G’day Mates

...Waltzing Matilda?
An Aussie bandleader stirs things up at the Pee Wee Stomp.

See page 26.

Swing dancers Sallie Stutz and Jerry Flood take to the Grand Ballroom’s dance floor. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

PROFESSOR CUNNINGHAM AND HIS OLD SCHOOL
The closing act strikes a pose at The Birchwood Manor in Whippany on March 26, from left, Daniel Foose, John Merrill, Adrian Cunningham, Paul Wells, Oscar Perez and Jon Challoner. Photo by Lynn Redmile.
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Prez Sez

By Mike Katz President, NJJS

This year’s Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp (our 48th) was a rousing success! We had four great bands perform sets of one hour each — The Midiri Brothers Quintet, the Peter and Wil Anderson Quintet, Dan Levinson’s Russell of Spring Band and Professor [Adrian] Cunningham and His Old School. All the leaders were clarinetists, and as last month’s cover story in Jazz Jersey put it, this was a “clarinet marmalade!... Just the kind of jam you go for.” Judging by the enthusiasm I observed from the audience during the Stomp, and the survey which we tabulated afterwards, it was clear that everyone was pleased with the music, and indeed, 100% of the survey respondents said so! Professor Cunningham also supplied us with enough clarinet jokes to last until the next Pee Wee and perhaps beyond!

During one of the breaks between sets, we presented our annual Pee Wee Russell awards, for the Musician of the Year and Jazz Advocate of the Year in 2016. The awards were made in accordance with recommendations by our vice president of music programming, Mitchell Seidel, and approved by the Board of Directors. The Musician award was given to trumpeter Jon Faddis, who was unable to be present because he was returning from an overseas gig; his award will be presented to him at a later date. The Jazz Advocate award was presented to John Schreiber, who since July of 2011 has been the president and chief executive officer of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. While the NIPAC is probably best known for the classical offerings of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, John has had an extensive background in jazz, having previously worked for George Wein Festival Productions, producers of the Newport Jazz Festival and other events, and under his leadership the NIPAC has presented the annual James Moody jazz festival and other jazz events. I am pleased that John did attend the Stomp and accepted his award in person, and we are hoping to do some collaborations with the PAC in the near future.

We were a bit disappointed by the fact that the attendance at the Pee Wee was somewhat lower than last year’s and years before that, especially given that we held the Stomp three weeks later than in the past, in order to lessen the chances of being snowed out and to take advantage of the arrival of daylight savings time, enabling patrons to drive home before dark, and also despite the high quality of the musical offerings I have noted above and our having held the price of admission steady for the past few years. So far we have not been able to identify a reason for the decline, but if anyone has thoughts about this, please let me know. (makatz2@comcast.net or (908) 273-7827).

At the risk of leaving someone out, I would like to thank some of the folks who have made the Pee Wee Stomp possible and made it the outstanding event that it has been and will continue to be: Mitchell Seidel, for selecting and engaging the bands and making other arrangements; treasurer Kate Casano for handling the advance ticketing and other financial arrangements, and staffing the front desk together with Jackie Wetcher and others; Sandy Josephson, Lynn Redmile and Linda Lobdell for publicity and printing; James Pansulla, Jack Sinkway and Stephen Fuller for manning the merchandise area; Sheilia Lenga

Stay tuned to www.njjs.org
for running the 50-50 and signing up new members; and Stew Schiffer for providing the drum set which was used by all of the drummers. Also special thanks to Bruce Gast and John Becker, who have operated the NJJS-owned sound system for many Pee Wees. With this year’s Pee Wee they have elected to retire from this role, and have turned over the sound board, speakers and other equipment to our newest Board member, Jay Dougherty, who has expertise in this area and worked with Bruce and John to learn the ins and outs of our system.

Carrying on events like the Stomp is like painting the George Washington Bridge, as soon as the job is completed at one end, it’s time to start over at the other. So, we’ll soon start planning for the 49th Stomp, and any suggestions from our members for improvement will be gratefully welcomed.

Last Saturday (April 1) we attended a concert by the John Pizzarelli Quartet at the Bickford Theater in Morristown. We were glad to see that Bucky (now 91 years young) and Ruth were in attendance, although it may not have been easy for Bucky to be the object of the many jokes by John over the course of the performance, although I guess that by now he’s used to it. We had spoken with John during the recent Jazz Cruise, and I extracted from him a promise to do his famous “I Like Jersey Best” song at the Bickford, which he did not do during the cruise, I presume for the reason that many of the passengers were not from New Jersey and therefore would not get the references to various municipalities and other features of the Garden State such as the number of shoe stores on Route 22 and the former Brendan Byrne Arena. I am here to report that John kept his promise and everyone at the Bickford thoroughly enjoyed it, as New Jersey audiences always do.

Lastly, the news having just been received, congratulations to NJJS member Bria Skonberg for winning this year’s Juno award for best vocal jazz album, for her eponymous CD, Bria, which was issued last September by Sony Records. The Junos are the Canadian equivalents of the Grammys; as most of you know, Bria hails from Chilliwack in British Columbia.

No less a figure than the mayor of Chilliwack, Sharon Gaetz, marked the occasion, saying, “From the moment I first heard Bria sing and play, I believed this day would come. Bria has an amazing gift and has worked relentlessly to hone her craft…We are all proud of her and heartily congratulate her on this achievement.” Mayor, we can’t agree with you more.
Jazz Trivia
By O. Howie Ponder
(answers on page 35)

The Jazz Advocates

Last month, the National Endowment of the Arts honored its 2017 Jazz Masters at a concert in Washington, D.C. Receiving the $25,000 awards were Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Dick Hyman, Dave Holland and Ira Gitler, who published the Encyclopedia of Jazz in 1999 and who has been a journalist (associate editor of DownBeat in the 1960s), educator, concert promoter, radio personality and prolific liner-note writer. He is the latest non-musician chosen for the award.

Can you name these other Jazz Advocates honored over the past decade?

1. Executive director of the Jazz Foundation of America, which helps jazz and blues artists with financial, medical, housing and legal assistance as well as performance opportunities.

2. Co-founder of Riverside Records in the early 1950s, he helped advance the careers of Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, Cannonball Adderly, Bill Evans and Wes Montgomery. He later produced for Milestone and Fantasy and issued major remastered projects, winning Grammys for the accompanying liner notes.

3. The Newark native has run the Village Vanguard since 1989 but her ties to jazz go back to the early 1940s and her husband’s co-founding of the Blue Note record label.

4. Regarded as the greatest recording engineer in jazz history, this native New Jerseyan died in 2016 at age 91.

5. He opened the Jazz Showcase club in Chicago in 1947, and still greets audiences nightly, although his son took ownership of the business just recently.

6. He pioneered the album concept for Decca and especially Columbia Records in the 1940s, developing the LP and issuing the recording of the famous Benny Goodman band’s 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. As a Columbia executive he worked with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Goodman among many other jazzmen.

7. He discovered jazz growing up in Europe, moving to the United States after World War II where he pursued a career writing about the music and editing jazz magazines. From 1976-2012 he led the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ and authored a memoir. These days, he is a columnist for Jersey Jazz.

Howie also welcomes suggestions for future questions — or comments from readers. Contact him at jazztrivia@njjs.org.
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Mercerville, the new Swingadelic CD from Zoho Music, is a loving tribute to the great American lyricist Johnny Mercer. The recording has its roots in a 2009 show celebrating Mercer’s centennial for which the band’s pianist and singer, John Bauers, was asked to be arranger and musical director. Ultimately, Bauers brought the show idea to Swingadelic’s bandleader Dave Post and they ran with it, enlisting the superb vocalist Vanessa Perea for the project.

They started doing performances all over the New York area at concert venues, libraries, theaters, senior centers. “Wherever they would have us,” Bauers says. “We told the story of Johnny’s life and the stories of his songs, which struck a chord with our audiences. This CD is an attempt to recreate some of that magic we feel when we go onstage and perform this great music.”

I was lucky enough to catch one of those shows a few years ago at Ed Coyne’s Rutherford Hall series, and that old Mercer black magic was certainly on display that Sunday afternoon in Allamuchy. It was also my first time seeing Ms. Perea perform and she is something special and then some. (Former NJJS president Frank Mulvaney was an early champion of the singer’s in these pages during student days at New Jersey City University.)

The recording includes 10 Mercer gems with Bauers and Perea sharing the vocals, among them several entertaining duets including a grand sendup of Louis Prima and Keely Smith on “That Old Black Magic.” Noteworthy contributions from the band include George Naha’s gritty guitar on “Blues in the Night” (one of four Harold Arlen tunes on the disk) and Audrey Welber’s lively clarinet on “Goody Goody.” The other songs included are “Too Marvelous For Words,” “Ac Cent Chu Ate the Positive,” “That Old Black Magic,” “I Wanna Be Around,” “Jeepers Creepers,” “The Glow Worm,” “Moon River”/“The Days of Wine and Roses,” “G.I. Jive,” “P.S. I Love You,” “One For My Baby,” and not a clunker in the bunch. Swingadelic swings on this highly recommended CD.

The new CD captures the excitement of the show and more, with 14 pieces in the band (the Rutherfurd Hall show was a sextet). Mr. Bauers shares a brithday (Nov. 18) with the songwriter with whom he clearly has a great affinity. He’s made himself somewhat of a Mercer maven and the show includes entertaining anecdotes about the songwriter and the songs, some of which are recounted in his liner notes for the CD. As if he hadn’t done enough already the multi-tasking Bauers also wrote the CD’s outstanding arrangements.

By Tony Mottola

The Editor’s Pick

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NJJS Deadlines
The deadline for submission of material for upcoming issues is as follows:
June: April 26 • July/August: May 26

NOTE: EARLY SUBMISSIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

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Big Band in the Sky

Dave Valentin, 64, flutist, April 29, 1952, the Bronx, NY – March 8, 2017, the Bronx, NY. Valentin started out as a percussionist, but there was a girl he wanted to meet who played the flute. In a 2011 interview with The New York Times, he recalled that the girl, Irene, “showed me a scale, and I played it immediately. Do-re-me-fa-so-la-ti-do. So, I borrowed a flute, bought a Herbie Mann record and learned ‘Comin’ Home Baby’. Three weeks later, I went to her and played it. She said, ‘I’ve been taking lessons for three years, and you come in here in three weeks and play like that? Don’t ever talk to me again!’ I lost the girl but kept the flute.”

Growing up as the son of first-generation Puerto Rican immigrants, Valentin’s home was filled with the music of Latin bandleaders such as Machito, Eddie Palmieri, Tito Puente, and Tito Rodriguez. In a 2006 interview with WBGW-FM’s Monifa Brown, he recalled how his father, who was in the Merchant Marines, “went to Brazil and brought me back some bongos and congas and little scratchy things and bells and all that stuff, and I started playing percussion when I was five.” He began working with a Latin dance band when he was 10, trying to play the timbales like his musical hero, Puente. As a teenager, he played the New York City nightclub circuit while studying percussion at the High School of Music and Art.

After he switched to flute, he was signed by GRP Records in 1979 and released his first album, Legends. His breakthrough album, according to WBGW’s Nate Chinen (3/14/17), was the 1993 GRP album, Tropic Heat. When it was released, AllMusic’s Scott Yanow described the album as “one of his best…All of the horns get their opportunities to solo, and the result is a particularly strong Latin jazz session. Valentin continues to grow as a player, and he cuts loose on several of these tracks.”

From 1989-91, Valentin was named Best Flutist in the Jazziz Readers’ Poll. He won a Grammy Award in 2003 for Best Latin Jazz Album for the Concord release, Caribbean Jazz Project, recorded in partnership with vibraphonist Dave Samuels.

His last album was Pure Imagination, released on the HighNote label in 2011. In 2012, he suffered a stroke during a performance and was paralyzed on the right side. He made a limited recovery but then had a second stroke in 2015. In a Facebook post, pianist Ramsey Lewis recalled having Valentin as a guest on his PBS Legends of Jazz TV series. “When we were creating the episode on Latin jazz,” Lewis said, “his name was at the top of the list of people to call…an authentic, passionate and articulate musician. That was who he was as a player and a human being. He’ll be greatly missed.” Valentin is survived by his brother, George.

Paul James Abler, 60, guitarist/composer, April 3, 1957, Saginaw, MI – March 3, 2017, Livingston, NJ. Abler decided to play guitar after hearing Jimi Hendrix, but his exposure to jazz began early in his childhood when he would listen to his grandfather practice his drums to recordings by Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington and Stan Getz.

He was part of the Detroit jazz scene until moving to Los Angeles in 1982 to study at the Musicians Institute (now known as the Guitar Institute of Technology). In 1988, he moved to Boston and studied improvisation with saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi, returning to Detroit in 1990 and working with some of that city’s leading jazz artists such as trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and drummer Roy Brooks. He also began leading his own groups. His first album was Goin’ Up on the Red Car label.

In 1996, Abler began composing for movies and television. He wrote music for such films as Blue Jasmine and The Two Mr. Kissels. His TV credits include music for Madam Secretary, Breaking Bad, and Mad Men. He moved to New York City in 2003, playing with other guitarists such as Jack Wilkins and Howard Alden, as well as pianists Tomoko Ohno and Ted Rosenthal, alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe, and trumpeter Ted Curson. In 2004, he married vocalist Yashmin Charnet, with whom he had performed.

The couple was responsible for launching a live music series at many of the Whole Foods markets, a series that continued until a couple of years ago. They were able to secure sponsorships from Gibson Brands, manufacturers of Gibson guitars, and the Baldwin Piano Company. In November 2007, a two-day “Gibson/Baldwin Jazz Festival” was launched at the Whole Foods Bowery store.

Among artists featured were Wilkins, Alden, Curson, pianists Allen Farnham and John DiMartino and special guest, multi-reedist Yusef Lateef. The series expanded to other Whole Foods stores including New Jersey locations in West Orange, Montclair, Union, Madison, and Ridgewood.

Abler is survived by his wife, Yashmin; his mother Corrine; stepson Leonardo and his wife, Laura; stepdaughter Mariana and her husband, Bill; and four grandchildren, Acadia, Anthony, Brandon, and Tyler.

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY
continued from page 8

Arthur Blythe, 76, alto saxophonist, July 5, 1940, Los Angeles – March 27, 2017, Lancaster, CA. Blythe grew up in San Diego and was influenced at an early age by the saxophone playing of Johnny Hodges and Earl Bostic, whose albums his mother often played at home.

He moved to Los Angeles when he was 19 and was mentored by the pianist Horace Tapscott. In a 2000 interview with the San Diego Tribune’s George Varga, Blythe recalled that he and Tapscott, “played and practiced a lot. Horace taught arranging and composing and helped me understand the clarity of how the music went. Whenever we played together, there would be a musical exchange.”

In the mid-1970s, Blythe moved to New York City and became part of the city’s jazz loft scene. According to WBGO-FM’s Nate Chinen (March 28, 2017), Blythe was “already a seasoned musician but not yet a familiar name…he fell in with a creative cohort that included his fellow saxophonists David Murray and Oliver Lake, trumpeter Lester Bowie, and the members of Air. He also gradually found steady work with drummer Chico Hamilton and the Gil Evans Orchestra, among others.”

His first solo album, The Grip, recorded in 1976 on the India Navigation label, attracted the attention of Columbia Records, which signed him to a contract in 1979. He recorded several albums for Columbia including Lenox Avenue Breakdown, In the Tradition, and Light Blue, a tribute to Thelonious Monk.

In the San Diego Tribune interview, he told Varga he, “was into the musical culture of Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Philly Joe Jones, and Ornette Coleman. I was listening to those kinds of things, and I was looking for the cutting edge. That’s what I liked and gravitated toward.”

A former bandmate, guitarist Elliott Sharp, recalled on Facebook that, “Arthur had a tone that was salty and sweet, reminiscent in the best ways of Cannonball Adderley.” University of California San Diego music professor and bassist Mark Dresser began playing with Blythe in 1972. He described Blythe’s playing to the San Diego Tribune: “At that time, he was going by the name, ‘Black Arthur,’” Dresser said, adding, “with one note you knew who it was. His timbre and vibrato were instantly identifiable, and he had a way of phrasing that was like a blow torch!”

In the late ’80s and early ’90s, Blythe played with the World Saxophone Quartet and released albums on the Enja and Savant labels. In 2001, he recorded an album called Soul Manifesto with guitarist Rodney Jones and fellow alto saxophonist Maceo Parker on the Blue Note label. When he released his own album, Focus, on the Savant label in 2002, Village Voice critic Gary Giddins praised it in an article titled, “Black Arthur’s Return”.

Since 2005, Blythe had been fighting Parkinson’s disease. Survivors include his wife, Queen Bey; two sons, Chalee and Arthur, Jr.; a daughter, Odessa; a brother, Bernard; and two half-siblings, Adrich Neal and Daisy Neal.

Tommy LiPuma, 80, record producer and executive, July 5, 1936, Cleveland – March 13, 2017, New York City. During his career, LiPuma worked with everyone from Miles Davis to Paul McCartney. His largest body of work, though, is represented by the 11 albums he produced for singer-pianist Diana Krall.

In a Facebook post after his death, Krall pointed out that LiPuma was “more than a record producer to me. He was an artist, a friend, and my counselor.” She then quoted from a letter she wrote in January while they were working together on the recording of her new Verve album, Turn Up Quiet, at the Capitol Studios in Hollywood. It said: “I could not have done this without you. You have to know that your presence, influence, wisdom, and inspiration have been the whole reason I have been able to do any of our recordings together.”

Other jazz artists LiPuma worked with during his career included vocalists Al Jarreau and Natalie Cole, guitarist/singer George Benson, pianist/singer Dr. John, bassist Christian McBride and alto saxophonist David Sanborn.

In 2012, LiPuma collaborated with McCartney on an album of standards on the Hear Music label. It was called Kisses on the Bottom and won a Grammy Award for best traditional pop vocal. A subsequent video, Live Kisses, won a Grammy for best surround-sound. LiPuma won three additional Grammys during his career. Two were for the Benson 1976 Warner Bros. album, Breezin’ — one for record of the year and one for the single “This Masquerade”. He also won a Grammy album of the year award in 1991 for Cole’s Unforgettable… With Love (Elektra). McCartney, in a Facebook post, said he “was very saddened to hear that my dear friend, Tommy LiPuma passed away…He was fun loving, thoughtful guy with a vast knowledge of music…Diana Krall was a very good friend of his and working together with her and Tommy on the album (Kisses on the Bottom) was a special experience…I will always have very fond memories of our time together and be proud to share his love with his family and many friends.” (Krall played piano on most of the tracks and wrote the rhythm arrangements).

Growing up in Cleveland, LiPuma was bedridden with a bone infection, and a local rhythm & blues radio station was his continuous companion. When he was older and recovered, he purchased a saxophone, developed a liking for bebop and played in local nightclubs. He moved to Los Angeles in 1962 and was hired for a promotion job by Liberty Records, which was the label for Bobby Vee and Del Shannon. In 1968, he formed Blue Thumb Records with Bob Krasnow. In 1973, Blue Thumb was sold, and LiPuma moved to Warner Bros. and worked with Barbra Streisand to produce

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The Jazz Lobsters
the soundtrack album for the movie, The Way We Were.

LiPuma worked at virtually every leading recording company. From 1998-2004, he headed the Verve Music Group and served as its chairman emeritus from 2004-2011. His final album production was his collaboration with Krall on Turn Up the Quiet, scheduled for release May 5.

In June 2016, Cleveland’s Tri-C Jazz Fest celebrated LiPuma’s 80th birthday, inviting Krall, Jarreau, Dr. John and Leon Russell to perform in his honor. Dr. John (real name Malcolm John ‘Mac’ Rebennack) told The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer that LiPuma “was always there for me. I loved him.” Two years ago, LiPuma helped out another Ohio native, young trumpeter Dominick Farinacci, producing his Mack Avenue Records album, Short Stories. In an interview after LiPuma’s death, Farinacci told The Plain Dealer, “When we first met 15 years ago, I never could’ve imagined how Tommy’s friendship, artistry, and values as a human being would impact every aspect of my life. His unwavering encouragement, mentorship, and guidance…helped me grow immensely both musically and personally.”

McBride, who emceed the 2016 Tri-C Jazz Festival, met LiPuma while recording David Sanborn’s Pearls on the Elektra label in 1993. He appeared on both Short Stories and Turn Up the Quiet and believes Krall “pumped new life into his heart when her career jumped off. I think Tommy LiPuma is as responsible for the rise of Diana Krall as anybody. I know he thought of her as a surrogate daughter. To end his career with Diana’s recording — well, in many ways, it’s come full circle.”

Survivors include his wife, Gill; daughters, Jen Monti and Danielle Wiener; and grandchildren, Matty, Julia, Choe, and Ava.

Jim Czak, 71, sound engineer, April 4, 1945, Queens, NY – March 15, 2017, Valley Stream, NY Czak was the owner-operator of the Nola Recording Studios on New York’s West 57th Street from 1976 until it ceased operation in 2014.

In a lengthy 2005 interview in tapeop.com, a bi-monthly magazine devoted to the art of record making, Czak was asked by Bren Davies to recount some of his more memorable sessions. His response: “I really liked working with John Pizzarelli when he was BMG. We did a great Beatles album. Don Sebesky did the arrangements. Lena’s albums. Blossom’s albums. I did a nice album with Dianne Carroll…I just did something with Sebesky and Hubert Laws — Ave Maria — playing flute with strings, string quartet…Benny Golson was up here once and he said, ’Dizzy Gillespie played trumpet right there! You know, this was the rehearsal room for all the jazz guys. ‘Jamal at the Penthouse,’ Ahmad Jamal playing piano.”

Czak started out as Leslie Gore’s pianist, and he claimed to Davies that she was “more of a jazz singer, really. Her influences were Chris Connor and Anita O’Day.” So, how did he become an engineer? “When Leslie went back to school, I was out of a job. I said to myself, ’I gotta get into the studios!’ I wanted to start being a studio player. Another friend of mine, Rod McBrien, was an engineer — he was working for Roulette and Sounds on Broadway. He said, ‘The only place I know that might be hiring is Bell Sound on 54th Street.’ He introduced me to the manager there, Dave Teig, and they put me on the list to be an assistant, to be affectionately what they called a ‘button pusher’. You do everything but push buttons. You make coffee, you clean the bathrooms, stuff like that… I couldn’t touch anything for six months…There were great engineers there. Eddie Smith was my mentor…I attached myself at the hip to Eddie.”

Asked about the important changes that have taken place in the recording industry, Czak replied that, “Music is funny. It goes through cycles. It goes through disco. It goes through funk. It goes through Joni Mitchell. It’s what the kids want and who’s buying the records. How has it changed? The technology has obviously gotten more selective…You can be an amateur and make great-sounding records. Are they as good as the old vinyl? No, but that’s not the benchmark anymore. The benchmark is how much you sell…A trumpet still sounds like a trumpet…if you’re recording a big band, a big band is still the same big band that it was in the ‘40s. The trumpets, bones — you still gotta capture what they sound like. So, as much as things change, they remain the same.”

That Czak was adored by the musicians who worked with him would be an understatement. Three of the many Facebook posts about him after his death, bear that out:

Vibraphonist/drummer Chuck Redd: “I have a family in New York City as a result of spending much of my musical life there — Jim Czak was an immediate member of that family. I have so many memories of the great Nola Christmas parties in January…Jim was and will always be remembered as a legendary engineer, wit, raconteur, gentleman, and soulful friend to all musicians.

Violinist Aaron Weinstein: “He worked with all of the best people because he was one of the best people. To Jim, the legends who’d frequented his Nola Recording Studios — they weren’t Gods. They were peers…After listening to a playback, hearing him say, ‘It didn’t suck’ was high praise indeed! Jim expected musicians to…well, be musicians! I am so lucky to have had him in my life.

Vocalist Hilary Kole: “I actually did my first demo when I was 17 at Nola with him. He was a true friend to me in my darkest moments and was always the most honest and loving friend to me and to everyone he cared for…He did so much for so many of us.”

In addition to his musical skills, Czak was also a pretty good basketball player. He was the center at New York City’s Power Memorial High School until Lew Alcindor (later known as Kareem

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BIG BAND IN THE SKY
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Abdul-Jabbar) arrived. He told great stories about being matched up against Akindor in practices.

Czak survived by his wife, Judy; son and daughter-in-law, Steven and Judy; sister, Kathy; and grandchildren, Juliana and Beckham.

Kenichi Fujiwara, 68, concert promoter/record producer, March 1, 1949, Okayama, Japan – March 13, 2017, Okayama, Japan. Fujiwara was an avid jazz fan who worked as an assistant for the Count Basie Orchestra when it was in Japan. As an employee of Matsuka Industries, he moved to New York City in 1989 to launch the Ken Music Label for Matsuka U.S.A. He stayed in New York for three years and recorded such artists as pianists Ted Rosenthal and Joanne Brackeen and trombonist Conrad Herwig.

After moving back to Japan, he began to organize concerts and tours, working closely with Rosenthal, on 11 tours to Japan with his trio, which included Noriko Ueda on bass and Quincy Davis on drums. Fujiwara was also a close friend of trombonist Benny Powell, who shared the same birthday.

Rosenthal described Fujiwara to Jersey Jazz as, “a great friend of jazz music...He has brought a wide variety of artists and has arranged tours traveling to concert halls, jazz clubs, and public schools throughout Japan. Our tours were organized expertly by Ken and have been most enjoyable for us and for audiences. Artistic integrity,” he continued, “was important to Ken, and he always arranged the right instruments, the right venues, the right sound, and the right performance conditions that brought out the best in all of us. Most of all, Ken was a loyal friend who put humanistic concerns ahead of profits.”

Sanford Josephson is the author of Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations and Jéri’s Journey: The Life and Music of Gerry Mulligan. He has written extensively about jazz musicians in a variety of publications.

Remembering Jim Czak
By Joe Lang

Last night I woke up in the middle of the night, and had some difficulty getting back to sleep, so I decided to grab my phone and check my e-mail. Once I did, I really had a tough time sleeping as I found an e-mail from Bill Moss informing me that Jim Czak had passed away. I was really devastated for not only had I lost a friend, but the jazz world lost one of its most enthusiastic supporters and advocates.

I first met Jim in 2004 when he was overseeing the recording Cookin’ the Books by Buddy DeFranco and the John Pizzarelli Trio. We instantly bonded, but I suspect that almost everyone who met Jim felt the same way.

He and Bill Moss were a team at Czak’s legendary Nola Studios, with Jim as the chief recording engineer, and Bill as his indispensible assistant. When Jim ran a session, he was a larger than life figure, dedicated to making the artist who was being recorded sound as good as possible, and also sound the way he understood the artist wanted to be heard.

Jim was larger than life in many ways. He was a physically large man with an outgoing personality that was abetted by a natural sense of humor, one that helped him to diffuse the tensions that were inevitable during any recording session. Jim was honest to his core, shy never about expressing his opinion about any subject. Even when someone disagreed with him, Jim knew exactly how to continue the conversation in a non-adversarial manner.

Since he had spent over 40 years recording many of the greatest names in jazz, he was a source of limitless anecdotes about the musicians and the sessions. When he related them, it was with the skill of a natural storyteller, and were spiced with the inevitable Czak sense of humor, sometimes a bit salty, but always engaging. I often encouraged him to write a book, capturing the wealth of moments that he had experienced. It would have been a treasure trove of pure pleasure for all who love the music that we call jazz. He indicated that he was making some notes toward that end, but I am not sure how far he got in the process.

It was not unusual to go to a club or concert, and find the always-welcome presence of Jim. There was the inevitable smile on his face, and a warm greeting on his lips. I recall one evening at Shanghai Jazz when Jim dropped in. During the break, he sat himself at the piano, and showed those present that he had wonderful chops. I subsequently learned that he had played with some rock bands early in his career, and when he supervised recording sessions, he did so with the ear and sensitivity of a musician.

Over the years of our friendship, we often spoke on the phone. I particularly remember one conversation when I called him to inform him that he had been chosen to receive the Jazz Advocate Award from the New Jersey Jazz Society at the 2012 Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. He was incredulous, but deeply moved. His first reaction was “You’ve got to be kidding, why me?” When I explained the meaning of the award, and why he had been selected, he was overwhelmed with emotion, and full of thanks. On the day that the award was presented with the inscription, “When jazz musicians record at Nola Studios, they know that they will be treated with respect, fully confident that you will capture their talents perfectly, and make them smile while doing so,” he was truly moved and effusively thankful.

The conversations that we had, in person or over the phone, are memories that I will cherish forever. His warmth, wit and intelligence were always in evidence, and I felt uplifted and refreshed by each of my exchanges with him. We have lost a special person, but the memories of Jim and his unforgettable presence will linger with me for as long as I continue to be here.
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Talking Jazz
A Jersey Jazz Interview With Russ Kassoff
By Schaen Fox

No matter what, Russ Kassoff seems blessed with a buoyant optimism as well as considerable talent. That’s only natural, as Frank Sinatra told him, “you are the best.” Also, having a host of other show business greats wanting you to add your skills to their shows must have a positive effect one’s mood. We spoke over a period of several months last year as he was constantly on the road and opened our conversation on a sad note.

JJ: Is there anything special that you want to talk about?

RK: I’m very saddened and despondent because Tony Monte passed away yesterday. He was one of my mentors and strong advocates. We had a long history. We shared the Café Pierre gig with Bucky Pizzarelli for five years and became great friends. We used to laugh and have great conversations. He was a great arranger, extremely knowledgeable, and accommodating. He was the first music director at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall for shows called “The American Songbook.” [It didn’t become “Great” until several years later.] He was a proud musician, sweet, funny, loyal and an honorable guy. Everybody that knew him loved him.

If sarcasm were something you could do for a living, he would have been a billionaire. [Laughs] He was very bright and hip, well-educated, and always reading The New York Times. When Steve Allen had a three-hour afternoon radio show on WNEW, Tony was his producer and they were great friends. The list goes on and on. He was Jonathan Schwartz’s music director and pianist for many years as well as Peggy Lee, Johnny Hartman, Sylvia Syms and many others.

As an aside, Johnny Hartman was supposed to go into the studio with Tony. The producer was Bernie Brightman. He owned Stash Records. The night before the date, Johnny Hartman died. Bernie was such a frugal producer, that rather than lose the recording time, he called Bucky and asked him to bring something in to record. Bucky brought me, Jerry Bruno and John Pizzarelli and that is when we recorded John’s first album I’m Hip, Please Don’t Tell My Father. We did the entire album in three or four hours.

JJ: How did your parents react to your interest in music?

RK: My parents were not musicians, but they were big fans. My mother was a huge Glenn Miller fan. My father just liked American standards. He always had WNEW on the radio. I would hear that as a child. At the age of three, my parents bought me a little tinker toy piano, and I was playing along with Bugs Bunny cartoons on TV. It had a range of two and a half octaves.

I have perfect pitch. I didn’t think that was special, because I thought everybody did. So I could usually pick up tunes off the TV and radio, but not real intricate harmonies or things like that. I was an improviser. I liked going into my own world. At the age of four, my father took me to a taping of the Steve Allen Show at the Hudson Theater. I was a wide-eyed mesmerized kid. I’d never been exposed to anything like this. Skitch Henderson was the bandleader, and it was a great big band. Out comes Steve Lawrence, who, as you know, was

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TALKING JAZZ/ RUSS KASSOFF

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discovered, along with Eydie Gorme, by Steve Allen. Steve sings “Portrait of My Love,” and I’m looking at the band. They were sitting there, playing cards. I said, “This is what I want to do.” [Chuckles] It took several more years to realize that they were playing a tape pre-record.

My parents were so supportive of me, we were certainly not rich, we lived in what now would be considered a tenement and I had two younger brothers. My parents saw that I had talent, so they took all their life savings and bought me a console piano so I could have lessons with a beginner guy who had a little studio in Flatbush, Brooklyn, where we lived. In less than six months, I outgrew everything he could teach me. He said, “You’ve got a lot of talent. I want to recommend you to somebody.” I got a scholarship with a woman named Rose Cion who was 100% classical.

I was really not enchanted with classical music. I felt that it was a hindrance to keeping an open mind, figuring out things on your own, and just being expository in nature. I ultimately majored in classical music in college, but at that time it was something where they were telling me everything that I had to do for my own good. I just didn’t feel that was right. So I would work and work on improvising on this console piano and once in a while I’d really practice selections like Bach and Chopin, but I was an improviser. I liked going into my own world.

My parents got me into what they called an IGC school, which was nothing more than a special class in a regular public school, where I skipped a grade. A whole bunch of us went on to be associated with music in some way, but were educated in music in the New York City public school system. That carried through for me all the way through high school.

Back in those days, the 1950s, jazz was not really accepted in the classical and traditional world of teachers. There really weren’t any music schools like Berklee. Even Eastman didn’t have jazz programs yet. The only way you could learn jazz was to be lucky enough to know a jazz player that would teach you. Not until I was about 12 years old did I really start to focus on learning repertoire. I never took jazz lessons. I was always an improviser.

**JJ:** What were your early years like as a professional musician?

**RK:** The first real gig I did was in the Catskills, when I was 13 years old. I had done a couple of gigs with a local big band in Long Island. As a result of that, one of the adults gave my name to some agents that booked musicians in the Catskills. He sent a couple of older musicians to my home for an audition. They hired me to play in their trio at a hotel called Pine Lodge. It was for very, very senior citizens all from Eastern Europe. The average age was “deceased.” They put the three of us musicians in a barn in the back of the property. It was really funny. It had the smell of a grandmother’s living room with naphthalene everywhere. There was no lock on the door and in the middle of the first night, I heard the sound of running water. I opened the door, and there was this homeless man relieving himself on our door. That was my introduction to the hotel.

It was a kosher hotel, so they didn’t have music on Friday and Saturday nights. Because of that, the agent booked us into two different bungalow colonies to play late shows for singers, strippers, comics and stuff like that. I spent the next five summers and all the major holidays in the Catskills. Finally I became the leader at an “A” hotel called The Laurels. They had entertainment like Billy Eckstein, Moms Mabley and all the greats that played the Catskills. That is how I got started.

There were some great musicians like Erskine Hawkins in the Catskills, but it is all gone now. It is mind boggling that from that somehow I managed to be in the right place at the right time to play for Frank Sinatra. Because of Frank Sinatra, I got to play with Bucky Pizzarelli. The guys in Sinatra’s band were all in Bucky’s world. They put in a great recommendation for me, and that’s how I wound up playing with Bucky.

I played with Benny Goodman a couple of times because of Bucky. Benny was in the last two or three years of his life and so ill that he didn’t play his clarinet for over a year, according to what we were told. He asked Bucky to play at his house in Greenwich, Connecticut, for a house party. Bucky called me and Jerry Bruno. Benny played with us for the whole afternoon. It was incredible, really thrilling, because there is no better sound on the clarinet than Benny Goodman. I got to play with Benny again at another private party in some big apartment on Park Avenue. It was the same band. Benny just said, “Nice kid, you sound nice.” Sinatra would always smile and say, “Hey kid, how you doing?”

**JJ:** And please tell us about your years playing for Frank Sinatra.

**RK:** From 1976 until ‘79, I played solo piano at the Windows on the World Restaurant on top of the World Trade Center. Celebrities were there all the time. We even had a public relations guy who would give you a list of who was coming in that night. The purpose of that was to see if I could play something that was associated with that person. Now, I have a lot of experience having served for Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, and Rita Moreno and that is the last thing a personality wants to hear when they go into a restaurant. When Liza walked in,
When Sinatra walked in, it was total magic. I came to learn that it made everybody in the room better to be in the presence of that guy. It was unbelievable. I can never explain or describe to a non-musician or fan what it was like to play for Frank Sinatra.

There were a couple of real stars, like Tony Mottola and lead trumpet and trombone players. Others like Irv Cottler on drums were legends, but few would go out to hear him on a gig other than this one, because he was one piece of the puzzle.

You put the whole puzzle together and you get this magic that was unequaled by anything else that ever happened in the great American songbook or showbiz. We were all just pieces, and the more you realized you were just a piece and you had a job to do if you did it well, like I did, he noticed it right away. He said to Joe, the contractor, "Whenever we need a piano player, call this kid." I got called for over 150 gigs over the years to play with Frank. We also did Frank, Dean and Sammy which was a tour that was on the West Coast in 1988 and we did Frank, Liza and Sammy when Dean left the tour in 1989, and in 1990 called The Ultimate Event tour. I’m back at the piano and I’m nervous, but I know ‘I’m there because I belong there. There was not really much to play in the piano book, but I did it well and I was just grooving on the orchestrations by Don Costa and all of that stuff. We did a week of shows and in my car, I still had all my equipment. I never used it there. After it was all over, I went to a temple in West Orange, New Jersey, and schlep all that equipment down a flight of stairs and played a bar mitzvah. The band leader was not impressed that I had just spent a week with Frank Sinatra.

He said, "Ah Frank Sinatra, bar mitzvah, same tunes." [Chuckles]

I got to be very good friends with Mel Lewis. In the mid ’80s, I was music director for Annie Ross. We did a five-week run at Michael’s Pub. The trio I had was David Finck on bass and Mel Lewis on drums. Every night after the gig, I would give Mel a ride home, but first we had to stop for pizza. Once you got a slice with Mel Lewis that was a two-hour slice, because we would talk and talk. It was great. I asked him, "Of all the things that you have accomplished, what is the thing you are most proud of?" He said that back in the early ‘60s he went out to LA and got to play percussion on the album The Concert Sinatra. He was just beaming to have been part of the Sinatra magic in any way, shape or form. It was really a personal accomplishment. It certainly was for me.

JJ: You also worked with Susannah McCorkle. Would you tell us about her?

RK: I really loved Susannah. Meaning we were more musical friends in that she had some regular piano players that she worked with, like Allen Farnham. I had a lot of respect for her as a self-made professional. She created a situation where all the gigs that she had in the Algonquin, the Carlyle and the Roosevelt Hotel in LA. She created her own record contract so she could record her own stuff. I played for her or wrote a chart for her at least once a year for the last 25 years of her life. I did some amazing gigs with her, usually as a super sub for her regular piano players. She also was very controlling about the music and the work she wanted to do. She demanded to rehearse because she wanted things just so.

The very last time I played for her was at WQEW.

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TALKING JAZZ/ RUSS KASSOFF

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When WNEW went off the air, they moved up the dial from 1130 AM to 1560 AM. She asked me to perform live with her on the Stan Martin program. This was getting near Christmas time. That day, the staff was told that they were all going to lose their jobs because the station had been sold to Disney. They would play cartoon music. Obviously the spirit there was horrible. With me on that day, there was no rehearsal. Something was wrong. She was totally relaxed and happy. There was nothing of the usual pre-performance stress. We did five songs, and it was the best musical experience I ever had with her. I asked the producers if I could get a copy of the recording. They sent me one, and I have it.

After the performance I asked, “What’s up?” She said, “Well, every day is one day at a time. I lost my record contract. I lost my contract with the Algonquin. I’m not going to be playing at the Roosevelt Hotel, and I left my husband.” She was at a crossroads in her life. All the stuff she had worked for, she had to start all over again. I don’t know if you have any idea how it is being a musician to start all over again. There is no starting all over. There is just a constant grind of trying to network to possibly share your talent in concerts. I gave her a big hug. She said, “I’m very positive about all of this. The future is bright for me.” A couple of months later, she took her own life.

JJ: Do you have any memories of the 9/11 tragedy you’re willing to share?

RK: September 9th was a Sunday and the end of the first week of a two week engagement that I had at Joe’s Pub with Ute Lemper. That afternoon, I was a member of an orchestra since I was a Broadway guy and working on a lot of shows. I was actually subbing or playing the cast rehearsals for about 12 books on Broadway. Every year they have this concert called Broadway on Broadway with a full orchestra made up of musicians and the actual casts for all different shows performing free for the public right on Times Square.

The concert lasted a couple of hours and in the middle of all that I’m right next to Mayor Rudy Guiliani. We exchanged pleasantries and it was a great concert. For me, that was the start of the weekend. That night I had two shows with Ute Lemper in her quartet. She is much more of a star in Europe than she is here, but she does perform here a lot and is highly respected. Anyway, we were at the end of our first week at Joe’s Pub, which is south of 14th Street.

We did the show, and then I went home very late on Sunday night. I felt something in the air and without regard to bridge traffic; I stopped my car and looked downtown towards the World Trade Center where I had spent two and a half years as the solo pianist at Windows on the World. It was a crystal clear night as the weather was perfect. I just made that picture in my mind, realized where I was, started my car, and got to the other side. Before I got off the bridge, I stopped again and looked to the left. I don’t know why, but I came to my senses and went home. I didn’t think about it again until September 11th when I heard the news.

Nobody could drive south of 14th Street. The subways or the buses weren’t going down there until three days after. They decided to open up south of 14th Street, and we could do our show. We did and the place was packed. It was something that needed to be done. People had to find a way to return to normalcy. We could smell the death in the air. The buildings were smoldering for months, and we were only about a mile away. It was horrible to be outside, but doing the show for all these people so they could get their minds off that for a while, we did it. It was really tough but part of the healing process.

The same thing happened with the Broadway. Broadway was shut down for quite some time and people, especially tourists from Europe, were reluctant to go to shows. So they cut the prices in half and gave everybody that worked on Broadway a 25% cut in salaries with the promise that if business returned by a certain time, we’d get reimbursed. It did, and we did. As a result, all of the 12 books that I was playing on Broadway, the shows to them closed by the end of that year. I had no more appearances on Broadway for several years after that.

I myself was afraid to fly. The first time I did was in a private jet out of Teterboro. I had a gig with Paul Anka in Atlanta and flew on his jet. We both looked at the New York skyline for the first time without the World Trade Center. It was sobering.

JJ: Do you have any career souvenirs that visitors get to see at your home?

RK: I’ve done so much and never been able to hold down a steady job because all the jobs end after one day. I’ve saved everything; I have programs up the wazoo. I have great booklets that were part of European and Japan tours with Liza and Frank. I have over 100,000 photos. If you go to my website visit the “Celebrity Deli Wall Of Fame.” On my Facebook page you will always see me with some really great photos with celebrities. Also when I toured with those major shows, I often sat right off the stage and took some great shots of them performing. The photos and programs are my biggest treasures.

JJ: Has anything of significance in your career happened in New Jersey?

RK: I’ve played the Garden State Arts
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Center many times with Liza. I played the Meadowlands with both Liza and Frank. There was a classic show that got cancelled at the Meadowlands and was made up the next night. I run into people all the time, like the entire population of the United States, was there on the night it was cancelled. It is kind of weird. I’ve done a lot of gigs in Jersey with Bucky Pizzarelli. I’ve been associated with him since about 1982-83.

Most of the gigs we did were in New York at the Knickerbocker and the Café Pierre. Jerry Bruno and Ron Naspo were on bass.

JJ: Is there a book, movie or play that you feel will give us non musicians a good idea of what a musician’s life is really like?

RK: There is a movie starring Warren Vaché called The Gig. It is really hard to find. I have a really bad copy of it. That movie depicts life in the Catskills. Dirty Dancing is another one like that. The Catskills was a whole different world. There were hundreds of hotels. They all had bands and different shows every night. You learned how to read what we call “fly shit.” You could read anything put in front of you. There is no such thing like that experience anymore. There are hundreds, maybe thousands of musicians now who are all peripherally in touch with each other from our Catskills experiences.

I’m involved in the jazz world, the cabaret world, the show biz world, and the classical world. All of them have different groups of people and for the most part they never cross into each other’s worlds. That’s very strange to me. For me, it is all a gigantic world, and I’m very fortunate to have been in a lot of it. I’m more on the show biz side than the jazz side. I work with Debbie Gravitte, who is a Tony Award winner. We just did a couple of shows with members of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, which is mostly classical and Broadway pop that wouldn’t be considered jazz, but the charts I wrote for Debbie are jazz charts. We have a project called Big Band Broadway. It is taking Broadway standards like “Let Me Entertain You” and turning them into Sinatra-like swinging arrangements. I did all that, but you try to book a big band into a theater and try to make some money for the guys.

JJ: How did you get your radio show The Jazz Deli?

RK: I am the music director for the singer Lise Avery. She has had a syndicated radio program for years that is live on WFDU-FM; that is Fairleigh Dickinson, 89.1. It is called Anything Goes. It is very eclectic and has a really great programming groove very much like the old WNEW. She does great interviews. WFDU decided to make their HD2 channel a “Jazz & What’s More” station. She asked me if I would be interested in having my own show. I said, “Yeah, if I can do it on Saturday mornings from 10:00 until noon.” I needed a name for it and if you look at my website, you will see the “Celebrity Deli Wall of Fame.” My good friend, the great drummer Warren Odze said, “Why don’t you just call it, ‘The Jazz Deli?”

The mission of The Jazz Deli is to be one or two generations away in separation of everything I play. Either I’m on the recording, or I know people on the recording, or I know a story from the recording, or I’m trying to promote people who are trying to promote their new recording. I alternate between a singer and an instrumentalist generally. It has been very successful so far and I’m having a ball with it.

JJ: You do the Piano in the Park, at Bryant Park each year. How did that get started?

RK: That is a collaboration between [Musician’s Union] Local 802 and the people that run events at Bryant Park. We used to have the Music Performance Trust Fund, and record labels contributed money into it. That funded all kinds of concerts in parks, schools and all over the New York metropolitan area. People who had bands or groups or ideas, if they could come up with half the money that it would take to pay the scale for the musicians, then they could get a concert done. There used to be thousands of those concerts a year. Now there are none because the budgets of the state and the recording companies have dwindled to such small amounts that they don’t pay for anything. Local 802, which is the greatest advocate of live music of all kinds, put together an organization that does raise funds for these things. It works pretty much the same way. Bryant Park wants to have events there, so the two came up with the idea to have pianists in the park. It is somewhere around 20 weeks when the weather is good, and each week there is a different pianist. It is a keyboard, not a real piano that was donated by the widow of the fellow who owned Sam Ash. She is from Japan, so it is made up of Local 802 musicians and Japanese pianists that are not members of the union. 802 approached me to see if I’d be interested. Well, of course; I love that gig. It is free, and often I’ll run into people I haven’t seen in years. It is one of my top gigs of the year.

JJ: Thank you for the interview.

RK: Great talking to you. Be well.
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Sunday March 12th was a clear cold evening in New York, and the final night of the Ted Nash Quintet’s three-night gig at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola. Occasionally I’ll see a band labeled “all-stars,” and I don’t recognize a single name. This was a true assembly of stars. Ted has been celebrated in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra as an important saxophonist, composer, arranger and educator for almost two decades. For this gig, his band consisted of Warren Wolf on vibes, Gary Versace on piano, Rufus Reid on bass and Matt Wilson on drums; all artists we enjoy.

Once in the club, I thought of past evenings there when we saw such notables as Walter Cronkite, Tony Bennett and George Wein in different audiences. As I wondered who might appear this evening, Bill Charlap popped in to see some friends. As the twilight deepened to night, the cityscape across from Central Park became a gray outline, dotted with random windows lights. A glowing full moon ascended into view drawing many of the admiring audience to the massive windows.

I heard a polyglot of languages in the crowd including Spanish, French, and Arabic; as well as heavily accented English. Once the set began, however, everyone sat attentive, smiling and kept time with the music. Perhaps the world would be a more harmonious place if the United Nations held its meetings at the Jazz at Lincoln Center venues.

The set started right on time, and Ted introduced each number, keeping his remarks pertinent and brief. He had selected a wonderful mix of jazz standards, such as Monk’s “Epistrophy” and Chick Corea’s “Windows,” and his originals, such as “Organized Crime.” In every number, each artist got to stretch out, delight his bandmates, and receive loud and deserved applause. Of special note was Matt Wilson, an artist who can mix humor into his music without compromising his art. He took one extended solo that involved both hitting a small hand gong and bouncing it repeatedly on his side tom. It wowed the audience and the rest of the quintet.

Every number was outstanding, but my high point was Ted’s “Spoken At Midnight” rearranged from its recent Grammy winning big band format. Also, Henry Mancini’s lovely “Soldier in the Rain” was so quietly enthralling that atypically the soloists received no real applause until it was over. Finally, the leader offered “Sisters” one of his older compositions. He explained that he had written it to express the frantic energy of his then two young daughters. Recently one of them had transgendered from Emily to Eli and Ted decided to reestablish it in his book as sign of his love and support for his son.

The musicians had achieved their goal. They wanted to swing, because as Ted said, “It just feels so good. I think of swing as a feeling, not a style. A lot of people run away from this [because they] equate swing with something old-fashioned.” It wasn’t old-fashioned; it was, as Rufus Reid said later, “BIG FUN.” For us it was magical. We left feeling buoyantly happy, the cares of the world pushed from our minds for the rest of the night.

As we exited, I saw Wayne Escoffery seated near the door and I wondered who we might see in the audience next time.

On March 23, the Jazz Standard, was about to celebrate its 15th anniversary, and we were there. If you have yet to visit, it is a basement club nesting below the Blue Smoke Restaurant on 27th Street in New York. One lobby wall has framed copies of some of the live CDs recorded there. On other walls you’ll see many candid photos of jazz luminaries, from Louis Armstrong to Ornette Coleman. My favorite is of Lady Day in the act of recording “Strange Fruit.”

It is easy to understand why so many fine live performance CDs have been made there. We have visited the club many times, and wherever we sat, the acoustics are always great. If, however, you wish to photograph an artist performing, the lighting for that is poor. Which is as it should be as it is club policy that photography along with loud talking are prohibited during the performances.

While the anniversary was notable, we went because Steve Kuhn had a four-day gig that overlapped his 79th birthday. He is an inspiring musician be it as a composer, educator or master pianist, both as a soloist and accompanist. While very young, he studied with the legendary Margaret Chaloff and gigged with her equally legendary son Serge. Throughout his long career, he has continued to associate with exceptional talents such as Kenny Dorham, Steve Swallow, Scott La Faro, John Coltrane, Ron Carter, Sheila Jordan and the list goes on and on. For this gig, he was more than ably
accompanied by David Wong on bass and Billy Drummond on drums.

The maestro walked slowly to the piano and made the customary brief remarks which he concluded by admonishing the crowd to “Have a good time... quietly.” He then played “My Shinning Hour” at a moderate up-tempo pace. Perhaps because he was not feeling well, the rest of the set was composed of slower pieces like “Emile” and some of his originals, among them “Adagio” and “All the Rest is the Same.” Or perhaps he was simply in the mood to blend two of his loves, jazz improvisation and the spirit of French Impressionist music. Whatever the cause, the selections allowed all three musicians great opportunities to show their considerable skills.

While Mr. Kuhn has been recognized as a master musician for more than half a century, David Wong is much closer to the start of his career. I have seen him a number of times, and always enjoyed his playing. He followed Steve’s solos beautifully, constructing wonderful ideas of his own. Billy Drummond has a much longer association with the pianist, and it is easy to see why. He is both expertly supportive and solos masterfully. During one number his sticks repeatedly danced across his cymbals in an amazingly captivating way. It looked simple, was brilliantly compelling, and garnered loud applause.

When the maestro introduced “Wisteria,” he explained that it was composed by Art Farmer in the mid ’60s, “probably before most of you were born.” I believe that a majority of the audience was far too young to have any memory of that time. Happily, it wasn’t the first time I’ve seen so much of the crowd composed of people with many years before their first mailing from AARP.

The Chinese have a saying that “One successful minute on the stage requires ten years of practice.” In his concluding remarks, Steve said, “Thank you for supporting the music to which we have devoted our lives.” It was a sincere and humbling statement. We were in the club to enjoy the food, drink and music. The trio, however, were there to show their absolute commitment to bringing us beauty in the form of jazz. Thank you gentleman, the pleasure was ours.

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BEBOP ROYALE! Vocalese Comes to Rutherfurd Hall

The Royal Bopsters have sold out NYC’s Birdland (where they were joined on stage by Jon Hendricks, Annie Ross, Sheila Jordan, Bob Dorough and Andy Bey), been featured on Michael Bourne’s Singers Unlimited on WBGO, and released a debut CD on Motéma Music (The Royal Bopsters Project). Now they bring their highflying brand of jazz vocalese to Rutherfurd Hall in Allamuchy, NJ on May 21.

Vocalese, a jazz subgenre where note-for-note lyrics are written to celebrated recorded jazz instrumental solos, was first heard in the late 1920s but had its heyday in the 1950s-60s. Two of the style’s best known examples include King Pleasure’s 1954 recording of Eddie Jefferson’s “Moody’s Mood for Love,” based on a James Moody solo, and Annie Ross’s “Twisted,” set to a Wardell Gray melody.

The Royal Bopsters is a vocal summit on which the talents of singers Amy London, Peter McGuinness, Dylan Pramuk and Holli Ross unite in harmony to pay tribute to the art of vocalese singing and to the forefathers and mothers of their favorite art form. (McGuinness replaced Darmon Meader who returned full-time to the New York Voices after the Motéma recording and Birdland show.)

Five years in the making, The Royal Bopsters vocal group was initially conceived by singer Amy London as a twilight years feature for her musical hero and close friend Mark Murphy, who she cites as a key influence. One by one, the other ‘Royal Bopsters’ signed on for the project at London’s behest. What can be heard at Rutherfurd Hall on May 21 will demonstrate why the group’s recording made five different “Top CD Releases for 2015” lists, including Downbeat and Jazz Times. Rutherford Hall is a 50-room Tudor style country home with picturesque grounds designed by the Olmsted Brothers, located just off Route 80 in Warren County at 1686 Route 517, Allamuchy, NJ.

Tickets for The Royal Bopsters show at Rutherfurd Hall are $25/advance and $30/door. For more information and tickets please visit www.rutherfurdHall.org. Show produced by Coyne Enterprises, Inc. in cooperation with Rutherfurd Hall and WRNJ Radio.
Clarinets, Comedians…and All That Jazz at the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp

Despite the famously dour demeanor of the event’s namesake, the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp has seen its share of would-be standup comedians. Many longtime attendees can recall being prey to Ken Peplowski’s topical schmaltz and Warren Vaché’s in-tune deadpan asides. Even emcee Joe Lang has been known to stall for time with a “joke” or two.

So the Henny Youngman-like slew of one-liners that Adrian Cunningham let loose when he took the mic for the afternoon’s closing performance was nothing new really. Neither were the jokes.

“What’s the difference between a jazz clarinetist and a pizza? A pizza can feed a family of four!”

“What do you call a clarinetist without a girlfriend? Homeless!”

“What do you call a clarinetist in a suit? The defendant!”

Yes, these are also all trombone jokes.

Well, the jokes may have been a little stale but the Aussie reedman’s repertoire was decidedly not. It’s a good bet that the Old School’s performance of “Waltzing Matilda” was a Pee Wee Stomp first. The song, Australia’s unofficial national anthem, came with Cunningham’s explanation of its mainly inscrutable lyrics, whereby we learned that a swagman is a hobo, a billabong is a pond, and a waltz is not a waltz. Fair dinkum to all that, I say.

Also off the beaten Stomp track was the band’s inspired swing version of Scott Joplin’s “Maple Leaf Rag.” All of that is not to say that there was not some appealing standard fare from this outfit as well, including “Sunny Side of the Street” and “Down by the Riverside,” both appropriately rollicking.
When it came time for the much maligned, but here celebrated clarinet to shine, the young Cunningham was up to the task, paying homage to the great master Sidney Bechet with soulful renditions of “Chant in the Night,” “Egyptian Fantasy” and “Sidney Bechet’s Fantasy” which also featured a tidy guitar solo, all in paired notes, by John Merrill.

The opening Midiri Brothers Quintet had dancers on their feet early with some vaguely familiar swing tunes, although the muffled stage announcements were no help with titles. I did recognize “Love Me or Leave Me” which the brothers fired up nicely.

More brothers, the Peter and Will Anderson Quintet were up next, with a more recognizable repertoire, like an opening “Avalon,” tightly voiced horns in the lead. “Robbins Nest” with Will on flute featured an ear-catching, lowdown solo by guitarist Adam Moezinia. Clarinets got the feature for “Begin the Beguine” and “Creole Love Call,” with another bluesy solo by Moezinia. “Cheek to Cheek” with Peter on clarinet and Will on sax prompted a big reaction on the dance floor. In between tunes, we learned that the twin brother Andersons share a birth date with Pee Wee Russell (the next day, March 27) and that Will is 10 seconds younger than Pete. The indistinguishable brothers usually wear different colored suits to make identification possible, this day light gray (Will) and dark gray (Peter).

During a brief intermission Music Committee Chair Mitchell Seidel announced that 2017 Musician of the Year awardee Jon Faddis was flying at that moment back to the U.S. after performing in Germany and would receive his award at a later date. However, NJPAC President and CEO John Schreiber, the Society’s 2017 Jazz Advocate honoree, was in attendance and made graceful acceptance remarks, noting that “the first jazz I got to work on were the NJJS jazz picnics at Waterloo.” He also had kind words for Society co-founder Jack Stine, who he said “made me feel like I was part of the community.”

After the break, Stomp favorite Dan Levinson and his Russell of Spring septet took to the stage and opened with “Oh Peter,” a tune Pee Wee Russell recorded with Red Allen. Molly Ryan had the guitar chair and performed several vocals, including a lively “Where the Morning Glories Grow.” The set closed with a raucous “California Here I Come,” all hands blowing, and a droll vocal by bassist Bryan Nalepka.

Due to a technical glitch with a new ticket service for this year’s event, early ticket sale numbers were alarmingly slack. In the end there was a more than respectable crowd on hand on March 26, and a 49th Stomp in honor of the great Mr. Russell now doubt will be on again — same time next year!

— Tony Mottola
Stylin’ Hoofers At The Pee Wee Stomp!

Jennie Meares and Jim Geyer

Cindy Champ and Linda Lobdell!

And away we go!
An exuberant Charleston jam circle.

Renee Toplansky and Victor Arenclibia

Abril Anchondo Reynaga and Orian Marx

Sallie Stutz and Mario Ritualo

— Photos by Lynn Redmile
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A Birthday Tribute for Dick Hyman at the Sarasota Jazz Festival

By Sanford Josephson

“Dick Hyman is the most important person in my life as a person and a mentor. When I moved to New York in 1981, he went out of his way to help younger musicians. Dick, I can never thank you enough.”

That tribute by clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Ken Peplowski preceded a performance by him and Hyman at a “New York Jazz Evening,” held March 9 at Michael’s On East in Sarasota, Florida. It was the featured event of the Sarasota Jazz Festival, held by the Jazz Club of Sarasota in honor of Hyman’s 90th birthday, which occurred on March 9.

The word “chemistry” is often overused, but the chemistry between Hyman and Peplowski was authentic and natural, not to mention thoroughly enjoyable. Estimating that they have played together hundreds of times, they began the evening’s performance with Rodgers & Hart’s “Lover,” played as a waltz. Vocalist Clairdee joined them on “Honeysuckle Rose” (Fats Waller/Andy Razaf), followed by “Royal Garden Blues” (Clarence and Spencer Williams) and a Hyman piano solo on the Walter Donaldson/Gus Kahn standard, “Love Me or Leave Me.” Other selections included: Coleman Hawkins’ “Stuffy,” and a Clairdee vocal of Erroll Garner’s “Misty.”

In 2013, Hyman and Peplowski recorded an album titled Live at the Kitano on the CB Baby label. At the Sarasota dinner, they announced that they will be appearing again at New York’s Kitano jazz club in July of this year. Their 2013 album was described by allaboutjazz.com’s Dan Bilawsky as “a gift to the world...If musical knowledge and taste were currency, pianist Dick Hyman and clarinetist Ken Peplowski would be two of the wealthiest men around.” Pointing out that Hyman and Peplowski “make for a perfect match,” he added that, “neither one looks at jazz as a museum piece; they both recognize that it’s a living and breathing art form that’s open to endless interpretation and variation…”

Two nights earlier, at the Riverview Performing Arts Center, an all-star band celebrated Hyman’s Musical Biography. Hosted by former WUSF-FM radio personality Bob Seymour, the evening traced Hyman’s career from his early days with NBC radio and the Arthur Godfrey Show to the present, culminated by this year’s ultimate honor — being named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. Hyman told his audience he originally wanted to call the concert, “Wallowing in Nostalgia,” but “I was overruled.”

The all-star band included pianist Bill Charlap, vocalist Clairdee, tenor saxophonist Houston Person, trumpeter Randy Sandke, guitarist Russell Malone, drummer Mark Feinman, and bassist John Lamb. Charlap is a distant cousin of Hyman’s. In my book, Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations (Praeger/ABC-Clio: 2009), Charlap recalled that, “Dick would take me around to various record dates, film scores, and solo piano recitals. I was a fly on the wall, and it was a great learning experience. I’m still learning from him all...
In the ’70s and ’80s, Hyman often performed and recorded with cornetist Ruby Braff. After a brief recording clip of their version of the Dave Bartholomew/Pearl King standard, “Someday (You’ll Be Sorry),” Sandke played it live, backed by Hyman and the rest of the rhythm section. Hyman showed a photo of himself with tenor saxophonist Flip Phillips and spoke of their warm relationship. That was followed by Person’s rendition of “You Don’t Know What Love Is” (Don Raye/Gene de Paul).

The indefatiguable Hyman also performed on the last night of the festival, March 11, with San Antonio’s Jim Cullum Jazz Band. The evening was divided into three segments celebrating the music of Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and Bix Beiderbecke. “For me,” said Hyman, “those are the Big Three.” The selections ranged from “Potato Head Blues” and “Muskrat Ramble” in the Armstrong section to Morton’s “Black Bottom Stomp” and “Milenberg Joys” to “At the Jazz Band Ball” and the showstopper, “Royal Garden Blues,” during the tribute to Beiderbecke. “Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong,” Hyman said, “didn’t play at all alike, but they complemented each other.” The Cullum Band were: Cullum on cornet, pianist John Sheridan, trombonist Mike Pittsley, bassist Phil Flanigan, drummer Kevin Hess, and clarinetist Allan Vache.

A unique feature of the Sarasota Jazz Festival is the annual Jazz Trolley & Pub Crawl, transporting jazz fans to as many as eight different pubs with live jazz between the hours of 6 and 10 pm.

This year it was held on March 8, and my wife Linda and I made it to only four. The highpoint for us was listening to a band led by pianist Bill Buchman at the Blue Rooster, a restaurant-bar featuring southern comfort food. Buchman, a graduate of the New England Conservatory, calls his band, “The Art of Jazz” and he showed a healthy respect for past jazz masters, playing tribute to Cannonball Adderley, Dave Brubeck and Mose Allison, while leading off the set with a stirring version of the jazz standard “Sweet Georgia Brown” (Ben Bernie/Maceo Pinkard). We also enjoyed Skip Conkling and the Dixie Mix (particularly trumpeter/cornetist Joe Miller) at the Gator Club, whose atmosphere reminded me of scenes from the HBO series Treme.

Hyman moved from New York City to nearby Venice, Florida, in 1993 and was awarded the Sarasota Jazz Club’s Satchmo Award in 2001. He was described in the program as “one of the few remaining stars from the old guard that made the Jazz Club of Sarasota one of the leading societies in the country.”

I first met Dick Hyman in the late 1970s when I interviewed him for an article I was writing about Fats Waller. In a later article that became the basis for a chapter on him in Jazz Notes, he told me that, “It seems like I always knew that I would be a musician. But it wasn’t exactly clear that it would go precisely along the lines that it has…I found myself playing soap operas and game shows as well as jazz piano programs as the conductor or leader and arranger. And all of that led to the composition, too. So, it’s all been one great jolly collection of impulses.”

A month after his 90th birthday was celebrated in Florida, Dick Hyman was in Washington, D.C. where he was honored as one of five 2017 NEA Jazz Masters at a gala concert at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall (see page 36).
Noteworthy
Frady Garner, International Editor Jersey Jazz

‘CATS HAIL SATCHMO’ AT NEWPORT JAZZFEST…BASSIST FELIX MOSEHOLM, 19, WINS FIRST DANISH YOUNG PLAYER AWARD…JAZZWAX TOUTS ‘SINATRA AT THE SANDS’ RECORD...BY GEORGE! IT’S GERSHWIN

‘CATS HAIL SATCHMO’ — That was the headline in the July 5, 1957 Newark News. The subhead read: “Jam Session for 57th Birthday.” I filed the story from the fourth American Jazz Festival at Newport, R.I. Nobody at the News city desk had asked for coverage, but they ran it, whetting the appetite of a would-be reporter. Now, 60 years later, here I am, winding up a career as a freelance journalist in Denmark. But the Newport Jazz Festival, as even its backers have long called it, bodes to outlive producer-founder George Wein, who still helps run the three-day show. NJF just announced its “Fourth Wave of Artists” for this summer’s event:

Friday, August 4
Leslie Odom, Jr.; Amir ElSaffar’s Rivers of Sound Orchestra; Jimmy Greene Quartet with Kevin Hays, Ben Williams & Otis Brown III; George Burton Quintet w/Tim Warfield, Jason Palmer, Pablo Menares & Wayne Smith Jr.

Saturday, August 5
Branford Marsalis Quartet; Jazz 100: The Music of Dizzy, Mongo & Monk featuring Danilo Perez, Chris Potter, Avishai Cohen, Josh Roseman, Roman Diaz, Ben Street & Adam Cruz; DJ Logic’s Project Logic; Benny Golson Quartet w. Mike LeDonne, Buster Williams & Carl Allen; Gilad Hekselman, solo guitar; Bill Stewart, drummer Alex Riel. Last year, Felix and the American pianist Isaiah J. Thompson were tendered The Horace Parlan Talent Award, named after the renowned American bebop pianist who spent his final years in Denmark. The Felix Moseholm Trio performed after their leader accepted his Conservatory Friends Award at Copenhagen’s renowned Jazzklub Monmartre.

An announcement came over the loudspeakers: Felix Moseholm had just been accepted to study at the Juilliard School of Music in New York.

“BEFORE I TELL YOU” what I’m writing about today,” writes Marc Myers, prolific proprietor of the daily blog JazWax, “listen to this...” And Marc invites you to click the link to Sinatra at the Sands with Count Basie and the Orchestra. Quincy Jones conducted the orchestra. “That’s trombonist Al Grey soloing on Thad Jones’s arrangement of ‘Makin’ Whoopee.’ The song appears on the album ...live with Frank Sinatra at the Sands Hotel in 1966. Grey had the sole instrumental on the double album, and it gave Sinatra a vocal break. Known for using a plunger mute to give his horn a soulful, conversational tone and for his white sun hat, Grey joined Basie in October 1957 and remained with the band until 1961, playing only occasionally with them. Bret Primack interviewed Grey on camera before the trombonist’s death in 2000 and asked him about this album.” Marc adds a link to the conversation in 1998 between Primack and Grey at Grey’s home on Long Island. JazzWax is a two-time winner of the Jazz Journalists Association’s best blog award. If you haven’t signed on to get the free daily offering, you owe it to yourself. Marc writes regularly for The Wall Street Journal. He’s the author of Anatomy of a Song (Grove) and Why Jazz Happened (University of California Press).

BY GEORGE! IT’S GERSHWIN — and the Lower East Side New York composer and pianist penned a treasury of piano, theater and concert music. What, though, about four-hands piano? Gershwin was an involved supporter of the several transcriptions of his orchestral music for two pianists. So we have arranged versions of both “Summertime” and “Rhapsody in Blue” for four hands. And you can buy four-hand sheet music for these and some other works. There are records, too. If you’re in London, go to concerts by two newcomers, London-based British women: Jocelyn Abbott and Laura O’Gorman. Their April 29 program at Live at Zedel included the “I’ve Got Rhythm Impromptu Variations; ““Porgy and Bess Suite,” a medley of Gershwin songs, and concluded with the evergreen “Rhapsody in Blue.” Live at Zedel – The Crazy Coqs, is on 20 Sherwood Street, W1F 7ED. Tel. 020 7734 4888. Find more information online at www.jbgbevents.com.

Michael Thrane holds the check for Felix Moseholm. Photo by Torben Christens

He has studied with American masters Ron Carter, John Patitucci and Scott Colley, and played with esteemed fellow-Danes like pianist Niels Lan Doky, tenor saxophonist Jesper Thilo, guitarist Jacob Fisher and drummer Alex Riel. Last year, Felix and the American pianist Isaiah J. Thompson were tendered The Horace Parlan Talent Award, named after the renowned American bebop pianist who spent his final years in Denmark. The Felix Moseholm Trio performed after their leader accepted his Conservatory Friends Award at Copenhagen’s renowned Jazzklub Monmartre.

An announcement came over the loudspeakers: Felix Moseholm had just been accepted to study at the Juilliard School of Music in New York.

‘BEFORE I TELL YOU’ what I’m writing about today,” writes Marc Myers, prolific proprietor of the daily blog JazzWax, “listen to this...” And Marc invites you to click the link to Sinatra at the Sands with Count Basie and the Orchestra. Quincy Jones conducted the orchestra. “That’s trombonist Al Grey soloing on Thad Jones’s arrangement of ‘Makin’ Whoopee.’ The song appears on the album ...live with Frank Sinatra at the Sands Hotel in 1966. Grey had the sole instrumental on the double album, and it gave Sinatra a vocal break. Known for using a plunger mute to give his horn a soulful, conversational tone and for his white sun hat, Grey joined Basie in October 1957 and remained with the band until 1961, playing only occasionally with them. Bret Primack interviewed Grey on camera before the trombonist’s death in 2000 and asked him about this album.” Marc adds a link to the conversation in 1998 between Primack and Grey at Grey’s home on Long Island. JazzWax is a two-time winner of the Jazz Journalists Association’s best blog award. If you haven’t signed on to get the free daily offering, you owe it to yourself. Marc writes regularly for The Wall Street Journal. He’s the author of Anatomy of a Song (Grove) and Why Jazz Happened (University of California Press).

BY GEORGE! IT’S GERSHWIN — and the Lower East Side New York composer and pianist penned a treasury of piano, theater and concert music. What, though, about four-hands piano? Gershwin was an involved supporter of the several transcriptions of his orchestral music for two pianists. So we have arranged versions of both “Summertime” and “Rhapsody in Blue” for four hands. And you can buy four-hand sheet music for these and some other works. There are records, too. If you’re in London, go to concerts by two newcomers, London-based British women: Jocelyn Abbott and Laura O’Gorman. Their April 29 program at Live at Zedel included the “I’ve Got Rhythm Impromptu Variations; ““Porgy and Bess Suite,” a medley of Gershwin songs, and concluded with the evergreen “Rhapsody in Blue.” Live at Zedel – The Crazy Coqs, is on 20 Sherwood Street, W1F 7ED. Tel. 020 7734 4888. Find more information online at www.jbgbevents.com.
RHYTHM & RHYME

Poetry editor Gloria Krolak explores the world of jazz in verse. This month she brings us one of the later works of Jayne Cortez, a leading figure in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and ‘70s, expressing a nostalgia of a jazz life that will resonate with many an older “fan.”

JAYNE CORTEZ

African-American poet, activist, writer and recording artist Jayne Cortez was only ten years old in 1944, when bebop began to reorder the jazz scene. But she was already a major fan, listening avidly to her parents’ recordings from an early age. Ten years later she would be married to saxophonist Ornette Coleman, a marriage that produced one son, drummer Denardo Coleman, and lasted a decade. That year she began the Watts Repertory Theater Company in the Los Angeles neighborhood where she grew up.

She had been born in Arizona as Sallie Jayne Richardson, but moved with her family when her Army dad was relocated. She took the last name of her maternal grandmother and soon became an outspoken leader of the Civil Rights Movement, using the arts to push for the political causes she believed in, using her work, for example, to enroll black voters in Mississippi in the ’60s.

She published her first book of poetry in 1969, followed by eleven others, many under Bola Press, her own publishing company. They’ve been translated into 28 languages. She released a number of recordings with her band, The Firespitters, an apt name for her brand of intensity. In 1975 Cortez married sculptor and printmaker Melvin Edwards. They lived in both Dakar, Senegal, where she felt most at home, and New York City. She died in 2012 at the age of 78.

JAZZ FAN LOOKS BACK

Jayne Cortez not only looks back, she explodes in a fit of nostalgia, recalling how bebop managed to get under and into her skin, right down to the bone. Starting in 1944 with Ella Fitzgerald’s “Lady Be Good,” to Monk’s “Criss-Cross” in 1963, and the whole bebopping royal family gathered as one, she’s clear about her musical loyalty.

She invents verbs and uses ordinary ones to marvel at the tunes that captivated her, like Dizzy’s “Groovin’ High,” Bud Powell’s “Wail,” dreamed with Fats Navarro, and Oscar Pettiford’s “Perdido,” which not only means “lost” or “confused” in Spanish, but is the name of a street in New Orleans. She imitates the language of bop, wears a magnolia like Billie, and screams like Dinah in “Nobody Knows the Way I Feel.”

I’m betting that somewhere she’s sweet on Buddy Rich’s “Yardbird Suite,” and casting her line with Tadd Dameron’s “Good Bait.”

JAZZ FAN LOOKS BACK

By Jayne Cortez

I crisscrossed with Monk
Wailed with Bud
Counted every star with Stitt
Sang “Don’t Blame Me” with Sarah
Wore a flower like Billie
Screeched in the range of Dinah
& scatted “How High the Moon” with Ella Fitzgerald
as she blew roof off the Shrine Auditorium
Jazz at the Philharmonic

I cut my hair into a permanent tam
Made my feet rebellious metronomes
Embedded record needles in paint on paper
Talked bopology talk
Laughed in high-pitched saxophone phrases
Became keeper of every Bird riff
every Lester lick
as Hawk melodized my ear of infatuated tongues
& Blakey drummed militant messages in
soul of my applauding teeth
& Ray hit bass notes to the last love seat in my bones
I moved in triple time with Max
Grooved high with Diz
Perdidoed with Pettiford
Flew home with Hamp
Shuffled in Dexter’s Deck
Squatty-rooed with Peterson
Dreamed a “52nd Street Theme” with Fats
& scatted “Lady Be Good” with Ella Fitzgerald
as she blew roof off the Shrine Auditorium
Jazz at the Philharmonic

Reprinted from Jazz Fan Looks Back (c) 2002 by Jayne Cortez, by permission of Hanging Loose Press.
Ella Fitzgerald’s centennial was widely celebrated but one of the most ambitious and interesting of these events was ELLAbration, a two-day happening on March 24 and 25 presented by my old hang, the Institute of Jazz Studies. I missed the first installment, which featured Dr. Judith Tick, at work on an Ella biography that promises to be the best yet, friend and confidant Jim Blackman, IJS stalwarts Vincent Pelote and Tad Hershorn (the latter also Norman Granz’s biographer), record producers Phil Schaap, Harry Weinger and Scott Wenzel, a film, Pure Love, a listening session curated by WBGO veteran Rhonda Hamilton and a concert by the Newark Science Park High School Big Band.

But I was there for day two, featuring a talk about “the historic partnership” between Ella and Norman Granz, by — guess who — Tad Hershorn, a talk on “Ella the Improviser” by Rutgers music prof Lewis Porter, a showing of Ella film and TV clips by Will Friedwald, a conversation between WBGO’s Sheila Anderson and yours truly, “Reflections on Jazz Singing,” and perhaps most interesting of all, “The Accompanists,” presenting two distinguished pianist who played that role with Ella, Richard Wyands and Mike Wofford. Wyands, who’ll be 89 come July 2, and whom I hadn’t seen in some years, was in fine shape and offered insights as well as a splendid solo version of “Yesterdays.” While Wofford, whom I’d not met before, but an LP by whom I reviewed very favorably in DownBeat years ago (which he remembered), also had interesting things to say and offered a sprightly “How High the Moon.” (He’s a mere 78). The evening concluded with a set featuring Houston Person and Newark’s own energetic Carrie Jackson, who went very well together on some Ella-associated songs. Before that, Tad had the excellent idea of calling up Daryl Sherman from the audience to offer a tribute. It turned out to be a very special program at Pangea, a pleasantly unpretentious place on Second Avenue between 11th and 12th, “Great Hit Songs we know but don’t know are by Carl Sigman.” Like the others in attendance, I had no idea that Mr. Sigman, who was both a lyricist and composer, had created either words or melodies to such monster hits as “Enjoy Yourself,” “Arrivederci Roma,” and “Civilization” (Bongo, Bongo, Bongo). Happily, Daryl rendered none of the above but chose some of surprising quality, among them “Crazy She Calls Me,” “I Could Have Told You,” “Dance Ballerina,” “Pennsylvania 6-5000,” and a favorite of mine, “If You Could See Me Now” (music by Tad Dameron).

The highlight, perhaps, was the only song I know of composed by a Vice President of the U.S.A., Charles Dawson, which by way of Sigman became “All in the Game,’ immortalized by Louis Armstrong (with a hand from Gordon Jenkins). This was Daryl at her best, as an interpreter and illuminator of the great tradition of Armstrong (with a hand from Gordon Jenkins). This was Daryl at her best, as an interpreter and illuminator of the great tradition of American popular song. She repeated it at Pangea, but I hope she’ll have the opportunity to present it to a larger audience. (Promoters take heed!) Without doubt, Rich Conaty might have been one of the very few to know about Carl Sigman. His commemoration, at the Cutting Room on March 22, was very well attended, as one would have expected, for his “The Big Broadcast” had many loyal followers, gathered over a span of almost four decades. Rich was a unique radio presence, in style and substance. I loved his show —not everything he played was great, but it all added up to a grand musical mosaic of the period he so loved and understood.

There were a bit too many speches (10), some quite touching, but the best verbal spot was a few well-chosen excerpts of Rich himself. And of course there was music first and foremost, by Vince Giordano’s Nighthawks. That great band was in fine fettle, and as his program note revealed, Rich was a Nighthawk co-founder. I’ll miss him at the next Collectors’ Bash.
JAZZ TRIVIA ANSWERS  
questions on page 4

1. Wendy Oxenhorn, inducted in 2016
2. Orrin Keepnews, 2011
4. Rudy Van Gelder, 2009
5. Joe Segal, 2015
6. George Avakian, 2010
7. Dan Morgenstern, 2007

NJJS Offers Patron Level Benefits

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a non-profit organization with a number of ambitious programs and a finite level of resources. Event ticket sales and member dues cover only a fraction of our expenses, making it necessary to find sponsors and partners to help us make ends meet. Your donations in excess of basic member dues are a great way of partnering with us, and very much needed.

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

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

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

Moving?

Please e-mail your new address to: editor@njjs.org; or mail the change to: NJ Jazz Society, c/o 382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217, Summit, NJ 07901.
Each year since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts has conferred the NEA Jazz Masters award. With the recent 2017 class, the NEA has awarded 145 fellowships to great figures in jazz. Now, with the Trump administration’s announced intention to defund the NEA in the federal budget, the future of the program is in doubt. Under this cloud of uncertainty, a free concert honoring the 2017 NEA Jazz Masters was presented on April 3 at the Kennedy Center’s Concert Hall. The concert was also available through a live web stream.

The five individuals — four musicians and one advocate are chosen annually — are recognized for their lifetime achievements and exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz. Each receives a $25,000 award. Here’s a look what could be the last class of NEA Jazz Masters.

**DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER**
**vocalist, producer, broadcaster**
Bridgewater is a daring performer of great depth whose singing talents have earned her both a Tony and multiple Grammy Awards. In addition, her commanding personality made her a natural for hosting the award-winning National Public Radio syndicated radio show *JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater* from 2001 to 2014.

**IRA GITLER**
**author, editor, producer, educator**
Gitler is an American jazz historian, journalist, educator and author who has written several books about jazz and hundreds of liner notes for jazz recordings. He has also written for many jazz publications, and served as associate editor of *DownBeat magazine* during the 1960s. In the 1980s and ’90s he produced concerts for George Wein’s New York jazz festivals. Gitler also taught jazz history at several colleges and is considered one of the great historians and champions of the music.

**DICK HYMAN**
**keyboardist, composer, arranger**
Hyman is a piano virtuoso who, Zelig-like, has been known for playing in any style he wants. A masterful improviser, he is also a composer of concerti and chamber music, and the soundtrack composer/arranger for more than a dozen Woody Allen films (including, appropriately, *Zelig*). In addition, he launched the acclaimed Jazz in July series at the 92nd Street Y in New York City and served as its artistic director for 20 years, and also produced the Piano Spectacular series for the NJ Jazz Society.

**DR. LONNIE SMITH**
**organist, composer**
Smith is a master Hammond B3 jazz organist and composer who, in a career spanning more than 50 years, has been featured on more than 70 jazz, blues, and R&B recordings. He is considered one of the premier purveyors of funk/soul jazz. He is lovingly referred to as “Dr.” by fellow musicians because he likes to “doctor” up the tunes with his unique improvisational stylings.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “For 35 years, the National Endowment for the Arts has celebrated jazz, one of our nation’s most important cultural contributions, by honoring those who have dedicated their lives to this music. I am pleased to welcome these five individuals with their artistry, energy, and commitment to jazz to the NEA Jazz Masters family.”

The NEA also supports the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program, an effort to document the lives of NEA Jazz Masters. In addition to transcriptions of the comprehensive interviews, the website also includes audio clips with interview excerpts. This project has transcribed the oral histories of more than 90 NEA Jazz Masters.
Local author Barbara Kukla says she is “dedicated to preserving Newark’s ever-vanishing history.” Her new book, *The Encyclopedia of Newark Jazz: A Century of Great Music*, furthers that effort by collecting biographies and photos of 250 musicians and singers associated with the Brick City’s musical legacy. In addition to the bios, the book features nearly two dozen essays, on subjects such as Donna Vaughan, (Sarah’s sister); former city mayor Ken Gibson, who played in a band with 10-time Grammy-winner Wayne Shorter; Denise McCoy of the jazz venue The Priory; Dorthaan Kirk of radio station WBGO; pianist Clem Moorman (still playing and singing at age 101); artists Carrie Jackson, Buddy Terry and Radam Schwarz; and local institutions, including WBGO, the Terrace Ballroom, NJPAC, the Institute of Jazz Studies and Savoy Records.

Barbara J. Kukla has written five previous books including *America’s Music: Jazz in Newark, Swing City: Newark Nightlife, 1925-50, Defying the Odds: Triumphant Black Women of Newark,* and *Sounds of Music: The Dolores Collins Benjamin Story,* (a biography of the founder of the North Jersey Philharmonic Glee Club, America’s oldest all-male African-American choral group), and *Newark Inside My Soul: A 50-Year Memoir*.

Before retiring from *The Star-Ledger* in 2004, she spent 43 years as a journalist, most of that time at *The Star-Ledger,* where she first served as a general assignment reporter and Sunday city editor. In 1979, she created and was named editor of *Newark This Week,* a section focused on news of interest to the residents of New Jersey’s largest city. Ms. Kukla’s new book, *The Encyclopedia of Newark Jazz,* is available for $29.99 per copy plus $4.00 postage. For more information, email the author at bjkukla@aol.com.
LYRICS & LYRICISTS

BABY, DREAM YOUR DREAM:
Dorothy Fields and the Women of the American Songbook

Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall – 92nd Street Y, NYC March 18-20

When a discussion turns to the writers of the Great American Songbook, most people think of names like George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer, Richard Rodgers or any of another group of mostly men who created most of these songs. There are some women who deserve equal prominence, notably Dorothy Fields, Betty Comden and Carolyn Leigh, all lyricists. “Baby, Dream Your Dream,” the most recent program on the 92nd Street Y’s heralded Lyrics & Lyricists series, focused on these three women, as well as several others who have made significant contributions to the music that has endured as one of the great American contributions to our popular culture.

Series artistic director Deborah Grace Winer, who has a biography of Fields among her credits as an author, served as the artistic director, host and writer of the program. With the aid of John Oddo, who served as music director, arranger/orchestrator and pianist, stage director Mark Waldrop, and vocalists Marilyn Maye, Keta Miller, Nancy Opel, Margo Seibert and Emily Skinner, Winer presented a program that covered the work of fifteen female lyricists and composers, and addressed 28 songs.

Winer provided insightful and informative commentary about these ladies and the milieu in which they created their songs.

While there were a few female songwriters like Anne Caldwell and Rida Johnson Young who preceded Dorothy Fields in the field of musical theater, it was Fields who stood out as the first significant woman contributor to popular songwriting. She was soon joined by the likes of Kay Swift, Dana Suesse and Ann Ronell, each of whom created hit tunes. In the jazz and blues area, there were contributions from ladies like Bessie Smith, Lil Harden Armstrong, Mary Lou Williams and Billie Holiday. In the field of musical theater, the next major lady lyricist after Fields was Betty Comden, and about a decade later Carolyn Leigh came on the scene. In the pop field there were Dory Previn, Fran Landesman and Marilyn Bergman, and the theater, the next major lady lyricist after Fields was Betty Comden, and about a decade later Carolyn Leigh came on the scene. In the pop field there were Dory Previn, Fran Landesman and Marilyn Bergman, and the age of the singer-songwriter opened the doors for Betty Comden and Carolyn Leigh, all lyricists. “Baby, Dream Your Dream,” the most highly anticipated debut CD Out Of My Dreams featuring songs by HOAGY CARMICHAEL JIMMY VAN HEUSEN IRVING BERLIN JOHNNY MANDEL RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN ANTHONY NEWLEY and DIANE PERRY Available SOON!

DianePerryJazz.com DianePerryFolk.com

Diane Perry

Look for her highly anticipated debut CD Out Of My Dreams

violinist

vocalist


Occasionally the choice of material was disappointing given the wealth of songs that were available to select, but overall, this proved to be an enjoyable look at an important part of the Great American Songbook.

STEVE ROSS: My Manhattan

Birdland, NYC | March 20

Few, if anyone, can convey the excitement, romance, sophistication and many dimensions of New York City in song as well as Steve Ross. His show at Birdland was a witty, informative and passionate paean to The Big Apple, a city that he deeply loves.

He opened with two songs about Broadway, “Give My Regards to Broadway” which evolved into “Please Don’t Monkey with Broadway.” Throughout the one-hour plus set, Ross examined, through songs, various aspects of life in New York, adding some pithy, and often humorous, commentary along the way.

He presented some earlier popular songs about New York, titles like “The Bowery,” “East Side, West Side,” “Streets of New York” and “Do the New York.” Rodgers and Hart often turned their attention to New York City with songs such as “Manhattan,” “I Got to Get Back to New York,” “At the Roxy Music Hall” and “A Tree in the Park.” Likewise did Cole Porter. Ross wonderfully combined Porter’s ironic song of love lost, “Down in the Depths (on the 90th Floor)” with the acceptance present in “Just One of Those Things,” also by Porter.

Many other Broadway songwriters turned their attention to the city with songs like “Every Street’s a Boulevard in Old New York,” from Hazel Flagg, “Broadway Baby” from Follies, “Tuscaloosa’s Calling Me, But I’m Not Going,” from the show of the same name, and When You’re Far Away From New York Town,” from Jennie. Ross cleverly combined two show tunes, “Lonely Street,” from On the Town, and “Another Hundred People,” from Company, into a musical picture of the challenges of living in New York City.
He also called upon some wonderful obscurities that depicted various aspects of city life, Michael McWhinney and Jerry Powell’s “New York Coloring Book,” “The Spider and the Fly” by Murray Grand, Peter Allen’s “Six Thirty Sunday Morning,” “Subway to the Country” by David Ackles, and the haunting “Manhattan Moon,” written by Ross and Richard Crosby.

The closing medley of two more Porter tunes, “Take Me Back to Manhattan” and “I Happen to Like New York” confirmed the thing that was evident throughout the show, that in his 40 plus years as a confirmed New Yorker, this chap who originally hailed from Washington, DC, has given his heart and soul to the greatest city to be found anywhere in the world.

**STEPHANIE NAKASIAN/ VERONICA SWIFT:**
Double Vision: Tribute to Hod O’Brien

The Kitano, NYC | March 25

Just a little over four months after Hod O’Brien left us, the wife and daughter of this legendary jazz pianist, Stephanie Nakasian and Veronica Swift, paid tribute to him with a heartfelt and musically satisfying show at The Kitano, a place where they all shared several memorable nights in the past.

The program presented many songs composed by Hod, as well as some tunes by others that were particular favorites of his. To assist them in this undertaking, they called upon a superb trio, Tardo Hammer on piano, Paul Gill on bass and Andy Watson on drums.

The evening started out with the trio playing “Bits and Pieces,” an O’Brien composition that served as the title piece for his first album as a leader.

Nakasian and Swift touchingly made “Almost in Your Arms” their opening selection.

O’Brien occasionally wrote his own lyrics to his compositions, but also worked with other lyricists, most notably Fran Landesman.


Several of the tunes with words by Landesman were sprinkled throughout the two sets. They all were representative of her approach to lyric writing, sometimes cynical, sometimes mystical, and often out there. The selections performed during this evening were “Hello Suckers,” “Handful of Dust,” “Mystery Man,” “What Am I Doing with You?” and “The Moth and the Flame.”

The ladies blended their vocal talents wonderfully. Particularly impressive were the wordless vocals they performed to O’Brien’s “Opalescence” and Victor Feldman’s “Exodus.”

Swift often performed with her father as her accompanist, and she sang several tunes that were frequently part of their programs, “Nothing Like You,” “Darn That Dream,” “September in the Rain” and most emotionally this time out, a medley of “Thanks for You” and “We’ll Be Together Again,” the last thing that they performed together.

Nakasian offered solo takes on “But Beautiful” and “Music Is Forever,” certainly emotional moments for her.

It is always thrilling to see the interaction of Nakasian and Swift when they get into their vocalese/bebop bag. They gave impressive versions of “Bebop Spoken Here” and “Fascinatin’ Rhythm.” The evening closed with them romping through “What Is This Thing Called Love” and O’Brien’s original based on the changes to this tune, “Hod’s House.”

This was an evening filled with great music, much emotion, and most significantly, love for Hod O’Brien that poured forth from the stage, and was sent back by an audience that shared affectionate memories of Hod O’Brien, a great musician and great person who had touched most of those present.

**THE INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES (IJS)**

has been collecting jazz records at Rutgers University in Newark and sharing them with a wide audience for the past 50 years. These include not only sound recordings of jazz music, but also the “record” of jazz found in photographs, documents, written music and historic artifacts. Expanding on the original vision of IJS founder Marshall Stearns, the Institute has grown to become one of the biggest centers in the world for the study of jazz history.

Our newest exhibit, **Records at Play: The Institute of Jazz Studies at 50**, at The Large Gallery at Express Newark, 54 Halsey Street, 3rd Floor, Newark,NJ is a unique opportunity to experience jazz history through the IJS treasures, just around the corner in Newark. The exhibit is open Monday-Wednesday, 12-5 pm, Thursday, 12-8 pm, and Saturday, 12-5 pm.

**INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES**

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185 University Avenue, Newark, NJ 07102.
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Other Views

By Joe Lang
Past NJJS President

As long as the new CDs keep coming, I will keep telling you about the best of them, but first a side trip to the world of DVDs. Notably, several of the musicians covered in this column are prominent in the field of jazz education.

There is a backstory to the recently released DVD by the NEW BLACK EAGLE JAZZ BAND, A Memorical Concert for Chester Zardis, New Orleans Bassist 1900-1990 (Self-Produced). Space precludes relating all of the details, but they are spelled out in the booklet accompanying the DVD.

Suffice to say that the NBEJB played a concert at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1990 that was videotaped, a fact that was forgotten by the band members until Preston McLanahan, the man who had the tapes, contacted them. It soon became apparent that they had a quality source from which they could produce a DVD of the highlights from the concert.

The concert is a delight with his stories and his takes on “Gallows Blues” and “The Right Key, But the Wrong Keyhole.”

Among the selections are many Trad favorites like “In the Sweet Bye and Bye,” “Careless Love,” “Shake It and Break It,” “C.C. Rider” and “Panama.” Barker is a delight with his stories and his takes on “Gaillois Blues” and “The Right Key, But the Wrong Keyhole.”

If you are a traditional jazz enthusiast, then this DVD is sure to please you, as these cats play the music with verve and authority. It will be a particularly special treat for the many fans of the NBEJB, many of whom are NJJS members. (www.blackeagles.com)

CDs

John Lewis was an exceptional pianist, composer and arranger, most notably as the nominal leader of the Modern Jazz Quartet. The JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA devoted a series of concerts in January 2013 to The Music of John Lewis (Blue Engine – 0008). The host, pianist and guiding light for the concert was JON BATISTE. They addressed ten Lewis compositions, including three of his most well-known, “2 Degrees East, 3 Degrees West,” “Django” and “Two Bass Hit,” as well as four selections that were originally included in the MQ recording titled The Clown. Batiste replaced the regular JALCO pianist Dan Nimmer for this concert, and was the primary soloist throughout the concert. The band played many of the original Lewis arrangements, with several of them artfully adapted by David Berger for the big band. The band certainly came to play with enthusiasm and precision, giving the Lewis compositions the kind of execution that they deserve. The JALCO has retained a fondness for dancing in her later years despite a fading memory. One of her favorite arrangements was the lovely title track. Longo is one of the living masters of jazz piano. He combines a laid back sensitivity with the intensity of his bebop roots to create a style that is his alone. Teaming with West and Nash, both of whom share with Longo the experience of having played with Gillespie, results in an empathetic trio playing

Throughout the seven selections the band, led by tenor/soprano saxophonist Curt Hanrahan, displays wonderful cohesion and spirit, with Hanrahan’s solo work being particularly notable. The program includes “After You’ve Gone,” “Caravan,” “Brotherhood of Man” and Charlie Parker’s “Blues in C,” plus three originals, two by Hanrahan, and one by the band’s guitarist, Steve Lewandowski. This is a live performance recorded at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where Hanrahan is the director of Jazz Studies. In the tradition of the bands led by one of Milwaukee’s most famous sons, Woody Herman, the MJO is a hard swinging outfit that knows how to create excitement. (www.cdbaby.com)

Boston has been a center of jazz education, with noted programs at the New England Conservatory and the Berklee College of Music. Ken Schaphorst has been the chair of the Jazz Studies department at NEC since 2001, and has led his big band for almost 30 years. The Music of the KEN SCHAPHORST BIG BAND and has been noted for its eclecticism, and that is certainly true of How to Say Goodbye (JCA Recordings). Schaphorst has created musical tributes to mentors like Herb Pomeroy “‘Blues for Herb,” and Bob Brookmeyer, “Take Back the Country.” “Amnesia” is a tango inspired by his grandmother who retained a fondness for dancing in her later years despite a fading memory. Each is a wonderfully evocative piece. This collection is far from an easy listening collection, rather one that challenges the listener as well as the players. If you dig adventurous writing, and some outside approaches to jazz, this one will satisfy you. (www.cdbaby.com)

It seems like yesterday that word came down about the passing of the fine jazz pianist Cedar Walton, but it was actually almost four years ago. His memory now lingers on in a special way on CLOCKWISE: THE MUSIC OF CEDAR WALTON (O2 Records – 229139) by the BEN MARKLEY BIG BAND. Pianist Markley, who is the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Wyoming, has arranged ten Walton compositions for his big band, comprising fellow Wyoming faculty members and many top players from the Denver area. As a featured soloist, Markley has enlisted trumpetter Terell Stafford, also a prominent jazz educator, currently serving as the Director of Jazz Studies at Temple University. Among the Walton compositions explored by the band are selections like “Hindsight,” “Holy Land” and “Bolivia.” Walton had a strongly blues based feeling to many of his creations, and this is pervasive in the charts penned by Markley. The music on the album grabs the listener from the start, and never allows your attention to wane. It has all of the qualities that mark good big band jazz, wonderful tunes, ear-catching arrangements, tight ensemble playing and focused, interesting solo work. (www.originalsarts.com)

Only Time Will Tell (Consolidated Artists Productions – 1054) is a spirited disc from the MIKE LONGO TRIO. Pianist Longo is joined by Paul West on bass and Lewis Nash on drums for a 13-song program that runs the gamut from standards, “Tomorrow,” “Exactly Like You,” “Ruby” and “Memories of You;” to jazz classics by the likes of Thelonious Monk (“Nutty” and “Brilliant Corners”), Oscar Pettiford (“Bohemia After Dark”) and Dizzy Gillespie (“Just a Thought” and “Wheatleigh Hall”; plus four originals by Longo, including the lovely title track. Longo is one of the living masters of jazz piano. He combines a laid back sensitivity with the intensity of his bebop roots to create a style that is his own. Teaming with West and Nash, both of whom share with Longo the experience of having played with Gillespie, results in an empathetic trio playing wonderful tunes superbly. Only Time Will Tell informs us that Mike Longo creates music that is timeless. (www.jazzbeat.com)

Tenor saxophonist JEFF RUPERT and pianist RICHARD DREXLER are fellow faculty members in the Jazz Studies program at the University of Central Florida, Rupert as the Director, and Drexler as an adjunct professor. They also
work frequently together as musicians. **Imagination** (RUPE Media – 111016) is a wonderful example of duo jazz performance. Rupert has a lovely, mellow tone that is well suited to the slow to medium tempo, contemplative approach to his playing, Jenkins also takes an old song from the days of vaudeville “Breeze (Blow Village),” an original by each of the players, and an interesting, mixing standards like “Bye Bye Baby” as background music, especially for an intimate club, back to those times when you caught Murphy in a lifetime at the Keystone Korner. The music on **East of the Village** (Capri – 74145) by tenor saxophonist KEITH OXMAN and his trio partners, Jeff Jenkins on Hammond B3 organ and Todd Reid on drums are all based in the Denver area where they not only play gigs, but also are involved in jazz education. Tenor sax/organ/ drum combos are often thought of as primarily being proponents of groove-oriented playing, but these cats have more of a swing to hard bop feeling to their music. Their tune selection is interesting, mixing standards like “Bye Bye Baby” “Deep in a Dream,” “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home,” “Lucky to Be Me” and “I’ve Got Beginner’s Luck” with a jazz tune, Hank Mobley’s “East of the Village,” an original by each of the players, and an old song from the days of vaudeville “Breeze (Blow My Baby back to Me).” Oxman has a robust approach to his playing, Jenkins also takes an aggressive tack, and Reid complements them with great time and just the right accents. This is fun music that seems to have been played with a smile, and should bring about a similar grin to a listener. (www.cdbaby.com)

**If you ever saw vocalist MARK MURPHY in a live performance, you know that you could always expect the unexpected. If anyone deserved to be called a jazz singer, it was Murphy. He combined an exceptionally flexible baritone voice with an unmatched imagination and musical genius that made each performance unique and memorable. Admittedly, he was not everyone’s cup o’ tea, but if you “got” him, you were forever hooked. This is a roundabout way of saying that the release on **Wild and Free: Live at the Keystone Korner** (HighNote – 7310) is a must have for Murphy enthusiasts. For one hour you can be transported back to those times when you caught Murphy in a club. If you missed that scene, then here is your chance to catch up. Keystone Korner was THE jazz club in San Francisco when this performance was captured in June, 1980. Murphy had pianist Paul Potyen, bassist Peter Barshay, drummer Jack Gobetti and percussionist Babatunde Lea on percussion as his support group. There are sixteen songs covered on the 14 tracks, each of them sung like you have never heard them before, as Murphy seemed incapable of singing any song the same way twice. This is vintage Mark Murphy, and that is like happening upon a bottle of desirable vintage wine. Let your ears drink up the sounds created by this unique and special singer. (www.jazzdepot.com)

** Mention the name DONNY MOST to someone, and they will probably say something like “you mean the guy who played Ralph Malph on Happy Days.” Then tell them that he has just released an album of standards called **Mostly Swinging** (Summit – 690), and they might look at you like you must be kidding. Well, Most has done just that, and the man can sing and swing! Producer and arranger Willie Murillo gathered together a cast of A-list Los Angeles musicians for the dynamic big band backing Most as he does indeed swing his way through a program of 13 standards like “Lover Come Back,” “Let’s Fall in Love,” “I Got it Bad (and That Ain’t Good),” “After You’ve Gone” and “One for My Baby.” The influences are surely there, Frank, Dino and Bobby D, but there is no imitation going on here, just a man who loves the songs, and loves to sing them. He breaks no new ground, but has a supple voice, and sounds at home singing along to Murillo’s sparkling charts. Mostly Swinging is a pleasant surprise from an unexpected source. Welcome to the world of good music, Donny Most! (www.summitrecords.com)

**Hearing This and That** (Arbors – 19455) by vocalist REBECCA KILGORE and pianist BERND LHOOTZKY recalls the words in an old public service announcement promoting New Jersey, perfect together. Kilgore has established herself as one of today’s finest vocalists, and this recording only enhances that reality. Lhotzky resides in Germany, has long been among the top mainstream pianists on the Continent, and is a member of the heralded quartet Echoes of Spring. These two superb artists recorded this 15-tune collection in Munich, and it is indeed a treasure. Among the selections are “I’m Shooting High,” “Baltimore Oriole,” “Flying Down to Rio,” “By Strauss,” “The Best Thing for You” and “You Can’t Lose a Broken Heart.” Particularly appealing are four songs by Billy Strayhorn, “Lotus Blossom,” with lovely lyrics by Roger Schore, “A Flower is a Lovesome Thing,” “Grievin’,” and “Star-Crossed Lovers,” the latter two co-written with Duke Ellington. Lhotzky’s accompaniment is a perfect compliment to Kilgore’s smooth, yet hip vocalizing. It is amazing how this music can bring together two musicians from widely different places, and allow them to sound like they work together regularly. That is the magic of jazz, and This and That is surely magical. (www.arborsrecords.com)

** While she has lived in this country for over 35 years, singer/pianist ELIANE ELIAS returned to her native Brazil two years ago to record there for the first time since she emigrated here. The resulting album, **Made in Brazil**, won a Grammy for Best Latin Jazz Album. Following up on this success, she has returned to Brazil for her next album, the recently released **Dance of Time** (Concord Jazz -00027). This time joining Elias are several guests, including pianist Amilton Godoy, one of her early mentors, Brazilian singer/songwriter/guitarists João Bosco and Toquinho, vibraphonist Mike Mainieri, trumpeter Randy Brecker, and vocalist Mark Kibble, as well as a rhythm section of bassist Marcelo Mariano, guitarist Marcus Teixeira, drummer Edu Ribeiro, and percussionists Marivaldo dos Santos and Gustavo di Dalva. There is an emphasis on samba rhythms, but there are also other Brazilian musical styles employed. Elias is a marvelous pianist who self-accomplishes her vocals, ones that are joyous at times and seductive at others. Most of the selections are Brazilian tunes, but there are also two American standards on the program, “You’re Getting to Be a Habit with Me” and “Speak Low.” Elias has been a significant presence on the jazz and Latin jazz scene since she arrived in New York City in 1981. This album is a winning addition to her catalog of outstanding recordings. (www.concordmusicgroup.com)

This month there are several tribute Cds by vocalists, three dedicated to songwriters and one magical pairing of Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass.

** Vocalist NANCY VALENTINE is a staunch advocate for the songs of Billy Strayhorn, and her enthusiasm has led to the release of **Lovesome: Nancy Valentine Sings the Music of Billy Strayhorn** (Jazz Garden Records). Pianist John di Martino encouraged her to record this CD. Over several sessions, a cadre of musicians, including saxophonists Harry Allen, Dick Oatts and Gary Smulyan; trumpeters Joe Magnarelli and Dominick Farinacci, cornetist Warren Vache, pianists di Martino and Tamir Hendelman, bassists Boris Koslov, Jay Leonhart and Marco Panascia, and drummers Victor Jones, Tony Jefferson and Kenneth Washington played on the recording. The program covered twelve selections. Two are among the most popular Strayhorn pieces, “A Flower is a Lovesome Thing” and “Something to Live For. Two

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are well known as instrumental pieces, “Blood Count,” and “Lotus Blossom,” but the first became “My Flame Burns Blue” when lyrics were added by Elvis Costello, and the latter “Thank You for Everything” with the words provided by Edmund Anderson. Another, “U.M.M.G” or “Upper Manhattan Medical Group” is performed with a wordless vocal by Valentine. The other songs, “You Better Know It,” “So This is Love,” “Oo! You Make Me Tingle,” “You’re the One,” “Wounded Love,” “Maybe” and “Pretty Girl” are more obscure. Valentine performs each of them with warmth and sensitivity. She reads lyrics with understanding and emotion, occasionally adding scat. The musicians handle the charts by di Martino and Hendelman with aplomb, soloing wonderfully. While Strayhorn has become far more recognized for his genius after his too early demise, with only occasional exceptions most of the attention that he has received centers on his most well known pieces. Thanks to Valentine, some of his less frequently performed works are seeing the light of day on this highly listenable visit to his musical world. Billy Strayhorn’s Centennial has drawn to a close, but he’ll continue to be honored as May 31 will be the 50th anniversary of his death. Lovesome is currently available as a download only. (www.cdbaby.com)

Several years ago, vocalist SHARON PAIGE and pianist KEITH INGHAM released an album devoted to the songs of lyricist Ned Washington, Love is the Thing. Now the same duo has turned their attention to another noted American lyricist, Johnny Burke, on Burke Beautiful! (Harbinger Records – 3215). Burke is most remembered for his partnership with composer Jimmy Van Heusen with whom he wrote many of the songs popularized in the films of Bing Crosby. Twelve of the sixteen tunes on this album are the work of this pair, including “Aren’t You Glad You’re You,” “But Beautiful,” “It Could Happen to You,” “Swinging on a Star,” “Suddenly It’s Spring” and “Like Someone in Love.” Two others by this pair that deserve wider recognition are “Sleighride in July” and “Humpty Dumpty Heart,” both of which are on the album. Burke also set lyrics to an instrumental number written by Bob Haggart to feature trumpeter Billy Butterfield on the Bob Crosby Orchestra, “I’m Free,” and it became a major standard retitled “What’s New” when Burke added lyrics. Paige is a straight-ahead vocalist with a pleasing voice, and a nice feel for the lyrics. Ingham, who also wrote the arrangements, is among the most accomplished accompanists on the scene, and is also a superior jazz player. Put all of this together, and the result is a fitting tribute to a gentleman who helped to create some of the most memorable standards in the

Last August vocalist CAROL WOODS performed a program of songs composed by Richard Whiting at the Metropolitan Room in New York City. The show was enthusiastically received, and subsequently was recorded at that venue on November 12, 2016. Now the music can be enjoyed by a wider audience on Ain’t We Got Fun: The Richard Whiting Songbook (My Ideal Music – 010). Woods had the fine supporting team of musical director/arranger/pianist Tex Arnold, the longtime accompanist for Whiting’s daughter, the legendary Margaret Whiting, bassist Saadi Zahn and drummer Steve Singer. During her one hour show, Woods sang 15 Whiting tunes, many of them familiar standards like “One Hour With You,” “Breezin’ Along With the Breeze,” “My Ideal,” “Too Marvelous for Words,” “Beyond the Blue Horizon,” “She’s Funny That Way,” “When Did You Leave Heaven” and “Ain’t We Got Fun.” Others such as “Got No Time,” “Sittin’ on the Curbstone,” “A Day Away From Town” and “Gasoline Gypsies” have remained under the radar. Woods is a consummate performer, with an earthy voice that is robustly expressive. The recording captures the excitement that the show generated, and is the next best thing to having been in the audience. (www.amazon.com)

With 2017 being the centennial year of the birth of Ella Fitzgerald, there are likely to be many albums paying tribute to the First Lady of Song. Vocalist PATRICE WILLIAMSON and guitarist JON WHEATLEY have chosen to address a specific musical relationship in Fitzgerald’s career on Comes Love: A Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass (Riverlily Records – 003). Fitzgerald and Pass recorded seven albums together. Williamson and Wheatley have chosen a dozen of the tunes from these recordings for their program. It is a an impressive list that includes “Bluesette,” “Tis Autumn,” “Take Love Easy,” “I Want to Talk About You,” “Lush Life” and “By Myself.” They do not attempt to channel Fitzgerald and Pass. Who could? They are fine artists on their own, both also being on staff at the Berklee College of Music, and have created an impressive recording. Williamson and Wheatley are both lean toward understatement, allowing the songs to be the center of attention. Williamson respects lyrics, and gives each of them a sensitive reading. She is perfectly supported by Wheatley’s gentle guitar accompaniment. After listening to Comes Love a few times, it became obvious that another volume by this duo would be welcome indeed. (patricewilliamson.com)
The long-running downtown Manhattan Highlights in Jazz concert series is in the midst of its 45th season, and its producer/director is receiving some well-deserved recognition for his dedicated efforts, including an honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of North Florida and an award from the Jazz Journalists Association.

The degree comes after Kleinsinger’s donation of the recorded archive of every concert in the Highlights series. (By contract the recordings are allowed to be used for educational purposes.) The donation also includes more than 2,000 pages of HIJ concert reviews and photos and 300 video interviews. The recommendation for the bestowal of an honorary degree was made by drummer Danny Gottlieb, a longtime professor of Jazz Studies at UNF.

Gottlieb told the Broadway World website: “I had attended a few of the early Highlights concerts with my parents, and when I was 23, I was lucky enough to have been asked by Jack to participate in one of the concerts in 1976 — Tubby the Tuba Meets A Jazz Band, a children’s jazz concert which was based on a composition by Jack Kleinsinger’s uncle George Kleinsinger, and featured Clark Terry. Jack Kleinsinger and his Highlights in Jazz concert series has had a profound impact not only on my life, but on so many other lives as well. There has never been a concert series like it.”

Now presented at the BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center, the Highlights in Jazz series was formerly performed at Theatre De LYS, Astor Place Theatre, Hunter College, NYU and Pace University. Jack is also an attorney, teacher and lecturer, and a former candidate for public office. He retired as an New York Assistant Attorney Genera in 1991.

Also, on April 3, Kleinsinger was announced as one of the 20 Jazz Journalists Association “Jazz Heroes” for 2017. His award profile, written by publicist Jim Eigo, notes: “Now 80, Jack continues producing and presenting. He’s very old school — you have to call him to tell him you’ve emailed him. He’s also a bit of a hambone. Get him in the right mood and he’ll tell a million jazz stories.”

Barbara Carroll was booked as the headliner of the HIJ Women in Jazz Concert on April 6, but died on February 12 and was replaced by banjo player Cynthia Sayer, who was joined on the bill by singer René Marie and International Women In Jazz Youth in Action Award Winner, pianist/organist Leonieke Scheuble and her group.

A fourth and final show of this year’s series on May 4 will celebrate the centennial year of the great pianist Joe Bushkin. The all-star band, featuring Warren Vaché, Wyckife Gordon, Steve Johns, Harry Allen, Nicki Parrott, pianist/vocalist Eric Comstock and pianists John Colianni, Ted Rosenthal and Spike Wilner, will perform Bushkin’s music under the direction of trumpet/vocalist Bob Merrill, the late pianist’s son-in-law. More details at highlightsinjazz.org.

Arnold Jay Smith, left, presenting Jack Kleinsinger with a 2017 “Jazz Heroes” award on behalf of the Jazz Journalists Association on April 6. Photo by Tony Graves.
Morris Jazz

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

May is the fifth month of the year. There are 31 days and three notable holidays that are observed during the month: Cinco de Mayo, Mother’s Day and Memorial Day. On the Bickford stage, we are adding two musical holidays for lovers of piano with an international flair.

Stephanie Trick has her Bickford Jazz Showcase debut on Monday, May 1 at 7:30pm. “Stephanie has come to practically dominate the stride piano field,” notes reviewer Jack Rummel. Harlem stride piano, which developed in the 1920s and ’30s, is an orchestral style of two-handed piano playing that not only swings, but is also technically demanding and exciting to watch.

With a swinging approach inspired by second-generation stride pianists such as Dick Hyman, Ralph Sutton and Dick Wellstood (as well as the original Harlem ticklers, James P. Johnson, Willie “The Lion” Smith and Fats Waller), and one that includes boogie-woogie and blues from the late ’20s, Stephanie was the 2012 recipient of the prestigious Kobe-Breda Jazz Friendship Award, and has performed in many parts of the United States and Europe in a variety of venues, including the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan, the Kig Dixeland Festival in Germany, the Arbors Records Invitational Jazz Party, the Rochester International Jazz Festival, the Gilmore Keyboard Festival and the Sacramento Music Festival. In 2008, 2010, and 2014, she was invited to perform at the international Stride & Swing Piano Summit in Boswil, Switzerland.

Alongside her for this concert is her husband, acclaimed pianist Paolo Alderighi, as they make fresh arrangements of songs from the Swing Era in a four-hands piano duo. Born in Milan, Paolo has performed in Italy, Japan, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, France, Ireland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, United Kindom, Malta, and Morocco. This concert is not to be missed.

When you say jazz pianist, some only think of the one “Bishop of Jazz,” Rio Clemente. No stranger to the Bickford Jazz Showcase nor to the tri-state area jazz scenes, this consummate jazz musician has performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the White House and NJPAC. He holds his audiences spellbound with the sheer brilliance of his improvisations, and his unique fusions of classical passagework with jazz. On Monday, May 15 at 7:30 pm, Rio will be joined by Gypsy jazz violinist Vitali for a unique and energetic event. Vitali graduated from the National Musical Academy of Georgia in Tbilisi as a soloist. Inspired by the great Stephane Grappelli who became his friend and mentor, Vitali started playing Gypsy Jazz. He has performed in the USA with many musicians, including Joe Morello, Elliot Zigmund, Mark Schmitt, Enrico Granafell, among others. He has also toured Israel, Russia, USA and Europe, performing with Bill Evans, Bucky Pizzarelli, Frank Vignola, Ken Peplowski, and Leonid Ptashka.

Upcoming Music:
June 5: Neville Dickie and the Midinn Brothers Third Time Around
Jazz SummerFEST (Preview)
Dan Levinson’s Midsummer Night’s Jazz, Bria Skonberg AND MORE!

New curtain time is 7:30 pm; $20 at the door, $17 with reservation

Jazz For Shore

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

Spring is thankfully here but we didn’t get through the winter without one concert casualty at MidWeek Jazz. Dennis Lichtman and His Queensboro Five were booked to perform on March 15, a date that seemed to be a safe one when we picked it. Alas, snow started falling on March 14 and it just didn’t stop in the New York area for the next day or so. Since Lichtman’s band was coming from Queens, we figured it was best to postpone the concert. At the time of this writing, we are still looking to reschedule Lichtman’s group for the fall of 2017 or early 2018 so please keep watching this space for an announcement on that in a future issue.

May is also a quiet month as there are no MidWeek Jazz concerts scheduled at Ocean County College but we can preview the next two shows coming up for those who would like to get their tickets early. And that’s probably a good idea as these are two of the most popular attractions to perform in Toms River in recent years.

First, on June 21, it’s the long-awaited return of The Jazz Lobsters Big Band, led by pianist James Rafferty. This group has been a mainstay on the New Jersey scene for a number of years, featuring an assemblage of top talent from the tri-state area. Since it appears most of their gigs are of a private nature these days, this is a great opportunity to the experience the power of a full big band — five saxes, four trumpets, four trombones and four rhythm — in a public setting. We will have more tails about this special evening of entertainment in the next issue of Jersey Jazz.

Continuing the theme of exciting swing bands, July 26 will see the return of Swingadelic, a “little” big band that made their OCC debut in 2016 and created quite a buzz with their tribute to Louis Armstrong, Louis Prima and Louis Jordan. The band hadn’t even left the building yet when I approached leader Dave Post about a return in 2017 and now it has been finalized. The theme this time will be a tribute to another jazz legend, vocalist Ella Fitzgerald. This is the year of Fitzgerald’s centennial which makes perfect timing for Swingadelic’s tribute, featuring the fabulous vocals of Vanessa Perea. Again, more details to come but don’t let
that stop you from visiting grunincenter.org to purchase tickets in advance.

And though this is a quiet month, we're just gearing up for a very busy rest of 2017 with returning favorites Geoff Gallante, Dan Levinson Will and Peter Anderson and many more great artists appearing on the Grunin Center stage. All will be revealed in future issues of Jersey Jazz so keep reading and thanks for supporting live jazz in Toms River. — Ricky Riccardi

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

Jazz At The Sanctuary
1867 Sanctuary at Ewing | 101 Scotch Road, Ewing NJ
Tickets/Information: 609-392-6409

The NJJS co-sponsors jazz events at 1867 Sanctuary. Members receive a $5 discount on admission. This Romanesque Revival church hall has exceptional acoustics, padded seating and is wheelchair-accessible. Concerts have varied start times and are either one 90-minute set, or two sets with intermission. Free light refreshments (including cookies!) are served.

Shows This Month:
Sat., May 6, 8 pm: **Michelle Wiley and Friends:**
A Tribute to Nina Simone
Michelle Wiley (piano/vocals), Alex Hiele (bass),
Jim Stagnitto (trumpet), David Stier (drums)

Fri., May 12, 8 pm: **Swingadelic: Songs Of Johnny Mercer**
Vanessa Perea (vocals), John Bauers (piano/vocals),
Dave Post (bass), David Longworth (drums)

Sat., May 20, 8 pm: **Eric Mintel Quartet: EMQ Plays TV Themes**
Eric Mintel (Piano), Nelson Hill (Sax/Flute), Dave Mohn (Drums) and Jack Hegyi (Bass)

Shows in June:
Sat., June 3, 8 pm: **Jack Furlong Quartet: Modern Jazz**
Jack Furlong (sax), Sean Gough (piano),
Jon McElroy (bass), John O’Keefe (drums)

Sun., June 11, 3 pm: **Joe Holt and Danny Tobias:**
Improvisations for Piano and Trumpet

Sat., June 24, 8 pm: **Luiz Simas: Brazilian Piano Jazz**

— Bob Kull

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

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

About NJJS

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

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

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

The New Jersey Jazz Society is a qualified organization of the New Jersey Cultural Trust. Visit www.njjs.org, e-mail info@njjs.org for more information on any of our programs and services:

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

NJJS supports JazzFeast presented by Palmer Square, Downtown Princeton. NJJS is a proud supporter of the Morristown Jazz & Blues Festival, the NJCU President’s Jazz Festival in Jersey City, and more.

**Member Benefits**

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

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

**Join NJJS**

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- **Family $45:** See above for details.
- **Family 3-YEAR $115** See above for details.
- **Youth $15:** For people under 25 years of age. Be sure to give the year of your birth on the application where noted.
- **Give-a-Gift $25:** Members in good standing may purchase one or more gift memberships at any time for only $25 each. Please supply the name and address of giftee. Good for new memberships only.
- **Fan ($75 – $99/family)**
- **Jazzzer ($100 – $249/family)**
- **Sideman ($250 – $499/family)**
- **Bandleader $500+/family**
- **Corporate Membership ($1000)**

**To receive a membership application, for more information or to join:**

Call 973-610-1308 or email membership@njjs.org
OR visit www.njjs.org

OR simply send a check payable to “NJJS” to: New Jersey Jazz Society, c/o Mike Katz, 382 Springfield Ave. Suite 217, Summit NJ 07901.
From the Crow’s Nest
By Bill Crow

My old friend songwriter Margo Guryan attended a party at Neil Diamond’s house. Three large tables were set up for the guests. At Margo’s table, Bob Dylan was seated to her right, and her husband David to her left. When David got up to go and say hello to someone, Neil Diamond came over to greet the guests at her table. David returned, saw Neil sitting in his seat, and sat down at another table. When Neil went off to another table, Margo was left sitting next to Dylan and an empty chair.

Dylan didn’t speak, to Margo or to anyone else. The rest of that table, mostly lawyers, chatted with each other. Margo said to Dylan, “That’s the film table,” and pointed to where Suzanne Pleshette and some other actors were seated. Dylan turned his chair and looked at the film table, but he didn’t speak.

At another table, where Rob Reiner and Albert Brooks were seated with some friends, laughter erupted every few minutes, and Margo wished she was with them. She said to Dylan, “And that’s the comedy table.” Dylan turned his chair toward them, his back now to Margo, but he said nothing.

Margo sat silently for another few minutes and then said, “And I don’t know what the F*** this table is!” Dylan burst out laughing. Margo told me, “I couldn’t make him speak, but I made Bob Dylan laugh!”

The late Eddie Bert once told Dan Miller that when a Debut Records box set came out on CD, he wanted to get the single session he had done with Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Mal Waldon. The people at the record company told him they couldn’t break up the set and just sell him the single disc. But they agreed to sell Eddie all 12 CDs at $5.00 apiece without the book, CD cases or the box that the set came in. After receiving the discs, Eddie consulted his card file of every gig he had ever done and discovered that he been paid $62 for the record date. The CDs plus shipping cost $65. Eddie said, “I can’t believe I lost $3 on this deal!”

Jazz musicians who play in restaurants usually confine themselves to songs from the standard American Songbook. But Mark Deveine posted on Facebook that, on his last New Years Eve gig at a fancy Manhattan restaurant, the waiter handed him a tip and said that a customer wanted anything by Tadd Dameron. So they played “Our Delight” and “If You Could See Me Now.” Then the patron requested “Four,” and began showing the table next to him the similarities.

Felix Lamerle posted a reply: “At my solo gig on New Years Eve, I was playing “Matador” by Grant Green, and the security guard started humming the melody along with me!”

Only in New York!

After moving to New York, Jack Stuckey spent his first year playing with a band called the Ninth Street Stompers. They played mostly on the street in a loosely-knit Dixieland style. A large part of the band’s entertainment value came from Tom Kirkpatrick’s trumpet playing and vocals.

On occasion, the band would be invited to play a private party, where they would be paid considerably more than the change they collected on the street. One of these parties was at a private home in Connecticut. The band was set up in the basement near a large indoor swimming pool.

One of their big numbers was the “St. James Infirmary Blues,” with a colorful vocal by Tom. During the last instrumental chorus Tom eyed the diving board and a large rope that hung from the ceiling above the middle of the pool.

Still playing, Tom casually walked to the end of the diving board. The song ended with an elaborate trumpet cadenza. Then there was a pause while Tom jumped to the rope in the middle of the pool, and then a final triumphant note from Tom’s trumpet as he held the rope with one hand. Splash!

Tom spent the rest of the party in a robe as his tuxedo was dried by the amused host.

Kirby Tassos attended a master class given by the renowned flutist Julius Baker. The piano had not been tuned, and Baker winced at the sound. “Boy,” he said, “I didn’t think an out of tune piano would bother me this much, after all the time I spent playing with the New York Philharmonic!”

At a flute camp, the eighty year old Baker was getting ready to play a Bach Sonata when the pianist asked him if he would like a tuning note. He responded, “Hey, if I don’t know where the A is by now…”

Peter Zimmerman sent me this one:

Some time ago, the tenor saxophonist Frank Foster was playing a street concert sponsored by Jazzmobile in Harlem. He called for a blues in B-flat. A young tenor player began to play “out” from the first chorus, making sounds that had no relationship to the harmonic progression or rhythmic setting. Foster stopped him.

“What are you doing?”

“Just playing what I feel.”

“Well, feel something in B-flat, mother!”
Great Gift Idea!

Jazz Up Your Wardrobe

Show your Jazz Love with NJJS and Pee Wee Stomp shirts!

At $15, they make great gifts for yourself and your friends. You can buy them in person at some of our events, and we can bring them to Jazz Socials on request. But if you don’t want to wait, order via mail and get your shirt within days! Shirts are 100% cotton, crew-neck, short-sleeved shirts; they may run slightly snug. Cost is $15 per shirt + $4 shipping fee.

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

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

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

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The Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University—Newark is the largest and most comprehensive library and archive of jazz and jazz-related materials in the world! — a valuable resource for jazz researchers, students, musicians and fans. The archives are open to the public from 9 am – 5 pm Monday through Friday, but please call and make an appointment.

Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers, The State University of NJ
John Cotton Dana Library, 185 University Avenue, Newark, NJ 07102
Web site: newarkwww.rutgers.edu/IJS 973-353-5595

**JAZZ RESEARCH ROUNDTABLES**

- Since 1995, IJS has hosted its monthly Jazz Research Roundtable meetings, which have become a prestigious forum for scholars, musicians, and students engaged in all facets of jazz research. Noted authors, such as Gary Giddins, Stanley Crouch, and Richard Sudhalter have previewed their works, as have several filmmakers. Musicians who have shared their life stories include trumpeter Joe Wilder, pianist Richard Wyands, guitarists Remo Palmier and Lawrence Lucie, trombonist Grachan Moncur III, and drummer/jazz historian Kenny Washington.

**CONCERTS/PERFORMANCE**

- The US presents occasional free Wednesday afternoon concerts in the Dana Room of the John Cotton Dana Library, Rutgers-Newark. Theses include the Newark Legacy series and the Jazz With An International Flavor series that recently featured the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Quartet with Mark Taylor (drums) and Yasushi Nakamura (bass).

IJS presented the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Quartet in a rare performance on the Rutgers Newark campus on March 23. The husband-and-wife team — she an NEA Jazz Master, he an award-winning saxophonist and flutist — also answered questions from the audience about their many years of jazz performance. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.
What’s New?
Members new and renewed

We welcome these friends of jazz who recently joined NJJS or renewed their memberships. We’ll eventually see everyone’s name here as they renew at their particular renewal months. Members with an asterisk have taken advantage of our three-years-for-$115 membership, and new members with a † received a gift membership. Members who joined at a patron level appear in bold.

Renewed Members
Mr. Steve Albin, Little Falls, NJ
Thomas Bender, Middletown, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Blackwood, Mountainside, NJ
Mr. Larry Carter, Branchburg, NJ *
Ms. Kate Casano, Philadelphia, PA
Mr. Raphael Cerino, West Caldwell, NJ
Patricia Curtis, Sparta, NJ *
Miss Donna Cusano, New York, NY
Ms. Beverly DeGraaf, Morristown, NJ
Sandra Evans, Wilmington, NC
Barbara Feldstein, West Orange, NJ
Mr. Robert Gerber, Mendham, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. James R. Gilmartin, Chatham, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Efren W. Gonzalez, Chatham, NJ *
Mrs. Sandy Grossman, Springfield, NJ
Mr. Brian Hochstadt, Morristown, NJ
Patrice Jegou, Florham Park, NJ
Sanford Josephson, Manchester, NJ
Mr. Paul Kopf, Morristown, NJ *
Mitzi Kreinberg & Seymour Klein, Livingston, NJ
Linda Kurdilla, Union, NJ
Susie Mackay, Gladstone, NJ
Joseph & Louise Manzaro, Scotch Plains, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. McEvoy, Ridgewood, NY
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert & Ruth Meisel, Springfield, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. William J. Meyer, Randolph, NJ
Don Miller, Succasunna, NJ *
Mr. Charles J. Mowry, Piscataway, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Paredi, Savannah, GA
John Patterson, Garwood, NJ
Ronald Pelletier, Guttenberg, NJ
Flip Peters, South Orange, NJ
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce J. Revesz, Cedar Grove, NJ *
Rutgers University Libraries/SPCOL, Piscataway, NJ
Ms. Ruthann Saenger, Mendham, NJ
Ms. Sandy Sasso, Oakhurst, NJ
Pat Sciarr, North Brunswick, NJ
Ronald Seigle, Morristown, NJ
Andy & Susan Senior, Utica, NY
Judy and Fred Simon, West Orange, NJ
Mr. Anders R. Stern, Brooklyn, NY
Mr. Louis Toscano, Hacketstown, NJ *
Ms. Irene Young, Austin, TX

New Members
Tony Cirillo, West Caldwell, NJ
John E Clark, Jr, Hawthorne, NJ
Martin & Teresa Corbo, Little Silver, NJ
Susan D’Alessandro, East Hanover, NJ
Matthew DeLeon, West Hartford, CT
Carol Deminski, Jersey City, NJ
Chris DeVito, Warren, NJ
Casey Dunn, South Orange, NJ
Irene Gashler, Towaco, NJ
Anthony Gilmore, Whippany, NJ
Rosalind Grant, Irvington, NJ
Sheryl E Grisewood, Califon, NJ
Tony Kubala, Lakewood, NJ
Stuart Mendelson, West Caldwell, NJ
Michael Mettelsdorf, Jersey City, NJ
Kate Nitto, Morristown, NJ
Jonathan Perelman, Chatham, NJ
Cliff Roberts, Bridgewater, NJ
Jean Sinclair, Washington, NJ
Nicholas R. Smolney, Old Bridge, NJ
Pepper Treuvey, Pompton Lakes, NJ


Fran Kaufman photographs the world of jazz—on stage and behind the scenes.

See what’s happening—with a new photo every day—on the WBGO Photoblog.

Check out where Fran’s hanging, and see what she sees, at www wbgo org photoblog
Since music offerings frequently change, we recommend you call venue to confirm there is live music at the time you plan to visit.
Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!

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

**TUMULTY’S**
361 George St.
732-545-6205

New Brunswick Jazz Project presents live jazz & jam session, Tuesdays, 9:30 pm

**Newfield**
LAKE HOUSE RESTAURANT
611 Taylor Pl.
856-694-5700

Occasional jazz concerts – contact venue for schedule

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

Fridays

**North Bergen**
WATERSIDE RESTAURANT
7800 9 River Rd.
201-861-7767

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

**Oak Ridge**
THE GRILLE ROOM
(Bowling Green Golf Course)
53 Schoolhouse Rd.
973-679-6868

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

**PRIVATE PLACE LOUNGE**
29 South Center St.
973-675-6620

**Paterson**
CORTINA RISTORANTE
118 Belkire Ave.
973-942-1750

Wednesdays, 6:30-10:30 pm, Joe Licari/Mark Shane

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

Fridays

**Princeton**
MC CARTER THEATRE
91 University Pl.
609-258-2767

MEDITERRA
29 Hulfish St.
609-252-9680

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

WITHERSPOON GRILL
57 Witherspoon St.
609-924-6011

Tuesdays

**South Amboy**
BLUE MOON
114 South Broadway
732-525-0814
Blues jam Thursdays

**South Orange**
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
One SOPAC Way
973-235-1114

**South River**
LAVATOLA CUCINA RISTORANTE
700 Old Bridge Turnpike
South River, NJ 08882
732-238-2111

The New World Order open jam session every Thursday, 7:30-11 pm

No cover, half-price drink specials

**Spring Lake Heights**
THE MILL
101 Old Mill Rd.
732-449-1800

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

Blues

**Sucssasunna**
THE INVESTORS BANK THEATER AT THE ROX PAC
Horseshoe Lake Park
72 Eyland Ave.
862-219-1379

**Teaneck**
THE JAZZBERRY PATCH AT THE CLASSIC QUICHE CAFE
330 Queen Anne Rd.
Teaneck, NJ 07666
201-692-9150
Friday nights 7-10 pm, $12

PUFFIN CULTURAL FORUM
20 East Olden Ave.
201-836-9823

**Toms River**
OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE FINE ARTS CENTER
College Dr.
732-255-0400
Some Wednesdays

**Trenton**
AMICI MILANO
600 Chestnut Ave.
609-396-6300

**Union**
SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFE
(Townley Presbyterian Church)
829 Salem Road
908-686-1028

**Van Gogh’s EAR CAFE**
1017 Stuyvesant Ave.
908-810-1844

Sundays & M, $3 cover

**Wantage**
WANTCHING ARTS CENTER
18 Stirling Rd.
908-753-0190

**Wayne**
LAKE EDGE GRILL
5 Lake Drive West
Wayne, NJ 07470
973-832-7800
Friday & Saturday

**Westwood**
BIZB Lounge
284 Center Ave.
201-722-8608

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

**Wood Ridge**
MARTIN’S GRILL
187 Hackensack St.
201-939-2000

Live jazz every Tuesday through Saturday

**For a link to each venue’s website, visit www.njjs.org, click on “venues,” and scroll down to the desired venue.**

**The Name Dropper**
Recommendations may be e-mailed to editor@njjs.org.

**PHYLLIS BLANFORD** – At the DLV Lounge, 300 Bloomfield Ave., Montclair. One of those come what may places — you know, jazz and cocktails. May 6, 9 PM - midnight, no cover/no minimum.

**ROSALIND GRANT** – At the Priory Jazz Club, Newark, May 6, 9-11 PM. With Carmen Lundy, bass; Winard Harper, drums; Ben Rosenblum, piano.

Friendly hang with no cover and listener friendly food and drink prices.

**BILLY CHILDS** – A four-time Grammy winner (with 13 nominations), Childs has emerged as “perhaps the most distinctly American composer since Aaron Copland.” He performs the world premier of “Rejoice” at 8 pm on Saturday, May 13 at Alexander Hall, Princeton University with the Princeton University Big Band. $15/$5 students, tickets at tickets.princeton.edu.

**SANDY SASSO** – With her trio at 55 Bar, Christopher St. in Greenwich Village on May 13. The early show, so you’ve got time after for pizza at John’s (Bleecker St.) or a burger at the White Horse Tavern (Hudson St.).

Also visit Andy McDonough’s njjazzlist.com
Send all address changes to the address above

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