

July 2015

PO BOX 60397, PALO ALTO, CA 94306

Ed Fox, Editor

FROM THE CHAIR

All the wizards at Apple, Google, CalTech, MIT, et al. have not yet come up with a scheme whereby one can physically be in two places at the same time. That's why I missed the Charles McPherson concert on June 5th.

Early last February, Ed Fox, Michael Griffin and I made plans and commitments for a trip to New York City for the stated purpose of visiting as many jazz clubs as possible in five days. Soon afterward, PAJA was advised that Charles McPherson would be available to play for us on June 5th—an opportunity PAJA could not pass up, even if it did skew our concert schedule a bit. Since it was too late to change our Big Apple trip, we missed out on what from all accounts was a great gig. Special thanks to Harvey Mittler, Patty Boyle, Larry Lovercheck and others for making it happen and helping out.

As you can tell from Michael's commentary later in this issue, we had a ball, as the saying goes. No question, New York is THE place for jazz, of all kinds. Every month a publication called Hot House lists hundreds of gigs, by region: midtown, lower Manhattan, etc. It tells you the names and locations of the clubs, the names of the performing groups, times of the shows, and so on. It is overwhelming and gratifying to see jazz so alive and well.

One observation that struck me is that the audiences were quite mixed as to age and ethnicity. We couldn't tell whether the audience—particularly at the Hiromi concert at the Blue Note—was primarily tourists like us, local fans or buddies of the performers. It was clear nonetheless that most were real aficionados. These clubs were filled even in midweek evenings, and the paying customers were *listening*—no talking or texting.

What does one do when faced with such a plethora of options? Some of acts we could have seen included the Terell Stafford Quintet at the Village Vanguard, Maria Schneider and Tommy Igoe at Birdland, and Kurt Elling at Dizzy's Coca Cola. But you can't do everything. We

decided on some who we were very familiar with, and others who were not that well known to us—a nice mixture. Next time, I would go just to the unknowns and get more exposure to new directions in jazz—it all happens in New York before any place else.

All vacations must come to an end, and you come home with a much depleted credit card—but knowing the money was well spent. You also return with a bit of depression about when will it be possible to see and hear so many grand sounds again. But fortunately, Jim Nadel

Charles McPherson



Greg Toland photo

solves that problem for us by providing us a cornucopia of great music over a couple of months at the Stanford Jazz Festival. I did go to the opening event at the Stanford Shopping Center to hear a Stanford Jazz Festival all-star group composed of saxophonists Andrew Speight and Patrick Wolff, trumpeter Erik Jekabson, pianist Matt Clark, basist John Wiitala, and drummer Hamir Atwal. Outstanding! As good as anything we heard the previous week 3000 miles east. Still, my recommenda-

tion is enjoy what we have here, but also find a way to get to Mecca as well.

Reminder: Our annual free member party is scheduled for Sunday, September 27th, at the Palo Alto Art Center on Newell. I hope to talk with many of you there and hear suggestions as to how we can improve and expand the reach of PAJA.

In continued appreciation of your support,
C. Stuart Brewster
Chair

MUSKETEERS HIT THE BIG APPLE

By Michael Griffin/Ed Fox

The Three Musketeers of Jazz, that's us: me Michael Griffin, Stuart Brewster and Ed Fox. Off to The Apple the first week of June for some hot jazz of the New York kind. And we got it, too. Greenwich Village: big band at The Garage, Hammond B3 at The Jazz Standard, throwback jazz at Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, piano and percussion at The Blue Note, and a swinging straight-ahead all-star group at Smoke way uptown (105th Street and Broadway). All good, all the time.

We kicked off the tour on Monday night at **The Garage**. Now I'm just a so-so big band guy, so for me the **Howard Williams Jazz Orchestra**—made up of various NYC professional musicians—was good, not great. But what really got my attention was that the bar was 75% full on a Monday night. I think that's the amazing part of New York City—the sheer number of residents and tourists allows really good jazz to flourish seven days a week, 52 a year. You can't say that about many places, including Tokyo (which is my next favorite jazz town).

Tuesday night was **The Jazz Standard** on E. 27th Street: **Doctor Lonnie Smith and Company**. I was apprehensive about an evening of B3 organ, with no tenor sax to play against the big blaster, but the swami, I mean Lonnie, had a killer guitarist, one Jonathan Kreisberg, who complemented the organ beautifully. These two artists set out to find new lands that included few standards—mountains of sound to explore. All of us went happily along for the ride. Solid stuff, and I can only extol the exploits of Lonnie Smith as he keeps his material fresh and challenging. On top of that, and adding to the evening's delights, was

linking up again with fellow PAJA founding board member Michael Flicker, who now lives in Brooklyn Heights. He joined the Musketeers for a great evening of jazz and BBQ (Danny Meyer's Blue Smoke BBQ restaurant is upstairs and you can order from that menu at The Standard—highly recommended).

Then it was off to Columbus Circle to get in the late show at our fave joint, **Dizzy's Club Coca Cola**. For me, the band—**Sammy Miller and the Congregation**—was a bust. Young, talented, experimental—but satisfying? Hmm. The band's demeanor was an informal and inventive retro shtick, taken to the max. Have you ever heard a jazz rendition of Stephen Foster? Us neither. And it went on from there, despite the Julliard crowd there to cheer on their champions. I'll leave it to the next generation to appreciate this bunch, talented though they certainly are.

Hiromi Uehara at the Blue Note. The 36 year old Japanese miss deservedly packed the club on Thursday with tourists, international students, and curious fans. If you've ever been to the Blue Note, you'll have compassion for us jammed and crammed into a tiny, longish rectangular room where every seat was taken. And Ahmad Jamal himself was seated front and center, with Hiromi introducing him to the crowd as her jazz mentor.

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Dr. Lonnie Smith on the B3 organ



A Japanese student jazz group playing in Washington Square



Hiromi poster in the Blue Note's window

Photos by Ed Fox



Steve Davis on trombone

LEARNING ON THE JOB

Musings by Harvey Mittler



Notes on preparing for the Concert by the Charles McPherson Quartet (and earlier for the Woody Herman Orchestra).

Nearly a month has passed since PAJA produced its most recent concert on June 5, presenting the dynamic quartet of alto saxophone icon Charles McPherson and his guests. Meeting the task of saying something earnest, worthy, and, hopefully, interesting, for the Jazz Buff, I find myself thinking also about the experiences of presenting my first concert produced for PAJA, featuring The Woody Herman Orchestra directed by Frank Tiberi. Following the WHO concert on January 25th I wrote that serving for 19 years as Herb Wong's apprentice and handling many of the details only provided limited training for the larger task.

For the gig by the WHO many chores were done by me for the first time. Fortunately, I dealt with professionals who wanted to perform a warm tribute to their friend, Herb Wong. Stew Jackson, the CEO of a large business organization and his staff in Denver handled booking, and I adapted and signed the contract as PAJA's representative. Contacts were established with the band's director, Frank Tiberi, and with the road manager, Mike Brignola, to arrange many details, including many setup details with the venue staff, ground transportation and rooms for 15 musicians flying in from around the country. Planning to feed the band before the concert was a complex matter, accommodating food and beverage preferences, as well as allergies and dislikes.

Those experiences were building blocks for the McPherson performance. Two weeks before the concert we had to find a replacement drummer, and the local musicians in our band put me in touch with Austin Harris. The biggest challenge of this event was preparing the room. First, a plan to use the risers from the Palo Alto Children's Theatre unraveled when we couldn't move them, so we had to locate a property company to rent, move and assemble them, and remove them after the concert because the room was being used the next morning. Second, we did not realize until the evening of the concert that PAJA was responsible to set up the tables and chairs. A hearty band of people on site pitched in to do this unexpected labor, and aside from the PAJA people, Lynn McPherson,

Charles' wife—a constantly helpful presence in the pre-concert planning—vigorously lent a hand. Note to self: always get a copy of the venue contract, and be sure who is going to do what!

This is an apt time to recognize that the fuel which propels the PAJA engine is a core of hard-working volunteers from its board of directors and member population. I've already acknowledged the contributions of the PAJAites before this concert. For the Herman concert it was the dedicated drivers who made the expected multiple trips from the airport to the hotel, from the hotel to the auditorium and back, and from the hotel to the airport for the flights home, and those who worked with the City of Menlo Park and the manager of the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center on securing our concert date, and accommodating the band. Just before the concert, unexpectedly, someone had to be on the premises to take delivery of Akira Tana's borrowed drum kit, delivered by one of his students. There isn't space to list the large number who helped, but special thanks, as always, to Carroll Harrington, graphic designer extraordinaire and hotel liaison, to Patty Boyle, queen of the worker bees, for her publicity and advertising efforts with print media and for pushing those tables and chairs around, and to Stuart Brewster, our PAJA Chair and the helmsman who guides the PAJA vessel.

The reward was hearing the wonderful, fiery and cool, music played by Charles McPherson on his alto sax, Larry Vuckovich on piano, Jeff Chambers on bass, and Austin Harris on drums, our featured guest Andrew Speight on alto, and our special guest Steven Luger also on alto. Those of you present to hear the joyous sounds know what I mean.

Photos by Grey Toland



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The gig was advertised as “Hiromi: The Trio Project,” but much to our dismay too many numbers were given over to percussionist Simon Phillips, a rock & roll drummer from the UK, with his enormous array of two bass drums, four snares, eight tom-toms, five cymbals and at least one cowbell. Unbelievable. How can a famous, accomplished pianist like Hiromi allow her act to be overwhelmed by this noise? We came to see Hiromi, not this guy. For the record, though, when we could hear Hiromi, we were quite impressed by her virtuosity and energy. Sure, all pianists do runs, but hers had a delicacy and fluency that resonated.

Friday night, along with our NYC host and companion Elizabeth Butson, (we were actually Three Dudes and a Dame) we Uber’d uptown to a pleasant, small club called **Smoke**. The featured attraction was the **Steve Davis Quintet**, celebrating their new CD. With Eric Alexander on tenor, Jim Rotondi on trumpet and Davis on trombone, this was an elite group and they didn’t disappoint. Excellent stuff—right down the middle and just the way we like it.

And so ended a great week in New York. And we didn’t even mention the theater on Wednesday or the terrific restaurants or the museums. Will we do it again? You betcha.

ON DUKE ELLINGTON

“Ellington sought and got from his sidemen a loose, festive ensemble sound that was far removed from the clean precision of the popular big bands of the swing era. He had no interest in smoothly blended playing that leaders like Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw demanded from their groups. He preferred instead to hire musicians with homemade techniques that were different to the point of incompatibility, then juxtapose their idiosyncratic sounds as a pointillist painter might place dots of red and green side by side on his canvas, finding inspiration in their

technical limitations. . . He was to jazz what Aaron Copland was to classical music—the great American composer—and his three-minute masterpieces will be remembered for as long as jazz itself is remembered.” Terry Teachout, in “Duke Of The Three-Minute Masterpiece,” in *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2013.

PAJA FINANCIAL STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2014-15

Fiscal year was July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

Operating Income:	
Dues	\$5,500
Other	10
Charitable income:	
Donations	24,462
Events	<u>17,583</u>
Total Income	\$47,555
Operating Expenses:	
Jazz Buff printing, postage	\$2,584
Other operating expenses	4,464
Charitable Expenses:	
Grants	8,800
Events	<u>25,485</u>
Total Expenses	\$41,333

Grants this year were made to the Stanford Jazz Workshop, KCSM Radio 91.1, San Jose Jazz Summer Camp, The California Jazz Conservatory in Berkeley, and the Foundation for the Fine and Performing Arts (San Mateo Union School District).

SAVE THE DATE—SEPTEMBER 27

Mark that date on your calendar—it’s PAJA’s next free member party, where you can hear outstanding jazz and mingle with your fellow PAJA members/jazz fans. The musical group hasn’t been decided upon yet, but we’ll be announcing it soon. The party will be held at the Palo Alto Art Center’s pleasant courtyard on Newell Road, Sunday afternoon 3-5pm—again, September 27. See you there!

Palo Alto
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THE JAZZ PERISCOPE *Selected gigs for July and August*

YOSHI'S OAKLAND *www.yoshis.com/oakland*

7/9, 22, 29; 8/5, 12, 27 Tommy Igoe Groove Conspiracy 8pm

7/8 Larry Coryell. 8pm

8/8, 9 John Pizzarelli. 8pm

SF JAZZ CENTER *www.sfjazz.org/center*

7/16 Ann Hampton Callaway (Sara Vaughn). 7:30pm

7/17 Kim Nalley (Billie Holiday tribute). 7:30pm

7/18 Paula West (Bob Dylan). 7:30pm

7/30 Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band. 7:30pm

7/31 Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra 7:30pm

8/2 Tommy Igoe Groove Conspiracy. 7:30pm

8/20-22 Ethan Iverson 8:30, 10pm

BACH'S DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY, EL GRANADA *www.bachddsoc.org*

Last concert was June 28. Stay tuned for future scheduling.

KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER, SANTA CRUZ *www.kuumbwajazz.org*

7/18 Donny McCaslin's Fast Future. 7:30pm

7/27 Jeff Hamilton Trio. 7:00pm

8/10 John Pizzarelli8 Quartet 7:00pm

8/24 Marcus Miller 7, 9pm

SAN JOSE JAZZ *www.sanjosejazz.org*

8/7-9 San Jose Jazz Summerfest 2015, with John Pizzarelli, Eddie Palmieri, Terri Lyne Carrington, Javon Jackson, Kim Nalley w/Kenny Washington, Anton Schwartz, many more

ANGELICAS 863 Main St., Redwood City *www.angelicasllc.com*

Every Tuesday evening Jazz on Tuesdays Trio + vocalists 7:15pm

7/12, 8/16 Mike Galisatus Big Band. 7:00pm

8/15 Nancy Gilliland Trio 8:00pm

CAFÉ STRITCH, 374 S. 1st St., San Jose *www.cafestritch.com*

7/11 Akira Tana Quintet

7/23 Giacomo Gates

7/25 Michael O'Neill/Kenny Washington

8/4 3rd Annual Rahsaanathon (music of Rahsaan Roland Kirk)

STANFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL

6/19/20 to August 8. For schedule see

www.stanfordjazzorg/stanford-jazz-festival-2015.

JAZZ ON THE PLAZZ, Los Gatos *www.jazzontheplazz.com* 6:30pm

7/23 Giacomo Gates

7/29 The Four Freshmen

JAZZ AT FILOLI June 21-Sept. 13 *www.filoli.org/jazz*

8/9 Arturo Sandoval

STANFORD SHOPPING CENTER June 18-August 10 6-7:30pm

7/23 Erik Jekabson Quintet

8/13 Marcus Shelby Trio



Arturo Sandoval