

## FROM THE CHAIR

HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN! Well, not quite, but it was a beginning. What a joy to be able to have a free member party once again and hear jazz LIVE. See Page 2 for a report and photos from the member party, with more photos on page 5.

Thanks to Harvey Mittler for gathering such a talented quartet, musicians who had never played together—but sounded like a veteran all-star group. Much appreciation goes to the efforts of our all-volunteer Board—Dave Miller, Shirley Douglas, Doris Harry, and Ed Fox for handling the various operational details to make for a memorable afternoon for all who were fortunate enough to attend.

I was struck once again as to just how valuable it is to be hearing the expression of sound particular to jazz at the moment of creation, that is, the language of music as it's being played rather than via CD or some other communication means that was created in the past. This is hard to put into words and I'm sure each listener is affected differently. At a LIVE concert, it behooves one to focus and really listen—no multi-tasking, no checking the cell, no conversation with others. For me, it is a time for reflection and absorbing the music. The mood provided by Greg Abate and friends was mellow and comforting, but certainly exciting. Consequently very much to my taste.

So we have resumed our efforts at helping to keep jazz alive. It's a shame that listening to jazz in this

country seems to be a pastime for an aging and declining community. What can PAJA do to keep developing the audience? I have asked this question many times before. How do we educate more to see the joy of focusing one's ears to such "noise"? Any thoughts would be appreciated as to what we can do to help others join us in this special world.

Maybe you have a friend for whom giving a membership to PAJA might be a consideration as a gift for the holidays. Let us know and we'll send you a brochure that can go along with the announcement of your gift. Or you can just refer them to our web site: [pajazzalliance.org](http://pajazzalliance.org) for insight to our efforts.

As always, thank you for your continuing support. Despite our Covid-caused two-year stagnation, we have managed to maintain our membership numbers and you continue to donate generously. We can finally look ahead to making plans for a public concert next spring, when hopefully the limitations on indoor gigs will be relaxed or even gone.

All good wishes,

C. Stuart Brewster  
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

Greg Abate



Karl Robinson photo

## RECORDS TO SELL?

Jeff Thornton, record dealer and Public Radio DJ, is seeking to buy vinyl records in any genre. Anyone who sells their records through Jeff can designate a percentage of the proceeds to go to PAJA (or any other charity). Those interested in buying records can mention PAJA for a 10% discount at *riddimatical discogs* store, [www.discogs.com/seller/riddimatical/profile](http://www.discogs.com/seller/riddimatical/profile) and on all transactions an additional 10% will be forwarded to PAJA. When purchasing your records, Jeff pays fair prices and helps these treasured music items to find new homes.

# WE'RE BACK!

## PAJA Offers Live Music Again At Great Member Party

After a pandemic-caused hiatus of two years, PAJA brought live music back to its members with a bang at a wonderful member party on Sunday, October 17. There are at least three things which made this one of the best member parties ever: 1. The joy most of us felt with the first notes sounded by the band. Wow! Live music—we've really missed you; 2. A very pleasant new venue—the shaded courtyard of the First Congregational church in Palo Alto—comfortable seating, plenty of room to spread out, lots of parking; and 3. Certainly not least, the band. Event chair Harvey Mittler arranged for a remarkable group, led by East Coaster Greg Abate, one of the best alto sax artists on the planet, backed by local stalwarts Ben Stolorow on piano, Doug Miller on bass, and Sylvia Cuenca on drums. They sounded like they've been playing together for years, and about 60 enthusiastic fans of the music were treated to standards like All The Things You Are, What's New?, Angel Eyes, the bebop classic Scapple From the Apple, Back Home in Indiana/Donna Lee, Family—a tasty original by Abate, and many other tunes. The weather cooperated, the wine flowed freely, and it was great to see jazz friends after such a long drought. So—we're back. . . and tentative plans are in the works for a spring concert, March 20. Stay tuned.



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## L.A.'s The Haig Remembered

I first learned of the existence of some legendary jazz clubs via recordings such as Thelonious Monk's "At The Blackhawk" (1960) and Bill Evans's "Sunday at The Village Vanguard" (1961). On my first visit to the USA, in the late 1960s, I was lucky enough to go to the Vanguard in New York City, but when I got to San Francisco I found that The Black Hawk had closed in 1963. (The difference in spelling of the name is explained by the club's co-owner Guido Caccianti, who claimed "the guy who made the sign goofed.")

Via liner notes to Gerry Mulligan LPs from the early 1950s, I learned of the existence of The Haig in Los Angeles, which, it appeared, had given birth to Gerry's piano-less quartet. This article gives a brief history of The Haig.

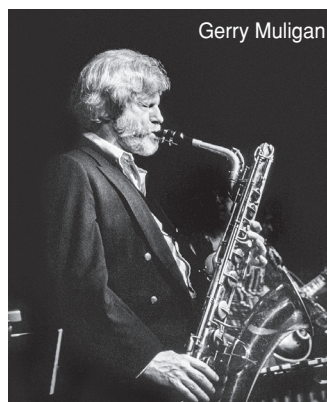
That history began in 1932 with the purchase of a small, four-room, single-story house scheduled for demolition, and then its removal—I'd never heard of such a thing—to the east side of South Kenmore Avenue, between 6th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, across from the Ambassador Hotel (demolished in the first decade of this millennium), and around the corner from its main entrance on Wilshire. At some time soon afterwards the bungalow was extended with a kitchen, and The Haig opened for cocktails and dining. The building was extended a second time in 1938; nonetheless, it remained positively minuscule compared with its neighbors, and dwarfed by even its own neon sign on the roof, "Haig, Dinners, Cocktails".

It's not clear exactly when music was added to the menu at The Haig, or when that music turned to jazz. Certainly by the late 1940s near-jazz pianists were appearing, such as Walter Gross (composer of a small number of tunes, notably "Tenderly") and Matt Dennis (composer of "Angel Eyes", "Everything Happens to Me", "Will You Still Be Mine?", and "Let's Get Away from It All", among many others). The first real jazz musician to perform at The Haig appears to have been Erroll Garner. Garner had moved from his native Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Los Angeles just after the end of WW II, notably appearing on Charlie Parker's classic "Cool Blues" in 1947. Later that year, he appeared at The Haig, and did so intermittently until at least 1952, when he was one of the regulars in the weekly off-night jam sessions (variously Monday or Tuesday).

Around 1950, owner John Bennett began to present jazz at The Haig in earnest. The music was varied, but the groups were always small—rarely bigger than trios—a factor dictated by the tiny stage squeezed into a

none-too-large dining room, for example: Dave Brubeck in trio with Ron Crotty and Cal Tjader; the so-underrated Red Norvo Trio with Charles Mingus and Tal Farlow; and Hampton Hawes with Harper Crosby and Larance Marable.

It's well known that the Haig gave birth to Gerry Mulligan's piano-less quartet, although there are at least two versions of how that came about: one is that Mulligan actively rejected the use of a piano; a second is that it was *force majeure* from the Haig's piano having been removed. Fanciful though it might be, I think the latter is rather closer to the truth, perhaps providing the necessary impulse. Mulligan had first visited The Haig, more or less by accident, for one of those off-night jam sessions; he must have liked what he heard, because he soon became the leader of those sessions. He seems to have had no antipathy, though, to the piano per se; indeed, there are photographs showing him with a pianist in quartet or, with a second horn, quintet. At the same time Mulligan formed his quartet with Chet Baker, Bob Whitlock and Chico Hamilton (first recorded—albeit not at The Haig—in August 1952). The piano was back very soon: it had been removed when Norvo reappeared at the Haig in July, but it was available again in time for Hawes to record there in September in a quintet with Art Farmer and Wardell Gray (it's not clear who was the leader; Joe Mondragon and Shelly Manne were on bass and drums). Notwithstanding a piano's availability, Mulligan continued with his piano-less quartet, both at The Haig and in the wider world. Dick Bock, who had become The Haig's publicity man after his job with Discovery Records had evaporated with the label's acquisition by an East Coast group, founded Pacific Jazz, and it was on that label that all the quartet's early recording were issued.



It's difficult to describe a jazz club without its turning into a laundry list of those who appeared there. In addition to some already mentioned, a few who actually recorded at The Haig were Warne Marsh (December 1952); Lee Konitz (with Mulligan, 1953); Sweets Edison (with Arnold Ross, Joe

Comfort and Alvin Stoller; July 1953); and Bud Shank (with Claude Williamson, Don Prell and Chuck Flores, January 1956).

Stan Getz recorded at The Haig in June 1953 with Chet Baker, Carson Smith and Larry Bunker—Mulligan's quartet sans Gerry, who was otherwise engaged. Everybody knows that it was Stan Getz who introduced Bossa Nova to North American and wider audiences with "Jazz Samba" from February 1962, but, like a lot of things that everybody knows, it ain't so. First, the impetus for that recording was not Stan's but that of guitarist Charlie Byrd: it was he who had proposed the project to producer Creed Taylor of Verve Records. Second, and more important, Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida had formed a quartet (with Bud Shank, Harry Babasin and Roy Harte) which had beaten them to Bossa Nova by almost a decade via their 1953 recording on Pacific Jazz. Almeida and Shank had appeared together at The Haig, probably also in 1953. (The music on off-nights at The Haig was often eclectic: one group had Babasin and Oscar Pettiford performing on amplified cellos, accompanied by some of the usual Haig suspects.)

That year, 1953, proved to be the apex of The Haig's success. Suffering from competition from parvenu clubs such as Tiffany and Zardi's (both of which had a "no cover, no minimum" policy), and unable to expand beyond its still tiny boundaries, it became difficult for owner Bennett to turn a profit. Billie Holiday's end-of-year booking was marred by the tendency, not banned or even discouraged by Bennett, of audiences to chat loudly, to the detriment of the music. In early 1954, a tired and emotional—to use a British euphemism—Bud Powell did not need audience indifference, or even any audience whatever, for his engagement to be a disaster.

For the rest of that year, West Coast stars rotated in and out, variously as leader and sideman, such as Zoot Sims, Barney Kessel, and Frank Rosolino. Prior attractions returned, such as, separately, Chet Baker and Chico Hamilton (both members of Mulligan's first quartet), and even Mulligan himself. Not mentioned earlier, the most persistent booking was for Shorty Rogers and His Giants: multi-reed player Jimmy Giuffre; Marty Paich (one of the pianists who'd accompanied Mulligan on piano the previous year); bassist Curtis Counce; and Shelly Manne.

During 1955, there was a series of long residences by such as the foregoing names, as well as Hampton Hawes, who was in trio for the latter half of the year, usually with Red Mitchell on bass, and presumably Chuck Thompson on drums. Barney Kessel replaced Hawes at The Haig, to be himself replaced in the new year by a new Bud Shank Quartet, with Claude Williamson (one of my own favorites—both Bud and Claude had left Howard Rumsey's Lighthouse All-Stars) on piano, Don Prell on bass, and drummer Chuck Flores; it appears that that quartet was in residence for the entire

first half of 1956.

But despite these many names long familiar to us, be it contemporaneously or soon afterwards, names many of which are now enshrined in the Pantheon of Jazz, their abilities had been no guarantee of success for The Haig's owner, John Bennett. The first indication that he had been reading the writing on the wall came with his cancelling newspaper advertising in 1955. He sold The Haig in 1956.

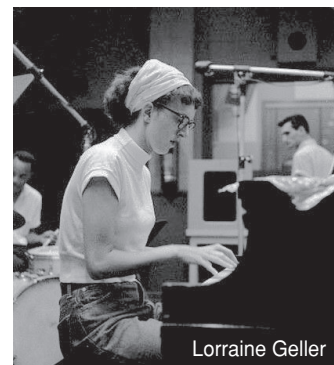
The new owners, Sally and Lee Pearce, lost no time in addressing the depredations wrought by years of seven-nights-a-week use. After renovations, they continued to spend money to make money, and resumed the practice of advertising, from which it appears that the first engagement at The Haig was for Buddy Collette, whose quartet opened at Halloween and continued through year's end. (Collette deserves praise not just for his contributions as a founding member of Chico Hamilton's Quintet or his prowess on so many reeds, but for his efforts on education and integration. Decades later he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from AFM Local 47.)

The year 1956 closed at The Haig with the Jimmy Giuffre Three, with Jim Hall on guitar and Ralph Peña on bass (this is the personnel on most tracks on the like-named recording done that same month for Atlantic Records), and 1957 began promisingly, with engagements by first the Bud Shank Quartet (this is when the live recording mentioned above was made) and later the Art Pepper Quartet. In March came an appearance by the Red Mitchell Quartet, with James Clay on tenor saxophone and flute, Lorraine Geller on piano and Billy Higgins on drums. (That same month these four recorded "Presenting Red Mitchell" for Contemporary—do check it out on YouTube.)

But Bennett's reading of the signs had been more accurate than that of the Pearces: first they, too, stopped advertising, and then, suddenly, following the Mitchell engagement, they closed The Haig. In 1957 the building was demolished, to be replaced by a parking lot.

Ironically, that was the same fate later suffered by San Francisco's Blackhawk. I can't help but be reminded of Joni Mitchell's lyric "Don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone? They paved Paradise and put up a parking lot." Please do your part in maintaining what we've got: get out and listen to live jazz.

*Michael Burman hosts "Weekend Jazz Oasis" Saturday evenings on KCSM, Jazz 91.1.*



Lorraine Geller



## MORE PHOTOS FROM THE MEMBER PARTY

*Photos by Karl Robinson*



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