AL COHN MEMORIAL JAZZ COLLECTION at EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The NOTE

SPRING/
SUMMER 2023

MORE DISCUSSION WITH
BILL HOLMAN

THAD JONES'
100TH!

ESU'S 14TH
PRESIDENT
KENNETH
LONG

ESU EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY

The NOTE

VOL. 33 - NO. 1

ISSUE 78

WINTER/SPRING 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE COLLECTION

Cover photo:
Edward Ellington II with ESU President Kenneth Long at the Duke Ellington Nutcracker and Grinch Suite concert on December 10, 2022.
Photo by Renee Broady

Centerfold:
The inner jacket photo of The Band from the 1972 LP The Alpine Power Plant featuring Phil Woods, Eddie Daniels, Dexter Gordon and many others!

Back Cover: Gerry Mulligan and David Ratajczak on drums at Newport Jazz Festival August 18, 1990
- Photo by Nick Puopolo

The NOTE contains some content that may be considered offensive.
Authors' past recollections reflect attitudes of the times and remain uncensored.

The Note is published by the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, as part of its educational outreach program.

AL COHN (1925-1988)
The Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection was founded in 1988 by Flo Cohn, Ralph Hughes, Phil Woods, Dr. Larry Fisher, ESU Vice President for Development & Advancement Larry Naftulin, and ESU President Dr. James Gilbert.

EDITOR
Matt Vashlishan, D.M.A.

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
ESU Marketing & Communications
Ideal Design Solutions

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
Kenneth Long

AL COHN MEMORIAL JAZZ COLLECTION
Kemp Library
East Stroudsburg University
200 Prospect St.
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
(570) 422-3828
alcohncollection@esu.edu
esu.edu/alcohncollection
esu.edu/jazzatesu

The mission of the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection is to stimulate, enrich, and support research, teaching, learning, and appreciation of all forms of jazz, particularly those connected to the Pocono area of Pennsylvania. The ACMJC is a distinctive archive built upon a unique and symbiotic relationship between the Pocono Mountains jazz community and East Stroudsburg University.

With the support of a world-wide network of jazz advocates, the ACMJC seeks to promote the local and global history of jazz by making its resources available and useful to students, researchers, educators, musicians, historians, journalists and jazz enthusiasts of all kinds, and to preserve its holdings for future generations.

A NOTE FROM THE
COLLECTION COORDINATOR

Dr. Matt Vashlishan

ESU AND ITS COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS

Matt and Erica Golaszewski introduce the WGJO - Renee Broady

I use this editor column to discuss ACMJC success stories and other important news, and this time is no different. I also usually dedicate a portion of the issue to our annual Ellington Nutcracker performance review, but this issue is packed with such interesting pieces I have decided to forfeit my space for the sake of the greater good so you can enjoy the content in its entirety.

I will begin by thanking each and every one of you who chose to spend your time with us on the evening of December 10th, 2022 for our annual Duke Ellington Nutcracker Suite (and Grinch Suite!) with the Water Gap Jazz Orchestra. Records prove this was one of our very best attended performances, and on behalf of ESU and the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection I would like to express my deepest thanks and also let you know how much your support means to the collection. Without community and audience support like you have shown, performances like these would be nearly impossible, and it is through your generosity and interest in what we are trying to do at ESU that we can bring these events to the public.

Edward reading the Nutcracker script between movements - Renee Boady

The WGJO performs “Into the Blues” by Dick Cone with guest Seneca Black on trumpet - Renee Broady

This year was particularly special for a number of reasons. It was our first year back after covid single-handedly shut down the arts for over two years. Turnout was a gamble either way you look at it. Most importantly, this concert was attended by Kenneth Long, the 14th ESU President and his family. President Long is a large part of the reason we have these performances at ESU, and he is dedicated to the preservation of the arts in the Poconos. He sees ESU as a vehicle for this not only to the campus community, but to the local and surrounding communities as well. My philosophy at the ACMJC has always been that of presenting live music to people and providing them an opportunity to hear something they may not know about. We have a large amount of material here at the collection, but it does no good if we don’t hear it. It is much different than an art gallery or library. Music must be heard, and having stacks of original scores in a drawer doesn’t help very much. What does help is leadership that understands this and is willing to put resources and ideas together to get it out to the people. This is exactly what President Long stands for, and I am grateful for the time we have spent together and the discussions we have had thus far. I am optimistic for the future.

The 2022 performance was also the debut of *The Grinch Suite*, a full four movement piece that I wrote by arranging the music from *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. Part of the attraction of writing music is hearing it for the first time, and the better the band the better it sounds. The musicians we had for this concert were fantastic. They are all wonderful people and are all connected to the ACMJC in some way, which is the main point of the Water Gap Jazz Orchestra. Like I say every year, I truly feel Rick Chamberlain and Phil Woods would be proud of what we have accomplished.

Matt rehearsing as Edward Ellington observes - Jon Broady

Bill Crow - Jazz Journeyman by Neal Miner (2023)

Scouring the internet, Pat Dorian alerted me of this fantastic documentary on bassist Bill Crow. As many of you may know, Bill has been an integral part to the ACMJC over the years, and it is wonderful to see him getting the appreciation he deserves. New York based bassist Neal Miner took this project on as a labor of love and is offering it to the public for free. It can be found on his YouTube channel -
https://www.youtube.com/@gutstringrecords

Here is what Neal has to say about the project:

“I hope you enjoy my documentary on the life and music of legendary bassist / published author / tubist / Local 802 musician’s union activist / brilliant storyteller and all-around amazing human being, who just turned 95 years young, Bill Crow! I began working on this project in 2020 during lockdown. It helped me to stay focused and positive during such uncertain and upsetting times. Now almost three years later, it has finally come to fruition, with the help of Bill, and many friends and fellow musicians. I sincerely hope that you enjoy the show... Bill Crow is a force!” ■

JAZZ SCENE IN THAT OTHER AMERICA

Jazz trumpeter Walt Szymanski likes to go fishing. In 2010 the Detroit native and former resident of Brooklyn started looking for fishing spots in the country of Ecuador, located in the northwestern part of South America, bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Have horn will travel. Soon, throughout Ecuador, word was out that a great trumpet man was in town. This led Walt to a professorship at the Berklee sister-school Universidad de San Francisco, and the musical directorship of Teatro Sucre Nacional, both located in Quito, the nation's capital.

On a trip to New York, shortly after relocating, Walt met me for lunch at Dizzy's, a favorite Brooklyn diner. Ecuador was the main topic of discussion. "I didn't initially go there to play music," he told me. "I just wanted to hike in the mountains, go to the beach, go fishing and chill out. At first I didn't know anything about the music scene there."

This was 13 years ago, and all the jazz in Ecuador was in Quito and Guayaquil. When I began spending winters in Cuenca, the third largest city, there was virtually no jazz scene at all apart from some restaurant gigs with the few players who were there at the time. But in 2012 everything changed. Jim Gala – a Bill Evans inspired pianist from Rochester – moved to Cuenca from the Philippines. Having had experience running clubs for his father, and later on his own, his dream was to create a Jazz Society in Ecuador. Eleven years later the Jazz Society of Ecuador is thriving thanks to Jim, his wife Debby, the players, the customers, and the staff.

The organization is truly a society, where staff and performers drop by on their nights off. The clientele of the society consists of tourists and locals, including the artistic elite of the city. The current U.S. Ambassador and his wife (as well as the previous ambassadors) make it a point to drop by the society whenever they're in Cuenca. The JSE is a living example of "if you build it, they will come." You never know what players from the States or Europe might show up at the Jazz Society while on tour in South America. Willard Dyson, Bob Albanese, Luiz Simas, Peggy Stern and Alki Steriopoulos are just a few of them.

Over the years other clubs noticed the success of the Jazz Society and started to present jazz themselves. There's a growing interest in the music, with many players studying, composing, playing gigs.

Embassy Tour - From L to R: Miguel Gallardo, Walt Szymanski, Su Terry, Daniel Toledo, Raúl Molina

I'm impressed with the Latin American jazz musicians I've played with here. They've truly absorbed this music, which has a completely different rhythmic feel, harmonic development and melodic sense from the common national genres. As far as the audiences, I find them very open to listening to and appreciating jazz. Back in 2013 I put a group together for the U.S. State Department and we toured the whole country. The group was called "Jazz del Norte y del Sur" – jazz from the north and the south – and featured myself, Walt Szymanski, Miguel Gallardo on piano, Daniel Toledo on bass and Raúl Molina on drums. Fine players. The tour was a success. Plus, I got good inside info from the consul, who was our "chaperone" from the State Department riding with us to all the gigs.

Several years ago the cats I'd been mentoring asked me to join their band Jazz de Barro. This means "jazz from primordial earth." The concept is to use traditional Andean rhythms like *San Juanito, capishca, pasillo, saltashpa* or *albazo* in a jazz setting. All the music is composed by the members. Besides myself we have Lucas Bravo on piano/keyboard, Christian Torres on acoustic and electric bass, and Pedro Ortiz on percussion. Besides being regulars at the Quito Jazz Festival, we've done three concerts with the Cuenca Symphony Orchestra. Christian and Lucas write the arrangements.

There are unique opportunities in South America to explore various fusions of jazz. Guitarist Donald Regnier and vocalist Maria Tejada, based in Quito, are doing just that: creating a fascinating and complex repertoire that displays its roots in American, Ecuadorian and Brazilian music. Walt Szymanski has taken a different route: now retired from teaching, he formed Zulu Kings, coaching his young Ecuadorian colleagues in the synthesis of New Orleans second line culture with Andean rhythms and sensibilities. The group Pies en la Tierra has been creating stunning recordings and touring with a very modern approach, as has the group Ecuador Encuentro, which also has an educational component of presenting jazz masterclasses throughout the Sierras. And Miguel and Raúl, who played on my 2013 tour, have a band called "Jazz the Roots" which mixes jazz with reggae.

The Humboldt Association puts on an annual touring festival in Ecuador, with Latino musicians who are based in Europe and Ecuador. This year I performed with guitarist Ramiro Olaciregui's group, with Raimon Rovira and Cayo Iturralde from Pies en la Tierra, Diego Pinera on drums, and the great Perico Sambeat on alto.

I sometimes have the opportunity to perform with Ecuadorian musicians who specialize in very traditional, shamanic sound palettes ranging from various types of wood flutes and hand percussion to condor feathers, and even leaves from plants! Ethnomusicologist Carlos Freire and I have jammed together, he on the above-mentioned instruments and myself on clarinet.

There's even a flamenco jazz scene. The instrumentation is acoustic guitar, horn, bass, vocals, and cajón, which means "box." That's because it's a box. But it's a fancy box. The percussionist sits on the box and plays it with his hands. A higher end cajón will be outfitted with a snare on the inside, which is a nice effect.

I find it interesting that jazz, an art form which derives much of its development from a persecuted past, finds its best musical-fusion partners in genres which came about in a similar way. Now that many so-called "popular" music genres are being codified and presented as courses of study in universities, it's even more important to remember those historical events and social attitudes which on one hand were unfortunate, but on the other hand did contribute – albeit unintentionally – to a flowering of music (and other art forms) that continue to offer humanity much pleasure and fulfillment of the spirit.

Being that Cuenca is so popular, you may find it on your bucket list at some point. The U.S. dollar is the currency here, and trust me, it goes a lot further here than where y'all live. So if Cuenca lands on your itinerary, come visit us at the Jazz Society. Players: bring your ax! ■

A CONVERSATION WITH ESU PRESIDENT KENNETH LONG

By Matt Vashlishan

Matt Vashlishan and Kenneth Long - Renee Broady

Matt Vashlishan: It is Tuesday February 7th, 2023. This is Matt Vashlishan and I am sitting here with the new ESU President Kenneth Long. Good morning!

Kenneth Long: Good morning!

MV: I know you have been in this position as interim president now for a few years, but how do you feel about recently becoming the "official" 14th ESU President?

KL: Well after being at ESU now for a little over nine years…

MV: About the same as me…

KL: Yes around 2013 we got here. I came in the summer of 2013, so this will be my 10th year. During the last two years as interim, my perspective on things was "do no harm." I wanted to keep things moving in the same direction and make the decisions that needed to be made to move the university forward, but not do things that would tie the hands of the incoming president. I didn't want to do anything that would make them have to live up to my vision or my ideals. Now being the permanent president, I can think more than a month or semester at a time. I can start thinking about things for next year and beyond, such as a strategic plan. I feel we can put my fingerprint on things, that's the biggest change.

We are a small campus, yet we are a big campus. I am spending time getting to know the faculty and staff in other areas that to be frank, with two years of covid, you just didn't interact with on a regular basis. You might see someone on a Zoom call, but getting out to really know and see the campus community in person is very important to me. During my former position as the CFO, I was behind the scenes trying to make sure the campus operates. As president, I would like to be more present for the moment.

MV: Excellent. One of the differences about you as president, although there could be many instances of this but I don't know of them, is that you have a particular fondness for music as well as a bit of a background with music to some degree. I know we have spoken about you taking piano lessons and a few courses in college, can you elaborate on that?

KL: Well yes to some degree. I started playing piano because of my church leader, she taught piano lessons to several folks in the area.

MV: What area was this?

KL: This was in Jersey City.

MV: What was the situation when you were growing up there?

KL: I was the youngest of five, two boys and three girls. Our dad died when I was eight, so while my mother worked, my older siblings who where eight, nine and ten years older than me took care of my sister and me. Both my parents worked blue collar union jobs - my father was a shop steward, and my mother was a seamstress. I went to a Baptist church, so you had gospel music, and it was really more of an upbeat type of...

MV: It was the type where you actually had fun at church?

KL: Yes exactly! [laughs] So I started taking piano lessons. All the boys in my family played an instrument when we were young, my brother played guitar...

MV: Did he start for the same reason?

KL: Kind of, more so just to be involved with something. He would play in church but it was really just to keep you involved with something. I started piano when I was in 5th grade. I didn't gravitate to it, but it was just something I did twice a week. We were a lower middle-class family, and when I first started playing I didn't even have a keyboard or a piano to practice on. I had a sheet of

paper that you placed on the dining room table with the piano keys written on it! You had to imagine the sound that would be made by using your fingers on this piece of paper! It's just carboard that you fold out and lay on the table.

MV: Did you make this?

KL: No you could buy it, it was just an image of the keys. And I would have my music there and be working my fingers and have absolutely no idea what kind of sound it was making! [laughs]

MV: Well no wonder you didn't gravitate to it, it didn't make any noise! [laughs]

KL: I would get to my piano lesson and my teacher had seven pianos in her house. I would get there early and she would let me go in the back room to practice, and that would be the first time I would actually get to hear what I was learning at home, and that was my experience for about three months. Eventually my mother bought a used piano which upset my siblings because she had to change the living room around to put the piano in but I started playing more, and I didn't sound very good. To make it more challenging all I was playing with my teacher was classical music – Bach, Beethoven, etc.

I took lessons until about 9th or 10th grade and she would eventually let me dabble in some other music. I would go to the music stores and pick something out that was more interesting to me, like Lionel Richie sheet music. I picked things that I heard on the radio - "Endless Love" was one of my favorite songs. I would practice that on my own and then get to the lesson and play classical again. By the time I got to high school I started playing basketball and that became a conflict. Basketball was five days a week and music lessons were two so…

MV: And you probably had a real basketball vs. a cardboard one…

KL: Yes I did have a real basketball!! [laughs] So that was basically my story leading up to high school.

MV: Did this have any influence on your children playing music?

KL: Well my youngest daughter plays the violin and plays in the orchestra and another smaller group, and my other daughter plays piano but only in school. She played for the first time last year, and now she's taking lessons. My older daughter sings and does open mic in New York on occasions.

MV: So they are all doing it on some level.

KL: Unlike me growing up, we actually have a keyboard at home so they get to know what it sounds like from the very beginning! When I tell them this story they laugh.

MV: You also mentioned that you took some music courses in college?

KL: Yes it was a course writing for musical theater. Everyone in the class had to have had some sort of music background. The course was at Drew University and it was an evening class from 7-10pm. You learned about writing music for musical theater productions, either for a show on Broadway, for a play of some sort, or for some type of TV show. My professor was a musician in NYC and he would come in on Tuesday nights. He would teach us about the music that would accompany these performances, how they picked the music, decided what went with what show, and how to arrange for it. The capstone project for the course was for the class to compose for a show, and everyone had to do something different. I had to write a piece for an imaginary theater performance. I played it on piano and had to craft my own part. Other people wrote the song itself and the words. It was all based on their background. Others wrote the theatrical performance.

MV: So you were all working on the same project, just different elements?

KL: Yes, all contributing to the same thing. We all had one thing we were responsible for. It was very creative, and it was fun. There were only two of us that played piano, and some were only singers, etc. It was something I thought inspired you to think differently. From that day on, from that course on, when I see a show, I listen to the music differently. I say "Ok, what were they trying to accomplish with this?" Whether they were playing in a particular key, or when they build up to something, the music has a lot to do with that. My daughter was working on music from one of the James Bond themes and she was telling me about the different parts she plays in the music by explaining, "This is what they are trying to get you to feel," and then I think, "Wow I've never listened to it from that standpoint."

MV: That's right, and music is literally everywhere regardless of the setting. Whether you hear a show or even a bird, car horns, etc. Once you start hearing these things you can't unhear them, and it becomes part of who you are and how you think.

What I think this illustrates is what music can do for a group of different people. When you say the whole class is working on that one project together, it brings you all closer in a certain type of way with music as the glue that holds it all together. It is a common language we can use for many types of community building exercises.

My next question is, are you drawing on these experiences to fuel what you are interested in doing on the ESU campus? What are your visions for an ideal situation at ESU?

KL: Music brings people together. I reference this during my welcome address at Pocono Latin Festival that's been hosted by ESU for the past two years. My wife is Puerto Rican, and it's common in the Latin culture to bring people together with music, food, and the celebratory aspect of these things. I truly believe music unites us. While we may be different, we can hear music and it changes how we feel, it unites us but in a different way more than anything else. What I would like to do at ESU as president is maintain that unity amongst us, and music is a perfect way to do it.

I have been speaking regularly with our band director Brian Hodge about growing our marching band back. It does something different for the campus. I have a cousin that played in the band at an HBCU, and the football team there is not very good. The band would draw people in because everybody wanted to come hear them. Now while our football team is good, I think music draws a different crowd if we also have a great band. I think our band has gone from roughly 30-70 in a year and a half, and the goal long term is to get it to 150.

Edward Ellington II and President Kenneth Long greet the community - Renee Broady

I also envision things specific to the Poconos and its rich jazz community. Not just jazz, but also the visual arts. ESU has a responsibility to educate our students and our community as a member of the area in which we live and serve. This doesn't just mean biology, chemistry or criminal justice, it also means the creative arts and the visual arts. Our theater program does a great job to allow students to be part of that creativity. I think as president if I can embrace that and create that exposure, it would make ESU even better and stronger than it currently is.

Let's make sure we expose our Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection and expose our various art collections. Thanks to you I am playing some of the music we have in the ACMJC when I have people at the president's residence. The visual art in the residence is art from our collections. If people donate these pieces, what better place to see it than in the residence where we have our visitors. I want to continue to do that with things that relate to what we do here.

I'm hoping in the next year or two to revitalize our gospel choir and have more small ensemble groups. I think that is something good for the campus. Many smaller schools have these types of things and I just ask myself, "Why can't we have one?" So I'm trying to push these types of activities.

MV: The important thing here is that you are creating an opportunity for students to choose. Give them a choice of all these various things they might not even know exist. It could really change the course of someone's life to participate in such a thing.

KL: You said the exact words, create opportunities. If we can create opportunities for people to embrace the university and to expand on their pleasures and backgrounds, it is a good thing.

MV: What I like about what you are saying is that you are creating these opportunities for students, but you are also creating them for the community as well. My annual Duke Ellington Nutcracker Suite performance that we do every year is a perfect example of this. Now you and I are discussing a Spring equivalent concert, and you are very invested in bringing this exposure to the campus community and the community outside the campus. You are actively trying to build a relationship between ESU and the jazz community by hosting them here and creating visibility for what they are capable of, and we have an incredible amount of talent living in the Poconos to pick from.

It is different than a large city like New York. There are so many musicians there, but they aren't connected to NYU or Manhattan School of Music in the same way the Pocono jazz community is connected to ESU or the ACMJC, for example. This is a much more closely related family and you are giving them and the music an outlet. There are so many components working together to benefit a lot of different people, both students and community.

KL: We are in a great location for this as well. We have so many events going on in the summer, but they are mainly tied to sports. But I ask the question, "Why can't we bring a theater or music experience to campus in the summer?" When someone drops their children off to play field hockey, maybe mom and dad can stop in to see a show, or maybe their other child is participating in the show.

MV: You can't underestimate the power of exposure, and this is why I started my Jazz Lounge Listening Sessions in Kemp Library. What if a student is in the library studying chemistry and hears something they have never heard before that they would have never heard otherwise? It is easy to pass a recording by if you see it sitting on a table, but what if hearing is your first experience? It could create a new curiosity, and hopefully they come over and become interested in it. I had a few instances of this during my last session. People come up to me and ask what I was playing, and they take a photo of the record cover to look it up on their own.

KL: I think that is perfect, being able to expose people to different things that you may not otherwise come across. Most of us listen to the same radio station, or the same TV channels, but it's not until something different comes along that you begin to see things differently.

MV: As soon as you get out of your comfort zone is when you can really grow. If you stay fixed in your narrow channel of what you do it all stops.

KL: There was a business leader who once said that you should always read something that you normally wouldn't read. I read a lot of business periodicals, but I would never read something on crime or the healthcare system necessarily. But reading something like that helps us realize that we have similarities with all of these other areas as well, and the same

goes for the arts. Just like my musical theater course in college causing me to hear music differently, the same goes for visual art. I can notice the Asian influence in a particular artist's sculpture, for example.

MV: This is why liner notes are so important to all those recordings that we don't have anymore with mp3's. You can read about why the music is the way it is, and the writer can steer the listener towards a particular listening perspective which is very important to the project as a whole.

KL: This is all very interesting because thanks to you, or I should blame you, I started reading more about earlier jazz, Duke Ellington and big bands. I read about the instruments that are used and the sounds they are trying to capture with some of that music and it is incredible.

MV: Yes, and Ellington and Strayhorn were masters at creating images through music.

KL: I find it fascinating how all of that work went in to creating these recordings.

MV: And there were so many elements to it, whether it was political, racial, social, etc.

KL: This was not something I would have done normally until I saw your concert last December, and afterwards I became curious to go and read about these things. "Ah ok, this is what he was writing about at this time because he's portraying this situation in life…"

MV: Not only is the music fantastic, but the story puts a whole other layer onto it.

KL: Yes, a whole other layer. As well as the different instruments and artists that Ellington would bring in to convey these things. Most of us think, "Oh they just get together and play…" But no, it is so much deeper than that. It is deliberate and intentional.

MV: We were speaking about the recording *Art Pepper Plus Eleven* right before this interview, and it is much the same. The arranger Marty Paich added French horn to the normal jazz ensemble instrumentation and did so for a reason, and it changes the entire sound.

KL: Those types of things are fascinating to learn about. Sometimes I sit there and think, "Gee I could just do this all day long!"

MV: No matter what you learn in music, there is always something else. There is a way to go deeper. And there are only 12 notes in western music, imagine that!

KL: The last time we met we were talking about the Marsalis brothers, Branford and Wynton. You find out that this person learned from this and this person studied here to learn more about something else… You asked me which Marsalis I liked more, and you really stumped me with that question, so I had to go find out what the difference was and why I made the choice I made.

MV: Everybody in that family plays very different from one another and they all grew up under the same roof.

KL: I didn't realize this until we spoke about it. After you read about them and you listen differently, you can really pick up on their background and their sound.

MV: For the type of music you really like, the Brecker Brothers are the same kind of thing. Michael and Randy are very different players and developed along a different timeline, they ended up having projects together but their improvisation styles are quite opposite.

KL: I will have to look into this.

MV: They are much more along the lines of jazz/funk and fusion when they had their projects together, but if you are interested in the more modern or "smoother" type of stuff this is worth checking out because it is still "jazz, jazz" but with that modern electric flavor to it.

KL: That's intriguing, and that is really what I'm looking to do in this area with ESU. I want to give our students and our community that opportunity to become exposed to conversations like we are having here. It all goes back to the theme of my inauguration of "creating opportunities." It isn't just about what you do in the classroom, it is also about what you do outside of the classroom. I think it makes us a much more strong and rich university when we have these opportunities to learn more and to succeed.

I had a great mentor in the previous ESU President Marcia Welsh, and I have been fortunate enough in life to have a number of mentors, some of whom have been my boss, to help educate me on the different perspectives there can be in any situation. I also learned a tremendous amount from how I was raised by my mother. She was born in 1932 and will be 91 this month (in April). She was born in an era of Jim Crow and segregation. While slavery was technically abolished, in the south it still existed in the 1930s and 1940s. Maybe not legally, but operationally it did. Yet, she raised my siblings and me with a very different perspective on people. You have idiots that are Black and idiots that are White, and Spanish, etc. There are jerks in every race, nationality and religion, so to paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we were taught to judge people by their character. She taught us to treat people the way we would want to be treated and that was the foundation of how I was raised and who I am as an individual. As I grew up, went to college and even to this day, there were individuals that passed through my life that helped frame how I view situations and those individuals, both good and bad. Some of these individuals helped me learn how to not treat people, regardless of who they are; I must be true to myself. It is important to be respectful and considerate of others.

I have certainly learned a lot in the last couple months talking with you, and it looks like I have some more listening homework to do!

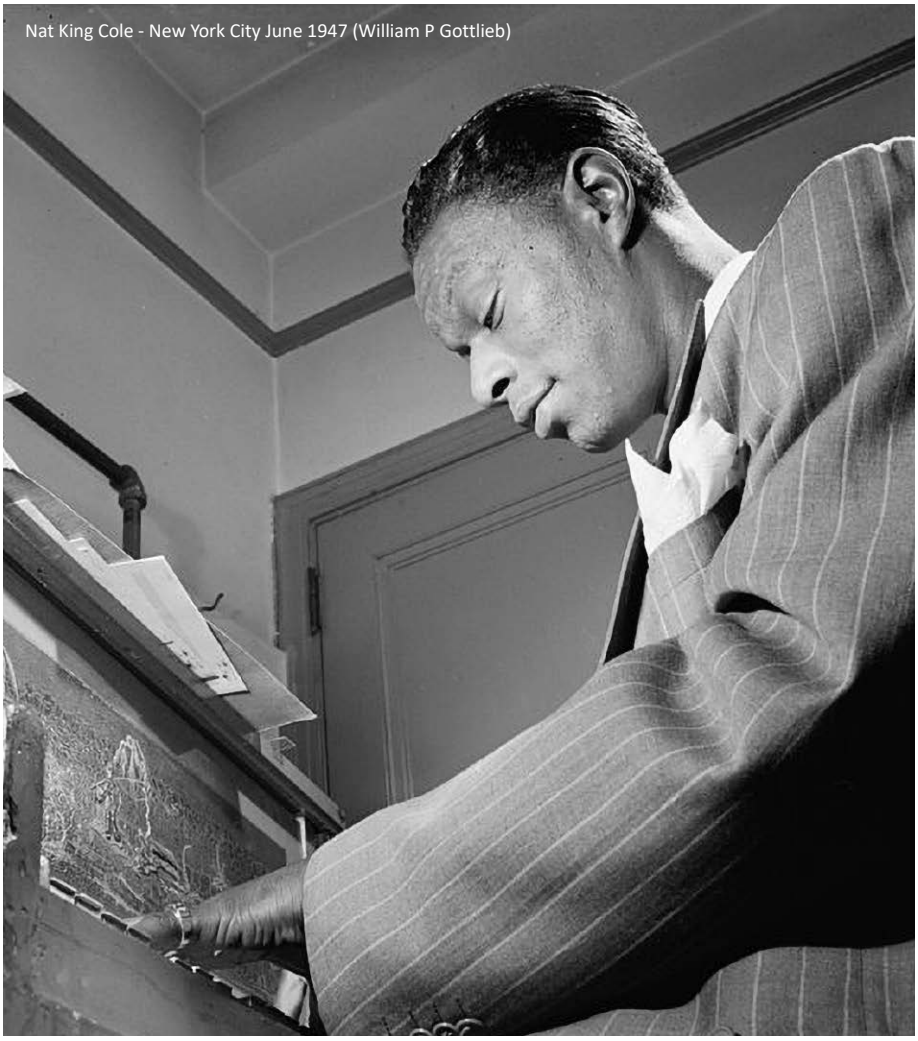
MV: I can say with the decisions you have been making thus far we are all off to a great start.

KL: We will keep our fingers crossed!

MV: Thank you once again for your time and a great conversation. ■

NAT 'KING' COLE:
ALWAYS A JAZZMAN AT HEART

by Phil Mosley


Nat King Cole - New York City June 1947 (William P Gottlieb)

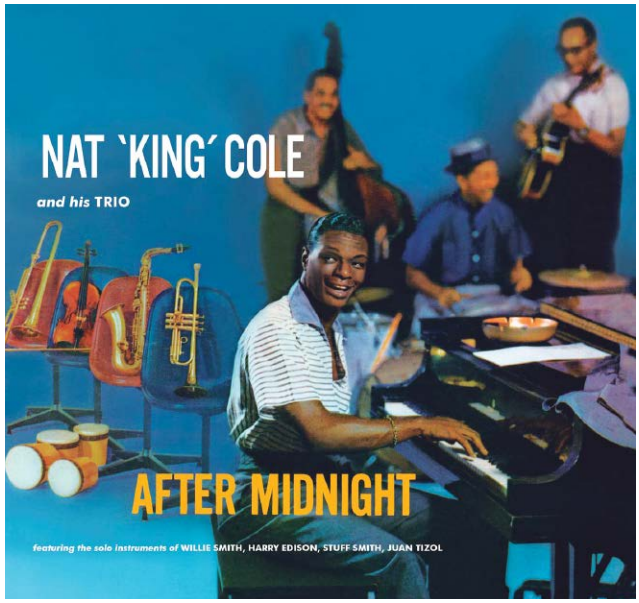
It's established in popular music history that from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s Nat 'King' Cole was the most popular black entertainer in the USA and the first to cross over into its television and popular music industries. His great success as a pop singer, which came at the price of his jazz career, resulted from a set of internal and external pressures upon him to conform to a type of black performer who could be acceptable to a largely white mainstream audience.

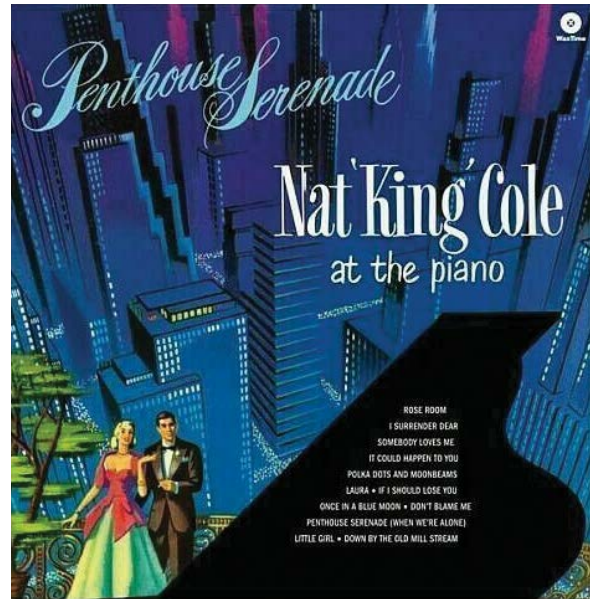
It's established equally that Cole began his storied career in the late 1930s as an Earl Hines-inspired pianist of remarkable technique and flair. He was putting together his first trio in 1937 when his intended drummer failed to show up, so he pioneered the drumless trio using only guitar and bass in addition to his piano. Signing to Capitol Records in 1943, the King Cole Trio's easy, swinging style became a national sensation. Its debut disk, "Straighten Up and Fly Right," topped the *Billboard* "Harlem Hit Parade" chart in 1944 and sold a half-million copies to war-weary Americans. A growing enthusiasm for Cole's mellow vocals, which he had been reluctant at first to display, was further encouraged by his second wife Maria Ellington (no relation to the "Duke," though she had sung in his band) whom he married in 1948. Thus, slowly but surely, the gifted jazz instrumentalist with a genial personality began to remake himself as a solo artist. By 1953 he had disbanded his trio and by 1956 had his own network television show.

Though he is remembered best as a peerless purveyor of romantic ballads, a lesser-known story is that Cole by his own admission never lost his taste for jazz or his prowess as an exponent of it. Two moments on record during his glittering pop career marked his return to the music that had formed him and to the small group format that had accompanied it: *Penthouse Serenade* (1952) and *After Midnight* (1956). Thereafter, until his death from lung cancer in 1965 (he had chain-smoked Philip Morris cigarettes), Cole reverted to limiting his piano playing and concentrating on the elegant crooning that had made him an international star.

From the stirrings of Cole's pop career in the late 1940s, some jazz critics censured him for abandoning the music. He argued back, not unreasonably, that his jazz stuff didn't sell, that his trio was going hungry, and that by singing pop ballads and novelty tunes he was changing all that. He proceeded to answer his critics by choosing, again not unreasonably, to indulge his jazzy side on his own terms from a newfound position of artistic and financial security.

Though the 1998 CD release of *Penthouse Serenade* includes six vocal tracks taken from the earliest (January 1952) of three recording sessions, and at which no drums (only bongos) were used, the original 10-inch long player contained eight instrumental pieces recorded in July 1952. Four additional





instrumentals from a July 1955 session were added when the album was re-released that year in the newer 12-inch long-playing format. The disk saw Cole working with a backing trio of John Collins on guitar, Charlie Harris on bass, and Bunny Shawker on drums. On six tracks, Jack Costanzo, who had played in Cole's 1949-51 outfit, added bongos and congas. Cole's old pal Lee Young (Lester's brother) took over the drum seat from Shawker at the third session. Young was the selfsame cat who by opting out of Cole's original group back in the late 1930s had inadvertently helped Cole revolutionize the jazz band format. The album shades towards a fashion for cocktail jazz, yet Cole's mellifluous and inventive playing reminds us why he had been such an innovative pianist in the 1940s. "He was a jazz guy inside, primarily," said John Collins. On such numbers as "Walkin' My Baby Back Home," "Too Young," and "Unforgettable," we hear Cole and his cohorts offering fresh, intimate alternatives to the string-laden or big-band settings of his hit recordings. The original front cover art for the album suggests Capitol's calculated marketing strategy. It downplays the jazz element by billing the record simply as Cole "at the piano" without mentioning his accompanying musicians. Moreover, it suggests a conservative uptown style: a white couple in evening clothes is depicted amid a sea of brightly lit skyscrapers. As for Cole, smiling and also tuxedoed, he awaits them at the keyboard, but *his* image appears only on an inside cover.

In 1956, stung by lingering criticism that he had forsaken his jazz sensibility, Cole recalled his small group to lay down tracks for a largely improvised 12-song *After Midnight* (with five additional selections appearing on the 1999 CD release). Recorded in the Capitol Tower in Los Angeles in four sessions and arguably his finest small-group jazz album, it was his last pure excursion into jazz before the pop world reclaimed the rest of his career. Once again, the front cover art is revealing in suggesting that Capitol was comfortable with a hipper image. The image depicts the full complement of eight jazz instruments, and a polo-shirted Cole is shown front and center backed by an equally informal soft-focus shot of his backing group. On this occasion, however, Cole played safe commercially by opting not to include any purely instrumental numbers and by augmenting his regular accompanists with four stars of the swing era—Stuff Smith on violin, Willie Smith on alto sax, Juan Tizol on trombone, and Harry "Sweets" Edison on trumpet—performing on four songs each (five with Edison). The set is well balanced between some old favorites like "Sweet Lorraine" and "It's Only a Paper Moon," and some material less evident in Cole's repertoire, such as "The Lonely One" and "Don't Let It Go To Your Head." Bobby Troup's "You're Looking At Me" gets an airing along, not unexpectedly, with "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66." "Nothing was rehearsed," said Lee Young; consequently, and with the pretense of the guest soloists "dropping in," the album has a relaxed feel reflecting the caliber of the players and the informal exchanges among them.

During the 1940s, Cole had grown interested in the potential of be-bop and Afro-Cuban rhythms, one reason why he brought in Costanzo from 1949 as a percussionist albeit with limited success. The chordal substitutions of Oscar Moore, his guitarist in the classic original trio along with bassist Wesley Prince, sit easily beside those of Charlie Christian and other architects of bop guitar. We may surmise that had Cole not turned into a pop singer, he might have become as influential a pianist in the modern jazz revolution as were Bud Powell or Thelonious Monk. Even so, to name but two other giants, he influenced Oscar Peterson and Ahmad Jamal notably in the development of piano/guitar/bass combos. Furthermore, his soulful early West Coast work also touched such budding R&B vocalist-pianists as Charles Brown, Ivory Joe Hunter, Amos Milburn, perhaps even Ray Charles. We treasure the memory of Nat 'King' Cole as a charming entertainer bringing polished and sophisticated pop to a multiracial audience, yet he always remained a jazzman at heart. ■

THAD AT 100: INFLUENTIAL COMPOSER-ARRANGER THAD JONES' 100TH BIRTHDAY

David Demsey
William Paterson University
Jazz Studies Coordinator
Curator, Thad Jones Archive

Thad and Harold Danko perform at the WPU 1977 Commencement - Geo Kemper

On March 23, 2023, arranger/cornetist/bandleader Thad Jones (1923-86) would have turned 100 years old. He became one of the most influential jazz arrangers during his lifetime, an influence that has become all the more pervasive since his death. He also made history by joining the jazz faculty at William Paterson University from 1973-78.

Thad, without a doubt, was a true genius**,** based on more than Thad's formidable talent: this is genius combined with years of focus, dedication, and endless work. Many stories chronicle Thad's creation of some of his greatest arrangements – with no score! – in European airport lobbies, on band buses. He would hand-copy the entire first alto sax part; then, without looking at the first part, the second alto part would be created error-free, and so on through the band. This, even for a highly trained professional musician**,** is not considered possible. That level of internal hearing, perception and concentration is the definition of genius.

To say that Thad came from a musical family in his native Detroit would be quite an understatement. Two of his brothers were the historic Hank Jones, one of the greatest pianists in jazz history; and drummer Elvin Jones, whose central role in the classic quartet of John Coltrane sometimes overshadows Elvin's depth and dimension with piano trios and other small groups.

After serving in the military from 1943-46 and some early training at the U.S. Navy School of Music, Thad toured with various midwestern bands for nearly a decade. During that period, he subbed for Clark Terry in Count Basie's small group for a week in Boston in 1950. That week put Thad's genius on display, and Basie invited him to join his big band four years later, in May 1954. Thad soon proved himself to be an expert section player and an adroit post-bebop improvisor, but he also began writing for the band. His written creations include some of the more well-known arrangements in the repertoire of the legendary late-1950s Basie ensemble referred to as the New Testament Band, which included saxophonists Frank Wess, Frank Foster and Marshall Royal, lead trumpeter Snooky Young, and many others. Some of Thad's Basie-era arrangements included "The Deacon," Counter Block," "The Elder" (a trumpet feature for himself), "Bluish Grey" (for his bandmate, trombonist Al Grey), and "Speaking of Sounds" (later called "Brushes and Brass"), and "H.R.H" (Her Royal Highness), written by Thad in commemoration of the then newly coronated Queen Elizabeth II. His composition "To You" is written for two big bands, at the historic first encounter between the orchestras of Count Basie and Duke Ellington, gaining Thad more exposure when Ellington was heard to ask upon first hearing the tune, "Who wrote *that* one?" The 1959 Basie album *Chairman of the Board* features no less than four Thad Jones originals, and is still today considered one of the landmark examples of the Basie style.

With Thad's huge reputation as an arranger, many people forget that he was a major voice on the trumpet and cornet. While with Basie, Thad was releasing small-group albums featuring him as a leader and co-leader. His

first recording was under the wing of Charles Mingus in 1954 with a third-stream appearance, and later on the album *Fabulous Thad Jones* on Mingus' Debut record label. He collaborated with such fellow Detroit musicians as Billy Mitchell, Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell, along with Oscar Pettiford and Shadow Wilson on the album *Detroit-New York Junction. The Magnificent Thad Jones* (1956) was followed six months later by *Mad Thad,* and he won the *Down Beat* magazine "New Star" poll at that time. *Magnificent Thad Jones Volume 3* was recorded a year later (presumably, the label considered *Mad Thad* to be #2 in the series), and a three-Jones reunion followed in 1958 with *Keepin' Up With the Joneses*, a great album made for a weird reason: it was an "all-Jones" recording! Brothers Thad, Hank, and Elvin Jones were joined by bassist and fellow Basie alum Eddie Jones, playing the music of Thad Jones, Quincy Jones, and Isham Jones. In fact, this album was the debut of Thad's famous tune "Three and One" (featuring three Joneses who were brothers and one who was not), later to be expanded into one of his most well-known big band arrangements.

It is a little-known fact that Thad also formed an unlikely partnership with bandleader/trumpeter Harry James. It turns out that James (a virtuoso player by any standard) was a huge Count Basie fan, and he placed Thad on retainer to write an arrangement a month for James' band, along with fellow Basie arrangers Ernie Wilkins and Neal Hefti. Some of the 25 arrangements Thad created for the James band turned out to be the "parents" of some of his famous big band charts, including "Three and One" and "Tip Toe." The 1964 album *Harry James Plays Down Beat Favorites* is arranged by Thad Jones nearly in its entirety.

It was during Thad's time with the Basie band that they engaged in a then-popular "battle of the bands" with the Stan Kenton orchestra, who then featured drummer Mel Lewis. The 1955 meeting of Thad Jones and Mel Lewis was truly fortuitous, and the two decided that it might be a good idea someday to get together and do some playing.

Thad in WPU Room 103 - Geo Kemper

Thad and Mel met again in New York City a decade later in 1965, and decided to form a band that was daring and unheard of in the mostly segregated 1960s. Although it was fairly common for African American and white musicians to associate and jam "under the radar," there were only rare instances at that time when record companies would allow them to record or perform publicly together, thinking that the American public was not ready for interracial bands. Thad and Mel formed a band made up of Thad's former Basie associates such as Snooky Young, Quintin "Butter" Jackson and others, and Mel's former Kenton bandmates like baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams. The band began to rehearse in the overnight hours - the only time when these busy players were free – although both Thad and Mel insisted that the band "was never a 'rehearsal band'!" As an experiment, the owner of New York's historic Village Vanguard jazz club, Max Gordon, gave the band a few Mondays nights beginning on February 7, 1966, figuring it was a low-risk Monday night, and that the Broadway theaters were dark, freeing up those who had pit orchestra commitments. The word got out, and the line to get into the Village Vanguard stretched around the corner. The rest is history.

Although trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, alto saxophonist Jerry Dodgion, and later trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater would be among others who contributed arrangements to the band, the driving force behind the band's repertoire was the ingeniously written compositions and arrangements of Thad Jones. His pieces share a quality matched only by history's greatest music: they are technically brilliant, inspiring to the musicians in their daring and imagination, while also possessing an earthy groove and blues foundation that communicate universally to audiences worldwide. Thad was also the onstage leader, and his inspiring conducting style is still something to behold on video.

The earliest repertoire of the band consisted of seven of Thad's pieces originally planned for an album *Count Basie Plays the Music of Thad Jones***,** but the record never happened. Thad had already been stretching the "Basie rules" to their limit, by doing such things as having the brass and saxes play unaccompanied, giving guitarist Freddie Green an actual solo to replace the quarter-note chords he'd been playing for half a century, and writing daring altered and extended voicings. As the story goes, Basie heard some of Thad's intended pieces for this album, made it clear that although he loved them, they did not fit his band, and suggested that Thad should form his own band to play them. That may have been the moment that mentor Basie kicked his band member out of the nest. These pieces, rejected by Basie, formed the earliest repertoire of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. They included "A-That's Freedom" (still listed as #1 on the band's book today), "Low Down," "Big

Dipper," "Backbone," "All My Yesterdays," the ballad "Don't Ever Leave Me," and the thinly disguised title with racial double meaning, "Second Race."

Later, Thad wrote some of his most enduring pieces, well known for their virtuosic writing, driving rhythms and blues underpinning. These include some pieces that began as small-group compositions, such as "Tip Toe" and "Little Pixie**,"** both written on the chords to "I Got Rhythm" in Ab; and "Three and One." There was also "Back Bone," "Don't Git Sassy," Thad's arrangement of his lead altoist Jerome Richardson's tune "The Groove Merchant," and the standard "A Child Is Born," (with later lyrics by the great Alec Wilder), long said by pianist Sir Roland Hanna to have originated from one of Hanna's own introductions. Thad's response to modal jazz trends set by John Coltrane and Miles Davis was "Once Around" and "Cherry Juice," both masterpieces of well-orchestrated, high-energy mayhem.

As the band moved into the 1970s, Thad turned out a number of rock and funk-driven arrangements like Steve Wonder's "Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing," the O'Jays' "For the Love of Money," his original "Tow Away Zone," and his landmark "Central Park North," a three-section Harlem tone poem that could be considered a tribute to "Harlem Airshaft" by his hero Duke Ellington. Thad cut across music stylistic boundaries by making a recording agreement with the Philadelphia International label founded by the Gamble & Huff songwriting team home to such R&B soul artists as the O-Jays, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, Lou Rawls, and Teddy Pendergrass.

Another watershed career move happened in 1973, when Thad Jones accepted the invitation of New Jersey's William Paterson University to join their full-time faculty. This made academic and jazz history: he became the first established major jazz figure to be appointed to a university faculty as a full-time professor. Thad taught arranging, improvisation, directed the big band, and brought his immense presence to those corridors, as well as the adjunct appointment of his band members Harold Danko, Jim McNeely and Joe Lovano. That association between Thad's band and the campus has remained unbroken through its history, more recently to include Cecil Bridgewater, John Riley, John Mosca, Gary Smulyan, and Rich Perry. Thad's professorship marked the founding of William Paterson's now historic degree program in jazz, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Thad departed the band, his William Paterson teaching position, and his entire American life in 1978 to live in Copenhagen, Denmark. Although his move was a shock to many, it did not slow down his writing. In Denmark, he founded and directed the Eclipse Big Band, and led the Danish Radio Orchestra. On several instances, he sent back charts to Mel and the band, such as "The Interloper" and his arrangement of "All of Me," the only one of a set of planned (according to Thad's letter to his publishers at Kendor Music, in the Thad Jones Archive) arrangements of standards and Ellington tunes that sadly never materialized. Thad also composed such Danish-era pieces as "Basic-Ally Yours," "Crackdown," "Live Life This Day," and the three-movement "Rejoice Suite" for the Danish Radio Orchestra that is only now gaining the acknowledgement that it deserves. Another intriguing and little-known project was Thad's collaboration with Swedish poet Thorstein Bergman and arranger Nils Linberg on *Svarta Motifs* ("Black Motifs"), writing music for three French horns, trumpet, trombone, alto sax, and rhythm section, to accompany Bergman's recitations of his own poems dedicated to African American jazz musicians, including Thad's arrangements of Ellington classics, "Honeysuckle Rose," "Wabash Blues," and more.

In February 1985, a year before his death, Thad's career took an unusual turn when he accepted an invitation to return to the U.S. and lead the Count Basie Orchestra after Basie's death in 1984. During this time, he encouraged the writing of such young band members as drummer Dennis Mackrel (who himself went on to lead the Basie band 20 years later); he recorded, wrote all the charts and toured with the famed Italian pop singer Caterina Valente; he supervised the recording of a Dick Reynolds chart for Manhattan Transfer and the Four Freshmen on his own "To You;" and he led the band on the album *Way Out Basie*. Soon, though, he was too ill to tour with the Basie band and he returned to his new home in Copenhagen, where he died of cancer in August 1986. His grave is in Vestre Kirkegard (Westside Cemetery), next to the great drummer Ed Thigpen.

Since his death, Thad's legacy has deepened and become more a part of the worldwide repertoire. It is safe to say that every public school and college has at least one (or maybe ten) Thad Jones arrangements in their library; his music is featured by professional bands all over the world**,** including the Water Gap Jazz Orchestra at the Deer Head Inn**.**

Since that first night in 1966, the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra has literally never stopped playing on Monday nights at the Village Vanguard. The band became the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra after Thad's departure to Denmark, and became the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra after Mel Lewis' death in 1990. This February will be their 57th year of Mondays – a continuous engagement of record length that, to anyone's knowledge, is unmatched in jazz or any other genre.

As an example of one school's continued dedication to Thad Jones' legacy, the students of the William Paterson University Jazz Program were invited to present a tribute to Thad at Dizzy's Jazz Club on the night of Thad's 100th birthday. The night featured his big band music in the early set and his small-group compositions in the late set. The Thad Jones Archive has been established at the school, in cooperation with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, joining the collections of Clark Terry, Michael Brecker, Art Farmer, Lee Konitz, Jim McNeely, and others. This collection creates a direct personal connection for present-day students (most of whom were born more than 30 years after Thad's death) with Thad's personal pencil scores and the original ink parts from his band's 1966 origins. In the vision of fellow archive member Clark Terry, the music is stored at the same high level as it would be at the Library of Congress or other major institution, but always with copies of that music on the stands of current students, in their ensembles and classrooms. It is as if Thad Jones were still, in a way, teaching on the William Paterson faculty.

Whether at historic venues like the Deer Head Inn or the Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village, hearing Thad Jones' music live is a rare treat. It is jazz at the highest level, and pure genius. ■

THE BAND

directed by
GEORGE GRUNTZ

George Gruntz
Daniel Humair
N. H. Ø. Pedersen
Runo Ericson
Åke Persson
Jiggs Whigham
Erich Kleinschuster
Virgil Jones
Benny Baile

Side A

Our Suite Di 11'00"
by Flavio Ambros
Soli
Franco A rosett trumpet
Flavio A rosett alto-saxophone
Erich Klein ombone
Runo Erics mbone
(duo-cader

Pistrophallobus 10'15"
by Franco Ambrosetti
Soli
Virgil Jones, trumpet
Eddie Daniels, tenor-saxophone
Flavio Ambrosetti, soprano-saxophone
Daniel Humair, drums

Side B

Witch Stitch 12'27"
by Daniel Humair/George Gruntz
Soli
George Gruntz, Fender-piano
Phil Woods, alto-saxophone
Dusco Goykovich, trumpet
Jiggs Whigham, trombone
Daniel Humair, drums

English Waltz 6'50"
by Franco Ambrosetti
Soli
Woody Shaw, trumpet
Jiggs Whigham, trombone
Benny Bailey, trumpet (cadenza)

Side C

The Tango 7'37"
by George Gruntz
Soli
Benny Bailey, flugelhorn
Runo Ericson, bass-trombone
N. H. O. Pedersen, bass
Sahib Shihab, vocal

Gravenstein 5'55"
by Daniel Humair/Phil Woods
Solo
Phil Woods, alto-saxophone

Saint Charity 9'07"
by George Gruntz
Soli
Herb Geller, soprano-saxophone
Åke Persson, trombone
Sahib Shihab, baritone-saxophone

Side D

The Age of Prominence 19'43"
by Flavio Ambrosetti
Soli
Eddie Daniels, tenor-sax
Woody Shaw, trumpet
Herb Geller, alto-saxophone
Dexter Gordon, tenor-saxophone
Franco Ambrosetti, trumpet

MPS
STEREO 33 21460-5

recorded:
April 5 and 6, 1972, at Ambrosetti mansion Gentilino/Lugano, Switzerland and in concert at Lugano-Casino-Kursaal.

recorded by:
Pitt Linder

re-mix engineer:
Rolf Donner

produced by:
EUROMUSIC SWITZERLAND
CH 4106 Therwil/Basel

executive producers:
Gérard Lüll
Willi Fruth

public relations:
Peter Rüedi

cover art:
Samuel Buri

photograph:
Hardy Zubler

layout:
MPS-Atelier

Special thanks to PRO LUGANO for the generous invitation for a one week rehearsal and production stay in beautiful Lugano, Switzerland.

EDDIE DANIELS
SPEAKS ABOUT PHIL WOODS

Patrick Dorian spoke to Eddie Daniels again on August 10, 2022, to concentrate on Eddie's interactions with Phil Woods over the decades. Eddie was fresh off two performances at the 2022 MetaJAX Second Annual Crypto Jazz Festival. On July 7 he was featured with the Roger Kellaway Trio & Peter Erskine. On July 8 he was featured with Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, including a performance of "Quietude" by Thad Jones. Some of these selections can be experienced by searching "YouTube: GORDON GOODWIN'S BIG PHAT BAND | MetaJAX 2nd Annual CryptoJazz Festival by WhaleStreet & TokenSmart."

PD: Hello again, Eddie. Thanks for continuing our conversation, this time focusing on you and Phil Woods. When did you first meet him?

ED: When I was about 12 years old, Phil [age 22] and I had the same barber in the Manhattan Beach section of Brooklyn, on Brighton Beach Avenue. We spoke a couple of times. [According to Phil's autobiography, "Life in E Flat," published by Cymbal Press in 2020, Phil had moved to Manhattan Beach in the summer of 1953 with his partner Joanne Green and their infant daughter Pamela. Another daughter, Robin, followed 11 months later. Phil was performing often with vocalist Joey Sano ("Little Mr. Dynamite") in Staten Island and in the aptly named town of Wildwood in New Jersey. Their theme song was "T'Ain't No Use" by Al Cohn, which Al had cleverly based on a chromatic melodic line from Stravinsky's 1911 ballet "Petrouchka."]

PD: Other crossings?

ED: We both studied with famed clarinet teacher Vincent Abato. I got my graduate degree at Juilliard while studying with him.

PD: Phil went right up to the final week of his undergraduate work with Mr. Abato until June 1953. Phil explains in his autobiography that during that same week, when he was to perform his final clarinet recital, Phil was concluding travel with the Charlie Barnet Band at an engagement at the Apollo Theater not far from Juilliard. He was practicing clarinet in between shows and hid it while on stage. Someone stole it, and when he met Mr. Abato to inform him, Mr. Abato had no compassion. A heated interaction ensued. Although THAT close to receiving his degree, Phil never graduated.

ED: Oh . . .

PD: You and Phil had one particularly profound intersection. In his autobiography, Phil tells how after returning to the U.S. in late 1972 and floundering in Los Angeles for 11 months, he met Jill Goodwin and they traveled east to Pennsylvania in October 1973. Phil still "couldn't get arrested" in terms of gigs and they ended up staying with Jerry and Dottie Dodgion in Park Ridge, NJ. Michel Legrand would be performing for two weeks in November/December at Jimmy's Restaurant in Manhattan, and you were to be his featured soloist. You couldn't make the second week, so Legrand's manager Nat Shapiro called Jerry Dodgion to take the second week. Jerry couldn't do this, but instantly recommended his extended houseguest. Phil gleefully accepted and recorded a virtuosic extended feature on Legrand's "You Must Believe in Spring" [recorded December 8, 1973, Phil age 42]. The LP "Michel Legrand Recorded Live at Jimmy's" was released in 1975 and was very successful, reigniting Phil's career. In between, Phil formed his quartet here in the Poconos in early 1974. [Jerry Dodgion turned 90 in August 2022. He died on February 17, 2023 in Queens, NY. RIP, elegant master! Appropriately, Jerry and Charlie Parker share the same birthday, 12 years apart.]

ED: The first week of that engagement, when playing "You Must Believe in Spring," it was my idea to have the saxophone start out alone before the band works their way in. I was so happy to be a part of Phil's resurgence! I couldn't do the second week at Jimmy's because I had already been booked into Blues Alley in Washington, DC [age 32]. After completing my week with Legrand at Jimmy's, I wanted to sing some of his songs at Blues Alley, but the lady in charge there wouldn't allow it.

PD: Their loss, right? [Eddie laughs.]

ED: Wasn't the Jimmy's recording around the time of Phil's solo for Billy Joel on "Just the Way You Are"?

PD: That wouldn't be for another three or four years; however, you two were recording for Billy Joel's producer Phil Ramone around the same time [mid-1977]. The same day that Phil recorded the Billy Joel track at Ramone's A & R Recording, Inc. in Manhattan [next door to Jim & Andy's famed musicians bar], Ramone also contracted Phil to record the title track of what would become Phoebe Snow's 1977 LP *Never Letting Go*. You are featured on a clarinet solo on that LP on the track "Ride the Elevator."

ED: I was? Wow . . . Phil and I might have passed like ships in the night unless we were there on different days! I'd like to hear it. How can I hear it? Do I sound good?

PD: When don't you sound good, Eddie? I believe that most of Phoebe's tracks are on YouTube, so I'll send you the internet link.

ED: Excellent. I'll look forward to reminiscing.

PD: Other Phil and Eddie times?

ED: I visited Phil and his wife Chan and their children at their home near Paris [Champmotteux, south of Paris, sometime between 1968 and 1972]. I always enjoyed our performances together in George Gruntz's big band in Switzerland over the years. Good times! [Gruntz co-led a large ensemble referred to as "The Band" in recordings in 1972 and 1976 and from 1978 through his death in 2013 was THE leader of The George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band (aka GG-CJB).]

Years later we shared the same fine woodwind repair person at the Yamaha Corporation: Tomoji Hirakata. Phil used him for years and I connected with him when I switched to Yamaha clarinets.

PD: Thanks again for everything, Eddie.

ED: A pleasure, yet again. I'll send you the YouTube links of last month's performances at MetaJAZZ.

On February 10, 2023, Pat and Eddie spoke YET AGAIN! Pat had obtained the out-of-print 1972 double-LP *The Band: The Alpine Power Plant* on which Eddie and Phil were in the saxophone section and featured as soloists. Interesting connections abound:

- "The Band" was directed by George Gruntz and co-led by saxophonist Flavio Ambrosetti, his son trumpeter Franco Ambrosetti, piano performer George Gruntz, and drummer Daniel Humair (many cooks in the kitchen!).
- In the 1960s Flavio led a quintet with Franco, George Gruntz, and Daniel Humair (the fifth member consisted of various bass players), and in 1972 Flavio expanded it to the 18-member "The Band." It evolved into the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band (GG-CJB).
- From 1968 to 1973, Phil led a legendary jazz quartet called the European Rhythm Machine (ERM), which included Gruntz and Humair.
- Two of Phil's colleagues from Quincy Jones's ill-fated late 1959-early 1960 touring musical *Free and Easy,* which simultaneously morphed into the Quincy Jones Big Band, are on the Alpine Power plant recording: baritone saxophonist Sahib Shihab and virtuoso Swedish trombonist Åke Persson (whom Phil affectionately referred to as his Skol Brother), who drowned when his car went into a canal in Stockholm in February 1975, just shy of his 43th birthday.

The personnel is truly remarkable:

Trumpet: Franco Ambrosetti, Duško Gojkovic, Virgil Jones, Woody Shaw, Benny Bailey (also flugelhorn)
Trombone: Erich Kleinschuster, Åke Persson, Jiggs Whigham, Runo Ericson (bass trombone)
Saxophones: Flavio Ambrosetti (alto & soprano), Phil Woods (alto), Herb Geller (alto & soprano), Eddie Daniels (tenor), Dexter Gordon (tenor), Sahib Shihab (baritone & vocal)
Keyboards: George Gruntz
Acoustic & Electric Bass: Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen
Drums: Daniel Humair
Percussionist: unknown

The inside of the double LP jacket features a striking photo of the entire band standing in a semicircle, from left to right: rhythm section, trombones, trumpet, saxophones.

Everyone seems to be standing in approximately six inches of a flaky yellowish substance . . . sawdust perhaps?

The LP notes indicate that it was recorded April 5 & 6, 1972 at the Ambrosetti Mansion Gentilin in Lugano, Switzerland, and in concert at Lugano-Casino-Kursaal; however, "The Jazz Discography - Tom Lord" states that it was recorded on April 8, 1972, at "Jazz in der Aula" in Baden, Switzerland, at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., and that some of the selections are spliced together from two different performances. Phil and his wife Chan Parker drove 10 hours from their home in Champmotteux in the French countryside south of Paris to the Ambrosetti villa near Lugano. Chan reflects thoughtfully about this trip on page 117 of her 1993 autobiography *My Life in E-Flat,* not to be confused with Phil's autobiography published in 2020, *Life in E Flat.* It would be a little over eight months before they would move the family to California on December 20, 1972, ending their four years and eight months in Europe.

Surprisingly, this was never released on CD; however, the eight tracks are available via download from Amazon, iTunes, or Deezer. Also, each track can be accessed individually on YouTube by entering "The Band" into the search box, followed by a track title.

The titles of the tracks are:

Our Suite Dig
Pistrophallobus (Eddie burns brightly on this one)
Witch Stitch
English Waltz (Woody Shaw's typical virtuosity)
The Tango
Gravenstein (Phil's stunning ballad feature)
Saint Charity
The Age of Prominence (Eddie, Woody, Herb Geller, and Dexter Gordon shine as true individualists here)

PD: Thanks again for speaking with me, as I have some information about you and Phil with George Gruntz. It concerns the LP *The Band: The Alpine Power Plant* recorded in April 1972.

ED: Really, I don't think that I've ever seen that.

PD: You [age 30] and Phil [age 40] are in the saxophone section with Dexter Gordon [age 49], Herb Geller [age 43], and Sahib Shihab [age 46]. It was toward the end of Phil's residency in Europe from 1968 to 1972. [Phil and Herb Geller share the same November 2 birthday: Phil in 1931, Herb in 1928.]

ED: That's one stellar section!

PD: Sure is! Any memories of the recording of this double LP?

ED: I remember that I was beginning to feel established as a jazz player and I think that I was already on Thad & Mel's big band . . .

PD: You had been with Thad & Mel for over six years at that point!

ED: [Laughs.] I felt good about what I was playing and, of course, Phil was PHIL! We sat next to each other in the section and there was one time when we both played solos where several phrases would have lots of notes. Soon after, it was Dexter's time to solo and he stood up and laid it right in the groove with just a FEW NOTES! Phil and I turned to each other and locked eyes, both thinking that we had once again witnessed a real deal master of all time.

PD: Wonderful! There's a perfect parallel to this in the photo inside the double LP. You and Phil are standing next to each other and facing each other. Dexter is to your right with Herb and Sahib in between. Dexter is facing you and Phil with a big grin and seems to be participating in your conversation.

ED: I'd love to see that photo. Can you take a picture of it and send it to me?

PD: The LP jacket has been scanned and Matt will send it to you soon. It's the least we can do, Eddie. Thank you!

ED: Always a pleasure, Pat! ■

GERRY MULLIGAN

by Rob Scheps

Gerry Mulligan is one the most revered baritone saxophonists in jazz, but his talents go much deeper than that. Mulligan was a superb composer and arranger. He contributed five arrangements to the 1949/1950 Miles Davis classic *Birth of The Cool*, including "Jeru" and "Venus de Milo." That totals more than Gil Evans or John Lewis, making Mulligan a chief architect of this iconic band's sound.

Mulligan was an innovator within mainstream jazz styles. His piano-less quartets were revolutionary. In 1952 Mulligan's quartet with Chet Baker was already piano-less. These explorations continued with Art Farmer in 1958 and valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer in 1962. Mulligan shrewdly used the available resources to create full sounding arrangements which forced listeners to adjust to the piano-less format while providing a well-ordered alternative. While dropping the previously mandatory piano from his small combos, Mulligan and such frontline partners as Art Farmer and Chet Baker created new sounds, largely resulting from Mulligan's incredibly fresh writing which featured counterpoint in a manner that precluded the missing piano.

Gerry Mulligan at Newport Jazz Festival August 18, 1990 - Photo by Nick Puopolo

Mulligan came full circle in 1963 with the record *Night Lights*. Featuring all three horn players, Farmer, Brookmeyer and Mulligan himself, a gentle addition of Jim Hall on guitar finally allowed for a chordal instrument to enter the delicate mix.

In addition to his writing for smaller ensembles, Gerry wrote cunningly for big band. In *Django's Castle* ("Manoir de mes Reves"), the mellow lush sounds have an uncanny kinship to Gil Evans's "Moon Dreams" for *The Birth of the Cool*. His large ensemble writing is also showcased on the Concert Jazz Band recordings from 1960 recorded at NY's Village Vanguard. With Mel Lewis driving the band on drums, "Blueport" composed by Art Farmer and arranged by Al Cohn is a sunny up-tempo blues with cracking solos from Clark Terry, Willie Dennis and Mulligan. The snappy medium swing of "Black Nightgown" (composed by Johnny Mandel) contrasts well with the smart ballad treatments of "Come Rain Or Come Shine," and Bob Brookmeyer's arrangement of "Body and Soul."

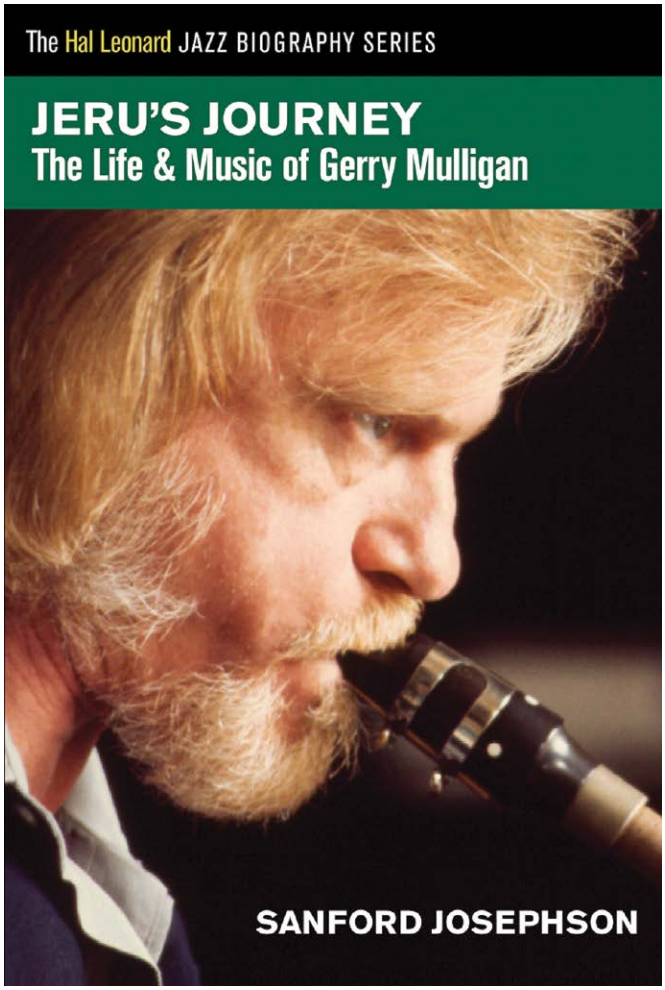
Later efforts like 1972's *The Age of Steam* show Mulligan writing in more contemporary flavors of jazz. The big band piece "Walk On The Water" from Mulligan's 1980s band is telescoped down to small group on the CD *Idol Gossip*. Likewise, "For an Unfinished Woman" is featured at the North Sea Jazz Festival with the big band, but is also effective in a live version with Dave Brubeck in a combo setting.

Mulligan added the soprano saxophone to his arsenal later on in his career. Used on pieces like "Walk on The Water," this new horn gave him a more whimsical voice to add to his sound spectrum. My contention is that Gerry was seen by the world as the light toned iconic baritone saxophonist, but his writing was among the smartest and most well-crafted in jazz, and is underrecognized for its excellence. ■

JERU'S JOURNEY

by Gordon Jack

The Life & Music of Gerry Mulligan, by Sanford Josephson.
Hal Leonard Jazz Biography Series, pb, 213pp, £13.28 ISBN 978-1-4803-6024-2.



For such a major figure there have been very few books published on Gerry Mulligan. In 1986 Raymond Horricks wrote a brief appreciation which he expanded in 2003 to include a discography of commercial and bootleg material. Jerome Klinkowitz's 1991 overview of his recordings is a very useful reference but what is really needed is a comprehensive, in-depth biography of the great man. Unfortunately, *Jeru's Journey* is not it.

Sanford Josephson has reduced a legacy of some 50 years into a mere 213 pages which hardly does justice to his subject. What is available here pales into insignificance when compared to the wealth of detail and new information to be found in the biographies of Chet Baker, Paul Desmond and Stan Getz for instance. Josephson highlights the signposts in Mulligan's career, not with fresh and original research but with numerous quotations from previously published sources – of which there are many readily available.

The first 45 pages touch briefly on Gerry's early career including his major contribution to the *Birth Of The Cool* project, his important work with Kenton and his various small groups. His use of the baritone saxophone not only as a solo vehicle but also as an accompanying voice created the contrapuntal interplay that was such a feature of his work at that time. He liberated the instrument from the relative obscurity of the saxophone section and some of his finest work as a soloist is to be found in the late fifties sessions with Stan Getz, Johnny Hodges and Ben Webster. Josephson however devotes a mere three lines to these important recordings. The films Mulligan appeared in are discussed including *I Want To Live!* with Susan Hayward. He claims that Gerry's quartet performed in the movie but it was actually a seven-piece group including Art Farmer, Frank Rosolino and Bud Shank that appeared with him on screen and played throughout the soundtrack.

His second wife Arlyne Brown is barely acknowledged. She was also his manager in the fifties - a critical time when he was resuming a career interrupted by a brief prison sentence. His long-time drummer Dave Bailey once told me that she perceived her role to be similar to the one undertaken by Martha Glaser for Erroll Garner. Josephson benefits from access to Mulligan's oral autobiography recorded in 1995 where he discussed the delightful Judy Holliday. They never married but they remained very close until her death in 1965. Gary Carey's biography of the actress (*An Intimate Life Story)* is not included in the bibliography but is recommended as it shines even more light on their relationship.

Prominence is given to the innovative CJB which did not benefit very much from Mulligan the arranger but as he once told Nat Hentoff, "My stamp is on the band and I'm the featured soloist." Gerry disbanded in 1964 and the rest of the decade was a difficult period for him and for jazz music in general. In 1968 he got together with Dave Brubeck for a somewhat surprising collaboration which lasted until 1972. There are numerous interviews with sidemen who worked with him in later years like Bill Charlap, Harold Danko, Bill Mays, Wallace Roney and Tom Harrell. However, there are no anecdotes about Mulligan's friends and colleagues from the early days like George Wallington, Brew Moore and Don Joseph making the decision to devote no less than eight pages (4% of the book!) to Gerry's later involvement with classical forms all the more surprising.

The long wait for a definitive Gerry Mulligan biography continues because he deserves something far more substantial than this slim volume. ■

BILL HOLMAN

INTERVIEW NO. 2

Patrick Dorian and Matt Vashlishan
Photography by Bob Barry

Bill Holman's Big Band from left to right - Trumpets: Bob Summers, Carl Saunders, James Blackwell, Ron Stout; Trombones: Erik Hughes, Jack Redmond, Scott Whitfield, Steve Hughes; Saxophones: Danny Janklow, Kirsten Edkins, Bruce Babad, Glen Berger, Bob Efford; Bass Alex Frank; Drums Jake Reed; Piano Matt Rhode.

I am very excited to present to you the second interview between Patrick Dorian, Willis "Bill" Holman, and myself. I am constantly amazed by the conversations we have with Bill. His personality is one of a kind and one of absolute sincerity, humility, humor and matter-of-fact straight-talk, even at 95 years of age.

As I have mentioned several times in the past, Bill Holman is one of my all-time heroes. His writing is unique, clever, and second to none. His compositional voice is a major defining piece of jazz history, and in this interview we finally reveal why. I get the opportunity to ask him several questions about his writing process and I am floored by his responses. When we hear stories of Thad Jones or Slide Hampton writing charts straight to parts without a full score overnight in a hotel room, Bill has revealed he is no different, often composing entire pieces without the aid of piano writing straight to a transposed score. This is a completely different level of musical creativity and mastery than mere mortals possess. When asked about how he writes so clearly to avoid clutter and overuse of certain techniques in an October 2022 interview by Kirk Silsbee, Bill simply responds, "Well, you have a brain, don't you?" It is becoming increasingly obvious that much of the music we have heard from Bill Holman's mind is simply that – music he hears in his head that he is able to translate either directly or with such conviction we have no choice but to believe in it. To think that he has done this time and time again with every chart he has ever written is simply incredible, and a perfect case of fate. Please enjoy our second journey into the mind of one of the best.

- Editor's Note by Matt Vashlishan

Patrick Dorian: Good afternoon, Willis!

Bill Holman: Hello, I'm here!

PD: Thank you again for agreeing to speak with us.

BH: Possibly we can unearth something I didn't know or that I have forgotten.

PD: That would mean a lot to us. How about we start out by saying it is Friday, December 2, 2022, and Dr. Matt Vashlishan and Patrick Dorian are elated that Willis "Bill" Holman has agreed to speak to us yet again. How are things in Hollywood?

BH: They are pretty good so far.

PD: We have several things to speak about. There was a period of time when you and Johnny Mandel were sharing a house. Or was it an apartment?

BH: It was a house.

PD: How long of a period was that and where was the house?

BH: The house was in Woodland Hills and I was there a couple of months, something like that.

PD: It might interest our readers that these two brilliant musicians, composers, orchestrators, arrangers were living under the same roof. You had interactions not only in the house but in all of the studios and performance spaces you would work in. You mentioned it might be about the time you did a Japanese-influenced recording with Tak Shindo. Was that around the time you and Johnny were living together? Maybe around November 1959?

BH: Yes, but I would say it was around 1961.

PD: I see that there are two recordings with Tak Shindo.

BH: I made one a few years before that did fairly well. It did good enough that they wanted us to make another.

PD: So to clarify, the first one is *Brass and Bamboo* in November of 1959 and then the next one is *Accent on Bamboo* in March and May of 1960. Tak was involved with you as an arranger on *The Many Moods of Ann Richards*, February and March of 1960, and the final one is *Far East Goes Western* with you and Johnny as arrangers in 1962.

BH: Yes, that sounds about right.

PD: The first track on that was "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle" in terms of the cowboy western or who knows what you might have been up to.

BH: I don't know anything about it. We wrote the music and that was the end of our involvement. We didn't have anything to do with the release or anything like that.

PD: Do you have any initial memories of you and Johnny coming and going in that house in Woodland Hills?

BH: I remember when we were collaborating on Tak's album, we had to share one piano in one studio. So we took turns and figured out times that worked well for both of us and we set up a schedule. It's not a very hip way to do things because you don't get creative ideas on a schedule.

PD: Right, and if you are working something out and you happen to need another 45 minutes, you have to work that out with each other, too.

BH: Yeah.

PD: It also seems you were both very busy during this time as well, from the recordings I see here, let alone you playing tenor among other things.

Bill Holman at Zipper Hall California 2016

BH: I was also drinking pretty heavily during that time. It was repercussions of my divorce, so I wasn't in very good shape.

PD: This was the late 50s divorce leading into the early 60s?

BH: The divorce was in the 60s.

PD: I understand you also got a feline out of the deal?

BH: Yeah, that was my cat named Grabber. I remember I was out late one night, and I was completely juiced. I needed to find a place to stay, so I went to Johnny's place. He put me up for the night, and it was the following

Bill Holman speaking at Zipper Hall in California 2016

morning when this cat made its presence known. I was really intrigued with the sounds the cat made. When I got up, I said, "John, I gotta have that cat." He said, "Take it, he's too aggressive." So that's how I came to possess Grabber.

PD: And did Grabber live a long time with you?

BH: Yeah, he did. More than a decade.

PD: Animals were very important to Johnny as well. During his last year of life, his daughter and wife got him a kitten named Alfie. If Johnny thought Grabber was aggressive, when I was visiting Johnny in Malibu in February 2020, Alfie would jump from the table onto Johnny's side stand that he had his cookies and tea on and knock everything over. Of course, Johnny would call him a name, but he really loved that cat.

Around this time you were probably orchestrating things that Johnny would call you about and say, "Willis, I need you to orchestrate something for me."

BH: It was a few years later when John started doing movie scores, and he was famous for missing deadlines. That's not important, but it was important that I orchestrated two of his movie scores for him.

PD: What were these titles? Maybe this was in the 70s?

BH: One of them was *Harper* with Paul Newman [released February 23, 1966], and I think the other might be *An American Dream* [released August 31, 1966].

PD: Do you have any memories of the sessions Johnny would call you to orchestrate for?

BH: We usually worked at his house. By that time he was living in Laurel Canyon. I would go to his house and he had a big studio in the back, and we would both work there. He was writing music and I was orchestrating it.

PD: Was he married to Martha yet?

BH: No, he wasn't married yet.

PD: So this was the mid-60s. He wrote a beautiful tune, "The Shining Sea," around this time with lyrics by Peggy Lee [from the movie *The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming*, released May 25, 1966].

BH: Maybe, but I didn't work on that film.

PD: I should also mention that it's fun to know that you and Nino Tempo have reconnected in the last year or so and have been in touch because of our interview with you both.

BH: Yes, he came over and we had a nice visit.

PD: That's great. Please tell us about the recent Los Angeles Jazz Institute event produced by Ken Poston where you were the guest of honor [Bill Holman Tribute – October 20-23, 2022].

BH: He has been doing these events since 1990. He liked the band and my writing, and we were brought in. It is usually in October and May, twice a year. It is his Los Angeles Jazz Institute organization that thought of the idea of honoring me, and so on the various days they had pickup bands doing music I wrote for other bands, like Count Basie, Buddy Rich, etc. It was over the course of three days and they had four or five programs of my music. They had local musicians rehearse and had somebody that was connected with me to conduct the bands. I was really flattered that they would go through all that work for my music.

PD: Your flattery is well deserved. I'm looking at the schedule for it now, and there are panel discussions, film presentations, something from the West Lake School of Music where you went. It's very extensive and well-earned on your part.

See the schedule here:
https://www.kathrynkingmedia.com/artist php?id=holman&aview=news&nid=11936
(also by searching "kathryn king media entire festival dedicated to bill holman")
An ensemble played your "Echoes of Aranjuez" suite, which is based on Joaquin Rodrigo's 1939 work "Concerto de Aranjuez." Chick Corea's composition "Spain" comes from the Rodrigo as well. Had you not heard that for many years?

BH: I had a record of it, but I hadn't played it for some time. A young drummer from Belgium conducted one of the programs that was dedicated to music that I had written for European bands. This Rodrigo thing I had done for one of those bands [the hr-Bigband in Frankfurt, Germany]. I did a few conducting gigs with them and they had me write that whole long piece. This drummer was picked to play on and conduct the concert of the European music. I asked him if he was going to play drums and conduct this suite and he said, "Sure!" I thought he definitely had his work cut out for him. It was all I could do to conduct it yet alone play drums. But they did a great version of it.

PD: And it went very well?

BH: Yes, it did.

PD: You performed and recorded this along with Claire Fisher's take on "Pictures at an Exhibition" for a concert in Germany in September 2001, the month of 9/11. Were you in Frankfurt with the HR band?

BH: Yes.

PD: How did you manage to travel to Europe that soon after 9/11?

BH: I'm not sure if the date is correct, because I don't remember having any trouble traveling. If it is correct, it didn't impact me getting there.

PD: Interesting, the record date is September 21 and 24, 2001. Perhaps two weeks after 9/11 they had some travel happening. It looks like you were there during the perfect window.

BH: Yes, I must have gotten over there after, because I remember I was downstairs working out at home watching 9/11 on the television when it happened.

PD: One more thing about the "Echoes of Aranjuez" suite: Do you have anything to say about how that came about or what you were trying to accomplish when you wrote it?

BH: Nothing specific, but I was taken aback by the idea of reorchestrating a symphonic piece for a swing band. But like everything else, you just dive headfirst into it and pretty soon your mind is operating in that environment and the ideas begin to come easier.

PD: Is there anything else that stood out for you at your tribute last October?

BH: The band that did my charts for Buddy Rich was a really good band. I can't remember who organized it, but the players were fantastic. With minimum rehearsal they really played those charts well. That was the biggest high point in addition to the concert with my band.

PD: That looks to be the Ready Mix Buddy Rich Alumni Band directed by Chuck Findley with special guest Peter Erskine.

BH: That's right.

PD: You can't go wrong with Chuck Findley.

BH: At the time that Buddy was playing these charts, Chuck was on the band [all through 1967]. Shortly after he left the band, he became the number one trumpet player in town.

PD: In pretty much everything – jazz, commercial, the "Tonight Show," he had several decades of being top shelf. That's very interesting.

Matt is getting ready to work on a project of Sammy Nestico music for his live concert of *Basie Straight Ahead,* and we spoke the other day about the 1976 LP you did for Basie called *I Told You So*. Do you have any memories of Sammy Nestico?

BH: Well, we never worked together, but we knew each other for quite a while. We both admired each other's work but never did anything together. He was a wonderful guy and very considerate of other people. I can't say enough about him.

PD: It kept coming back to him in droves with his wonderful writing and personality.

I have a quote by Phil Woods from when he was interviewed by Dave Liebman. Dave was asking Phil about how to lead a big band, and Phil said, "It's very much like being a coach for a football team." You and I were talking about how you are a big Kansas City Chiefs football fan. Do you agree with this statement?

BH: I think the comparison to a football team is a good one. You go through the same kind of things. You have to help the guys that are lagging and make use of the stars to inspire the other players. There are a lot of similarities.

PD: Phil was once interviewed by National Public Radio in the New York metropolitan area and he was asked about the arts and living in America. Phil said, "Well, we live in a nation of barbarians. What can you expect for support for the arts?" Of course, I then asked him if he came home and turned on the New York Giants along with ten million other people and he laughed. He loved the New York Giants all of his life. Have you always liked Kansas City? Were they always good or is it because of their coach?

BH: It's because of their quarterback [Patrick Mahomes]. [The Al Cohn Memorial

Jazz Collection sincerely apologizes to our local Philadelphia Eagles fanatics for discussing this topic with Bill, since at the time of this interview the 2023 Super Bowl teams wouldn't be decided for another six weeks.]

PD: Ah yes, he's special.

Matt Vashlishan: I would like to ask something along the lines of the football team topic. I'm curious if you ever thought about different ways to rehearse different bands? I know any given big band can be a mix of personalities and musical abilities, not always catered to any specific music. Is this something you thought about? Do all of the bands you work with play your music correctly from the start? Like when you work with the WDR, for example, do you have to spend time with them so that they understand exactly what you are looking for?

BH: Well, at the time I made my records, the people who I was associated with all came from the end of the big band era. As such, we all had a common way of interpreting things on the paper. We reacted to situations similarly. It was easy to get a band that could play well together. All of us big band guys new how to phrase without being told. But that was during that time. Now there are so many people from different backgrounds and musical conceptions that you have to do a bit of explaining about how you want a phrase to be played. In my time we did it automatically.

MV: Did you think about these rehearsal techniques? What about when you went to Germany and didn't have your own band? I think Mel Lewis came with you a lot of the times you were with the WDR band [Cologne, Germany].

BH: They took to it pretty fast. To start, I didn't include any out and out Basie kind of phrasing in the music I chose to write. I wrote things that weren't exactly straight 8ths, but was a straighter version of swing 8ths. I never had any problem with the WDR with that, until I took a piece that really required a traditional triplet 8th note feel, and I couldn't believe how the band murdered it the first few times we read through it. I've heard the same thing from a few other composers whose style is much more of a triplet feel. Of course, if you give them some time to understand what's going on, they really rise to the occasion. This can lead to frustration from both sides – the composer becomes frustrated that the band isn't playing their music right, and the band becomes frustrated because you are pushing them outside of their comfort zone and what they do naturally. They are flexible enough to hear what I tell them and always come around. Swing time is a hard one.

MV: Of course, and there must be a fair amount of diplomacy involved to make sure everybody is cool during these discussions. So this was something you were able to do naturally from the very beginning? Did you ever feel out of place when you were directing a band?

BH: Yes, I did. I realized that I could get it right, but I'm kind of shy, and when I'm standing in front of 15 people, I'm going to be a little uneasy. That didn't last too long, but it was hard at first to run rehearsals just because of my mind.

PD: Do you have a short list of classical pieces you have admired over the years?

BH: The "Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky is a given. I like the Bartók string quartets also. Those are the two that really stand out to me. I was also into Charles Ives for a while--that was an eye-opener.

PD: Ives was one of Phil Woods' favorite composers. Is there anything about Ives or any of these classical composers that led to your development and mastery of being a linear composer?

BH: Not really, I just started out that way. I had a melody, and I thought, "Well, there's something that can go with this, maybe another melody." So I just started writing like that. I didn't know much about counterpoint, and I just wrote melodies that I thought would go well together. Pretty soon people started calling it "linear," and that was interesting, so I followed up on it.

PD: They gave it a label.

BH: Yes, and that led me into this whole thing called "counterpoint." I looked at it and saw good results from it, but I didn't follow any of the rules of it. When I started out, I didn't know what the rules were.

PD: Would you play them on the piano to hear how they fit together? Or were you writing these counterpoint-type lines and it just worked? Did you check it in any way?

BH: Yeah, sometimes. For some reason I played things on the piano that I didn't need to play. I get sidetracked when I'm writing, and if I run across something on the piano that sounds good, I try to mess with that for a while. I guess it was coming close to counterpoint, but I wasn't quite there. People often explain the different species of counterpoint, and I think, "That's great and all, but it's not what I do."

PD: Johnny Mandel, in his NEA oral history with Bill Kirchner said, "Bill Holman is the only guy who could write linear like that and have it swing madly. Bill is one of the swingingest writers of all." I think that reflects on what everybody thought. He went on to say, "I just love Bill Holman's writing. Nobody even begins to write like Holman. He is totally different. Holman is a hero of mine."

BH: I've never heard that!

PD: This is from the Bill Kirchner interview when Johnny became an NEA Jazz Master in 2011. Bill Kirchner said in the interview, "The interesting thing about Bill writing for Woody Herman is that he [Woody] might not have liked linear things, but he eventually got to like Bill Holman a lot." But that was Woody. He could shift with the times, styles, and genres, and he was the ultimate chameleon as a leader. The pdf of this interview is available by searching "Smithsonian Bill Holman interview transcription PDF" online.

I think Matt has some wonderful questions for you, Willis.

MV: Let's start with "Speak Low." We emailed a while back about this and you mentioned that someone told you that you arranged this

tune two or three times. I don't know what you remember, but I have counted five arrangements so far. Except for the WDR in 1989, four of them are between 1955 and 1960. They are all very different but happened within a relatively short period. Do you remember anything about how this happened or what you felt about the tune?

BH: I told somebody that I only remember writing one chart of "Speak Low," and you sent me your list and there were five!

MV: The first was a vocal arrangement for Stan Kenton featuring vocalist Ann Richards [recorded live at two performances in May 1955]. The second one was basically the same arrangement but arranged for instrumental only with the key changed as well as some slight differences in orchestration. So I would count that as two different charts seeing you did a bit of work. Do you remember either of those or which came first?

BH: I don't remember the chart for Ann Richards at all.

MV: We then have the chart with French horns that you wrote for your band in 1960 [recorded on June 30], which is probably the most well-known.

BH: Yeah, that's the one I remember.

MV: There is another that you wrote for Anita O'Day on her LP record *Incomparable: Anita O'Day with Bill Holman's Orchestra*, which was also in 1960 [about two months later on August 23]. You arranged all 12 tunes on this recording.

BH: Yes, that's right.

MV: So what is it about "Speak Low"? Is it a tune you particularly like or is it a coincidence that this happened so many times?

BH: Well, I like the tune. I can't say exactly why I picked it for my record, except that I like it.

MV: The interesting thing, especially because you don't remember doing all of these, is that there are so many similarities between each version, while also being incredibly different. I suppose this makes sense because you are the person writing them, but it's fascinating to me how much material you can get out of a piece like this. When I'm listening, I can hear little bits of one of the other arrangements, but it isn't simply a copy. It is hidden and developed in such a different way that it's really a pleasure to hear. I'm curious about if you do arrange a tune twice, do you try to reference the one that came before, or do you try something different on purpose? Or maybe you just sit down to arrange and don't think about any of that…

BH: I try to tailor each arrangement to the person I'm writing it for. I have to imagine that person singing the song or playing it or whatever. But if I can't think of those previous charts, I can't really speak about problems I had writing them.

MV: Do you remember anything about that Anita O'Day record as a whole? Anything about the process or how it happened or how you felt about it?

BH: The thing that stands out for me was Russ Garcia was acting as the producer of the record. It was up to him to say, "Do another take" or "That's the take we use." It was up to him to keep the session moving. Russ allowed Anita to hear every take we made of every tune! It didn't matter if it was a good take or a lousy take. She wanted to hear every take and Russ said, "Okay." The sessions ran way over time and Norman Granz's company had to pay for it. Norman's financial guy called me up. He became very famous later on at Warner Bros., but I can't remember his name. He really yelled at me for all the overtime. He wouldn't hear my excuse, which was of course that Anita wanted to hear every take, good or bad. That was the only difficulty I had with that session.

I also remember Val Valentin came to the session. Val was supposedly Sinatra's favorite recording engineer. He came in when we were doing Anita's record and said, "The band is too loud!" So Russ cut the band down, and when the record came out, you really have to work hard to hear the band at all.

MV: I have a few more tunes I'm curious about that are unrelated to this, just for my own interests. The first is "Kissing Bug," which is one of my all-time favorite arrangements of yours. Did the original Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra recording [April 1945] of this Strayhorn/Joya Sherrill/Rex Stewart composition influence you in any way? Did you try to draw from elements in Strayhorn's writing? Do you listen to original recordings when you arrange?

BH: I didn't consciously do that, but when I was in high school, the original "Kissing Bug" was played on the radio a lot. It was a vocal chart.

MV: Yes. So it was in your head because you heard it so often.

BH: Yeah.

MV: The next tune I'm curious about is your composition "Evil Eyes." You recorded it on April 25, 1957, and Terry Gibbs was playing it in 1959 and recorded it on February 23, 1960. I was listening to Manny Albam's *The Blues Is Everybody's Business*, recorded in September and October 1957, and there is a striking resemblance between the two. I wonder if you ever thought about that or talked about it with each other.

BH: I'm pretty sure my arrangement of "Evil Eyes" came first.

MV: Do you remember where your idea for that chart came from?

BH: No. I probably thought about it for a couple of days.

MV: Movement I of Manny's piece sounds like he heard your chart and then tried to do his own thing with it. Maybe it's completely unrelated, but to me it sounds like there's something going on there.

There were so many arrangers at this time writing at a high level, this would be in the late 50s: you, Manny Albam, Bob Brookmeyer, Al Cohn, Marty Paich, Johnny Mandel, and the list goes on. Did you have a relationship with each other? Did you talk about writing or each other's writing styles? Or was it just a job you all did individually?

BH: Me being in LA kind of kept me from socializing with a lot of the other guys who were in New York. I was one of the few people in LA who was trying to write jazz charts. I didn't mingle too much. We were all home at the desk without time for social stuff.

When my first so-called linear charts came out--I guess on the Kenton album that had several of my pieces on it [recorded early March 1954]--shortly after that LP those elements started showing up in other people's writing. They began to stretch their charts out a little bit and trying more melodic-type stuff. Brookmeyer was untouched by everything I ever did. I can't count him as me influencing him, but as you say, Manny may have picked up on it and tried it out. As the years went by, more and more people did it that way.

PD: Bill, I believe you did some arranging for Natalie Cole's *Unforgettable… with Love* LP with Johnny Mandel. Do you remember what arrangements you did or your experience working with Natalie?

BH: Working with Natalie was great. She was so aware of everything and so concentrated on doing a good job. She recorded her vocals with the band playing live. By this time most singers had the band make a track and they would go in and overdub the vocal. That way they didn't have to pay the musicians for all that time. But she insisted on being in the room when the band was playing, which I really admire her for. She sounded like her dad, Nat King Cole, talking. The charts had to be "hot" and the tunes that they gave me to write kind of worked that out. The producer suggested several titles and had me write copies of some of her father's hits. I can't remember the titles of those either, but they were operating from Nat's viewpoint in the 50s and we were working from the singer's viewpoint doing modern charts. But either way, working with Natalie was a great pleasure.

PD: The list of tunes you did in 1991 is remarkable. You did "L-O-V-E," "This Can't Be Love," "Avalon," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," "Almost Like Being In Love," and "Thou Swell." What a great list of tunes you were able to contribute to for the legacy she left. [Bill did three more arrangements for her in 1993.]

BH: Ever since she took those charts on the road, I was getting comments from people playing in the band. They congratulated me on writing great charts and she liked them, too. She always included them in her programs. I had a trumpet player come up to me just a few weeks ago and tell me how much fun he had playing those charts on the road.

MV: I have more unrelated questions now that we are talking about all of these charts that you write for record after record. You've written so many, and often you are writing the entire album for people. I can't even imagine how many pieces you have written for occasions like this. Once you have a chart finished and bring it in to read it for the first time, how much editing would you do after you heard it?

BH: Hardly any.

MV: You had it right from the very beginning?

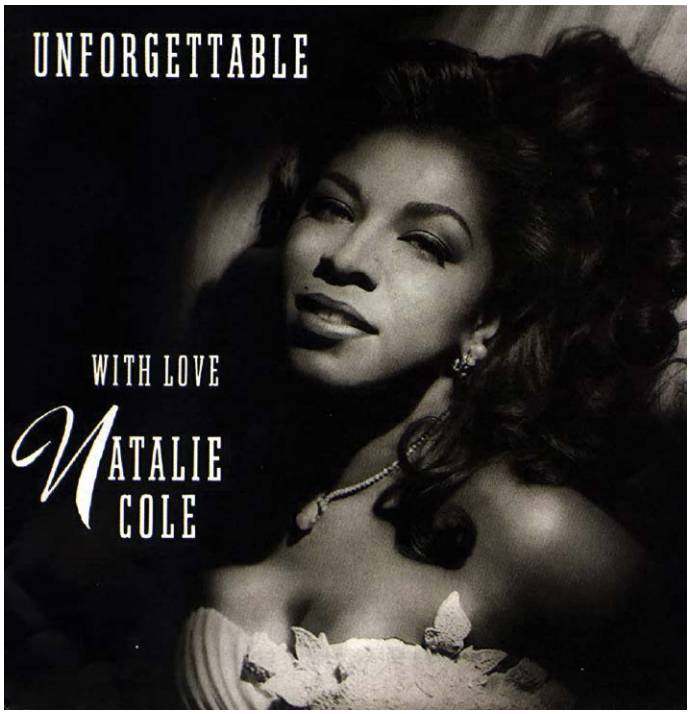
BH: I don't know if I had it right, but I was committed.

MV: You wouldn't change existing charts then? You would go on and write a new one?

BH: Yeah, unless we had a discussion about something, I hardly ever changed a chart.

MV: How much editing would happen before that then? Let's say, if you wrote 90% of the chart…

BH: No, my editing started long before that…



Bill and the sax section, from left to right: Danny Janklow, Kirsten Edkins, Bruce Babad, Glen Berger, Bob Efford

[laughs]. I was editing from the moment I started, which consequently made me pretty slow at writing.

MV: And you wrote exclusively using the piano?

BH: Yeah, and I subconsciously would finger things on tenor sax as I wrote.

MV: And would you ultimately figure everything out on piano?

BH: I tried to hear it by myself without any outside stuff.

MV: Even without piano?

BH: Yeah, and if I got to something hard, I would immediately go to the piano. Sometimes I would use the piano to figure out aggregable chord progressions, but I tried to keep away from the piano as much as I could.

MV: So now I must ask, did you always write a score, or would you write directly to parts?

BH: I pretty much always wrote a score.

MV: Would you write a concert pitch or transposed score?

BH: Transposed.

MV: So you would write these charts for the first time directly to a transposed score.

BH: I would sketch a few bars in concert, and later on when things got more complicated, I would sketch out the entire chart. But for these earlier dates I would just sketch out parts that were tricky. Often I would just start out writing on the score if I had been carrying an idea around for a few days. I would sit down, put it on the score, and proceed from there until I had to have some help.

MV: I find this absolutely incredible.

PD: Willis, you have once again made our day, week, month, and year with this opportunity to speak with you.

BH: I want to leave with one more story about Johnny Mandel and his love for animals. When I was working on those movies and going to Johnny's house, often we worked all night and had to send out for food. One time he sent out to the local deli for food for him and me, and when we were waiting for it to arrive, he took a can of pet food out of the cupboard and put it in a dish and put that in the oven. I said, "John, how come you're heating the cat food?" He said, "I want her to think she's eating the same food we are." And I said, "Oh!" [laughs]

PD: That's wonderful closure. We are so pleased to work through these memories with you. You sound more lucid than Matt and I put together. As Clark Terry always told people, "Keep on keepin' on." Thank you so much for sharing your journey with us. ■

Readers, PLEASE TAKE **NOTE**

The ACMJC and the Jazz Lounge at Kemp Library

Visit **esu.edu/jazzatesu** to stay up to date on everything happening at the Collection.

From jazz concerts on campus to annual concerts such as the Duke Ellington Nutcracker Suite to the Jazz Lounge Listening Series, any information will be available on this website. Visit esu.edu/jazzatesu to stay involved with jazz on campus, and we hope to see you at a future event!

ACMJC on WESS 90.3 FM

Tune in to 90.3 FM WESS radio to hear Collection Coordinator Matt Vashlishan showcase some of the unique recordings hidden in the ACMJC.

Visit **esu.edu/jazzatesu** for schedule updates.

Listen online at:
https://quantum.esu.edu/clubs/wess/listen-2/

Big Band Night at the Deer Head Inn Returns!

Following a much needed winter break, the Water Gap Jazz Orchestra will return on the last Monday of May and continue monthly for the rest of the year. Performing two sets at 7:30pm and 9:00pm, the band resurrects the sounds of Phil Woods, Al Cohn, Gerry Mulligan, Dick Cone, Thad Jones, and much much more. More information at www.deerheadinn.com

CONTRIBUTORS and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For additional information about contributors to this issue of The Note, you can visit their websites:

SU TERRY: www.suterry.com

NEAL MINER: www.nealminer.com

ROB SCHEPS: www.robschepsmusic.com

PATRICK DORIAN: https://quantum.esu.edu/insider/professor-patrick-dorian/

BOB BARRY: www.jazzography.com

WILLIAM PATERSON LIVING JAZZ ARCHIVES: https://livingjazzarchives.org

JON AND RENEE BROADY: www.broadyphotography.com

SPECIAL THANKS TO: ESU President **Kenneth Long**, Marketing and Communications director **Elizabeth Richardson** and assistant director **Greg Knowlden,** and Interim Provost **Margaret Ball**, for showing their continued support for the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection and providing the opportunity to continue to present this publication; **Ideal Design Solutions** for graphic design; **Megan Smith** and the **ESU Library Staff** for making this publication possible; **Louise Sims** and **Jill Goodwin** for their ongoing support and generosity; **Pat and Mary Dorian** for all of their invaluable assistance; all of the people who have donated over the years to make the ACMJC a continuing success!

LEGENDS LIVE ON

BUT NOT WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT!

Representing all forms of Jazz from all eras, the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection was founded and named in honor of the award-winning Al Cohn — legendary saxophonist, arranger, composer and conductor.

Housed in Kemp Library on the campus of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, the collection consists of jazz recordings, oral histories, sheet music, photographs, books, videos, original art and memorabilia. The collection also includes outreach programs.

YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE COLLECTION IS CRUCIAL in helping promote music education and preserving the iconic jazz history of the Pocono region.

Please make your gift by mail using the enclosed envelope
or online at **www.esufoundation.org/supportalcohn**

Be sure to designate your gift to the ACMJC. *For personal assistance, call (800) 775-8975.*

EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY

200 Prospect Street
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301-2999