

## FROM THE CHAIR

My phone message light is flashing madly. It's another message from Ed Fox telling me that it's time to prepare another speak-out for the Jazz Buff.

What to say, what to say? Have to take care not to bore you with the same old same old about the importance of experiencing Jazz Live.

However, I am motivated to keep reiterating how we must find ways to make more of those non-jazz-experienced folks out there learn about this important part of our culture, no—world culture, thereby growing the audience. It's not enough just to find more existing jazz lovers who are hidden in some haystack and get them to our concerts. Nor do our commitments diminish by helping students learn how to perform jazz. Both of these efforts are important, but if we don't help generate a broader audience, then we will soon not have enough opportunities where new players can perform and for aficionados to hear Jazz Live.

All this was recently reinforced in my mind as a result of spending an afternoon sailing with a nephew who lives in Marblehead, MA. It was a lovely fall day with a tricky wind, so we stayed within the confines of the harbor. During our easygoing conversation, I mentioned our forthcoming concert with the Woody Herman alumni

band. I was taken aback when the response from this man, in his mid-forties and who is not musically illiterate, was, "Who is this Woody Herman?" I thought, "Wow, what a shame never to have heard of this icon and his amazing music." Well, it's a generational thing—I would not know much about some current major rock or rap performer. But upon reflection, not knowing of Woody Herman is much like never having heard of Mozart or Beethoven. . . or Duke Ellington. Something needs to be done.

It is easy to make this plea, but what can you and PAJA do to introduce jazz to those with little or no contact with the music? One thing you can do: Bring a non-jazz person to the Woody Herman gig and let them come to know this important part of our culture. Educators call this experiential learning.

You will soon receive a revised PAJA brochure that tells our story. Let me know if you want extra copies to help distribute in our ongoing campaign to build support for jazz in all its permutations and combinations.

Hope to see you at the January 25 gig—a special time for us to once again celebrate the memory of Herb Wong and to hear a classic big band and enjoy ourselves at a beautiful, underappreciated local venue.

*C. Stuart Brewster  
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance*



## ●●●●●●●●●● Movie Review ●●●●●●●●●●

### WHIPLASH UNCONVINCING

The touted movie, *Whiplash*, which was ranked #3 in the Sunday Chronicle "pink sheets" critical consensus the week of October 27, is unusual in that it contains a lot of good big band jazz. For that alone, I'd recommend PAJAns see it—particularly the closing concert where "Caravan" is played in its entirety. Also there's great (uncredited) drumming in that number. It's a pretty phony movie though. The basic plot centers on a drum student at the leading music school in the country and his interaction

with a teacher whose idea of education is to vilify and curse his students who don't meet his (arcane) standards. His rationale for his over-the-top behavior is that that's the only way he's going to find the next Charlie Parker. Survive his trial by fire and you have a chance to be really good. The teacher is played by J. K. Simmons, the bald guy you've seen a lot of on TV and in movies, most notably recently in those insurance commercials. The young student is played by Miles Teller, and he failed to convince me that he was a drummer, either in body language or attitude. And the plot elements in the final concert were just too unrealistic, even ridiculous. Still, if you can stand the ribald language and the contrived story, see it. We don't get a lot of movies with our music, and the jazz and the score by Justin Hurwitz make it all worth it./Ed Fox

# AT THE MEMBER PARTY

*Photos by Karl Robinson*

Take a pleasantly warm Sunday afternoon in October, a lovely tree-shaded courtyard, two consummately talented jazz artists, and sixty amiable PAJA members, and you have the recipe for a very satisfying way to spend a couple of hours—great music, lively conversation, wine, water and soft drinks and a nice selection of snacks. That pretty much sums up PAJA's free member party on October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Palo Alto Art Center. We luxuriated to the velvety saxophone (and vocals) of Kristen Strom, teaming with her husband Scott Sorkin on guitar. Take our word for it—beautiful stuff.



See No Evil, Hear No Evil. . .  
Stuart Brewster, Bruce Powell,  
Michael Griffin, and Ed Fox.



Jan De Carli, Marilyn Wong,  
pianist Rodney Franklin



Shirley Douglas and  
Roger and Mercy  
Smullen



Lori and  
Max Jemma



Vern Simon, Ed Fox,  
John Schroeder, Steve Piazzale



Kristen Strom  
on sax, Scott  
Sorkin on  
guitar



Stuart introduces  
Kristen Strom



# MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL 2014 / A REVIEW FROM THE GROUNDS

*Photos by Andy Nozaka • Text by Andy and Dorothy Nozaka*

This September celebrated the 57th anniversary of the venerable Monterey Jazz Festival, which once again manifested the ever changing scope and diversity of jazz. We had preplanned a strategy of staying mainly on the grounds (as opposed to the Main Stage), a plan that allows more intimate listening and better photo accessibility.

Here's a rundown of some of what we saw and heard at the festival.

## FRIDAY NIGHT

- ❑ **SANGAM:** The festival started on a very high plateau with a meeting of master musicians Charles Lloyd (reeds, flute, piano), Zakir Hussain (tabla and vocals) and Eric Harland (drums, piano). In particular, the dialogue between Lloyd and Hussain was intuitive and magical; the music was mainly Indo-centric, with the mood sometimes soft and reflective, but sometimes rising in searing crescendo—a perfect meeting ground for two practitioners of meditation to achieve a state of peace and healing.
- ❑ **CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE TRIO:** With pianist Christian Sands and drummer Ulysses Owens, Jr., bassist McBride presented his latest version of straight ahead jazz. One is awed at the formidable “chops” of this amazing bassist, all performed with a joyful, driving, propulsive swing.
- ❑ **CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT:** Ms. Salvant's MJF debut was eagerly anticipated and she did not fail to impress. At times she evoked Betty Carter, at other times Billy Holiday and even Bessie Smith, yet with a distinctive style of her own. She sang her own compositions as well as tributes to early 20th century Afro-American master entertainers Bert Williams and Ethel Waters.



## SATURDAY

- ❑ **Blue Note Records 75th Anniversary Presents—Our Point of View:** With Blue Note president Don Was in attendance, a stable of Blue Note “young lions” produced an exciting, high energy set, pushing the edges of the current state of mainstream jazz. The all-star group included Ambrose Akinmusire (trumpet), Marcus Strickland (sax), Lionel Loueke (guitar), Robert Glasper (piano), Derrick Hodge (bass), and Kendrick Scott (drums). The drumming work of Scott was a particular delight.
- ❑ **THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT:** The reunion of former classmates of the Philadelphia H.S. for the Creative and Performing Arts (Class of 1989) brought together bassist Christian McBride and drummer Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, leader of The Roots, the house band for the Tonight Show. A third member, Uri Caine, also a graduate perhaps 15 years earlier, manned the keyboards. Quite simply, the gig was a paean to funk – greasy and straight from the mean streets of Philly, never escaping the relentless groove set by Questlove. Caine's soulful keyboard work and McBride's skill on both upright bass and 5-string fretless electric bass were notable.
- ❑ **CHARLES LLOYD-GERALD CLAYTON DUO:** Another conversation between soul-mates with gentle, tender stirrings by Lloyd and exquisite, ruminative playing on piano by Clayton. Again we arrive at a place of peace and healing. Heavenly.



## SUNDAY

- ❑ **BRIAN BLADE & THE FELLOWSHIP BAND:** Drummer Brian Blade can hardly contain his joy and exuberance in propelling his excellent group, consisting of saxophonists Melvin Butler and Myron Walden, pianist Jon Cowherd and bassist Chris Thomas. In the end, one feels the group is centered on a pastoral sense of happiness, peace and goodwill, undoubtedly reflecting the persona of its leader.
- ❑ **HAROLD LOPEZ-NUSSA TRIO:** The latest in a string of Cuban conservatory trained pianists, López-Nussa plays a rhythmically infectious brand of jazz-cumclave beat. The group is rounded out by electric bassist Jorge Perez and percussionist Ruy López-Nussa; the latter, the younger brother of the leader, gave a master class on hand drumming on the box-shaped *cajon*.
- ❑ **ERIC HARLAND VOYAGER:** Another group of “young lions” led by Mr. Harland, 2014 Artist-In-Residence, included vocalist Chris Turner, saxophonist Walter Smith III, guitarist Julian Lage, pianist Taylor Eigsti, and Harish Raghavan. The group played one composition lasting the full set. Like the Blue Note group, they too are agents of change, extending the boundaries of mainstream jazz, a decidedly healthful sign.
- ❑ **A PLETHORA OF PIANISTS:** One is amazed at the group of fine pianists that played MJF this year. We managed to hear Christian Sands, Aaron Diehl, Taylor Eigsti, Gerald Clayton, Harold López-Nussa, Robert Glasper, Billy Childs and Sam Harris. Those we missed and wished we had seen: Ellis Marsalis, Harold Mabern, Donald Brown, Geoffrey Keezer and Herbie Hancock.
- ❑ **In Memoriam:** The festival magazine paid tribute to Dr. Herb Wong, a true friend of MJF, frequent participant and attendee at every festival from 1958 to 2013. Also honored were Iola Brubeck (the wife of Dave Brubeck), Pete Douglas (founder of The Bach Dynamite & Dancing Society), Dee Dee Rainbow (colorful creator of the ‘Rainbow People’) and Lawrence R. Bemis, longtime MJF board member.





# THE JAZZ CURMUDGEON

*D. Michael Griffin on Monterey*

Ow. . . Ouch! Who sez change doesn't hurt? After this past Monterey Jazz Fest (September 19-21), I know pain. Even though I also know why it's something I'll need to get used to. . . pretty much, anyway. Because Monterey, and other jazz extravaganzas, are trying to transition. Transition their base audience to a newer kind of "jazz" that appeals to younger ears. Younger than *my* generation's, that's for sure. And while media critics [and the Buff's official reviewers, the Nozakas] were supportive, even enthusiastic about the new sounds at MJF, it's going to be a difficult learning curve for us old jazzers.

**Herbie Hancock** gets it. His move toward electronics is fairly well known by now. We got a taste of it at the Stanford Workshop in June. Now, there he was on the Arena stage, playing his keytar (an electric keyboard played like a guitar) as if he were Jimi Hendrix incarnate. Please, spare me, Herbie.

Keyboardist **Robert Glasper** gets it. The Grammy award winner has moved toward a decidedly less jazz style—more left field stuff. What a shame.



*Herbie and his keytar*

And then it really hit the fan. "The Roots"—the studio band from the Jimmy Fallon Late Night TV show. Hip hop city, baby. They cleared out the Arena after three "tunes," if you can call them that. But to show you the other side of the story, I offer a long quote from Mac McDonald, writer for the *Monterey Herald*. Hold on to your hats, kids.

*"I can't recall another performance in my 30 plus years covering the MJF that was more exciting, energized, provocative [no kidding!], ear-opening, and, yes, controversial [duh!] than. . . this band of supremely talented musicians. Granted, it irked the jazz purists. . . and probably alienated some [some?] of the older patrons. . . but I found it invigorating and a thrilling jolt of energy. . . that the festival needs to continue to be viable and relevant in an*

*always-shifting musical landscape."*

Different strokes for different folks, clearly. For me, it means I'll be forking out the 10 bucks for the program next year and reading it carefully, *very* carefully, so as to know what to see and what to duck. In the past, I just sort of drifted from one stage to the next, knowing that I'd probably not get roughed up too badly regardless of who was playing. Hey, it was a feel-good jazz festival, right? But those days of innocence are done, I'm telling ya.

Don't get me wrong. Monterey is still a terrific jazz fest. Plenty of wonderful music, appealing to a wide, and I mean *wide* spectrum of tastes. Here are just a few of my faves:

- **Davina & The Vagabonds**, playing boogie/blues/ragtime, were huge, simply huge. Davina Sowers and her four-piece band was a breakout hit last year at MJF and this time in the Arena she energized the crowd with her throaty pitch-perfect voice, boogie-woogie style, bawdy delivery and natural comedic talent. A little of Etta James? Bette Midler? With maybe a bit of Jerry Lee Lewis tossed in.

- **Brian Blade**, the drummer and his Fellowship Band. Very satisfying. Modern jazz that was accessible, friendly and new all at the same time.

- **Harold Lopez-Nussa Trio**. I heard these Cubans in Havana many moons ago and then again last year at SF Jazz. Now they've made it to Monterey, wow! Let me say thanks to the financial boost they get from Danny Scher. Harold plays a classically influenced style of piano, with the music driven by his younger brother on drums. Ruy Adrian is an inventive percussionist and keeps up the Cuban side of this fusion trio. I hope I can get away with saying their sound is 100 Octane Chopin meets Montuño (the traditional Cuban song form), if that makes any sense. Well, I love these guys. Terrific.

- **Charles Lloyd**. The sax geezer still has what it takes, sounding great. Well into his 70s, he benefitted from his band mates—pianist Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers (b) and Eric Harland (d). This quartet had the touch, pleasing us with its soft sound. Charles Lloyd, soft?

There were so many more engaging sets performed by well-known jazz headliners: Geoff Keezer, Christian McBride, Cecile Salvant, Booker T. Jones, Gary Clark, and the list goes on. I'll be here next year, but I'll read up a bit on what I want to see and hear.

# THE JAZZ PERISCOPE

Selected gigs for November and December

## YOSHI'S SAN FRANCISCO

[www.yoshis.com/sanfrancisco](http://www.yoshis.com/sanfrancisco) (new name: The Addition)

11/18, 12/12	Tommie Igoe Groove Conspiracy . . . . .	8pm
11/8	Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band . . . . .	8,10pm
11/10-12	Cecile McLorin Salvant . . . . .	8pm
11/14	Manhattan Transfer . . . . .	8,10pm
12/12-13	Dee Dee Bridgewater . . . . .	8,10pm
12/24	Clairdee Xmas Show . . . . .	8pm
12/27-28	Christian McBride Trio	

## YOSHI'S OAKLAND

[www.yoshis.com/oakland](http://www.yoshis.com/oakland)

11/7	Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band . . . . .	8, 10pm
11/18	Ernie Watts Quartet . . . . .	8pm
12/3-4	The Bad Plus . . . . .	8, 10pm
12/5	John Santos, Mads Tolling, Roger Glenn . . . . .	8, 10pm
12/11	Joey DeFrancesco Trio . . . . .	8, 10pm
12/16	Tommie Igoe Groove Conspiracy . . . . .	8pm
12/29	Larry Vuckovich Dexter Gordon Tribute With Noel Jewkes . . . . .	8pm

## SF JAZZ CENTER

[www.sfjazz.org/center](http://www.sfjazz.org/center)

11/6, 7	Karrin Allyson . . . . .	7, 8:30pm
11/9	Boogie Woogie Festival . . . . .	4pm
11/9	Jackie Ryan Sarah Vaughn Tribute . . . . .	5:30, 7pm
11/14, 15	Dorado Schmitt & Django All-Stars . . . . .	7:30pm
12/4-6	Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet . . . . .	7, 8:30pm
12/6	Le Jazz Hot Holiday Concert . . . . .	11am
12/11	Ravi Coltrane, Joe Lovano . . . . .	7:30pm

## BACH'S DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY, EL GRANADA

[www.bachddsoc.org](http://www.bachddsoc.org)

11/9	Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet . . . . .	4:30pm
12/7	Terry Disley "Jazzcracker Suite" . . . . .	4:30pm

## KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER, SANTA CRUZ

[www.kuumbwajazz.org](http://www.kuumbwajazz.org)

11/17	Django Reinhardt All-Stars, w/Dorado Schmitt . . . . .	7, 9pm
11/20	Tammy Hall, w/Houston Person . . . . .	7pm
12/4	Kate McGarry . . . . .	7pm
12/5	The Bad Plus . . . . .	7, 9pm
12/12	Dan Hicks Xmas . . . . .	7, 9pm

## SAN JOSE JAZZ

[www.sanjosejazz.org](http://www.sanjosejazz.org)

11/14	Legally Blue At San Pedro Sq. Mkt. . . . .	7-9pm
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## ANGELICAS

863 Main St., Redwood City [www.angelicasllc.com](http://www.angelicasllc.com)

Every Tuesday evening	Jazz on Tuesdays Trio + vocalists . . . . .	7:15pm*
11/15	David Miller Trio, with Rebecca DuMaine . . . . .	8:30pm
11/16, 12/14	Mike Galisatus Big Band . . . . .	7pm

\*Denise Perrier 11/18, Jackie Ryan 12/9, Rebecca DuMaine 12/16, Wesla Whitfield 12/23, Wendy McCain, 12/30

## OSHRMAN JCC, Palo Alto

12/4	Ron Carter Trio
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## CAFÉ STRITCH

374 S. 1st St., San Jose [www.cafestritch.com](http://www.cafestritch.com)

11/6	Michael O'Neill, with Tammy Hall on organ
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## HOTEL SOFITEL

223 Twin Dolphin Dr., Redwood City 650/598-9000

Wednesday evening jazz, with Michael O'Neill and vocalists 6-9pm

## VIBRAPHONIST WARREN WOLF WEIGHS IN

"A lot of jazz nowadays is too thought-out. . . A lot of musicians—and I'm guilty of this myself sometimes—are playing for ourselves and not the audience. To get away from that, I want to choose lines that will connect with people. Take any popular song—'It Don't Mean a Thing,' 'Take Five,' 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy'---and you'll find a

strong melody. You can solo all day and run all these changes over all kinds of meters and the average listener can't follow it. I think of all the hours of training that guys like me have had at Berklee, Juilliard or elsewhere. We're the best trained musicians around, and often we can't come up with a simple melody that some uneducated guy might come up with at home." From "Warren Wolf: A Complete Musician," by Geoffrey Himes in DownBeat, November 2013.

**Sunday January 25, 7PM**

## THE WOODY HERMAN ORCHESTRA

*In tribute to Dr. Herb Wong*

**Menlo-Atherton High School's Center for the Performing Arts — 555 Middlefield Road, Atherton**

Woody, of course, is no longer with us, but a group of alumni all-stars, led by Frank Tiberi, continues to carry the torch and keep those great Herd charts alive. This is a rare Bay Area appearance for the WHO. Dr. Herb Wong had a special bond with Woody Herman, and Marilyn Wong conceived this concert as an ultimate tribute to Herb. Please join us at this beautiful 492 seat concert hall, an easy drive from anywhere in the mid-Peninsula. Tickets (available December 1) are \$40 general admission, \$35 for PAJA members, \$15 for students. Mail order to PAJA tickets, c/o Fox, 294 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, CA 94306.



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