

FROM THE CHAIR

So, what to write as we continue to have our lives dominated by dark events, such as the COVID-19 delta variant, the horrible fires to the north, plus all the troubles from Afghanistan and the world in general. Should I search for something happy in the contemporary world to take our minds off these tragedies? No, that seems pollyannaish under the circumstances, and somehow I'm led to thinking about just how long might this pandemic last, and how will it be viewed, say, fifty or a hundred years from now.

In 2019, I visited England and the fascinating Stonehenge site of a pile of weird rocks standing in a circle. There are countless opinions as to the purpose of Stonehenge's arrangement of stones. Recently, researchers have concluded that one element of the circle involved hearing music and singing when standing inside the full circle. Outside the circle, the experience was less appealing. (Is this an early example in support of the advantages of hearing music up close and live?) It has only taken 4,000 years to reach this understanding, but look how music has continued to grow in so many directions, jazz being one, despite plagues, earthquakes, wars and other destruction.

On this same trip, I visited the Pepys Library at Cambridge University. Samuel Pepys's diary is one of the main sources of historical information about a seemingly endless time of plagues and fires that beset London in the seventeenth century. A time of profound misery, but the world recovered and moved on. Science now figures out how to make vaccines to help us survive plagues. Incidentally, there is an entry in one of the diaries reporting on the repair of his string instrument called a theorbo. That particular instrument has disappeared, but music hasn't, thank goodness.

So—you are wondering—what is my point? Simply that the world will always have disasters and suffering, yet we adjust and some good always survives. So too for PAJA: one day we will have live concerts again. And perhaps some day a hundred years from now, some enterprising researcher will find slightly decayed copies of *The Jazz Buff* and understand that live jazz was an important activity of the time. At least for some of us.

In continued appreciation of your support,

C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

BACH'S FALL SEASON SET

The Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society has set a schedule of four concerts for the fall, September 12 to October 3. There will be in-person audiences on site, though management says they'll be following local health department directives regarding masks, etc., and possibly requiring all patrons to be vaccinated. Livestreaming passes will also be available for most concerts.

Sunday, Sept. 12	Joshua Redman Trio
Sunday, Sept. 19	Best of S.F. Comedy Competition
Sunday, Sept. 26	The Cookers
Sunday, Oct. 3	Warren Wolf Quartet (History of the Vibraphone)

All concerts start at 4:30pm. Tickets went on sale to the general public on August 27.



BILL MOODY—AN APPRECIATION

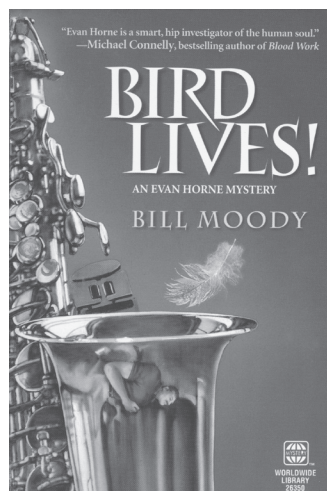
Bill Moody died in 2018, at age 76. In one life he was a jazz musician, a drummer who played with various local groups, and at one time toured and recorded with the likes of Maynard Ferguson, Junior Mance and Jon Hendricks. In another life he was a professor of creative writing at Sonoma State University. But it is in a third life that he is probably best remembered—the author of the Evan Horne Mystery novels.

Jazz fans: if you are also a reader of crime fiction and you are unfamiliar with the Evan Horne series then let me introduce you to Bill Moody and the seven books he wrote with jazz pianist Evan Horne as the central character, a series the publication of which spanned 17 years, from 1994 to 2011.

In the first two books, *Solo Hand* and *Death of a Tenor Man*, Evan has recently been in a road accident in which tendons in his right hand were severed, putting his piano career in serious jeopardy. Not being able to play, he gets involved in solving crimes instead. In the second book, he tries to find out the truth behind the death of saxman Wardell Gray, who was found as a drug fatality in the Las Vegas desert in 1955. In the third book, *The Sound of the Trumpet*, he has to determine whether supposedly newly discovered tapes were actually recorded by the late trumpeter Clifford Brown.

Bird Lives! Is the fourth novel, and it introduces a heinous serial killer who is knocking off various smooth jazz performers (well, that's one solution...). By this time, Evan is playing piano again with a gig at the Jazz Bakery in L.A. and other venues, and he is called upon by the FBI to assist with their efforts to find the serial killer. It is in this book that he meets the fetching FBI special agent, Andie Lawrence, who will become his main squeeze for the rest of the series.

Looking For Chet Baker finds Horne in Europe—recharging batteries after the heinous serial killer episode. After a successful gig at Ronnie Scott's in London, he lands in Amsterdam with regular stints



at two jazz clubs. While there he naturally has to look into questions surrounding Chet Baker's death, which involves him in Amsterdam's nasty drug underworld. In the sixth book, *Shades of Blue*, Evan returns home and settles in Monte Rio, near the Russian River, which puts him near Andie, who is now assigned to the SF FBI office.

In this book, Evan finds out who his real father is. This one also has some newly discovered jazz tapes. The coolest part though is the New York recording sessions with legendary drummer Roy Haynes.

The final offering in the series is *Fade to Blue*. Evan is hired to make a movie star look like a real jazz pianist and to compose the music for the subsequent movie. Stuff happens, one or two folks are murdered, and then serenity is restored. This may be my favorite book in the series.

So, why read these? Well for one thing, for a jazz fan they are chockablock with interesting jazz history and anecdotes. Moody was an authentic jazz guy, the real deal. Many familiar tunes are named in every book, and each time another song is mentioned, it will ricochet through your mind, and, if you're like me, you'll want to hum or sing it, smoothing the plot along.

How do these mysteries stack up against the best crime novels? Well, Moody is a very competent writer—the books are really well done and Evan is a complex but sympathetic character. But the biggest plot fault of these novels to me is Evan Horne's obsessiveness—he can't leave things alone, he must follow through to the bitter end, and this often strains credibility. You'll ask, "Why is he doing this? Why doesn't he just forget about it?" But no, Evan Horne cannot do that, even if it leads him and others into serious danger. Just a quibble—the rewards in these books to the jazz fan are more than enough to overcome minor plot failings.

In two other works of fiction, Moody wanders into the world of international espionage: *Czechmate: The Spy Who Played Jazz* and *The Man in Red Square*, fairly decent works in the genre, especially the second book. Bill Moody also published a nonfiction work, *The Jazz Exiles*, about American jazz musicians in Europe after WWII.

Several of these books, including the first four Evan Horne novels, are available from the publisher, Down and Out Books. They are all available from [amazon.com.](http://amazon.com/)/Frank Story

NOODLING *Thoughts on jazz* By Michael Burman

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Wynton Kelly

This concludes a two-part article on two perhaps undersung jazz pianists, Red Garland and Wynton Kelly.

Pianist Wynton Kelly was born in Jamaica in December 1931. But he didn't spend long there: five years later his parents moved to Brooklyn, NYC. He never made much of his native country—so little, in fact, that some biographies have him born in Brooklyn; indeed, I myself wasn't certain of it until I asked Jimmy Cobb in 2001.

Doubtless it was Kelly's island heritage that drew him to the rhythmic music of the R&B bands in which he played as a teenager, but his jazz playing always showed the influence—in-escapable in that era—of Bud Powell. He made his first recording at age 16 behind tenor player Lou Singer (apparently an R&B hit), followed at age 17 by one with vocalist Billy Stewart, two with vocalist Babs Gonzales, and one with vocalist/alto saxophonist Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson (there's that R&B connection). At age 18 he recorded with Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, and at 19 with vocalist Dinah Washington, beginning a musical relationship that was to continue throughout the '50s; most likely it was on a session with Dinah that he first met Jimmy Cobb, with whom he was later to work for a decade.

Kelly came to the attention of Blue Note's Alfred Lion, who that same year made Kelly's first recording as a leader. That recording by Kelly, still aged only 19, was one of the earliest in the series of 10" LPs entitled "New Faces, New Sounds" that presented youngsters such as Kenny Drew, Horace Silver, Frank Foster, Lou Donaldson, Clifford Brown, and others.

Throughout the 1950s, Kelly recorded prolifically. There were several sessions, as mentioned, with Dinah Washington, and several more with Lester Young. After a couple of years in the army, he was a sideman with J.J. Johnson, Art Farmer, and Sonny Rollins; with Johnny Griffin and Benny Golson (twice each), Lee Morgan, Charlie Rouse with Paul Quinichette, and too many others to mention. Kelly was part of Tony Scott's orchestra backing Billie Holiday, and part of an expanded Art Blakey Jazz Messengers with Lee Morgan, Melba Liston, Sahib Shihab and Cecil Payne. His most persistent relationship was with Dizzy Gillespie: as part of the orchestra, Kelly was on the LPs "Birks' Works" and "Dizzy in Greece", and the one recorded at the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival; he's also the pianist on Diz's "Sittin' In" with three great tenor players, Coleman Hawkins, Paul Gonsalves and Stan Getz.

Kelly became the pianist in the Miles Davis Sextet in January 1959. As described in the preceding Red Garland article, by 1958 relations between Miles and Red had deteriorated, and Red's tenure became intermittent. Bill Evans

joined Miles in April 1958 (his first recorded appearances came from two dates in May at Café Bohemia in May) and left after seven months, in October. In November Red was back for the sextet's broadcast from Washington, DC.

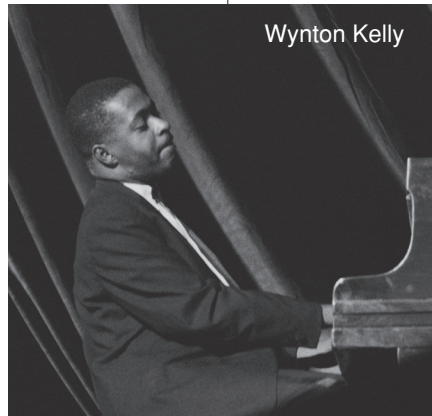
For Wynton Kelly 1959 began with a live Davis Sextet broadcast from Birdland. In early February the sextet was in Chicago, and all the members save Miles himself (i.e., Cannonball, Coltrane, Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb) participated in recordings, both as a quintet for EmArcy, and (without Coltrane) for Chicago's own great Vee-Jay label under the leadership variously of Cannonball or Chambers. So it came as an unpleasant surprise to Kelly when in March he arrived at Columbia's 30th St. studios for the first of the two sessions that compose "Kind of Blue" only to find Bill Evans already there. Miles's autobiography with Quincy Troupe explains it as follows. "Wynton joined us just before I was going into the studio to make 'Kind of Blue', but I had already planned that album around the piano playing of

Bill Evans, who had agreed to play on it with us." Ruffled feathers were smoothed somewhat by Miles's assigning the piano rôle on "Freddie Freeloader" to Kelly: the tempo suited Kelly to a T, and what a sparkling solo he produced on this classic!

Almost all the recordings Kelly made in his two-plus years with Miles came from live concerts in Europe in 1960, issued on various European labels; during this period, Cannonball had left to restart his quintet with brother Nat, thus reducing Miles's sextet to a quintet; Coltrane, too, had left, being replaced by, first, Sonny Stitt and then Hank Mobley. Certainly, studio recordings are like hens' teeth: following "Kind of Blue", Kelly appears only on "Someday My Prince Will Come".

Kelly's final two recordings with Miles are live. From April 1961 there's the two-night (Friday and Saturday) engagement at San Francisco's Blackhawk; these are particular favorites of mine. A month later, the quintet fronted the Gil Evans orchestra at Carnegie Hall; a casual recording was made on a portable Webcor tape machine, and the music was later issued under the obvious title.

The sheer number of leaders listed earlier with whom Kelly recorded suggests that Kelly might have been content as a sideman. Indeed, by contrast with Red Garland (featured in the prior Jazz Buff), Kelly's recordings as a leader are few. Since his "New Faces" debut a decade earlier, by April 1961 he'd led fewer than half a dozen dates: from 1958, "Piano," also issued as "Wynton Kelly" (a quartet date with Kenny Burrell, Chambers and Philly Joe Jones), for Riverside; from 1959, "Kelly Blue" (variously trio with Chambers and Cobb, and sextet with that trio augmented by Nat Adderley, Belgian flautist Bobby Jaspar, and Benny Golson), also for Riverside; and two dates for Vee-Jay, "Kel-



ly at Midnight" (trio with Chambers and Jones) from 1960, and "Kelly Great" (that trio with Lee Morgan and Wayne Shorter) from 1959.

But evidently Kelly did have other aspirations. He left Miles following the Carnegie Hall date in 1961, taking Chambers and Cobb with him to form the Wynton Kelly Trio, which was to remain unchanged until the bassist's untimely death in 1969 of tuberculosis, aged still only 33. The trio toured constantly and recorded somewhat frequently as a unit, beginning immediately with two more for Vee-Jay. There were a couple of dates with guitarists (Kelly's second with Kenny Burrell, and notably "Smokin' at the Half Note" with Wes Montgomery--which, notwithstanding its title, is mostly a studio recording); and others where the trio backs a horn (e.g., two with Joe Henderson at the Famous Ballroom in Baltimore, MD, in 1968).

All good things come to an end. Ron McClure had occasionally subbed for Chambers when the latter was ill (so good was McClure that "Full View" from 1966, with McClure in for Chambers, was Jimmy Cobb's favorite of the trio's works). Chambers's death marked the beginning of the end for the trio, but while it continued McClure was the bassist.

Kelly was not without his demons: apparently he was

a functioning alcoholic and his own health deteriorated; the trio disbanded, and he had difficulty in finding work. What was to be his final engagement was as a visitor to Toronto, Ontario in 1971: Kelly died following an epileptic seizure; he was 39 years old.

As for Kelly the pianist, Grove mentions his "funky approach [which] exhibits the use of expanded block chords and a number of impressionistic touches." Notwithstanding his excellence at ballads, Kelly was, I feel, essentially a pianist with a preference for medium and medium-up tempos, often with a bluesy feel. His solos were jaunty, and guaranteed to put a smile on the listener's face. Whatever the true essence of his style, though, it certainly spoke to many of his peers: he was in demand by so many of the best—and at such a young age, too (he was aged only 27 when he joined Miles. At the very least, his fine contributions to some of the most important/popular jazz classics ensures his place in jazz history. Let's leave the last word to Orrin Keepnews, who had produced many of the recordings mentioned: interviewed on KCSM, Orrin opined that Kelly was "simply the best."

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

BIRD AND BECKETT—LIVE AND STREAMING

Bird and Beckett Books & Records is located in San Francisco's Glen Park area at 653 Chenery Street. A PAJA favorite, tenor saxophonist and educator Patrick Wolff, told me in mid-July about a month-long series, when he was leading a group every Wednesday, as did other musicians on different nights. B&B's civic-minded owner Eric Whittington formed a nonprofit Cultural Legacy Project to provide work for local musicians and a place for local fans to hear jazz, but amazingly, the BBCLP was originated in 2007 to present three weekly concert series, poetry readings twice a month, and other cultural programs, and it publishes Americana, an

annual literary review. Eric saw a need, and he filled it by his ambitious, energetic program to enhance the area's cultural activities during the pandemic. It has been his purpose to present local musical talent and to pay them a reasonable fee, and to afford an opportunity for local audiences to hear live jazz. The ticket policy is to pay a low or no fee and to supplement the funds to pay the musicians by grants and donations, and customers bring their own beverages without paying a cover or corkage fee. B&B has been live-streaming these shows, for free, but it asks viewers to consider making a donation to support the program and help pay the musicians. Now that live shows are reemerging, B&B is continuing to broadcast livestream permitting viewers to enjoy the performances. Kudos to Bird and Beckett and to Eric Whittington! /Harvey Mittler



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