

MILESTONES

MISSION: To promote the growth, appreciation and performance of Jazz & Blues – great American music art forms – through scholarships, workshops, clinics, weekly jazz jams and community outreach programs.



Excellence!

By Don Bestor Jr., President

A while back I was engaged in a conversation with

director of a local community theatre. The conversation took place because of a comment I made regarding the “robotic” sounding music that was being used. The music was obviously computer generated. As the conversation progressed, I learned that the person creating the music did not have much experience producing music for shows and, unfortunately, step-wrote everything (Step-writing all of the music for tracks is always mechanical in nature because of the way that the data is entered...yes, I said data.) Using this technique requires (very) little or no musical knowledge and just about anyone with a bit of computer data input skill can accomplish this. I then, mistakenly asked “why can’t the music be as good as it can possibly be?” The answer that was given to me was “Don, this is community theatre”. WOW. That’s the answer?

I then asked if anyone else had anything negative to say about the way the music sounded and the answer to that was “NO!”

I then pressed forward with, couldn’t professional, experienced musicians been hired for this, and the answer was “that would be way too expensive.” Then I asked if maybe a couple of music students could be considered for something like this and the answer was, “they don’t know how to do this kind of stuff”! I’m now thinking to myself, I know, at least four students that would have done a better job on the music for this show.

My point is excellence... what has happened to quality? Why don’t more people aspire to being excellent at whatever they choose to do in life? Since when are determination and the pursuit of excellence desirable qualities to possess only if you can afford them? Is this merely part of the idealism we of youth possess but as time passes is shed, almost like a snake’s

skin? Excellence is not only skin deep. The Ft. Pierce Jazz & Blues Society aspires to excellence because of a number of passionate people who believe in teaching and sustaining excellence, and who spend an enormous amount of time pursuing it. Our School Master-Classes, Jazz Jams, Jazz Week, free concerts, and our Scholarship programs all share this commitment and enjoy the unbelievable reward of making a difference in a student’s life by being there to help and to mentor whomever seeks out help.

I salute all of our wonderful volunteers and the musicians for their dedication, their passion and their constant desire to be excellent at what we do as a group! We are The Ft. Pierce Jazz & Blues Society and without you, our members, fans, and friends, we cannot do what we continue to do! Thank you for always being there with the help that we always need to be EXCELLENT at being the best that we can be. Bravo!

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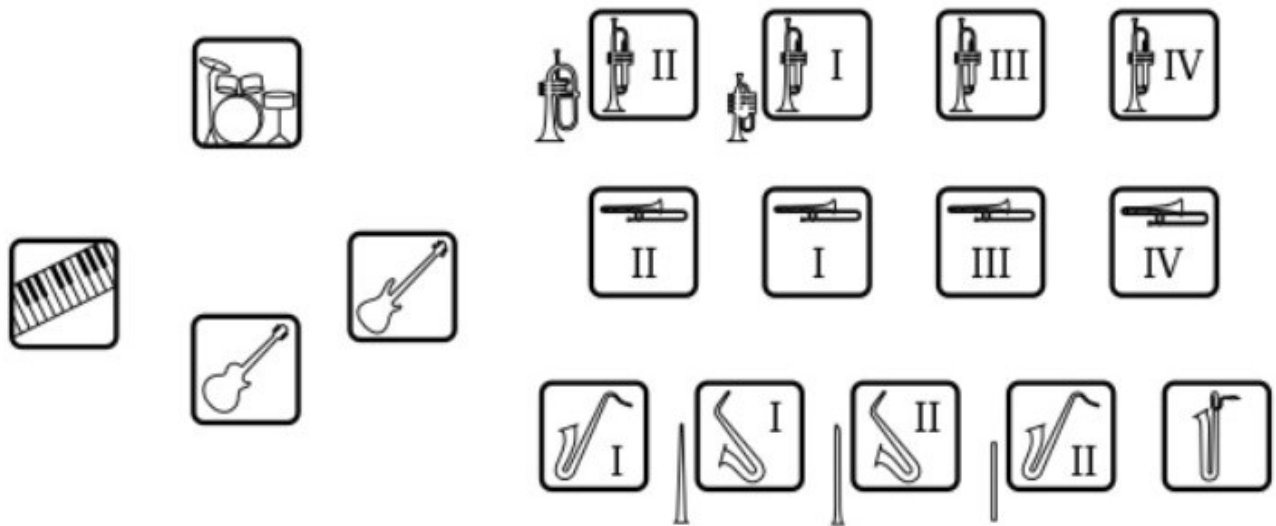
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What's the number? It's seventeen.



Count the musicians, in the horn section, five saxophones, four trombones, four trumpets. In the rhythm section, drums, guitar, bass and piano. Total, seventeen. Pictured above is the West Point Jazz Knights

touring band organized in the classical, four sections, seventeen-piece configuration. Another American tradition which evolved from the mid 1900s and continues to this day.



The sax section typically will have two altos, two tenors and one baritone sax and the roman numeral I indicates a lead performer in each section who might be called upon in the chart to perform a solo routine. The complements of trumpets and saxes can vary depending on the band leader and sometimes a singer replaces the guitarist in the rhythm section, but generally what you see above is the standard grouping of seventeen with musical charts written for the instruments shown.

The evolution of this style of musical playing is fascinating and began around 1916 when Ferde Grofe, an arranger for the Art Hickman band wrote a chart utilizing and intermingling musicians in the manner similar to the one above. Although, at first considered a curiosity and even ridiculed it really took off in the 1930's with onset of ballroom dancing and big ballrooms which were a feature all over the country in communities big and small.

The era saw an appearance of bands and bandleaders still famous today, Glen Miller, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Buddy Rich, Les and Larry Elgart, Doc Severinsen, Maynard Ferguson and many others. However, perhaps the most influential member of this



group is Fletcher Henderson who developed this style of big band and swing music in the early days. Interestingly he graduated with a degree in mathematics and chemistry from Atlanta University and moved to NY to continue his studies at Columbia. An off-

chance gig as a substitute pianist on a riverboat cemented his career as a musician rather than chemist. In 1924 he and his band got an engagement at Roseland Ballroom in New York. He had just hired Louis Armstrong and the band stayed at Roseland for ten years. Scores of talents like Coleman Hawkins, Don Redman and Benny Carter got their start with Henderson. Besides strong instrumentalists the popularity of many bands was enhanced by star vocalists like Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald and others.

By the mid 1930s there were hundreds of big bands and swing bands all working in hundreds of clubs and ballrooms. You might say "swing was in full swing".



The Roseland Ballroom in New York, where Henderson got his start, was duplicated all over the US as Roselands, Bowery's, Savoy's, etc. Yours truly and Mrs. enjoyed many evenings in New England ballrooms dancing to the music of Larry Elgart and other top bands whenever they toured the area. Steady ballroom playing were the prized

gigs for working musicians but not so much when the bands ventured on the roads. One-night stands were particularly grueling with travel, lack of sleep, stages that were too small, PA systems that were inadequate and pianos out of tune. It was a challenging way to earn a living, although top performers and stars were often poached between bands with better pay and conditions. As the swing era gave way to "less danceable music" and styles of dancing, many of the big bands

broke up or had to re-invent themselves as concert jazz bands. You went to see them performing superb scores played by top notch musicians with plenty of opportunity to improvise. Woody Herman's "The Herd" and Maynard Ferguson's "Big Bop Nouveau" band are couple of examples.

We are fortunate to have one of those bands right here among us, staffed and led by members of the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society. It's called FDO, or For Dancers Only. A bit of history. FDO is a creation of Charles Macaluso, a CEO of a Fortune 500 company who had a dream to someday having Big Band of his own. Chuck played trumpet in his high school band. Upon retiring to South Florida in 1990, Chuck was not going to be denied. He joined the local Gus Beckman Big Band and also met saxophonist Al Hager and trumpeter Mark Green. When Beckman moved out of Florida in 1993, Chuck asked Al and Mark to help him put together another Big Band. They agreed and Chuck put in the necessary resources to make this happen. Band charts are not cheap and Chuck obtained several hundreds of them plus the necessary stage equipment. Chuck played in the trumpet section and over the years Mark and Al recruited top notch professional musicians to play the key parts. By 2005 Chuck wanted to retire again and step back from running the band so he offered Al and Mark an opportunity to

buy the band. They pooled their resources, made payments to Chuck and now own the band outright. Chuck continued to enjoy playing in the trumpet section until recently when he bowed out due to increasing problems with his vision. As a parting present, he checked something off his bucket list by financing a professional live studio recording of FDO. This mostly featured the repertoire of Count Basie, one of the Big Band sounds that FDO really excels at.

Al and Mark have added hundreds of arrangements to the FDO library including their own arrangements. A significant number of performers in the band are Society members and the band appears frequently on the Society's schedule of performances and is known as "the official Big Band of the Jazz Society".

One of the missions of the Society is to remember the roots of jazz and celebrate the nostalgic days that many of our fans remember. The band has quite a following and can pack the house particularly in the winter.



FDO performing at Elliot Museum on Hutchinson Island in Stuart. Mark Green is seen in the back row performing

a trumpet solo. Al Hager plays alto saxophone and is in the front section in the middle.



FDO at Moorings, Mia Batalini was the featured guest singer



FDO at Grand Wyndham, Mark Green soloing



FDO Nov 10th performance at the Black Box in Fort Pierce featured Leti Metcalf as guest Vocalist. The band routinely draws on local vocalists (Leti, Mia Batalini, Moe Frank, Peter Jones, Debbie Bestor, Pat Dyer) to spice up the musical set. The band already has a full schedule, check the Society's web calendar for places and times of their upcoming performances at the Black Box and other locations:

Nov 22 (BB), Dec 13 (Waterside Blues), Dec 22 (BB), Jan 26 (BB) Feb 23 (BB), Mar25 (Fort Pierce Street Dance), Mar 30 (BB) and Apr 27 (BB). Join us for the fun!



Leti Metcalf



The Jazz Market is a routine feature in downtown Fort Pierce every Saturday, weather permitting and sometimes “not permitting”. As you can see in the above picture, the Society performers dropped the sides on their tent and “soldiered on” through the occasional sprinkles. Incidentally, the oil canvas in the upper right corner is by Denis Gauthier, a market “regular”.

The Society has been operating the market for many years and it is the financial arm of the Society. Although it operates next door to the green market featuring food

our's is a crafts market. We offer space to local craftsmen and artists to exhibit and sell their wares and we don't compete with the vendors in the other market. You can't just show up with a tent and a trunkfull of “stuff”, plenty of markets around for that. There is an application process with an emphasis on LOCAL CRAFTMEN and fair competition in the market place. The result is loyal vendors who have been with us for years and some more than a decade.

One of them is Laura O'Kelly.



Laura honed her skills 13 years ago as a multi medium artist, she works with watercolors, acrylics resin and glass. She's been a year-round vendor with the Society

for 9 years, a real “veteran”. She calls her art “Coastal Wall Decor”, below are more examples of her work and you can check out her website fineartbylaura.com



We have a new vendor exhibiting at the market who has a truly unique product/art. Kitchen utensils hand made from solid cherry wood. Richard McCollum decided "enough with the rat race, time to do what I truly love". Check out his website americanspoons.com amazing and

beautiful utensils he makes. Example, his salad (and other) tongs don't require a steel spring, it's part of the wood. Longevity, clean with soap and water and treat with mineral oil every 3 months and you can include these in your will for your descendants.



Time to meet our stars



Editor's note: I think it's high time to acknowledge the hard working and incredibly talented individuals that make the Fort Pierce Blues and Jazz Society such a successful enterprise. Claudio is the Vice President of the Society, has been on the faculty for several Advanced Jazz Camps yours truly attended and is a "scheduler" of the musician for the various gigs and sessions for the Society, and a friend whom I cherish.

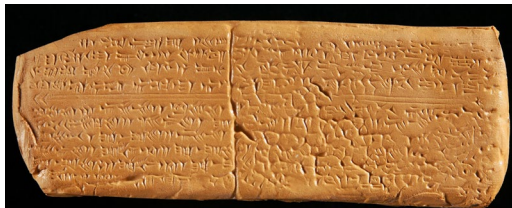


Claudio Berardi

At ten years old, Claudio discovered the excitement of playing the drums ... and he hasn't stopped playing yet. By his early teens, he began playing professionally; and, by his late teens, began touring the USA and Caribbean with various musical organizations, gaining valuable experience backing up or touring with Sandler and Young, Vic Damone, Bob Hope, and many others. As a member of the pop combo "The Hi Lights," Claudio performed on the Mike Douglas National TV Show with Kaye Ballard. In Las Vegas, he played main show rooms at the Sahara and Frontier Hotels. He's played the Playboy Club hotels and many of the Caribbean's best resorts. After moving to Florida, he's had the pleasure of playing with some of the greatest musicians around--Bill Cunliffe, Ken Peplowski, Jeff Rupert, Bobby Lee Rodgers, Don Coffman, among many others. Claudio considers himself a very lucky and happy musician indeed



Did You know?



The clay tablet you see is the oldest known music recorded. It was found in Ugarit, Syria. It was written in cuneiform and was decoded, there is a modern chart which was played on a period instrument such as lyre. It utilizes the diatonic scale and harmony. Its age is estimated at 3400 years old. Prior to this discovery it was believed that the diatonic scale and harmony originated with the Greeks, 2,000 years ago.



Jazz and The Great American Songbook

The “Great American Songbook” is the term used to reference American popular songs, written between the 1920’s through (+/-) the 1960’s. There is no official list of which

tunes collectively are referenced by this term, generally referred to as “Standards”. The bulk of these tunes were either show tunes from Broadway or taken from Hollywood film.

Written by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer, and Richard Rodgers among others, they are the core repertoire of jazz musicians. This is the reason we can offer a Jazz Jam and feel confident with unknown musicians sitting in: We all speak the same language!

The Great American Songbook is so entrenched in our cultural psyche that even Rock musicians have felt compelled to record these tunes (Lady Gaga, Amy Winehouse, Rod Stewart, Linda Ronstadt, Paul McCartney, Sheryl Crow, Elton John, and Billy Joel among others). So have Country stars like the Dixie Chicks, k.d. Lang, Tim McGraw, and Willie Nelson among the many.

The formula for performing these Standards for the jazz musician is simple and painstakingly unbreakable:

- Play the melody, accompanied by the chord changes (1st time through the form).
- Alternate improvising on those chord changes (keeping the form intact) with various band members.
- Reprise the melody as the last time through the form.

The melody becomes the perfect pair of bookends for this method of performance. The chords are typically “voiced” in thirds in the pianist’s left hand. This is a familiar and pleasing sound to the listener, who enjoys hearing “the expected”. If the drummer was afforded a solo, it was usually relegated to “trading fours” with the other musicians rather than playing through the form.

When the Swing Era ended after WWII, jazz evolved out of necessity into small groups and Be-Bop was born. These new breed of jazz musicians covered the Great American Songbook by playing these show tunes and movie themes with the bassist playing a walking bass line (one note per beat). The drummer added a swing pattern on the ride cymbal, played the high-hat on two and four, and played the bass drum in sync with the bassist (on every beat).

Where Be-Bop really made its mark was when they started composing their own tunes, based on the standards, then re-naming them. Instead of playing the melody of the standard tune, they improvised a whole new melody, which was a notated jazz solo. “How High the Moon” became “Ornithology”, “Whispering” became “Groovin’ High”, and “Back Home Again in Indiana” became “Donna Lee”, among others.

These new jazz tunes beget a new way of playing jazz as Be-Bop evolved to “Hard Bop” and “Straight Ahead” jazz. New jazz tunes were being written which were NOT based on the Great American Songbook (“Well You Needn’t”, “All Blues”, “Footprints”, “Mr. PC”, and “So What” among others).

The chord changes moved chromatically rather than a series of ii-V-I’s, which is the Great American standard. The pianist “voiced” the left-hand chords in fourths rather than in thirds. This sound creates an “edge” which is hard to pinpoint. The drummer now is NOT playing the bass drum on the quarter note beat, but rather using it for accents. The drummer is also free to solo using the entire form of the tune rather than merely “trading fours”.

Playing jazz this way is supremely satisfying to me as it allows the greatest amount of freedom and personal expression. I am, however, forever grateful for the foundation the Great American Songbook has provided our jazz idiom. These masterpieces of music are the jazz musician’s Bible, and always a welcome addition to any set list.

Peace...

Fort Pierce JAZZ camp



SUMMER CAMPS
WEEK 1 – JUNE 7 – 11
WEEK 2 – JUNE 14 – 18
ADVANCED CAMP
JUNE 21 – 25

The 2020 Jazz Camps fell victims to the COVID-19 epidemic, we are hoping for a better outcome in 2021. The Society has been in contact with the faculty and the Black Box in an effort to repeat the successes we had in the past years. Mark Green is ready to lead the Summer Camps and we have a venerable quintet of faculty to put on the Advanced Camp.



Larry Brown on the piano will be again the leader of the faculty for the Advanced Camp. Joining Larry will be Claudio Berardi on drums, Dave Mundy on bass, Gene Bruno on tenor sax and James Suggs on trumpet.



Having participated in several of these I can say that these are pretty “intense weeks”, with curious changes in attitude among the students. When the study material and charts for the Friday night “graduation concert” are handed out Monday morning, the general consensus is, “hell no, we can’t play this by Friday night”. By Wednesday there are murmurs, “we might be playing these by Friday”. By Friday morning the attitude is, “hell yes, we can perform those tonight”. You will not be coddled and handed a hot chocolate when you sign up for one of these camps, but you will surprise yourself by what you CAN DO.

What is Haiku?

Traditional and structured, this short form of Japanese poetry is well-known for its rule of 5/7/5: five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five again in the third. Haikus are known for their ability to paint a vivid picture in just a few words. A practice of artistic discipline, their minimal nature forces writers to pare down to only the essentials—making each word, or even syllable, count. Few examples of the masters of this art.

"The Old Pond" by Matsuo Bashō

*An old silent pond
A frog jumps into the pond—
Splash! Silence again.*

"A World of Dew" by Kobayashi Issa

*A world of dew,
And within every dewdrop
A world of struggle.*

"Lighting One Candle" by Yosa Buson

*The light of a candle
Is transferred to another candle—
Spring twilight*

Did you know that we have a "practitioner" of this ancient art in our midst? Mark Green, our venerable trumpet player, FDO conductor, Jazz Camp leader, Society Board of Directors member and many other is a haiku poet. Mark has written a set of these and is in the process of publishing them. I learned about it when his computer was giving him grief accomplishing this task. I also learned that Mark is a graphic artist and created pencil drawings for each of his poems. I persuaded Mark to share with us a "pair" which dovetails with the material written in this Newsletter titled "Big Band"

*Trumpets and saxes,
Trombones and rhythm section.
Hit it, and swing hard!*



You might recognize certain members of the band Mark drew, particularly the trumpet soloist.