

FROM THE CHAIR

For a number of years, Board member Doris Harry was the director of The Music School in Sunnyvale. Brian Ho was one of her faculty members, a great teacher. Brian is a well-known local performer, particularly on the Hammond B3 organ, and he has now joined the PAJA Board of Directors. Welcome, Brian, your energy, talents, and musical connections give the Board some desirable new blood.

As I contemplated what else to talk about in this issue of the Buff, I found that the San Francisco Chronicle had just published a long article on the subject that AI can mimic but cannot replace the artistry of music. This is in keeping with some of my thoughts. AI may offer some version of jazz, but the human element is lost. I want to be there and experience the on-the-spot efforts of live musicians as they make it happen. Their creativity of the moment is what we enjoy. Please support live music and purchase recordings, rather than leave the field to computer-generated "elevator music."

I am adjusting to hearing speech (let alone music) via

hearing aids. It's not a way of life that one particularly wants. Somehow the sound is different and challenging since the audio aids also pick up a lot of other distracting sounds. My informal survey among friends and others who use audio enhancement is that most people have some dissatisfaction with these aids, as I do. But, I guess they are better than nothing.

I want to encourage all those with or without such dissatisfaction to attend live concerts, such as our October 4th gig with Taylor Eigsti at the Community School of Music and Arts in Mountain View. The acoustics in the concert hall are first class and will be welcoming to those of you, like myself, who are now tied to those pesky bugs in your ears. It's an honor having Taylor here playing for PAJA once again. We're expecting a capacity turnout, so don't wait. Order your tickets now.

Thanking you for your continued support,

C. Stuart Brewster, Chair
Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

MEET BRIAN HO

Brian is PAJA's newest Board member. Brian consented to participate in the following Q&A.

What do you consider your hometown?

I was born and raised in San Jose. After college, I came back and lived in the Peninsula for many years before purchasing a home in Sunnyvale.

What was your schooling?

Elementary, middle and high school in San Jose. I studied computer science and music at UC Davis. I've also received training from Joey DeFrancesco and Pat Bianchi.

What is your main instrument?

I am primarily a Hammond organist, but I do play piano as well. I have been performing professionally since the age of 16.

Jazz Accolades?

I have performed or recorded with Billy Hart, Gary Bartz, Azar Lawrence, Troy Roberts, Dan Wilson, Paul Bol-



Brian Ho

lenbeck, Calvin Keys, vocalist Kenny Washington, Leon Joyce, Jr., Nicholas Bearde, Lorca Hart, Akira Tana, and more.

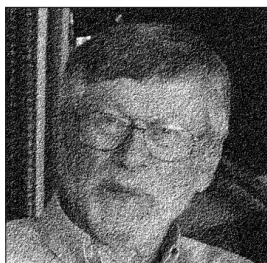
In 2024, I released my second album, "Bridges," which was #96/100 on the Jazzweek radio charts. It features Paul Bollenbeck and Byron "Wookie" Landham (2/3rds of Joey DeFrancesco's original trio). The Mercury News (Andrew Gilbert) listed it as one of the "best albums released in 2024."

What other musical professional activities are you involved in?

Alongside performance, I am also the general manager of Melody Academy of Music, with locations in Palo Alto (Cubberly), Fremont, and Cupertino.

What do you hope to bring to the PAJA Board of Directors?

I hope to bring my experience both as a performer and educator, as well as my passion for jazz and community engagement. I want to contribute ideas for concert programming, outreach, education initiatives, audience development, and to help strengthen the role of jazz in our community.



A Rare Talent

*Better watch your step
When your old dog Shep
Can't even look you in the eye...*

Fans of Dave Frishberg will recognize those lines from one of his most familiar songs, *Blizzard of Lies*. Fans will also know at least a couple of his other songs: *My Attorney Bernie*, *I'm Hip* (with Bob Dorough), and *Peel Me a Grape*. My personal favorite of Dave's is *Van Lingle Mungo*, a haunting torch song with lyrics composed completely of baseball players' names from the 1940s or so, like Barney McCosky and Hal Trosky. There aren't too many who did exactly what Dave did, and I suppose you could call his genre as jazz novelty songs. Funny, thoughtful, always clever. Have you heard *All Alone in El Cajon*?

Dave was a terrific jazz pianist and his keyboard accompaniment to his twangy singing voice was brilliant. As a pianist, he played with the likes of Gene Krupa, Carmen McRae, Ben Webster, Zoot Sims, and many more. As a lyricist, he provided material or collaborated with Johnny Mandel, Blossom Dearie, and Gerry Mulligan, and several others.. He composed "I'm Just a Bill" for *Schoolhouse Rock*.



Dave Frishberg

LOOKING BACK

By Ed Fox

I was fortunate to see him, with Bob Dorough, at Yoshi's in Oakland one red-letter evening when they played all our favorites. I also saw him at Palo Alto Square at an improvised outdoor concert venue that I think that was arranged by Jim Benham of Full Faith and Credit; remember that terrific local big band?

Dave died in 2021, aged 88. I had heard he was struggling to remember lyrics in performances near the end. To have cognitive issues for someone whose artistry depended so much on plays on words and clever lyrics must have been extremely disheartening.

Dave Frishberg wrote hundreds of songs, and I enjoyed them all, though I have to stretch to forgive him for one questionable tune he wrote—*Dodger Blue*, a hymn to the Los Angeles Dodgers. Wrong team, Dave.

Monk in Palo Alto

You may recall that PAJAn Danny Scher discovered tapes of a 1968 Thelonious Monk concert he arranged (as a 16-year-old) at Palo Alto High School and that a wonderful album of that concert was released in 2020. There is a superb article on the whole story by David Kushner in the July 20th online issue of *Rolling Stone*. Highly recommended. One thing I didn't know is that Scher was later able to book Duke Ellington for a Palo Alto High concert. I was here in 1968 and later, but somehow didn't get the memos. Sob.

Jazz Hotbed

I haven't actually measured, but there have to be more jazz fans per square foot in Japan than any other country. The city of Tokyo has 90-100 jazz clubs. It's not uncommon for elevator or supermarket music to be John Coltrane or Miles Davis. No country releases more old classic recordings or jazz books and translations annually than Japan. A number of Japanese women keyboardists have made an impact on the U.S. scene (Hiromi, Toshiba Akiyoshi, Chihiro Yamanaka, et al.) but almost no male instrumentalists are known to me. It is a puzzlement.

Reach Ed Fox at chezfox@mindspring.com

A LOOK AT SELECTED GIGS AT THE 2025 STANFORD FESTIVAL

By Michael Griffin

JAZZ SAWYER: Tribute to Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers. July 11. This was the bebop gig for SJW's festival with Sawyer showing what it was like to play in Blakey's hard bop academy for young musicians. Featuring forceful, if not ferocious, bursts of high-impact drumming, Sawyer did a good job demonstrating Blakey's percussive technique, sometime to quite a startling effect! Luckily, the front line held on for the ride, especially after getting into the groove when they got to the classic *A Night in Tunisia*. Local trumpeter Mike Olmos and the incandescent altoist Kasey Knudsen were quite marvelous. I could hear more from this lady.

JOHN PIZZARELLI: Broadway and Hollywood Swing. July 12. Anyone (like me) who has been on The Jazz Cruise has to be a fan of this guy, a truly fine guitar player and singer of Nat King Cole ballads and hip tunes. Do you enjoy classics like *Straighten Up and Fly Right* or *Route 66* or *Hit That Jive, Jack*? Or Sinatra torch songs like *Witchcraft* and *Night and Day*? Yeah, me too. And Pizzarelli is THE man to sing these beauties, made more memorable by his guitar chops, which are formidable. Accompanied by Isaiah Thompson for the last few years, Pizzarelli has benefited from the lyrical phrasing and soulful touch of this new (to me) star on piano. They played to a house full of very enthusiastic fans. Very!

RUTH DAVIES' BLUES NIGHT, WITH CHRIS CAIN. July 16. Stand back, folks; here comes B.B. King incarnate. Chris Cain and his singing guitar. A South Bay native, Cain is a star of blues music, not only playing with dazzling chops, but also singing along in close unison with the notes on his guitar. I'll confess I could hardly understand a word of his lyrics, but this guitar virtuoso impresses. And then he sat down at the keys to deliver some straight-out Ray Charles. This was a monster band tonight, with terrific players like Danny Caron, a phenomenal sideman on guitar, who plays above his weight and is right up there with Cain when it comes to blowing away a blues audience. John Burr on organ and piano covered the waterfront. And Kris Strom did herself beautifully on tenor; we should have heard more from her. Hey, the crowd went full stop. Jazz fans would do well to attend this once-a-year refresher course in this important foundation genre that undergirds modern jazz.

ANAT COHEN & MARCELLO GONCALVES. July 19. What is your definition of Brazilian jazz? Is it Jo-

bim's *The Girl From Ipanema*, Stan Getz playing bossa nova, or the soundtrack from *Black Orpheus*? Unusual percussion and rhythm? Hey, that was 1964 (yes, really). It's 60 years later, folks; time marches on, and tonight we enjoyed *Contemporary Brazilian jazz*. Two virtuoso soloists playing in a terrific, highly skilled duet of expressive Spanish guitar and Anat's captivating clarinet. Not your mama's Brazilian jazz, but a modern interpretation of the genre. Goncalves's seven string gypsy guitar with its bass tone adding remarkably to his instrument's impact. Cohen's mesmerizing skill on clarinet, as she riffed over the top of their music. Simply exquisite. So, welcome to Contemporary Brazilian jazz. It's not bossa nova, y'all.

DENA DEROSE TRIO, July 28, reviewed by Ed Fox. Vocalist-pianist Dena DeRose has been an SJW faculty member since 1996, but she doesn't always perform as a featured artist in the Festival. We were lucky this year, very lucky. Performing with her favorite West coast backup of Peter Barshay (bass) and drummer Akira Tana, she provided a wonderful evening for fans at that perfect setting for jazz, Campbell Recital Hall. I've always thought that selection of material can make or break an artist with his/her audience, and Dena was right on this evening: *Day By Day*, *Only Trust Your Heart*, *Maybe September*, *Lotus Blossom* (with new words honed by Dena), and *Dreams*, the Langston Hughes poem set to music by Ms. DeRose. Dena put Peter Barshay to work on several of these and he was great, as usual. Trombonist Steve Davis guested on two numbers near the end, one of which, *In a Mellow Tone*, brought down the house, as they say. Just a wonderful evening. Thank you, Dena. The only slight negative for me was she didn't do enough of that scat singing she does in unison with the notes she plays on the piano, just as John Pizzarelli does so well with guitar. I love that stuff. Maybe next time.



Dena Deroose



John Pizzarelli

PAJA PRESENTS

Two-time Grammy winner

TAYLOR EIGSTI
IN CONCERT



**With JASON LEWIS, DRUMS
JOSH THURSTON-MILGROM, BASS**

**SATURDAY 7:30PM, OCTOBER 4, 2025
Community School of Music and Arts
230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View**

Seating is limited. Get your tickets early. General \$60,
PAJA members \$50, Students \$15.

Tickets from our website: pajazzalliance.org,
or by mail from Fox c/o 294 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, CA 94306

JAZZ ON THE PENINSULA

Selected gigs for September and October, 2025

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

9/14	The Lao Tiger Band	4:30pm
9/21	Sarah Hanahan Quartet	4:30pm
9/28	David Sanchez: Carib	4:30pm
19/5	Wildflowers: Kurt Elling w/Christian Sands	4:30pm
11/2	Gunhild Carling	4:30pm

MEYHOUSE RESTAURANT, PALO ALTO Meyhouserestaurant.com

9/5	Darryl Rowe	5, 8pm
9/6A	Larry Vuckovich: A Life in Jazz	5, 8pm
10/10	Flubby Dubby Soul=Jazz Night	5, 8pm

STANFORD UNIVERSITY www.live.stanford.edu

10/3	Lucia (Bing Studio)	7:30, 9pm
10/12	Arboresque (Bing Concert Hall)	4:00pm

Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

10/4	Taylor Eigsti — CSMA, Mtn. View	7:30pm
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