

FROM THE CHAIR

“Hey, Joe. Are you going to the PAJA jazz concert tonight?”

“No, I never heard of those players. I am not going to spend my money on a group that I never heard of.”

Well, in my book, it’s too bad that Joe has such a shortsighted outlook.

Let me tell you a personal story. Back in the spring of 1963, I was in Chicago. After finishing a business dinner, I wandered over to the Rush Street section—that’s where the action was in those days. I came across a club called Mister Kelly’s. Perhaps you’ve heard of it. It had a large sign with the names of that evening’s performers. I had never heard of them, but since the evening was young, and I was young, I went in and paid the admission fee.

The lead was a young woman who sang “Happy Days Are Here Again” as a blues. WOW. This fantastic talent was named Barbra Streisand. Opening for her was a standup routine offered by a Jewish kid from Manhattan named Woody Allen. Another WOW. We all know what happened to these unknowns.

Needless to say, I’ve been a fan of both of them ever since and have not been afraid to risk the unknown.

Years later, I told this story to PAJA’s co-founder Herb Wong, whom I had first met when he was principal of an elementary school in Berkeley. He then told me how he had once auditioned to do a club standup about jazz for a slot later given to



Taylor Who?

Woody at Mister Kelly’s. Sometimes life can be so weird.

All this reminiscing prompts me to take a look at the variety of talent that Herb at first, and now Harvey Mittler, have offered for our pleasure over the years. A mix of the established as well as those on the way up. All in keeping with our devotion to hearing jazz live and furthering jazz education in a variety of ways.

I suppose one can be open to new, perhaps unfamiliar, music efforts and join 30,000 others at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara some evening. I’m curious about this new singer—Taylor Swift—and a ticket costs how much? No, let’s stick to what we know and understand—straight-ahead, accessible, intimate jazz concerts. As I write this, we haven’t decided on what group we’ll be offering next, and when. But be it a “name” you’re familiar with or not, please trust us to offer something well worth hearing. I do hope you’ll be there.

In continued appreciation of your support,

C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

JAZZ DIARY—Three recent “gigs”

By Ed Fox

On October 11, **Hiromi** was appearing at Bing, that beautiful concert space on the Stanford campus. I had seen Hiromi, the now 44-year-old Japanese virtuoso jazz pianist, about eight years ago at the Blue Note in New York City. At that time, she was backed simply by a standup bass player and a drummer, and she played a lot of jazz standards like Caravan and Round Midnight. Hiromi



Hiromi

has moved on. At Stanford, **Hiromi Sonicwonder** incorporated various elements, particularly electronic and techno—with a trumpeter and a bass player plugged in to get that interesting echo effect, an effect I first heard about 45 years ago with Don Ellis and his electronic trumpet at Flint Center. Hiromi’s bandmates were the same ones as on her recent Sonicwonder album: Adam O’Farrill, trumpet; Hadrian Feraud on bass, and Gene Coye on drums, and they were very good indeed. I last saw O’Farrill playing with Rudresh Mahanthappa in San Jose and he carried a heavy Sonicwonder load throughout this evening; there was also an extended excellent drum solo near the end. But it is Hiromi’s playing that still is the group’s centerpiece. She bangs the keys, dances, plays scintillating runs, all while alternating between three different keyboards (sometimes playing two at once). She is a very strong player. It was all very high energy uptempo tsunamis for the most part, with the exception of a few beautiful slow-tempo changes of pace, enhanced by haunting trumpet echoing and delay pedals. There were no familiar tunes; all were extended original concerto-like pieces, and the packed audience loved it all.

Jazz deals with the truth with honesty and sincerity. When people hear it down the line, even 2000 years from now, we’ll be hailed for giving the world some of the most beautiful music it’s ever heard. —Tony Bennett

On Sunday, October 15, I wandered over to Mitchell Park in South Palo Alto for one of Earthwise’s free jazz concerts outdoors at the Mitchell Park Bowl. The first set featured vocalist Cait Gjerdrum and it was quite pleasing with standards like God Bless the Child, Thou Swell,



Mads Tolling

and Quiet Nights and Quiet Stars. Then the main act was introduced—the **Mads Tolling Quartet**. Tolling, the Copenhagen native who now resides in San Francisco, is unquestionably one of the world’s top jazz violinists. This ensemble included Jeff Denson on bass, Jason Lewis on drums, and keyboardist Palo Alto native Ken Wong. They opened with a swinging version of the Flintstones theme and I wished they had played more jamming numbers like this one. It was a mixed and intriguing program after that, with music from various genres, including a Beatles medley. In all, it was an entertaining offering by some accomplished musicians. Earthwise is presenting various concerts in the Palo Alto area, including some jazz—Anat Cohen (with guitarist Marcello) appears at Mitchell Park Community Center in Palo Alto on November 17. For more information Google Mark Weiss dba Earthwise Events.

Music is inherently therapeutic—it’s been proven that it can affect brain waves, improve breathing and heart rate, and combat anxiety. Live music seems to amplify this phenomenon, as the sound waves from real instruments blend together to resonate even deeper than they do through head phones or speakers —Emmet Cohen

Well, there were no live Emmet Cohen concerts in the vicinity, so I listened instead to his latest album—**Emmet Cohen Featuring Houston Person**, Masters Legacy Series, Volume 5. Emmet has always enjoyed playing with jazz veterans, and I’ve seen him with George Coleman, and another time with Tootie Heath, not always that interesting. This one is a winner, though, and Person, who turns 89 next month, is in fine form. He plays what Michael Griffin calls a Texas tenor, referring to its deep, brassy sound. Houston is not the player he was 30-40 years ago (who is?), but he’s still plenty good. And his sound today is more mellow and soulful than brassy. I’m looking for a word—how about “mellifluous”? The “mel” root refers to “honey” and that’s an apt description of his sound—honeyed. Whoa, this review is getting out of hand...



Houston Person

Pianist Emmet Cohen needs no praise from me. This piano trio includes his regulars Yasushi Nakamura (b) and Kyle Poole (d) and I don’t know a better piano trio in the business.

There are eight familiar tunes on the album and my favorites are the ballad “All My Tomorrows” and a swinging version of Billy Idol’s “Just the Way You Are.” It’s all Jazz, baby—listenable, toe-tapping, very enjoyable.

ARTEMIS IN CONCERT

Reviewed by Kenneth Cobb

WOW!!! That's just about all I have to say after taking in both incredible sets by Artemis (Renee Rosnes, Ingrid Jensen, Nicole Glover, Noriko Ueda, Allison Miller) at Keystone Korner [Baltimore] yesterday afternoon/evening! Its members are all bandleaders, composers, arrangers, and outstanding musicians in their own right. I previously saw the group last May (2022) at Kennedy Center, and in March at Zellerbach Auditorium at U.C. Berkeley. Both times, the sextet performed, with Anat Cohen or Alexa Tarantino on alto saxophone, respectively.

Playing original compositions from its latest CD, standards, and rearrangements of classic tunes, Artemis put on a rare display of artistry, improvisation, and technique reminiscent of those legendary 1950s Blue Note recordings. Hence, it's no accident that the latest recording, titled "In Real Time", is on that celebrated label.



One Artemis lineup.

Be it a ballad, mid-tempo, or fast/burner tune, the front-line horns of Jensen and Glover harmonized perfectly, while Miller often pushed the band, displaying lightning-quick drum rolls, and at other times showing beautiful brush work and making very creative sounds on cymbals. Rosnes' beautiful touch, swing, and re(arrangements) were something to behold. And Euda's steady notes on bass kept it all together throughout. Yep, that's why Artemis is must-see, can't-miss Jazz...

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THE JAZZ PERISCOPE *Selected gigs for November and December, 2023*

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

- 11/9 Grace Kelly..... 8pm
- 11/14 Benny Green 8pm
- 12/3 Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band..... 7, 9pm
- 12/7-10 Robert Glasper

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

- 11/16 Steven Lugerner's Slugish Ensemble.....7, 8:30pm
- 11/24-26 Dorado Schmitt & Sons
- 11/28-12/3 Pink Martini, with China Forbes
- 12/9, 22 Etienne Charles: Creole Christmas
- 12/15 Halie Loren7, 8:30pm
- 12/15 Spanish Harlem Orchestra7:30pm
- 12/16 Adam Schulman
- 12/17 Marcus Shelby New Orchestra 7pm
- 10/19-22 Eliane Elias

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

- 11/5 Jackie Ryan, with Erik Jekabson4:30pm
- 11/12 Patrick Wolff, with Peter Bernstein4:30pm
- 11/19 Mary Stallings4:30pm
- 12/3 Davina & the Vagabonds.....4:30pm

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

- 11/27 Dorado Schmitt & Django Festival All-Stars..... 7pm
- 12/7 Matt Wilson's Christmas Tree-O 7pm
- 12/11 Davina & the Vagabonds 7pm
- 12/14 Spanish Harlem Orchestra 7, 9pm

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*

- 12/8 Storm Large—Holiday Ordeal (studio)..... 7pm
- 12/10 Davina & the Vagabonds (concert hall)..... 4pm

EARTHWISE *Google "Mark Weiss dba Earthwise Events"*

- 11/16 Ben Goldberg's Glamorous Escapades (PA Art Ctr Aud.) 8pm
- 11/17 Anat Cohen, with Marcello (Mitchell Park Comm Ctr).....7,9pm



Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band