

## C. STUART BREWSTER, 1926-2026

*PAJA's longtime leader and chairperson Stuart Brewster died on April 16th, age 99. Michael Griffin, the only surviving founding Board member of the organization (the others were Herb Wong, Henry Page, Michael Flicker and John Richardson) contributes this memoir pursuant to PAJA's origins and the man who held PAJA's reins for the past twenty years or so.*

Back in the late 1980s, Herb Wong was still a DJ on KJAZ radio. In addition to being an on-air personality, Herb had a long history of being a Bay Area jazz event producer as well as being a well-known A&R guy running the Blackhawk and then Palo Alto labels. Being widely known on radio and in the record biz here and in L.A., he had a fan base of jazz fans who eagerly followed him when he started teaching a jazz history course at the Palo Alto Adult School. The class was taught in Room 103 at Paly and all of us students were overjoyed to learn at the feet of the master. One of those regular students was Stuart Brewster, who became one of "Herb's gang." With Herb leading the way we soon started going to the annual conventions of the IAJE—International Association of Jazz Educators. And from all this "togetherness" there evolved the formation of the Palo Alto Jazz Alliance, in partnership with Henry Page, principal of the Adult School. The idea was to have a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to jazz education and the production of jazz concerts open to the public, Herb's forte.

The club was organized in 1991 in Carroll Harrington's living room, where John Richardson was elected our first Chair. I was Editor of the Jazz Buff newsletter, and the two of us joined the founding Board of Directors, along with Herb, Henry and our legal beagle Michael Flicker. Michael was the only one of us who knew how to set up the nonprofit paperwork, register us with the Federales, find us a CPA, get insurance for the Board and put us on the right path legally. We couldn't have done it without his expertise. And it is with heavy heart that I report that Michael has recently died in hospice in Copenhagen at age 85. He was a terrifically popular guy—smart, well-admired by all, and those of us who knew him are deeply saddened by his passing.

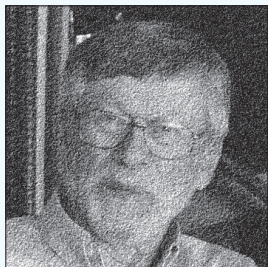
In the early 90s the club was full of enthusiastic members, eager to attend Herb's concerts, attend his Paly classes and travel as a group around the country

to attend the IAJE conventions. We had house parties, went to jazz movies together, filled Stanford Shopping Center every Thursday to listen to jazz bands (arranged by Herb), and started donating money to Jimmy Nadel's Stanford Jazz Workshop. We even organized not one but two trips to Cuba to see the island and experience the foundations of Afro-Cuban jazz. The club membership was about 500 and we were flying high with plenty of volunteer participation.

After John Richardson's term expired, there were two other chairpersons (Ron Schilling and Mike Aydelott) before Stuart Brewster took on the post two decades ago. Stuart was good at it, dedicated, was a Herb enthusiast and a good writer. Not only was he easy-going and personable, he was a great roommate. He and I went to several IAJE conventions together, one of which was in New York City, Stuart's old stomping grounds when he was a representative for the book publisher Addison-Wesley. He knew where all the cool places were and made sure I got to sample the best museums and jazz clubs. We also joined forces on The Jazz Cruise several times and even went on a three-week visit to the Far East, traveling to Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Tokyo. This trip was a long way from Stuart's New England, not to mention California. Stuart's favorite meal of the day in the mysterious Orient was breakfast where he could at least eat familiar food: scrambled eggs. I'll miss Stuart a lot. He was a good guy, a great friend, and a real jazz fan./Michael Griffin

*Stuart is survived by his daughters, Karen and Andrea, his son-in-law, Seyed Alavi, and his grandchild Naseem Alavi. We will send details of a memorial service to members once they are known.*





## LOOKING BACK *By Ed Fox*

### FAREWELL, STUART

PAJA has lost its leader of the past 20 years and it shouldn't be a shock. Stuart Brewster was 99. Even so, he seemed indestructible; he had very few of the "old man" ailments that plague the rest of us, he was still driving his Prius up to his last days, and his mind was still fairly sharp. His dedication to PAJA and its mission of jazz education was absolute. When I volunteered to be PAJA's treasurer about 15 years ago, Stuart showed me the ropes and we realized that we both were born and brought up in the same county in Massachusetts. We became very good friends and met at least once a week with Stuart bringing me the mail and any bank deposits he made. I could have performed those chores, but then he wouldn't have visited me where we could have our weekly discussion of world affairs on my patio. I will miss those discussions and that very fine New England gentleman.

I did not know Michael Flicker, a PAJA charter Board member, very well, but Michael Griffin always spoke very highly of him as being instrumental in setting up PAJA's nonprofit status. He had left for New York well before I joined the



Board and later retired to Denmark, his wife's home country. I met him on two jazz cruises and once, with Griffin and Brewster and other friends, at the Jazz Standard in New York. A good jazz fan and a good man.

### EMMET COHEN AT BING

Emmet Cohen's annual swing through the west coast this year included Stanford's Bing Concert Hall (April 8th) and naturally I was in attendance. Emmet's trio included himself on piano, of course, Reuben Rogers on bass and the formidable Joe Farnsworth on drums.

They opened with "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" and this was Emmet's piano showcase of the evening, as it turned out. Since this was a tribute to Miles Davis and John Coltrane on the centennial of their births, horns were needed, right? So the group then expanded into a quintet with Tivon Pennicott on tenor sax and Jeremy Pelt on trumpet. A highlight of the evening was Pelt's beautiful, soulful solo on "What's New?" My goodness! But it was all good, and the band closed with a Davis-Coltrane medley of tunes like "So What" and "Giant Steps" that brought the house down. With so many top-tier players could there be a better jazz quintet? Emmet says he hopes to be playing with this configuration for years to come, and we can only say "right on!"

Emmet Cohen is one of the busiest performers in jazz. He turns out an album every year, he is a principal host and performer on The Jazz Cruise, his Monday night streaming sessions are now in their sixth year, and his extensive annual touring takes in pretty much all of the U.S., plus Europe and Asia. But there's a reason he's so busy, and popular. He's a terrific pianist and a great ambassador for the music: personable, articulate and well versed in jazz's history. I've seen him a dozen times now—often on The Jazz Cruise, at the San Jose Jazz Festival, at Stanford's Bing Studio, and at Birdland in New York. My only complaint is that he often includes various guest performers in his concerts when you really want to hear more of him. But everyone wants to play with him; those Monday night streams have introduced many young jazz artists to a wider audience, and they also attract some of the biggest names in the music.

The accompanying photograph was taken after a 2019 gig at Stanford's Bing Studio, Emmet flanked by PAJAns Stuart Brewster and Michael Griffin. Emmet is a bit more hirsute these days.

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## MAY 15 EARTHWISE CONCERT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO BREWSTER

The last concert Stuart Brewster attended was one of Mark Weiss's Earthwise gigs on April 4th featuring Tammy Hall, Kristen Strom, Sylvia Cuenca and Ruth Davies, at the Mitchell Park Center. Mark Weiss now invites PAJA members to his May 15th concert at the Mitchell Park Center featuring alto saxophonist Caroline Davis and her quartet. Caroline is an innovative player who has taught at the Stanford Jazz Workshop and has a history with the CCRMA computer music lab. Mark says that anyone identifying him/herself as a PAJA member will be admitted free and there will be a small tribute to Stuart during the program. It all starts at 8pm.



## PAJA SPRING CONCERT DRAWS A NICE CROWD



The Sherri Roberts "I'm Hip" concert at the First Congregational church of Palo Alto's Harmony Hall on March 7th lived up to its billing as "a tribute to the hep-cat singer/songwriters of jazz: Matt Dennis, Bobby Troup, Dave Frishberg and Bob Dorough" as Sherri offered a number of their tunes, familiar and not so familiar. It was a fine way to spend a Saturday afternoon visiting all these old songs. Sherri was backed by her husband David Adolf on piano, Chris Amberger on bass and Akira Tana on drums. Sherri's introductions to the songs amounted to a veritable history of the period of the '70s, '80s, '90s, and added much to the program.

PAJA's next offerings will be a free member party in June or July, and a Fall concert sometime in October. Stay tuned.

## MENLO TAVERN ENGAGES DUMAINE, MILLER

Fans of the marvelous father-daughter duo, vocalist Rebecca DuMaine and pianist Dave Miller, will be delighted to know they have been engaged to play at the Stanford Park Hotel's Menlo Tavern for a series of dinnertime gigs. They'll be joined from time to time by youngsters Kealy and Jackson Bryman, rising stars who, we are told, are related to Rebecca and Dave. The hotel address is 100 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. The dates:

May 29 • June 18 • June 26 • August 27 • September 4  
• September 24 • October 9  
6-9 pm on the patio



**JAZZ ON THE PENINSULA** *Selected gigs for May and June 2026*

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

5/10	Taylor Eigsti Quartet, ft. Cssey Abrams	4:30pm
5/17	Kurt Rosenwinkel Trio	4:30pm
5/24	Terrie Odabi	4:30pm
6/14	Jane Monheit	4:30pm
6/21	John Santos Sextet	4:30pm
6/28	Ralph Allesi Quartet	4:30pm

**MEYHOUSE RESTAURANT, PALO ALTO** *Meyhouserestaurant.com*

5/8	Sandy Crssman Brazil tribute	5, 8pm
5/9	Turkish Jazz, w/ Sinam Sen Trio	5, 8pm
5/15	Coltrane/Davis tribute, w/Vuckovich, Tang	5, 8pm
5/22	Nathan Tokunaga	5, 8pm
5/23	Erik Jekabson, Michael O'Neill	5, 8pm

**EARTHWISE**

5/15	Caroline Davis Quartet (Mitchell Park Ctr)	8pm
6/6	Emi Makabe. (Mitchell Park Ctr)	8pm
6/7	LeBoeuf Jazz Group. (PA Ctr Aud)	2pm



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