

FROM THE CHAIR

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL—that's the mantra as COVID-19 starts to get corralled. So, what is normal? According to my dictionary, normal is conforming to the standard, i.e., the regular, usual or natural. Wait a minute. After more than 18 months of misery of one kind or another, the normal isn't normal any more. So many of our routines have been disrupted, businesses and restaurants we have supported are just gone. Sad to say, there is little likelihood of their returning.

Happily, jazz as an institution has survived in one way or another. We are so fortunate to have access to it via KCSM—twenty-four seven whenever the mood strikes. Also due to the fine efforts of Harvey Mittler and Leslie Marks, you have been notified of all kinds of jazz streaming offerings—if you are on our e-mail list. But if you want to purchase some recording, be it vinyl or CD, your options are quite limited. There is Amazon—and other online sources, but the days of being able to drop into some record store are about over. There is one local site that is an excellent source for finding jazz and classical offerings, by known and unknown performers. I strongly suggest you check out The Record Man shop at 1322 El Camino Real in Redwood City. Gary Saxon, who has long operated this little jewel (and has supported PAJA by selling tickets to our concerts) has announced that he will close down in the near future. That will be a sad day, but then no show runs on Broadway forever. So, please get on over there and take a look at his stock—including things you won't find on Amazon.

There will be a return to normal when PAJA can offer a live concert, and we're working on it. Let's hope that the current positive trends regarding indoor events continue so that we'll be able to move ahead on present plans to offer a live concert on Sunday afternoon, October 17. We are hoping to present the Return of the Six Jazz Masters, led by Greg Abate, whose latest album is sizzling on the nation's jazz stations (see "Jazz Notes"). We are excited about this gig—you may want to wear a mask, but that won't interfere with the sounds. The venue will be CSMA in Mountain View. Details coming.

Thank you for hanging in there with us. I look forward to next year—our 30th, when we'll return with more concerts and a member party where we can meet

and enjoy one another's presence once again.

In continued appreciation of your support,
C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

JAZZ NOTES

Saxophonist **Noel Jewkes**, who has played at PAJA concerts a number of times, has a new CD out—*Moods, Modes, Muses*, with the Noel Jewkes Septet. Kay Kostopoulos is the featured vocalist, and other local notables like Chris Amberger (bass), Dave Bendigkeit (trumpet), Keith Saunders (piano) and Charlie McCarthy (sax) are septet members.



Kay Kostopoulos

Contact Noel at jewkesjazz@sbcglobal.net.

That album produced from the Thelonious Monk 1968 concert at Palo Alto High School has been selected as Historical Record of the Year (2021) by the Jazz Journalists Association. "**Monk: Palo Alto**", you'll recall, captures a very special afternoon concert at the high school, arranged and promoted by then Paly student Danny Scher. The JJA is an organization of jazz commentators that supports the creation and dissemination of accurate, balanced, ethical and informative journalism on all jazz genres. "Palo Alto" was selected over some formidable competition including "Rollins in Holland" (Sonny Rollins), and "The Lost Berlin Tapes" (Ella Fitzgerald).

Greg Abate, the alto sax luminary who performed for PAJA (Six Jazz Masters) in May of 2018, has a new album out: "Greg Abate—Magic Dance: The Music of Kenny Barron." This album led the nation in airplay (number of spins on jazz radio stations) for seven consecutive weeks in May and June of this year. We are hoping to have Greg back with another Six Jazz Masters concert this October. Stay tuned.

NOODLING *Thoughts on jazz* By Michael Burman

Red Garland and Wynton Kelly

Miles Davis is rightly famous for many things. Without doubt, he's one of the ten most influential jazz figures of all time. It's been said that he changed the direction of jazz every decade for half a century, and there is some justification for this: the 1949-50 "Birth of the Cool" sessions; his two classic quintets of the mid -50s and mid-60s; the modal music introduced with 1959's "Kind of Blue"; his live and four recorded collaborations with Gil Evans from 1957-63, almost a decade after those "Birth of the Cool" sessions; and his introduction of a rock element in the late 1960; even if crediting Miles with bebop, or emphasizing his later work as influential are a stretch at best.

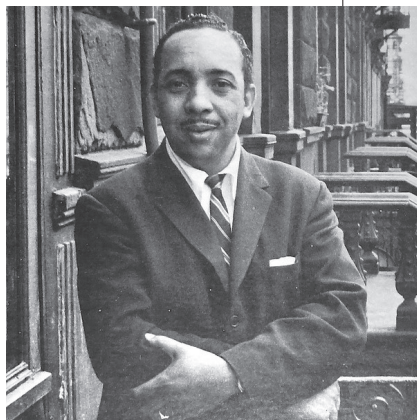
One thing that is indisputable, though, is the consistently excellent quality of Miles's sidemen: Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter et al. on tenor saxophone; Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Dave Holland et al. on bass; and Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, Tony Williams et al. on drums. Pianists are no exception: the list includes the likes of Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, and Joe Zawinul; indeed, it was their association with Miles that, while being far from their first time in the spotlight (each had already recorded at least as a sideman if not as a leader), was the imprimatur that propelled them to jazz stardom.

The assiduous reader of "The Jazz Buff" will note the omission from that list of not just some famous pianists who recorded with Miles on occasion (e.g., John Lewis, Horace Silver, Ray Bryant) but also of two who were actually members of Miles's working groups over a period of years, Red Garland and Wynton Kelly. The omission is deliberate: it's been suggested that by contrast with not just those Miles alumni listed above, but with such as Bud Powell or McCoy Tyner or Dave Brubeck or Earl Hines, for example, Garland and Kelly are overlooked. This article is intended to draw thumbnail sketches of each of the pair. In Part 1, we'll deal with Red Garland.

RED GARLAND was born in Dallas, Texas, in 1923. His given name was William McKinley Garland; I presume he was named after the late US president, but as for the reason for his nickname your guess is as good as mine.

Despite Red's family not being at all musical, he did study clarinet and saxophone. Without evidence, I can only assume that this was outside school since

he studied with his fellow Dallas native the saxophonist Buster Smith, who had such an influence on Charlie Parker. Somehow while Red was in the US Army in 1941 it was the piano rather than the M1 that he took up, his original influ-



ences being probably Count Basie and Nat Cole.

Since a pianist's hands are his biggest asset, I find it remarkable that in the '40s Red had something of a parallel career as a welterweight boxer, with some three dozen fights to his name, including an exhibition bout with Sugar Ray Robinson. (Red lost.) Writer Joel Simpson seems to agree, saying that boxing had left Red with a broken knuckle "as a souvenir of his road not taken".

After WWII, Red went on tour, playing with another fellow Dallas native, trumpeter Oran "Hot Lips" Page. When, in 1946, the tour ended in New York City, Red stayed put. Soon afterwards, thanks to a chance encounter with Art Blakey, he began a stint playing with Billy Eckstine's bebop-oriented big band. His earliest recording appears to be one side with Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis in either '47 or '48.

It was in NYC that, later that decade, Red heard play live both the slightly younger Bud Powell and the veteran Art Tatum (reported to be Red's favorite, although I myself hear no evidence in his playing). Red and Bud became friends, and from Art I understand Red took some lessons.

Red continued to work in and around NYC and Philadelphia for the better part of a decade; one of those he played with was Fats Navarro (who, like Red, had recorded with Lockjaw, in Navarro's case a year earlier). Red led his own trio in Philadelphia for a couple of years until he was hired by Roy Eldridge and Coleman Hawkins for their quintet. That relationship led first to a stint with Ben Webster and then a longer one with Lester Young. He played with Charlie Parker, and appears on four tracks, with Roy Haynes on drums, on Bird's Blue Note recording "At Storyville", live performances from George Wein's Storyville Club in Boston in 1953.

Red was playing with Lester Young in 1953 when he was approached by Miles Davis to form a quintet. That particular venture didn't work out, and Red continued to play with Lester. Nothing daunted, though, Miles and Red tried again two years later with a recording for Bob Weinstock's Prestige label. Red recommended drummer

Philly Joe Jones, and the quartet was rounded out by bassist Oscar Pettiford. "The Musings of Miles" marked the beginning of a professional relationship between Red and Miles that was to last for most of the remainder of the 1950s.

On that 1955 recording, Red is immediately identifiable on the intro to "I See Your Face Before Me" and on "Green Haze" via his use of block chords, which were to be his trademark for the rest of his life. Block chords are most often thought of in connection with pianists such as Milt Buckner and George Shearing, although with Buckner it's more a matter of locked hands, and with the "Shearing chords" (certainly popularized by George, although probably more accurately attributable to Phil Moore) it's to do with a more straightforward doubling of one or more notes an octave lower.

Bay Area pianist and citizen of the world Larry Vuckovich, who has performed for PAJA at least half a dozen times, relates an event described in a magazine (Larry

speculates “Down Beat?”), where Red is reported to have searched unsuccessfully for what was to become his signature sound, until finally, in total frustration, he banged both hands down onto the keyboard, only to hear what he’d long been searching for: E-flat, F-sharp, A, D in the left and F, B, D, and F in the right.

With the benefit of hindsight, “The Musings of Miles” can be seen as a turning point in Miles’s career, even though it was with something of a pick-up group. Remember, in 1955 Miles was not the superstar of later years who could fill stadia and concert halls: rather, he was no more than a lone trumpeter without a regular band, and one escaping the reputation of a drug addict—albeit a recovering one; he was one who, it’s true, had played with Bird and had fronted the “Birth of the Cool Sessions”, but what had he done for the jazz world lately? The seeds of the answer were sown the month after the recording of “The Musings of Miles”, when Miles appeared at the second Newport Jazz Festival, where—hard though it might be today to credit—he had been the least known of a sextet including Gerry Mulligan and Zoot Sims on saxophones, and Thelonious Monk on piano. This performance came to the attention of the prescient George Avakian of Columbia Records, who soon proposed to Miles the possibility of a contract, provided he could form a regular group.

“The Musings of Miles” can be seen as a turning point in Miles’s career, even though it was with something of a pickup group.

Four months later, in November 1955, Miles’s first classic quintet—with Red and Joe from “The Musings of Miles”, with that late developer John Coltrane added on tenor saxophone, and on bass the precocious Paul Chambers, only 20 years old—was ready. Their first recording (again for Prestige, of course, to which label Miles was still under contract) was “Miles: The New Miles Davis Quintet”. Once more with the benefit of hindsight, it’s inexplicable how such an excellent recording can be so little known. Red’s block chords are obvious immediately in the intro to the opening track, “Just Squeeze Me”.

That recording was the impetus for Avakian to convince Bob Weinstock to terminate Miles’s contract in favor of Columbia. Weinstock was a good enough businessman to agree, but only on condition that Miles fulfill his remaining commitment to record four LPs before Columbia would be allowed to release its first recording by Miles. So over two days at Rudy Van Gelder’s in Hackensack, NJ, in May and November 1956, the quintet laid down 24 tracks which were assembled into four LPs—“Cookin’”, “Relaxin’”, “Workin’”, and “Steamin’” (which I’ll term collectively “CRWS”), which are surely one of the pinnacles of what is termed (increasingly inaccurately now) “Modern Jazz”. That said, these four superb recordings are largely interchangeable, and lack any single standout track; on the other hand, is this simply consistent excellence?

Red’s use of block chords is again pervasive on these recordings. I find it particularly telling that on one of the reissues in the compact disc era of the CRWS recordings,

the take issued on the LP of one tune is preceded by a false start where Red opens with a spare intro; Miles interrupts “Block chords, Red, block chords;” Red stops, and restarts with the block chord intro we know.

So keen on their new signing was Columbia Records that, even before the first

track of those four CRWS Prestige LPs had been recorded, the quintet had already recorded one track, Charlie Parker’s “Ah-Leu-Cha,” for what was to be Miles’s first Columbia LP, “Round About Midnight”; further, before the final track of the four CRWS LPs had been recorded, the entire Columbia LP was in the can—although, for reasons already mentioned, it wasn’t released until after Miles’s contract with Weinstock had run out. The shrewd businessman Weinstock meted out those four CRWS LPs over a period of some five years, so slowly that by the time “Steamin’” was eventually issued in 1961 Miles was already on his next-plus-one quintet.

Around the time that Columbia issued “Round About Midnight” in 1957, Red left Miles’s employ—not altogether voluntarily. Despite the separation, though, it’s Red who is the pianist on the next Columbia recording, “Milestones” from early 1958, which was the first recording by Miles’s new sextet, Cannonball Adderley having been added on alto saxophone. Notwithstanding the excellence of those four Prestige CRWS LPs, “Milestones” is one of Miles’s very, very best.

That said, relations between Miles and Red had deteriorated, so much so that an argument on the earlier of the two “Milestones” sessions caused Red to storm out of the studio, leaving Miles to play piano on “Sid’s Ahead”, and perhaps causing the session to be curtailed. Nonetheless, on the second session a month later Miles even gave Red his own feature, “Billy Boy,” with just Chambers and Jones.

At this remove, who can say where the fault lay for the rift? Further, there are two sides to every disagreement. Some insight might be gained from an incident related by Larry Vuckovich and described to him by Jon Hendricks, with whom Larry played on and off over many years. Apparently Red had transcribed Miles’s solo on Charlie Parker’s 1945 recording of “Now’s the Time;” then he had reharmonized it for block chords, and played it for Miles, perhaps as a birthday gift. Initially Miles had seemed delighted but, according to Jon, later seemed to resent it. Miles was famous for his reluctance to look back in his career (there are many stories of his responding to criticism that he did not play his earlier repertoire by saying “if you want to hear that, buy the record”), so perhaps that was the reason.

Whether because the writing was already on the wall,



or because of simple career development for Red (by then in his early-to-mid-30s), or simply because Weinstock recognized a golden goose when he heard one, Red began to record prolifically as a leader. By my count, two dozen LPs under Red's name were recorded, and then issued by Prestige, between 1956 ("A Garland of Red") and 1960 ("Red Alone" and "Alone with the Blues", from the same session), with another to follow two years later ("When There Are Grey Skies") after the surprise interruption by three LPs between mid 1961 and early 1962 for Orrin Keepnews's rival Jazzland label.

All these 40+ recordings were made over a period of barely seven years. Then everything changed for Red.

Red's trio backed Coltrane on a dozen Prestige releases, mostly in quartet, including Trane's first as a leader, "Coltrane" from 1957. Chambers is on bass on all; Taylor is on drums on half, the other half mostly split evenly between Louis Hayes and, just having replaced Joe Jones with Miles, Jimmy Cobb.

Red's trio (with Chambers and Jones) also backed Sonny Rollins on "Tenor Madness" (the title track featuring Coltrane on his only recorded encounter with Sonny), and (with Chambers and Taylor) all of Hank Mobley, Trane, Al Cohn, and Zoot Sims on Hank's "Tenor Conclave".

And it would be criminal not to mention the stellar "Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section" from 1957. Miles's quintet was appearing in Los Angeles, and somehow Lester Koenig, proprietor of Contemporary Records, arranged for "The Rhythm Section", as they were known, to record, backing Art. The musicians had never met, and although Pepper's autobiography, "Straight Life," rather contradicts the liner notes which describe the obstacles facing Pepper at that time, the expectations on him must have been considerable. Whatever the truth, this is surely one of the 100 greatest jazz recordings.

Note that all of these 40+ recordings were made over a period of barely seven years. Then everything changed for Red: apart from two in 1971 he didn't record again until the very end of 1977. He'd gone from half a decade of deluge to

one-and-a-half decades of drought.

The reasons for this aren't clear. Some sources ascribe it to the inroads of Rock music, but as a child of the '60s I question that: it wasn't until five years later, i.e., the late, not early, '60s, that such music, electric if not eclectic, began to displace acoustic jazz. It is known that Red's mother, back home in Dallas, was in poor health, although accounts differ as to whether Red returned to Dallas in order to care for her until her death, or did not return there until after that had occurred. Whichever it is, Red was certainly at or near home for over a decade. Fifteen years is a long time out of the public eye; and after 15 years away, would the public eye recognize Red should he return?

I can't speak for the public, but I do know that when the third incarnation of the Fantasy subsidiary Galaxy Records got going in 1977, Red was one of the artists they recorded; others included fellow pianists Hank Jones and Tommy Flanagan, as well as Art Pepper. Galaxy issued half a dozen LPs by Red recorded in 1977 and 1979. Each is worthwhile; but, strangely, none that I've heard features block chords, which had been Red's hallmark 20 years earlier. In a blindfold test, he's much harder—but by no means impossible—to distinguish from Jones and Flanagan.

Red was to live for a further five years, dying of a heart attack in his home town, Dallas, in 1984 at the age of 60. I'll leave the final words on Red to a BBC announcer in the early 1960s introducing a track from Red's "Live at the Prelude, Vol. 1" (1959). "Red Garland ... the pianist with the crisp touch: let's hear him use it on "Satin Doll."

You could do worse.



Philly Joe, Ron Carter, Red Garland

Michael Burman hosts "Weekend Jazz Oasis" Saturday nights on KCSM Jazz 91.1.

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