

## FROM THE CHAIR

2012 represents the 20th year of operation for the Palo Alto Jazz Alliance. We currently have approximately 200 loyal members, a committed Board of Directors and offer two or three concerts or jazz parties per year to you and the public at large. You have supported us with your membership dues and monetary contributions. All this allows us to continue our mission to keep jazz alive and provide significant grants for jazz education.

It is always important to us that we increase our membership. To that end, we have created a new brochure describing our program and history. A copy is enclosed with this issue of the Buff. We need your help to hand this out to hidden lovers of Jazz that you may know or may encounter. More copies are available any time that you want them. (Contact me at 650-326-7836.) I believe that there are many jazz lovers out there who due to the pressures of day to day living have drifted away from the music. We hope they will find our organization a vehicle for re-connecting. We need your help in finding them and encouraging them to join PAJA.

I also believe that many, especially young folks, who know little to nothing about jazz, can be motivated, to get in the groove as we use to say, by joining PAJA and start going to our various events. Our live one time only gigs, are the way to best get initiated.

For example, we have a great, great show coming on May 18 with an outstanding lineup, all at a very exciting new venue. See the details below. Bring a friend who has never been to a jazz concert. In any event, I hope to see you all there.

Thanks for your help and your continued support.

*C. Stuart Brewster, Chair*

## **RICHIE COLE'S ALTO MADNESS PLUS— TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE**

Make plans now to attend PAJA's big spring concert at the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center theater on



Richie Cole

May 18. Tickets are still available at various outlets (see below) or you can purchase them at the door: \$35 general admission, \$30 PAJA members, \$15 students.

Herb Wong has put together a once-in-a-lifetime all-star group, led by virtuoso altoist Richie Cole—an octet that will knock your socks off. Bop and swing standards played by artists who really know their way around the music.

**Richie Cole** has been entertaining jazz audiences since 1969 when he joined the Buddy Rich Big Band. He has been touring with his own quintet worldwide since the 70's, but may be best known for his Alto Madness groups which he formed in the early 90's. The idea is to recreate the concept and sound of an eighteen-piece big band, using only seven or eight musicians. Cole has performed and recorded with the best: Freddie Hubbard, Sonny Stitt, Art Pepper, Nancy Wilson, the Manhattan Transfer, Mark

Murphy. He has also served as chairman of the board of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Don't miss this jazz icon.

**Carl Saunders** is one of the premier trumpeters in jazz. He has played lead trumpet for countless big bands led by such as Maynard Ferguson, Bill Holman, Bob Florence, Johnny Mandel and Gerald Wilson. And he also leads his own groups, including the Carl Saunders Be Bop Big Band, his sextet and a quartet.

**Andrew Speight** and **Noel Jewkes** are Bay Area treasures—two of the finest reedmen in the country. Seasoned, inventive soloists and ensemble musicians, they'll make this a sax section you won't soon forget.

**Rick Vandivier** is another local treasure. A guitarist who has performed with the likes of "Tootie" Heath, Mose Allison, Bruce Forman, Dr. Lonnie Smith, et al., he has worked in the Bay Area for the last 25 years, including a collaboration with Nate Pruitt in "Primary Colors."

**Larry Vuckovich.** What more do we need to say about this widely acclaimed piano standout who has performed at many PAJA concerts? He is a performer at home with hard-swinging bebop, post-bop, contemporary jazz and down-home blues. Thomas Conrad of *Jazz Times* called him "a pianist whose evocative touch and poetic (but un-sentimental) sensibility convey the wisdom of deep musical life experience."

**Jeff Chambers** is one of the foremost bassists in jazz, known for his impeccable timing, dynamic rhythms and improvisational dexterity. He has played with everyone, from McCoy Tyner, Dizzy Gillespie, and Benny Carter to Cedar Walton, Ahmad Jamal and James Moody. (You might also have seen him in the Whoopi Goldberg film "Sister Act" or with Keanu Reeves in "Sweet November.")

**Akira Tana.** Another familiar face to local jazz fans, Tana is one of the most sought-after drummers on the international jazz scene. He has performed on more than 100 recordings, including with such as Kenny Burrell, Sonny Rollins, and Dizzy Gillespie. "Even at its most urgent, its most insistent, there is a certain delicacy to his playing." John Kelman, *allaboutjazz.com*

So, that's the Richie Cole's Alto Madness Plus octet. Things kick off at 7:30pm at the Oshman JCC theater, corner of San Antonio Road and Charleston in Palo Alto. There's plenty of free garage parking, with the entrance on Fabian Way.

Tickets are available from these outlets: Peninsula Music & Repair, 4333 El Camino Real, Palo Alto; The Record Man, 1322 El Camino Real, Redwood City; Vinyl Solution, 151 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. in San Mateo; and Groove Yard, 5555

Claremont Ave. in Oakland. And also at the door from 7pm on at the Oshman theater.

## ON DRUMMER PAUL MOTIAN

Paul Motian played with Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Lee Konitz, Stan Getz, Paul Bley, and many more. He died last November and this quote from bassist Charlie Haden is from the February 2012 issue of *DownBeat*, in a short tribute written by Ken Micallef.

"He was a special human being in every way. . . People are lined up together like stars sometimes—people who have a close feeling with each other, the way they see life and the way they imagine their place in the universe. I always felt a special feeling with Paul, and I knew that we were supposed to meet and play music together. When you meet someone like Paul it's not really about music any more. It's about the universe, about the planets, about where we are and about discovering why we're here. The feeling I got from Paul was music playing nature and nature playing music."

## TYLER LEAVES THE DADDIOS

Steve Tyler, who has directed the DeAnza Daddios for 12 years, is moving to Southern California at the end of May. He will be missed. The Daddios have given great pleasure to big band fans for many years, especially at DeAnza's new theater. Steve's final performance as Daddios director will be at the Daddios CD Release Party at Dosa Biryani/Senzala Restaurant, 250 E. Java Drive, Sunnyvale, on Tuesday, May 15, 7-10pm. Cover charge is just \$5 and both the 6 and 8 O'Clock Daddios will perform.

## STANFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL KICKS OFF JUNE 22

Thirty-eight shows are scheduled this year, starting on June 22 with the Danilo Perez Trio. There is a warm-up event off-campus on June 17 (Sunday evening) with a Kitty Margolis concert at the Oshman Jewish Community Center.

Some of the headliners Jim Nadel has scheduled this year are Bobby Hutcherson, Poncho Sanchez, Kenny Washington (singing Sinatra!), Roy Haynes, Wycliffe Gordon, Kenny Barron, Terell Stafford, Houston Person, Julian Lage, Taylor Eigsti, and Charles McPherson. Another great lineup for our area's premier jazz festival.

The calendar can be found at [www.stanfordjazz.org](http://www.stanfordjazz.org) and you can also purchase tickets online or by phone (650/725-ARTS) or in person at the Stanford Ticket Office at Tressider Union (upstairs).

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# The Jazz Buff finally gets to Cuba, thanks to Stanford Jazz Workshop.

by Michael Griffin

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Totally bummed at not being able to fly to Cuba in December 2000 on a Palo Alto Jazz Alliance-sponsored trip, I vowed not to let an opportunity slip away again. To the rescue came Stanford Jazz Workshop, 12 years later. Competently led by Catherine Murphy, the same Cuba expert from the PAJA trip, the Stanford gang of 20 “researchers” spent eight days focused on the music and arts scene in today’s Havana. The weather was warm but not too, we all got along famously and the trip was a big success, allowing us to dig into the culture that has long influenced American jazz.

The big surprise for me was realizing what a rich country Cuba had been prior to the 1959 revolution. Beautifully ornamented buildings, hotels, public edifices in grand style, parks, plazas, gracious homes and modern infrastructure, all of which are still visible 60 years after the entire place went into a time capsule. However, were it not for that pre-existing legacy to fall back on, there would be precious little to show [in a physical sense] for six decades of Fidel Castro’s régime. Indeed, Havana is living off of that legacy even today. Of course, this is not to denigrate the vast improvements in the social arena, such as literacy, education for all, medical care, housing, etc. In that sense, advancement for the general population has been dramatic.

As for Havana itself, it presented a lavish mix of architecturally styled buildings, ranging from baroque, neo-modern, art nouveau, deco, and Stalinesque-modern for the Russian embassy. Many structures have been refurbished, but many were pretty much wrecks. It was sad to see so much of the magnificent construction of the 30s-40s-50s in such serious disrepair. But it’s not all bad, because in Havana Viejo [Old Havana, center of interest for tourists] the government has renovated the old town core, and continues rebuilding little by little, because the biggest part of the Cuban economy is based on tourism.

Once the Russians left in the early 90s, cutting off their huge foreign aid support, tourism became the country’s bread and butter, and now the hotels & restaurants are *packed* with overseas visitors. So, despite appearances in the rest of town, Old Havana is a charming, interesting tourist mecca. It well deserves its World Heritage Site status, showing off some of the best Spanish Colonial and neo-classic architecture in the Caribbean.

Nevertheless, it was hard for me to look at all those beautiful homes—now suffering great neglect—that were owned by the middle/entrepreneurial/professional class, and then confiscated by the state. While I didn’t have much sympathy for the sugar barons [they lived a high life and had money abroad for their escape], but I believe the next level of society down took a bad hit. As for the people who stayed, they view Castro as their Robin Hood, and it’s clear why Fidel is a hero to those who got a place to live, even if it was just a bedroom in a shared house. Our guide told us Cubans aren’t Communistas or Socialistas; but they sure *are* Fidelistas.

And if Fidel was Robin, on every wall, in every shop and bar, peers the benevolently smiling face of Cuba’s Christ, Che Guevara. Subject of tee shirts, flags and posters around the world, a recent movie, icon of the idealistic left, and for sure the peoples’ favorite martyred saint, Che and his image are seen everywhere.

Meanwhile, our intense day-time research took us to several music schools, recitals, galleries, a dance studio and even an excursion to visit Hemingway’s estate in the countryside. All of us were greatly impressed by the high quality of the Cuban artists, dancers and musicians we saw. On a visit to a high school music presentation, we heard a 13-year-old boy play a spectacular trumpet solo, rivaling nearly anything I’ve ever heard. I mean this kid is the next Arturo Sandoval, he was *that* good. When the performance was over he turned to the professor of music in our group, saying, “Remember me!” In my opinion, he won’t be forgotten at all, and I’ll be the first to sign up for bringing him to Stanford when the time is right. Remember me indeed!

In appreciation for the warm-Cuban hospitality we received at these top flight arts schools, we were able to leave gifts of common items not readily available to most Cubans, such as music supplies, aspirin[!] and other over-the-counter meds. The experience here was genuinely heartwarming and we enjoyed interacting with young people so dedicated to their musical craft.

Back on the street, I got a kick out of the ‘50s era American cars still running, mostly as private taxis. Their numbers were many times more than I had thought possible. I mean ‘51 Chevys zipping around all over. Turns out there is a real industry keeping these half-century old cars go-

ing. Due to the lack of parts, Cuban auto mechanics replace the entire running gear and drive train with a Russian frame and engine, Russian parts being a lot easier to come by. So, now they've got US car bodies mounted on top of Russian truck chassis. Really! One afternoon a few of us rode back to our hotel in a Pepto Bismol pink '57 Ford Fairlane convertible. Cool!

Our group also visited a cigar factory (actually, just me) and the "Club Havana" rum museum, which had a terrific, large scale model of a sugar mill. The mill turns out to be quite an industrial operation, with locomotives hauling cut cane from the fields to the presses, boiling vats of sugar syrup, and finally the making of molasses, the sugar by-product from which rum is distilled.



Many of the extravagantly decorated buildings in Old Havana have been refurbished by the Cuban government, intent on increasing revenue from tourism, the main driver of the Cuban economy.



Talented Cuban students compete for places at the prestigious National Art Academy. We heard this high school combo, among other top-notch groups during our research trip.

As for the famously lovely Latin ladies you may have read about, I didn't really see them in the course of the day. So, in search of a Carmen Miranda experience, I went to the renowned Tropicana night club. Still the alfresco landmark of old, but no longer with affiliation to the mob, the Tropicana puts on a very athletic, high-energy production, and we had a splendid evening watching Caribbean beauties shake their tail feathers to an Afro Cuban beat. The dance routines were non-stop, cast-of-thousands, costumed and bikinied to the max... extravaganzas that made this night one of the trip's highlights. Chucho Valdez' father Bebe Valdez was the long time pianist here, and it was good to listen to some Irakere style music that I hadn't heard at the jazz clubs we visited in town.

No doubt there is a lot more to Cuba than what I've just described, but the best thing to do about that is to go to Cuba yourself, and do it soon. Fidel is 86, and when the Castro brothers pass, there may be a big change in American policy to the island sitting only 90 short miles south of Miami. And once Americans are allowed easy access to this fascinating place, it could all turn into another Florida in a heartbeat. Then wouldn't you be cross at yourself for not going before that happened?

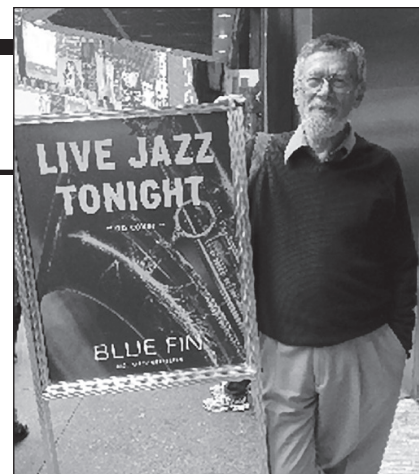


For a Carmen Miranda experience we hit the alfresco Tropicana night club. The dancers were athletic, the costumes over-the-top and the visit to this historic venue was a high point of my trip.

*Photos by Michael Griffin*

# Manhattan Interlude

by Ed Fox



April in New York, why does it seem so inviting? I consider the Bay Area a fine place for jazz, with lots of opportunities almost any night of the week, but it's nothing like New York. In Manhattan alone, *Hot House* (a monthly New York jazz zine) lists more than 150 venues offering jazz at least a couple of nights a week. Of course some of the most famous clubs in the world are here: the Village Vanguard, the Blue Note, Dizzy's Coca Cola, Birdland, etc. So it was like kids in a candy store when we spent a week in the Big Apple in mid-April. Our first night we hoped to see the Tommy Igoe big band at Birdland, but it was sold out, so we "settled" for the **Steve Wilson Super Band**, with Patrice Rushen, at the Jazz Standard on E. 27<sup>th</sup>. Good decision. I'd seen Wilson before—he is a fine altoist, and of course pianist Patrice Rushen is always worth listening to. The "Super Band" was really nothing more than a quartet, with James Genuie on bass and the impressive Billy Nilson on drums. Vocalist Carla Cook contributed several songs.

Close your eyes on Wilson's solo on "In a Sentimental Mood" and you'd think John Coltrane was still with us. Carla Cook on "So What" was exciting. She can sing! The Jazz Standard is a very comfortable club, with space between tables and really good ribs (try the Kansas City) from the Danny Meyer Blue Smoke restaurant upstairs.

The next night we'd hoped to take in Redwood City's Virginia Mayhew and her quartet at The Garage, but it was Saturday night and there was just no room at the bar. (If you want a table at The Garage, you have to have a meal, and we'd already eaten.). Virginia told us she'd be playing again on Monday night with the **Howard Williams Jazz Orchestra**, so we decided to return then.

We did—and we loved the big band led by octogenarian pianist Williams. At the moment, he has some fine New York professional musicians in the 16-piece group, including Virginia on tenor and clarinet. They wailed on charts by Thad Jones, Clare Fischer, Randy Weston ("Hi-Fly"), et al. and the female vocalist (Vicki ??) selected some interesting songs, including Bob Dorough's "I've Got Everything I Need." Virginia gave us her new album—a tribute to Mary Lou Williams, with special guest Wycliffe Gordon. The album is being released officially in June. By the way, the Howard Williams orchestra plays at The Garage every Monday night—so, if you have a Monday night free in Manhattan—park it in The Garage.

On Tuesday night it was off to one of Manhattan's oldest (and least comfortable) clubs, The Blue Note, for a very special gig: **Jim Hall**, the great influential guitarist, playing with **Julian Lage** (backed by Scott Colley on bass and Joey Baron on drums). The contrast between the 81-year-old Hall and the 24-year-old Lage couldn't be greater. Julian is tall, handsome and erect, always smiling and seemingly playing effortlessly. Hall is bent by age,

and is a study in serious concentration. Some lovely music was the result. The *New York Times* reviewer thought they didn't mix well, though he praised Julian as a "guitarist

of extravagant technique," with which we in the Bay Area who've appreciated him for more than a decade will certainly concur. The one song they did have some neat guitar interplay on was an intricate "My Funny Valentine." As an aside, we were staying with a friend in the Village, and Jim Hall lives one floor above. We did meet him and exchanged pleasantries on the elevator—a thrill for us.

On Wednesday evening it was the 5:30 show at Birdland on W. 44<sup>th</sup> Street, one of the nicest venues for jazz in the city. The group was Dick Oswald's **Louis Armstrong Centennial Band**; I wasn't expecting much, but the players were strong and the feel-good music was contagious—popular traditional numbers like "Sleepy Time Down South," "I Never Knew," "Lonesome Road," and "Back Home in Indiana." Oswald's on tuba and the rest of the group was composed of rhythm guitar, drums, trumpet, trombone and clarinet. The \$10 cover charge is a great bargain. We were intrigued by the young clarinetist, Will Anderson, who also played impressive tenor. He was joined mid-set by his look-alike brother Pete, who also excels on clarinet. They had a nice duet on "Chinatown." You'll hear from these young men. Oh, the guitarist was James Chirillo, who we'd seen before. He's a wonderful musician, and his contributions this evening were a joy.

Later that evening, we went back to the Jazz Standard for the second set of **Kate McGarry's Quartet**. I hadn't seen McGarry before, but I knew she has a growing following in the jazz world. This gig was a celebration of her new album, *Girl Talk*, and she did sing a few songs from the album, backed by her husband Keith Ganz, guitar, Gary Versace on Hammond B3 and Clarence Penn on drums. Kate started out with "We Kiss in a Shadow" from *The King and I*. She is a capable, confident singer who hits her notes. For me, the evening's highlight was when she called Kurt Elling up from the audience and their duet on "O Cantador" was a thing for the ages. Just beautiful. (It's on the new album.)

So, all in all, a profitable jazz week in the big city. And if you think jazz is dead or mortally ill, you might change your mind in New York. Most of the gigs we went to were quite well attended—and the audience (except for the Louis Armstrong band) was at least 50% composed of young folk—in their 30's or younger. Very heartening to us more elderly fans.

## IN THE OFFING

The Stanford Jazz Festival starts at the end of June and the usual summer community series at Stanford Shopping Center, Los Gatos, Redwood City, etc. should be announced soon. In the meantime, here are some upcoming gigs that should appeal:

### Yoshi's Oakland:

June 20-22 The Cookers: Billy Harper, Eddie Henderson, George Cables, et al.

### Yoshi's San Francisco:

May 27 Rebeca Mauleon 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

June 23 Pat Martino Organ Trio

June 25-26 Jimmy Cobb's So What Band, with Jeremy Pelt, Javon Jackson, Buster Williams, et al.

### Bach's Dancing & Dynamite Society, El Granada:

May 13 Amina Figarova Sextet, featuring vocalist Jackie Ryan

### Kuumbwa Jazz Center, Santa Cruz:

May 14 Jane Monheit  
May 16 Brad Mehldau Trio

### Oak City Bar & Grill, Menlo Park:

May 21 College of San Mateo Big Band (also June 18)

Wednesday Neil Adler & Friends Jam Session evenings

### Hedley Club, De Anza Hotel, San Jose:

Live jazz Thursday, 8-11pm;  
Friday and Saturday, 8:30-12:30

Also twice monthly jazz jams, hosted by John Worley and Oscar Panilinan, first & third Wednesday evenings.

### Stanford Jazz Festival:

June 17 Kitty Margolis  
7:30 at the Oshman JCC Theater

June 23 Bobby Hutcherson & Joey DeFrancesco Trio, at Dinkelspiel

### Dosa Biryani/Senzala Restaurant, Sunnyvale:

May 15 DeAnza Daddios CD Release Party, 7-10pm  
250 E. Java Drive, Sunnyvale.  
\$5 cover.  
(Steve Tyler's last gig as Daddios director)

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