

STRAIGHT AHEAD

THE COMMUNITY JAZZ CENTER

2013

JAZZ



HALL OF FAME



BOB WASHUT | RUFUS SPATES | DON JAQUES

See inside

Editor's Take

Eighteen years ago, an eclectic mix of professional jazz musicians, educators, and jazz lovers met at Phyllis Leaverton's home to discuss the future of the Community Jazz Center of Greater Des Moines. I didn't know what I was getting involved in. But I am very happy that I went to that meeting. The group decided to continue to sponsor jazz performances and education in the Des Moines area, albeit at a lower level than founder Willie Thomas' initial expectations. Phyllis Leaverton became the "housemother" to this organization of "many Indians, and no chief," and is proud to say that 10 of those original volunteers are still active with the organization.

The organization has flourished, renewed itself, and continues to grow. It is fascinating to walk into a club and see so many musicians who got their start as students on the jam session stage or see the interaction of the young "lions" with the old "lions" as they play together. CJC has touched many lives by being the bridge that connects the pros with aspiring musicians. Often, the spark that starts as an interest in jazz is fanned into an eternal flame of love for this amazing music. I speak from experience. My two sons love to play this music and are flourishing as musicians because of the opportunities that CJC offered them.

Thank you to the board members and committee/event chairs, for without them there would be no CJC.

Joel Poppen, Editor

BOP ONLINE:
dmcommunityjazzcenter.org

CJC To Honor Local Jazz Heroes on Sunday, October 20

Every city has its jazz heroes, and Des Moines is no exception. For the past 13 years, the Community Jazz Center of Greater Des Moines (CJC) has honored these heroes with its Annual Hall of Fame and Special Recognition Awards. This year's event is scheduled for the evening of Sunday, October 20, at Adventureland Inn.

CJC will be inducting the following musicians into the Hall of Fame which now numbers a total 36 musicians: saxophonist **Don Jaques**, pianist and educator **Robert Washut** and saxophonist **Rufus Spates** (deceased).

Special Recognition Awards will be given to drummer **John Kizilarmut** and the **Community Jazz Center Big Band**. The Next Generation Award, which focuses on up-and-coming musicians who are making an impact on music in Des Moines, will be presented to bassist **Eric Krieger**. The Bobby Dawson Award, presented to a student musician who has been involved regularly with the CJC monthly jam session, will be presented to guitarist **Ross Clowser** from Waukee High School. **Lauren Johnson**, a bassist from Valley High School, will also receive an award for her musical contributions to the music of the CJC Big Band.

The Hall of Fame event will kick off at 5:00 p.m. with a performance by the CJC Youth Combo. Doors open for the main event at 6:00 p.m. with live music followed by the ceremony and lots of live jazz by some of Des Moines' finest musicians, including Sam Salomone, Steve Grismore, John Kizilarmut and others.

This year, in an effort to make jazz accessible to more people, the CJC is decreasing the admission price to \$15 if tickets are purchased and paid for prior to October 20. Admission at the door will be \$20. Food will be an additional option that may be purchased during the social time at the beginning of the evening.

The CJC Hall of Fame is always a very special night jam packed with live jazz performances and tributes that you won't want to miss! Visit dmcommunityjazzcenter.org or call Phyllis Leaverton at 515-276-0777 for ticket information.

STRAIGHT AHEAD

Straight Ahead is published quarterly by the Greater Des Moines Community Jazz Center. We welcome any and all contributions to this newsletter, including book, concert and CD reviews, editorials, concert news and any other information that would be of interest to CJC members. Please send your articles and information to Abe Goldstien, c/o Trilix, 9105 Northpark Drive, Johnston, IA 50131. Materials can also be e-mailed to abe@trilixgroup.com. For information about advertising in *Straight Ahead* or to receive future copies of the publication, contact Phyllis Leaverton at 515-276-0777.

Jazz At Caspe Terrace

Something magical happens each time musicians take the stage at Caspe Terrace. It will happen two more times this fall!

It's the magic that comes from an intimate performance venue where friends gather for one reason — to experience the diversity and ageless beauty of jazz. So save the following dates for Jazz at Caspe Terrace.



November 5:

Lee Shaw Plays The Music of Billy Strayhorn

It's not her age that will impress you. It's her piano playing. At age 87, Lee Shaw's name is usually mentioned in the same sentences as female jazz greats Mary Lou Williams and Marian McPartland. Find out why when she and bassist Rich Syracuse explore the music of Duke Ellington's favorite composer/arranger — Billy Strayhorn.

December 5: The Dave Douglas Quintet

The last time trumpeter Dave Douglas was in Des Moines he was just starting his climb to the top of the jazz polls. Today he is solidly there, having been named Downbeat Magazine's Top Trumpeter for more than ten years. Caspe Terrace is just one stop on his mission to play in all 50 states during his 50th year. We'll all be celebrating with an evening of original music from some of the best players on the scene today.



Advance tickets for Lee Shaw are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Advance tickets for Dave Douglas are \$30 and \$35 at the door. Student prices are available. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. And stick around after the show for a meet-the-artist dessert reception hosted by the Waukee Area Arts Council.

You can reserve tickets now by contacting Abe Goldstien at abe@trilixgroup.com or 515.279.6452. See you at Caspe Terrace for some magic!

A Blast For The Past



My experience with the Des Moines Community Jazz Center (CJC) is one that I will never forget because it helped set my future on a

solid foundation. At the time, I did not fully understand the value that CJC provided. Not only was it a great place to meet other like-minded jazz musicians my age, but also laid a theory foundation that made getting a music degree much less stressful than what it could have been.

I started with the CJC when I was in middle school. I quickly became involved in the Sunday jam sessions at Java Joes as well as other related events. Between Susie Miget's theory classes, combos and the jam sessions I was given an opportunity to build the "house" of my musical career. Much like architecture, if you do not have a solid foundation to build from, your house will crumble in time.

Those theory classes taught me the inner workings of music. Then the combos and jam sessions were the real world applications. I continued on through college at Drake and my Master's at the University of Denver.

As a full time musician in Denver, I still remember those jam sessions, relationships built and lessons learned. I believe every community can model off of what CJC is doing!

- Ryan Klobnack

(In late August, Ryan brought his quintet to Des Moines' Star Bar and Vaudeville Mews.)

JAZZ AT JAVA JOE'S

STUDENT JAM W/CJC HOUSE TRIO: First Sunday of the month, 2-4 p.m.

CJC ADULT JAM SESSION: Fourth Wednesday of the Month, 7-9 p.m.

CJC BIG BAND: Third Sunday of the Month, 2-4 p.m.

JOHNSTON STATION BIG BAND: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 2-4 p.m.

All performances are free!

Jazz Ensemble Saxophone Section Tips

By Dave Camwell, associate professor of music-saxophone/jazz studies at Simpson College

In the past few years, I have judged over one hundred jazz bands in various festivals throughout Iowa. The goals of many of these bands are to qualify for the annual Iowa Jazz Championships and to improve the quality of their performances. I enjoy working with these students and their directors, but I find that I often repeat the same advice over and over again. In this article, I will write about the three most common problems I find in jazz saxophone sections. Undoubtedly, the areas in need of improvement are as common to all regions of the country as they are in Iowa.

It's called lead alto for a reason

Problem number one is usually a lack of balance in the section. Lead alto needs to do precisely that – lead! This includes being the focal sonic point of the section as well as directing the cut-offs, phrasing, articulation patterns, vibrato, and overall style. These musical elements have to be provided in a forceful and extroverted manner; there should be no such thing as a wall-flower lead alto player. A common problem also occurs when the lead tenor player overpowers the lead alto, thereby affecting the balance of the section. Most jazz band music is written in such a way that the lead alto needs to be the top sounding voice to create the intended texture of the music. While lowering the level of the tenor saxophonist is a viable option, I most often encourage the lead alto player to simply come up a dynamic level and perform in a more aggressive musical manner. It is also important to make sure the baritone saxophone is as strong as the lead alto to provide a solid overall column of sound. I encourage directors to work towards having a strong top and bottom presence in the section, with the middle voices adding their weight in a way that complements and correctly balances with the outer voices.



Adjust mouthpiece and neck strap while standing

I still clearly remember my seventh grade band director approaching me while playing a saxophone soli (while standing) and turning my mouthpiece about 40 degrees to the proper horizontal angle...the moral of this story is that due to the nature of holding the saxophone, the angle of the mouthpiece in the mouth almost always changes when shifting from sitting to standing while playing. I often see a sax section look just fine to begin a chart, and then watch in horror as they assume strange Quasimodo-ish physical contortions as they stand to solo. Mouthpieces at wild angles, neck straps clearly too low: all are aspects that will negatively affect air flow, support, embouchure, and articulation. Remember, the mouthpiece should always come to you and not the other way around!

Correct equipment

There is perhaps no greater (and common) frustration for me than seeing a sax section all performing on incorrect mouthpieces. Many band directors assume that all mouthpieces are created equally, and for the same purpose. Reeds will also need to be lighter (as opposed to classical playing) to match the typical larger tip opening of a jazz mouthpiece. As always, finding the right combination

between player, reed, and mouthpiece is essential when working towards an authentic jazz sound.

Low-tongue disease

While not a real disease such as leprosy or gout, low-tongue disease affects many young saxophonists. The symptoms include a flat upper register, unresponsive low register, and a generally unfocused and spread sound. By using a low tongue position in the oral cavity, the air flow and pressure into the saxophone is not enough to produce a rich and vibrant sound. I call this “low and slow” air, and I use the analogy of “aaaaah” versus “eeeeee” with my students. While the tongue in jazz playing is still slightly lower than you would likely use in classical playing, these two vowel sounds work well to simplify the somewhat complicated topic of embouchure. Simply put, “aaaaah” produces a much slower and less pressurized air flow, essentially under-supporting the needs of the saxophone. My corny, yet effective, line to remember is this: “the key to good saxophone playing is ‘eeeeee’.” I recommend all saxophonists play a full-range Bb major scale with both “aaaah” and “eeeeee” voicings to experience the often dramatic difference.

In summary, these tips should help saxophone sections to sound better and swing harder. However, the most important piece of advice is always to listen, listen, listen! Authentically-performed jazz cannot be learned out of any book or article; it must be learned through immersive and consistent listening and lots of playing, coupled with enthusiastic and skilled teaching to help reinforce these skills. Jazz is a demanding art form, but the rewards of correctly performing this music are always worth the effort.

These tips are part of an article that appeared in Saxophone Journal

Meet CJC Big Band Member Andrew Steffensmeier



I was born in Iowa City, IA. At the age of four, my parents finally gave in to my requests to learn to play the piano and I studied it until the age of 10. At 10, I had heard recordings of saxophone players and again my parents agreed to let me take lessons on an alto saxophone. I still remember my first instructor telling me I should consider playing more jazz after she heard me improvising a classical piece after neglecting to practice. "That wasn't what is on the page but it sounded good."

My first experience with a jazz ensemble was in the jazz band at Southeast Junior High in Iowa City in the 7th grade. During 8th grade, I had organized a group of horn players and rhythm section to play tunes we transcribed or transposed from piano music. At age 14, I started studying with Lynn Hart, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I also made the

transition to tenor saxophone. A year later, I was a frequent sub in the house big band at Eddie Piccard's jazz lounge in Cedar Rapids. As a soloist, my biggest influences of that time included Lester Young, Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane.

At 16, I formed a combo with my younger brother who was a percussionist. Later in high school, I added clarinet and flute to my skill set. Between playing in the City High School Jazz Band, subbing in the house band and my combo there was a gig nearly every week.

I attended Luther College in Decorah, IA, graduating with a degree in Biology. I played in the concert band on clarinet, the jazz band on tenor sax, and had active combos most of my time there. After college, I moved back to Iowa City, where I attended medical school at the University of Iowa. For a few years, I played with Dox Big Band in Iowa City, an ensemble loosely affiliated with the college of medicine. The demands on my time

as a resident in the Department of Ophthalmology resulted in a hiatus in playing my saxophone.

I joined Des Moines Eye Surgeons in West Des Moines in August of 2008. Shortly after arriving in town, I received a call from the section leader of the CJC Big Band with an invitation to sit in with the group. I have now been playing the lead tenor chair with the band for nearly five years.

Playing with the band has been a tremendously rewarding experience. After what are sometimes long weeks of focus and concentration during ophthalmic surgery, it always feels good to get to rehearsal and use other parts of my mind. It is hard to beat escaping to collaborate with other musicians and participate in the "conversations" of jazz.

Of course, when I am not on the bandstand, I am in my office, where practice includes cataract, LASIK, eyelid and corneal transplant surgery. I am married and have two children, ages 6 and 3.

Look For Nate Sparks In New York City

Nate Sparks, a long-time participant at the Community Jazz Center, headed to New York City to pursue his love of jazz. He has been awarded a major scholarship from the prestigious Juilliard School of Music.

In New York, Nate will get to work with some outstanding jazz musicians, teachers and classmates but he is quick to recognize Iowa's outstanding jazz program at middle school, high school, college and professional levels. "I took lessons from many musicians around the country who told me they were surprised to find that Iowa offered so many learning opportunities in jazz. Few states can match Iowa," commented Nate.

Nate also admits that much of his development as a musician is due to CJC. "It is a great program and everyone who dreams of getting good at jazz should get down there to Java Joe's, get up on the stage and start jamming, not only with other students but with pros too! What an opportunity!"



JAMMIN' WITH CJC

by Gage Schmitt

I started to go to the CJC jam sessions when I was in middle school. My parents met Abe and Phyllis at the CJC middle school jazz festival, who told them about the jam sessions. When my parents told me, I was excited to go even though I had no idea what it would be like

Once I arrived, Abe guided me to the song sign up list. I did not know any of the songs, so I picked ones that sounded easy. When Abe called me up to the stage I was nervous and played random notes quietly because I was insecure in my ability to improvise. I was lucky that professionals were there to help me out with the songs. Afterwards, everyone was so encouraging about

my performance. They said what a nice job I did even though I did not feel like I did a good job. That made me want to come back.

As I went to more jam sessions I no longer felt nervous or scared to get up on that stage and play the songs. I quickly became familiar with many of the songs. I got used to different people and to adapting, which adds variety to the jam session and makes it even more fun.

I have told many of the kids I go to school with, at Urbandale High, about the CJC jam sessions. Some of them have come to the sessions with me too, and enjoyed it a lot. Great people run the program.

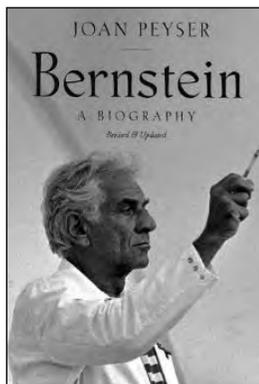


Gage Schmitt takes a flute solo at a recent jam session

The audience is so supportive and I am very appreciative of Java Joe's and everyone who supports this awesome program.

Jolls On Bernstein

Jazz Hall of Fame recipient Ken Jolls reviews "Bernstein, A Biography"



I recently read "Bernstein, A Biography," by Joan Peyser. This is the story of the person whom many feel has been this country's finest musician — Leonard Bernstein. New England-born and Harvard educated, Bernstein was torn between three musical passions: the piano, the symphony orchestra, and the Broadway theater. He was an accomplished concert pianist, he was the youngest person ever to lead the New York Philharmonic, and he also established himself as a first-rate Broadway composer with, among other productions, his very famous "West Side Story." Bernstein's musical interests were eclectic and certainly extended to jazz. He could be seen often in the 52nd Street jazz clubs of the 40s and 50s.

Leonard Bernstein was encouraged by the highest-ranking musicians of his day to pursue a career solely in classical music. No lesser names than Dimitri Mitropoulos, Aaron Copland, and Samuel Barber wanted him to focus on his virtuoso piano skills and his unique symphonic conducting style. But that wasn't for Bernstein, and he could never bring himself to drop theater music completely.

I saw Leonard Bernstein once in 1976 when he brought the New York Philharmonic to Hilton Coliseum in Ames. But the piece that he chose to exhibit his own talents was "Rhapsody in Blue," where he both played the solo part and conducted. It was a superb performance, but I'm sure that more than one orchestra member must have rolled his or her eyes at such a popular, programmatic piece of music being put before that magnificent group of musicians. I can only guess, but my years of living in New York before moving to Iowa suggest that L.B. decided that he needed to play something sweet and simple for the "farm folk."

The late Joan Peyser was an outstanding writer and biographer. She produced two editions of "Bernstein," 1987 and 1998. I read the earlier one, but I would recommend the later edition. Peyser was criticized after the first edition for focusing too much on Leonard Bernstein's "dark side," but the musical history is there and will please anyone who is looking for solid information about an icon of 20th century art.

Notes & Tones

From: KFMG Sam Is Back

Des Moines Hammond organ legend, Sam Salomone is back on the radio Thursday nights from 8 to 10 p.m. with a new show featuring “funky jazzy bluesy music.” Tune into KFMG-FM 99.1 on the radio or at www.kfmg991.org on the internet. And don't forget to listen to these KFMG jazz shows every Sunday:

- 6 a.m. - 10 a.m.: Sunday Morning Jazz with Cecil White
- 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.: Straight, No Chaser with Abe Goldstien
- 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.: Jazz Gumbo with Abe Goldstien
- 9 p.m. - 10 p.m.: Sunday Night at the Savoy with Bob Hunter
- 10 p.m. - Midnight: C-Notes with Cecil White

From DMACC: Jazz Comes To DMACC

The first jazz instrumental music ensemble at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) was initiated in the fall of 2012. Music Director Jim Loos had approached Scott Davis about starting this group, and when Scott retired from full-time teaching in the Des Moines Schools in the spring of 2012 the opportunity finally presented itself. With enrollment as part of the Continuing Education program the class is open to any and all and not just DMACC students. The class meets on Monday evenings from 7 to 8:30 pm at the Ankeny campus music room.

In our inaugural season last year we had one trumpet, one trombone, two saxes and rhythm. At least partial rhythm! Drummer Steve Knight, who runs a wrestling foundation, had to miss many rehearsals for his job. No bass player showed up, so Scott Davis, in his “third mid-life crisis mode” played bass for the rehearsals. His friend Jay Alcorn sat in for the concert, held in conjunction with the vocal department at DMACC lead by Aaron Powell. The second semester had a larger enrollment: two trombones, two trumpets, five saxes with some arm twisting and a real bass player! Bob Brown, regular drummer with Scott Davis' jazz quartet, assisted and covered for Steve when he couldn't be there.

The cast of characters is charming! Key to the success has been Dick Hinson, a lawyer and financial guy in town returning to his guitar after a 40 year layoff. With a brief stint at UNI, Dick and Scott just missed each other at the school. His enthusiasm for the ensemble is contagious. Jim Loos has also contributed as our pianist and now has a vocal jazz ensemble at the school (another first).

This season we are still short on horns! We're in the process of purchasing jazz ensemble literature and hope to perform in public. If interested in joining, contact Scott Davis at sedavis7@dmacc.edu.

From CJC: Membership Update

Renewals

Lyle Krewson
Steven Day
Elaine Pineger
Gary Lozano
Lloyd Miller
William Gode
James Bush
Ron and Kathie Danielson
David Dickey
Pete Taggart
Roslyn Ashner
Del and Marlene Dickey
Sheila Epstein
Lois Davis

New Members

Jean Winters
James Thorpe
Karen Downing
Polly Clark
Zane Gedler (student)

Donations

Ken and Ann Packer
Ron Rubek
David Cunningham
Kate Washut
(for Carolyn Adler)
Claudine Herrod
*(for the Stu Calhoon
Summer Scholarship)*

From Abe Goldstien: Witness Spotting

Witness Matlou, the pianist from South Africa, who spent a year at Drake University and participated in many CJC activities was recently spotted on the stage of Dizzy's Coca Cola Room at Lincoln Center performing with Joe Lovano and the Berklee Global Jazz Institute Ambassadors Ensemble. The band is currently doing a tour of the east coast and then they are off to Monterey Jazz Festival. Witness is currently studying piano and composition at Berklee School of Music in Boston.

Community Jazz Center
2921 Patricia Drive
Urbandale, Iowa 50322-6863

CJC Membership Form

- School [\$35] Patron [\$30] Adult [\$20] Student [\$10]

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Fax Number _____ Email _____

Volunteer Interests/Skills _____

Date: _____

Return to: CJC Membership Chair, 2921 Patricia Drive, Urbandale, Iowa 50322-6863