

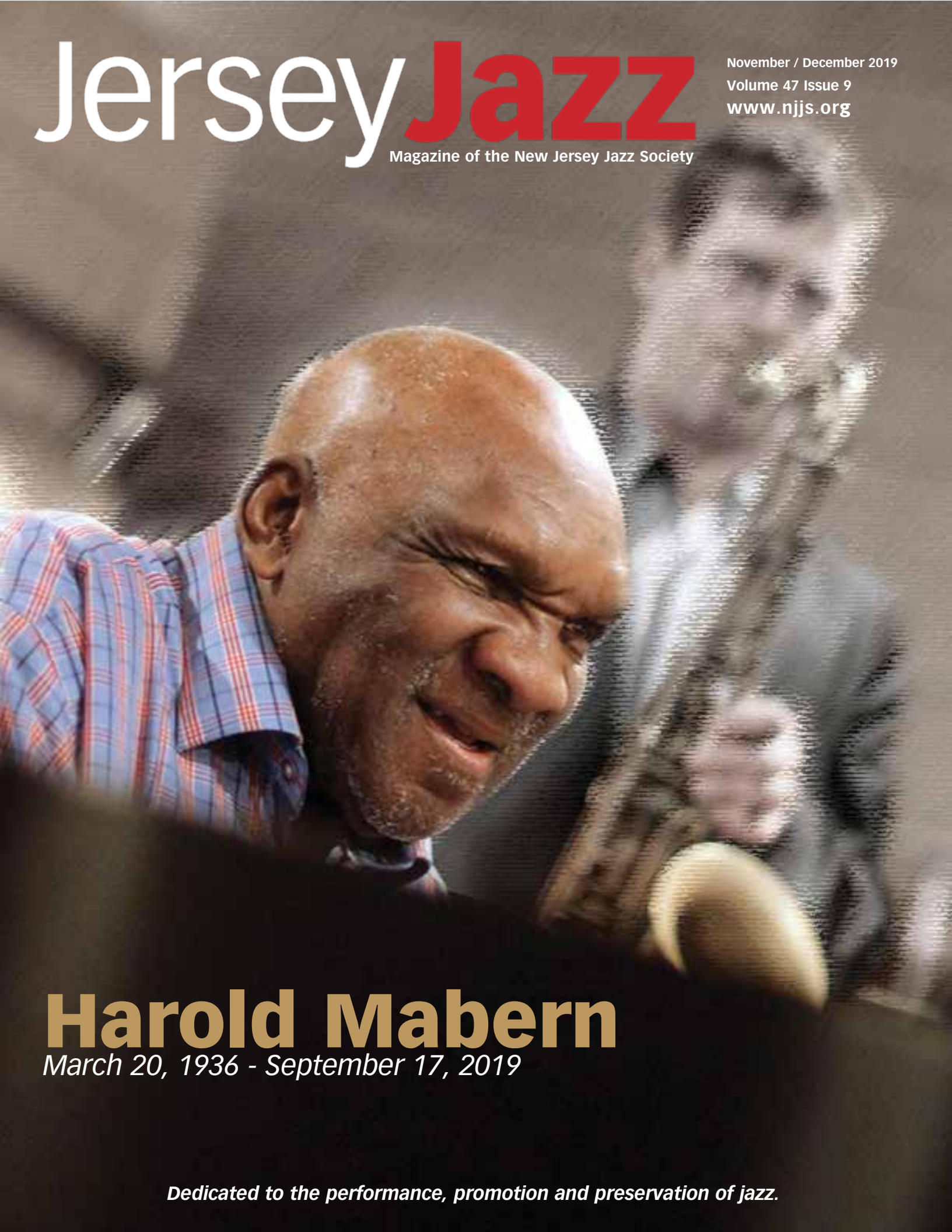
JerseyJazz

Magazine of the New Jersey Jazz Society

November / December 2019

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www.njjs.org



Harold Mabern

March 20, 1936 - September 17, 2019

Dedicated to the performance, promotion and preservation of jazz.



ALL THAT'S JAZZ!

**By Cydney Halpin
President, NJJS**

And just like that, it's November and the Holiday Season is upon us!!

This past September *Jersey Jazz* presented a host of exciting changes and will be published 6 times a year. In order to provide our members with the customary 12 months of *JJ* contributors content, we have reworked our website so that our membership can access additional articles, reviews and information in the non-print months of December, February, April, June and August via our website, www.njjs.org.

In order to have "members only" access to the magazine online and the additional added content, you must log on to our website and CREATE A LOGIN ACCOUNT tied to an email address. This "new FREE account" is for

CURRENT MEMBERS and will be linked to your membership and renewal and will help us create a much more accurate and streamlined membership process. Creating this account will not cost you any extra dues nor change your membership status. NJJS does NOT share or sell its membership list or email list with any 3rd party, so creating this account will not clog your computer inbox with spam mail.

My apologies to anyone who has attempted to create an account and was confused by this new process! Allow me to provide greater instructions to create your new account:

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5. You will be directed to a Confirmation Notice and your Members Only Access to additional magazine and website content will be active.
6. Make note of your log in information and password for future reference.

The newly configured website will allow our membership to renew, donate, pay for *JJ* advertisements and eBlasts and shop our catalogue of used CDs & LPs all through the Shop/Donate tab at the top of the site.

Change is both exciting and daunting! We thank you for continued support as we forge ahead and embrace what is possible for the future of *Jersey Jazz* and NJJS.

"Turn your Amazon purchases into a force for good." 'Tis the Season and all and I'd like to remind you that NJJS has joined the AmazonSmile Gives program where 0.5% of the price of your eligible smile.amazon.com purchases will go directly to us! It's the same Amazon you know but a separate website. Same products, same service – **but to generate donations you must ALWAYS SHOP AT smile.amazon.com.**



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On the cover:

Photo of Harold Mabern by Christopher Drukker. In the background is one of Mabern's former students, tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander.

Correction:

The photo of Bill Mays and Martin Wind that appeared on page 24 of the September-October issue of *Jersey Jazz*, was taken by Steven Goldberg. His name was previously given incorrectly.

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I'm very delighted to announce that NJJS is a proud co-sponsor of three very exciting concerts through the end of 2019:

Thursday, November 14th, 7:30 p.m., singer and showman Danny Bacher joins forces with the venerable, doyenne singer Marilyn Maye, bandleader Pat Longo and the Hollywood East Coast Big Band and smooth saxophonist Harry Allen at the College of St. Elizabeth/Dolan Hall. This is a rare occasion to experience Ms. Maye in New Jersey, and with a big band, this event will be a true delight! More information is available on our website www.njjs.org. For tickets www.lks.org.

Saturday, December 7th, 6 p.m., the Jazz Vespers Service at Bethany Baptist Church will feature 'horn man to watch' trumpeter Eddie Allen presenting "*Jazzy Brass for the Holidays*." This special evening of music is sure to put attendees in the holiday spirit. The concert is free, and there is free, secured parking adjacent to the sanctuary. For more information, please see article on page 18.

Friday, December 20th, 8 p.m., the New Brunswick Jazz Project (NBJP) presents Evan Sherman Big Band Holiday Swing! at the new performing arts center in New Brunswick. This evening is sure to be lively and entertaining and chock full of extraordinary talent featuring up-and-comers performing alongside seasoned veterans. For more information, please see article on page 18. For tickets www.NBJP.org.

You don't want to miss the November and December 7:30 p.m. jazz concerts at the Bickford Theater at the Morris Museum. For tickets www.morrismuseum.org/jazz.

Monday, November 4th plays host to the 9th Annual Bickford Benefit Concert with 100% of the proceeds benefiting the Bickford Theater. Always entertaining and educational, fan favorite Dan Levinson has assembled the best musicians in the Tri-State area for this jazz extravaganza!

Monday, December 2nd presents "Earth Wind and Wonder" - the latest music by saxophonist, arranger and bandleader extraordinaire Don Braden along with a 16 piece big band as they delight with luscious, reimagined arrangements of the works of Earth, Wind and Fire and Stevie Wonder. (Please see article on page 4).

Congratulations to the Morris Museum on its newly acquired status as a Smithsonian Affiliate. For more information visit www.njjs.org or www.morrismuseum.org.

The NJJS Annual Meeting is Sunday, December 15th, at Shanghai Jazz in Madison. Doors open at 2:00 p.m.; the presentation begins at 2:30 p.m. The entertainment for the afternoon is Louis Armstrong Scholar and author Ricky Riccardi along with musical friends as they present a program around Mr. Armstrong's last recording "The Night before Christmas." A wonderful afternoon is in store! (Please see article on page 27) And - if you're an NJJS member - you can cast your vote for the 2020 NJJS Board of Directors.

Mark your calendars, NJJS is a proud co-sponsor of the Chicken Fat Ball which will take place Sunday, January 5th, at 1 p.m. in Maplewood, NJ. This event is always a wonderful way to kick off the New Year. Please see page 45 for more details.

NJJS was founded with the mission of promoting and preserving jazz. To that end, please consider helping NJJS continue its performance and educational initiatives by donating to our Preserving the Future of Jazz! fundraising campaign either by mail (watch your boxes), or anytime online at www.njjs.org/Shop/Donate.

Many of you work for employers that have a matching gift program that will double the impact of your gift for free by completing and submitting a simple form. Check with your Human Resources Department for further information.

On behalf of my fellow board members, we thank you for all you do to support jazz music and education. Together we are preserving the future of this uniquely American art form.

As the holiday season is officially upon us, I'd like to wish you a very happy and blessed Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays, safe travels - whether near or far and a New Year filled with more jazz!

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THE EDITOR'S CHOICE

Bria Skonberg's Latest Album: Venturing into New Territory

By Sanford Josephson




I first saw Bria Skonberg play trumpet and sing in April 2008 at the Bickford Theatre in Morristown, performing with trombonist Jim Fryer. In those days, when she visited the New Jersey-New York area from her home in British Columbia, Bria's repertoire was almost entirely traditional swing with a healthy dose of inspiration from Louis Armstrong. In fact, the first time I spoke to Bria, she told me,

"Louis Armstrong is my American idol."

As her career progressed, and she eventually moved to New York, it quickly became clear that Bria would never be hesitant to take risks. Early on, she had the temerity to cover songs made popular by Janis Joplin and Joni Mitchell -- Joplin's "Mercedes Benz" and Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi" -- in her albums, *Fresh* (Lighter Than Air Records: 2009) and *So Is The Day* (Random Act Records: 2012), respectively. With the release of *So Is The Day*, she began composing songs as well as performing them. She has sung the music of Aretha Franklin alongside Michelle Williams of Destiny's Child, played with U2 at the Apollo, performed the Star Spangled Banner at a New York Rangers hockey game, put a new spin on the 1930s Harry Ruby/Bert Kalmar standard, "Three Little Words", and introduced the world to the late African-American female trumpet player, Valaida Snow, whom Louis Armstrong called the "second best trumpet player in the world."

Bria's newest album, *Nothing Never Happens*, was officially released on her own label on November 1. "It's not a swing album, but music I wanted to share," she told me in an email. In an advance news release she described that music as "a cathartic collage of frustration, despair, anger, melancholy -- and yet with a silver lining of hope."

Nothing Never Happens may not be a 'traditional' swing album, but it surely does swing -- from her gritty blues piece, "Blackout", to a rousing reworking of the Sonny Bono pop song, "Bang Bang" to "Blackbird Fantasy" -- typical of Bria's creativity, it combines Lennon and McCartney's "Blackbird" with Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy". My favorite track, though, is the folk-like "Square One", co-composed by Bria with Ciriad Harmon. You can hear shades of Karla Bonoff and Norah Jones, but the style and performance are uniquely Bria's, just as in her crowd-pleasing interpretations of "Mercedes Benz" and "Big Yellow Taxi".

Needless to say, Bria's magical trumpet permeates throughout. I can't stop listening to this album. I predict it will have the same effect on you. 

About NJJS

Founded in 1972, The New Jersey Jazz Society has diligently maintained its mission to promote and preserve America's great art form -- jazz.

To accomplish our mission, we produce a bi-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 provide interactive programs focused on the history of jazz.

The Society is run by a board of directors who meet monthly to conduct Society business. NJJS membership is comprised of jazz devotees from all parts of the state, the country and the world.

Visit www.njjs.org or email info@njjs.org for more information on our programs and services.

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'Always Adventurous, Always Swinging': Pianist Harold Mabern Dies at Age 83

By Sanford Josephson

In the October 2019 issue of *JazzTimes*, Michael J. West reviewed *The Quartet*, tenor saxophonist George Coleman's latest album on the Smoke Sessions label. In the review, he wrote of Coleman's "glorious" relationship with Harold Mabern, "his fellow Memphian and 70-year collaborator . . . The pianist turns even the saxophonist's longer and more linear lines into conversations," he wrote, "and he approaches the jaunty 'Prelude to a Kiss' with the energy of a playful duet."

Mabern died on September 17 in New York at the age of 83. Coleman described him to *The New York Times*'s Giovanni Russonello as, "just such a complete musician. He was always adventurous, and he was always swinging, keeping the crowd pleased."

Born on March 20, 1936, in Memphis, Mabern attended Manassas High School there, along with Coleman, trumpeter Booker Little, and saxophonists Charles Lloyd and Frank Strozier. After high school, Strozier and Mabern moved to Chicago where Mabern played in Strozier's band while he attended classes at the American Conservatory of Music. About five years later, Mabern moved to New York and received a career boost from Cannonball Adderley. He recalled the experience in an interview for *Jazz at Lincoln Center*: "Cannonball knew me from Chicago, saw me and said, 'Hey, Big Hands, you want a gig?'" That night, Adderley brought Mabern with him to Birdland and introduced him to top jazz musicians of the day including trumpeters Miles Davis and Harry "Sweets" Edison, pianist Tommy Flanagan, and vibraharpist Lionel Hampton. (*On Saturday, November 16, Mabern will be honored at the annual Giants of Jazz concert at the South Orange Performing Arts Center. See page 32 for more information.*)



Mabern's first album, *A Few Miles From Memphis*, was recorded in 1968 on the Prestige Records label. His last of 31 albums, *The Iron Man: Live at Smoke*, was released last year on the Smoke Sessions label. Reviewing the album and live performance for *AllAboutJazz*, Mike Jurkovic wrote of Mabern's "youthful joie de vivre . . . Working as hard as ever with his long standing trio of tenor saxophonist and former student, Eric Alexander, bassist John Webber, and drummer Joe Farnsworth (another former student), Mabern, on this last night of an exhilarating three-week residency covers all the bases and revels in his song-filled autobiography. His signature, 'A Few Miles From Memphis' and 'Rakin' and Scrapin', two full fledged, hot blooded boogies, bookend *The Iron Man: Live at Smoke*, and the music in between never lets you down."

As impressive as his performance skills were, Mabern's reputation as an educator was just as inspiring. He taught for nearly 40 years at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ. "As much of a giant Harold Mabern was as a musician and pianist," says Dr. David Demsey, WPU Coordinator of Jazz Studies, "he was equally strong as a teacher -- and that is saying a great deal! Harold was a huge part of the soul and the essence of this jazz program."

In addition to Alexander and Farnsworth, another of Mabern's students was pianist Tomoko Ohno. "I studied piano with Mr. Mabern for three years at William Paterson," she told *Jersey Jazz*. "It gave me an opportunity to play with Mr. Mabern in a two-piano setting for about 60 lessons. We did not use any sheet music at the lessons. Instead, I would listen to my teacher's performance first, and then he would invite me to play with him. It was truly 'super ear training'."

"Of course, I had millions of questions about voicings, melody, or even history regarding the songs he showed me. Whenever he answered my questions, he always made sure I completely understood his explanations. He also mentioned that his piano teacher, Phineas Newborn, had always practiced classical music, and he encouraged me to study classical piano. It helped me tremendously when I later started to play professionally with big bands . . . So much laughter, so much excitement of learning new music. I will miss Mr. Mabern very much."

According to drummer Nick Scheuble, his daughter Leonieke -- a rising star on piano, though still in high school -- recently played duets with Mabern. "He was such an inspiration as a person," says Scheuble. "He was enthusiastic, passionate, kind, and giving."

In 2016, Mabern was presented

continued on page 36

JAZZ ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Swingadelic Celebrates the Music of Fats Domino

By Ricky Riccardi

Swingadelic, "NYC's Greatest Little Big Band" as they are known to some, returns to the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts at Ocean County College December 1, their third appearance in Toms River in three years. But whereas previous concerts have featured electrifying tributes to established jazz giants like Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, their December soiree might surprise some, as it will pay tribute to Fats Domino.

Still beloved as one of the figureheads of 1950s rock 'n' roll, Domino famously racked up 35 hits in the *Billboard* Top 40 including seminal numbers such as "Ain't That a Shame" and "I'm Walkin'." Swingadelic is an excellent jazz band but why pay tribute to a rock 'n' roll pioneer in the JAZZ on a SUNDAY afternoon series?

The answer is simple: Domino swung, and he was from New Orleans, the single place most responsible (in my humble opinion) for the birth of not just jazz, but also rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. Like many musicians from that city, Domino straddled all genres, sounding comfortable on Armstrong-inspired numbers such as "Blueberry Hill" and "The Saints," as well as pop-tunes-turned-second-line-anthems like "When My Dreamboat Comes Home." Domino's music still remains the perfect recipe for an instant party.

The same can be said of Hoboken-based Swingadelic, which has been going strong since 1998 under the guidance of upright bassist Dave Post along with pianist and

singer John Bauers, who will be in the Domino seat on December 1. If you love jazz, swing, New Orleans, rhythm and blues, boogie-woogie, rock 'n' roll, street parades, second lines and/or just having a good time, get your tickets for what should be quite a fun time at the Grunin Center at 3 p.m. on December 1. Tickets are available at www.grunincenter.org or (732) 255-0500. (*Swingadelic will also be appearing on Sunday,*



John Bauers

November 24, at Jazz at Rutherford Hall in Hackettstown. This time, the band will do a tribute to the music of Johnny Mercer).

The JAZZ on a SUNDAY afternoon 2019-2020 season kicked off on September 15 with a powerhouse performance by the Jazz Lobsters Big Band in front of a packed house. The returning favorites were made up of some of the top musicians in the Tri-State area, including Anthony Nelson, Jr., Mike Weisberger, and 89-year-old saxophonist Warren Fioretti, who melted the crowd with his rendition of Erroll Garner's "Misty." The band was led by pianist James Lafferty, who

picked an excellent array of arrangements, building up to the crowd-pleasing "Sing, Sing, Sing," featuring his wife, Audrey Welber, on clarinet. Vocals were handled by the smooth and swinging Brooklyn-born Tony Corrao. The one-time winner of Hoboken's "Sinatra Idol" contest, Corrao effectively filled the shoes of "Ol' Blue Eyes," aided and abetted by the Lobsters handling the original charts, including "Fly Me to the

Moon" from *Sinatra at the Sands*, "Don't Be That Way" from *Sinatra Swings*, "Zing Went the Strings of My Heart" from *Ring-a-Ding-Ding* and more. Trumpeter Jonathan Ashcraft's daughter Jillian also was featured on a couple of numbers, including "S'Wonderful" as arranged by Nelson Riddle for Ella Fitzgerald.

Overall, it was another successful Sunday show at Ocean County College and with bands such as the Jazz Lobsters and Swingadelic, proof that swing is alive and well

in Toms River. In between these two concerts, the Gerry Mulligan Tribute Quintet performed on October 27, featuring Ron Vincent on drums, Dean Johnson on bass, Bill Mays on piano, Marvin Stamm on flugelhorn, and Jay Brandford on baritone saxophone. Vincent and Johnson were members of Mulligan's final quartet; Mays played with Mulligan in the '80s; and Stamm performed on Mulligan's 1990 Grp Records album, *Little Big Horn*.

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a proud media sponsor of the JAZZ on a SUNDAY afternoon series. 

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JAZZ AT THE BICKFORD

Don Braden Presents Big Band Arrangements of *Earth Wind and Wonder*

By Sanford Josephson

At the 2016 Litchfield (CT) Jazz Camp, Don Braden arranged the music of Earth Wind & Fire and Stevie Wonder to be played by the Litchfield Jazz Orchestra. For tenor saxophonist/flutist Braden, it was a labor of love because he grew up listening to that music as a teenager.

Two years later, in May 2018, Braden released an album called *Earth Wind and Wonder* (Creative Perspective Music), small group arrangements of the music by EWF and Wonder. The album spent 11 weeks in the Top 10 of the *Jazz Week* radio airplay charts, peaking at #2 the week of May 28. “The messages of their music,” he wrote in the album’s liner notes, are “built around core themes such as strength, love and joy” and “are imbued with the African-American spirit, and yet embody a wide variety of human emotions and experience.”

Now, Braden is returning to the arrangements he introduced in Litchfield for a big band performance of the music at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, December 2, at the Morris Museum’s Bickford Theatre in Morristown. The band will include four trombones, five reeds, four trumpets, and a rhythm section. The complete lineup was not available at press time, but the rhythm section will be one of two featured on the CD: Art Hirahara on piano, Kenny Davis on bass, and Jeremy Warren on drums. Bruce Williams will be lead alto saxophonist, and one of the trumpeters will be Eddie Allen.

Throughout his career, Braden has released more than 20 albums as a leader. He has been Music Director of the Litchfield Jazz Camp for 20 years and directed the New Jersey Performing Arts Center’s Jazz for Teens program for 15 years. While he values formal education, he savors the on-the-bandstand teamwork he learned as a young musician from some of the veterans. “If you want to be a good tennis player,” he explains, “you find the best tennis player you can and get as close as you can to the real master. Interaction is where the growth comes from.”

He speaks from experience. The 55-year-old Braden’s first professional gig was with vocalist Betty Carter, and he also received early on-the-job training from trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, drummer Roy Haynes, and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis.

In 1986, Carter added Braden and trumpeter Philip Harper as her first horn players. Prior to that, she always performed and recorded with trios. “The great thing about her,” Braden recalls, “is that she was no nonsense. She knew what she wanted. I learned the skill of pacing from her. As a tenor player, I played a lot of notes. She got me to start the process of cooling that out. She insisted that everything had to swing. She was a stickler for swing and pacing. Those were the most important lessons I learned from her.”

Freddie Hubbard, Braden says, was “probably the most profound virtuoso I worked with. His virtuosity was insane. He had a strong positive side and a very dark side -- the behavior of geniuses. It was a great experience.” Haynes was “a stickler for melody -- the phrasing of the melody. He was with Sarah Vaughan for a number of years, and he passed on her love of melody. He was also very mindful of nutrition, of what he ate. Well, he’s 95, and he’s hanging in there. And, he was the best in the business for being on time, paying attention to the audience.”

Photo by Christopher Drukker

Marsalis was Braden's idol when he was in college. "We are similar in age," Braden points out, "but he was super important to me in my formative years in the '80s. My first gig with Betty Carter was at Fat Tuesday's, and Wynton was in the audience. He was in the first row, but I had taken off my glasses to look cool, and I couldn't see anything. Later on, I was reading the *Illustrated History of Jazz*. Wynton wrote the foreword and mentioned Philip and me. That was in 1986. In October, when Branford left the band, Wynton called me. I joined the band when I was 23. It was a huge experience."

Braden's favorite tenor saxophonist was, "probably Sonny Rollins because of his energy, creativity, and rhythm." Other role models include Benny Golson, Coleman Hawkins, Stanley Turrentine, and Wayne Shorter. Other than *Earth Wind and Wonder*, the most personally meaningful albums to Braden were his *The Voice of the Saxophone* (RCA Victor: 1997) and *After Dark* (Criss Cross Jazz: 1994).

The Voice of the Saxophone featured an octet which included, in addition to Braden on tenor sax and flute, Vincent Herring on alto sax and flute, Hamiet Bluiett on baritone sax and clarinet, Randy Brecker on trumpet, and Frank Lacy on trombone. Selections ranged from Hank Mobley's "Soul Station", Shorter's "Speak No Evil", and John Coltrane's "After the Rain" to Braden originals such as "The Dust Kicker" and "Cozy". In

the liner notes, Golson praised the album and Braden's talent. "Up to now," he wrote, "his potential has always been a promise, something yet to be realized. But now his fulfillment is manifesting itself in a way that gives the reality undeniable believability and acceptance. That reality is this recording."

After Dark featured five Braden originals, including the title track, as well as Wonder's "Creepin'", Thelonious Monk's "Monk's Dream" and standards such as Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz's "You and the Night and the Music" and Frank Perkins's "Stars Fell on Alabama". In addition to Braden, the septet featured Scott Wendholt on trumpet, Steve Davis on alto sax, Noah Bless on trombone, Darrell Grant on piano, Christian McBride on bass, and Carl Allen on drums. "We did the whole record in about four hours," Braden recalls. "It got mixed reviews, but I'm very proud of what we achieved at the time." *AllMusic*'s Greg Turner called it, "One of 1994's best releases and a positive step in Braden's rapid development."

Looking forward, Braden says, "I can't wait to do a big band record. I love the sound of a big ensemble." The December 2nd Bickford concert could serve as a preview of that record. Tickets are \$18 for museum members; \$20 for non-members and can be ordered at morrismuseum.org/events or by calling (973) 971-3706.

On Monday, November 4, the Bickford will hold its ninth annual Benefit Concert, also at 7:30 p.m. Performers will include: cornetist Randy Reinhart, trombonist Herb Gardner, clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Dan Levinson, pianist Mark Shane, guitarist/vocalist Molly Ryan, bassist Tal Ronen, and drummer Matt Hoffmann. Tickets for this concert are \$20 for museum members; \$25 for non-members. **JJ**

JAZZ AT THE 1867 SANCTUARY

Richie Cole's Alto Madness Orchestra Returns to Ewing On December 21

By Bob Kull

Alto saxophone jazz legend and Ewing, NJ, native Richie Cole and his "mini big band" Alto Madness Orchestra, return to the jazz listening room of the 1867 Sanctuary for his Richie Cole Christmas concert on Saturday, December 21.

Cole started playing alto saxophone when he was 10 years old. Influenced by Sonny Rollins and Charlie Parker, Cole's talent and dedication won him a full scholarship from *Downbeat* Magazine to the Berklee College of Music in Boston after graduating from Ewing High School. His professional career began in 1969 when he joined the Buddy Rich Big Band. After stints with the Lionel Hampton Big Band and the Doc Severinsen Big Band, Cole formed his own quintet and toured worldwide, popularizing bebop and his own "Alto Madness" style in the 1970s and early '80s.

Other artists on the Sanctuary's November and December schedules are:

November 1, 8 pm:

Pianist Joe Holt

November 16, 8 pm:

Pianist Steve Sandberg and violinist Rob Thomas.

Saturday, November 23, 8 pm:

Darla Rich Quartet (bassist Darla Tarpinian and guitarist/vocalist Rich Tarpinian)

Sunday, December 1, 2 pm:

Pianist Eric Mintel and his Quartet

Saturday, December 7, 8 pm:

Flutist Wendy Zoffer and her Jazz Group

Friday, December 13, 8 pm:

Pianist/Vocalist Jay Daniels, "Simply Timeless Christmas Sing-Along"

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a co-sponsor of the Sanctuary jazz series. Tickets are \$20 for general admission; \$15 for NJJS members; \$5 for school and college students. The can be ordered by logging onto www.1867sanctuary.org or by calling 609-392-6409. Jazz at the 1867 Sanctuary is located at 101 Scotch Road, Ewing, NJ **JJ**



Richie Cole

WPU FALL JAZZ ROOM SERIES

John Pizzarelli and Catherine Russell Celebrate Jazz Legends



Catherine Russell/John Pizzarelli

A program with guitarist John Pizzarelli and vocalist Catherine Russell, featuring the music of Nat King Cole and other legends, is the highlight of the Jazz Room series November concerts at William Paterson University in Wayne.

Inspired by Nat King Cole's TV show, the all-star duo of Pizzarelli and Russell will pay homage to Cole and his talented guests on December 15. Russell is back at WPU by popular demand, and Pizzarelli shares a deep connection to William Paterson with his father, historic jazz guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli. John Pizzarelli, who recently released a Nat King Cole tribute album, *For Centennial Reasons 100 Year Salute to Nat King Cole* (Ghostlight Records: 2019) and Russell will perform Cole's most memorable hits, as well as timeless works by Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and other ladies of song. (*Pizzarelli and Russell will also be appearing at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton on December 13 and 14. That program, called 'Billie and Blue Eyes', will be a tribute to Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra*).

Internationally respected drummer and William Paterson alumnus Carl Allen returns to his alma mater with his quartet on November 10 in a tribute to two of his mentors, drum legends Art Blakey and Elvin Jones. Allen has built a major career leading his own bands and appearing with numerous influential jazz performers, as well as collaborating with Michael and Randy Brecker, Benny Golson, J.J. Johnson, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Cyrus Chestnut, Benny Green, Billy Childs and many others. His direct connection to Elvin Jones and to Blakey will be the inspiration for this powerful performance.

The multitalented New York Voices, celebrating their 30th year as one of today's premiere jazz vocal groups with styles ranging from doo-wop to swing to modern jazz, performs with the WP Jazz Orchestra directed by David Demsey on November

17. The concert will feature the Voices foursome—Kim Nazarian, Darmon Meader, Lauren Kinhan, and Peter Eldridge—in collaboration with the talented students of William Paterson's 18-piece Jazz Orchestra, with exciting performances of Meader's arrangements of standards and big band hits


On November 24, the young violinist Daisy Castro, who has grown to become a major part of gypsy jazz music worldwide, brings her talents to the Jazz Room stage. Her debut CD *Gypsy Moth* was released at age 13, and she has been appearing on the world's stages since then, performing with violinist Mark O'Connor, guitarist Howard Alden, and many more. Her high-energy gypsy swing will certainly make a wonderful impression in her first Jazz Room performance.

Trio da Paz opened the season on Sunday, October 13. Saxophonists Eric Alexander and Vincent Herring, two great performers of the post-bop tradition, brought a quintet to the Jazz Room on October 27. Both have deep William Paterson connections -- Herring as a member of the jazz faculty since 2006, and Alexander as one of the best-known alumni of the University's Jazz Studies program.

William Paterson University's Jazz Room series, now in its 42nd season, is the longest-running program of its kind in the United States. Launched in 1978, the Jazz Room has welcomed more than 500 jazz legends to the stage, including Sonny Rollins, Wynton Marsalis, and Wayne Shorter, among many others. The performance series provides support for the University's internationally renowned Jazz Studies Program, founded in 1973. It draws students from across the United States and abroad under the current direction of pianist Bill Charlap.

All performances take place in the Shea Center for Performing Arts on campus at 4 p.m. The concerts are preceded by "Sittin' In," informal jazz talks with the afternoon's artists, at 3 p.m. in Shea Center 101, which are free to all Jazz Room ticketholders. Sunday afternoon concerts begin with a performance by a William Paterson student jazz ensemble.

Tickets for the John Pizzarelli and Catherine Russell performance are \$45 for orchestra, \$40 for loge and \$10 for William Paterson students. Admission for all other concerts is \$15 for the general public, \$12 for the William Paterson community and senior citizens, and \$8 for non-William Paterson students; admission is free for William Paterson students. There will be an additional \$3 charge per ticket on the day of the performance. For information, call the Shea Center for Performing Arts Box Office at 973-720-2371 or visit wp-presents.org.

The Jazz Room at William Paterson University has been made possible, in part, by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. 



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TD JAMES MOODY JAZZ FESTIVAL

Christian Sands Leads '3 Piano Summit' In Tribute to Erroll Garner's Legacy

By Sanford Josephson

When I interviewed Billy Taylor in 2008 for a chapter in my book, *Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations* (Praeger/ABC-Clio: 2009), he told me about his experiences with his mentor, Art Tatum. I then asked him if he had any protégés. Here was his response: "Christian Sands. Last season, I took him to Kennedy Center with me. I let him close my set. I played with my trio, and then I got off the stage and let him do the last thing. I'm really proud of him."

Then only 19, Sands, now at age 30, has already earned five Grammy nominations. He spent six years as the pianist in bassist Christian McBride's trio and has been called "a jazz pianist of the future" by Wynton Marsalis.

In a review of his 2018 Mack Avenue album, *Facing Dragons*, WBGO's Nate Chinen wrote that Sands has "a mode of soulful eclecticism that expresses new ideas without abandoning the old." That, Sands told *Jersey Jazz*, "is pretty accurate. I'm a big advocate for learning from the past, and where do we go from here? For example, just to write a song with different chord changes -- what is the point? You can only build from the ground up, bringing tradition to the essence of what we call music. Some of it is new, some of it is old, and some of it is repeated."

As for Billy Taylor, "He was an absolute major mentor for me, a huge beacon for where I continue to see myself as an artist and individual. He was such a prolific writer, arranger, and composer. The best of the best." Sands says he was fortunate to learn from several legends when he was growing up. In addition to Taylor, he met and learned from Dave Brubeck, Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones, Barry Harris, and Harold Mabern. He received his formal jazz education at the Manhattan School of Music.

Now, he's paying tribute to another giant of the jazz piano, Erroll Garner. Earlier this year, he succeeded the late Geri Allen as Creative Ambassador to The Erroll Garner Jazz Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to Garner's legacy. On November 22, as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, he will present the "Erroll Garner 3 Piano Summit" featuring Helen Sung and Tadataka Unno as his piano partners. The purpose of the EGJP, he says, is to "reinvigorate his music and cultural legacy, put him back into the light of the jazz greats." At the concert, the pianists will play Garner's music separately and together "on one piano, on three separate pianos. You think of it, you do it. We did it at Newport." They will be accompanied by Lucas Kerns on bass and Savannah Harris on drums.

Sung is classically trained and planned to become a classical concert pianist. But, in her last year of undergraduate studies at the University of Texas, a friend invited her to a Harry Connick, Jr. concert. In her website biography, Sung recalled the experience. "He performed with a big band, and they were very entertaining. But, in the middle of the concert, he sat down and played some solo piano pieces. I remember wanting to jump out of my skin, this music was so alive . . . I remember thinking, 'I didn't know you were allowed to play the piano like that!' " She finished her classical studies and then enrolled in beginning jazz

"I'm a big advocate for
learning from the past . . .
You can only build from
the ground up,
bringing tradition to the
essence of what
we call music."



Photo by Anna Webber

courses, eventually being accepted into the New England Conservatory's Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance.

Unno spent the first 10 years of his jazz career in his native Japan before moving to the United States in 2008. In 2010 he attended Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead program at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and the Jazz Rising Stars program of the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. By 2013, he was playing with the Jimmy Cobb Trio at the Village Vanguard. He was the late Roy Hargrove's last pianist and has also performed with drummer Winard Harper, trumpeter Eddie Allen, and trombonist Clifton Anderson. He became a protege of the late pianist Hank Jones, and when Jones died at age 91 in 2010, Unno was at his bedside.


Sands still performs with McBride, who he describes as "just an amazing person on and off the stage. He has been a major person in my corner." In a *Jersey Jazz* interview in November 2017, McBride described Sands as "a very, very special young man. In many ways, he sort of reminds me of the way I was. He's thoroughly entrenched in the music . . . always looking to get information from his elders. In a world where young musicians are concentrating on creating something new or gaining Instagram followers, it's refreshing to see someone who has a throwback attitude. I think he's going a long, long way."

The "Erroll Garner 3 Piano Summit" will be presented at 7:30 p.m. on November 22 in the NJPAC Victoria Theater. It is one of 12 concerts to be presented at the TD James Moody Jazz Festival. Among the others are: "After Midnight: The Music of the King Cole Trio", with vocalists Clint Holmes and Catherine Russell, accompanied by pianist Billy Stritch at 7:30 p.m. on November 15; "The Roots with A Christian McBride Situation", 8 p.m. on November 16; and *Tappin' Thru Life* starring tap dancer Maurice Hines with the DIVA Jazz Orchestra at 3 and 7 p.m. on November 23.

Christian McBride is "just an amazing person on and off the stage. He has been a major person in my corner."

There will also be six free community events in Newark including: an opening reception on November 3 at the Jewish Museum of New Jersey at Ahavas Sholom; a performance by the Scott Robinson Quartet on November 6 at Gateway IV; and Jazz Vespers with Bobby Sanabria on November 9 at Bethany Baptist Church.

The TD James Moody Jazz Festival is co-produced by NJPAC and WBGO 88.3FM. The festival was launched in 2012 and named in honor of saxophone virtuoso James Moody, who was from Newark. The program is guided by McBride, who is NJPAC's Jazz Advisor. Festival sponsor is TD Bank, one of the 10 largest banks in the United States, headquartered in Cherry Hill, NJ.

Tickets for any of the festival events can be purchased at the NJPAC box office at 1 Center St. in Newark; online at njpac.org; by phone at 1-888-GO-NJPAC (888-466-5722); or via the NJPAC mobile app for iOS and Android devices. 



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TALKING JAZZ

A Jersey Jazz Interview with Emmet Cohen

By Schaen Fox

Photo by John Herr

Emmet Cohen is another stellar example of the expression “Jazz is in good hands.” While he is still relatively young, he has garnered high praise from both jazz masters and the jazz media. He has a strong Jersey connection, and his website shows a full schedule of gigs with many masters as well as his own trio. He also frequently performs with Veronica Swift, and the two dazzled a happy crowd this past July in Camden’s beautiful Wiggins Waterfront Park. They team up again for an extended Birdland booking on November 27.

JJ: *Is there anything you especially wish to talk about?*

EC: One of my main projects is called “Masters Legacy Series.” It is very dear to my heart. I’ve been spending a lot of time and effort on it. It is about bringing together the older established jazz musicians with serious musicians in their 20s and 30s, and providing a forum for interaction and interplay for the transference of knowledge and experience. I found that there is a real gap between the generations. Some of my heroes, who are in their 60s, 50s or even 40s, got to play with Ray Brown, Betty Carter, Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard and all these guys that took them under their wings. Miles would do that with Joey D and Kenny Garrett. This generation that I’m in doesn’t have that as much. The masters are further removed.

This is intended to be a series of records, interviews and interactions between a lot of jazz masters and, for lack of a better word, “young lions.” I started with a record with Jimmy Cobb. That turned out really well, and we developed a very friendly relationship. He called me for some things that he was doing, like the Jazz Cruise in 2018. He is one of my mentors. I called Ron Carter and asked him if he would make a record with [drummer] Evan Sherman and me. He had Evan in his big band as a sub. It was at a live performance in Vancouver. We put a lot of time

and effort into doing some of his compositions and created some stuff that we thought would work really well with him. He was really receptive to the detail, respect, and study that we put into everything. We became very close and he invited me to his house for Christmas. (Cohen and Sherman appeared with Carter at the Village Vanguard in January of this year).

I had a chance to spend some time around jazz masters like Jimmy Heath. I met him at the White House. I also played a bit with the Dizzy Gillespie Alumni Big Band with Jimmy in that band. He was in Dizzy's big band when Dizzy was alive. It was amazing to be around him, experience his stories, energy, and just his aura. I felt that I understood jazz in a different way, more than I had in school, or learning in private lessons, or listening to records or experienced playing on gigs. Being around the jazz masters was my path to understanding what this music is about. I wanted to create some way for my peers and other musician friends to be involved and be around these jazz masters as well.

I've recorded a couple other volumes in the Masters Legacy Series that are not released yet with Tootie Heath and Benny Golson. The amazing thing is I got close to Mr. Golson and Mr. Heath, and I've been playing with them in different configurations. Mr. Golson asked me to play with him at the Jazz Standard, after we did the recording. I got to play his compositions, and absorb his stories, music, and concepts. I also did a recording with George Coleman which will be another volume. I spent time with "Big George" as they call him. He is a completely different musical mind with different concepts from the rest of them. What I have learned is they all have their unique concepts and experiences that have led them to where they are now.

The greatest lesson you can learn from jazz is individualism, and to be comfortable being yourself. That is what the greatest jazz musicians exhibited: Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Thelonious Monk, Fats Waller. You think of these people and you think of a whole culture, a whole way of being, and a whole world. It has really been amazing for me to keep in mind their lives through the stories, teaching and acts of kindness that the jazz masters exhibit.

JJ: *Was your experience in the Montclair school system important to your musical education?*

EC: We moved to Montclair when I was beginning sixth grade. I started at Glenfield Middle School and they had a good music teacher named John Ward. He did a great job, but I was already studying classical piano pretty seriously. I started at the age of three on the Suzuki method, and I had a great experience at the Manhattan School of Music pre-college where I went every Saturday until I was 18.

My move to Montclair inspired me in ways beyond the school system. It's in close proximity to New York City, the cultural hub of all things, in this country and the world. I also found there was a lot of diversity, and amazing people in Montclair. That was a huge

benefit, and had a huge impact in my growth and development as a musician and human being. The schools were good, but there wasn't an exceptional music program at any of those schools. The student body and the people there were interested, smart and aware, especially much more than in Miami where I came from. That really helped. (Chuckles)

JJ: *How did your family react to your decision to make music your career?*

EC: Whether they meant to or not, they kind of groomed me for a career if I wanted to do that. It was always a dream of my dad to be a musician. He got a taste of it, but never got to live it out fully. I was really lucky that they fully supported me no matter what I wanted to do. Also, my mother, Marla Cohen, is an artist. She is a great photographer and sculptor with a really, really creative mind and spirit. Growing up around that, I got some of it from her. Someone like that would understand if their child wanted to do something creative. I'm lucky in that regard.

JJ: *Would you tell us more about your dad's interest in being a musician?*

EC: He was from the Bronx and became a singer in his 20s. He got hooked up with a couple of opportunities in the industry. He was working in nightclubs, and got signed to a record deal. He cut a couple of sides and sounded really cool and great. His music was R&B, which was a lot closer to jazz then it now is. I think the record came out at the same time as Jackie Wilson's and he didn't get any attention or press after that, just because of the timing. He kind of faded a little bit. He got sick of waiting for things to happen, and became a psychologist.

JJ: *Are there any other members of your family or your parent's friends who have made music their career?*

EC: My dad's uncle, Maurice Kogan was a tenor player nicknamed "Hawk," because he sounded like Coleman Hawkins. He played a lot of big band stuff and Broadway hits. His son, Greg Kogan, is a pianist who played with Buddy Rich, Red Norvo, Lionel Hampton and many others. He lived a full jazz life. I got to know him when I was about 16 or 17. I used to go see him when he played with Joe Morello at Trumpets. He would let me sit in sometimes.

JJ: *After high school, you attended the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. For years, you had spent Saturdays studying at Manhattan School of Music. What attracted you south?*

EC: I'm originally from there and had memories, but wasn't able to put them in an adult context. I wanted to explore Miami as an adult. I think that was the first reason. Also, I had spent a lot of time in New York. I knew I wanted to be there, but I wanted a break from it before I got my career and life started. I thought taking four years to grow up a little bit, before I was around all the musicians and everyone I wanted to meet, would be a good idea for me. Also growing as a

"One of my main projects is called 'Masters Legacy Series' . . . about bringing together older established jazz musicians with serious musicians in their 20s and 30s."

musician, practicing and just spending time away [from] the microscope where everyone sees and hears you all of the time was important for me.

Another huge reason was this teacher there whom I met my senior year of high school. His name is Shelly Berg, a fantastic pianist and all around musician. He writes for orchestra, musicals, directs, writes curriculum, and runs the whole entire music program. That is almost unheard of for a jazz musician to run the classical program, the musical theater program, and the recording engineering program. He became the dean of the music school program at the University of Miami, and said, "I want you to come and study with me." He only had a couple of students per semester, and it was a pretty good honor.

I trusted him and felt he was someone I could look up to as a mentor, who would show me the things that would help in my life and career, as a human, in the business and in all things. I decided to be under his wing. It was one of the great decisions I've made. He was really one of the best teachers that I have had, in the sense that he taught you how to be yourself. You had to get you out of you. A lot of teachers will give you information, and show you things you can use or play. He really focused on looking inward, drawing from your experiences, and using your emotions to express yourself and be the best musician you can. That is something I am grateful for, and will never forget.

JJ: *In addition to Manhattan School of Music, where else did you learn about jazz?*

EC: I was learning to play jazz with a few friends in middle school. I also went to this New Jersey program that is worth mentioning, called Jazz Connections, which was run by a lady named Janet Lemansky out of Montclair State. It was a workshop that had Billy Hart, Mike Lee, Michele Rosewoman and many other great teachers. It really inspired me being in that environment. That program later

developed into Jazz House Kids. I got to know Christian McBride that way. Now I'm in one of his bands, and touring pretty extensively with him.

JJ: *In those early years, did you have any musician friends that also became professional musicians that we might know?*

EC: One friend is Evan Sherman. We met in high school and used to work on music here in New Jersey, play gigs, and figure out the music together. He is a great drummer and musical mind. We've known each other for over 10 years, are still very close, and still play together all the time. He plays in my band and my trio. We recorded an album with Ron Carter that was released in May 2018 (*Masters Legacy Volume 2 Emmet Cohen Evan Sherman Featuring Ron Carter: Cellular Live*)

JJ: *Do you recall just how you met?*

EC: I don't, but he has a story that we met at Cecil's Jazz Club. That was the place in West Orange run by Cecil Brooks III. That was my home town club. The club Trumpets was closer to my house, and I would go there, but Cecil's was the scene. Musicians like Freddie Hendrix, Bruce Williams and many others, would come in for the jam session every Tuesday night. They had no piano, so I was forced to learn the Hammond B-3 organ there, for which I'm forever grateful. Now that it is part of my musical scope.

Cecil's was very special, because it was an incubator for learning. Not how most people learn, in an institutional setting, but really learning on the bandstand. Guys like Steve Turre would come in and scream at me that I was rushing or not playing the changes right. Christian McBride would be by the stage, and I'd be all nervous, and messing up the chord changes. Bruce Williams really gave me a chance by putting me in his band. We would play together almost every Tuesday. I was just figuring out how to play with people who were older and who came from different backgrounds than me, how to find common ground, find my groove in the tradition, and discover myself as well. That was my first professional experience with that. It is quite amazing to look back on. Bruce Williams is one of my mentors and teachers always. He lives in Montclair.

Cecil's is where I met Evan. He is about three years younger than me. I can't remember, but he says I was like 17, and he got on the drums, looked at me and said, "Hey, do you want to play 'This I Dig of You?'" I looked at him, said, "No," and we played something else. That was our first interaction. Hopefully I've grown up a lot since then, because the music is a place to find common ground, and relate to other people in a positive manner.

JJ: *What caused you to change your focus from classical to jazz?*

EC: I fell in love with jazz around the time I was in middle school. I played clarinet and saxophone as my second (and third) instruments, and spent my afternoons learning solos by Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. I heard the language and understood it in my core. Other outside experiences such as Litchfield Jazz Camp, and jam sessions at Cecil's Jazz Club affirmed the community that I wanted and needed to be a part of. I always like to relate it to Harry Potter, when I'm speaking to young students. When it's time for him to choose his wand, he realizes— you don't get to choose your wand, your wand



Photo by John Herr

continued on page 30

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Trumpeter Eddie Allen Enriches Holiday Tunes with a Jazzy Makeover

When trumpeter Eddie Allen released his *Jazzy Brass for the Holidays* album on the DBCD label 10 years ago, NPR's Kevin Whitehead reported that Allen's sextet made "those shopworn tunes so shiny, you can forget you're listening to Christmas music . . ." Added *Downbeat*'s Frank Hadley: "Refusing to stoop to weak sentiment, he [Allen] communicates his sense of uplift when refurbishing 'We Three Kings', 'O Holy Night', and a dozen more classics. All the while his fellow brass players sound just as involved and confident. They're on a little wintry voyage of discovery with streams of ideas articulated with spirit and concision."

Ten years later, Allen is still taking *Jazzy Brass* on the road, and his sextet will be the featured attraction on Saturday, December 7, at the Bethany Baptist Church Jazz Vespers in Newark. The New Jersey Jazz Society is a co-sponsor of the concert, which will also include trumpeter Reggie Pittman, trombonist Clark Gayton, pianist Oscar Perez, and drummer Carl Allen. A second trombonist is to be announced later.

Called one of the most versatile musicians on the New York-New Jersey jazz scene, Allen has performed or recorded with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, tenor saxophonist Houston Person, and drummer Art Blakey, among many others.

Allen's younger brother, drummer Carl Allen, has performed on more than 200 recordings. He grew up on gospel, rhythm & blues, and funk but was converted to jazz after hearing an album by saxophonist Benny Carter. Carl Allen's first gigs were with alto saxophonists James Moody and Sonny Stitt, and he spent eight years a Musical Director for trumpeter Freddie Hubbard. Allen is a former Director of Jazz Studies at the Juilliard School.



Eddie Allen

Pianist Oscar Perez, a resident of West Orange, spent several years performing with bands led by trombonist Wycliffe Gordon and tenor saxophonist Virginia Mayhew. He also toured with vocalist Phoebe Snow. WBGO's Sheila Anderson first heard Perez play with Gordon and later wrote that, "It was clear to us that he wouldn't be a sideman for long. An improviser and composer with his own distinctive voice, Oscar Perez has expertly combined the tradition of his Cuban heritage with straight-ahead jazz."

Trumpeter Pittman has been performing professionally for more than 30 years, and his 2018 Ivoryhornz album, *Smilessence*, with keyboardist Loren Daniels, was described by *Jazz Weekly* as a "solid and straightforward bop jazz quartet sound that feels like it's been waiting in the shadows preparing to jump out at you as you pass by." Trombonist Gayton has played with the Count Base Orchestra, Duke Ellington Orchestra, and Mingus Big Band. He also toured with Bruce Springsteen as part of his Seeger Sessions band.

The Bethany Baptist Church is located at 275 Market St. in Newark. The combination concert/service begins at 6 p.m., and admission is free. Free secure parking adjacent to the sanctuary.

NEW BRUNSWICK JAZZ PROJECT

Young Drummer Evan Sherman Leads His Big Band

Evan Sherman, who was born in Livingston, NJ, and grew up in Short Hills, began playing drums when he was five years old. He played his first professional gigs as a 13-year-old, and, as a junior at Millburn High School, was selected to play in the Grammy Jazz Ensemble at the 2010 Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Sherman went on to graduate from the Manhattan School of Music, and in 2014 formed the 16-piece Evan Sherman Big Band, which will be performing on Friday, December 20, in a concert presented by the New Brunswick Jazz Project at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center. The New Jersey Jazz Society is a proud sponsor of this event.

The band members are a blend of up-and-coming young lions and a rotating cast of seasoned veterans. The band is the resident band at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola's late night dance parties and has also appeared at The Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center, The Django in TriBeCa, and the Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre in Morristown.

Sherman and pianist Emmett Cohen appeared at the Village Vanguard this past January with legendary bassist Ron Carter. In 2017, Sherman, Cohen, and Carter performed as a trio on the Cellar Live album, *Masters Legacy Volume 2 Emmet Cohen featuring Ron Carter Evan Sherman*. (See Talking Jazz With Emmett Cohen, page 14).

The New Brunswick Performing Arts Center is located at 11 Livingston Ave. in New Brunswick. The concert is being presented from 8-10:30 p.m.; tickets are \$25 and can be ordered by logging onto NBJP.org.



Evan Sherman Big Band



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Pat Metheny's Side Eye Trio Unveils 'New Playing Environment'

By Spotlight Central

The Pollak Theatre stage on the campus of Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ, was set up on Tuesday, September 10, with a drum set, an organ, several synthesizers, and a collection of amps and guitars. Behind the instruments, however, sat an oddly-shaped stack of equipment with a cloth covering, unusually noticeable because of its unconventional shape and large size.



Photo by Love Imagery

Many of the jazz lovers who filled the theater were wondering just what it was hidden under that mysterious cloth — as they excitedly awaited the beginning of the evening's concert by Pat Metheny's Side Eye.

Metheny, 65, a Grammy-winning guitar prodigy, has been one of the most important musicians of the past 40 years. Not only is he a virtuoso on the traditional jazz guitar, he has been instrumental in the development of several new kinds of guitars including the soprano acoustic guitar, the 42-string Picasso guitar, and the "Orchestrion," a room-filled collection of musical instruments which play based on computerized instructions generated from Metheny's single master electric guitar.

Born in Kansas City into a musical family, Metheny started on trumpet at the age of eight and switched to guitar when he turned 12. By the time he was 15, he was working regularly with the best jazz musicians in town. At 18, Metheny became the youngest teacher ever at the University of Miami; by the age of 19, he was hired as the youngest teacher ever at Boston's Berklee College of Music.

Following a three-year stint with vibraphonist Gary Burton, Metheny reinvented the traditional "jazz guitar" sound for a new generation of

players with a series of recordings starting with *Bright Size Life*, *Pat Metheny Group* (ECM Records: 1976) and *American Garage* (ECM Records: 1979). Over the years, he has won 20 Grammy awards in 12 different categories.

Currently, Metheny is touring in a new "playing environment" which he calls Side Eye. "I wanted to create an ongoing setting to feature a rotating cast of new and upcoming musicians who have particularly caught my interest along the way," he explains. "From my earliest days in Kansas City onward, I was the beneficiary of so many older musicians giving me a platform to develop my thing through the prism of their experience and the particular demands of what their music implied."

Metheny entered the stage to cheers and applause from the crowd stating, "It's great to be here in Jersey. It's great to be back on the East Coast with all of you super hip people. I have with me two incredible musicians — please welcome to the bandstand Marcus Gilmore on drums and James Francies on piano and keyboards." The crowd enthusiastically applauded and Metheny and Co. opened the performance with the Ornette Coleman blues piece, "Turnaround." Metheny sat center stage making his hollow-body jazz guitar sing as

his left hand danced up and down the fretboard and his right deftly picked the strings. After Gilmore joined in on the drums, Metheny played a solo to great applause. Francies entered on grand piano as Metheny played chords.

Beginning his solo sparsely, Francies soon played rapid runs as his fingers fluttered over the keys. Then it was back to Metheny for more golden guitar sounds before he handed the spotlight off to Gilmore on the drum kit, his sound rolling with precision and style as he skillfully worked his way around the set with his skimming sticks.

Following “So May It Secretly Begin”, the crowd cheered when it recognized “Bright Size Life.” Starting slow and mellow with solo guitar, blue lights illuminated the stage as Metheny performed with his eyes closed, Francies’ keyboard bass accompanying him while drums rolled. Handling the bass parts, Francies ran up and down the keyboard channeling the work of Metheny’s brilliant former bassist Jaco Pastorius, alternating soloing with his right and left hands to large applause. The number ended with a Metheny guitar trill followed by a glorious final chord.

On the next number, “Always and Forever,” Metheny fingerpicked slowly and melodically as he temporarily held his guitar pick between his teeth. Playing pianissimo, the notes were barely audible as this gorgeous ballad softly stole from his guitar while Gilmore gently caressed the drums with brushes — swirling, tapping, and brushing whispers of sound — to accompany the exquisite strains emanating from Metheny’s expert fingers.

On an upbeat and rhythmic cover of Ornette Coleman’s “The Good Life,” Gilmore played with sticks on the rims of his drums as he tapped out an upbeat solo. Metheny nodded his head in agreement as he and Francies joined in on the fun, synchronizing their strums and chords into the stream of rhythms coming from the trio which brought fervent cheers from the attentive crowd.

Later, the group launched into Michael Brecker’s jazzy minor blues, “Timeline.” Francies played the Hammond organ on this number which rambled along as the three Side Eye musicians played side by side, each creating within singular musical worlds that magically melded together to create a cohesive piece of spirited music. Francies’ organ solo featured bright and rapid-fire playing before exploring chordal rhythms. Communicating musically with the guitar and drums, Metheny’s head bopped to Francies’ organ playing prior to Metheny returning to solo himself, the arrangement building and crescendoing to an impressive conclusion.

Following a waltz, Side Eye launched into a funky John Scofield/Pat Metheny creation, “The Red One.” On this boisterous piece, the trio’s big sound drew the audience in with multiple layers and levels of vibrations to explore and enjoy.

Francies effortlessly played again on two separate keyboards, his bass

and synthesizer racing along with accelerated fingerings. Metheny changed over to a guitar controller for his signature brassy guitar synth sound as he nodded his head in agreement while wailing to the funky rhythm. Audience members moved to the groove in their seats — some drumming, some swaying, and some bopping along to the mountain of sound coming from these three musicians — as the conclusion of this exhilarating performance brought applause and cheers from the crowd.

At this point, Metheny switched to acoustic guitar and sat solo center stage for “Message to a Friend.” In sharp contrast to the previous number, the sound rang out softly, clearly, and melodiously on this gentle ballad with an exquisite melodic line before Gilmore’s drums gently entered and Francies’ keyboard bass added its low voice.

The joy of the music could clearly be seen on Metheny’s face as he ended a mostly solo performance of “Message to a Friend”. Metheny exclaimed, “Not a whole lot of talking going on here! In the recent past, I played older tunes in different ways, knowing I would get these two musicians. Next, we have 40 minutes of new music which is broken up into three ‘Things.’ We’ll play them now, and I hope you all like them. Here we go!” “Thing #1” was a space-age sounding piece on which Metheny used his hollow body jazz guitar and Francies

played more intricate keyboard parts while Gilmore rode the cymbals.

As the trio began to stretch out, a stagehand removed the cloth covering the large stack of equipment behind the performers to reveal a mini version of Metheny’s invention — the Orchestrion. This smaller version of the room-filling

Orchestrion contained actual instruments like orchestral bells, drums, tambourine, and more which can be robotically triggered by Metheny’s guitar or sequenced in advance. With its lights flashing, the Orchestrion played a pre-set repeating ostinato pattern which simultaneously kept the song holding steady and led it forward as the three instrumentalists played and soloed over it, creating a unique combination of live-sounding robotics and live musicians.

Metheny played wild strings and Francies played accelerated keys as Gilmore worked a shaker with his right hand while drumming softly with his left, leaving the Orchestrion to flash its lights as it steadily accompanied the solo creations of Metheny and Francies.

Metheny changed back to his guitar controller for “Thing #2.” And the Orchestrion was featured again on “Thing #3.” Taking the audience’s ears on a journey to the next dimension in sound, tambourine, bells, and then drums crisply fired on the Orchestrion within this jazzy new age piece. After this number, the Orchestrion was once again covered by a stagehand, and the crowd cheered for the trio’s tour-de-force performance.

At the end of the concert, the crowd continued to stand and cheer until Metheny returned to the stage and took a seat with his jazz guitar to play a soft and melodious encore solo medley. He opened with “Phase Dance” segueing into an elegant and rich interpretation of such compositions as “Minuano (Six Eight),” “September Fifteenth,” “This is Not America,” and, finally, “Last Train Home.”



“I wanted to create an ongoing setting to feature a rotating cast of new and upcoming musicians who have particularly caught my interest along the way.”

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

By Joe Lang

Birdland Theater, New York City **Our Sinatra: Hilary Kole/Eric Comstock/Christopher Gines** **September 27-28**

Twenty years ago, three young singers developed a concept show, *Our Sinatra*, a review containing several dozen songs performed by Frank Sinatra. It debuted at the legendary Oak Room in New York City's Algonquin Hotel as a last minute replacement for a suddenly unavailable Buddy Greco. The critical response was wonderfully positive, and it evolved into an extensive off-Broadway run, a couple of national tours, and occasional other performances.

For two evenings at the Birdland Theater, the original cast comprising vocalists Hilary Kole, Christopher Gines and Eric Comstock, who also provided the piano accompaniment, resurrected the show to the delight of enthusiastic audiences.

In addition to being accomplished singers, the three of them provided informative and witty commentary throughout the evening with the aplomb of accomplished actors. Joining them for the shows was the bassist from the original production, the marvelous Dean Johnson.

The evening opened with each of them singing a snippet of three Sinatra favorites, Comstock's "Come Fly with Me," Kole's "I've Got You under My Skin" and Gines's "These Foolish Things." This set the stage for a continuous stream of great songs delivered with style and substance. For almost 1 1/2 hours, the audience was transported to a world of song once inhabited by the grand master of pop/jazz vocalizing, Ol' Blue Eyes himself, by three talented and engaging singers who carried on the Sinatra influence in their own individual ways. Individually and together, they seamlessly presented a panoramic glimpse at the range of material that Sinatra assayed throughout his long and prolific career.

Comstock, who fills the 5:30 p.m. slot at Birdland's main room on most Saturdays, has developed into a performer who belongs in the grouping of singer/pianists such as Bobby Short, Hugh Shannon, Steve Ross and Ronny Whyte, gentlemen who have all mastered the art of mining the Great American Songbook with style, elegance and grace. Kole has a magnificent voice and great musical instincts. Gines has a style and voice most close to that of the subject of the show, but in no way attempts to channel Sinatra, although he did do a bit of parody while singing "For Once in My Life."

The show was constructed in a way that was fluid and interesting. A series of individual tunes with no particular theme prefaced a collection of songs that Sinatra sang in films. A brief medley of tunes exploring various aspects of romance gave way to Gines giving a passionate reading of "Ol' Man River." All three joined in on "Without a Song" leading into a medley of saloon songs bookedend by the classic "One for My Baby." Following a few more individual songs, they concluded the show with an extended medley of Sinatra favorites, just a line or two of each, with a logical pattern as they segued from tune to tune. After 20 years, the show has lost none of its charm, and the performers, while their talents have matured, retain the same freshness and enthusiasm that they exhibited on the first night at the Oak Room.



Hilary Kole Photo by Bill Westmoreland

Carol Sloane **September 20-21**

If you did not catch Carol Sloane at the Birdland Theater dispensing her vocal magic with assistance from Scott Hamilton on tenor sax, Mike Renzi on piano and Jay Leonhart on bass, you missed seeing one of the special musical happenings of 2019.

Always a creative singer with an understated approach to vocalizing, Sloane, now 82, has perfected her style to a point where her performances are master classes on how to communicate lyrics in a way that makes each word meaningful, and leaves you with the feeling that while you may have heard the song before, it is somehow like meeting a new friend. She has a jazz sensitivity that is always present, and even indulges occasionally in a scat chorus that is surprising and effective. Her voice is mellow, but when she wants to, she can stretch for some higher register notes that are unexpected, but perfectly chosen.

Unfortunately, Hamilton does not bring his tenor sax supremacy to these shores too often in recent years, so it was a super treat to hear him apply his luscious mainstream swing approach to the horn that has been described as the instrument that is closest to the human voice. He sure makes it sing. His subtle noodling behind Sloane was nicely enhancing, and his straight out playing was a reminder of how much he is missed as the once steady presence that he was in the New York City area. After leaving New York for London, he is now based in Italy.

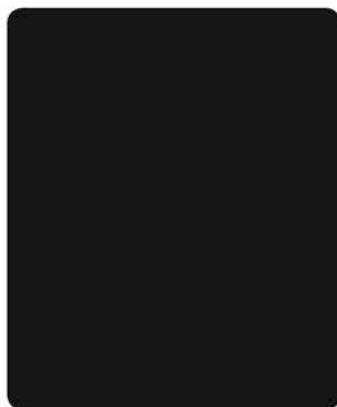
Renzi has developed the art of accompaniment to a level that is close to peerless. His shadings and musical acumen are of the highest order and are matched by a sensitivity that provides a vocalist with a bed of sounds on which to float with ease and comfort. Give him a bit of open space, and you hear that there is also an exceptional jazz player occupying a part of him.



Carol Sloane and Mike Renzi

continued on page 24

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 The Art of Elvin

Sunday, November 17 • 4:00 p.m.

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Leonhart, the only member of the cast who does not claim Rhode Island as his state of origin, fitted seamlessly into the package of all-stars on the Birdland Theater stage. There are few bass players who have reached the level of admiration that Leonhart enjoys among his fellow musicians. One thing that sets him apart is his always present sense of humor, something that infuses his playing along with his seemingly infinite creativity.

For several minutes in excess of an hour, the audience was treated to four sensational musicians having a conversation that was simply scintillating. Each member of the audience certainly left the venue feeling better for having experienced this uniquely satisfying set of music that illustrated why jazz is such a special and important art form.

Count Basie Orchestra

Scotty Barnhart (Leader, Trumpet)/Shawn Edmunds, Frank Green, Bruce Harris, Brandon Lee(Trumpets)/Clarence Banks, Dave Keim, Mark Williams, Alvin Walker, (Trombones)/Doug Lawrence, Markus Howell, Dave Glasser/Doug Miller/Josh Lee (Saxophones)/ Glen Pearson (Piano)/Will Matthews (Guitar)/Trevor Ware (Bass)/Robert Boone (Drums)/Carmen Bradford (Vocals)

August 20-24

The Count Basie Orchestra made its annual visit to Birdland for five nights of the most swinging big band music that one can experience. These occasions always call to mind the appearances by the band at the original Birdland when they were still led by the Count and were frequent performers at that venerable club.

Current leader Scotty Barnhart has the band humming along with the expected tight ensemble playing and scintillating solo turns by the wonderfully talented individuals comprising the current lineup.

They opened with "This Could Be the Start of Something Big," and it certainly was. Tenor saxophonists Doug Lawrence and Doug Miller carried the solo interludes with the kind of dynamism that has been a hallmark of the Basie bands since the 1930s. On "Basie Power" it was the alto saxmen, Dave Glasser and Markus Howell front and center sharing the solo time.

As the set progressed, there were long-time Basie favorites to be sure like "Blues in Hoss' Flat," "Li'l Darlin'" and "The Kid from Red Bank," but Barnhart always includes many great charts that are not as well known as those. In this instance, they addressed "Who Me," "What's New", highlighting the trumpet of Brandon Lee, "I Needs to Be Beed With," featuring the longest standing member of the band, trombonist Clarence Banks, and "Doodle Ooodle." The dynamic vocalist Carmen Bradford appeared at two points in the program with her takes on tunes such as "Honeysuckle Rose," "We'll Love Again" and "At Last."

The Basie band is one of the great ensembles in jazz history, and has been thrilling audiences since 1935. It sure had that effect on the folks at Birdland on August 20.

Nicki Parrott Trio **August 8**

Bassist/vocalist Nicki Parrott is never less than a sparkling performer

and presence wherever she appears. Match her up with pianist John di Martino and drummer Alvin Atkinson, turn them loose on a program of jazz and Great American Songbook standards, and the results are guaranteed to be magical.

Parrott has a new album, *New York to Paris*, on which di Martino and Atkinson are also participants, and they revisited several tunes from the album, including "I Love Paris," "I Will Wait for You," "The Brooklyn Bridge" and "Broadway." The other tunes were "Remember," "L-O-V-E," Oscar Pettiford's "Laverne Walk," "Caminos Cruzados (Malagueña)," "I'm a Woman," with some new lyrics containing contemporary references, and "The Rainbow Connection."

The trio functioned as a superbly cohesive unit. Parrott, who proves that you can indeed sing and play the bass, and do both magnificently, is a sensitive ballad singer, and has an unyielding sense of swing underlying everything that she plays and sings. Di Martino is an accompanist supreme who also is a marvelously creative jazz player. Atkinson holds the trio together with his steady time, abetted by a nice sense of humor. The set was an exercise in musical cohesion that was exciting and engaging from the opening notes to the last, ones that came too soon for the engrossed audience.

Josh Richman Quintet **August 6**

Pianist Josh Richman has been gaining a reputation as one of the best accompanists on the scene for vocalists. He provides sensitive and creative backgrounds for singers and is often involved in creating the arrangements for them. When he is given solo space, it is quickly apparent that he has solid jazz chops to complement his accompanying talent.

Given the opportunity to front his own instrumental group, featuring mostly his original compositions, at the Birdland Theater, he gathered an outstanding cast of musicians that included Steve Wilson on alto sax, Leon Jordan Jr. on trumpet, Peter Washington on bass and Donald Edwards on drums and demonstrated that he can sparkle as a leader, arranger and composer in addition to his superb pianism.

The band was obviously enjoying playing Richman's tunes, and that positivity permeated into the audience throughout the set. Wilson has been a first call reed player for the last several decades, as well as an acclaimed leader of his own groups. Jordan has been playing in the Philadelphia area since high school, and, after graduating from the University of the Arts in 2009, has had an impressive career. He plays with intensity and has developed his own signature sound.



Josh Richman

Photo by Anthony Dean Photography

Washington, a member of the Bill Charlap Trio for more than 20 years, is simply one of the premier players on his instrument. Edwards is an exceptionally steady timekeeper and plays with wonderful musicality. The set proved to be musically satisfying, and steadily entertaining. Richman is a star on the rise.

Symphony Space, New York City Songbook Summit: Ellington and Armstrong: Peter and Will Anderson

For the fourth season of Songbook Summit, Peter and Will Anderson turned their attention to two of the most significant and influential musicians in jazz history, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong.

The Andersons are magnificent performers on a variety of reeds, with Peter playing tenor sax, soprano sax, clarinet and bass clarinet, while Will addresses alto sax, baritone sax, clarinet and flute. They share the abilities to play each of their instruments with incredible technical proficiency, produce tones that are simply beautiful, with intense and limitless swing.

August 13-15 (Ellington),

The program devoted to Ellington found the Andersons in the company of pianist Jeb Patton, bassist Neal Miner, drummer/vibist Chuck Redd and vocalist Molly Ryan.

During the concert, they played 13 gems from the world of Ellingtonia, songs written mainly by Ellington and/or Billy Strayhorn, with occasional contributions from members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. There were plenty of familiar favorites such as "Take the 'A' Train," "I Got It Bad (and that Ain't Good)," "I'm Beginning to See the Light," "Mood Indigo," "Prelude to a Kiss," "In a Mellow Tone" and "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Don't Have That Swing)."

The Andersons also dug deeply to find selections that are less frequently heard. They gave their takes on "Black and Tan Fantasy," "Soda Fountain Rag," Ellington's first published song, "Drop Me Off in Harlem," "Ad Lib on Nippon" and "The Mooche." Special mention must be made of the duo played by Peter Anderson on bass clarinet and pianist Patton on the magnificent movement from *The Queen's Suite*, "Single Petal of a Rose." This was a feature number for their late mentor, baritone saxophonist Joe Temperley; and Peter proved that he has absorbed Temperley's superb musicianship.

Ryan contributed effective vocals on six of the pieces, tender on ballads, and swinging on the more uptempo selections. Patton, Miner and Redd offered perfect support for the Andersons. This impressive program wonderfully honored the world of Ellingtonia.

August 21-23 (Armstrong)

When the Andersons turned their attention to music associated with Armstrong, their supporting crew included Jon-Erik Kellso on trumpet, Rossano Sportiello on piano, Paul Wells on drums and Vince Giordano on bass, tuba, bass saxophone and vocals.

Armstrong performed a huge number of songs during his career, many of which he wrote. For this concert, the Andersons selected songs written by him, "Struttin' With Some Barbeque," "Cornet Chop Suey," "Potato Head Blues," "Some Day You'll Be Sorry" and

"Swing That Music," plus several tunes by others that were closely associated with Satchmo, songs such as "Muskrat Ramble," "St. James Infirmary," "West End Blues," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Weatherbird," "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," "Hello Dolly" and "It's a Wonderful World."

The band nicely captured the spirit of Armstrong. Kellso was a perfect choice to make the contributions on trumpet, as he is quite obviously influenced by Satchmo, but has developed his own individual style, among the most recognizable on the scene today. Sportiello is truly one of the special pianists in jazz; Wells is a rock solid contributor on drums. Giordano is a master of his trio of bass instruments and added some Armstrong-influenced vocals on "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Someday You'll Be Sorry," "Hello Dolly" and "Swing That Music." The duo by Peter Anderson on soprano sax and Sportiello on piano of "What a Wonderful World," added a nice reference to one of Armstrong's most famous recordings without weighing down the concert with the overly sentimental lyrics.

Louis Armstrong was famous for his winning smile, and this program would have elicited one of his classic grins.

As in their prior programs in the Songbook Summit series, the Andersons split the responsibilities for assembling the show. Will writes and delivers an informative and witty script, and prepares the slide/video portion of the program that adds a visual aspect to their presentations. Peter provides the nicely conceived and executed musical arrangements.

Unlike the previous dozen entries in this series which were each devoted to a single songwriter, these concerts concentrated on iconic musicians who were also accomplished songwriters, giving the Andersons different challenges in creating the programs. They succeeded with aplomb! **J**

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New Jersey **Jazz** Society Social Connections

Vanessa Perea

By Sanford Josephson

vocalist Roseanna Vitro. “Roseanna would make the students listen to mixed CDs,” she recalls, “and I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing ‘How High the Moon’. I thought it was insane! How could someone do this with their voice? After that, I heard Anita O’Day’s version of ‘Tenderly’. Her voice was so sultry and full of character.”

After graduating from NJCU in 2010, Perea decided to pursue a career as a jazz vocalist. In a review of *Soulful Days*, her 2014 album, *Jazz Times*’s Christopher Loudon wrote that her singing recalled “the interpretive fearlessness of Anita O’Day” and “a slithery sexiness worthy of Sarah Vaughan.” *Jazz Weekly*’s George W. Harris described her singing as having “a crisp and clear Nancy Wilson-ish sound . . . flexible enough to handle tricky bebopping lines,” but with “the addition of Latin passion to put some feeling into the lyrics as well.”

According to Vitro, Perea “was a star student of mine. She learned jazz phrasing and started swinging by two semesters of study. She was transcribing solos by the time she sang with the late, great James Moody in concert at NJCU.” Earlier this year, Perea appeared at the Mezzrow Jazz Club in Greenwich Village and Birdland Theater and is a regular attraction in New Brunswick as part of the New Brunswick Jazz Project’s ongoing series.

In addition to her solo career, she is a member of The Ladybugs, a sextet that includes two lead singers, doubling on percussion and ukulele; two trombone players; a guitarist; and a bassist. The group’s repertoire leans heavily on songs from the 1920s, ‘30s, and ‘40s. The *Wall Street Journal*’s Will Friedwald defined The Ladybugs as part of “the emerging genre generally known as the new hot jazz . . .” and *The New York City Jazz Record* reported that the group’s “refreshing sound and smart interpretations of early jazz tunes come as something of a revelation.”

In 2018, The Ladybugs spent three weeks at Jazz At Lincoln Center’s club in Shanghai, appearing there with other rising American jazz stars such as saxophonist Patrick Bartley, Jr., and drummer Evan Sherman. Shanghai, Perea says “felt like five New York Cities all together. The music scene was pretty cool, but the audiences were more subdued than audiences in New York.”

On Sunday, November 17, Perea will be leading a trio at the New Jersey Jazz Society’s monthly Jazz Social at Shanghai Jazz. At press time, she hadn’t decided on the theme of her performance, although she hinted that she might decide on a tribute to Billie Holiday, something she has done in the past. Doors open at 2:30 p.m.; the music starts at 3 p.m.



Photo by Christopher Drukker

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

Louis Armstrong's *The Night Before Christmas*

By Ricky Riccardi

What better way to celebrate the holiday season than by listening to Louis Armstrong's *The Night Before Christmas*. This was Armstrong's final record, made on February 26, 1971, in his home in Corona, Queens, just a few days before his last extended engagement at the Waldorf-Astoria, an engagement that pretty much sealed the fate of the frail trumpeter. He passed away on July 6, 1971.

But enough sadness! Louis Armstrong was the personification of joy, and on Sunday, December 15 at the New Jersey Jazz Society annual meeting, I'll be playing his *The Night Before Christmas* recording, discussing it, and playing some live music with trumpeter Danny Tobias and drummer Rich Noorigian (I'll be at the piano).

Louis Armstrong was terrific around children, two attributes that come to the fore of this reading. And, here's some information about this record that I'd like to share. One of Louis's private tapes, housed at the Louis Armstrong House Museum (where I am Director of Research Collections) features a tape contents sheet inside of the box on which Louis wrote, "Louis Satchmo Armstrong talking to all the kids from all over the world -- at Xmas time." Lo and behold, when I first played it almost four years ago, it opened with TWO versions of *The Night Before Christmas*! What's crazier is the sound quality was better on the tape than on the final released record. I listened to them both, and it struck me: They were two different readings. Louis's first reading is delightful, but he's a tad hesitant at the start and, at one point, has trouble turning the page (causing him to ad-lib, "Good old Santa!"). The second take was mostly used for the master, though they edited out Louis's clearing his throat early on.

We may never know how this recording came to be. Did Louis do it on a whim and someone -- maybe Lucille? -- brought it to the attention of Continental Records? Or, did Continental ask him to record it, but Louis, ailing a bit and probably unable to go to a recording studio, just recorded two versions in his den and sent it over to Continental to edit together the best parts? My assumption is that it was spurred on by the record label because, why else would Louis read *The Night Before Christmas* two months after Christmas?

According to the October 9, 1971, issue of *Billboard*, Continental produced it, but it was actually distributed by the Lorillard tobacco firm. If you bought a carton of cigarettes, you'd get a free record? Lorillard printed up one million copies to start selling for Christmas of that year, and they even awarded Lucille with a gold record, which we have at the Armstrong Archives.

Both surviving takes are very special, and you'll get a chance to hear them on December 15 as well as the Brunswick reissue, which added some silly sound effects and background music. See you then!

The annual meeting social will be held at Shanghai Jazz. Doors open at 2:00 p.m.; program starts at 2:30 p.m.

Ricky Riccardi is the author of *What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years* (Pantheon Books: 2011). His second Armstrong book, *Heart Full of Rhythm*, about Armstrong's big band years, will be published in 2020 by Oxford University Press.

The January 19th 2020 Social will feature saxophonist, composer, and arranger Alex Laurenzi. Although only in his 20s, he has performed with jazz veterans such as bassist Christian McBride, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, and saxophonists Joe Lovano and David Sanborn, among others. Currently a student of African-American history at Princeton University, he has performed at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Blue Note, and at the Vail Jazz Festival.

The New Jersey Jazz Society produces 10 Sunday Jazz Socials a year, which are FREE to members. Admission is \$10 for non-members, and there is a \$10 food/beverage minimum. Socials are held at Shanghai Jazz, 24 Main St., Madison. Doors open at 2:30 p.m., music is performed from 3 to 5 p.m.

The performances are accessible to all persons. If you have any questions or need special arrangements of any kind, please contact us: pres@njjs.org

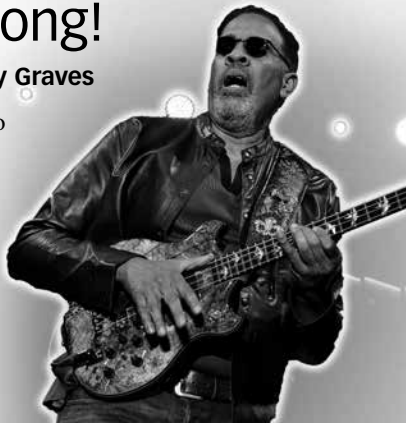


DETROIT JAZZ FESTIVAL: 40 Years Strong!

Story and Photos by Tony Graves

After being rained out for two straight years, “Ladies and gentleman Stanley Clarke!”

The first night started with pianist Danilo Perez and The Global Big Band. Then came Artist in Residence, bassist Stanley Clarke. His show was entitled “Back to School Days”. He performed hits from his



Stanley Clarke

as well as cuts from his other albums and a few from his stint as a member of Return to Forever. For the next three days, four stages and an unbelievable lineup such as bassist Ron Carter, vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, New Jersey residents, trumpeter Wallace Roney and drummer Lenny White, violinist Regina Carter, pianist Chucho Valdez and the fusion band, The Yellow Jackets, to name a few. As he came in, Clarke went out with a bang! He performed the music to John Singleton’s “*Boyz N the Hood*” with the help of the Detroit Jazz Festival String Orchestra. So ended the 40th edition of The Detroit Jazz Festival. You have to wonder what Musical Director Chris Collins has in store for next year. **J**



Danilo Perez



Chucho Valdez



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JJ: *Your website states that you were received by President Obama at the White House. Please tell us about that.*

EC: I was in the Thelonious Monk Competition in 2011, and went to DC to compete. I don't like that word when it pertains to music. "Participate" that's the right word. I guess they had about 13 to 15 pianists. We all played a set, and they chose three finalists. The judges were Herbie Hancock, Daniel Perez, Renee Rosnes and Ellis Marsalis. I was chosen as one of the three finalists. That night they told us, "We are going to take you to the White House to meet Obama." They picked us three finalists, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Jimmy Heath up in a black car. That was one of those moments where I thought, "Okay! I may be ok in this business."

That whole weekend was pretty surreal. I was like, "Herbie!" "Obama!" "Wayne Shorter!" I was trying to keep my composure, as a 21 year old. Obama said, "Hey Herbie can these guys play?" He said, "Yeah they are all right." It was like a very joking atmosphere. They kept it very light. They obviously knew each other. Obama was very cool and poised, just as he always was on TV. We miss him dearly. We got photographs with him, Herbie and the guys.

JJ: *Do you have a favorite quote about jazz?*

EC: There are a lot of famous quotes. Louis Armstrong said, "What is jazz? If you have to ask, you'll never know." I like that one and Art Blakey's "Jazz washes off the dust of everyday life." That is a real nice one. Phil Woods was quoted saying, "They don't pay us to play. They pay us to travel." I think of that often. Before this interview, I just got a notification that my flight to Detroit was cancelled. I spent time on the phone picking which flight I wanted and which airline and making sure everything was cool. That is the real life stuff.

JJ: *Of all your jazz heroes which are the most interesting to you not as an artist, but as a person?*

EC: All the guys I mentioned are extraordinary people, larger than life. I never just consider someone's music and not consider them as a human being. Those things are directly related especially in improvisatory music where you are so focused on bringing something inside of you out. When I teach, I tell my students, "Get inside of who that person was." That is why I mention the biographies, to check out as much as you can about a person, and the trajectory of their artistry. What did Miles sound like in 1949? What did he sound like in '53 and '66? Then in the 70's, what was he doing? The path of the artistry, and the depth of the human being, are intertwined. It is amazing to study both at the same time.

So many people are larger than life. I hear stories about them from the jazz masters that I know and get a picture of who they were. What Dizzy was like, and what he would have done in certain situations. It

is really important to consider who someone was as a person. I look up to all of those people and incorporate their spirit into my spirit and my music. That is what life and music are really about; knowing where you came from, who your influences are, your parents, grandparents, your family. In my case, musical parents, musical grandparents and you trace the ancestry back to the architects of the music. What did someone like Ben Webster look like? How did he move? What was Lester Young's jargon? It is just endless to trace all that stuff back and incorporate all those spirits into my music and my being.

JJ: *You have spoken of the status of the Village Vanguard. Are there any other clubs or concert halls that have a similar cultural importance to you?*


EC: I don't think there are any other clubs that match the majesty of the Vanguard, the most magical jazz club in the world. I was down there, and Russell Malone said, "I wonder what goes on when everybody leaves. There's got to be some paranormal activity down here." The point he was trying to make was everyone who has played jazz in the last 85 years has

been there. I don't think any other place has been around as long as that. There are other places that are important. I've gotten to play Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen, the Newport Jazz Festival, and the Monterey Jazz Festival. What is left for me is to explore more places all over the world and bring the music to as many people and cultures as possible.

JJ: *Earlier you mentioned playing the Jazz Cruise with Jimmy Cobb. What are your thoughts about that experience?*

EC: Oh man, I love the Jazz Cruise. I first went on when I was 21 years old, and I was around people like Roy Haynes, Tootie Heath and Benny Golson. That was early exposure to the jazz masters, and I was just so drawn to the energy and aura. Also, guys like Joey de Francesco would invite me up and have me join them on the set. I have had so many unique experiences on that thing; you're on a boat in a giant jazz festival for people in close quarters. You really get a chance to know people over the course of the week. For me that is one of the experiences that has been invaluable. They pair you with different people. I've had opportunities to play with some of my distant cousins, the Cohen family, Anat and Avishai. (We are not actually related, but people ask me so often that I started to say "Yeah," We are not, but I am very close to them. It is nice to be around them. They feel like family.) The week after we played together Avishai invited me to come to Jerusalem, and play at his jazz festival. It really works in a crazy way.

JJ: *I've enjoyed this ever so much. Thanks for taking the time.*

EC: Thank you, and take care. 

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DAN'S DEN

By Dan Morgenstern

After a fairly long hiatus from live performances I had the good luck of catching the one and only Daryl Sherman not once but twice, in different surroundings, both in the isle of Manhattan.

The first encounter was at Mezzrow, that notable offspring of Small's (they're within a block of each other and under same management), where Daryl was joined by her regulars, James Chirillo and Boots Maleson. These three have been together for a remarkable length of time—just about a quarter century—and it shows. I can't think of a current threesome (or many precursors) that is more together. I could, as the song goes, write a book, but let me just say that they share great time and have a great time together.

Daryl's piano is on the same level as her singing; James has great taste and chops and, like Boots, is as skilled an accompanist as a soloist (I think Boots is the most compelling bass soloist I know, though he no doubt would bow to Ron Carter, of whose group he's a charter member. Daryl creates the arrangements, or should I say routines, and, of course, selects the repertory, which is wide ranging and always a fine blend of the familiar (if never overly so) and the unexpected.

On this occasion, the three first selections were a salute to the season: The lovely "Tis Autumn", the seldom heard "This October" (by Bobby Darin), and "Autumn in Rome", one of those good old good ones, as Louis would say. Further highlights included "It's Love I'm After", "Music Makes Me", and one of Daryl's specials, "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" (she recently returned from her annual British tour—or should I say made her Brexit). James' solo feature was "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes", just lovely, and the wrap was "Aren't You Glad You're You"—and we were, for a welcome change.

Mezzrow has a good piano, its owner being a keyboarder himself, but the next venue where we caught Daryl has none. This was the Folk Art Museum, on Lincoln Square, where the excellent guitarist



Daryl Sherman


Bill Wurtzel has been presenting Wednesday afternoon sessions for a while. The setting is intimate so come early to make sure of getting a seat. Admission is free, and you can have a look at the exhibits as a bonus.

On this particular sunny afternoon (the music starts at 2) Bill was joined by Jay Leonhart—who just happens to be one of the very first, if not the first, musicians Daryl played with after arriving in the big city from her native Woonsocket (yes, Rhode Island is famous for Daryl). As appropriate for an audience not mainly specializing in jazz, the fare was mostly standards but served up in fresh ways, starting with the opener on Daryl's most recent album, *At Sundown*,

setting a happy mood that lasted throughout this recital. Jay offered some of his patented bass-and-voice scat, always enjoyable (and musically interesting as well as fun) and offered his instrument to surprise visitor Boots Maleson for a sit in, I think on "Whispering" and "Grooving High". "Whispering" is Paul Whiteman's recording which put his band on the road to fame. "Grooving High" is its bebop offspring (Bill shone on this—and he and Jay did a fine backup job for Daryl, who hit the spot on "What'll I Do"). So if you're in Manhattan on a Wednesday afternoon, do stop by for some fine free music—Bill draws from a deep pool of

singers and bassists!


A kick was the verse to one of the oldest tunes still in the active repertory, "Melancholy Baby", which happens to be beautiful (Ruby Braff recorded it by itself, skipping the chorus).

At my age, needless to say, I've become accustomed to losses, but September was quite a blow as we lost no less than three fine pianists: Harold Mabern, Richard Wyands, and Larry Willis (see page 5). Sometimes strange things happen: I was listening, for the first time in a long time, to a CD on which Larry is present at bedtime, awakening to learn of his passing....

Jimmy Cobb, Eric Alexander, Rufus Reid Among Jazz Stars Honoring Harold Mabern at 'Giants of Jazz' Concert

Pianist Harold Mabern, who died at the age of 83 on September 17 (see page 5), will be honored on Saturday, November 16, at the annual Giants of Jazz concert held from 8-10 p.m. at the South Orange Performing Arts Center.

A complete list of musicians who will be performing wasn't available at press time, but some of the performers will be: pianists Bill Charlap, Cyrus Chestnut, and Jeb Patton; bassists Rufus Reid and Peter Washington; drummers Jimmy Cobb, Joe Farnsworth, and T.S. Monk; guitarists, Vic Juris, Russell Malone, and Dave Stryker; tenor saxophonists Eric Alexander and George Coleman; trombonist Steve Davis; trumpeters, Freddie Hendrix, Jeremy Pelt, and Claudio Roditi; alto saxophonist Vincent Herring; and vocalist Roberta Gambarini.

SOPAC is located at One SOPAC Way in downtown South Orange, NJ. Tickets are \$55-65 and may be purchased at the box office (Monday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m.); by email at boxoffice@sopacnow.org, or by phone at (973) 313-2787. 



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Peter Leitch: 'New Life' With a Big Band


By Schaen Fox

Several years ago, guitarist Peter Leitch suffered disastrous medical problems that nearly took his life and did rob him of his ability to play his instrument. Unable to continue as he had for decades and unwilling to stop doing what he loves, he optimistically claimed to be freed from the tyranny of daily practice and found a new voice: composing, arranging, and directing his own big band. The band debuted late last year but hasn't played nearly enough since. Finally, earlier this year, he and the band performed at St. Peter's Church for its "Midday Jazz Midtown" concert series.

In his program for the concert *Notes on the New Life Orchestra: Ways and Means*, Peter wrote, "There have to be 'ways and means' of creating music when one is no longer physically able to play one's instrument. All that remains is the pencil (and a good eraser). The title 'New Life' refers not only to my own personal odyssey, but also to the music itself—to the act of breathing new life into the traditional 'raw materials,' the blues forms and song forms that have long been the structural basis of this music."

"Using the tried and true method of trial and error, in search of a personal voice I have generally tried to avoid the traditional groupings and sections of instruments: e.g., brass, reeds, etc., instead using various mixed instrumental combinations." This was instantly apparent because the 14 members of the band were not arranged in the usual configuration. The first row was only Mark Vinci (flute) and Phil Robson (guitar). Second row had Steve Wilson (soprano and alto sax), Jed Levy (tenor sax), Patience Higgins (baritone sax, bass clarinet), Matt Haviland (trombone), Brandon Moodie (bass trombone). Third row had the two trumpet players Bill Mobley and Duane Eubanks. Traditionally, the rhythm section of Peter Zak (piano), Yoshi Waki (bass), Tim Horner (drums), and Chad Coe (acoustic guitar) were on the left. Finally, Dennis James (arco bass) was located across the band on the right.

Immediately after Ronny Whyte's introduction, Leitch gave the downbeat to begin an hour of music that but for "Spring is Here" and "Round Midnight" were all his creations. They opened with "Sorta, Kinda," a polite, up-tempo piece and continued like that for much of the hour. One selection, "Mood for Max," is named for the physician he credits with saving his life. Another, "Brilliant Blue, Twilight Blue," he named for the colors of the sky during different hours of the day. That was appropriate as he had also been an excellent photographer. The closer was the joyous romp "Fulton Street Suite." It involved all the musicians and included a wonderful extended back and forth between Steve Wilson and Jed Levy that caused Mark Vinci to grin and bounce along happily as he turned to watch them. It was a great visual of a grand audio experience.

Unfortunately, if you want to hear a recording of this band, I could only find a single selection, "Portrait of Sylvia" on YouTube. 



Peter Leitch leading the New Life Orchestra

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Upcoming Concerts: Rio Clemente and Amani

The Watchung Arts Center in Watchung, NJ, will present two jazz concerts during the months of November and December. At 8 p.m. on Saturday, November 9, pianist Rio Clemente will draw on his strong classical background, and the "Bishop of Jazz", as usual, can be expected to play a variety of music that includes American Songbook standards, his own compositions, and patriotic anthems.

On Saturday, December 14, also at 8 p.m., the band, Amani, will present a holiday concert. Led by saxophonist Marty Eigen, the band will also include vocalist Stephen Fuller, pianist Fred Fischer, guitarist Flip Peters, bassist Alex Gressel, and drummer Vern Mobley.

Both concerts will include a dessert reception. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door (\$22 for WAC members). They can be purchased online at watchungartscenter.eventbrite.com; by mail at Watchung Arts Center, 18 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069; or by calling (908) 753-0190. 



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BIG BAND IN THE SKY

Pianist Harold Mabern

continued from page 5

with the New Jersey Jazz Society's Distinguished Musician Award. In 2018, Memphis-based Rhodes College honored Mabern with its Mike Curb Institute for Music's Beale Street Brass Note award. In a Facebook post, pianist Renee Rosnes expressed sadness that Mabern "never experienced the honor of being publicly recognized as an NEA Jazz Master, as he was the precise embodiment of such a title."

The last time pianist/composer Jim McNeely saw Mabern was two years ago in Frankfurt, Germany. "I was conducting the radio big band with Ambrose Akinmusire as soloist," he recalled in a Facebook post. "Harold was playing at the JazzKeller with Eric Alexander's quartet. Ambrose and I went down to see them. The band was great, but Harold was especially on fire. He played with the energy and passion of a 25-year-old, but also with the maturity that came with his years of experience. I was blown away. After the gig, Ambrose and I hung for two hours while Sir Harold held court, talking about everything imaginable. His playing and storytelling were two aspects of a true virtuoso. God bless you, Harold Mabern. Thank you for all you gave us."

Mabern is survived by his son, Michael; daughter, Roxanne; and one granddaughter.

Richard Wyands 91, pianist, July 2, 1928, Oakland, CA -- September 25, 2019, New York.

In a review for *JazzTimes* of Wyands's 1997 Steeplechase album, *Get Out of Town*, Jack Sohmer pointed out that Wyands was, "largely overlooked by the critics in the



Richard Wyands

'50s and '60s' and "also overshadowed in the eyes of the public by such more widely

exposed pianists as Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans, Tommy Flanagan, and Oscar Peterson." This album, he wrote, "should help correct this injustice... Unfairly neglected during his prime, Richard Wyands is a remarkably fine musician who still deserves all the attention he can get."

In a Facebook post after Wyands's death, guitarist Peter Bernstein, agreed with Sohmer's assessment. Wyands, Bernstein wrote, "was truly an unsung hero and almost unknown except among the musicians, despite being on so many important records with Gene Ammons, Roy Haynes, Kenny Burrell, Oliver Nelson, Roland Kirk, Etta Jones, Illinois Jacquet, and so many others."

Nate Chinen, in Wyands's obituary on the WBGO website, singled out the pianist's performances on Haynes's 1960 New Jazz album, *Just Us*; Jones's 1960 Prestige recording, *Don't Go to Strangers*; Kirk's 1961 Mercury recording, *We Free Kings*; and Burrell's 1971 CTI album, *God Bless the Child*.

Wyands began playing the piano at age 7, and, by the time he was a teenager, was playing professionally in the Bay area. He received a music degree from San Francisco State College and worked as the house pianist at the Black Hawk jazz club where he was opposite jazz super stars such as Erroll Garner and Art Tatum.

In the mid-1950s, he moved to Canada, and, while there, accompanied visiting vocalists such as Ella Fitzgerald and Carmen McRae. He returned to New York in 1958. Most recently, he led a trio at 75 Club in lower Manhattan, playing with bassist Lisle Atkinson and drummer Leroy Williams. Atkinson died in March of this year.

Wyands's piano style, according to Bernstein, "was all about subtlety and completely unique in the way he was able to find so many slick and ingenious variations on things that you could miss if you weren't paying close attention. He was a quiet and unassuming man who did his thing and didn't call attention to himself."

Tenor saxophonist Douglas Lawrence, on Facebook, said he always looked forward to playing with Wyands. "Whenever I knew he would be on the gig, I knew it was going to be great, no matter who else might be in the band. Richard's playing was always inspiring, and the way he would comp behind you was other worldly. He would always make you sound your best." Lawrence recalled Christmas Eve parties that saxophonist Jerry Dodgion and his wife, Mickey, would hold every year. "Many of those parties would also

include Tommy Flanagan and/or Hank Jones and, inevitably, one of those two great pianists would be at the piano along with Richard, playing four-handed piano, or trading with each other. It was a testament of how great Richard really was. He did more than hold his own; he belonged to the same club of exquisite piano playing."

Larry Willis 76, pianist, December 20, 1942, New York City -- September 29, 2019, Baltimore.

This past summer, Willis appeared at the Keystone Korner in Baltimore with bassist Blake Meister and drummer Victor Lewis. After that engagement, they were joined in a recording studio by saxophonist Joe Ford and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt for what will now be a posthumous album on the HighNote label. Jazz producer and Keystone Korner owner Todd Barkan recalled, in a Facebook post, what turned out to be Willis's final performances. "It was only last July 31st and August 1st," he wrote, "that 'Sugah Woogah' warmed the grottos of our hearts here at Keystone Korner in Baltimore. His loving music will long be resonating in all of our soul."

Growing up in Harlem, Willis attended the High School of Music & Art, aspiring to be a classical vocalist. But there he met classmates such as bassist Eddie Gomez and trumpeter Jimmy Owens and fell in love with Miles Davis's classic 1959 Columbia album, *Kind of Blue*. During his senior year, he changed his major to piano and earned a scholarship to the Manhattan School of Music.

As a 19-year-old, he was playing with alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, eventually appearing on his 1965 Blue Note album, *Right Now!*, and providing two of its four compositions. One of those was "Poor Eric", a tribute to multi-reedist Eric Dolphy, who had recently died at the age of 36.

Throughout his career, Willis has performed as both a sideman and a leader. He often played with South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela, whom he met at MSM; he performed with alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, and trumpeter Woody Shaw, among others. And, he was a member of the early '70s edition of Blood, Sweat & Tears.

Willis's first album as a leader was *A New Kind of Soul* (LLP: 1970), with a sextet consisting of Jimmy Owens and Joe Newman on trumpets, Marvin Stamm on flugelhorn, Al Gafa on guitar, and Al Foster on drums.

continued on page 38

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY

continued from page 36

He followed that up with *Inner Crisis* (Groove Merchant: 1973), a departure into what *AllMusic's* Thom Jurek called "one of the finest examples of electric jazz-funk from the mid-'70s." Fifteen years later, Willis teamed up with bassist George Mraz, saxophonist Kenny Garrett, and Foster for *My Funny Valentine*, released on the Japanese Jazz City label in 1988 before being re-issued by Evidence in 1998. It was described by *AllMusic's* Alex Henderson as "straight-ahead jazz that's honest, warm, and melodic."

From 1988 through the mid-1990s, Willis played with the Latin jazz group, the Fort Apache Band, and, from the late '90s on, he was the pianist in Roy Hargrove's Quintet. He also served as music director of Mapleshade Records in the '90s and 2000s.

Willis appeared on one of this writer's favorite albums, the 1995 Mapleshade release, *Big Sweet N' Blue*, featuring a quartet led by alto saxophonist Norris Turney, who was Johnny Hodges's successor in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. The other two members of the album's quartet were bassist Walter Booker and drummer Jimmy Cobb. The album featured Ellington's "In a Mellow Tone" and "Come Sunday", Billy Strayhorn's "Blood Count", Turney's "Blues For Edward" and "Checkered Hat" (a tribute to Hodges), as well as standards such as Van Heusen & Burke's "Here's That Rainy Day" and Frank Loesser's "I've Never Been in Love Before". The chemistry between Willis and Turney on "Come Sunday" was brilliant.

Upon hearing of Willis's death, pianist Benny Green, recalled, on Facebook, that Willis had once given him two free piano lessons. "He just showed me that love and support as a young guy in New York City who he believed in . . . Years ago, while Larry was touring with Roy Hargrove's quintet, we wound up staying in the same hotel in France, and I got to hang out with him again. I reminded Larry of the lessons he'd given me, and I thanked him for his soulful generosity to me years before . . . Just in case any piano players may happen to read this post and are at all curious, Larry's lesson assignment to me was: learn every note Herbie Hancock plays on 'My Funny Valentine' with Miles Davis."

Willis is survived by a nephew, Elliott Willis, and a cousin, Trish Cooper.

Carol Diann Johnson (Diahann Carroll)

84, singer-actress, July 17, 1935, Bronx, NY -- October 4, 2019, West Hollywood, CA.

Although best known for her groundbreaking role in the NBC television series, *Julia*, Carroll launched her professional career as a singer, performing on Broadway, in nightclubs, and on recordings.

Her first break came in 1954 when Truman Capote selected her for a leading role in the Broadway musical, *House of Flowers*, based on his short story and featuring music and lyrics by Harold Arlen. Carroll portrayed a prostitute in a Caribbean island bordello (Pearl Bailey was the madam), drawing notice for her singing performances of "A Sleepin' Bee" and "I Never Has Seen Snow".

In 1957, she recorded an RCA album with Ralph Burns and his Orchestra called *Diahann Carroll Sings Harold Arlen Songs*. It included "A Sleepin' Bee" along with such other Arlen standards as "My Shining Hour" and "Come Rain or Come Shine" (co-written with Johnny Mercer), as well as the classic "Over The Rainbow" (co-written with Yip Harburg).

Carroll won a Tony Award in 1962 for her role in Richard Rodgers's *No Strings*, the first musical written by Rodgers without Oscar Hammerstein II, who died in 1960. A highlight of the show was Carroll's duet of "The Sweetest Sounds" with co-star Richard Kiley.

In a column in *theaternewsonline.com* about a 2007 appearance by Carroll at New York's Feinstein's at the Regency, music critic Robert L. Daniels recalled seeing *House of Flowers* and "being taken by the character of a 16-year-old girl named Otilie, acted with beguiling charm by the youthful Diahann Carroll in her Broadway debut. When she sang, 'I Never Has Seen Snow' and 'A Sleepin' Bee', the thrill of discovery was installed within me, and it has lasted over a half-century."

The highlight of her performance at Feinstein's, Daniels wrote, was, "a swinging tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes. From the bountiful Sinatra legacy, there was Cole Porter's 'I've Got You Under My Skin', the Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer boozy lament, 'One For My Baby', and the John Kander-Fred Ebb hymn to Gotham, 'New York, New York'. Carroll is a true jazz baby who can sing and swing with the best of them."


Ironically, Carroll's closest connection to the jazz world was a non-singing role in the 1961

movie, *Paris Blues*. In the film, Carroll and Joanne Woodward are vacationing in Paris when they meet two American jazz musicians played by Sidney Poitier and Paul Newman. Poitier's character has moved to Paris because, he says: "Here in Paris, I'm Eddie Cook, musician - period; not Eddie Cook, Negro musician." Carroll falls for Poitier (they were having an affair off the screen) and tries to convince him to return to the United States and fight to improve conditions there. Louis Armstrong makes a special appearance in the movie; the soundtrack was written by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn; and Ellington was nominated for an Oscar and a Grammy for best score.

In addition to *Julia*, Carroll appeared on TV in *Dynasty*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Roots: The Next Generations*. Other feature films included *Claudine* (for which she received an Oscar nomination), *Hurry Sundown*, and *The Split*. In the 1990s, she was Norma Desmond in the Canadian stage company's production of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, *Sunset Boulevard*, the first African-American to play the role.

Samuel Fine 68, saxophonist/educator, November 29, 1950, Baltimore -- September 22, 2019, Towson, MD.

I never met Sam Fine, but we spoke on the phone about six years ago, and we both shared a love for the music of Gerry Mulligan. He wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland about Mulligan, and I was honored to quote from it in my book, *Jeru's Journey: The Life and Music of Gerry Mulligan* (Hal Leonard Books: 2015). In his thesis, he pointed out that Mulligan's role in the creation of the Miles Davis *Birth of the Cool* album was "somewhat shortchanged from an appreciation standpoint. Mulligan's contribution has been minimized by the jazz press, even though his role was central."

After selling his information technology business in 1997, Fine returned to school to pursue his love of music. He earned a bachelor's degree in music history and literature from Towson University, a master's in musicology from Peabody Conservatory of Music, and a doctorate from the University of Maryland." Fine joined the Towson faculty as an adjunct professor and taught musicology and music history. He also played saxophone in two Baltimore area bands: Mood Swings Big Band and Hank Levy Legacy Band. At the time of his death, he was president of the Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society. 



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JAZZ TRIVIA

NEW JERSEY JAZZ ROYALTY

By O. Howie Ponder

On September 8, James P. Johnson, the “father” of stride piano was celebrated by his hometown New Brunswick at the city’s brand new Performing Arts Center. Pianist Aaron Diehl played many of Johnson’s compositions, from ragtime (“Carolina Shout”) to pop and theatrical hits (“The Charleston,” “If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight”) to excerpts from his piano concerto. Johnson (1894-1955) grew up in the Hub City before his family moved to Manhattan in 1908, where he absorbed the music of the day, developed his own style, and taught it to the likes of Fats Waller and Duke Ellington. He’s one of many New Jersey natives to achieve jazz greatness; here are a half-dozen more:

1. “The Kid from Red Bank” (born 1904) grew up listening to and playing music at the downtown theater that now bears his name. He led a big band from 1935 until his death in 1984, never veering from the brawny, bluesy swing he mastered in Kansas City in the late ‘20s.

2. The tenor saxophonist and composer hails from Newark (born 1933) and has led his own quartet with no personnel changes for 20 years. He rose to prominence in Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers and Miles Davis’s “Second Great Quintet,” going on to found the fusion band Weather Report.

3. Another Newarker, a singer (1924-90) whose lustrous voice and incredible range earned her the nom de vox “The Divine One.” She was also dubbed “Sassy” for her spunky personality.

4. Another world-renowned singer was born in Hoboken in 1915. ‘Nuff said, but he started in the big band era with Harry James’s and Tommy Dorsey’s outfits, became a bobby-sox idol in the ‘40s, a movie star in the ‘50s, a Las Vegas legend, and sold more than 150 million records.

5. The beloved guitarist was born in 1926 in Paterson, and is a true Jersey legend. He’s performed often at NJJS concerts after making his name as an NBC staff musician in Skitch Henderson’s *Tonight Show* band when Johnny Carson presided. He toured with Benny Goodman, is on the ASCAP Wall of Fame and in the New Jersey Hall of Fame. Leader on 28 albums from 1971 to 2015, and his last public performance (at Dizzy’s Club in New York) is on YouTube.

6. The pianist and composer from North Plainfield (born 1929) was in the Miles Davis Sextet that in 1959 recorded *Kind of Blue*, jazz’s best-selling album. He formed a groundbreaking trio in 1961 with bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian, and over the next 20 years won seven Grammys (31 nominations). Longtime battles with drugs contributed to his death in 1980.



James P. Johnson
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answers on page 46

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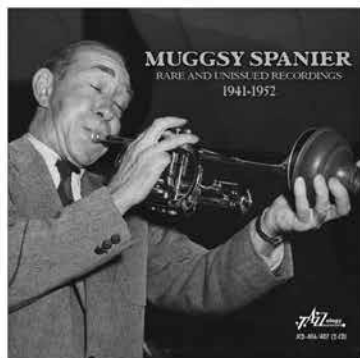
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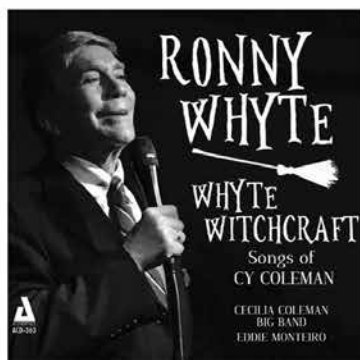
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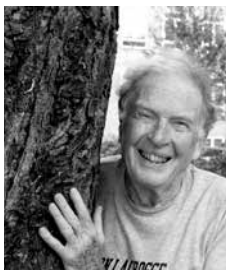
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NOTEWORTHY

It Swings, So it shakes

By Henrik Palle (contributed by Fradley Garner, International Editor)

Young people yawn when the older generation starts talking about Duke Ellington. Yet such a reaction should quickly be suppressed and corrected, because Duke Ellington is one of the fantastic and original authors of nothing less than history's book of jazz. As such, it is an occasion in itself when new material shows up with the Duke himself and his orchestra. In this case, it is the charming live concert recording from the Swedish university town of Uppsala, where the master and his entourage performed in 1971.

The concert took place in November 1971, which means that the legend himself was 72 years old at this point and had long before written the songs of his prime years. This was evident in the repertoire — a series of the absolute greatest classics served by a band composed of the trumpeter Cootie Williams, saxophonist Paul Gonsalves, clarinetist Norris Turney, other experienced musicians, and Ellington himself.

It begins with a version of "C Jam Blues," relatively easy to play, running only on the two chords C and G, yet sets the backdrop for beautiful soloing, allowing the musicians to stretch and warm up. The songs are incredibly famous and swinging. 1953's "Satin Doll", composed by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn with lyrics by Johnny Mercer is superb in this Uppsala version. Strayhorn's "Take the A Train" is so well known, and yet new nuances keep appearing in the music, as in "Things Ain't What They Used to Be." However, the version of "Hello Dolly," from the musical of the same name, doesn't cut it and could have been spared.

The cool and inescapable "swing" is constantly present in this music, lending it a near-physical character. The music is half a century old, and yet so fresh. The music is immortal in the rarest, most literal sense. As long as pianos, saxophones, clarinets and trumpets exist, Duke Ellington will be played. Perhaps "things ain't what they used to be," but this matters less when the music is running.

When will the Blues Leave? is the title of the Lugano 1999 record by the master pianist Paul Bley, bassist Gary Peacock, and the fantastic drummer Paul Motian. May the blues never disappear from music as

played by these three veterans. If it does, we will end up with nothing but disconnected and strange avant-garde music. The blues is there — in the desire to quickly go out on an improvised tangent without regard for the other musicians. This can create genius, or it can create chaos. Bley can be tempted to go there, but then he is stopped by Peacock, who enters with big, powerful tones, straightened by Motian's deep rhythm work.

This setup is reminiscent of another trio with Peacock, this time with Keith Jarrett's and Paul Bley's swing experience, creating a different groove. The tracks are originals except for the title song, which is Ornette Coleman's. Then the record closes with a wonderful version of "I Loves You, Porgy," wherein the blues truly lies.

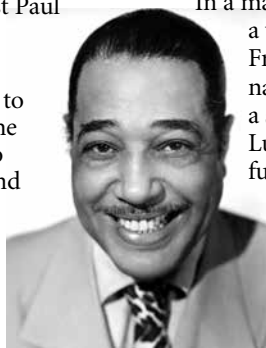
Maluba Orchestra

In a magical ensemble, the percussionist Marilyn Mazur presents a world class performance with the saxophonist and flutist Fredrik Lundin and the guitarist Kasper Bai, under the name of Maluba Orchestra. There is an enormous drive and a solid groove in the melodies mostly written by Mazur and Lundin, which could be both 1960s avant garde and '70s fusion jazz.

Bai's guitar work points in the direction of John Scofield, but also to rock guitarists of diverse sources. In reality, however, it is first and foremost *swinging* that counts. Lundin masters his instrument superiorly and even forces the high-pitched sounds to be beautiful. And when this happens against the backdrop of Jesper Løvdal's strong baritone, there is magic in the air.

All in all, this is a magical ensemble, and there is good reason to listen to the record, because in the real world it is expensive and geographically complicated to assemble all these first-rate musicians for a concert. So it's good that this one has been documented on record.

Translated by Maya Brill Garner of London, from an article by Henrik Palle in the Copenhagedaily Politiken, August 22, 2019



Duke Ellington

NBJP AT TAVERN ON GEORGE

Lucy Yeghiazaryan Trio Freshens Up the Standards

By Schaen Fox

Tavern on George has become the keystone of the New Brunswick Jazz Project's performance venues. Twice a week its basement becomes a friendly jazz room crowded with fans both young and old. On October 2, the Lucy Yeghiazaryan Trio performed and, happily, we were there for the first set. It was the first time we have caught her gig, but the enthusiastic applause that followed her introduction, showed we were late to the table.

The 11 songs the trio performed included "A Stranger in Town" and "Sweet Pumpkin", plus several warhorses of the American Songbook including "Young at Heart" (Johnny Richards/Carolyn Leigh) and Harry Rubin and Bert Kalmar's "Three Little Words." Yeghiazaryan proved to be an artist who finds freshness in the familiar. She scats masterfully, and her beautiful voice is augmented by pleasingly precise articulation. Aply accompanied by Charlie Sigler on guitar and Vince DuPont on bass, she moved quickly from one selection to another, at one point, joking that she felt she was dressed like a candidate. When someone objected to a reference to the world outside, she said, "You're right. You came here to forget that," and returned to the music. The hour passed quickly, and thanks to a captivating artist's magic, for that time, the troubling outside cares were no trouble.

Yeghiazaryan's family immigrated to West Milford, NJ, from Armenia when she was 12, right after 9/11, and she spoke no English at the time. Thanks to her father's record collection, she already had a deep interest in jazz. Captivated by artists such as Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald, she mimicked their singing long before she understood their language. In her New Jersey years from middle school through college at William Paterson, she developed her English to perfection. She is an artist well worth everyone's attention.



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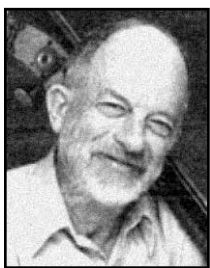
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FROM THE CROW'S NEST

By Bill Crow

The late John Amoroso was a fine trumpet player and a great entertainer, both on and off the bandstand. He had a lot of schtick with which he entertained his audiences and his band mates. And he often called his friends to tell them the latest joke, or to exchange put-ons.

Mark Fleischer told me that, after John moved to Florida, he used to call him to give him directions to non-existing jobs. John would start by saying "You take the Hutch to exit..." and they would agree to meet at a nonexistent place at a nonexistent time. Then they would both hang up and call each other months later for another set of "directions."

Turk Mauro told me about a wedding he played in 1973. As they were getting started, Turk overheard some hateful remarks between the families of the bride and groom, and told the rest of the band about the tension in the air. They didn't pay much attention to Turk's warning, but suddenly it broke into a free for all. Men and women were punching and kicking each other. Turk, with his sax still hanging from its neck strap, grabbed his case and ran for his car. As he drove out of the parking lot he saw the bride standing outside screaming, "The band's leaving!" Surprisingly, the musicians all got paid.

Drummer Lew Leabman's girlfriend, Sharon Bailey, sent me this story: Lew was working with Jay Jerome, a club date band in Philadelphia, in the early 1970s. Jay kept asking Lew to sing, and Lew kept telling him, "I don't sing." One night, Jay said, "Everybody sings. Pick a tune." Lew knew the words to "More," and since Jay kept insisting, he sang it. At the end of the tune, Jay turned around and said, "Don't sing again."

Herb Gardner posted this one on Facebook: "While I was playing intermission piano on a job with Vince Giordano's Nighthawks I noticed one of the guests watching me intently. Finally he came up and said, 'You look exactly like the guy who plays trombone with the Smith Street Society. You could be his twin brother!' When I explained that I was the same guy and just played different instruments with different bands, he drew back, scowled and said, 'Nah...you don't look THAT much like him.'"

Bill Wurtzel got this story from Lou Caputo. When Lou was studying with Frank Foster, he told him he wanted to learn "Shiny Stockings" in F. Frank asked why, because he had written it in A flat. Lou said the Real Book had it in F, because Dexter Gordon had recorded it in that key. Frank said, "Maybe Dexter learned it from the Real Book."

Wurtzel also forwarded two stories from Hide Tanaka: "In the 1980s, after a late night gig at St. Nick's Pub in Harlem, I was walking with


my bass and amp to the subway station on a deserted street. A voice from behind said, 'Hey, did you play music around here?'

I looked back and a big guy was standing there. He said, 'You know, it's not so safe around here. I can walk with you to the subway.' His voice was very relaxing and I thought, If he wants a few bucks it's fine,

I've hired a bodyguard. We talked about jazz while we were walking. At the subway entrance he grabbed my amp and ran down the stairs. I followed with my bass. At the token booth, I said 'Thank you' and offered him a few dollars. He said 'No, no, no, I just appreciate that a Japanese guy came to our neighborhood and played our music. Please come back again, Have a good night!' Then he disappeared up the stairs."

Here's Hide's second story: "When I was a street musician in 1980, we were playing near City Hall. We thought this area was supposed to be good, but no money was coming into our hat. One day, a beggar from down the street was really getting into our music. He said, 'You guys sound really great... I love that Bird and Trane... I can't believe I'm able to listen to this music for free. Now, for my exchange, I can give you a good tip. You guys should move to my space over there, it's a magical spot. I'm always there until four p.m. every day, but after that, it's yours.' We were skeptical at first... but we decided to try it. He was right, just 50 feet made a hatful of difference."

Kirby Tassos told me about a European tour of *West Side Story*. Their hotel in Frankfurt had four 20-story towers. The trombone player and the pianist planned to go rock climbing the next day. After downing a lot of the local pilsner, they decided to climb the hotel as a warm up. At two in the morning they began rappelling off a tower. Everyone was amused except the hotel people, who had the whole group thrown out of the hotel. The German company manager hurried to the hotel manager's office with a briefcase full of currency, and, after some

diplomatic words and many German Marks, all was forgiven. 

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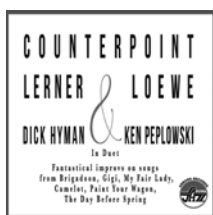


OTHER VIEWS

By Joe Lang

Whenever **AARON WEINSTEIN** is on the scene, you can be sure of a few things. He will demonstrate flawless musicianship whether playing or plucking his violin; making some side visits to his mandolin or even contributing some whistling. He will also let his unbounded sense of humor permeate his performances.

The tunes that he chooses to play are almost always what Satchmo used to refer to as “the good old, good old ones.” In guitarist Matt Munisteri and bassist Tom Hubbard, Weinstein has found perfect partners for his latest album, *3x3* (Chesky Records – Digital only). There are twelve selections on the program, each of them a delightful listening experience. The tunes include “St. Louis Blues,” “Makin’ Whoopee,” “Hindustan,” “There’s a Broken Heart for Every Light on Broadway” and “Ja-Da,” plus a couple of Weinstein originals. The players are obviously having fun, and you will also do the same as a listener. (amazon.com) **(Note: This album is only available as a download. There are two versions, the regular option and, for a slightly higher price, a Deluxe Audio Edition that has alternate versions with different microphone pickups.)**



Thanks to support from the Frederick Loewe Foundation, Arbors Records has issued two albums devoted to the music of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, one by Dick Hyman and Ken Peplowski, and the other by a group led by Adrian Cunningham.

Counterpoint Lerner & Loewe (Arbors – 19471) finds pianist **DICK HYMAN** and clarinetist/tenor saxophonist **KEN PEPOWSKI** exploring 14 L&L songs with their empathetic and unique approach to duo performance. The material was recorded at Hyman’s home studio in an intensive two days of sessions. Hyman prepared for Peplowski’s visit by “arranging chorus or-so versions of the Loewe melodies which we could use as basic concepts to launching our improvs.” Many of the selections were songs that were new to both players, but with musical minds such as those of Hyman and Peplowski, the results are exceptional. Their approach to contrapuntal playing has been honed over years of playing together, and they anticipate each other’s twists and turns as if they had one brain. You will hear songs like “I Could have Danced All Night,” “Almost Like Being in Love,” “On the Street Where You Live” and “If Ever I Would Leave You” in ways that you have never heard them before. Unless you are a deep student of musical theater, it is doubtful that you have ever heard “A Jug of Wine” or “You Haven’t Changed At All,” both from L&L’s first Broadway success *The Day Before Spring*. This project presented the players with many challenges, ones that they met with spectacular results. Their efforts will also challenge you as a listener, but one that you will find satisfying to accept. (arborsrecords.com)

ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM & HIS FRIENDS is a moniker that a multi-reedman Cunningham has applied to a variety of groups he has led. For *Adrian Cunningham & His Friends Play Lerner & Loewe* (Arbors – 19470) he has gathered together a truly all-star aggregation with Randy Brecker on trumpet, Wycliffe Gordon on trombone, Fred Hersch on piano, John Hébert on bass and Eric McPherson on drums. The 11 selections include “Just You Wait,” “I

Talk to the Trees,” “The Heather on the Hill,” “The Rain in Spain” and “Brigadoon.” Cunningham arranged the tunes in ways that he believes respect both the melodies and the lyrics, but he takes many of them on paths that they have not visited before. The players are willing and able to go where Cunningham’s sketches lead them, offering their unique voices throughout. Listen to this collection and you are guaranteed a few things, you will have a smile on your face, and your musical satisfaction will be of the highest order. (arborsrecords.com)

There is something special that evolves when a group of musicians enjoy an extended partnership. In the case of **THE FRED HERSCH TRIO**, they have enjoyed playing together for 10 years. In celebration of this milestone, Palmetto Records has packaged their trio recordings from this period into a boxed set titled *The Fred Hersch Trio 10 Years / 6 Discs* (Palmetto). The set comprises two studio sessions, *Whirl* (2010) and *Floating* (2014), plus four live sessions, *Alive At the Vanguard 1*, *Alive At the Vanguard 2* (2012), *Sunday Night At the Vanguard* (2016) and *Live in Europe* (2018). Several things shine through about the music in the set. This is one of the finest piano jazz trios ever on the scene. The quality and creativity exhibited on all of these sessions is consistent and energizing to hear. This is truly an organic unit. Hersch knows how to choose superior tunes to play and ones that offer him and his bandmates ample opportunities to bring their own unique musical perspectives excitingly to the fore. Hersch is not only a great interpreter of the jazz and pop standards but is also a wonderfully accomplished composer of original tunes. This set offers six hours of pure pleasure. (palmetto-records.com)

Due to a conflict between Columbia Records and Martha Glaser, **DERROLL GARNER**’s manager, Garner went through a period when he did not record any new material. In 1961, Garner founded his own label, Octave Records, to release new recordings. Mack Avenue Records, in cooperation with the Garner estate has undertaken a reissue project that will find newly remastered versions of 12 Garner albums on the *Octave Remastered Series*, each with a Garner original composition as a bonus track. The first four titles have been released simultaneously, *Dreamstreet* (1959), *Closeup in Swing* (1961), *One World Concert* (1962) and *A New Kind of Love* (1963). Starting in October, and through June of next year, there will be one additional album released each month. The first two albums mentioned above are trio recordings done in a studio. The third was recorded by the trio at the Seattle World’s Fair and is Garner’s first live recording since the legendary *Concert By the Sea*, one of the best selling jazz albums ever released. The fourth title comprises selections recorded for the film, *A New Kind of Love*, is recorded with a full orchestra, and includes four original tunes written by Garner for the soundtrack.

Garner’s prodigious pianism makes his piano sound like an orchestra, and is infused with a level of creativity that few have approached. There is a constant elfin humor present in his playing that puts it on a special level of entertainment. This is a treasure trove of material well worth revisiting, and those who appreciate jazz piano played at the highest level should feel almost compelled to add these recordings to their collection. (www.mackavenue.com). (See article on *Christian Sands’ 3-Piano Summit in tribute to Erroll Garner*, page 12)

continued on page 50



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Pianist **RAYMOND DE FELITTA** is perhaps better known currently as a movie director, but he is a cat who has firm roots as a jazz pianist. He has recorded a delightful new album, *Pre-War Charm* (Self-Produced). De Felitta has chosen a baker's dozen tunes written before we entered World War II, most of which are far from as ubiquitous as they once were among jazz players. Among the selections are "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," "Drop Men Off in Harlem," "Deep in a Dream," "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling," "You Go to My Head" and "Then I'll Be Tired of You." To explore these selections, he has bassist Mike Alvidrez and drummer Paul Kreibich for eight of the songs, Kreibich and clarinetist Alex Budman for three others, while he offers solo takes on a pair of others. The feeling is straight ahead throughout, with a steady underlying swing present at all times. De Felitta is comfortable at the keyboard, giving each selection respect, and offering his own vision of each of them, while demonstrating a nice touch that is a pleasant contrast to the heavy-handed inclinations of many pianists on the scene today. This is a parcel that is nostalgic, but one that does not feel dated. (raymonddefelitta.org)

Calgary-based **BARITONE MADNESS** is a unique group comprising a three-baritone sax frontline of Keith O'Rourke, Pat Belliveau and Gareth Bane with Kodi Hutchison on bass and Tyler Hornby on drums. The program for their initial release *Baritone Madness* (Chronograph Records – 78) contains eight originals by the baritone players, plus "Moanin'" by Charles Mingus, "Requested" by trumpeter André Wickenheiser, Jimmy Smith's "Ready and Able," and "I Hear a Rhapsody." These are three baritone saxophonists with plenty of chops, and the kind of imagination and musical empathy necessary to make this unexpected combination work as more than a gimmick. Their music is warmly accessible. This is a daring project that quickly draws the listener in with the high level of musicianship exhibited by O'Rourke, Belliveau and Bane. (chronographrecords.com)



It has been popular over the years for jazz musicians to devote albums to the scores of individual Broadway musicals. *West Side Story* has a score that is particularly appealing to jazz players. *Somewhere Else* (Plastic Sax Records) is well named for it finds reedman **TED NASH** taking 10 songs from the show to places where they have not been before. It derives its name from the song

"Somewhere," included here on two takes. For this program, Nash alternates between tenor sax and clarinet, with sensitive and perceptive support from guitarist Steve Cardenas and bassist Ben Allison. The trio originally performed this music at the Havana Jazz Festival to an enthusiastic response. The players jointly conceived the arrangements, and their intricate interplay can only result when the musicians involved have an almost mystical empathy. The songs should be familiar to most listeners, "Jet Song," "A Boy Like That," "Maria," "One Hand, One Heart," "Tonight," "America," "I Have a Love," "Something's Coming," "Cool" and "Somewhere." Listen once, and you will feel the same kind of excitement that the audience in Havana experienced. Listen again, and you will want to listen again and again. (tednash.com)

Oh for the days when you could hang out in intimate boîtes until the wee hours of the morning listening to sophisticated singers, often self-accompanied on piano, performing quality songs, many of which were rarely heard outside of that kind of setting. **RONNY**

WHYTE was one of those performers, as was -- at the start of his career -- Cy Coleman. Whyte went on to be one of the most acclaimed pop/jazz singers on the scene, and Coleman devoted most of his energies to composing songs for Broadway musicals. Their paths often crossed, as Coleman never lost his affection for the piano bar/cabaret scene, and often dropped in on a Whyte appearance, occasionally sitting in for a few songs. In addition to his show tunes, Coleman wrote many stand alone songs that he performed, and were picked up by the likes of Whyte, Blossom Dearie, Bobby Short and Mabel Mercer. It seemed inevitable that *Whyte Witchcraft* (Audiophile – 363), a 17-song collection of Coleman tunes sung by Whyte, would eventually become a reality. It is certainly worth the wait! Whyte has chosen tunes from both sides of the Coleman oeuvre, and does so in three settings: backed by the Cecilia Coleman Big Band, in his familiar trio format, and with the trio supplemented by accordionist Eddie Monteiro. No matter the musical setting, Whyte delivers spot on performances of the Coleman songs, several of which will be new and welcome for listeners. Cy Coleman would have loved this collection! (jazzology.com)

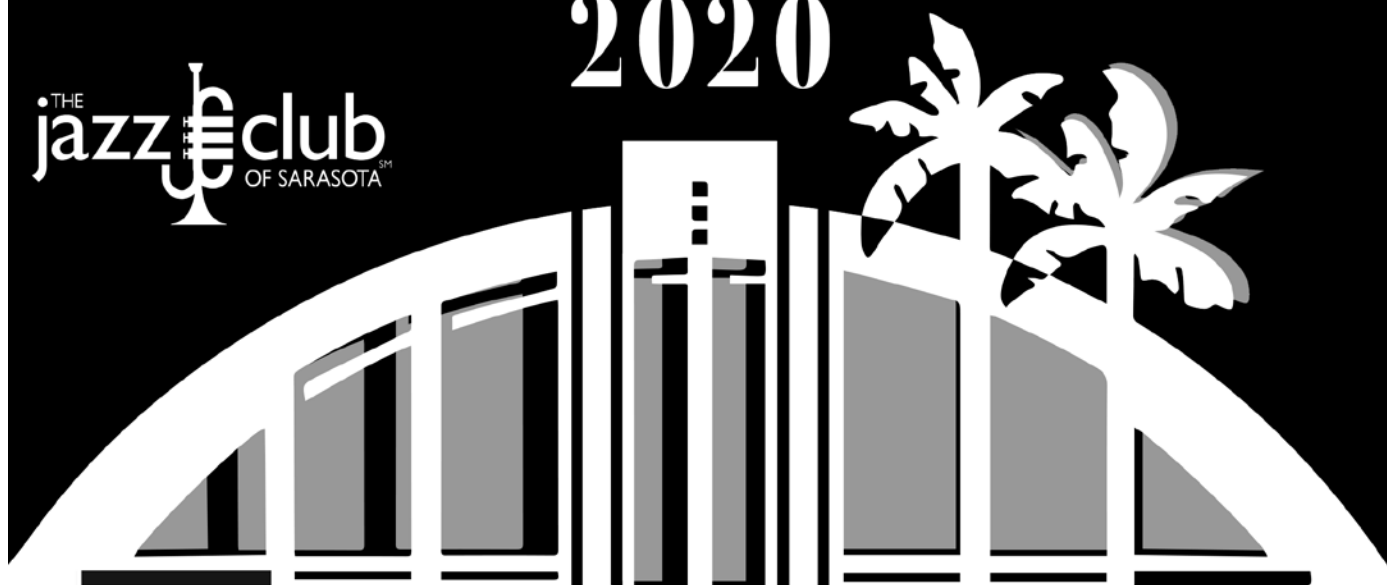
Pairing vocalist/pianist **CHAMPIAN FULTON** with alto saxophonist **CORY WEEDS** is not a duo that would seem obvious to envision, but listen to *Dream a Little...* (Cellar Live – 022518), and you will find that the decision to do so was inspired. The 10-song program will provide you with an hour of hip sounds from two musicians who seem to have a natural affinity. Fulton has become established as a first-rate vocalist, and her pianism is superlative. Weeds is best known in his home ground of Vancouver, but, through his Cellar Live family of labels, his excellence as a player has been reaching new and welcoming audiences. The tunes are mostly familiar, tunes such as "Dream a Little Dream of Me," "Fly Me to the Moon," "Darn That Dream," "Pennies From Heaven" and "I Thought About You." There are four instrumental tracks, "Secret Love," "Tangerine," "Save Your Love for Me" and "Lullaby for Art," a Fulton original. It was nice to hear them include the Eubie Blake/Andy Razaf tune, "I'd Give a Dollar for a Dime," a good song, rarely heard. Fulton and Weeds make a fine duo, and should record more like this in the years to come. (cellarlive.com)

While there are many fine vocalists and jazz musicians all over the country, New York and Los Angeles seem to be magnets for more of them than any other cities. Too often the folks in these two cities are unaware of their counterparts in the other city. A good example of an excellent Los Angeles singer who should be more familiar to those who reside in the area of the Big Apple is **CALABRIA FOTI**. Her new release, *Prelude to a Kiss* (MoCo – 23-06), has 11 tracks of sublime vocalizing in the company of a varying cast of excellent cats from greater LA. There is one East Coast ringer, John Pizzarelli, who joins Foti for the vocal chores on "It's the Mood I'm In." With selections such as "Prelude to a Kiss," "On the Street Where You Live," "Waltz for Debby," "The Man with the Horn" and "The Folks Who Live on the Hill," and arrangements by Roger Kellaway, Johnny Mandel and Bob McChesney, among others, the chance of hearing sounds that will be pleasing is virtually guaranteed. Add Foti's wonderful control, phrasing and all-around vocal excellence, and *Prelude to a Kiss* is a prelude to feeling good. (www.calabriefoti.com)

Sometime around the middle to end of November, I will post online a special column devoted to Christmas releases. Many of them will reach me after the deadline for this issue, so I am taking this option to give you the information in time for the season.

For additional Other Views, log onto njjs.org after November 1

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