fascinate Me So (Harbinger – 3102) and Barnum Backer’s Audition (Harbinger – 3301) with the next release to feature Coleman playing the scores from two of his Broadway shows, Wildcat and Barnum. These are must haves for lovers of Broadway music. (www.amazon.com)

The music of Thelonious Monk is challenging. To take 12 Monk tunes, and reimagine them as vehicles for interpretations in a Brazilian musical setting is beyond challenging, it is daring. Pianist MATT KING has long had a fascination with both Monk’s music and Brazilian musical genres, and is obviously a daring cat, so he gathered a group of New York‑based Brazilian musicians, wrote charts incorporating a variety of Brazilian musical styles. The results can be found on Monk in Brazil (Mighty Quinn – 1122), an album of remarkable originality. Monk’s tunes are idiosyncratic, and his playing of them is as well. It takes special effort and insight to bring something new and valid to them. King has done just that. This is the most successfully original reworking of Monk’s music since Bill Holman’s 1997 album Brilliant Corners: The Music of Thelonious Monk. The tunes are “Brake’s Sake,” “Four in One,” “Bemsha Swing,” “Light Blue,” “Work,” “Round Midnight,” “Jackie‑ing,” “Skippy,” “Played Twice,” “Ugly Beauty,” “Let’s Call This” and “Crepuscule with Nellie,” a mix of the familiar with the lesser heard. Each track has a different combination of instruments, and King has incorporated eight different Brazilian rhythmic styles into his arrangements. There is a strong percussive element. Anton Denner’s versatility as a reed player is impressive as he plays five different instruments, soprano sax, alto flute, piccolo, clarinet and alto sax, on five different tracks. The mix of exuberance and creativity on Monk in Brazil is impressive, and draws the listener in from start to finish. (www.cdbaby.com)

Listening to pianist SHELLY BERG and bassist DAVID FINCK is like feasting on a superbly prepared meal. All the elements come together to bring a broad smile to your face. Give a listen to The Deep (Chesky -387), and you will understand why. These are two gentlemen blessed with exquisite taste, impeccable technique and limitless imagination. Whether exploring standards like “Why Did I Choose You?” or “Just You, Just Me,” Jobim classics like “Dindi” or “If You Never Came to Me,” jazz tunes like “Solar,” or “Peri’s Scope,” or creating instantly improvised selections like the six originals on the program, the results are nothing short of satisfying. The art of duo playing is demanding, but this pairing makes it seem like the most natural musical form imaginable. Two gentlemen communicating musically on the highest level is what you will hear on The Deep, and it is a joy to experience. (www.chesky.com)

A trio of New York City‑based musicians, pianist Oscar Perez, bassist Kuriko Tsugawa and drummer Brian Woodruff, have been performing as the OKB TRIO. Their first album, The Ing… (Queens Jazz Over Ground – 1801) shows them to be a wonderfully empathetic trio who function as a cohesive entity, with each member pulling equal weight. Their 11‑song program two
originals by each member of the trio, and an interesting mix of pop tunes, “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter,” “Hi-Heel Sneakers,” “Please Send Me Someone to Love,” “I Remember You” and “Tristeza.” Perez is a fluent player with a fertile imagination, Tsugawa is the glue in the group, and Woodruff is a superbly musical drummer who fully understands where and how to add just the right accents. Woodruff stated “We always keep the ‘ing’ in swing,” thus the title of this engaging outing. (www.queensjazz.org)

West Coast Trio finds the East Coast pianist ROBERTA PIKET in the company of some West Coast players, bassist Derek Oleszkiewicz and drummer Joe La Barbera, with guitarist Larry Koonse adding some tasty touches on two tracks, and percussionist Billy Mintz guesting on one. Piket has selected a nice blend of standards, “Falling in Love with Love,” “My Buddy” and “Windmills of Your Mind,” jazz tunes by other pianists, “Humpty Dumpty” by Chick Corea, “Yememja” by John Hicks and “Conception” by George Shearing; and a Brazilian tune, “Flor de Lis;” with two of her own originals, “Mentor” and “A Bridge to Nowhere,” resulting in a nicely paced program that highlights her impressive pianism. She is a percussive player who has a frequently aggressive approach, but when she chooses to, as on “My Buddy,” she can express herself with gentle tenderness. While her past albums have explored a wide range of jazz styles, this is basically a mainstream affair. Oleszkiewicz and La Barbera provide Piket with the kind of rhythmic support that is a pianist’s dream. Here East meets West with pleasing results. (cdbaby.com)

Pianist/vocalist JOHN PROULX is in the tradition of pianist/vocalists like Matt Dennis and Bobby Troup. Like these gentlemen, in addition to his fine pianism, and pleasantly hip vocal approach, he is also an accomplished songwriter. Say It (Artist Share – 0159) only has one example of his composition talent, “Stained Glass,” a song with lyrics by Melissa Manchester, who joins Proulx in a vocal duet on this tune. The balance of the ten‑song program contains a mix of familiar items such as “The Summer Knows,” “Watch What Happens,” “Something to Live For” and “Both Sides Now,” and less frequently heard tunes like Michael Frank’s “Scatsville” and Mose Allison’s “I Don’t Worry About a Thing.” Bassist Chuck Berghofer, drummer Joe La Barbera, guitarist Larry Koonse, tenor and soprano saxophonist Bob Sheppard and percussionist Billy Hulting comprise the support crew. On several tracks the Gina Kronstadt Strings, arranged by Alan Broadbent, are present. Proulx is an artist who is easily accessible for the casual listener, but who integrates enough jazz elements into his performances to satisfy the diggers out there. (www.johnproulx.com)

It took some convincing to push vocalist ALLAN HARRIS to consider performing the vocalise stylings found on The Genius of Eddie Jefferson (Resilience Music Alliance). On his last two albums, he included Jefferson’s “I Got the Blues (Lester Leaps In)” and his most noted selection, “Moody’s Mood for Love,” and that gave him a taste of the appeal of Jefferson’s work. Pianist Eric Reed recruited an outstanding crew of instrumentalists, bassist George DeLancey, drummer Willie Jones III, tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore and alto saxophonist Richie Cole, who was Jefferson’s musical partner during the last several years of his life, to support Harris. Jefferson was among the first singers to develop the vocal style called vocalise where lyrics are set to famous jazz soli. Harris covers nine Jefferson compositions, “So What.” “Sister Sadie.” “Dexter Digs In.” “Body and Soul,” “Jeannine,” “Filthy McNasty,” “Lester’s Trip to the Moon,” “Memphis” and “Waitz for a Rainy Bebop Evening,” plus Jon Hendricks take on “Billy’s Bounce.” Harris does not channel Jefferson, but effectively puts his own mark on the material. Reed’s arrangements provide the perfect setting for Harris’s vocalizing. This tribute to an artist who has been overlooked by an artist willing to accept the challenge of addressing a master, and doing so with winning results, is one that should be welcomed by all fans of jazz vocalizing. (www.allanharris.com)

There have been several deep baritone vocalists who have left a lasting impression on the world of pop/jazz vocalizing. Billy Eckstine, Johnny Hartman and Arthur Prysock, the most noted among them. E. J. DECKER was exposed to Prysock during his formative years, and when he turned his performing attention from folk and rock to jazz, he felt the influence of Prysock deeply. Bluer Than Velvet (Candela – 9942) is his tribute to Prysock. Backed by Claire Daly on baritone sax, Elizabeth Frascoia on trombone, Les Kurtz on piano, Chris Bergson on guitar, Saadi Zahn on bass and Tom Melito on drums, Decker presents a 14‑song program featuring songs like “Autumn in New York,” “Blue Velvet,” “Since I Fell for You,” “When You Walked in the Room” and “I Could Write a Book” that were recorded by Prysock, as well as “Why Can’t You Behave,” “He Loves and She Loves” and “On the Street Where You Live,” non‑Prysock tunes that Decker includes, singing in a manner inspired by Prysock. Decker has a rich voice that captures much of the Prysock sound, but his interpretive powers lack some of the depth of feeling that Prysock evoked. Still, he has produced a fitting tribute to the singer whose singing stuck with Decker through all phases of his career. (www.ejdecker.com)

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Vocalist DIANE MARINO has high regard for Gloria Lynne. **Soul Serenade: The Gloria Lynne Project** (M&M Records – 6923) is a collection of 14 tunes recorded by Lynne. Marino does not attempt to imitate Lynne, but uses the tunes as springboards for her own takes on the material. Marino, who usually accompanies herself on piano, is strictly vocalizing on this outing. She has left the arranging and keyboard work to Brad Cole. Cole employed a floating cast of musicians, including a string section on several tracks. The song selection includes “Somewhere in the Night,” “For You,” “Blue Gardenia,” “Sweet Pumpkin,” “He Needs Me,” “Let’s Take an Old-Fashioned Walk” and “Serenade in Blue.” Cole’s arrangements offer musical beds that allow Marino to find the essence of each song. Marino is equally comfortable with ballads and faster tempo material, infusing many selections with a convincing blues feeling. Not having been aware of Marino before receiving this album to review, her work here makes seeking out her prior recordings a likely undertaking. (dianemarino.com)

**The latest release from vocalist JOANNE TATHAM is a nicely eclectic collection titled The Rings of Saturn** (Café Pacific – 14060). Surrounded by a stellar crew of Los Angeles musicians, including Max Haymer on piano, Lyman Mederios on bass and drummer Dan Schnelle, with contributions from guitarists Marcel Camargo and Larry Koonse, saxophonist Bob Sheppard, trumpeter Brian Swartz and percussionist Kevin Winard, Tatham presents her takes on eleven selections. There are a few standards, “Love Me or Leave Me” and “It Could Happen to You,” which bookend the program; a couple of Jobim songs, “If You Never Come to Me” and “Jazz ‘n Samba (Só Danço Samba),” a taste of Sondheim, “Anyone Can Whistle,” and some more contemporary songs, “Poetry Man,” “Can We Still be Friends?” and “The Rings of Saturn,” a fresh new piece by Eli Brueggeman and Mark Winkler, who produced the album, is a particular delight. Tatham has a pleasant voice, and her phrasing is infused with a jazz sensitivity. *The Rings of Saturn* is a first class addition to the pool of appealing vocal albums that have been recently released. (markwinklermusic.com)

**AS IS** featuring guitarist ALAN SCHULMAN and vocalist STACEY SCHULMAN has released **Here’s to Life** (self-produced) with a program of songs that covers a wide time span, ranging from “Willow Weep for Me” written in 1932 to Sting’s 1996 song, “La Belle Dame Sans Regrets.” They also use a variety of combinations of musicians to set many musical moods. Stacey Schulman is at her most tender on “When October Goes,” her most subtle on “La Belle Dame Sans Regrets,” her most emotional on “Here’s to Life,” and her jazziest on “Night in Tunisia” to give a sampling of the breadth of her vocalizing. She has a knack for finding the right approach to each selection, with Alan Schulman equally adept at adopting a musical bed to nicely set her vocal efforts. They offer a bit of something for many tastes, and offer a program that is full of musical twists and turns that make the album one that is entertaining, but difficult to categorize. (www.asisjazz.com)
Blue Engine Records Announces

**ALL JAZZ IS MODERN: 30 YEARS OF JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER**

Jazz at Lincoln Center releases series of 30 iconic singles digitally to commemorate its 30-year concert history.

Thirty years to the day Jazz at Lincoln Center produced its first concert series at Alice Tully Hall in New York City, Jazz at Lincoln Center announced the latest project from its in-house record label, Blue Engine Records: All Jazz is Modern: 30 Years of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Reflecting the organization’s threedecade history, this series of 30 iconic singles is being released digitally throughout the 2017-18 season. The first three singles are available for download, on streaming platforms and www.jazz.org/modern:

**PREMIERE TRACKS FOR ALL JAZZ IS MODERN**

- “The Strawberry” – The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis featuring Myra Melford (recorded in 2016)
- “Single Petal of a Rose” – The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis featuring Joe Temperley and Dan Nimmer (recorded in 2015)
- “Ring Shout - 'Peace of Mind'” – The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis (recorded in 2010)

More tracks will be released to digital platforms in the coming months.

“We’re excited to celebrate our 30th anniversary by revisiting some of the greatest performances we’ve staged over the past three decades,” says Gabrielle Armand, the label head for Blue Engine Records. “Throughout our 2017-18 concert season, we’ll be digging deep into our archives and releasing at least 30 digital singles that showcase our organization’s incredibly rich and diverse programming history and proving Wynton Marsalis’s belief that ‘All jazz is modern.’”

The first three singles from All Jazz is Modern were recorded more recently but are deeply symbolic of the institution’s history.

“The Strawberry,” a composition by guest pianist Myra Melford, was recorded with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO) during the 2016-17 concert season, demonstrates Jazz at Lincoln Center’s commitment to the idea that All Jazz Is Modern with its bold, playful ménage of the blues, Latin rhythms, and avant-garde harmony.

“Ring Shout,” a Marsalis original, was recorded during the JLCO’s history-making trip to Cuba, which also provided the material for “Live in Cuba,” Blue Engine’s inaugural release.

“Single Petal of a Rose” is a poignant ballad featuring Joe Temperley, a long-time member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra who occupied the JLCO’s baritone saxophone chair from the group’s inception until his passing last year at the age of 86.

Blue Engine Records’ All Jazz is Modern: 30 Years of Jazz at Lincoln Center digs into the institution’s extensive concert recording archives, which feature — in addition to the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis — a long list of jazz luminaries including Tony Bennett, Betty Carter, and Benny Carter.

Many of these songs are still archived in analog and outdated digital formats (DTRS) and will be digitized in order to be preserved and ultimately released.

These singles, including newly digitized and remixed archival recordings from the late 1980s onward, will be available to a global audience launching first as playlists on Spotify and Apple Music, for download and on streaming platforms. The project will likely see a physical release in spring or summer 2018.

Current full CD releases from the label available at iTunes and Amazon are: Live in Cuba, The Abyssinian Mass, The Music of John Lewis, Handful Of Keys, Big Band Holidays by The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, and The Bronx Pyramid by Carlos Henriquez. [Editors note: If you’re interested in more information on these titles search them at Amazon. The Blue Engine website is singularly user unfriendly.]

**ABOUT BLUE ENGINE RECORDS**

Blue Engine Records, Jazz at Lincoln Center’s platform that makes its vast archive of recorded concerts available to jazz audiences everywhere, launched on June 30, 2015. Blue Engine Record releases new studio and live recordings as well as archival recordings from Jazz at Lincoln Center’s performance history that date back to 1987. This archive has grown to include thousands of songs from hundreds of concert dates.

The launch of Blue Engine is aligned with Jazz at Lincoln Center’s efforts to cultivate existing jazz fans worldwide and turn new audiences onto jazz. For more information on Blue Engine Records, visit blueenginerecords.org.
**JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS**

**questions on page 4**

1. “Rhythm-a-Ning,” “Little Rootie Tootie,” “52nd Street Theme”
2. “Anthropology,” “Chasin’ the Bird,” “Steeplechase”
3. “Cotton Tail”
4. “Dizzie Atmosphere”
5. “Don’t Be That Way,” “Seven Come Eleven”
6. “Finger Poppin’”
7. “Good Bait”
8. “Lester Leaps In”
9. “Oleo”

As a compositional device, the contrafact was of particular importance in the 1940s development of bebop, since it allowed musicians to create new pieces for performance and recording on which they could improvise, without having to seek permission or pay publisher fees for copyrighted materials. While melodies can be copyrighted, the underlying harmonic structure, like titles, can’t be.

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**NJJS Patron Level Benefits**

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

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

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Morris Jazz

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

We are sick of the snow...tired of cold weather and April showers bring the flowers that bloom in May! Let’s Ring In Spring with two hot jazz greats (think summer)...Bickford Summer JazzFEST is a few weeks away.

Ken Peplowski brings his Tribute to Benny Goodman band to the Bickford making his debut on our stage on Thursday, May 3 at 7:30 pm. Ken has recorded approximately 50 CDs as a soloist, and close to 400 as a sideman — some of the artists he’s performed/recorded with include Charlie Byrd, Mel Torme, Rosemary Clooney, Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops, Hank Jones, Peggy Lee, Bill Charlap, Woody Allen, Benny Goodman, and Madonna. The spirit of Benny Goodman lives in this great clarinetist who is an international favorite and has been delighting audiences for decades with his warmth, wit and musicianship. There is no one better to salute the great clarinetist than Peplowski. As Will Friedwald wrote in the Wall Street Journal, “Mr. Peplowski sounds the way [Benny] Goodman might have if he had kept evolving, kept on listening to new music, kept refining his sound, polishing his craft, and expanding his musical purview into the 21st century.”

Tickets are $35 for Morris Museum Members/non-Members in Advance and $40 for non-Members at the door.

UPCOMING MUSIC
June 4 - Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers
Jazz SummerFEST, Dan Levinson's Midsummer Night's Jazz Party, Danny Bacher…and much more!

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

A wise man might say that the only thing better than having one dynamic stride pianist is two! To prove the wisdom of this axiom, MidWeek Jazz at Ocean County College will be featuring the husband-and-wife duo of Stephanie Trick and Paolo Alderighi on May 16 at 8 pm.

Trick made her debut in Toms River last April and completely captivated the Grunin Center Audience. Not long after the show, she expressed an interest in returning with Alderighi, a renowned pianist himself. It only took about half-a-second to agree on our end as I’ve been a big fan of their duo videos, which are popular on YouTube. Another big fan is none other than Dick Hyman, legendary pianist and recent NEA Jazz Master, who says, “I love to hear Stephanie and Paolo together. They are an inspiration. Such sympathy! Such back-and-forth! Individually they are marvelous musicians — we’ve known that, but together they play four-handed stride as it’s never been done. Brava, brava!”

Trick began playing piano at the age of five but didn’t get fully immersed in early jazz and stride piano until college. After graduating from the University of Chicago with a bachelor of Arts in Music, Trick turned pro. Her 2011 CD Live won the Hot Club of France’s “New Talent Award” and in 2012, at the age of 25, she won the prestigious Kobe-Breda Jazz Friendship award. Since then, she’s been in demand all over the world, having performed at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan, Italy, the Kig Dixieland Festival in Dresden, Germany, the Rochester Jazz Festival, the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, the Sacramento Music festival and the Stride and Swing Piano Summit in Boswil, Switzerland, among many others.

It was in Boswil that Stephanie met Paolo Alderighi in 2008. Alderighi was born in 1980 in Milan and received a Degree in Piano from G. Verdi Conservatory in Milan. He began performing professionally in 1996 and began touring the world, performing in Italy, Japan, Australia, Germany, France, Ireland, Spain and more. Trick and Alderighi recorded their first “four-hand” album in 2012 with Two For One, following that up with Sentimental Journey (2014), Double Trio Live in 2015 and Double Trio Always (2016). The frequent collaborations led to marriage and they currently split their time between Trick’s hometown of St. Louis and Alderighi’s hometown of Milan, where he teaches musical culture at Bocconi University.

Just to be clear, Trick and Alderighi don’t play duets on two separate pianos but rather have devised a series of intricate arrangements featuring the two of them on a single keyboard. “Four hands (on one piano) is not a formula that is often used in jazz,” Alderighi recently told a reporter, “But we make it work. We love to practice together, and we love finding things we can do together.
Trick and Alderighi’s sensational duets must be seen to be believed. Tickets are available in advance for the May 16 show at grunincenter.org and showtime starts at 8 pm.

Following this, the very last MidWeek jazz performance ever will take place on June 20 and will feature the Jazz Lobsters Big Band, but it will not be the end of jazz at Ocean County College. We’ll have more about future plans for jazz in Toms River in upcoming issues 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 New Jersey Jazz Society co-sponsors jazz events at 1867 Sanctuary at Ewing and members receive a $5 discount on admission. This Romanesque Revival church hall has exceptional acoustics, padded seating and is wheelchair-accessible. Concerts are either one 90-minute set, or two sets with intermission. Free light refreshments (including cookies!) are served.

Saturday, May 4 at 8 pm JATS presents the Alex Levin Smoke Rings Quartet. The sophisticated foursome evokes the elegance and charm of the Swing era. Anchored by the vocals of Sarah King, the group specializes in songs from the Great American Song Book.

Inspired by the legendary early bands of New Orleans, notably the New Orleans Rhythm Kings and the Original Dixieland Jass Band, Jerry Rife’s Rhythm Kings are committed to the hot jazz style associated with the post-World War II Dixieland revival. They perform their unique style of collectively improvised jazz at JATS on Sunday, May 6 at 3 pm.

The Eric Mintel Quartet is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The Brubeck devotee and his group return to JATS at 8 pm on Saturday May 12.

— 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.

The Eric Mintel Quartet 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 NCU 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 giftee. Good for new memberships only.
- Fan ($75 – $99/family)
- Jazzzer ($100 – $249/family)
- Sideman ($250 – $499/family)
- Bandleader $500+/family)
- Corporate Membership ($1000)

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

To receive a membership application, for more information or to join:
Call 973-610-1308 or email membership@njjs.org
OR visit www.njjs.org

OR simply send a check payable to “NJJS” to: New Jersey Jazz Society, c/o Mike Katz, 382 Springfield Ave. Suite 217, Summit NJ 07901.
I started learning songs when I was still in my infant crib, and I'm still at it at the age of 90. Lately I've noticed that I don't remember the bridges of some of the earliest ones, but I do remember a lot of songs, and I may be the only one left who remembers some of them.

Church songs, art songs, folk songs, the great American songbook, they are all in my head somewhere, and they come popping out into my consciousness all the time. Jimmy Rowles, the late great jazz pianist and accompanist, knew even more songs than I do. His memory included verses and lyrics and alternate versions on a massive scale. He liked to use me on duo gigs because I could stay with him on a lot of obscure material.

Once I asked Jimmy if he knew a tune Duke Ellington recorded as an instrumental called “John Hardy’s Wife.” Jimmy played it for me, with the verse, and then sang a lyric to it that I didn’t know existed.

Now that I'm playing mostly with musicians around a third of my age, I'm always pleased when I can turn one of them on to a song, even one of mine. Once I asked Jimmy if he knew a tune Duke Ellington recorded as an instrumental called “John Hardy’s Wife.” Jimmy played it for me, with the verse, and then sang a lyric to it that I didn’t know existed.

Now that I'm playing mostly with musicians around a third of my age, I'm always pleased when I can turn one of them on to a good song. They just look a tune up on the internet and learn it. Sometimes they can find a lead sheet on their phones right on the job, and we can play an old tune as soon as I think of it.

The Internet isn’t much help with some requests, though. It is pretty hard to come up with “Stardust” when a customer asks you to play “Sometimes I Wonder.” And no search engine is going to find songs from “Casablanca” for the Spanish-speaking waiter who asked me for “White House.”

Greg Thymius told me about a story he found in the liner notes of a Harold Arlen record called, Harold Arlen in Hollywood, made in the late 1960s, arranged and conducted by Rusty Dedrick. The scene is Manhattan, in the early 1930s. Harold Arlen is in a taxi. The driver is whistling Arlen’s song, “Stormy Weather.” Arlen asks the driver, “Who wrote that song?” The driver answers, “Irving Berlin.”

Kirby Tassos was playing a production of West Side Story in Europe with trumpeter Craig Johnson of Maynard Ferguson fame. On the way to the sound check on the first gig, Kirby got lost and showed up at the theatre with the sound check already in progress. He began setting up his usual 50 pounds of keyboard gear when the conductor paused and asked if everyone could hear okay. Craig quipped, “Well I couldn’t hear Kirby.”

A banjo playing friend of Herb Gardner’s couldn’t afford a proper banjo case, so he used an old guitar case instead. Herb said that once, at a subway stop, the guy put the guitar case down and a thief ran off with it. Herb’s friend ran in hot pursuit, yelling, “It’s a BANJO! It’s a BANJO!…”

Danny Morgan sent me this one: Shelly Manne attended a concert at the Hollywood Bowl when Andre Previn was conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic. After the performance, Shelly went backstage and asked to speak with Previn. When asked why, he said, “I hear that big bands are back.”

Jack Schatz told me that when bass trombonist Paul Faulise moved from New Jersey in the 1960s, he invited lead trumpeters Bernie Glow and Dick Perry to visit him. They were impressed by the size of Paul’s house and property. Bernie commented, “All this, and you don’t even have to play above the staff!”

I’ve been writing this column every month except August since 1983, and stories still keep coming in. But I think I should reprint some of the earliest material for the benefit of the new generation. Here are two items that I wrote for the June 1988 edition:

Jack sat there happily until closing time, drinking and listening to the music. He then paid his check and headed for the door. As he left, the headwaiter said, “Don’t forget the Maitre D’”

“Jack turned and shook his hand fervently. “I’ll never forget you!” he said, and walked out.

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What Jazz Is to Me

By Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Jazz has been the musical narrative of my life. My love of jazz stems not just from the music itself, but from its history. The music connects me to my own thoughts and feelings but also connects me to my cultural history. Jazz is the original soundtrack of the black experience in America. It expresses the hardships, frustrations, rage, melancholy, unity and hopefulness. Jazz was the popular voice of the Harlem Renaissance. Its rise in popularity called attention to the black writers and artists giving African-Americans more respect as intellectuals and artists.

It changed white perception of blacks. After World War II, small, intimate jazz bands replaced the big bands. Instead of dancing, people listened to the music. They appreciated the artistry and intellect of the music.

Jazz was also the marching music of the civil-rights movement. John Coltrane’s “Alabama,” in response to the 1963 bombing of the Birmingham church that killed four black girls. Charles Mingus’ “Fables of Faubus” condemns Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus’ treatment of the Little Rock Nine, nine black students trying to attend a recently desegregated high school. Nina Simone shocking the Carnegie Hall audience in 1964 when she sang “Mississippi Goddam.”

...We need to educate the next generation that the joys of jazz are greater than those of K-pop and other music trends.

Most courses teach students how to make a living; art and music teaches them how to enjoy life. [We need] more outreach programs in schools — especially since Trump recently proposed severe budget cuts that could eliminate many music and art programs. We need a more comprehensive and intensive [education] program. It will require a lot of volunteers.

But we will be bringing joy to the community, perhaps inspiring future jazz musicians and creating a lot of new customers for your music. So I’ll leave you with what jazz is to me.

Jazz is the perfection of imperfection. It acknowledges the cracks in the sidewalk of humanity, the flaws in the diamonds of our souls, the tectonic faults in our personal relationships — and forges all those discordant notes into something greater and stronger than the sum of those parts. In the end, jazz not only makes us feel better — it can also make us be better.
Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.
We want to include any locale that offers jazz on a regular, ongoing basis. Also please advise us of any errors you're aware of in these listings.

TASTE VENUE
42 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

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

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

North Bergen
WATERSIDE RESTAURANT
7800 6 River Rd.
201-861-7676

North Branch
STONEY BROOK GRILLE
1285 State Highway 28
908-725-0011

Oak Ridge
THE GRILLE ROOM
(Bowling Green Golf Course)
53 SchoolHouse Rd.
973-679-6888

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

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

Pennsauken
GREENWOOD INN
4457 Marlon Pike
856-669-9668
Blues open mic Wednesdays

Phillipsburg
MARIANNA’S
224 Stockton St.
908-777-3500
Fridays

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

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

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

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

WITHERSPOON GRILL
57 Witherspoon St.
609-924-6611
Tuesday night jazz,
6:30–9:30 pm

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

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

Red Bank
COUNT BASIE THEATRE
99 Monmouth St.
732-542-9000

JAZZ ARTS PROJECT
Various venues throughout the year. Refer to www.jazzartsproject.org for schedules and details

MOLLY PITCHER INN
88 Riverside Ave.
609-221-1372

SIAM GARDEN
2 Bridge Ave.
732-224-1233

Stanhope
STANHOPE HOUSE
45 Main St.
908-347-7777
Blues

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

Tappan
THE ‘76 HOUSE
110 Main St.
845-359-5476
(just over the Nj border)

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

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

South Orange
PAPILON 25
25 Valley St.
732-761-5499

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

SOUTH ORANGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
One SOPAC Way
973-235-1114

South River
LA TAVOLA CUCINA
790 Old Bridge Turnpike
South River, NJ 08882
732-238-2111
open jam session Thursday,
7:30–10 pm
No cover, half-price drink specials

Stanhope
STANHOPE HOUSE
45 Main St.
908-347-7777
Blues

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

Tappan
THE ‘76 HOUSE
110 Main St.
845-359-5476
(just over the Nj border)

Teaneck
THE JAZZBERRY PATCH AT THE CLASSIC QUICE CAFE
330 Queen Anne Rd.
201-692-0100
Friday nights 7–10 pm, $12

PENNIGHT LIVING LUNGE
20 Pfiffn Way
201-836-3499

Teaneck
THE JAZZBERRY PATCH AT THE CLASSIC QUICE CAFE
330 Queen Anne Rd.
201-692-0100
Friday nights 7–10 pm, $12

PENNIGHT LIVING LUNGE
20 Pfiffn Way
201-836-3499

West Orange
HIGHLAWN PALAVION
Eagle Rock Reservation
973-731-3463

SUNDAY'S BAR & BISTRO
34 South Valley Rd.
973-763-7899

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

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

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

The Name Dropper

Forty years after he produced the popular Piano Spectacular Jazzfest Saturday shows for the NJJS at Waterloo Village **DICK HYMAN** is still going strong. And you can hear his legendary artistry stripped to the bare essentials when the NEA Jazz Master performs an evening of solo piano at the Bickford Theatre at 7:30 pm on May 7. Tickets are $30/advance and $35/door, call 973-971-3706.

Hoboken’s feisty little big band **SWINGADELIC** returns to the Whippany VFW on May 12 for a dance hosted by Let’s Swing NJ’s affable Victor Arenchica, with a 7:45 pm pre-show swing dance lesson from the irrepressible Nisreen Almazouni. Admission is $20 which includes the class, dance and refreshments. The VFW features a wood dance floor, cash bar and free on-street parking. For more information visit www.letsswingnj.org.

**THE ANDREA BRACHFELD QUARTET** – at Trumpets Jazz Club, Montclair on May 18, sets at 8 and 10 pm. For those who missed this superlative musician at our March Jazz Social here’s your chance to correct that mistake. Andrea is the first female flutist to play Charanga music in the United States. How’s that for breaking the glass ceiling? $20 in advance/$22 at the door, $12 food/beverage minimum. Tickets at www.trumpetsjazz.com.
Send all address changes to the address above

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED