

FROM THE CHAIR

A few weeks ago, I had the good fortune of attending one of Earthwise's Palo Alto shows featuring the pianist Ethan Iverson (formerly of The Bad Plus). Iverson is not only a virtuoso performer but he is also a music scholar and educator. In the January 2024 issue of the *Buff*, we printed an excerpt from his article in *The Nation* on Louis Armstrong. In the April 17 issue of *The Nation* he has another provocative article reviewing the growth of the musical audience as a by-product of the invention of recorded sound devices started by Thomas Edison and his wax tubes.

The Nation is generally a forum for political writings, but Iverson's pieces are very welcome. With the latest article, he shows how each iteration which has evolved from the black shellac 78's to the long-playing 33's, then the tapes and CDs and now to the Internet, zooming and streaming, and how all have played a role in the exposure of the masses to music of all kinds.

This stimulated me to review my own connection to this element of our culture. My family had two pianos and all the adults were players. We also had a hand-cranked Victrola machine with records that were focused on classical music. We also had a radio early on, and the advent of 78's were essential for broadcasting stations. For the 33's we obtained a Magnavox big box with dual speakers and an electric phonograph along with a radio and a stacking system for the records. My brothers and I started buying records of the popular music of the day. We had all the Goodman and Miller ballroom beauties, and Ella with "A Tisket A Tasket."

Like millions of others I was hooked and wanted to hear this stuff live, so instead of recordings reducing the need to be present for musical performances, the opposite happened. The dream was to get to the Big Apple where jazz was being played in dozens of clubs night after night.

I was keen to see my favorites in person. I heard Tommy Dorsey in a big movie theater in Boston when Buddy Rich was his crackling and impatient drummer. And I saw one of Woody Herman's herds long before I ever knew Herb Wong and his close relationship with Woody. Oh, and there was a fantastic evening with Louie Armstrong on a hot, steaming night in Ipswich, Mass. If I, like millions of others, hadn't heard them on recordings I might never have gotten the fever and be enthusiastic about seeing them live.

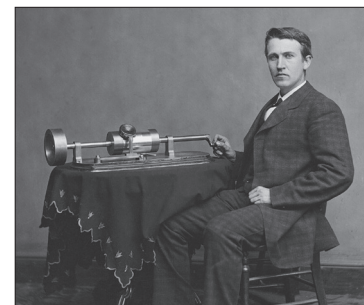
I wonder what the impact Artificial Intelligence will have on all this. We have a little taste of it via the Internet. In theory a pretty good jazz band could be AI created, using pretty much all of jazz history to construct it and to invent

new tunes, actually a combination of the new and the old. So what need would there be for live jazz then? But what of the spontaneity and excitement we get from live musicians on the spot? Live music must keep on keeping on.

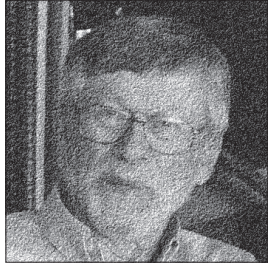
That is certainly PAJA's intention. It is getting increasingly difficult to put together and produce interesting jazz. But we, and you, can take pride in the live experience that Herb and now Harvey have been able to present. We are committed to continue doing so.

Thank you for your continued support,
C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

P.S. We are in need of more helpers to carry the workload. Please give me a call at 650/326-7836 if you would like to participate in keeping PAJA vibrant and relevant.



Young Thomas Edison and his first phonograph



LOOKING BACK *By Ed Fox*

How did you get started with jazz? Was it a lightning bolt—an aha moment— during your teens?

Or did jazz surface in your life in middle age when someone took you to a Keith Jarrett concert? Or was it a gradual thing, and it suddenly dawned on you—“Hey, I really like this music.” And you started listening to it more and more.

For me it was definitely a teen-age stroke of lightning. I was immersed in the pop music of the day: Frankie Laine’s “Lucky Old Sun” and “Mule Train.” Vaughn Monroe and “Ghost Riders in the Sky.” Satchmo’s “Blueberry Hill.” And April Stevens (ever hear of her?) and “I’m in Love Again,” sung in an affectless, but sexy, voice. So, you know, I’m a pretty old duck.

As a teen, I spent a lot of my afternoons listening to the great disc jockey Bill Marlowe on Boston’s station WBZ. He played Bobby Short a lot (“Sand in My Shoes”) and a new band called the George Shearing Quintet. I loved hearing “I’ll Remember April” and “September in the Rain” and I had no idea this was jazz.

But one fine evening, a naive and unsuspecting high school sophomore, I visited my friend Burt and he played for me his father’s recording of the Benny Goodman 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. That was my lightning bolt. Wow. Harry James, Ziggy Elman, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa and “Sing Sing Sing.” I was hooked and in regular visits to Burt’s house, we segued into Stan Kenton—OMG! We bought every Kenton album and loved the barn burners like “Capital Punishment” and “Thermopylae.” We became big fans of Shelly Manne and Eddie Safranski and Maynard Ferguson and even Vido Musso. I had a hard time with Bob Graettinger’s “City of Glass” though.

And then of course we discovered Woody’s 1948 Carnegie Hall concert with hot numbers like “Caldonia” and “Northwest Passage”, but we also dug the intricate “Bijou” and Bill Harris’s “Everywhere”. What a band.

At another friend’s house we were introduced to Duke Ellington—another wow—and I soon learned the names of all the players, from Johnny Hodges to Harry Carney to Cat Anderson.

When I look back it dawns on me how important it was to have a comrade-in-arms to enjoy the music with, and to find new directions. My friend Burt was absolutely instrumental in my development as a jazz fan—we started playing everything from Brubeck to Mulligan to Getz to Lester Young and more, with a new 45 RPM every week. Ah, youthful enthusiasms. And we went to see the Count Basie Orchestra together.

Burt abandoned jazz for classical music later on, but I’ll always be grateful to him for opening my eyes and ears to a music which has remained a life-long passion.

Of course I still love the classic American popular music written by geniuses like Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Frank Loesser, et al. And those vocalists like Frank Sinatra and Bing, though my personal favorite was Dick Haymes, with that voice



Dick Haymes

like sweet cream (“The Night That You Told Me Those Little White Lies”), though Vic Damone and later Steve Lawrence approached Dick for creaminess. You can still hear these folks on station KJAZ from Long Beach—good laid-back Sunday morning breakfast accompaniment.

I don’t get what passes for popular music these days, but that’s OK—each generation has its own music and its own nostalgia. My 17-year-old granddaughter doesn’t get Sinatra or Ella, and I don’t get Ed Sheeran or Ashley Frangipane (Halsey). That’s as it should be, I guess.

Hey, if any readers want to share their early exposure to jazz stories with us, we’d like to hear from you. Send an email to chezfox@mindspring.com.

3 SHADES OF BLUE

Book Review by Frank Story

This is a new book by James Kaplan on the lives of three seminal figures of the post-bop jazz world: Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Bill Evans. All three collaborated in the making of the best-selling album, "Kind of Blue," (1959) which has sold more than 5 million copies over the years. It was the modal music developed by Miles and Gil Evans, moving jazz away from the bebop era of Parker and Gillespie, well covered in the book, and toward a larger audience.

Kaplan writes of the many false starts until Miles found just the right group to execute his vision: Davis, Cannonball Adderley and John Coltrane, backed by Bill Evans, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb. Just five titles on the album: So What, Freddie Freeloader, Blue in Green, All Blues, and Flamenco Sketches. Davis and Gil Evans had created "Birth of the Cool" a decade earlier (though not released until 1957), and "Kind of Blue" brought that impulse into full flower.

The lives of these three are not easy reading. All were heroin addicts, though Davis and Coltrane were able to kick the habit. While Coltrane's spiritual direction led him to sobriety, Davis relied on cocaine and alcohol the rest of his life. Bill Evans remained a hard-core heroin junkie until the end,



Kind of Blue: Evans, Davis, Adderley, Coltrane.

leading to an early demise at age 51.

The black-white thing is a large factor in the book. Evans was the only non-African American in that "Kind of Blue" band, and his presence was questioned by other musicians and some in the black community, but Miles knew he was the pianist he needed, though Wynton Kelley did the honors on "Freddie Freeloader."

Miles later commented that Evans displayed no musical growth after "Kind of Blue" and Kaplan seems to agree, quoting many who criticized Evans for "playing it safe" and sticking to what he knew. For those of us who revere Bill Evans's albums (white music?), this is awfully petty. Here is Evans's thoughtful reply to those criticisms, decrying,

"this preoccupation with 'who's the most modern' instead of 'who's making the most beautiful, human music.'...to make avant-garde the criteria has gotten to be almost a sickness, especially in jazz."

As for musical growth, many fans would not call Miles's excursion into fusion "growth," nor Coltrane's losing his audience after "A Love Supreme" with experiments in free jazz, demonstrating that change is not necessarily progress.

The book mentions that Miles had a concert in Palo Alto in 1975. Anyone remember that? I was here; why didn't I go? I did see Miles at Hearst Greek Theater in Berkeley about that time. Jefferson Airplane opened, and then Miles's fusion band took over, with Miles of course playing with his back to the audience the entire time. I found the Airplane set more interesting and enjoyable, though I'm not at all a rock and roll fan.

The book's subtitle is "Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bill Evans and the Lost Empire of Cool." "Lost" is the operative word, in that Davis and Coltrane especially lost themselves in search of visions difficult for others to understand, while Evans's addiction and premature death was certainly a profound loss to the jazz community.

"3 Shades of Blue," by James Kaplan, is available from Amazon. \$28.95, hard cover, 485 pages.

CORRECTION: In Stuart Brewster's "From the Chair" piece last issue, I added that Akira Tana was a graduate of Palo Alto High School. Oops, right city, wrong school. He graduated from Gunn High School, not Paly./Ed Fox

CLARK TERRY'S TAKE ON THE YOUNG MILES DAVIS

"I went over to Lincoln High in East St. Louis and met this little skinny mother. He was so thin that if you turned him sideways, they would have marked him absent."

JAZZ ON THE PENINSULA

Selected gigs for May and June, 2024

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

5/12	Claudia Villela Group	4:30pm
5/19	Emmet Cohen (sold out)	4:30pm
5/26	Tony Lindsay & Soul Soldiers	4:30pm

MEYHOUSE RESTAURANT, PALO ALTO Meyhouserestaurant.com

5/3, 4	Nicholas Bearde	5, 8pm
5/9, 10, 11	Jamie Davis, w/ Glenn Pearson	5, 8pm
5/16, 17, 18	Larry Vuckovich, et al	5, 8pm
5/23, 24	Tony Lindsay	5, 8pm
5/25	Kim Nalley, with Larry Vuckovich Trio	5, 8pm
5/30	Tammy Hall	5, 8pm
6/1	Alvon Johnson, with Larry Vuckovich	5, 8pm

It's advisable to call for reservations.



Kim Nalley

EARTHWISE, Palo Alto [Google "Mark Weiss dba Earthwise Events"](#)

STANFORD <https://live.stanford.edu>

5/22	Samara Joy (Bing Concert Hall)	7:30pm
5/24	Stanford Jazz Orchestra, with Donny McCaslin (Bing)	7:30pm
6/1	Stanford Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble (Dinkelspiel)	7:30pm
7/14	Count Basie Orchestra (Bing)	7:00pm

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