



# JAZZ NOTES™

THE JOURNAL OF THE JAZZ JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION™

Vol. 19, No. 3 • Autumn 2008

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## JAZZ NOTES HAS GONE DIGITAL.

This issue of *Jazz Notes* is available in PDF only.

To download previous issues or to discuss this change, visit [www.jazzhouse.org](http://www.jazzhouse.org)

## Growing the organization through new media, renewed energy.

### JJA 2.0

**I**N THE AFTERMATH of a highly successful 12th annual Jazz Awards<sup>SM</sup>, the JJA is taking a close look at itself, hoping to consolidate and strengthen its positions and move ahead. The board, officers and active contributors to the JJA want to expand the organization's leadership cadre and new membership, reconceive the JJA website, repurpose *Jazz Notes* and come up with relevant programs in response to issues regarding arts journalism, pressed by contemporary digital platforms that are determining the shape of journalism as a profession, affecting all of us.

One major shift of responsibilities is the assignment of New York-based member Eugene Marlow as our new JJA treasurer—accompanied by the JJA board and membership's great thanks to Arnold Jay Smith for a dozen years of invaluable service, during which he kept the books during the organization's transition to legal nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, documented expenses and income on projects including the Jazz Awards and instituted the JJA's PayPal account. Arnold will be stepping up to a new raft of duties, to be announced, probably having to do with membership and promotion of the organization itself.

Furthermore: A committee has convened to study jazzhouse.org with the mandate of determining a structure that will best reflect the makeup and needs of our organization. *Jazz Notes* co-editors David Adler and Forrest Bryant, JJA vice president and jazzhouse.org managing editor James Hale, independent media consultant J. A. Kawell, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com) princi-

pal Michael Ricci, [newmusicbox.org](http://newmusicbox.org) editor and publisher Frank J. Oteri, and JJA members Lara Pellegrinelli and Joe Petrucci are among those who have chimed in with comments, mostly aiming at helping the JJA's media and message be at the



Louise Deigato

## President's Report Howard Mandel

forefront of how the arts can be covered now. Webmaster Whit Blauvelt, who built [jazzhouse.org](http://jazzhouse.org) from the ground up and has maintained it devotedly, is in on the plans, too. Your comments are welcome—but you have to be approved by an administrator to view our ongoing Google.doc, <http://tinyurl.com/6ryple>. So if you want to, please email [david@adlermusic.com](mailto:david@adlermusic.com) and you'll be ok'd to post ideas.

So far, desires have been voiced that the website improve member benefits by 1) facilitating members' networking and communications, with easier bulletin board and RSS features; 2) promoting us and our works to the public, including as-

*continued on next page* >>

signment editors and other potential clients, potentially with a members' profile section, and 3) increasing the focus on professional news of work opportunities and business suggestions. We have the opportunity to rework *Jazz Notes* simultaneously, imagining it less as a quarterly journal and more as a regular newsletter, drawing recipients (members-only as it is now, unless we agree to modify that policy) back to further information and postings at the JJA website.

These may seem like overly technical items to take up in my President's Report, but as the most public face of the JJA, our deployment of web resources is crucial to demonstrating that jazz journalism is part of a new era of communications, and that we are masters, rather than victims, of change. We assume the confidence to assert this, after once again producing the only substantive, independent awards event that honors a comprehensive range of jazz-related endeavors.

To have Hank Jones and Joe Lovano, Roseanna Vitro and Mark Soskin, the Miller Quartet, Iqmar Thomas and the Cypher and pianist Art Tatum (in the form of a renewed masterpiece recording) in one place to entertain a standing-room-only audience of eminent jazz musicians, journalists, producers-presenters, festival and record company principals and A-Team Award inductees (including NEA Chairman Dana Gioia, Dr. Valerie Capers and Wendy Oxenhorn of the Jazz Foundation of America) is one measure of success. To host Jazz Awards winners, nominees and presenters including Roy Haynes, Maria Schneider, George Wein, Marty Sheller, Daniel Smith, Candido Camero, Frank Wess, Joe Locke, David Berger, Nate Chinen, WYSP's Linda Yohn, Marty Ehrlich, Anat Cohen, the Litchfield Jazz Festival's Vita Muir, Zeph Reperformance, WBGO, Brother Thelonious Beer, Boosey and Hawkes, Iceberg Vodka and so many more friends in the house was another—a treat the JJA was proud to afford and enjoy. That everyone was well-fed and socially engaged demonstrated the rec-

ipe for a party was right. And that the JJA walked away with a small margin of profit from the benefit was icing on the cake.

In addition to those who attended the Jazz Awards in New York, the JJA touched many honorees who couldn't be there. A-Team Awards inductee Phil Nimmons of Thornhill, Ontario sent the JJA a note of thanks for a "wonderful surprise. I'm profoundly moved...." Dr. Herb Wong, who received his award from JJA member Andy Gilbert onstage at a concert performance at Stanford University, was grateful in several phone discussions, and at the time of this writing Lauren Deutsch and Dick Wang of the Jazz Institute of Chicago were eager to get their statuettes onstage at the Chicago Jazz Festival over Labor Day weekend.

If the Jazz Awards is the most high-profile event the JJA initiates, we would like to compete with ourselves by originating more Jazz Matters panels, mentoring programs, educational discussions or documents, and perhaps an arts-journalism-wide conference on significant topics ranging from the aesthetic to the practical. As I write repeatedly, such programming requires JJA member input. So do our plans to collect on dues that seem to be long in arrears, to enlist new members in the JJA and to determine where we want the organization to go. There is no time like right now to decide you'll be more active in the JJA this year, that you realize working together with other jazz journalists toward common goals could help you prosper in your own career. An idea about what you'd like to see the organization do, and a few hours to help the JJA do it, go a long way toward advancing your own goals—really! Ask any JJA board member or officer, they'll tell you. Or better yet, just take it for granted, and decide it's worth your while. Then get in touch with me, or any of the board members or officers, so we can put the organization we've built into operation for you.

Best,  
PRESIDENT HOWARD

## JAZZ NOTES

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE  
JAZZ JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION



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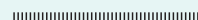
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The Jazz Journalists Association (JJA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, promoting the interests of writers, photographers, broadcasters and new media professionals covering jazz. The JJA supports the creation and dissemination of accurate, balanced, ethical and informative journalism on all of jazz's genres; the growth, development and education of the jazz audience and the dissemination of information pertaining to jazz to the general public, by providing forums for the discussion of jazz-related issues and events, fostering the development of journalistic and presentation skills among new journalists and the continuing development of such skills in journalists already engaged in the field.

# Goodbye Philly, Not Farewell

NEW YORK REMAINS an unparalleled jazz mecca, but there's really something to be said for getting out of town. In April 2007, for reasons pertaining to marriage, I moved to Philadelphia, immersing myself in another jazz and improvised music scene, making new friends and contacts, and seeing life and art through a strikingly different prism. I detailed my first impressions in this space, back in summer of that year. I revisit the subject now, because in September 2008, my wife and I are moving back to New York.

You won't find me kicking and screaming. The Apple and I have been a pair since 1987, and every time I've traveled home in the last 18 months, it's like I never left. I look forward to jumping back in, catching up on the new players, haunting the old rooms and visiting the ones that have sprung up since. But I will miss my beautiful Center City neighborhood. I'll also remain a big believer in the Philadelphia scene, and I'll be better able to look at New York with an outside-in perspective, a sense that yes, many things, important things, are happening elsewhere.

So I'll keep evangelizing for some of the awesome Philadelphia talents I've encountered: the fierce straightahead tenorist Ben Schachter; young outcat bassists Evan Lipson and Jason Fratelli; rising guitarist-composer Matt Davis; veteran altoist and big band leader Bobby Zankel; experimental violinists Katt Hernandez and Carlos Santiago; improvising bass clarinetist and new music maven Gene Coleman; avant/klezmer trombonist Dan Blackberg; electronics tweeker Dave Smolen; young drummers Justin Faulkner and Wayne Smith, and a good many more. Bands like Shot x Shot and Sonic Lib-

eration Front are staking new ground while Philly's straightahead engine continues to rev, thanks to Mickey Roker, Sid Simmons, Bootsie Barnes, Larry McKenna and others on the scene at Ortlieb's Jazzhaus.

More than anything, Philly reinforced my view that openness to all music, jazz and beyond, is not just spiritually



Noah Kalina

## From the Editor

### David R. Adler

sound, but professionally necessary. In addition to the grunt work of weekly previews and overnight reviews (encompassing mostly jazz but also world music, hip-hop, experimental noise and so forth), I was able to publish front-page arts features on Odean Pope, Orrin Evans, Danilo Pérez, Elliott Levin and Return to Forever for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. I wrote two cover stories for *Philadelphia Weekly*, including a synoptic take on Philly jazz past and present. This was some of the most in-depth jazz coverage to appear in these publications in a while, and I intend to maintain my relationships there.

Bottom line: It's a cop-out to assume editors aren't interested in jazz, and it's on us to speak up. If they're not biting in your town, try the next town.



### Moved? New email address? New affiliation?

Please be sure to notify the JJA's membership secretary, Jerry D'Souza, at [jerrydsouza@rogers.com](mailto:jerrydsouza@rogers.com)

# Letter to the Editor

## A Call for an International Jazz Association

TO THE EDITOR:

I appreciate Howard Mandel's mention in his most recent President's Report (*Jazz Notes*, Spring 2008), but I have been misquoted, or at least misinterpreted.

It's not my view that we should create a new organization out of the ashes of the IAJE. It's that a new organization should be created that serves the broader jazz community, as in "jazz industry." In effect, a trade group needs to be created whose central purpose is the creation of audiences for jazz, by whatever means available. This is quite different from the Jazz Education Network (JEN), recently formulated out of a meeting of jazz educators in Chicago. Even though part of JEN's mission is audience creation, it still sounds like a copy of the IAJE with the emphasis on "jazz education." It's also my view that the trade group I'm recommending have a strong international component. It's only vaguely implicit in JEN's mission statement.

I have identified 20 or so stakeholder groups that represent every aspect of

the jazz industry. This list includes, of course, jazz journalists and jazz educators. While very important, the jazz industry is larger than these two groups. I'd like to see a meeting of individuals from each of these 20 areas of the jazz business world at one table, to talk about how to rejuvenate the jazz audience in the U.S. and create new audiences for what is clearly America's most important contribution to world culture. This trade group would represent to the world the entire jazz industry, not just educators.

What has been missing—and the mission the IAJE failed to acknowledge at least overtly—is that jazz is a business, not just a sophisticated art form. The trade group I envision should use every venue of mainstream media to bring to the American public the "value" of jazz in all its aspects. Some of the best marketing minds in the music business are working hard to push various shallow forms of popular entertainment on the American public. Why hasn't the jazz world countered with some form of national marketing and public relations? Because no one has been looking outward.

It is ironic that the IAJE met its demise in April, so-called Jazz Appreciation Month. How many Americans know that April is Jazz Appreciation Month? How many Americans know that jazz spawned all forms of popular music present today? How many Americans, especially young African-Americans, know that the most oppressed in America (blacks) created the most democratic of arts? How many Americans know that jazz has become a world music, appreciated and performed by many all over the globe, including China? The IAJE, for all its good works, always seemed to be preaching to the choir. And now even that has gone by the wayside.

There's a definition of insanity that says you keep doing the same things over and over again, expecting a different result. It's time for the jazz industry to change some behaviors to get the kind of results we all want. Getting there clearly is a large task, one I would hope the JJA would join.

EUGENE MARLOW, PH.D.



LEFT: The late Johnny Blowers lets loose at All Nite Soul, St. Peter's Church, New York. Photograph by Norm Harris.

ABOVE: Brian Blade. Photograph by Emra Islek.

# Doug Ramsey: A Lifetime of Achievement

► By Ken Dryden

**D**OUg RAMSEY IS one of a handful of jazz journalists whose name is recognized internationally from his prolific output of books, reviews, articles and liner notes in a career spanning almost 50 years. He has contributed to *JazzTimes*, *Downbeat*, *The Wall Street Journal* and many other publications. His detailed biography *Take Five: The Public and Private Lives of Paul Desmond* earned the 2006 JJA Jazz Award for Book of the Year. Other honors include two ASCAP Deems Taylor Awards (1997 and 2006) and, in June of this year, the JJA Lifetime Achievement Award for Jazz Journalism.

Ramsey's career in daily journalism has encompassed newspapers, radio and television. His interest in journalism originated in junior high school, in his hometown of Wenatchee, Washington. He credits an eighth-grade history teacher, Charles Hayes, with inspiring his first career. "It was 1948 or '49," Ramsey recalls. "He told us to write an essay about something interesting and tie it to contemporary history. I went down to the Columbia Hotel, where Preston Tucker, the inventor of the innovative Tucker Torpedo, was displaying his new automobile. I talked to Mr. Tucker, wrote about him and his car and turned in the essay. Mr. Hayes said, 'This is quite good, you should think about being a reporter.' After also considering law and architecture, I eventually chose reporting."

Ramsey's musical interest developed simultaneously. "I was taking piano lessons and studying cornet. I began to listen seriously to all kinds of music around the same time. Two people in my hometown became very important to me. One was Jack Brownlow, a great pianist who died last year. The other was someone Brownlow had greatly influenced, Don Lanphere, the tenor saxophonist. Knowing them at an early age steered me to a lot of the right

things. I had been listening to Louis Armstrong and Muggsy Spanier and my parents' records of Guy Lombardo and Frankie Carle. One day I was in Belmont Radio & Music, which was owned by Don's father. Don was home during one of his drying-out periods, working in the store. I was in a booth listening to the Spanier recording of 'Sugar' on Commodore and Don handed me a yellow-label 78 and told me, 'Listen

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**"They say that there are millions to be lost on the Internet. I'm doing my part."**

— Doug Ramsey

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to this.' It was one of Charlie Parker's Dial records, with 'Yardbird Suite' and 'Moose the Mooche.' It really opened my ears. I didn't understand why it was so different from Muggsy Spanier, but I knew it was."

Ramsey studied journalism at the University of Washington. "The junior year of the journalism major was devoted entirely to writing for the campus newspaper. I wrote editorials, covered a lot of news and was assigned to write about jazz, classical and other kinds of music. That's when I started writing about jazz regularly."

After graduation, Ramsey worked for a year on *The Seattle Times* as a police reporter and copy editor. "Having opted out of ROTC after the obligatory two years, I knew I had to do something or I would be drafted. So I joined the Marine Corps and they thought I was qualified for officer training. After wrestling my commission away from the Corps, I was assigned to lead an infantry pla-

toon at Quantico. Then I was adjutant for a helicopter squadron in Japan. Out of the blue, I became the manager of an Armed Forces Radio Station. For years, commandants of the Marine Corps had resisted having its officers assigned to Armed Forces Radio. Finally, the Joint Chiefs exerted enough pressure, so the Corps rummaged through personnel records for a journalism major and found me. It turned out to be a wonderful experience and led to my going into broadcasting after active duty."

Released as a captain on Christmas Eve of 1959, Ramsey spent time in San Francisco, then went to work for KIMA-TV in Yakima, Washington, as anchor and news director. His broadcast career took him around the country, to Cleveland; Portland, Oregon; New Orleans; New York; Washington, DC; San Antonio and San Francisco (where he won an Emmy in 1982). He served variously as reporter, anchor, chief correspondent news director and—based in Los Angeles—educator of professional journalists, before he returned to settle in his home state.

Ramsey is clear about his aims as a jazz journalist: "My primary goal is to help people understand," he says. "Part of the reviewer's responsibility is to know the context of the music. A review must be supported by facts and knowledge; it can't be opinion alone. In the process of trying to help the reader understand and appreciate the music, I learn more. That's the continuing adventure. I apply the same standards to liner notes. I try to be open, honest and factual, finding points of interest in the music that will satisfy peoples' desire to know what they're hearing. In evaluating performance, technical capability is hardly ever a consideration these days; it seems all young artists have technique to burn. I have no interest in how many

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substitute chords can be packed into a C minor scale. I listen for individuality, the use of judgment in the number of notes, use of space between them, the ability to invent interesting melodies and to make sense in the context of improvisation. The question is of artistic taste, judgment and maturity.”

Like many journalists, Ramsey is deluged with over a thousand new CDs annually. “Word of mouth from various musicians, critics, writers and listeners is helpful,” he remarks. “When something completely unknown arrives, I’ll look at the list of tunes and personnel. If I’ve never heard of the leader or the sidemen and all of the tunes are originals by a recent music school graduate, I’m less likely to listen to it than if they include a standard or two. If the liner notes are by somebody I respect or someone who’s clearly knowledgeable, I might play a track or two. When every 18-year-old tenor player is a record company, the stuff comes flooding in like business cards and there’s no way to listen to even one track on each of those CDs.”

Regarding the state of journalism today, Ramsey thinks that standards have slipped. “Journalism has become so diffused, particularly in broadcasting. I don’t think of print journalism separately from the Internet. It still deals in language, words and writing. It’s almost impossible to compare the news business with when I started in 1960. There were only three networks. Now look at the proliferation and the different values. There has been a serious loss of professional standards and ethics, particularly at certain cable networks. Citizens are badly served by the ranting and raving that passes for news. There’s room for opinion, but it should be clearly labeled. The lines separating news, opinion and entertainment are blurred, I hope not beyond repair.”

Another pet peeve is the lack of editing everywhere. “Because of all of the cutbacks in newspapers, magazines and book publishing, editing seems to be the first thing to go. There is practically no editing at publishing houses.

It falls on the author to check facts, usage and punctuation. Even major newspapers have gone downhill very fast in that regard. Some of the stuff that sneaks by in jazz magazines affects me like fingernails on a blackboard.”

Ramsey’s blog, *Rifftides* (online at [artsjournal.com/rifftides](http://artsjournal.com/rifftides)), came about in an amusing way. He was at lunch in New York with his publisher Malcolm Harris, saxophonist Bill Kirchner and *Wall Street Journal* theater critic Terry Teachout. Teachout’s *About Last Night* was one of the early arts blogs.

“I mentioned my frustration over the shrinking number of outlets for people who want to write seriously about mu-

sic,” Ramsey recounts. “There was a glass canopy over the eating area in this West Side restaurant. Terry looked up, his mouth fell open and he said, ‘Oh, my God!’ I wondered if an airplane was about to fall on us. He said, ‘Do a blog! Be the first jazz blogger. I’ll tell you how it’s going to happen.’ He hooked me up with [artsjournal.com](http://artsjournal.com), and that’s how it started. I have another novel underway [his first is titled *Poodie James*], but *Rifftides* is so enjoyable, consumes so much time and makes me so much money [he laughs] that the book is coming very slowly. They say that there are millions to be lost on the Internet. I’m doing my part.”



ABOVE: Al Harewood and Danny Barker at Louis Armstrong memorial concert, July 1971. Photograph by Doug Ramsey.

# A Conversation with Wolfram Knauer

► By W. Royal Stokes

**W**OLFRAM KNAUER HAS served as director of the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt in Germany since its establishment in 1990. He holds a Ph.D. in musicology from Kiel University, Germany, and has published more than 10 books in German on different jazz subjects. He also sits on the editorial board of the University of Michigan Press's jazz book series and the scholarly journal *Jazz Perspectives*, published by Routledge. A JJA member, Wolfram was the first non-American to serve, during spring semester 2008, as the Louis Armstrong Professor of Jazz Studies at the Center for Jazz Studies, Columbia University. In addition to his course "Jazz in Europe—European Jazz," he organized several special events related to that subject.

W. Royal Stokes conducted this interview with Knauer via email in July.



**W. Royal Stokes:** How did your Columbia University appointment come about?

**Wolfram Knauer:** The Jazzinstitut Darmstadt has close ties to a lot of American scholars. We provide some research services, such as our Jazz Index, a free bibliographical service available (by email) that puts us into contact with many researchers. I have been on the international advisory board of Chicago's Center for Black Music Research and have collaborated with many other initiatives and organizations in the U.S. Darmstadt has become a household name in jazz research circles, and George Lewis was at the Jazzinstitut a couple of times doing research for his recently published book on the AACM. Shortly after he took over the directorship of Columbia's Center for Jazz Studies in the summer of 2007, George put on a conference in cooperation with the JJA called "Jazz in the Global Imagination," bringing journalists from all over

the world to Columbia to talk about what jazz meant in their respective regions and discussing what quality in jazz made this music such a productive musical language that it could be creatively adopted by people in so many different countries.

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"I tried to make students aware not only of jazz history, but also of their own positions.... You need to know where you come from and what shaped your aesthetic ideas to be able to approach the music."

— Wolfram Knauer

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I was appointed out of the same considerations, although nobody told me that I should be teaching about jazz in Europe. I'd been on the advisory committee for a Columbia project called Jazz Studies Online (a new website, [jazzstudiesonline.org](http://jazzstudiesonline.org)), and I'd also been to a board meeting in spring 2007, when both George and the founder of the Center for Jazz Studies, Bob O'Meally, asked me whether I'd be willing to teach at Columbia for a semester. I spoke to city officials in Darmstadt (after all, I am a city employee) and they agreed that the offer of being the first non-American Louis Armstrong Professor of Jazz Studies at Columbia University is a big honor for the city of Darmstadt, just as it is still an unbelievable honor for me.

**W. Royal Stokes:** Can you share some of your experiences during that spring semester as a visiting professor?

**Wolfram Knauer:** It definitely was a big challenge. After all, you want to, and have to, live up to the title. I decided that I should present what to my knowledge was the first-ever full course on European jazz at an American university, and call it "Jazz in Europe—European Jazz." It was a historical as well as aesthetic discussion about the productivity of jazz in a non-American cultural environment. My students were mostly undergraduates, not all of them well versed in jazz, but extremely bright. They definitely wanted to learn. We talked about the history of jazz in Europe, about how it arrived in the Old World; about the Nazis and jazz, about post-war developments in different countries; about the so-called "emancipation" of Western European jazz from the American model in the 1960s; about European free jazz and how it differed (or did not) from its American counterpart; about the recent self-confidence in European jazz; about Stuart Nicholson's recent book *Is Jazz Dead?*; and many other related subjects.

We often talked about aesthetics: How do we feel about a specific piece of music and why? I tried to make students aware not only of the history of jazz (in Europe and elsewhere), but also of their own positions on jazz. Because only if you position yourself correctly are you able to really talk about the music. You need to know where you come from and what shaped your aesthetic ideas to be able to approach the music. And that, to me, holds true even in a scholarly context.

**W. Royal Stokes:** What were some of the special events you organized?

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**Wolfram Knauer:** I invited the German vibraphonist and bass clarinetist Gunt-er Hampel for a talk at Columbia. He told us about his own initiation to jazz, about his aesthetic, about current projects, especially with young break dancers, and about his experiences on both sides of the Atlantic working regularly both in Germany and the U.S. since the late 1960s. A second special event was a panel called “Where You Come From Is Where You Go,” for which I invited German vibraphonist Christopher Dell, German singer Michael Schiefel and their American colleagues, saxophonist Matana Roberts and pianist Vijay Iyer, to talk about their cultural background and how it has shaped their musical experiences.

The next day, Christopher Dell performed with his trio D.R.A., with bassist Christian Ramond and drummer Felix Astor, at the intimate concert space at the Goethe Institute on Fifth Avenue. The two-day event was also the first cooperation between Columbia University and the Goethe Institute, Germany’s cultural “embassy” all over the world.

Our third event was the first-ever Louis Armstrong Lecture, which I gave myself and which I titled “Europe’s Blues and Soul: A Different Look at Jazz Aesthetics.” I looked at the so-called “emancipation” process in European jazz and specifically at the examples of the two trumpeters, Enrico Rava and Tomasz Stanko. I also discussed Stuart Nicholson’s above-mentioned book and argued that the new self-confidence of European musicians is a good thing, and actually a tribute to the African-American history of jazz as a productive and creative music, yet musicians should always be aware of their double consciousness, which asks them to pay respect to the blues and soul of Afri-

can-American jazz, while at the same time finding their own blues and soul. All of these events were very well attended and ended in lively discussions, showing me that interest in the subject is definitely big.

**W. Royal Stokes:** Tell me something about your earlier visits to the U.S., your extra-university experiences in New York and elsewhere during your visiting professorship.

**Wolfram Knauer:** I’ve been to New York often. The first time was an eight-month stay in 1979. In the early 1980s I visited regularly in the winter and attended a lot of memorable concerts all over the city. I’ve been back often, although there was a long pause between 1993 and 2007 when I felt that New York’s previously lively alternative cultures were not happening anymore, due to increased costs of living, rent and so forth. I’ve been elsewhere—New Orleans, for instance, and Chicago, and I traveled all through the American South. I’ve been to Charleston, South Carolina, several times, where I am involved in the ongoing local and regional research undertaken by my colleagues of the Charleston Jazz Initiative, a highly commendable project researching the rich musical history of the city, which brought to the world musicians such as Jabbo Smith, Cat Anderson, Freddie Green and so many others.

I met many colleagues while at Columbia: old colleagues I knew from before as well as many new friends. My good friend Lewis Porter was among them; my esteemed colleague Dan Morgenstern too, of course, and Krin Gabbard, as well as colleagues from Columbia. I met Maxine Gordon, Dexter’s widow, who is also a music researcher and came by to our class one day to tell my students about her husband’s European

experiences. I met several times with the wonderful Phoebe Jacobs, vice president of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation. I had lunch with Rachel Goodman, Benny’s daughter, and attended a set of Louis Armstrong’s music at Birdland with the legendary George Avakian.

Michael Cogswell, the director of the Louis Armstrong House and Archive, took the time to show me around both of these great places. I had lunch with Laura Johnson of Jazz at Lincoln Center. On a visit to Washington, DC, I met (JJA member) Larry Appelbaum at the Library of Congress, who showed me some of their treasures, and I kind of met, posthumously, Duke Ellington at the Smithsonian when I browsed through some of his scores.

Of course, I also met many musicians, mostly hearing them in concert, but also talking to them during intermission. I became a regular at the Lenox Lounge on Monday nights, when the Patience Higgins Quartet played quite conventional yet excellent modern jazz and you never knew who might sit in. For example, I heard Kiane Zawadi, Bernard “Pretty” Purdie, Michael Schiefel and many others there. I went to hear Lou Donaldson at the Village Vanguard, Junior Mance at Le Loup and Wynton Marsalis at Lincoln Center. I was at The Stone a couple of times, as well as Roulette and Barbès in Brooklyn to check out the more contemporary, cutting-edge scene. I heard William Parker and his large ensemble at the Living Theatre the night before I returned to Germany. It was quite a mix of old and new, the way I like it, the way I always liked jazz: a music spanning from ragtime to free improvisation and beyond, and making us all open our ears to all of the new things to come.

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**“NOT TO DENY THAT IT IS A THINKING PEOPLE’S MUSIC, BUT WHEN I LISTEN TO MUSIC IF I EVER CATCH MYSELF THINKING... I KNOW SOMETHING IS WRONG.”**

**—BRIAN BLADE**



# Hear Me Roar

► By Claire Daly

**W**HAT'S IT LIKE to be a white male accountant? Or a short male filmmaker? How about a balding sculptor or a female jazz musician?

I've only been asked one of these questions, but I suspect I'll be hearing some version of it for the rest of my life. Other people identify us by our gender. It's not a personal diss. Usually.

My being a saxophonist has nothing to do with my being a woman, but I cannot deny that other people see it as an odd visual. In my younger years, I may have answered the question about being a female saxophonist with a variant of the comebacks above. Now, my response might be much shorter, with an attempt to be polite. I've come to realize that any person in a nontraditional role will hear versions of this.

I think being a woman in jazz is a lot like being a man in jazz: It is challenging. The real issue now is that there are more qualified players than venues in which to work. In fact, the entire paradigm of what I thought I would "grow up" to be is gone. The jazz souls in music now seem to be going in different directions—look at a lineup of most jazz festivals. Schedules often run from world music to hip-hop to R&B, with a few slots for big jazz names. And the listening audience is diminishing by the minute. Life is a sound bite. Attention span, anyone?

The real challenge of the jazz life is to keep growing, improving, learning and creating. Before even getting to the "women in jazz" stigma, I'd say that

just being in jazz as a lifestyle takes a degree of courage that could be confused with insanity. Still, I wouldn't have it any other way. As for the four scariest isms—sexism, racism, ageism, fascism—they seem to be woven into the fiber of our culture as a counterpoint to our stated goals of democracy, economic opportunity, freedom and equality.

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***I never think about the fact that I'm a woman playing the horn.***

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I suppose everyone has a cross to bear. I have experienced my share of "no chicks in the band" syndrome, and I have come to see it as an honest (though lame) position. When confronted with this, I recognize it's coming from someone with more issues than I care to deal with. I will go where the waters are warmer. The tricky part is that real sexism doesn't have to state its case to make its point. There are many layers trying to conceal when it's happening. More dangerous is the "invisible woman" phenomenon. What you don't see is what you don't get.

Dr. Billy Taylor, founder of the Mary Lou Williams Festival in Washington, DC, points out that by ignoring women players, a huge resource of influence is missing in the music. I am generally op-

timistic and choose to believe the lines will blur more over time, and younger generations will see that the body has a gender, but the soul is much more than male or female.

My personal history has involved downplaying gender and being about the music and the community. Once, after a gig with the all-woman big band Diva, an older man came up to me with tears in his eyes and said, "I don't care if you're all women, or all green, or whatever. I love this music so much. Thank you for playing it." He was visibly moved and meant it from his heart. To me, it sounded like, "I don't care what anybody says ... I like you." As the bari player in Diva for its first seven years, I'd heard every imaginable attempt at a compliment. Many people used the "you play good for girls" routine. I've come to the conclusion that this is a topic for other people to talk about because I *never* think about the fact that I'm a woman playing the horn. Some terrific women players I know refuse to play in "Women in Jazz" events. For me, as long as the focus of the group is the music, I'm delighted to play with whoever wants to play!

The bottom line is that we create our own realities. If I focus on the unfair aspects of the business, that's what will get nourished. I've gotten over a few real offenses in the sexism arena. But I'd say that presently there is a healthy crop of new players coming up through the ranks and I can only hope that equality rules in the end. Keep playing the changes.

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**"I SAY, PLAY YOUR OWN WAY. DON'T PLAY WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS. YOU PLAY WHAT YOU WANT AND LET THE PUBLIC PICK UP ON WHAT YOU'RE DOING — EVEN IF IT DOES TAKE THEM 15, 20 YEARS."**

**—THELONIOUS MONK**

# Jazzing Caesarea

► By Dan Morgenstern

ONE DOESN'T NECESSARILY think jazz festival and Israel in the same breath, but in June I experienced just such an event — not a huge nonstop affair like North Sea or Montreal, but a serene three-day outdoor festival in a unique setting: Roman ruins as backdrop to bandstand, the soft murmur of the nearby Mediterranean Sea, a cloudless moonlit sky and perfect temperature for the 2,000 attentive listeners who turned out each night. Ken Peplowski, leader of the first night's ensemble, said the audience reminded him of Japan: non-demonstrative but palpably appreciative. There were more young folk than at similar events back home, and when I mentioned this to one of the ladies involved with the Caesarea Jazz Festival, she told me that many, like her, originally came from Russia. (Willis Conover would have been pleased.)

Caesarea is a charming seaside resort with a fascinating history: founded by King Herod, it was a natural harbor and busy trade center, sacked and ruled by a succession of invaders through the centuries, including Romans, Crusaders and Turks. There is a stretch of beach, a scenic promenade along the waterfront, a museum/art gallery and some first-class restaurants. (The food was also fine at the Dan Hotel, a bit inland, where the performers were quartered. Needless to say, the name helped to make me feel at home; in Israel, nobody thinks Dan is short for Daniel.)

This was the second of four Caesarea festivals in which the Statesmen of Jazz, shepherded by Mat and Rachel Domber of Arbors Records fame, have played a leading role. The 2007 two-day event starred such favorites as Warren Vaché, Evan Christopher, Red Holloway, John Bunch, Bucky Pizzarelli, Aaron Weinstein, Jay Leonhart and Mickey Roker, while this year's triple-header was a repeat for Warren, clearly pleased to

be back; I've rarely seen him in such a mellow mood.

Ken Peplowski's group included frequent partner Howard Alden, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, bassist (and vocalist) Nicki Parrott and drummer Joe Ascione. The leader featured himself a cappella on Ellington's "Single Petal of a Rose," and you could have heard one of those petals drop. Howard shone on "Spring Is Here," and Cyrus offered a swinging "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea," with a hint of Garner in there. Cyrus is also an enthusiastic lensman who never seemed to part with his camera, except when at the keyboard, of course.

The next night offered trumpeter Duke Heitger's nine-piece band, a lineup reminiscent of The World's Greatest Jazzband, with Warren's cornet, John Allred's trombone and a reed section of Kenny Peps and Anat Cohen, both doubling clarinet and tenor. Howard was back, this time also on banjo, as were Nicki and Joe, with John Sheridan at the piano bench. Although not a New Orleans native, Duke has a Crescent City soul and spends much time there. He also loves Louis Armstrong. The opener was a surprise: "Do You Ever Think of Me" from the New Orleans trad repertory, which got things off to a swinging start. By the time they tackled "Wolverine Blues," they sounded surprisingly like a working band, and a definite high point was Anat and Howard's duet on Jelly Roll Morton's "Shreveport Stomp." Duke also likes to sing, and for his feature he dug up a Satchmo special from 1937, "Yours and Mine." He and Warren also shone in exchanges on Louis's "If We Never Meet Again."

Anat was the only Israeli musician in the festival's main lineup, and she certainly held her own. She also appeared at one of three pre-concert performances on the harbor promenade,

co-leading the Three Cohens: Anat and her brothers, trumpeter Avishai and soprano saxophonist Yuval. Anat and Avishai spend most of their time in the U.S. and Yuval is a not infrequent visitor as well; they've performed together in New York and have a fine CD, *Braid*, on the Anzic label.

Here, with two very young locals on guitar and drums, they offered a program centered on the jazz tradition, with the focus on Armstrong. Yuval's soprano hinted of Louis and Johnny Hodges on "Sunny Side of the Street," and the three horns warmed up the riffs on "Used to Be Duke," a blues, on which Avishai got into a Sweets Edison groove. The tempo was way up, but held, on "Them There Eyes." There was a true rarity from the Louis canon, "Yes, Yes, My, My," hinting at a Louis Jordan flavor. They also revived "If We Never Meet Again," the only time in this listener's experience that this song was heard twice on the same day. And they finished up in style with "Swing That Music."

All told, this was one of the most pleasant festivals I've attended in my more than 50 years of doing so. For 2009, the producers plan a tribute to Benny Goodman. You can keep track at [caesarea.org](http://caesarea.org).

On the way back to Caesarea from a side trip to Jerusalem, we stopped off for a cold beer at a roadhouse, selected by our guide (named Dan, by the way) as a special surprise: Would you believe The Elvis Inn of Jerusalem, complete with statue outside and several life-size replicas of the man inside, among the many souvenirs? Of course we knew that the great old city has been home to many religions, but this was one we didn't expect.

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# News of Members

**DAVID R. ADLER** attended the Fès Festival of World Sacred Music in Morocco and wrote about the experience for the *Forward*. He wrote a cover story for *Philadelphia Weekly* on guitarist Matt Davis and his large ensemble Aerial Photograph, and reviewed Kabir Sehgal's *Jazzocracy: Jazz, Democracy, and the Creation of a New American Mythology* (Better World Books) for the British online journal *Democratia*. He also wrote liner notes for *Love Stories* by Russell Gunn (HighNote), *The Turning Gate* by the New Jazz Composers Octet (Motéma) and *The Throw Down* by the Brenan Brothers (Death Defying Records).

**LARRY APPELBAUM** completed "Before & After" pieces on Larry Coryell, Drew Gress, Taylor Eigsti and Jeremy Pelt for *JazzTimes*, reviewed Nordic Jazz '08 and the Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Festival, curated a jazz film series at the Library of Congress and conducted pre-concert public interviews with Guillermo Klein, Miguel Zenón and Vijay Iyer.

**LAYLAH AMATULLAH BARRAYN'S** latest photography exhibit, "Kindred Cool," opened at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) in Brooklyn on August 3. The project uses the relationship between Ralph Ellison, Romare Bearden and Albert Murray as an inspiration for documenting other friendships forged and fostered through a shared appreciation for jazz. A partial list of those photographed are Ellis Marsalis, Ladybug Mecca, Randy Weston, Mos Def, DJ Spooky, Vijay Iyer, Rhonda Ross, Brian Jackson and Farah Jasmine Griffin, among many others of "jazz society." For more visit [kindredcool.org](http://kindredcool.org).

**FORREST DYLAN BRYANT** will be blogging live reports from the Monterey Jazz Festival for the fourth straight year, this time for the launch of a new website, [jazzobserver.com](http://jazzobserver.com). In the following months, *Jazz Observer* will

grow to include exclusive features, reviews and interviews centered on the jazz scene in California and beyond. Forrest also invites all JJA members with Facebook accounts to join the new JJA group at [facebook.com](http://facebook.com) as a place to connect with colleagues and exchange updates on your current work.

**LAURENCE DONOHUE-GREENE**, Managing Editor of *All About Jazz—New York* (AAJ-NY), humbly received the Photo of the Year award at the recent Jazz Awards for his photo "Time Stood Still for Andrew Hill," presenting a poster-size version to Hill's widow, Joanne Robinson Hill. Laurence has written liner notes to forthcoming CD releases by the Jazz Paracites on Jazzwerkstatt (out in the fall, featuring pianist Kalle Kalima, bassist Ed Schuller and drummer Ernst Bier), and the sophomore recording by vocalist Deborah Latz for June Moon Productions, titled *Lifeline*. AAJ-NY's September issue features legendary guitarist Kenny Burrell on the cover (see [newyork.allaboutjazz.com](http://newyork.allaboutjazz.com)).

**KEN FRANCKLING** authored liner notes for two Owl Studios recording projects this year, trumpeter Derrick Gardner's *Ride to the Other Side* and pianist Steve Allee's trio session *Dragonfly*. Ken's "Music in the Key of Light" exhibit of recent and classic jazz photography was featured in May and June at Picture This, a new gallery and framing center in downtown Providence, Rhode Island.

**JAMES HALE** conducted a rare interview with ECM head Manfred Eicher for the August issue of *Downbeat*. He is also writing liner notes for Roberto Magris's third release on Soul Note.

**RUSTY HASSAN** wrote liner notes for Whit Williams's CD *Now's The Time Big Band*, featuring Slide Hampton and Jimmy Heath. The recording, released on the MAMA label, should garner some recognition for Whit, a longtime Baltimore area saxophonist and educa-

tor. Rusty also conducted history sessions for the Blues Alley jazz camp in Washington, DC, and interviewed Kenny Werner on his WPFW-FM radio show.

**JOHN EDWARD HASSE** lectured on Duke Ellington at the Academy of Music in Bratislava, Slovakia, and at the U.S. Embassy there. His article "Louis Armstrong's Revolution" appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* of June 14, 2008. In February, John participated in a State Department-sponsored tour by the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, which performed at the Cairo Opera House, Alexandria Opera House and the Pyramids. He also gave lectures on Louis Armstrong in Cairo and Alexandria.

**PATRICK HINELY'S** recent band shoots include Norma Winstone and Blue-Ground UnderGrass, as well as portraits of Bill Frisell. His latest album cover shoot was for Robin and Linda Williams. His very first LP front cover photograph, of the *Plank Road String Band* (1976), now adorns the CD reissue of that album (on the Field Recorders' Collective label).

**THOMAS JACOBSEN'S** feature on the Lionel Hampton centennial celebration in New Orleans appeared in the June (online) issue of *The Mississippi Rag*.

**STEVE RATHE'S** Murray Street Productions is beginning production of the 16th season of Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio. Rathe is senior producer of the weekly hour, heard on more than 200 stations. The season will feature (among others) Frank Wess, Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Pat Martino, Joey DeFrancesco, Barry Harris, Regina Carter, Paquito D'Rivera, Pablo Aslan, Monty Alexander, Chano Dominguez, Richard Galliano and Monk's music performed

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» | MEMBERS: from previous page

solo by Steve Turre, Min Xiao-Fen, Doug Wamble and Gary Bartz.

**DAWN SINGH**, owner of Dawn Singh Publicity and Senior Project Coordinator of the Tanglewood Jazz Festival, has established a new speakers bureau agency specializing in jazz writers and performers. The company, Jazz Speakers, has a roster of some of the most highly regarded jazz/music critics in the country, including Howard Mandel and Gary Giddins. Jazz Speakers will target colleges, universities and other educational institutions and will officially launch on September 15, 2008.

**JOHN R. TUMPAK** is working with Marquette University Press on the publication of his book *When Swing Was The Thing: Personality Profiles Of The Big Band Era*. The book, out later this year, contains in-depth profiles on the band-leaders, musicians, vocalists, arrangers and other contributors of the era. Many of the 54 chapters are based on interviews and personal association.

## New Members



**TOMMY MOTTOLA** is the editor of *Jersey Jazz* and lives in Montclair, New Jersey.

**TIM DICKESON** is a jazz photographer who contributes mainly to *Jazzwise* and lives in Cardiff, UK.

**ANDY ROBSON**, journalist, lives in London.

**JERALD MILLER** is with NuJazz Entertainment and lives in New York.

**CHRISTIAN BROECKING**, author and music critic, lives in Berlin.

**MAXI SICKERT**, author and music critic, lives in Berlin.

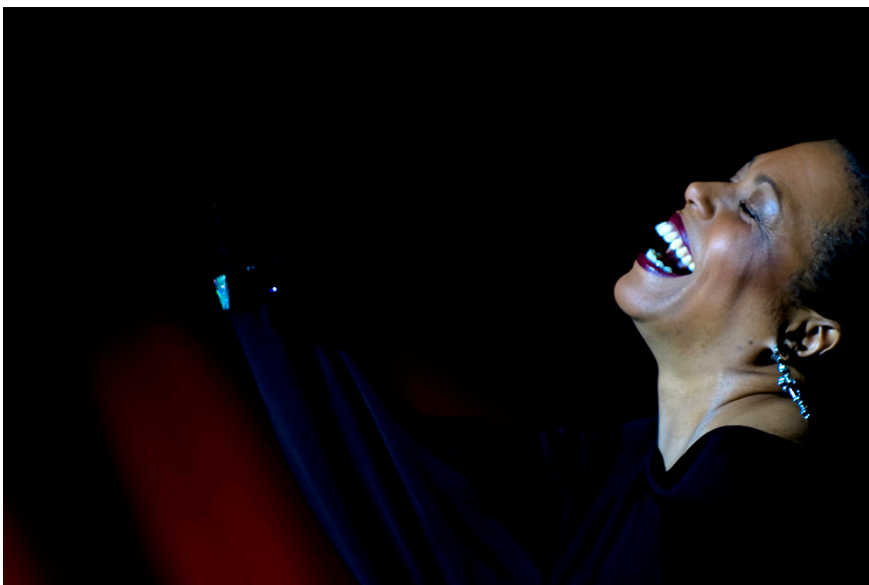
**JANICE GREENBERG**, author, lives in Aberdeen, New Jersey.



# HIGH NOTES

**ABOVE:** Ryan Brouwer of the TD Canada Trust Jazz Youth Summit warms up before the Youth Summit's performance at the Ottawa International Jazz Festival, July 1, 2008. Photograph by Brett Delmage.

**BELOW:** Dee Dee Bridgewater basks in the moment. Photograph by Emra Islek.



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# Book Reviews

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## The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver To Congo Square

By Ned Sublette

Lawrence Hill Books, Chicago, 2008;  
368 pages; \$24.95 hardcover

►► Review by Kalamu ya Salaam

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**N**EARLY EVERYBODY HAS a theory about New Orleans. Why they love it or don't. Why it's so different from other American cities. Why the food (and music, and architecture) is so good. Why rebuilding New Orleans does (or doesn't) make sense. Why people should move there (or stay, or leave).

Along comes Ned Sublette with a new book, *The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver To Congo Square*. Could this be the Rosetta Stone for understanding New Orleans, apropos of the African proverb: Know the beginning well and the end will not trouble you?

Sublette is a learned man, especially strong in Romance languages and colonial history. As they used to say on the Mississippi, he knows how to “mark twain”—how to read the currents and recognize the undertows. If Sublette were a scientist, he would be into DNA research.

Understanding the origins of the mysterious city once known as The Big Easy is anything but. Sublette seems to have been struck by the El Dorado craze, gone looking for something that may not even exist. Who can truthfully say they understand New Orleans?

Sublette offers a rich read. He is a meticulous researcher, expansive in both his outlook and his uprooting of how New Orleans came to be whatever it is—make that, whatever it “was.” He’s particularly good at unearthing the origins of street names and local customs. As a native I found myself smiling to learn who “Pauger” was—my junior high school was located on Pauger Street. I chuckled on learning why Frenchmen Street, where my brother owns a coffee shop, is named “men” and not “man.”

The book is suffused with satisfying nuggets of enlightenment, often perfectly placed to encourage one to keep reading well after any sensible person would turn in and finish later. Also, Sublette never attempts to fade into the objective woodwork. At every turn he makes clear who he is and what he is doing, including how his family name fits into the picture. If only more history books were written with Sublette’s sensitivity and understanding.

Sublette ends his book enthralled with one of the deeper New Orleans mysteries: the Mardi Gras Indians. Who are these black (mostly) men who dress in elaborate, hand-sewn, multicolored, feathered suits built on Native American motifs? Where did they come from? What is their significance?

Sublette declines to answer definitively. But something in the sight and sound of their processions through narrow New Orleans streets resonates in Sublette, who believes that the Mardi Gras Indians hold a key to understanding the city. Why did he exit on such an ephemeral note, after taking admirable academic pains to research and document for close to 300 pages? It’s almost as if he’s saying: I’ve got it all figured out except I don’t. And then it hit me. Hard. I remembered a brief passage from early in the book.

Indeed, I did more than remember it in passing. I was on a panel at the 2008 Vision Festival in New York. When I spoke I mentioned the citation and wondered about its provenance. It happens that Sublette was in the audience, and we spoke for a bit after the panel.

He noted that he got the information from Iberville’s journal and that Iberville had not specified on what authority the information was rendered to him. And here is the crux of the matter. On page 39 Sublette writes:

*When these first French-speaking colonists arrived, there were already free blacks in the area. Iberville learned from a native informant of the existence of a community of black Spanish-speaking cimarrones (maroons), some ten days’ travel to the west-northwest: “At this settlement there were only Negroes with their families. [The Indian informant] reports them to be rather numerous and leads us to believe that the Negroes at his settlement did not welcome any white Spaniard; and when white ones came, the blacks drove them off without speaking to them.”*

Do you see it? As I perused the 13-page-plus bibliography, the evidence was incontrovertible: There were very few African-heritage sources cited. We blacks were not there. Selective of the authority figures he cites, I don’t believe he realized the de facto racial exclusion. Why George Washington Cable but no Alice Nelson Dunbar? Both were fiction writers; although Cable never saw any of Congo Square he is constantly cited as an authority. Why? Where is Marcus Christian, who wrote a book on “Negro Iron Workers” of Louisiana? Where are the Desdunes brothers, who wrote histories of New Orleans’s free people of color? I could go on, but the point is simple: Why are we excluded as references?

At the end of the book, as if instinctively realizing the dearth of primary (or even secondary) sources from New Orleans’s storied black community, Sublette finds himself focusing specifically on what is absent from most of his account. And that is the rub of New Orleans today: The blacks are not there. Although we lack a definitive census, by the prevail-

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» | **SUBLETTE:** *from previous page*

ing estimates, close to half of the native-born New Orleans blacks present before Katrina have not yet returned. The probability is most of us never will.

The emptying of the city following the hurricane was a third great migration. The first was the middle passage. The second was the Jim Crow and “mighty flood” of 1927/Great Depression-engendered exodus to the promised land of the North (and by World War II, to California). The third was the post-Katrina one-way ticket to anywhere, everywhere (would you believe Salt Lake City, Utah; Lincoln, Nebraska; New Hampshire and Oregon, and so forth and so on?).

What the waters didn’t physically destroy, the gunpoint-enforced out-migration scattered. The majority of the history is gone. Family heirlooms (photographs, paraphernalia, letters, diaries, etc.) were washed away. Also gone are educational, medical, municipal, police and other institutional records. The loss is immense, but more than things, what was lost is people.

The African presence was the essential ingredient in the making of New Orleans—and this history still has not been sufficiently studied. Very little is left to tell the tale of the missing, albeit essential, piece of the puzzle. But I give credit to Sublette: He closed his book focusing on the Mardi Gras Indians, thereby raising seminal and thought-provoking questions. Sublette recognized what was missing. Given the current conditions, we may never know the full recipe that created the cultural gumbo of New Orleans, but at least some of us are wise enough to know the picture is incomplete.



*Kalamu ya Salaam (“Pen of Peace”)* is a New Orleans-born writer, educator and moviemaker. He and his son, Mtume, moderate *Breath of Life: A Conversation About Black Music* ([kalamu.com/bol](http://kalamu.com/bol)). Salaam also moderates *e-drum*, a list-serve of over 900 black writers and diverse supporters. He is co-director of *Students at the Center*, a writing program in the New Orleans public schools. For an extensive collection of Salaam’s writings, plus a feature-length interview, visit [nathanielturner.com/kystable.htm](http://nathanielturner.com/kystable.htm).



ABOVE: Charlie Haden. Photo by Emra Islek.

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## Shoot Me While I’m Happy: Memories from the Tap Goddess of the Lower East Side

By Jane Goldberg

Woodshed Productions, New York, 2008;  
305 pp.; \$25.00 paperback

» Review by Bridget Arnwine

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**A**UTHOR/DANCER JANE GOLDBERG has documented her love for tap in her first book, *Shoot Me While I’m Happy*. Part personal account, part interview and part history lesson, the book shines a spotlight on tap from the inside out, in an effort to expose Goldberg’s beloved art form to a not-so-clued-in jazz world. With her tap career spanning more than three

decades, it’s hard to think of a better, more experienced person to write such a book.

For a young Jane, influenced by the movement of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, a modest interest quickly turned into a full-blown obsession. She abruptly ended her college education at Brown University to explore the unknown world of tap. After relocating to New York following a short stint in Massachusetts, she went on to spend the next 30-plus years learning from and growing with some of the greatest artists in the history of the idiom.

Goldberg came to experience and witness tap in varying settings, from musty basements, under-hyped festival performances, sellout Broadway shows and even in movies. When women weren’t being regularly featured as dancers, Goldberg and several of her female counterparts joined together and formed Sole Sisters, an all-female tap troupe that hosted its own shows all around the country. One of the few women to work consistently with male dancers, Goldberg had accomplished more than some of the men and women she was fortunate enough to study under.

Goldberg features the stories of both the popular and lesser-known tappers (also known in the tap world as hoofers) in the pages of *Shoot Me While I’m Happy*. Among those included are Honi Coles and his wife Marion, Charles Cook, Sandman Sims, Mable Lee, Buster Brown, John Bubbles, Frances Nealy, Jimmy Slyde, Savion Glover and Goldberg’s beloved friend and tap icon Gregory Hines.

One of the major challenges found in tap, a theme that resurfaces throughout the book, is the challenge of staying relevant. For Goldberg’s fellow tappers, this often meant taking any job (which some of the greatest tappers did when they’d

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aged and found that they still wanted to dance). For stars like the Nicholas Brothers, Hines, Sammy Davis, Jr., and the new face of tap, Savion Glover, all of whom were fortunate enough to experience success, staying relevant meant creating their own opportunities, mostly on Broadway and in movies.

While this is a worthwhile account of a little-explored topic, the book does have its share of flaws. There are places where Goldberg contradicts herself, loses time and randomly mentions information that, if followed up, could have added to the story. Add that reorganizing the chapter order could have made for easier reading, and throw in the occasional error of referring to herself as “Jane” in some photo captions and then as “me” in others, and there are far more errors than one would expect.

In one example, Goldberg shares a story of a time in 1977 when she witnessed Philly Joe Jones’s participation in a tap challenge. She states, “Philly Joe’s challenge was over in a flash, just like the Tyson/Spinks fight at Madison Square Garden the night before.” If she’d witnessed Mike Tyson fighting in 1977, then she may have another book to write.

Another example centers around a conversation Goldberg had with Gregory Hines. While discussing the significance of the cutting contest for tap dancers, the two began to dance and talk and soon the talk turned to arguing. While Hines firmly believed the cutting contest was vital to the tradition of tap, Goldberg took the position that tap was a “sensibility” and that “cutting” was only something the male dancers did. What’s interesting about that exchange is her description of her dancing on that day: She talks of pulling out all her best steps in dancing alongside Hines, and even “challenging” that she knew more history than he did.

In addition to her tap goddess label, Goldberg also refers to herself as a feminist tapper. In the above example, the talk turned to arguing largely because of Goldberg’s indignation over Hines’s seeming disregard for the contribution of women in tap. Although Goldberg danced with some of the best female dancers of her generation, none of the women featured in the book receive the same kind of attention given to the men. There are at least three occasions where Goldberg writes extensively about the life and death of male dancers. But her former Sole Sister Frances Nealy’s death is only referenced in passing toward the end, where she’s referred to as the late Frances Nealy. If ever there was a time to tell women’s stories, why not in the pages of this book, in her own words?

The shortcomings of *Shoot Me While I’m Happy* can’t diminish Goldberg’s contributions to the world of tap, of course. What she has accomplished in words and steps remains unparalleled.



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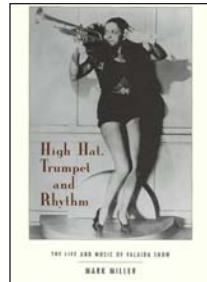
## High Hat, Trumpet and Rhythm: The Life and Music of Valaida Snow

By Mark Miller

*The Mercury Press, Toronto, 2007;*  
187 pp.; \$17.95 paperback

» Review by Michele Drayton

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**N**EAR THE END of Mark Miller’s biography of Valaida Snow, one of her collaborators offers this comment about the prodigious entertainer: “Female, black, trumpet player — you’ve got to have a hell of an inner drive to make *that* work.” In his admirable biography of the trumpeter, singer and dancer, veteran jazz journalist Miller captures Snow’s inner drive, in all its glory and shrewd calculation.

Born June 2, 1904 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where iron works and steel mills attracted rural blacks in the post-Reconstruction era, Snow hit the stage as a childhood star in a group arranged by her father. He billed her as Valada (she added an “i” later) the Great, and before long, journalists wrote of her standout skills in playing violin, singing and dancing. She married for the first time at age 15 and soon hitched herself to black vaudeville acts reaching the major cities. She lived up to her childhood name, appropriated a few such as “Little Louis,” according to Miller, and honed a multitalented reputation. By her early 20s, she had joined the cast of a show touring Shanghai, Bangkok and other cities in the Far East, as well as crisscrossing Europe.

Snow’s associates included well-known names, such as Earl Hines and Willie “The Lion” Smith, and those who ought to be better known, such as the Seven Musical Spillers, a band made up of men and women and led by Isabele Taliaferro Spiller. According to Rex Stewart, Spiller was both a “despot” and a “most gracious lady” and “undoubtedly the greatest music teacher” he had ever known.

Traveling in such circles and imbued with self-confidence not limited to matters of music, Snow dreamed big. She told an interviewer she wanted to become a musical director, and did in fact handle stage production at the Chicago club where she and Hines worked. She also assisted in hiring for Jack Carter’s Serenaders band during an extended engagement in Asia.

There were love affairs and multiple marriages, including one to her soul mate apparent, reportedly a minor when they first got involved. It did not last. All combined, the music, the men and the adventure paint a picture of a fearless woman who thrived on bold living and unlimited ambition.

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Plus she could play. A few writers likened her to Louis Armstrong. Even a writer underwhelmed with a Paris production—in which Snow had the title role, sang, played violin and muted trumpet—conceded: “[She] whistles like a bird, plays cornet with heart-rending virtuosity and goes all out with [the sort of] tireless jazz that would wake the dead.”

Other published biographical accounts propagate Snow’s claim that she was held in a Nazi concentration camp after the Germans invaded Denmark. Miller’s reporting refutes that. She did spend 10 weeks in Danish custody under a cloud of scandal involving stolen silverware, a Danish pharmacist who filled her prescriptions for Eukodal (a morphine derivative) and a dancer friend who died of poisoning from the drug.

After her release and return to the States, she appeared thinner to an interviewer, but “her old self.” She mentioned a “polite internment” by the Germans and said she was unable to work. However, Miller’s digging found her accepting a starring role in a tent show, recording for a Danish label and touring with a local orchestra. Later, the same newspaper reports on Snow’s plight as “the only colored woman entertainer on record to have been interned in a Nazi concentration camp.” New details ratcheted up the drama: a daily diet of three boiled potatoes, morning lashes with a bull whip, a bayonet wound to the head and a rescue plotted by a police chief who had seen her perform.

All of this leads to a central question Miller grapples with in this book: Why would she concoct such a thing? The book suggests that Snow, seeing her star eclipsed by Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne and Billie Holiday, her versatile entertaining style passé, could not cotton to the has-been label. Her account of suffering kept her employed and her flexible skills led her to a recording contract in 1945, as a “pop singer.” Miller points out that until then, Snow had never been recorded commercially as a trumpeter in the U.S. or as a singer. (She did record with Earl Hines, but the record was released in Europe).

How that lack of recognition might have affected Snow and the choices she made is left to speculation. Younger women musicians remarked on the sadness apparent in Snow’s later years, even though she continued to perform. She died at age 51 following a brain hemorrhage—driven until the end, undoubtedly complicated and forever extraordinary.



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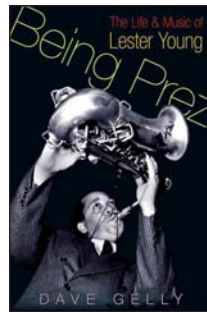
## Being Prez: The Life and Music of Lester Young

By Dave Gelly

Oxford University Press, New York, 2007;  
171 pp.; \$23.95 hardcover

» Review by David Franklin

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**N**OT ONLY DID Lester “Prez” (or “Pres”) Young provide a model for the succeeding generation of tenor saxophonists, but his original manner of improvising affected the course of jazz history through its influence on Charlie Parker and the development of modern jazz. Several works, including Lewis Porter’s *Lester Young*, Douglas Henry Daniels’s *Lester Leaps In: The Life and Times of Lester*

*“Pres” Young* and Frank Büchmann-Møller’s twin volumes *You Just Fight For Your Life: The Story of Lester Young* and *You Got To Be Original, Man! The Music of Lester Young*, deal with Young’s life and with his music. However, the British jazz critic and professional saxophonist Dave Gelly believed there was a need for a book that integrated those two aspects of the man. Indeed, Porter himself acknowledged that “the meat of the text” of his own book “consists of analysis of Young’s music.” Gelly’s 1984 book, the brief *Lester Young*, served as a basis for this one. The author expanded it with new information and corrections as warranted.

Although Willis Lester Young was born on August 27, 1909 in Woodville, Mississippi, his family actually lived in the New Orleans area. When Lester was 10, his father left his mother and took him and his siblings on the road as members of his circus side show band. In that setting, Lester became immersed in “the American Popular Song and the blues, and these would provide the sole material of his art for the rest of his career.” The family spent winters in Minneapolis, where Lester, who had settled on the alto saxophone, discovered the recordings of C-melody saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer, whose smooth, pure tone and relaxed manner of improvising he cited as the inspiration for his own distinctive sound and style.

When Lester was 18, he left the family band to join Art Bronson’s Bostonians. It was then that he switched to tenor saxophone. Tenure with several other bands, including the Blue Devils and King Oliver, followed. As Lester travelled throughout the mid- and southwestern states, his reputation among musicians as an original and compelling soloist grew. Following a stint with Bennie Moten in Kansas City, Young joined Count Basie in 1934. He soon left Basie for a short, ill-fated job with Fletcher Henderson, whose band wanted him to play in the familiar, heavier style of tenor icon Cole-

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man Hawkins. Returning to Basie in 1936, he recorded two tracks — “Shoe Shine Boy” and “Lady Be Good” — that made a powerful impression on fellow musicians. Inspired by those recordings, aspiring tenor players began to emulate Young’s light, buoyant style rather than Hawkins’s heavier one. Gelly describes those solos in terms that readers with little or no theoretical knowledge can understand.

Young’s influence continued to grow. Gelly depicts the period as “the happiest time of Lester Young’s life” and analyzes several of his solos from the time. Young left the Basie band in late 1940, and following a failed attempt to lead his own band, teamed up with his brother Lee in another short-lived venture. In 1943 he settled in New York, where he rejoined Basie and soon recorded four solos which, according to Gelly, show that his “tone is noticeably thicker and grainier” and is “accompanied by simpler and more deliberate phraseology.” The author concludes that “if Lester’s sound no longer expressed the buoyant optimism of former years, it was probably because he no longer felt buoyant or optimistic.” During this period, Young recorded with Basie’s rhythm section what Gelly calls “the first of his acknowledged ballad masterpieces,” “Ghost of a Chance.” Later that year he appeared in the film “Jammin’ the Blues.”

In early 1945, Lester was drafted into the U.S. Army, where his horrific experience included a stretch in detention. Discharged early, in December 1945, Young recorded for Norman Granz. Gelly says of the session: “From the way he plays you would hardly guess that he had been through the worst year of his life.” Indeed, the author takes issue with crit-

ics who claim that Young’s post-army playing was inferior. “His playing in the immediate post-war period was anything but lackluster,” Gelly writes. Subsequently Young traveled with Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic and led his own band again. Of his playing on a series of three recording sessions from 1951–52, Gelly says Young “plays quite magnificently.” But he was becoming inconsistent. Gelly notes of a 1953 session that “something seems to be interfering with both his technique and his thought processes.” Again in October of 1955, “he seems to be falling apart before our ears....” Yet his playing on *Jazz Giants ’56* “recalls the easy, unbuttoned creativity of those brief months in the mid-1940s....”

Young drank heavily and by 1959 suffered from cirrhosis of the liver, epilepsy, malnutrition and, according to the author, possibly syphilis. On March 15, soon after returning home from an engagement in Paris that he cut short because of his illness, Lester Young died.

Young’s story would be incomplete without mention of the women in his life, including his wives and Billie Holiday, with whom he had a close musical and, reportedly Platonic, personal relationship. Accordingly, they are referenced as they play a role in Young’s life and music.

Avoiding the pedantry of many historical works, Gelly’s clear, concise book reads like the fascinating story that it is, illuminating for professionals and laymen alike the life and music of one of jazz’s seminal figures.



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