

FROM THE CHAIR

AI, AI, AI is taking over our lives. Is that a good thing for everyone? It seems to me, like the smart phone, there is some good here, yet, all the same, it can be just an irritating and frustrating barrier when you need to reach a live person to resolve some problem beyond the AI world skill set. I have seen some AI-generated art and the results can be amazing. So what happens within the music world, especially the jazz world, where improvisation and personal creativity are key aspects of what makes jazz? AI will have access to every recording ever made, so if a composer uses AI to produce a “new” Thelonious Monk-type tune, say, pressing a few buttons will create new combinations in the desired style. I will call that AI Jazz. I wonder how satisfying that is going to be. And I wonder how widespread its use will be, as jazz artists tend to be individualists, proud of their personal creativity.

Maybe AI Jazz is a good thing. In a way it is something like the introduction of a new kind of phonograph that could stimulate us listeners to hear those created sounds in person. This is in keeping with my earlier thoughts about how the proliferation of the phonograph stimulated the desire to hear music live. By the way, Thomas Edison received his patent for the phonograph on February 19, 1878, 147 years to the day this column is being written. I bet he would have been fascinated by AI.

Why do 100,000 people turn up for an Ohio State-Michigan football game in sub-zero weather when they could be watching the game on the jumbo TV set in the comfort of their own home? Because there’s nothing like being there, even if you’re in Row 115 in the end zone. And have you ever seen Anat Cohen live—she dances, grimaces, grunts, laughs, and plays a terrific clarinet. You can’t get that experience from one of her albums, no matter how excellent they are, or a video. Again, there’s nothing like being there.

So, AI may take over the jazz world (doubtful), but jazz fans will still always prefer live performances—watching their favorite artists, real people creating real music on the spot. AI-generated jazz may be good to listen to, but it will never be a substitute for the real thing.

Mark your calendar for our free member party on May 11th, back at the Palo Alto Art Center Courtyard. See all the details in the piece following this column. Come, bring a friend. And hear some creative jazz. AI not invited.

In continued appreciation for your support,

C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

MEMBER PARTY ON MAY 11

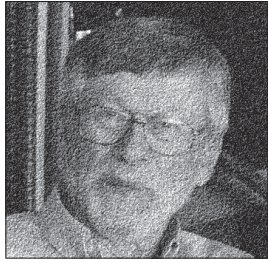
Let’s have a member party! We have reserved a favorite member party venue—the Palo Alto Art Center courtyard—Sunday afternoon, tentatively 3-5pm, on May 11. All members are invited to come and enjoy the music, have a glass of wine, and meet your old jazz pals in this lovely setting.

We welcome back **the Dave Miller Trio** and vocalist **Rebecca DuMaine** who can always be counted on to give us a great afternoon of jazz standards and gems from the Great American Songbook. There may be a few young guest artists as well.



It’s all **free**, our annual gift to you for your loyalty and support over the years. We’d love to see you all there, visiting with old friends and making new acquaintances—all people who love that art form known as JAZZ.

The Art Center is at 1313 Newell Road, next to the main library. There’s plenty of parking opposite the main entrance and in the back.



Board member Shirley Douglas passed on to me an obituary of the singer Louise Tobin (died in November 2022 at age 104) which I found fascinating. Louise, who reminded some of a young Ella Fitzgerald early in her career, met the trumpeter Harry James in 1934 when they both had joined a local swing band. They eloped a year later. Louise was 15, Harry 19. By 1937, Harry had become a key Benny Goodman band member, and just two years later formed his own band—which lasted for forty years! That Harry James orchestra was extremely popular (“A Sleepy Lagoon,” “You Made Me Love You,” “I’ve Heard That Song Before”). The story goes, in 1942 Columbia Records attributed a shortage of shellac to demand for his records.

His wife Louise recorded with Benny Goodman (“There’ll Be Some Changes Made”), but she gave up singing to care for sons Harry, Jr. and Tim, while Harry, Sr. was on the road constantly with the band. That kind of long distance marriage is difficult to sustain, and Harry and Louise divorced in 1943; Harry shortly afterward married WWII’s famed pin-up girl, actress Betty Grable. (The US Treasury reported that James and Grable were the highest paid couple in America in 1945.) It was not a particularly happy union, but it did last 22 years.

Frank Sinatra’s first big gig was with the Harry James Orchestra, but that lasted only seven months before he jumped ship to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra.

After the kids were grown, Louise started singing again and she connected with Peanuts Hucko and his band. She sang with the band for several years and married Peanuts in 1967. That band performed widely and played in Europe, Japan and Australia where they played for Prince Charles and Princess Diana. When Peanuts died in 2003, Louise retired, and she died 19 years later at age 104.

LOOKING BACK

By Ed Fox

I was not terribly familiar with Louise Tobin, so I googled her and listened to her on the Internet with the Goodman band in the early 40s, and then with Peanuts in 1990, singing a duet with Peanuts on “When You’re Smiling.” The lady could swing.

MORE ON TAYLOR

The best line in an interview of Taylor Eigsti with Rick Gilbert a couple of years ago was: “I didn’t make a career choice [jazz piano] until I was eight years old.” That after he’d asked the professional pianist David Benoit how much you had to pay to play piano for an audience. “They pay us!” replied Benoit to the surprised Taylor. And by the way, congratulations, Taylor, on another Grammy, this year for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album—“Plot Armor”. That beat albums by Bela Fleck, Julian Lage and Bill Frisell. Good career choice, young Taylor!



Louise Tobin

SUPERFAN

Jazz superfan Kenneth Cobb noticed that I lamented the fact that we had lost the interview Bruce Powell and I did with him in 2010. Fortunately, Kenneth, now retired and living in Maryland, reads the *Buff* and he did save that interview and sent it along to us. We’ve now put the entire interview up on the PAJA website. In this issue of the *Buff* we’re reprinting Kenneth’s amazing 2010 Memorial Day weekend jazz marathon at nine different jazz clubs in New York City. Kenneth still hits multiple clubs in Washington DC, Philly, and Manhattan (and elsewhere) most weekends.

Reach Ed Fox at chezfox@mindspring.com

25TH SAILING OF THE GOOD SHIP STRAIGHT-AHEAD JAZZ HEAVEN

By Michael Griffin

Standing in line in Fort Lauderdale preparing to board for my eleventh jazz cruise, I turned to the fellow jazz sailors around me and asked how many cruises they'd been on. They all answered the same—this was their first one! I was shocked. Then the official news came down: fully 30% of this year's attendees were jazz cruise rookies. While the general cruise demographic leans toward the grandparent crowd, it appears there are plenty of newcomers. So, who says straight-ahead jazz audiences are fizzling out? Not me; not any more.

This year's cruise was again co-hosted by the eminent bassist Christian McBride and the cruise heart-throb Emmet Cohen. The pair of them played in different combinations everywhere on board. We got our money's worth from these mega-star performers, much to the delight of all. Here are my impressions of some of my favorite gigs, mostly with Emmet Cohen as headliner or in the rhythm section.

Emmet Cohen's "Uptown in Orbit" Band. EC strikes again! After being a smash hit last year on the organ, Emmet blew down the house with the latest iteration of his Hammond B3 band. The gig's title refers to Emmet's early days playing at Smoke, that uptown NYC club, where he, drummer Kyle Poole and trumpet pal Benny Benack III all played late night organ sets.

Standout guitarist Dan Wilson joined this group and provided bass lines, as well as superb solos. Both Benack and Wilson are 5-star musicians, and the quartet was rockin', with Emmet playing the key role, comping behind the bandmates as well as contributing blistering solos. The man was at the keys nonstop the entire set with his pedal to the metal.

Benny not only plays fiery trumpet, but he is also a creditable vocalist. Fans will need to find a way, though, to ignore his "look-at-me" demeanor on the bandstand. The quartet was joined by young tenor man Julian Lee who played some line duets, providing a nice balance to Benack's hot trumpet.

The closing tune of this power performance was the blues, "Back at the Chicken Shack." Driven by EC's B3, the band traded 4's with long solos by Wilson, and if that weren't enough, Bria Skonberg hopped on to the bandstand, adding her trumpet to the mix. Now numbering six players it was full steam ahead, giving the room an even bigger dose of energy. The nearly 200 fans got what they came for—to hear Emmet, of course, and his band that carries on the legacy of Joey DeFrancesco. The future of the B3 is in excellent hands.

Herlin Riley Quintet. Herlin Riley, drums; Emmet Cohen (piano), Philip Norris (bass), Godwin Louis (alto), Bruce Harris (trumpet). What an eye-opener this was! A terrific rhythm section led by the peripatetic New Orleans drummer Herlin Riley. I'd not seen him before as a leader. Arms going every which way, flamboyant to the max. Buddy Rich would have been proud to see Riley's energy and total mastery of the traps. Emmet anchored the other side of the bandstand and helped Riley encourage the young front line of Harris and Louis to show their stuff. I was pleased to see these new, terrifically talented guys being invited to join the Cruise. The next generation has arrived.

Riley's introductions were punctuated by his New Orleans y'awls, and he favored us with a vocal (who

knew?) of "La Vie en Rose", mimicking the style of Louis Armstrong. What a hoot! The set finished with the audience standing to shake that thing to a Mardi Gras march with Riley drumming to an emblematic "shuffle" beat. A marvelous ending to a truly marvelous per-



Emmet Cohen, Sean Jones, Patrick Bartley



Bruce Harris and Godwin Louis

formance by the entire band. My advice: don't ever miss a chance to see and hear Herlin Riley in action.

Emmet Cohen's "Vibe Provider" Band. Emmet Cohen, piano; Philip Norris, bass; Kyle Poole, drums; Sean Jones, trumpet; Patrick Bartley, sax. Despite the mainstream rhythm section, Jones and Bartley were intent on showing us the shape of jazz to come. Happily, they included some straight-ahead tunes between the "advanced" music so as not to lose the audience. But while they did lose a few listeners, most of us kept our seats and were rewarded by some very interesting music. What does this new-yet-old modern jazz sound like? Late-stage John Coltrane perhaps. Ornette Coleman? So, I'll say while it sure wasn't straight-ahead, it sure was exciting, daring and different for most of us. Like a 2025 version of Parker/Gillespie and Max Roach on steroids. Yes, Kyle was really slamming his

kit with a vigor I've not heard from him before. All in all, this band was a great experience in getting our ears stretched, as we used to say back in the day. I say onward!

A Salute to Bird and Diz, featuring Patrick Bartley and Bruce Harris. Patrick Bartley (alto), Bruce Harris (trumpet), Mathis Picard (piano), Nicki Parrott (bass), Willie Jones III (drums). In a lot of ways this was my favorite gig, with new (to me) and interesting musicians playing my favorite genre—bebop a la Parker and Gillespie. Bartley showed he can play in a wonderful, accessible style, and Harris did a great cover of Diz, hot and fast. A very exciting twosome. After the gig, I told Harris their set was too good not to bottle. He told me they were working on a CD and when it comes out, I'll be first in line to buy it. Watch for these musicians if they land a Bay Area gig!

SUPERFAN'S HISTORIC MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND SCHEDULE

This is Kenneth Cobb's jazz schedule, flying from SFO to New York City for the weekend on May 27, 2010. Cobb had a full-time job at NASA Ames at the time and flew to NYC for jazz 24 times that year.

Friday, May 27

- 8pm Cedar Walton, Javon Jackson, Peter Washington & Lewis Nash (Iridium)
- 9:30 Ernestine Anderson Quartet, featuring Houston Person (Dizzy's/JALC)
- 11:00 Kenny Barron Quartet (Birdland)
- 12:45 Ken Fowser Quintet (Smoke)

Saturday, May 28

- 8pm Miles Davis Birthday Tribute, with George Coleman, Eddie Henderson and Harold Mabern (Smoke)
- 10:00 Joe Locke Quartet (Kitano)
- 11:30 Dezron Douglas Power Trio, featuring Louis Hayes (Smalls)
- 1am Ian Hendrickson-Smith Group (Smalls)

Sunday, May 29

- 8pm Stanley Clarke Group (Blue Note)
- 9:30 Joe Magnarelli Quartet (Smalls)
- 11:00 Roy Hargrove Quintet (Village Vanguard)

JAZZ NIGHT AT WOMAN'S CLUB

Louise Rising informs us about another Jazz Night Club event at the **Woman's Club of Palo Alto**. Latin guitarist-vocalist **Lisa Sanchez** leads a trio consisting of herself, Jon Eriksen on vibes and harmonica (!), and Jim Kerwin on bass. The date is **April 5**, Saturday evening. Doors open at 7:30pm. And there'll be music from 8pm to 10pm. Tickets are on sale now @ \$75 per person, which includes admission, two drinks and snacks. This is a philanthropic fundraiser which goes toward grants to serve the needs of the community.

The Woman's Club is located at 475 Homer Ave. in Palo Alto.

Tickets may be purchased online:
womansclubofpaloalto.org



REMEMBERING TWO PROMINENT PAJANS



Sam Pearl, Karl and Theresa Robinson

KARL ROBINSON

1930-2024

By Sam Pearl

Karl was a great man—honest, trustworthy, humble, intelligent, kind and forever curious,

with a smile on his face. I met Karl in Herb's class in 1994 or 95. It was only later that I discovered that Karl was a highly regarded pediatrician in the Los Gatos-Saratoga area and a founding member of the Good Samaritan Medical Group in San Jose!

Karl was passionate and knowledgeable about jazz and an avid fan. Along with Harvey Mittler and other students including Woody, Herb's brother, we were always discussing whatever Herb's topic was for the week as well as who was playing where and who were the headliners and their sidemen.

He loved the Monterey Jazz Festival, continuously attending for probably 50 years or more! Around 2008 he went to Africa with his wife, Theresa, and offered his tickets to my wife and me. We were thrilled and have attended the MJF ever since that time. We spent many hours sitting next to Karl and Theresa, seeing a huge number of musicians, discussing every aspect of jazz and becoming good friends. Karl was a generous man, letting us have the right to purchase his seats permanently only a few years ago, which we continue to use yearly.

Karl loved the Bach Dancing & Dynamite jazz beach house in Half Moon Bay, a phenomenal place to see first tier jazz in an intimate, relaxed setting across the street from the Pacific Ocean. We met Karl and Theresa there on many a Sunday afternoon, enjoying pre-show snacks and wine brought from home to share on the patio overlooking the ocean -always a fun time.

The Stanford Jazz Workshop was also a place where he spent many hours over the years, attending and volunteering at concerts. A stimulating and fun-filled discussion frequently followed.

Of course Karl and Theresa attended virtually every PAJA concert since its inception, always smiling faces in the audience.

Karl was always looking for new jazz talent. It was only two years ago that he told me about this spectacular young vocalist that he saw at the Bach that was "outta sight" and sure to reach super stardom. Have you heard of Samara Joy?

We already all miss Karl. He had a long, full life full of love, medicine and jazz.

JUDY BLOOM

1944-2024

By Harvey Mittler

The January 2025 issue of the *Jazz Buff* listed Donations to PAJA in 2024. Of these 30 Jazz champions, Karl Robinson and Judy Bloom have passed away in the last few weeks. We don't often note the loss of our members, but this coincidence is notable, not just for the recent timing or their obvious love for the art form of jazz, but because each was an accomplished, special person. They were gracious, sweet, generous, warm people with engaging smiles and joy for life and jazz and may their memories be a blessing and inspiration to us all.

Judy, in her 80 short years if a life well lived, began to help others in a lifetime of service, volunteering from an early age, and to quote her SF Chronicle obituary, "hers was a life of exploration, teaching and giving back to others with voracious commitment," devoting herself to repairing the world, and in Judy's words, "bringing justice and fairness-righteousness" whether teaching French and Spanish to middle school children after graduating cum laude from UC Berkeley, helping low-income women transition back to the work place, advocating for peace in the Middle East, and even in the final months of her life teaching young children to swim in between chemotherapy treatments. She worked with Jackie Speier for many years, first on the San Mateo County Advisory Council for Women, and working with Speier, she became the founding president of the Professional Women's Conference, aiding and mentoring women in the workplace. This culminated when she spent a decade as district director of Speier's San Mateo office.

Among numerous awards, Judy was honored by the California Commission on the Status of Women in 1991, and in 1993 was inducted into the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

Among her many passions were music and dancing to music with her husband Jordan, a highly-respected, now retired, labor attorney whom she met through a youth group. They loved to travel and enjoyed sailing on The Jazz Cruise as well as attending jazz festivals in Monterey and elsewhere and being active members of PAJA and other jazz organizations.

JAZZ ON THE PENINSULA
Selected gigs for March and April, 2025

BACH DANCING AND DYNAMITE SOCIETY, El Granada *www.bachddsoc.org*

3/2	Ann Hampton Callaway	4:30pm
3/9	Allison, Cardenas, Nash	4:30pm
3/30	Omar Sosa Quarteto Americanos	4:30pm
4/6	Carmen Lundy	4:30pm
4/13	Anthony Fung Quartet	4:30pm
4/27	Jahari Stampley Family Trio	4:30pm

MEYHOUSE RESTAURANT, PALO ALTO *Meyhouserestaurant.com*

3/1	George Brooks Trio	5, 8pm
3/7,8	Tony Lindsay	5, 8pm
3/13,14	Nicolas Bearde	5, 8pm
3/15	Clairdee	5, 8pm
3/28, 29	Allan Harris—Poetry of Jazz	5, 8pm

STANFORD UNIVERSITY *www.live.stanford.edu*

3/8	Stanford Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble (Dinkelspiel)	7:30pm
3/12	An evening with Branford Marsalis (Bing)	7:30pm
3/14	Lavay Smith & Red Hot Sk.Lickers. (Bing Studio)	7, 9pm
4/2	Brad Mehldau, Christian McBride, Gilmore (Bing)	7:30pm
4/19	Natalie Cressman & Ian Faquini. (Bing Studio)	7pm

WOMAN'S CLUB OF PALO ALTO *www.womansclubofpaloalto.org*

4/5	Lisa Sanchez group	7:30pm
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 Mail your check to Palo Alto Jazz Alliance
 P.O. Box 60397, Palo Alto, CA 94306

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Annual dues, \$35 for individuals \$ _____

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