

FROM THE CHAIR

The algorithm for life is change. Like it or not, our world is dominated now by the Internet and digitization. In keeping with this change, PAJA has long maintained a web site: pajazzalliance.org, and I encourage you to check it out. In fact, you can read the latest Buff there, if you wish. But, have no fear, we'll continue to provide a paper edition as well.

We also have e-mail addresses for many of you. If you have not done so, I urge you to provide this information to us so we can quickly communicate with you and keep you informed of our activities.

These days, many folks, especially the younger set, get their only exposure to music via their digital device(s). I suppose it's nice to have music whenever and wherever you want, but they are missing out if they don't hear music LIVE. It is sobering to recognize the decline in the number of opportunities for such exposure. This isn't exactly new; after all, it started once recordings came into existence. And for one thing, the astronomical costs of tickets to popular music concerts shuts many of those fans out of concert attendance. PAJA is dedicated to the importance of live jazz, being there, hearing it LIVE, and at reasonable cost.

In that regard, take note of our first offering for the 2019-2020 season, namely "Bird With Strings," featuring alto virtuoso Andrew Speight, his quartet and the Alexander String Quartet. (See ad elsewhere in this issue.) What one will hear at this event will be different from what you'd hear on the original Charlie Parker recordings, recordings which were by far Bird's best-selling albums. This is pretty much a repeat of the concert given by Andrew earlier this summer at the Stanford Jazz Festival, though the playlist will be somewhat different. I have talked to a few who attended that evening and were so ecstatic that they plan to come again. They also found Andrew's between-numbers commentary excellent background regarding the original recording sessions and their importance in the history of jazz.

So I do hope you'll join us for this one. Remember, the Menlo-Atherton HS auditorium is centrally located with lots of free parking, our ticket prices haven't changed, and we'll continue to schedule an intermission so you can meet and talk with fellow attendees.

One last thought: Come to the FREE member party on September 15 at the Palo Alto Art Center. Let's talk. Tell me or any of our Board members how we can improve our efforts.

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

"CHEZ NOUS" IMPRESSING THE CRITICS

"Chez Nous" is the latest release by local vocalist Rebecca DuMaine and the Dave Miller Combo. Some of the reviews I've seen are absolutely gushing: "Always impressive. . .flawless pipes. . . incredible vocals" and "Rebecca DuMaine possesses one of the most lustrous voices in the business" and "Rebecca DuMaine has perfect phrasing, tone and articulation. . . Miller's deft touch evokes George Shearing" and "Simply amazing work." That's just a few of the



laudatory comments in print and on line. For me, this is an album I'll want to play over and over. The words that come to mind are "elegance," "taste," "joy." DuMaine and Miller always have great playlists on their recordings: combinations of the familiar and not-so-familiar, superb interpretations of the American Songbook, Brazilian standards and others. Of the 14 numbers on "Chez Nous" the ballads are wonderful: "I've Never Been In Love Before," "Tangerine," "I Wish You Love," etc., but DuMaine also shines on uptempo, lighter tunes like "Everything I've Got Belongs To You." Listen to a sample on Rebecca's site: www.rebeccadumaine.com or the Summit Records website; it's available for purchase on that website: www.summitrecords.com. It's also available from amazon.com. /Ed Fox

NOODLING *Thoughts on jazz* By Michael Burman

DAVE CATNEY—UNDER THE RADAR

Dave who? That's the question I always get from callers after I've aired on the radio a piece by Dave Catney, and then commented that he's the best jazz pianist you've never heard of. The calls show that I'm right, at least as regards his lack of fame; so if I'm not too presumptuous, let me try to enlighten you.

Dave was born in West Virginia in 1961 and moved with his family to Houston in 1966. Following experiments with a xylophone (home-made, presumably by his parents), five-year-old Dave taught himself not only to play piano but how to read music. Over the next few years, he added a surprising number of heterogeneous instruments, including clarinet and electric bass. But tuba was his main interest, and it was tuba that he studied at the University of North Texas.

Throughout college, Dave played in jazz sessions off and on campus. He was the pianist in the award-winning UNT jazz band, but his admittance to the piano department was precluded by his lack of formal training. Remember, he was self-taught—in fact, his first formal piano training didn't come until age 23. He did, however, cram into a two-week visit to the Big Apple lessons from jazz pianists Richie Beirach, Joanne Brackeen, and Hal Galper.

Following graduation, Dave made his living for the next few years as a straightforward entertainer-cum-cocktail pianist in hotel lobbies or on cruise ships. In the late 1980s, he took over from Paul English at Cezanne, then just a piano bar, and today still part of Houston's Black Labrador pub. Cezanne started booking national acts and was later described by one critic as "Houston's only national-caliber jazz venue." Dave often performed at Cezanne himself, and you can find You Tube examples of his playing there—in surprisingly good video quality, too.

Dave Catney's breakthrough came in 1990 when he was contracted to Houston's newly formed Justice Records, a label founded by Randall Hage Jamail, son of flamboyant Texas lawyer Joe "King of Torts" Jamail. Joe was a billionaire, and not just because of his multi-million-dollar contingency fee from Pennzoil in its successful '80s dispute with Texaco.

"First Flight"—Dave's first recording as a leader, and one of the earliest Justice records, was released in October 1990: Dave on piano, Marc Johnson on bass, and Ed Soph on drums. Ed, a fellow UNT alum, played with Woody Herman through the mid-70s, and Johnson of course was Bill Evans's final bassist. That association was appropriate given that it's with Bill Evans that Dave is most often compared. (Other influences on Dave are usual suspects from that era: Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea [who encouraged Dave by mail and even wrote a tune for him], and occasionally McCoy Tyner.)

Dave's second recording as a leader (probably the best known, that is to say, the least unknown) came the following year. On "Jade Visions", the number of Bill Evans connections has doubled. Not only is Marc Johnson on bass again, but the title track was written by Scott LaFaro, and was first and most memorably recorded by the Evans-LaFaro-Motian trio at the

Village Vanguard in 1961. LaFaro died in a road accident less than two weeks after that recording. With Dave on this version was drummer Peter Erskine, perhaps best known for his work with Weather Report and Steps Ahead.

During this period, Dave was a sideman on a number of other Justice recordings, including two by vocalist Kellye Gray, notably "Standards in Gray" (1990). Gray recalled, "[Originally we] both didn't think either one of us was talented. But then we went on to become each other's advocates. . . The fact that we were both gay I think was comforting to both of us, that we could be in this world of prejudice and always find solace in each other."

That Dave was battling AIDS was known only to friends and fans until after his health began to deteriorate in 1993. His third and final Justice recording as a leader was issued in April 1994—the solo piano "Reality Road," the first instance of non-classical music recorded at Rice University's Stude Concert Hall.

After a quarter century, what is Dave's legacy? It's piecemeal at best. Obviously there are the three recordings referred to above.

In his capacity as assistant professor of music at UNT, Ed Soph established the Dave Catney Memorial Scholarship in 1994. Perhaps the best epitaph is this comment from Kellye Gray: "As a human being, I think Dave was one of the greatest losses that I'll ever experience in my life. . . he was *the* guy. He was playing like a New York player, in Houston, and he was world-class."

In 1993, the year before Dave's death, pianist Fred Hersch produced "Last Night, When We Were Young: The Ballad Album" for Classical Action—Performing Arts Against AIDS. It featured performances by Fred and many other major artists. Although it's a gem, it's long out of print, but at You Tube you can hear the title track sung by Mark Murphy. Dave plays his "Little Prayer" on the record, with Sandra Dudley singing his lyric, "I count the stars/I feel you're still there."

In 2000, six years after his death, a fourth recording emerged with Dave as leader, called "Window of Light." It was issued as UR-1001 on Urbana Records, a label apparently created for that sole purpose: there are no other items on the label. Engineer/producer Randy Miller compiled the music from demos done in 1988 and 1989. Other than the opening track—a quartet featuring Warren Sneed on soprano saxophone—all the performances are by trios, including four of the six originals by Dave which later debuted on "First Flight." (Presumably these performances are the reason Randall Jamail signed Dave for Justice Records shortly after they were laid down.) I myself find the playing ebullient and full of joie de vivre.

Dave Catney now is no longer a jazz pianist you've never heard of. Whether he's one of the best is for you to judge. Why not start your assessment with "Reality Road," available in its entirety on You Tube?

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



SJF STILL FRESH AFTER 40+ YEARS

The Stanford Jazz Festival is still one of the best jazz festivals anywhere. With more than 30 events over a period of 36 days—June 21 to August 3—the 2019 festival did what its previous editions did—bring jazz headliners and new talent to the Peninsula, often putting them in unique combinations you can hear nowhere else. Artistic Director Jim Nadel mixes major veteran artists, like Ken Peplowski, with fresh voices, such as Dawn Clement. The Festival and its associated Jazz Workshop are definitely a local treasure. Here are thumbnail reviews of a few of the concerts at this year's festival.

■ AKIRA TANA & FRIENDS.

Campbell Recital Hall, June 28

If drummer Akira Tana invites a jazz group from Japan to play with him, do yourself a favor. Don't miss it. In this hugely satisfying concert we were treated to Atsuko Hashimoto on organ, one of a seemingly endless stream of wonderful female jazz keyboard artists from Japan. Her husband Yutaka Hashimoto was on guitar and he was terrific. The third member from the city of Osaka was saxman Hideki Kawamura—fine, but I thought his miking was not quite right. The featured artist of the night was vocalist Jackie Ryan, and she brilliantly soared above Atsuko's marvelous organ chords to offer us several of the late Michel Legrand's familiar numbers: "The Windmills of Your Mind," "Summer Me, Winter Me," "The Theme From 'The Summer of '42'", and "I'll Wait For You," from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (sung in French, *naturellement*). Did I say hugely satisfying concert? *Absolutement.*/Ed Fox



Atsuko Hashimoto

■ BIRD WITH STRINGS.

Dinkelspiel, June 29

When Alisa Clancy introduced the musicians she said, "After this concert you will say, I'm really glad I went to this concert." She was totally right. Altoist Andrew Speight's regular quartet members—Matt Clark (p), Michael Zisman (b), and Austin Harris (d)—were joined by the Alexander String Quartet (actually a quintet), augmented by oboist James Moore. The program was the performance of Charlie Parker's original Parker-with-Strings charts from the 1940s, standards from the American Songbook, like "Yesterdays," "Stardust," "Laura" and "Summertime." Beautiful music flowed from Speight's alto sax, with Matt Clark contributing several elegant piano solos. The addition of the oboe added intrigu-

ing contrasts. The group was able to "stretch out" on two Gerry Mulligan tunes—"Rocker" and "Gold Rush"—on which Speight was free to display more of his vaunted bebop talents. His insights into the career of Charlie Parker and the strings project in his song introductions were a meaningful bonus. This was a most enjoyable evening from all aspects. For those who missed it, there will be a reprise presented by PAJA on Saturday, October 12, at the Menlo-Atherton HS Performing Arts Center./Karl Robinson

■ MATT WILSON'S HONEY & SALT.

Campbell Recital Hall, July 14

The Honey & Salt project is a combination of Carl Sandburg poetry and free jazz by the Matt Wilson Quintet—Matt on drums, Dawn Clement (piano and vocals), Jeff Lederer (reeds), Nadjé Noorhuis (trumpet and vocals), and Martin Wind on bass. The poetry was recited and sung by members of the quintet or read by SJW faculty and staff members. The reading of the famous poem "Fog" was a recording of Sandburg himself. The music was provided by the quintet, all excellent musicians who played a changing array of moods to fit the verse. Wilson's superb creative drumming was in evidence, as was his well-known humor, musically and verbally. Blues, country, New Orleans, chamber and martial genres were all represented in the free jazz spectrum. Highlights were "As Wave Follows Wave" with an extended solo by Wind, "Choose" (martial), "Daybreak" (New Orleans) and "To Know Silence Perfectly" (chamber). The enthusiastic audience, many of whom were SJW students, were treated to a wonderful, eclectic evening of jazz./Karl Robinson

■ AN EVENING WITH VICTOR LIN.

Dinkelspiel, Thursday, July 18

It is very unusual for me to feel a bit cranky at a Victor Lin concert. For many Festivals now Victor has been one of the highlights of the series, with his engaging personality and wit, his brilliance on piano and violin, and his skill at putting interesting combinations of jazz artists together. So, the same was

expected this year—despite the fact there was no theme specified, as with previous concerts. Victor was on piano the first set and playing with Zach Ostroff on bass and Luther Allison on drums, he gave us a thunderous rendition of “Lucky Be A Lady Tonight.” Wonderful. But nothing else exciting—“Slow Boat to China,” a strangely unsatisfying duet with Peter Stoltzman on “Blue in Green,” and a nice Joao Gilberto tune, featuring tenor Daniel Rotem. The second half never took off—fiddlers three wandering the aisles of Dinkelspiel, a promising but not-ready-for-prime time young vocalist named Tim Ouyang, some minor contributions from Dayna Stephens and percussionist Tupac Mantilla. The Donnie Hathaway closer was not quite the killer finish intended. Catch you next year, Victor. /Ed Fox

■ **JOEY ALEXANDER.**

Dinkelspiel, 7:30pm, July 21

The phenom is now 16 years old and still impressing fans around the world with his considerable piano chops. Youth brings energy, and with that, Joey is absolutely the jazz Energizer Bunny. His keyboard attack is, in a word, formidable. While he can play a ballad, it’s not long before—at a rapid tempo—he is pounding away to great effect on the ivories. And I do mean pounding. He actually broke a string in the instrument while rehearsing for tonight’s performance. Joey played mostly his own compositions and while I enjoyed a few of them, especially the encore, I found myself thinking, “These all sound about the same...”—despite being played with verve, enthusiasm, competence, and... above all, force. It was that barrage of notes that wore me down. But I need to mention Joey’s amazingly talented bandmates. Kris Funn’s bass playing was simply inspired and helped no end to give the trio’s performance a needed “rounding.” Quincy Phillips on drums played with authority and finesse. Joey benefited mightily from these highly skilled sidemen. /Michael Griffin



■ **ANAT COHEN, DAFNIS PRIETO, SHERYL BAILEY.**

Dinkelspiel, July 29

An exciting sextet including Anat on reeds, Cuban drummer Prieto, Sheryl Bailey on guitar, Monk

winner Marquis Hill on trumpet, Jason Lindner on keyboard, and Matt Brewer on bass. Putting these folks together speaks to Jim Nadel’s incredible gift of being able to assemble groups of musicians who have not played together before, but then create great jazz moments. The format of this concert was six original compositions, one from each band member. The ebullient Anat Cohen was the leader and spokesperson. Her wonderful solo on Prieto’s “Feed The Lions” was heavily into klezmer. She combined with Hill on his “Return Of The Students” and on Brewer’s Chopin-inspired “Aspiring to Normalcy”—both evening high points. Hill displayed his well-known full tone. Brewer and Lindner contributed outstanding solos. This was all executed on previously unseen material after one hour of rehearsal. Remarkable. /Karl Robinson



■ **TAYLOR EIGSTI GROUP.**

Dinkelspiel, July 30

In introducing this concert, Jim Nadel reminded us that this was Taylor’s 23rd summer with the Stanford Jazz Workshop/Festival, and we’ve been privileged to witness his progression from child prodigy to mature artist. Taylor’s maturity and virtuosity, as a performer, composer, and arranger, were showcased in this splendid presentation of mostly Taylor’s compositions—every number earning a hearty response from the near-full Dinkelspiel audience. He was ably assisted by Matt Brewer on bass, Kendrick Scott drums, the L.A. guitarist Jeff Parker making his SJF debut, and Dawn Clement on Fender Rhodes and vocals. Highlights for me were Taylor’s song “Rainbows,” a soulful tune dedicated to his sister, the closing piece—an amazing “Caravan,” and the encore: the standard “Skylark,” as arranged by Taylor, with Clement on vocals. /Ed Fox



One More Time!

PAJA PRESENTS

BIRD WITH STRINGS



Charlie Parker Centennial



Your chance to see and hear alto standout Andrew Speight's BIRD WITH STRINGS, a recreation of the famous Charlie Parker With Strings record sessions of the 1940s. This program was a major hit at the recent Stanford Jazz Festival, and if you missed it make sure to join us on October 12.

The playlist includes standards like "Yesterdays," "Stardust," "Laura," "Summertime," and many more.

Featuring

ANDREW SPEIGHT, Alto

MATT CLARK, Piano

MICHAEL ZISMAN, Bass

AUSTIN HARRIS, Drums

And THE ALEXANDER STRING
QUARTET and Friends

**Menlo-Atherton High School
Performing Arts Center
555 Middlefield, Atherton
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 12 7:30PM**

**Palo Alto
Jazz
Alliance**

Tickets \$45 general, \$35 PAJA members, \$15 students
Order online: pajazzalliance.org or by mail from PA Tickets,
c/o E.Fox, 294 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto 94306 after September 1 or purchase
at the usual outlets: Peninsula Music & Repair, The Record Man, Vinyl
Solutions, and Groove Yard.

THE JAZZ PERISCOPE

Selected gigs for September and October 2019

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

- 9/17 Tommy Igoe..... 8pm
- 9/26 Rodney Franklin..... 8pm
- 9/27 John Santos Sextet..... 8, 10pm
- 10/5, 6 Eliane Elias
- 10/15 Count Basie Orchestra



Gerald Clayton

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

- 9/5-8 Veronica Swift
- 9/5-8 Ahmad Jamal
- 9/15 Tierney Sutton and Anne Hampton Callaway..... 7pm
- 9/29 Christian McBride Big Band..... 3, 7pm
- 10/3-6 Chucho Valdés: Jazz Bata and guests
- 10/6 Julian Lage Trio..... 8pm
- 10/10 Kenny Barron and Friends: Monk tribute (Hergst Theater)..... 8pm
- 10/17-20 Christian Sands Trio

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

- 9/8 George Colligan Trio.....4:30pm
- 9/22 Allison Au Trio.....4:30pm
- 10/6 Gerald Clayton Quartet.....4:30pm
- 10/27 Kendrick Scott Oracle.....4:30pm

CETRELLA Restaurant, 400 Main St., Los Altos *www.centrella.com* 650/948-0400

Jazz vocalist every Saturday night, 6:30-9:30, with sax ace Michael O'Neill

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

- 9/16 Tierney Sutton Band..... 7pm
- 10/7 Julian Lage Trio..... 7, 9pm
- 10/14 Grace Kelly..... 7pm
- 10/21 Christian Sands Trio..... 7pm

SAN JOSE JAZZ *www.sanjosejazz.org*

ANGELICA'S 863 Main St., Redwood City *www.angelicasllc.com*

- 9/22, 10/20 Mike Galisatus Big Band..... 7pm

BING CONCERT HALL STUDIO **Stanford University** *www.live.stanford.edu/venues*

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

SAVANNA JAZZ 1189 Laurel St., San Carlos 415/624-4549 *www.savannajazz.com*

7 MILE HOUSE 2800 Bayshore Blvd., Brisbane. 415/467-2343 *www.7milehouse.com*

Jazz Sundays, 5-8pm(Lateano, Speight, Stoloroff, Zisman, et al.)
Jazz Tuesdays, 7-10pm (Bendigkeit or Molina groups)