

FROM THE CHAIR

COVID-19 continues to change our lives. There is no opportunity yet for us to present live jazz, as we've been doing for the past quarter century. I keep hearing in my head, "When will it ever end? The answer my friend is blowing in the wind." What a prophetic song we all sang back in the sixties, along with Dylan, Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul and Mary.

Everyone has been struggling with what to do while sheltering in place day after day. It is month to month now. Some things that I have been doing: cleaning out all the closets, listening to old vinyl records, reading and rereading various kinds of books that sit quietly waiting for attention, listening to some jazz streaming offerings as suggested by Harvey and others.

Primarily I have been indulging my addiction to the New York Times, understanding over and over

the value of this cultural icon which offers insight to so many things—and NYT continues to pay attention to jazz, too. For example, in their Friday, October 2 edition they included a fascinating critique by Giovanni Russonello of the release of a recording of a forgotten live concert by Ella Fitzgerald in Berlin in 1962 (Verve, "Ella: The Lost Berlin Tapes," to be released this month). There



Ella Fitzgerald

isn't room here to tell you everything that enthralled him about the concert; just know that his main point is that Ella comes across quite differently at a live event as opposed to her studio recordings of the American Song Book. It was a refreshing read that made the day stand out from all the others that very hot week. Another boost for the uniqueness of being there LIVE.

As we all wait out this pandemic horror, I am re-

minded of the old song "We'll Be Together Again," sung by Frankie Laine, Billie Holiday and others. "Remember, there's always tomorrow" is one of the lines. Hopefully, "tomorrow" will be sooner rather than later. We are all looking forward to getting together again at a live concert in keeping with our mission of offering first class entertainment for jazz lovers at easily accessible locations here on the Mid-peninsula.

In continued appreciation of your renewals and donations,

C. Stuart Brewster

Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

THE ARTISTRY OF JIM HALL

"Known as much for the notes he left out of his creative comping and unique phrasing as the ones he left in, [Jim] Hall changed the course of jazz guitar with his minimal, less-is-more aesthetic. His playing was subtle yet sophisticated, lyrical and always in the moment, with an indelible connection to the jazz guitar traditions of swing and the blues. . . Hall may have come out of the Charlie Christian school, but it was his innovative ideas and constant search for fresh modes of expression that caused Pat Metheny to describe him as "the father of modern jazz guitar." Bill Milkowski, from "Bill Frisell & Friends Pay Tribute to Jim Hall at Blue Note," *DownBeat*, July 2014.

OVERHEARD ON "THE OFFICE"



This exchange was overheard on an old episode of the TV comedy series, "The Office."

Dwight: I hate jazz.

Angela: Why can't they get the notes right?

A CONVERSATION WITH DANNY SCHER

By Harvey Mittler

Periodically, the Jazz Buff recognizes a distinguished PAJA member, whose accomplishments—personal, professional, or both—are worthy of mention. On an afternoon in early October 2020 our subject, Danny Scher, and Harvey Mittler, PAJA event chair, spent a pleasant hour plus chatting on the phone about parts of Danny's life as a producer and promoter in the music world. This is Harvey's report.



Danny Scher

As an avid record collector, I wanted to know more about the release on September 18, 2020, of an historic recording by Thelonious Monk which sat in Danny Scher's vault since 1968. The fascinating story is how Danny, then a 16 year old junior at Palo Alto High School and already a staunch jazz fan and a talented drummer in the realms of classical music and jazz, arranged for the Thelonious Monk Quartet to play a Sunday matinee concert on October 27, 1968, at Paly prior to the group's evening gig at a jazz club in San Francisco.

Arranging it all was far from easy, and among other things it involved making contact with Monk's manager and thinking he had reached an agreement, only to discover a few days before the concert, when he phoned Monk to remind him about it, that Monk did not know about it. Fortunately, Monk admired Danny's "chutzpah" and agreed to perform. Danny had to arrange transportation, promote and publicize the concert, and sell tickets to people in Palo Alto who were dubious that Monk would come to Palo Alto. And also to people in East Palo Alto who were skeptical that Monk would play in the predominantly white city.

He asked those doubters to come to the school's parking lot to wait for Monk's arrival and then to buy tickets when he appeared. Monk and the members of the quartet did arrive in the Scher family's car driven by Danny's older brother Les, with the neck of the bass hanging out a window. The assembled fans bought their tickets and were treated to a splendid set.

Danny told me about a related mystery, the story of how the recording came to exist. The concert was recorded on reel-to-reel tape by a janitor at the school who made a deal to tune the piano in return for permission to record the music. Following the concert, the janitor gave a copy to Danny, and it languished for over 50 years. Danny, working with Monk's son, drummer T. S. Monk, decided to issue this wonderful music, but he still had to determine whether Monk was under contract to Columbia Records at the time of the concert. It delayed release of the album briefly, until its release on

Impulse! Records on September 18, 2020.

This incredible concert, with Danny's nearly Herculean efforts to bring it to fruition, is but one instance among a lifetime of magnificent achievements. The year before he brought Monk to Paly, he cold-called the popular local pianist Vince Guaraldi and renowned vocalist Jon Hendricks to invite them to play on campus. Vince not only accepted, but he guided Danny through his first venture as a concert promoter. Even before then, Danny attended jazz concerts and looked for ways to be involved. In Danny's first year at Paly, UC Berkeley undergrad Darlene Chan commenced work on what would become the annual Berkeley Jazz Festival in 1967, and Danny called her and offered his services to help publicize it. He also became acquainted with Dr. Herb Wong, then the principal at Berkeley's Washington Elementary School, and later one of PAJA's co-founders.

A brief summary of Danny's exploits includes many notable highlights. He attended Stanford University and received his B.A. in Economics and his M.B.A.; a captivating story for another time is how Danny gained admission to Stanford with no A. P. classes and performed an audition on his drum kit (he already was the principal percussionist with the California Youth Symphony and the drummer and leader of his own Dixieland band). While at Stanford he earned money working as the manager for Jon Hendricks, whose pianist then was Larry Vuckovich. He went on to work for famed impresario Bill Graham for 24 years and advocated the addition of jazz musicians to Winterland and other shows. As a top assistant to Graham, Danny created and produced the annual New Orleans by the Bay Festival, the largest New Orleans food and music festival outside of New Orleans; developed the outdoor Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View; and booked venues such as the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco and the Day on the Green concerts at the Oakland-Alameda County Stadium.

Danny has been a card-carrying member of PAJA for several years. He related to me that in fact he belongs to numerous local jazz societies around the country in order to maintain a relationship with jazz fans and support the music. As a prominent figure in the world of jazz production, he has made friends with a great many musicians and fellow promoters, such as George Wein, the founder of the Newport Jazz Festival, whom Danny called recently to wish a Happy 94th Birthday. For years Danny has lived the life which he had envisioned since he was a teenager, operating his own business, DanSun Productions, in Berkeley to be a producer of music, concerts, and travel (interrupted by the pandemic). May he enjoy continued success and pleasure as he follows his muse.

See p. 4 for more on this article.

NOODLING *Thoughts on jazz* By Michael Burman

YUSEF

October 9th 2020 marked the centenary of the birth in Chattanooga, Tennessee, of William Emanuel Huddleston, who was to go on to become a world-famous jazz musician and NEA Jazz Master.

After a couple of years, his father moved the family to Lorain, Ohio (birthplace of Toni Morrison) and, a couple of years later, on to Detroit, where, for reasons unclear to me, he changed the family name to Evans. Just what the jazz world needed, another Bill Evans! Fortunately for us all, William later changed his own name, this time to **Yusef Lateef**.

An only child, William Evans was somewhat solitary, and became fascinated with Nature. Music historian Marc Myers quotes him as saying "Growing up alone made me more sensitive and more aware of nature—butterflies, the sky and trees. I was actually entertained by flowers and grasshoppers and ants. . . At the time I didn't realize that those things were the phenomenon of creation. I still marvel at Nature." It's tempting to see in these early recollections harbingers of a spirituality that was later to be the bedrock of his adult life.

Jazz history is full of biographies of those who, even if not prodigies, nonetheless began on their instrument at some very early age. While accounts differ significantly, it's clear that William Evans was not one of those: his first instrument, the tenor saxophone, came either at age nine or 10 (1930), or perhaps not until age 17 (1938); his own web site (yuseflateef.com) has him "already proficient on tenor saxophone while in high school".

An earlier Noodling article (*Jazz Buff*, September 2017) on alto saxophonist Sonny Red referred to the Detroit Jazz scene of the 1940s with the likes of Barry Harris, Paul Chambers, Eddie Locke, Tommy Flanagan, Frank Gant, Kenny Burrell, Roland Hanna (yet to be knighted), Dorothy Ashby, Donald Byrd, Oliver Jackson, Doug Watkins, Teri Thornton, and Curtis Fuller. What a jazz hotbed Detroit must have been!

Almost a decade older than Barry Harris (who in 1989 would precede him as NEA Jazz Master by two decades), William Evans was not a member of that group—although in 1960 he would join Harris as a



Yusef Lateef

sideman on Sonny Red's "Breezing", the Jazzland LP which debuted Sonny Red's tune, dedicated to him, "Teef". Nonetheless, he was very much a part of the Detroit scene, and it was from there that he first went on the road with such as Lucky Millinder, trumpeters Hot Lips Page and Roy Eldridge, and reed man Herbie Fields.

After some years with those leaders, Evans moved to Chicago in 1948 with the Dizzy Gillespie band, playing alongside Benny Harris, Willie Cook, J.J. Johnson, Ernie Henry, Al McKibbin and Johnny Hartman. He stayed with Dizzy for almost a year, appearing on recordings such as "Hey, Pete, Let's Eat More Meat!" and "In the Land of Oo-Bla-Dee", as well as less frivolous fare as "You Go to

My Head", "Dizzier and Dizzier", and "Jumpin' with Symphony Sid".

It was at around this time that William Evans converted to Islam in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and became Yusef Lateef, by which name we were to know him for the following six decades, until his death in 2013, aged 93. Also at around this time, he returned to Detroit, and studied flute at Wayne State University.

In the mid-50s Lateef began recording as a leader, first for Savoy and later moving to Prestige, with a group of predominantly Detroiters including trombonist Curtis Fuller, pianist Hugh Lawson, bassists Herman Wright and Ron Carter, and drummer Louis Hayes.

Over the next few years, Lateef recorded as a sideman with fellow Detroiters and bassists Paul Chambers ("First Bassman") and Doug Watkins ("Soulnik"), and with Charles Mingus ("Pre-Bird"), and Clark Terry ("Color Changes"), all four in 1960, and Grant Green ("Grantstand", 1961). In 1962 he began his highest-profile gig, expanding Cannonball Adderley's quintet to a sextet, in a role he occupied for two years.

Beginning at Prestige Records in 1961, Lateef had begun increasingly to feature his playing on flute and oboe (his oboe work on "Love Theme from 'Spartacus'" from "Eastern Sounds" is perennially popular), and, to a lesser extent, on bassoon. Over the subsequent years, he experimented with and recorded on a

variety of "exotic" instruments as difficult to describe as they are to spell, such as the argul (North African, single-reed, double-tube--one a drone--sounding somewhat like a bassoon), the shehnai (Indian, wooden, double-reed, sounding like an oboe), and the algaita (West African, double-reed oboe), as well as various flutes, including the home-made bamboo flute and the pneumatic flute.

Lateef returned to college in the late 1960s, at the Manhattan School of Music, receiving his bachelor's degree in Music in 1969 and his master's degree in Music Education the following year, just a few months before his 50th birthday. Obviously on an educational roll at this time, a few years later he received his Ph.D. in Education from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He spent the first half of the '80s as a research fellow in Nigeria, both teaching,

and researching yet another "exotic" instrument, the tambin, the national instrument of the West African Fula people.

In 1992, he founded the YAL record label, and over the next two decades released roughly two recordings a year.

In closing, let me express a personal assessment. Just as with another exponent of jazz on non-mainstream instruments, Roland Kirk, I feel that Lateef's work on the tenor saxophone is underappreciated. My take is that as outstanding though he was on flute and oboe, his tenor prowess was the equal of anyone's. If you're not familiar with his tenor work, then imagine a sound between those of Booker Ervin (always bleak) and John Coltrane (often bleak). As an example, listen to "Water Pistol" from "Into Something" (Prestige, 1961).

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



CONTINUED from Conversation with Danny Scher

To learn more about the making of the CD "Monk: Palo Alto" (available on Amazon, etc.) and the tumultuous times of the 60s which formed the backdrop for that Palo Alto HS concert, check out Robin D. G. Kelley's excellent biography "Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American original, pages 398-399, and a featured article in the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday Datebook, September 13, 2020, pp. 18-19, by local critic Andrew Gilbert.

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FAVORITE HORN SOLOS

Okay. We have another PAJA poll to report; this time we asked six veteran PAJAns to list their five favorite brass or woodwind jazz solos, and we provided the possible examples of John Coltrane on "Say It (Over and Over Again), Roy Hargrove on "You Go To My Head", and others. We asked our respondents to select "other gems" rather than the most famous numbers, which they pretty much cheerfully ignored. Another element they ignored for the most part was the number "five." It was impossible for most to stop at five, indeed out-of-control Michael Griffin offered 12(!) favorites, not stopping at just horn players.

Michael Griffin. 1. Bunny Berigan on "King Porter Stomp" with the Benny Goodman Orchestra, 1935; 2. Clifford Brown, "I'll Remember April", Clifford Brown and Max Roach at Basin Street, 1956; 3. Charlie Parker, "Perdido" in Jazz at Massey Hall, 1953; 4. Ben Webster, with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, on "Cotton Tail", 1940; 5. Lester Young, "D.B. Blues" in the Complete Aladdin Recordings, 1945. Monsieur Griffin also listed Coltrane on "A Love Supreme", Miles Davis on "So What" and Sonny Rollins on "Blue 7" from Saxophone Colossus.

Andy Nozaka offers 1. Coleman Hawkins on "Body and Soul," 1939 ("The record that made me a lover of jazz," sez Andy); 2. Ben Webster (echoing Griffin) on "Cotton Tail" with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1940 (foretelling bebop, says Andy); 3. Stan Getz with the Herman Orchestra on "Early Autumn" (why not?); 4. Art Pepper on "Art Pepper Meets the Rhythm Section", 1957; 5. Charlie Parker on "Lover Man", 1945; 6. Lester Young with Basie on "Lady Be Good," 1936. He also suggests John Coltrane on any of the numbers on the Coltrane-Johnny Hartman collaboration.

Palo Altan **Cathy Dolton** listed these smart entries: 1. Scott Hamilton on "Ill Wind" from the Har-



Coleman Hawkins

old Arlen Centennial Celebration; 2. Trombonist Curtis Fuller on "Stormy Weather," on that same Harold Arlen collection; 3. Art Pepper on "When the Sun Comes Out" (Cathy really likes Harold Arlen); 4. trumpeter Brian Lynch on "Silent Conversation" from The Brian Lynch

Quartet, Volume 1; and 5. "People Will Say We're in Love," Ralph Moore's striking soprano solo on the Rob Schneiderman: Dark Blue album. She also singled out Anat Cohen on "Teimosa" from her CD "Rosa dos Ventos."

Dave Miller takes a break from the piano

and gives us these horn solos: 1. Don Ellis's solo on "Indian Lady" (Dave says "Ellis died too young; I loved his band"); 2. Maynard Ferguson's solo on "Birdland" with his orchestra; 3. Lee Morgan's beautiful melodic solo on "Ceora"; 4. "A Night In Tunisia" as performed by Dizzy Gillespie ("I saw a transcription of this solo and literally was 'blown away'"); 5. Clark Terry on "Mumbles" (okay, "I'm taking liberties here because he's using his voice as though he's playing a horn." Yeah, sure.)

Karl Robinson provides this Lucky Seven: 1. Oliver Nelson, "The Shadow of Your Smile," on the Sound Pieces album; 2. Ben Webster, "Stardust," from Echoes of Harlem Live, 1940; 3. Lester Young, "Body and Soul," on The Complete Aladdin Sessions; 4. Dexter Gordon, "I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry"; 5. Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson on "My Funny Valentine" on Live at the Opera House ("Great sax and trombone solos plus terrific duo harmony"); 6. "Here's That Rainy Day," by Gene Ammons on Gentle Jug, Volume 2; 7. Houston Person, "Since I Fell for You," Live at San Javier Jazz. He also offers Houston's "Now's the Time," a duet with Ron Carter.

Veteran PAJAn **Judith Kays** checks in with an interesting list of her top **vocal** numbers, a belated addition to that exercise in the last *Buff*: 1. Bessie Smith on "Gimme a Pigfoot"; 2. Aretha Franklin's "It Ain't Necessarily So" (1961); 3. Charles Brown on "Drifting Blues"; 4. Ray Charles's "Tell the Truth" or "The Night Time Is the Right Time"; 5. Mose Allison, "The Seventh Son." She adds the non-secular, "Consider Me" by Mahalia Jackson, and "Why Don't You Do Right" by Peggy Lee. Other personal lists of five are welcome—vocal or horn solos.

I'm going to toss my two cents in again, this time favorite cuts from male vocalists: two from Dave Frishberg—"Van Lingle Mungo" and the clever "My Attorney Bernie"; Bob Dorough's great "I've



Gene Ammons

Got Everything I Need"; Mark Murphy on "We'll Be Together Again"; and, oh, Chet Baker—so many, but I'll take "Look For the Silver Lining".

All right, let's start another entry solicitation. What is your favorite Tony Bennett song? Mine is easy, no contest—Tony's version of "The Way You

Look Tonight." What's yours? C'mon, you can do better than "Rags to Riches" or "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Lots to pick from—the Bill Evans albums, the duets, and so on and so on. E-mail your personal favorite to chezfox@mindspring.com. /Ed Fox

HARVEY'S HORN HEROES

Our esteemed event chair (and jazz aficionado supremo) Harvey Mittler was also asked to contribute his favorite horn solos, and we thought our readers would be interested in his entire detailed report.

It's a tough chore to winnow my favorite recorded solos to a mere five, even with your guideline to eliminate the obvious classics, and with some wonderful music I admire already picked by the early birds. As they did, I would surely include among the classics "Body and Soul" by Hawk [Coleman Hawkins], a piece by Pres [Lester Young] and Basie, and several of the others. . . I am compelled to mention that it would be impossible to omit Louis's "West End Blues." My five selections:

1. **Phil Woods**, "Wait Till You See Her," with Phil on alto, Bob Corwin on piano, Sonny Dallas on bass, and Nick Stabulas on drums, from "Warm Woods," on Epic, 1958. This warm, lyrical solo (as well as the album and the artist) has been my favorite since I first heard it, most probably on KJAZ-FM. Similar to the observations by some of the others, any cut from this album could easily stand as my favorite.

2. **Sonny Rollins**, "Tenor Madness" with Sonny and Coltrane on tenor, Red Garland on piano, Paul Chambers bass, and Philly Joe Jones on drums, from "Tenor Madness" on Prestige, 1956. Here we have the bonus of two outstanding soloists, inspiring each other to greater improvisatory heights as they trade choruses.

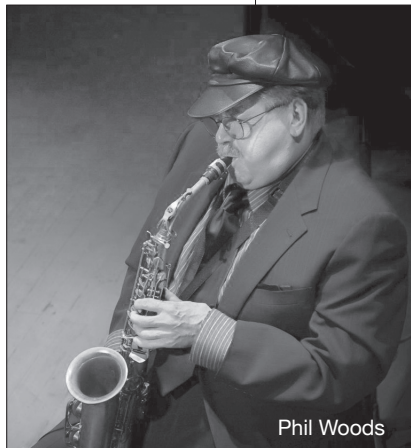
3. **Lee Konitz**, "I'll Remember April." Lee on alto, Elvin Jones drums, Sonny Dallas bass, from "Motion" on Verve 1961. Lee has long been among the masters of improvisation in his solos, having learned well from Lennie Tristano not to repeat clichés and pet phrases and to use the melodies of jazz standards as launching pads leading to unique solo compositions.

4. **Dizzy Gillespie**, "Kush" from "Swing Low Sweet Cadillac" on Impulse, 1967. Diz on trumpet, James Moody on alto, Mike Longo piano, Candy Finch drums, Frank Schifano on bass. This live recording of Diz's original tune affords another twofer with Diz and Moody sharing sterling solos, as well as having the opportunity on the title track to display their uproarious senses of humor. Diz, along with Phil Woods, remains my all-time favorite jazzier.

5. **Art Pepper**, with Warne Marsh, on "Cherokee" on "Art Pepper and Warne Marsh, Donte's, April 26, 1974." Art on alto, Warne on tenor, Bill Mays on piano, John Heard bass, and Lew Malin

drums. This live recording of a group co-led by Art and Warne, who was a one-night substitute for trumpeter Jack Sheldon who couldn't make the gig. Art and Warne hadn't played or recorded together in eleven years and had only scant time to prepare for the show. As the ensemble played and each soloed in his own disparate style, each demonstrated the ability to adapt cohesively to the other's music and to produce an incredible evening's work.

An aspect of jazz which has always appealed to me is how an individual's personality and thoughts are expressed in solos. Two leading examples are Art Pepper and Lee Konitz. Art is the leading exponent of sharing what he is thinking and feeling at the moment. As he communicates his moods and emotions, he instantly bares his soul, and it's as if what's on his mind is conveyed directly from his core to his fingers and to my ears. When Art plays, I think I hear exactly what's up. When Lee Konitz solos, realizing that he never knowingly repeats a prior solo on one of the well-known standards he prefers, I marvel at Lee's creativity and fascinating ability to compose with new chords and honor the melody of the original song. Lee and Art were masters of creating compositions which stand firmly on their own.



Phil Woods