

May 2016

PO BOX 60397, PALO ALTO, CA 94306

Ed Fox, Editor

FROM THE CHAIR

It has always been PAJA's mission to support jazz education in the schools. To that end, we recently made a contribution to the jazz band program of the Alum Rock School District in East San Jose. Our funds will help provide scholarships for students to attend the San Jose Jazz summer camp at the end of June.

In consideration, the PAJA Board was invited to attend their spring concert, entitled "A Night of Jazz." Shirley and Chet Douglas, along with Michael Griffin and myself, did so and we were very impressed with their program. This performance was held at the Evergreen Valley College Visual Performing Art Theater. The opening set offered a full-size big band made up of Grade 6 to Grade 8 students of all sizes, sexes and ethnicities. There were a number of soloists as well as a multiple-member chorus. It was heartwarming to see so much enthusiasm and commitment, not only by the students but also the strong presence of parents and volunteers who were equally supportive, making for a very successful show. A second set followed featuring the Alum Rock All-Star Alumni—namely Amy Dabalos (vocals), Joe DeRose (drums) and Oscar Pangilnan (sax). In addition we were able to meet and talk with the director—Tim Spacek, a sparkplug-type who makes it all happen in a fun and exciting way.

You'll read a review in this issue of the new film "Miles Ahead," a kind of biopic about Miles Davis. Although the movie's plot has its limitations, I would urge you to see it. There are mainly only bits and pieces played of those familiar Miles Davis classics—usually just an intro, followed by new original music. But it's still jazz, and nicely done. The lead actor, Don Cheadle, does a fantastic job as Miles and it's worth it just to see his talented portrayal.

Finally, a big thank you to those who attended PAJA's spring concert at the Community School of Music and Arts courtyard in Mountain View. I can't think of a better way to spend the First of May; it was a balmy spring afternoon and our spectators were thankfully protected from the sun by portable tenting. There weren't a lot of kids, but those who came added a lot of fun to the afternoon. And notably, it was the first jazz concert for Herb and Marilyn Wong's latest grandchild. The Dave Miller

group was cool and mellow, as usual, and they had welcome augmentation in guitarist Brad Buethe. The Peninsula's favorite vocalist Rebecca DuMaine was in fine form. She did do some numbers for the kids, like Willie Wonka's "Pure Imagination", but in general it was superb fare for any jazz fan, ending with a swinging version of "I Love Being Here With You." It was a fine, relaxing and highly enjoyable time for all, and thanks once again to Event Chair Harvey Mittler for pulling it all together.

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

BEACON OF TRUTH LEE KONITZ

"There has to be question of what improvisation is and why we would do it, and whether it is a meaningful thing or not. I think of all the people in the world, Lee [Konitz] stands as a beacon of truth in improvisation. There aren't many like him, where you listen and come away with 'OK, that's why we do this.'" Pianist Dan Tepfer, on alto veteran Lee Konitz, quoted in "Lee Konitz: Melodic Invention," by Ted Panken, in the August 2015 issue of *DownBeat*.

TWO JAZZ FILMS ON LOCAL SCREENS

BORN TO BE BLUE

The fascination with Chet Baker continues, and the latest entry is by a young Canadian filmmaker Robert Budreau—"Born To Be Blue," starring Ethan Hawke as Baker. Hawke has a slight resemblance to Baker and he does a reasonably good job, even

singing (somewhat) like Chet, though thankfully there isn't too much of that. The film deals with the period after Baker got all his teeth knocked out in Sausalito (1966) and had to essentially learn how to play again, with uncomfortable dentures. I can find no references in the literature to a Jane, the woman in the film who loves him and is instrumental in his rehabilitation, winningly played by the British actress Carmen Ejogo. I suppose she represents all the women Baker used, abused, and relied upon during



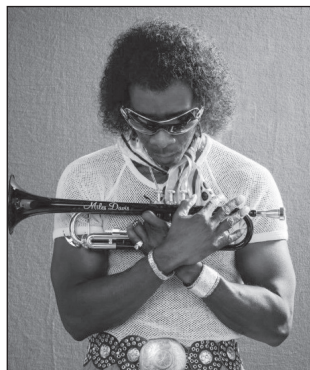
his career (and of course there was no shortage of those). I found this quote offered by a woman at his funeral: "Chet can hurt people even after he's dead. Remember that."

He was not a nice man, but the movie depicts him as an insecure naif, hungry for approval—particularly from Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie (there are roles for them in the film). It's Dizzy who finally gets him a gig in New York (but it was the Half Note, not Birdland, which is probably more recognizable to the average moviegoer) and he nails it, but only after getting the needed confidence by shooting up and falling off the wagon, in Jane's absence. If there's a message then, and there are plenty of other historical examples, it's do what you have to do to pursue your art, your genius, even if it means you'll lose the rest of your humanity and the candle will blow out well before its time.

Jazz fans will want to know who are the musicians who actually play the tunes in the movie (*My Funny Valentine*, *Let's Get Lost*, *Born To Be Blue*, etc.), and you have to wait until the very end of the credits—after the grips, the location manager, the first assistant accountant, and the caterers to find out that Kevin Turcotte did the Baker licks on trumpet (and he does a creditable job). Turcotte is on the faculty of York University in Toronto. Another Canadian, David Braid, is the film's bandleader, pianist and arranger. If you have ATT U-Verse, you can get *Born To Be Blue* on demand. IMDB gives it 7.7 stars out of 10. That's a bit generous./Kenneth Doll.

MILES AHEAD

Directed and co-written by the well-known Hollywood actor Don Cheadle, who also plays the lead role as Miles Davis, a few of us went to see "Miles Ahead" at the Landmark Embarcadero theater in San Fran. This is a civilized theater that lets you sit in a leather Barcalounger with



a beer in hand—just like your own living room. Bottom line: I liked the move. Despite some mixed reviews and Willie Brown's put-down in the *Chron*, I liked it. Despite more than a few liberties taken with history and tossing in a cockamamie car chase, with gunplay(!), I still liked it.

Cheadle did a decent job capturing Davis's persona. He is not a stranger to impersonation, having played Sammy Davis, Jr. in a TV production of "The Rat Pack" in 1998. Miles' first wife, Frances Taylor, is ably played by the knockout, attractive Emayatzy Corinealdi (say that fast three times!).

If you've read Miles' autobiography, you know about his

abandoning his music and slipping into a dark hole of drugs, alcohol and nasty behavior in the late 70s. That's where the "plot" takes place, with plenty of flashbacks to the glory days of Miles with Gil Evans, et al. Much of the story revolves around Miles and a freelance writer (played by Ewan McGregor) trying to retrieve a stolen tape recording of Miles' "new" music. With the help of flashbacks we see what the anti-hero's character was and what it has become, and it's not a pretty sight, regardless of how he revolutionized jazz in 1959, and again in 1965.

OK, the flick is a bit of a rough ride. But the challenging (if schizoid) way it is told, the quality of the acting, the photography and music all make it worth the effort. When Frances leaves him, the film gets rather surreal (reflecting what's in Miles' head, I suppose), flashing forward and backward in time. But it all ends "well" with Miles playing his horn again, and an intriguing final concert piece closes out the movie with the onscreen participation of Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Esperanza Spalding. East coast artist Keyon Harrold plays the Miles trumpet licks. Robert Glasper is the film's music director. And one number was co-written by Cheadle and . . . Taylor Eigsti! Taylor's original "Taylor Made" appears on the movie soundtrack (available from Amazon.com).

The Palo Alto Weekly gave it 3 stars out of 4, so if it's still playing at Century 16 or 20, give it a shot, sez me./D. Michael Griffin

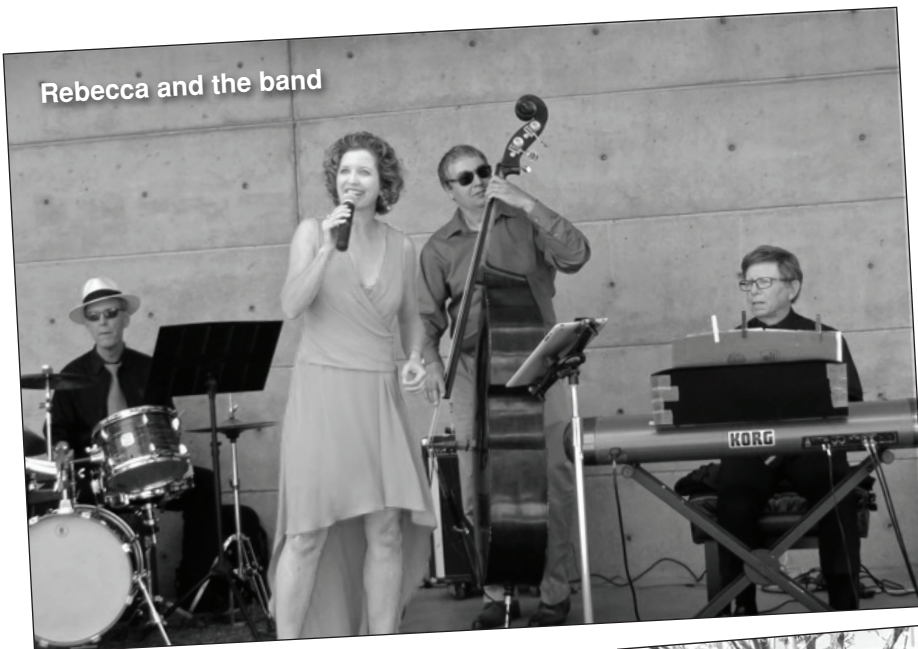
JAZZ ON THE HILL 2016

KCSM's annual daylong jazz bash will be held again at the College of San Mateo on Saturday, June 4 this year. This free community alfresco event runs from 11am to 6pm. Artists include Charlie Musslewhite, Etienne Charles, Grace Kelly (with Lynne Arriale and Charenee Wade), and others. Free parking in designated lots. Food trucks, but bring your own picnic stuffs, if you wish.

MONTEREY'S NEXT GENERATION FESTIVAL CONCERT—APRIL 8

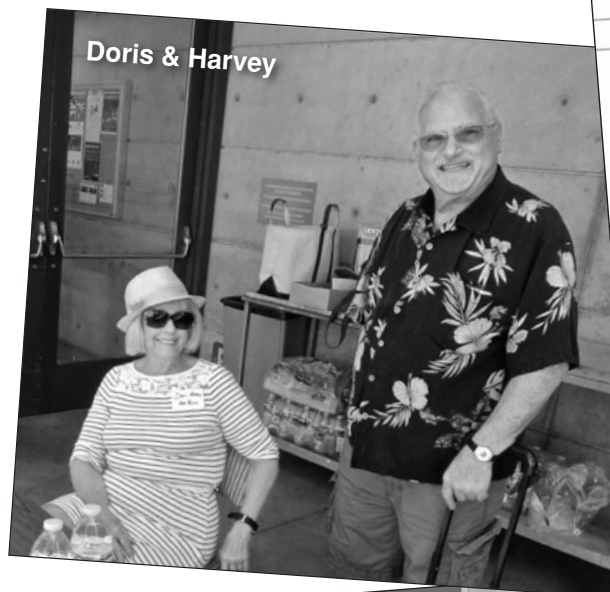
It sounded like something worth taking in, the Opening Night Judges Concert at the Monterey Conference Center, featuring performers Terri Lyne Carrington (drums), Tia Fuller (sax), James Tormé (vocals), Ray Drummond (bass), pianist Helen Sung, and Bruce Forman (guitar). It was 50 bucks, but it was a good cause—supporting the MJF Next Generation program, so it wasn't difficult convincing Michael Griffin to trek down to Monterey with me, as Michael is a gamer—if it's jazz, he'll go (often, anyway). The Monterey Conference Center is being renovated (I mean gutted, starting over again), so a huge tent in the shape of a giant quonset hut served as the venue, and by the time we showed up, the place was packed.

Rebecca and the band



**PHOTOS BY
KARL ROBINSON
FROM
PAJA'S MAY 1
CONCERT**

Doris & Harvey



Three jazz fans enjoying the music and the ambience.



Two of guitarist Brad Bueche's admirers



Kids enjoying the beat.



But for \$50 you are a gold circle member, with reserved seating up front and access to a wine and dessert reception afterward. The Josh Shpak Quartet, four young guys from Berklee School, entertained before the main show, and once they finished, we noticed all these horn/reed players lining up alongside the stage.

Hey, there's Gary Smulyan (Have baritone, will travel), and Gilbert Castellanos (with trumpet), and three or four others, accompanying Tia Fuller. What a bonus. The first number was Take the A Train, with everyone taking solo turns—a barn burner. The same with the follow-up tune, You Stepped Out of a Dream. And then there was a sensational ballad (Old Folks), a long beautiful solo by a tenorman we were unfamiliar with, Joel Frahm. We talked to him later—he's from New York, is mainly a sideman (his term) for bands supporting Diane Schurr, Kurt Elling, and others. This is a guy we definitely want to hear more from.

And then it was vocalist James Tormé's turn. Mel's son has a polished act—he is very expressive and kinda show-bizzy, but his second song—It Don't Mean A Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing, blew everybody away—a creative arrangement, with terrific scatting. We'd also like to hear more from him. The final couple of numbers featured the smaller group, Carrington, Drummond, Sung, and Forman, and it was all good.

In all, we certainly got more than we'd expected. It was a matter of regret that a prior commitment precluded our staying for Saturday's high school and college jazz group competitions. Maybe next year./ Ed Fox

BASSIST GARY PEACOCK, PLAYING WITH PIANIST PAUL BLEY

"Bley called 'These Foolish Things' in E-Flat, but almost immediately Peacock recognized that the pianist was actually playing in E major and adjusted his own playing in response. 'The minute I did that he turned around and said [emphatically], 'E-Flat.'" So I'm playing in E-Flat, he's playing in E. It was so jarring sometimes I wanted to

scream. But sometimes it would come together in a very strange way and be something really beautiful. That was my first experience of not being glued to traditional forms of harmony and melody. It was very, very scary.'" From "Dying to the Music," by Shaun Brady, in *Jazziz* magazine, Fall 2015.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Peninsula has been blessed with two new jazz clubs opening recently. **Café Pink House** has been in operation for several months now in Saratoga, at 14577 Big Basin Way (just past the Plumed Horse restaurant). An offshoot of the Studio Pink House, which had occasional jazz offerings for several years, the Café is a real, honest jazz club, and nothing but. The principals are Matt Toshima and Yoshiko Oda, two serious jazz lovers (and musicians) and they've designed a welcoming, comfortable club where fans can enjoy the best in local—and national—jazz artists. Oh, and nice Japanese-oriented appetizers too.

In two recent trips, I took in the Richard Sears Quartet featuring the excellent Bay Area tenorman Patrick Wolff, and a week later, the Jonathan Kreisberg/Dave Kikoski two-some (from New York)—a dynamic duo with miraculous interplay between guitar and piano. Kreisberg (who plays with Dr. Lonnie Smith) is an amazing world-class guitarist and Kikoski plays like he has four hands—cascades of notes and inventiveness. See them if you get a chance—one of the best gigs I've been to in years. Just 70 seats at Café Pink House—ride down to Saratoga one of these weekends and check it out if you haven't done so already.

I haven't been to **Savanna Jazz** yet, but will report next issue. Moved down from San Francisco, Savanna Jazz is now located at 1189 Laurel St. in San Carlos. Open 7 days a week, there's a different jazz group each night. Friends who have been there tell me it reminds them of a New York jazz club, without the smoke. Low lighting, small and intimate, close to the musicians. The owners seem to have a good feel for what it takes to set up a hip, urban vibe in the club./Ed Fox

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THE JAZZ PERISCOPE *Selected gigs for May and June, 2016*

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

5/10	Bill Charlap Trio	8pm
5/20-22	Taj Mahal	
6/1	Tommy Igoe Groove Conspiracy	8pm
6/12	Cecile McLorin Salvant	7, 9pm

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

5/19-22	Cassandra Wilson	
6/10-11	Cyrille Aimée	8, 9:30pm
6/11	Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band	8pm
6/19	McCoy Tyner Tribute at Davies Hall, with Corea, Green, Barron, Eigsti & Tyner	8pm

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

5/8	Pete Escovedo Latin Jazz Orchestra	4:30pm
5/15	Taylor Eigsti Trio	4:30pm
6/12	The Bad Plus	4:30pm
6/26	Jane Monheit	4:30pm

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

5/9	Bill Charlap Trio	7pm
5/12	Bruce Forman Trio	7pm
5/23	Jack DeJohnette Trio	7, 9pm
6/2	Julian Lage Trio	7pm
6/13	Benny Green Trio	7pm
6/14	Joshua Redman Quartet	7, 9pm



Benny Green

SAN JOSE JAZZ *www.sanjosejazz.org*

ANGELICAS 863 Main St., Redwood City *www.angelicasllc.com*

Every Tuesday evening		
5/6	Pete Escovedo Latin Jazz Orchestra	
5/7, 6/21	Rebecca DuMaine & Dave Miller Trio	8:30pm
6/5	Denny Berthiaume Trio, with Clairdee, C. Ducey	7:15pm
6/14	Mike Galisatus Big Band	7:30pm

CAFÉ STRITCH, 374 S. 1st St., San Jose *www.cafestritch.com*

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

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

CAFÉ PINK HOUSE, 14577 Big Basin Way, Saratoga 408/647-2273

5/13	Anton Schwartz Group	7:30pm
5/20	Terrence Brewer Trio	7:30pm
5/25	Larry Vuckovich	7:30pm
5/27	Tammy Hall	7:30pm

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

Jazz nightly (except Tuesday?)

COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO/KCSM 91.1

6/4	Jazz on the Hill	11am-6pm
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STANFORD UNIVERSITY, BING CONCERT HALL

5/11	Stanford Jazz Orchestra, with John Faddis, Trumpet	7:30pm
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