

November 2018

PO BOX 60397, PALO ALTO, CA 94306

Ed Fox, Editor

FROM THE CHAIR

You may recall my write-up a few issues ago about a gold nugget not to be missed in our community, namely the American Heritage Museum and its exhibit of juke boxes. Another such nugget is the Peninsula Symphony, which is celebrating its 70th season with a unique concert offering a *jazz* reunion featuring David Benoit, Taylor Eigsti, and Chris and Dan Brubeck. There are two concerts, the first on Friday, January 25th at the Fox Theater in Redwood City, the second on Saturday, January 25, at Flint Center on the DeAnza College campus in Cupertino. For more info, check their website: www.peninsulasymphony.org.

All this is of much interest to PAJA, and we have been happy to work with the Symphony on some concert aspects. First, of course, it is an opportunity to hear some terrific musicians with the backing of a large orchestra. Further, we have been big supporters of Taylor ever since he was a teen ager, with nurturing by Herb Wong helping him to become the artist he is now. He is an honorary lifetime member of PAJA, and speaking for myself, I can hardly wait to hear his contributions to these concerts.

Interesting footnote: Taylor, as a teen ager, opened a concert for Dave Brubeck at Redwood City's Fox Theater—I was there, as I'm sure were many of you. Now he'll be playing with two sons of Dave Brubeck at the same venue. Nice story.



PAJA Board member Shirley Douglas here shown with the Four Freshmen at their 8/7/18 performance at S.F.'s Nikko Hotel.

It has long been the custom at Peninsula Symphony concerts to have a speaker present some background about the evening program before the concert. We were fortunate to get the services of KCSM's program director/morning host Alisa Clancy to do these introductions, and PAJA is co-sponsoring Alisa's participation. Alisa will help a non-jazz audience gain some understanding of our genre of music. We feel this is an opportunity for PAJA to broaden our efforts to help further the growth of supportive audiences, and I hope as many PAJA members as possible will attend one of the concerts. Individual tickets are on sale on the website at various levels from \$10 to \$75.

Before closing, let me change the subject and mention that our fall concert featuring Erik Jekabson and the Electric Squeezebox Orchestra, a 17-piece jazz orchestra, was a blast. We are going to hear a lot more about this team of talented jazz artists. It's a brilliant group of top-tier local musicians who perform their own stunning arrangements of jazz classics and standards, and get your toes to tapping with some amazing original compositions. One piece that touched me especially was entitled *Scottish Lullaby*—just beautiful stuff with a long baritone sax solo. Over the years, we have offered all kinds of jazz groups and presentations, from solo piano to big band bashes. This was another winner that for my taste will long be remembered, and all thanks to our event chair Harvey Mittler for arranging it all.

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

WATCH FOR LOCAL HS JAZZ BAND CONCERTS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Dec. 7 | Gunn & Paly High Guest Artist Concert
7:30-10 at Spangenberg (Gunn HS) |
| Feb. 21 | Paly / Greene Middle School
7:30-9 at Paly Performing Arts Center |
| May 6 | Paly Jazz Band
7:00-8:30 at Paly PAC |
| May 17 | Gunn Jazz Band
7:00-8:00 at Spangenberg (Gunn HS) |

Concerts are free, open to the public.

MONTEREY 2018

A Report From The Grounds by Andy and Dorothy Nozaka. Photographs by Andy Nozaka.

With near perfect weather, the Monterey Jazz Festival celebrated its 61st season on September 21-23. Your intrepid reporters covered the Grounds events and a review of some notable events attended follows.

Hristo Vitchev Quartet. Bay Area guitar virtuoso Vitchev fronted his finely orchestrated quartet of Jasnam Daya Singh (piano), Dan Robbins (bass), and Mike Shannon (drums). The present group has been together about six years and it's a wonder to experience: a fusion of richly woven rhythmic, harmonic and melodic invention. The music can be impressionistic, yet warm, heartfelt and deeply moving. This is a world-class group. Is anyone listening?

Fred Hersch Solo Piano. It's a rare pleasure to hear Mr. Hersch play solo piano in front of a packed and reverent crowd. A survivor of the AIDS epidemic and in his early sixties now, Fred is gaunt and in need of a crutch to maneuver the stage. His musical powers however are intact and robust. His music is highly personal, spiritual and tender, with masterful rhythmic and chordal invention. We are in awe.

Adam Rogers and DICE. Guitarist Rogers' trio is an eclectic jolt of funk, rock, and Hendrix. Together with bandmates Fima Ephron (bass) and Nate Smith (drums), the group rides on the endless wave of deep groove patterns. It's exhilarating when done right, as this group so ably demonstrates.

Thornetta Davis, "Detroit's Queen Of The Blues". Ms. Davis is a straight-ahead blues singer with a pleasing voice and great rhythmic feeling and projection. One clearly hears her early gospel choir training. The Garden Theater venue crowd was in a thoroughly receptive, rollicking mood.



Thornetta Davis



Hristo Vitchev

Dan Robbins

Dianne Reeves and Beleza Brazil. Reeves was in good form, as usual, and was ably backed by a Brazilian group led by guitarist Romero Lubambo. Reeves has had a long-term fondness for Brazilian popular music, and, if not ready to take high risks,

was squarely in her comfort zone.

Monterey Jazz Festival On Tour. This year's group skewed toward younger recently established artists like Bria Skonberg (trumpet), Melissa Aldana (tenor), Christian Sands (piano), Yasushi Nakamura (bass), and Jamison Ross (drums). The exception—vocalist Cecile McLorin Salvant is certainly young but well established. Her artistry never fails to surprise; she is an artist who is never afraid to take risks and explore unknown territories. I suspect we were witnessing the full flowering of her exceptional talents.



Adam Rogers



Cécile McLorin Salvant

THE MEMBER PARTY

Photos by Karl Robinson



PAJA loyalists Anne Hessing and Beryl Gaidos



Another cozy, congenial PAJA member party took place on Sunday afternoon, September 16th, at our usual haunt, the courtyard of the Palo Alto Art Center on Newell Road. We welcomed back the wonderful singer, Rebecca DuMaine, supported as usual by the hip piano trio led by Dave Miller. It was an exceptionally pleasant day in the shaded courtyard and the general feeling seemed to be "there's no place else we'd rather be." It was that good. The music was divine, the wine flowed freely, and the table of snacks provided by Shirley Douglas's great volunteers satisfied every appetite. Let's do it again next year!



Michael and Grace Griffin kept the wine flowing



Geoff and Camille Ball enjoying the courtyard ambience



Vocalist Rebecca DuMaine kept us entranced

NOODLING

Thoughts on jazz By Michael Burman

In an earlier piece, we looked at a number of great jazz trumpeters who died young. This is a follow-up to discuss trumpeters who lived relatively long lives, giving perhaps a lens into what might have been for those artists whose lives had been untimely ended. We started, last issue, with the “father” Louis Armstrong, and now continue with the first of two giants who succeeded Louis.

ROY ELDRIDGE

Perhaps the name in my list least recognized today, Roy Eldridge was as well known in the late 1930s as Louis Armstrong, and among musicians of the time, more listened to. He was the major trumpet soloist of the late swing era, and bridged the gap between earlier traditional jazz and bebop. He was a major influence on Dizzy Gillespie.

Roy’s style derived not from Armstrong (ten years his senior), but from saxophonists Coleman Hawkins (“Bean” and “Little Jazz” were friends until the former’s death in 1969) and Benny Carter. It was blazing and ever aggressive, and never better demonstrated than on “After You’ve Gone” with his own orchestra in 1937.



Increasingly well regarded, in 1941 Roy accepted an offer to join Gene Krupa, with whom he recorded his famous “Rockin’ Chair” and, featuring Anita O’Day, the classic “Let Me Off Uptown.” Eldridge always felt upstaged by O’Day, so he wasn’t devastated when the Krupa band folded in 1943. The country apparently wasn’t ready for black musicians playing with white bands, and Roy’s experience with Krupa was no better or more meaningful than Billie

Holiday’s with Artie Shaw had been five years earlier. This didn’t stop Roy from joining the Shaw band briefly, however.

For much of the remainder of Roy’s career, he was associated with Norman Granz. He traveled with Jazz At The Philharmonic (often in a quintet with Hawkins as the other horn) and recorded with Clef, Pablo, and Verve (notably, on one day in October 1957, as leader, sideman, and even A&R man on no fewer than three LPs). He was based at Jimmy Ryan’s on West 54th Street from 1970 until ten years later when he suffered a stroke. The stroke caused him to abandon the trumpet, but for at least a few years afterward, he performed intermittently on piano and vocals, and his name—I can personally attest—continued to be featured on the Ryan marquee.

Roy died in 1989, aged 78, six years after having received probably his greatest formal recognition by being in the very first class of NEA Jazz Masters. In that same class of 1982 was Roy’s great friend Dizzy Gillespie, who will be the subject of January’s “Noodling.”

Roy Eldridge’s playing was always characterized, not by subtlety, but by a blazing virtuosity. This bordered on the tasteless, sometimes; I say this with reluctance because he remains my favorite trumpeter, and one reason is precisely his combative nature. Never a high-note specialist in the style of Cat Anderson, Al Killian, or Maynard Ferguson, he would nonetheless always seem to choose the highest of candidate notes. Time and again I find myself thinking “surely, he’s not going to go for that, is he?”, only to find not only that indeed he is, but that most of the time he makes it. I recall one live recording from the ‘60s or ‘70s where, as a leader, he fluffs the final note of a piece. Undeterred, he stops the already stopped band, and retries two or three times until he makes it. Wise? Probably not. Impressive? Indubitably.

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

STAN KENTON AS PROPHET

“Jazz stars will simply not rise as they have in the past. We’ve seen our last Ellington. There are no more contributions to make.” Stan Kenton [obviously, in a really bad mood], 1964, as quoted on jazzwax.com

ELECTRIC SQUEEZBOX ORCHESTRA, October 6th, at Menlo-Atherton HS

Photos by Andy Nozaka



PAJA's fall concert, featuring Erik Jekabson's great band, the Electric Squeezebox Orchestra, delighted the fans in attendance with their fascinating takes on standards, like Stardust, All Blues, and Blue In Green, and their brilliant, crowd-pleasing original compositions. Another great program arranged by PAJA's event chair Harvey Mittler. There's nothing like live jazz for true excitement and appreciation.

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THE JAZZ PERISCOPE

Selected gigs for November and December 2018

YOSHI'S OAKLAND www.yoshi.com/oakland

- 11/13, 12/15 Tommy Igoe. 8pm
 11/16-18 Arturo Sandoval
 11/30 John Santos, w/ Kenny Washington, et al. 8pm

SF JAZZ CENTER www.sjfazz.org/center

- 11/8-11 Kenny Barron residency, with various artists
 11/18 Steven Lugerner's Jacknife 6, 7:30pm
 11/23-25 Dorado Schmitt's Django All-Stars
 12/13-16 Joey Alexander Trio
 12/15 Clairdee and Friends 11am
 12/20 Marcus Shelby Orchestra, w/ Kenny Washington & Tiffany Austin 7:30pm



Kenny Barron

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

- 11/4 Kenny Barron Quintet 4:30pm
 11/11 Jane Bunnett & Maqueque 4:30pm
 12/2 Ari Hoenig Trio. 4:30pm

KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER, SANTA CRUZ www.kuumbwajazz.org

- 11/5 Benny Green Trio 7pm
 11/26 Ray Brown Quintet, w/ Eddie Mendenhall 7pm
 12/6 Helen Sung 7pm
 12/13 Adam Schulman plays Charlie Brown Christmas. 7pm

SAN JOSE JAZZ www.sanjosejazz.org

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

- 11/9 Tony Saunders "Uptown Jazz" 8:30pm
 11/14 Martan Mann & Clif Payne. 7pm
 11/16 Pete & Juan Escovedo Latin All-Stars 8:30pm
 11/18 Mike Galisatus Big Band 7pm
 11/29 Anton Schwartz & Josh Nelson 7:30pm

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

- Eulipions Jazz Jam, Sundays, 7pm

CAFÉ PINK HOUSE 14577 Big Basin Way, Saratoga 408/647-2273 www.cafepinkhouse.com

- 11/17 Sandy Cressman & Homenagen Brasileira. 7:30pm
 11/30 Anton Schwartz & Josh Nelson 7:30pm
 12/15 Dave Miller Trio, w/ Rebecca DuMaine. 7:30pm

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