

FROM THE CHAIR

So much is going on in our Yin/Yang Positive/Negative world, one might think it inappropriate to be talking about a jazz concert and having a good time when there is so much misery around us. Yes, that's understandable. Still music is vital and provides a calming and comforting way to cope with the dark side. Consequently, PAJA continues on its mission of offering live gigs to raise funds for the survival of that which we all enjoy—JAZZ.

Here are a few thoughts about our next concert to be held on Saturday, January 27, at the Menlo-Atherton High School Center for Performing Arts. The concert is billed as "An Evening With Akira Tana and Friends", and you'll find full details elsewhere in this issue of the Buff. It seems to me that there is more going on here than just another evening of jazz. What is a little different this time is that the concert will kick off with a few opening numbers by the Menlo-Atherton HS Jazz Ensemble. This group of talented youngsters represents, metaphorically speaking, the future. Some will continue to play music all their lives; others will drop away and will become the potential audience of tomorrow. This stint with the high school jazz band should make them, at the very least, good listeners and appreciators of the music. Without listeners there would be no concerts, no place to play. To further support the future we have lowered the student ticket price to \$5.00.

Akira Tana and Friends are some of the very best players right here in our back yard. Akira has been fortunate to engage the wonderful vocalist, Clairdee, and I am anticipating an evening of beautiful music, all happening at a first class acoustical site that does not involve driving long distances to San Francisco or San Jose. There's plenty of free parking, in a well lit parking lot. So, come and enjoy the experience and forget, for an evening at least, the miseries of the

world, as we enjoy the finest of contemporary jazz and a hint of the kind of players we'll enjoy in the future.. We'll turn Saturday night into the swingiest night of the week. And remember that members can bring another friend at the member price.

In continued appreciation of your support,

C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

THE LEGACY OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG

These quotes are from an article by former Bad Plus pianist Evan Iverson in the November 13-20, 2023 issue of The Nation.

"If you had to pick one person to write the history of 20th-century American culture, it would have to be Louis Armstrong."

From Phil Woods: "Louis Armstrong was the first person to play behind the beat on record."

Iverson adds: "In the simplest terms, 'behind the beat' means that the melody is a shade slower than the accompaniment."

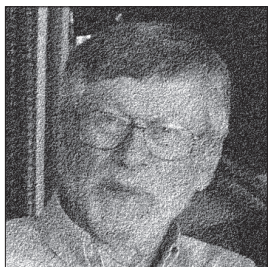
Miles Davis is quoted: "You can't play anything on a horn that Louis hasn't played—I mean even modern."

From Quincy Jones: "It's a shame that anyone takes him for granted, 'cause everything after John Philip Sousa that swings stems from Louis Armstrong."

Gunther Schiller "expressed disdain for his pop persona and actually suggested that the government provide him with a stipend so that he no longer had to perform 'Hello, Dolly'".

A chief theme of this excellent article is to rebut those who believe that Louis was an Uncle Tom who sold out and his music and life was uninteresting after the mid-30s.

LOOKING FORWARD *By Ed Fox*



January 27th is the date of our next concert. Harvey Mittler has put together an outstanding group of local musicians, with the help of our favorite drummer Akira Tana, who'll lead and be at the drums chair, and he has engaged Clairdee as vocalist for the event. Clairdee has not performed for PAJA for a few years and in that time she has reached the pinnacle as a jazz vocalist. Her latest album was the Grammy-nominated "A Love Letter to Lena", a tribute to Lena Horne.

I'm familiar with Bay Area saxman James Mahone, but have not seen him before—definitely anxious to hear him. We are looking forward to welcoming Clairdee, James and this superb group to the PAJA stage. Expect some beautiful music.

The venue is Menlo-Atherton High School's Performing Arts Center; we were last there with Andrew Speight's Bird With Strings concert in 2019. There is plenty of free parking in a well-lit parking lot. A few hot numbers from the M-A High School jazz Orchestra will kick off the festivities, and we hear they can really bring it.

Palo Alto—Jazz Hotbed. In recent years, Palo Alto has been pretty much a wasteland as far as jazz is concerned. Not counting Stanford's Jazz Festival and Bing Concert Hall and Studio offerings, there has been a dearth of jazz programming in Our Fair City. But all that has changed. First, Mark Weiss's **Earthwise** has been presenting lots of shows generally at Mitchell Park, the Mitchell Park Community Center and the Palo Alto Art Center for the past few years—about a third of his offerings are jazz. In the last few months he has featured Anat Cohen, Scott Amendola, Ben

Goldberg, Todd Sickafoose, Mads Tolling, and Adam Klipple. At the moment, no shows are listed but Mark has told me he has three jazz shows planned for January—check out the Jazz Periscope this issue or log on to his website: Mark Weiss dba Earthwise Events.

A few PAJA Board members met with Mark recently and we're hoping to co-sponsor some future events with Earthwise. We are happy to help publicize his events, as the more local jazz the better, right?

An authentic jazz club has newly opened its doors. **The Meyhouse Restaurant**, in the old Gordon-Biersch space on Ramona St., has a specially dedicated room devoted to jazz. On three Saturday nights in December, they offered vocalists Kenny Washington, Jackie Ryan, and Jaccqui Naylor. I was there for the Kenny Washington bit and it almost felt like a New York club, with jazz posters on the wall and a marquee listing the performers. Dinner was good (Turkish cuisine) and the ambience was just what you'd expect in a traditional jazz club (noisy, lively).. And the music was excellent, of course, with Kenny and saxophonist Michael O'Neill. The owners tell me they expect eventually to be open for jazz on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Let's support them, folks. May they long wave the jazz flag!



Kenny Washington

*Let us hear from you.
Email chezfox@mindspring.com*

PAJA'S WINTER CONCERT



AKIRA TANA TANA AND FRIENDS



Akira has assembled a dream quintet

CLAIRDEE—vocals

JAMES MAHONE—saxophone

KEN FRENCH—piano DOUG MILLER—bass

AKIRA TANA—drums

Saturday evening, January 27, 7:30pm

**MENLO-ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL
CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

555 Middlefield Road, Atherton

Praise for Clairdee: "In sassy, solidly assured crowd-pleasing form, a whole lot of interpretive brilliance." *Jazz Times*

The highly acclaimed Menlo-Atherton HS Jazz Ensemble will perform an opening set.

TICKETS: \$50 general, \$40 PAJA members, \$5 students. Available online: pajazzalliance.org. Click on TICKETS. Or by mail from Fox, PAJA Tickets, 294 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto 94306. (Send check and SASE.) Or at the door the evening of the performance—cash or check only.

Information: harvey.mittler@gmail.com

Proceeds to the Education Fund of the Palo Alto Jazz Alliance (an IRC 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

THANK YOU—2023 DONORS

A big thank you to all of you who made monetary contributions to PAJA during 2023 over and above your annual membership dues.

Anonymous

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Annual dues, \$35 for individuals \$ _____

Annual dues, \$50 family (two persons) _____

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Total enclosed \$ _____

THE JAZZ PERISCOPE *Selected gigs for January and February 2024*

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

1/23 Miguel Zenon Quartet 8pm
 2/9-11 Stanley Clarke Band

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

1/9-14 Chris Botti
 1/18-21 Julian Lage +
 1/31-2/4 Kenny Barron +
 2/15-18 Chucho Valdes +
 2/23-25 Dianne Reeves

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

1/21 Miguel Zenon Quartet 4:30pm
 1/28 Linda May Han Oh 4:30pm
 2/4 Delfeayo Marsalis Quartet 4:30pm
 2/18 60th Anniversary Celebration
 2/25 Sullivan Fortner Trio 4:30pm

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

1/18 Joey Alexander 7pm
 1/22 Cecile McLorin Salvant 7, 9pm
 2/7 Blue Note Quintet, with Gerald Clayton 7pm
 2/12 Brad Mehldau 7pm
 2/26 Sullivan Fortner Trio 7pm
 2/27 Dianne Reeves 7:30pm

KEYS JAZZ BISTRO *498 Broadway, SF www.keysjazzbistro.com*

SAN JOSE JAZZ *www.sanjosejazz.org*

STANFORD—BING CONCERT HALL AND STUDIO *live.stanford.edu/venues-thestudio*

1/26 Linda May Han Oh Bing Studio 7pm

MEYHOUSE RESTAURANT, PALO ALTO *meyhouserestaurant.com*

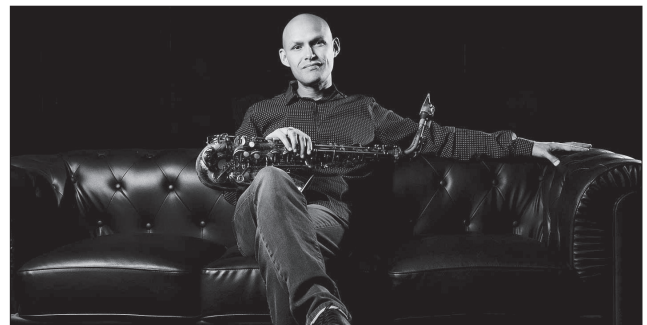
EARTHWISE, Palo Alto *Google "Mark Weiss dba Earthwise Events"*

PALO ALTO JAZZ ALLIANCE *pajazzalliance.Org*

1/27 Akira Tana & Friends, featuring Clairdee. Menlo-Atherton HS 7:30pm



Brad Mehldau



Miguel Zenon