Hail to the Chief

Barack Obama uniquely appreciates the role and value of creative expression. 

[...]
Barack Obama believes that the arts should be a central part of effective teaching and learning. 

[...]
Barack Obama supports increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. 

[...]
Barack Obama will ... improve and expand public-private partnerships to expand cultural and arts exchanges throughout the world. 

[...]
Finding affordable health coverage has often been one of the most vexing obstacles for artists and those in the creative community.... Barack Obama's plan will provide all Americans with quality, affordable health care.

I am quoting from a document by the Arts Policy Committee of the next President of the United States.

If it wasn't clear enough that “change has come to America,” as President-Elect Obama said on that historic night in Chicago's Grant Park, think about the fact that the next leader of the free world even has an Arts Policy.

We are not in the clear. Debates about the change agenda are now underway: How much is possible, and how fast? Support for the arts may be a lower priority at a time of recession and complex military redeployment. But we can legitimately say a tide is turning in the nation.

Not only did Barack Obama win; John McCain and Sarah Palin were pummeled, humiliated and sent into full retreat. In overwhelming numbers, the American people rejected the veiled and not-so-veiled racial and xenophobic appeals. They chose an African-American of partly foreign ancestry to represent this nation on the world stage. If this isn't a jazz outcome, I don't know what is.

It is one of the great privileges of my life to have taken part in this process, phone-banking from Harlem on a Sunday morning, canvassing for two days in the white working-class wards of Northeast...
Expanding the JJA’s activity is a team effort.

It’s Up To You!

Dear colleagues,

What can the JJA do for you? This is not a rhetorical question.

Do you want better-paying work and more of it? Do you want assignment contracts and letters of agreement, or dependable advice on what to sign and what to negotiate? Would you like to raise your public profile, locally or on the web? How about learning new media skills and improving contacts throughout the industries with which you, as a music journalist, connect? Want to correspond with and/or hang out with jazz experts and sharp critics with whom you can match your wits, or companionably share a meal, drink, bowling alley or pool table in an unfamiliar city? How about more fabulous JJA parties?

Since its establishment in 1986, the JJA has functioned as a loose network of writers, photographers, broadcasters and new media producers who cover jazz in all its forms. We’ve gained respect and recognition for our difficult, under-financed, typically misunderstood, always marginalized and now faster than ever changing profession by establishing panel discussions and public interviews at festivals, conferences and educational institutions and by producing the only international Jazz Awards™, going on its 13th year, hailing musical accomplishments and also spotlighting jazz activists, advocates, altruists, aiders and abettors. We’ve consulted with record labels, conferred with musicians, collaborated with other journalistic, music and arts organizations, built and sustained a dynamic website and published a journal for members that informs us about news and issues that matter specifically to what we do.

What else do you want? And how can the JJA provide it?

At the 12th annual Jazz Awards last June, Dana Gioia, the outgoing chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, told me that what he admired most about the JJA is that what we’ve done, we’ve done ourselves. He’s right. Although the JJA has enjoyed financial support from a number of esteemed allies, we’ve kept operating expenses extremely low and raised most of our budget through dues. But we haven’t...

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merely done it ourselves, we’ve done it together. Though I think I’ve become way too central to this organization—and after 15 years as president, I want to step down from this position in a year—nothing the JJA has accomplished is the result of one person’s work. And that leads me to conclude that what you want from the JJA requires you—and you and you—to speak up about, and then lend your smarts and energies to get.

What I think would be useful is more Jazz Matters panels throughout the areas JJA members inhabit. These can be fairly easily (and cheaply) mounted, and immediately put JJA members on their toes, sharpening presentation abilities and getting us in touch with our public and local partners who are most likely to gain mutual benefits. Panel discussions can be about almost anything regarding jazz and/or journalism. James Hale, vice president of the JJA and an outgoing board member, is leading an initiative to get more Jazz Matters panels happening. Contact him at jehale@rogers.com.

Jazzhouse.org is a JJA function that can use an upgrade, to make it more user-friendly and beneficial to members. Whit Blauvelt, who built this site back in the day when websites were a novelty, has put enormous effort into it, and must be applauded. David Adler, editor of Jazz Notes, is key to the committee working on reimagining its design.

I want to devote myself to organizing a major jazz journalism conference, hopefully in spring 2010, as well as sustaining the Jazz Awards at an ever-higher level. Yvonne Ervin, who, like David Adler, has agreed to stand for election to the incoming JJA board (Reuben Jackson is stepping down after back-to-back two-year terms), has served as a co-producer of the Jazz Awards, and the JJA is sure to benefit from her further participation.

But Jazz Matters panels, jazzhouse.org, a profession-wide conference and the Jazz Awards only scratch the surface of what the JJA can do. We might bring more jazz journalists—the rising generation of bloggers, for instance—into our circle, the better to learn from each other. We might address questions regarding ethics, relations of critics and musicians, new means of research and archiving, the international spread of jazz and related musics, our role as professionals in making sure jazz has a proud place and convenes new audiences in 21st-century culture. And we should have more parties.

What else? What do you want? What will you do to get it? Can the JJA succeed in enhancing your professional life? If we try together (repeat this mantra, which has proved effective in recent uphill campaigns), yes we can.

President Howard

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT

The Jazz Journalists Association is electing two board members to seats currently held by Reuben Jackson and Vice President James Hale. Voting is underway at jazzhouse.org. Nominees for these posts are David Adler, editor of Jazz Notes; and Yvonne Ervin, co-producer of the Jazz Awards, fundraiser for the JJA and a past member of the board, among her other qualifications. Queries about joining the JJA board or participating on action committees (for fundraising, the Jazz Awards, Jazz Matters, jazzhouse.org, membership, etc.) should be directed to Howard Mandel (hman@jazzhouse.org) and/or James Hale (jehale@rogers.com). Current JJA board members, besides Hale, Jackson and Mendel, are Forrest Bryant (Jazz Notes art director), Susan Fox (governance issues), Fred Jung (West Coast affairs) and Gary Giddins (at large).
Book Review Missed a Few Steps

To the editor:

I appreciated Bridget Arnwine’s review of my book Shoot Me While I’m Happy: Memories from the Tap Goddess of the Lower East Side (Jazz Notes, Autumn 2008), although I’d like to correct a few factual errors.

1. I went to Boston University, not Brown, as Arnwine states, and didn’t have a short stint in Boston. I stayed there eight years where I became serious about rhythm tap.

2. Arnwine states that I discuss the deaths of male hoofers and only mention “the late Frances Nealy.” I devoted as much ink to Nealy as any of the men (pages 84-86 with full-page photo of Frances on page 84). Gregory Hines received more attention because his life and death were the overarching theme of the book.

3. My nonprofit company, Changing Times Tap, was, alas, only able to produce Sole Sisters in New York two years in a row (1985-86), rather than hosting the show “all over the country” as Arnwine states. Women in my shows from 1978-1985 were basically ignored because black male soloists dominated the tradition. Hence the formation of Sole Sisters. Several books and documentaries are now available about women in tap. That wasn’t my focus. “Living the tap life” was.

4. Lastly, I’m sorry that Arnwine chose to nitpick on whether I called myself “Jane” or “me” in some of the 300-plus photos in the book. She didn’t seem to get into the book’s spirit of fun, which is what tap dancing itself is all about.

Sincerely,

Jane Goldberg
Director, Changing Times Tap Co., Inc. Janegoldberg.org

Further thoughts on a burgeoning online world. Jazz and the New Internet, Part II

Since my last piece about jazz online (Jazz Notes, Autumn 2007), the music world has seen new developments in Web 2.0, or what I like to call “the new Internet.” In March 2008, shortly after its annual conference, the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) folded. This conference, along with satellite events with local chapters, had brought together many disparate jazz people under a common umbrella. Living in a post-IAJE world, without that former meeting place and real-life “social network,” there is a definite vacuum. And yet there is hope, at least online.

There’s been a notable increase in jazz activity on Facebook.

The rapid and somewhat suspect chain of events that led to the IAJE’s downfall was a story told largely online. It began with the JJA’s Paul de Barros breaking the story on The Seattle Times website. In the next few days, the saga unfolded via email and through messages on Facebook and MySpace (with a large number of comments and discussion on Willard Jenkins’s blog, The Independent Ear). As an observer of jazz and new media, it seemed to me that the jazz world had finally caught up with the blogosphere. Musician bloggers Darcy James Argue and Pat Donaher offered their own measured criticism of the jazz education movement at large.

Meanwhile, Downbeat and Jazz Times would eventually release their own findings, though with an unavoidable delay, hitting newsstands in summer 2008. To their credit, both magazines posted news items on their websites within a few days of the news breaking.

In the last six to eight months, there has been a notable increase in activity among jazz musicians, fans and industry folk (including many JJA members) on Facebook, the fast-growing, Palo Alto-based online social network. (The JJA has initiated its own Facebook group. Search “Jazz Journalists Association” from your profile page to join.) At the time of my last article, Facebook was gathering steam and continually adding new features. These were spurred on by allowing independent programmers to create customized applications and widgets (mostly, tools for wasting time). In addition, the site developed a News Feed, which, like Twitter, updates users on their friends’ activities as well as their ever-popular, moment-to-moment “status updates.” The instant-messaging function, introduced in spring 2008, has also proved quite popular. Though MySpace, the News Corporation-owned networking behemoth, is still buzzing with activity for musicians (particularly since the recent launch of the merchandising platform MySpace Music), Facebook has been gaining considerable ground, along with the business-oriented networks LinkedIn and Plaxo.

What does all this mean for jazz? The sharing of news and events relevant to our community; increased ability to connect individually; a coming together when heroes like Joel Dorn, Teo Macero, Dr. George Butler, Jimmy Giuffre, Johnny Griffin and Neal Hefti pass away: This and so much more underscores what we all have in common. The October 1 Jazz for Obama benefit concert at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan was spearheaded by pianist Aaron Goldberg, a Facebook
member. All the time, we are able to “friend” and interact with folks we previously “saw” only once or twice a year.

Active Facebook users in the jazz realm include JJA author and journalist Ashley Kahn, journalist Eugene Holley, pianist Vijay Iyer, drummer Jeff “Tain” Watts, author and editor of jazz.com Ted Gioia, Jazz Times editors Lee Mergner and Evan Haga and Downbeat managing editor Aaron Cohen, among others. Nate Chinen devoted his November 2008 Jazz Times column to the subject. Having recently joined Facebook, he is now dealing with the vexed issue of being or not being “friends” with his subjects or potential sources.

Gioia of jazz.com is one of Facebook’s most active users. “Some folks prodded me to get involved. I was reluctant at first—my initial impression was that these social networking sites are for younger folks. But I have been pleasantly surprised at how much I’ve learned about the web from running a website.”

Jazz Times editor Lee Mergner comes to Facebook from a different perspective. “I joined initially to keep tabs on my teenage daughter and be able to communicate with her on that level. But of course the nature of the medium connected me with the jazz community and vice versa.”

Both Gioia and Mergner also use LinkedIn for professional purposes. But it seems that few in the music world have tapped into LinkedIn as a recommendation service for professionals—especially those looking for jobs or freelancers on the prowl for work. James Hale advertises his professional writing and editing services on LinkedIn, as does freelancer John Murph. This is a function that Facebook seems too social to serve. LinkedIn was originally intended for the corporate world, and according to The Wall Street Journal, many Fortune 500 executives use the network actively.

Another area of interest is the upgrading of websites run by the jazz magazines themselves. Regarding the state of downbeat.com, editor Jason Koransky concedes, “It needs a major overhaul and we have a lot of work to get there. But we have a great branding. Creating a really strong web presence would be wonderful and it’s something we’re going to do. But we have to create a revenue stream for it to work.” The magazine is also considering a full digitization of its archive, which stretches back to 1934.

It should be noted that allaboutjazz.com and jazzcorner.com have been ahead of the curve with respect to new media for several years. And if it’s any indication of where things are going, Jazz Times, jazz.com and the JJA itself are all committed to enhancing their online offerings. Chris Lewis, Vice President of Digital Initiatives for Jazz Times, reveals: “We’ll start rolling out the new site in early 2009. The initial feature set will be modest, but will include tens of thousands of articles as well as new social media tools”—including the ability to share content on Facebook, thus driving traffic to the Jazz Times website.

“What makes the new site truly Web 2.0,” Lewis adds, “is the importance it places on community. User-generated content will play a major role in the new site. The vision is to elegantly combine the high quality of the magazine’s journalism with the voice the jazz community.” Surely other magazines will follow this path as well.

Matt Merewitz, a JJA industry associate member, is the proprietor of Fully Altered Media and can be reached at 215-921-4447 or fullyaltered@gmail.com.
Wolfram Knauer: Tell me about your background and how you came into jazz.

Wolfram Knauer: I was born in Kiel, a northern harbor city on the Baltic Sea with not too much of a jazz background. Modern jazz was mostly played in the southern part of Germany, because that was the region occupied by American forces. In the Frankfurt/Mannheim region, in Munich and other parts of the American zone, there had been a long tradition of exposure to modern jazz, whereas in the north, the British troops brought mostly skiffle and Dixieland.

I learned to play piano as a kid. My mother played as well, and there always was a love for music in my family, classical mostly, but never a devoted interest. I took clarinet lessons as a teen. I played in a quintet in the mid-1970s—modern and contemporary jazz, and it was one of the few such bands in Kiel. After school and civil service at a hospital (an alternative to the army draft), I studied musicology at Kiel University. Already during school I had begun to travel to jazz festivals regularly. My main event was the Grande Parade du Jazz in Nice, France, where I hitchhiked every summer, 2000 kilometers, to hear the likes of Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson, Count Basie, Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Miles Davis and so many others.

The first jazz I heard was probably some of the Dixieland fashionable in the north, quite different than what you would hear in the U.S., as it was more influenced by the British trad band style. I had listened to jazz before, though unknowingly. Turning the dial on the radio as a kid, I was often fascinated by these strange sounds, a bit complex, no immediately recognizable melody. Later I knew that what I’d listened to were broadcasts of free improvised jazz or contemporary composed music.

But as I came to jazz through trad, my first records were just that: Australian trombonist Max Collie (whom I had seen in Kiel), then King Oliver (to hear the original), then the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra (the first American band I ever saw), then Oscar Peterson (who played Kiel in a duo with Joe Pass in 1974). Then from 1975, jazz exploded in my consciousness. I never will forget the first bluesy chord I heard at the Nice festival, played by Sammy Price on a hot afternoon on an upright piano. Or the first time the Basie band blew me away (at the Antibes Festival 1975, next door to Nice). Or the Charles Mingus set at Antibes. Or Dollar Brand’s solo set, or Keith Jarrett or Cecil Taylor’s group. Or the Sun Ra Arkestra. I was hooked, and I realized the whole gamut this music comprised.

While studying musicology, we concentrated on medieval polyphony and Schoenberg, Bach cantatas and Brahms string quartets, Bizet and Wagner. But one of my professors suggested I should write my dissertation on jazz. He suggested Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five. But I always liked to have an emotional distance from the subjects I researched. It made a more objective view possible, and guaranteed that I learned something from my research—something about myself, about why I like or dislike things. Anyhow, I chose the Modern Jazz Quartet, perhaps because I only owned one al-

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bum and it was not really my favorite. I learned to love their music, though. All of them regularly came down to the Nice festival, so I was actually able to hear John Lewis and Milt Jackson on one stage, even when the MJQ was not a working band.

My dissertation turned out to be an analytical study of the MJQ and the development of composition and improvisation between bebop and free jazz. I’ve always been interested in developments, more than in descriptions of static situations. I always wanted to know why changes happen, rather than just the result of the change. My dissertation was approved in 1988, and I received my doctorate in early 1989. I had already worked as a freelance translator of jazz books for an Austrian publisher, translating books by Gene Lees (his Oscar Peterson biography), S. Frederick Starr (his book on jazz in the Soviet Union) and James Lincoln Collier (his Benny Goodman biography).

W. Royal Stokes: How did your appointment as director of Jazzinstitut Darmstadt come about?

Wolfram Knauer: During a visit to Vienna to see my publisher, I saw the ad in Die Zeit announcing the job. I applied and I got the gig.

The Jazzinstitut Darmstadt was officially opened on my first working day, September 2, 1990, when I knocked at the door of the Darmstadt mayor at that time, Günther Metzger. The Jazzinstitut is a municipal body, so the mayor basically was (and still is) my boss. Since then I have lived and worked in Darmstadt, a medium-sized city close to Frankfurt and renowned also for its Jugendstil (art nouveau) architecture and its Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Holiday Courses for Contemporary Music). My job, in a way, was to create something with a similar reputation in the jazz world.

I still remember the mayor at the press conference introducing me as the new director, boasting: “Herr Knauer will make Darmstadt the center of German jazz!” — a promise hard to fulfill with only three or four professional jazz musicians living in that city. Yet he was not too wrong—if we couldn’t make Darmstadt the center of German jazz, we could make it a center for research, an example of “customer service,” an important political supporter of the music, influential on all levels: scholarly, cultural, political.

“I love the fact that the U.S. is different from Europe, just as I love the fact that a jazz concert feels different in France or Italy or Austria or Germany.”

The Jazzinstitut has even inspired some American plans to build a similar mix of scholarly seriousness and community orientation, a helping force for musicians. But we’re not necessarily trying to be better than the American models. Personally, I learned a lot living in New York with a research grant for half a year in 1986, when I spent at least four days a week at Rutgers’s Institute of Jazz Studies. I learned what could be done, and I learned what had not yet been done. Basically I learned what would be a good direction for a European archive, even though I didn’t know (or even dream) anything about the Darmstadt plans.

W. Royal Stokes: The thorny topic of American versus European jazz has been much discussed. Having a close-up view of both worlds, how would you assess the relative health, originality and creativity of the two scenes?

Wolfram Knauer: The jazz experience in New York and the U.S. definitively is different from Germany and Europe. In the U.S. it is much more based on the long tradition of artist–audience communication, of participation, whereas in Germany and Europe we have this long tradition of concert music, which calls for concentration and silence on the side of the audience rather than any call and response.

Stuart Nicholson, in his book Is Jazz Dead?, opened a whole new chapter on the discourse of what jazz actually is. I do have my own problems with his book, which needed better editing. He shows a bias in favor of the things he knows about, yet gives the impression that that’s what all of European jazz is about. Yet Nicholson made many Americans aware that you can’t tell people who ask what makes a good jazz musician to “Play yourself, man!” and then be angry if they do just that.

European jazz has developed a new self-confidence. After the era of the so-called “emancipation,” the youngest generation is still influenced by Miles and Trane and all the other heroes, but also European role models at the same time. That is quite a difference. And not only do the musicians change; the audience changes with them. European audiences — and I am mostly talking Western Europe — are interested in new developments in neighboring countries as well as the U.S. And the music coming from Scandinavia or the Balkans raises more curiosity than the newest version of hard-bop, fusion or the like coming from the U.S. One may not like it, and it may actually seem like a lack of respect, but it is a fact.

In reality, it is not at all a lack of respect. It does, however, influence the lives of American musicians, as for them the European market always had been an important part of their touring schedule. Jazz is not dead, and all pessimism is unwarranted, but a conservative approach to the music doesn’t do any good for its future. To this day, jazz is one of the most creative idioms in contemporary music, because by
Bix Eiben contacted me regarding my interest in writing a biography of Hazen Schumacher, whom I’d never heard of previously. In my research for my biography, *Willis Conover: Broadcasting Jazz to the World*, I included a short history of jazz radio. Had I known about Schumacher, I would have noted his weekly broadcasts for more than 200 U.S. radio stations. His specialty was jazz ranging from 1917 to 1947. His 30,000 programs, and other recordings, LPs, cassettes and CDs are now preserved at the Bix Eiben Jazz Museum in Hamburg, Germany.

Eiben retired from his business in order to devote his efforts to the jazz museum, and he’s received an international response for his efforts. Grabel International Movers took three days to load some 60,000 items in Ann Arbor to be sent to the museum.

Schumacher started his programs in 1967 on WUOM in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He drew on 1000 78 rpm recordings which were ultimately donated to the University of Michigan by Philip Diamond, a university professor of mathematics. The collection included mostly recordings of Red Nichols, Bix Beiderbecke and Bessie Smith.

Schumacher’s collection grew to 10,000 recordings, and in 1971, National Public Radio distributed his programs to more than 50 of its member stations. The name of the program was Jazz Revisited, and his opening theme music for the program was Ellington’s “What Am I Here For?” All the programs have been digitally remastered, documented and catalogued in two books, which can be ordered from the museum.

Eiben — whose dog is also named Bix — was born in 1936 and introduced to jazz by his father, who recalls that jazz was forbidden under the Nazis. However, Eiben’s father “disobeyed the rule without being detected.”

Thus far, the museum has no support from private or public institutions. The building is owned by the Eiben family and run by mostly volunteers. “We are collectors, not experts in jazz,” Eiben states. He hopes to go public in the next few years. Those seeking more information can contact (in four languages) bixeibenhamburg@web.de. The mailing address is Bix Eiben All That Jazz, Postfach 26 13 63 D, 20503, Hamburg, Germany.
The outgoing NEA chairman reflects on his jazz-friendly tenure.

Dana Gioia to Step Down

By arnold jay smith

AFTER FOUR YEARS of dedicated service to the National Endowment for the Arts, during which the NEA's support for jazz grew exponentially, chairman and poet Dana Gioia will resign as of January 20, 2009, “to follow my muse before she abandons me.” On October 17 at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Gioia moderated a panel of the 2009 NEA Jazz Master awardees: guitarist/vocalist George Benson, drummer Jimmy Cobb, alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, guitarist/harmonica player/whistler Toots Thielemans, trumpeter Snooky Young and engineer/“advocate” Rudy Van Gelder. Gioia also hosted the ceremony and concert that followed, which was broadcast and available for download from the websites of WBGO-FM Newark and XM Satellite Radio. He graciously granted time for this backstage interview, interrupting preparations for the panel.

Gioia said he could have stayed longer at the NEA if he wanted to, but he’d been chairman long enough. He felt he was losing touch with the poetry he loves. “You have to be able to bring a certain energy and stamina to an art form if you’re really serious about it,” he said.

Even under the capable hands of former NEA chairwoman Nancy Hanks, the organization couldn’t hold a candle to what it has become under Gioia. Pianist and former NEA board member Dr. Billy Taylor used stronger words: He said that Gioia, in effect, “cleaned it up,” making it a more viable means of channeling interest in all of the creative arts and jazz in particular. The Jazz Masters grant, which currently stands at $25,000 per honoree, is the largest ever for jazz in the U.S. The awardees now number six, up from three in 1982.

Gioia has done all he can to ensure that the United States honors its artists. “We have almost no federal honors,” he said. “As a consequence, our artists play almost no role in public life. They go to Europe, where they make better money. It’s a narrow vision [in the U.S.] of what constitutes civic pride.” Gioia added: “I think it’s a scandal that the Pulitzer Committee thought him too young. Indeed, they awarded Duke Ellington for “body of work” almost two decades after his death. They actually took one away from him during his lifetime, to which Duke offhandedly remarked that the Pulitzer Committee thought him too young.

“I felt that the U.S. needed an award for jazz comparable to the Pulitzer and the Academy Award,” Gioia continued. “So we consciously took the NEA Jazz Masters, a relatively small award not known outside of the jazz community, and we not only doubled the number of recipients and the size of the awards, but created a large ceremony with all the attendant publicity.” The awardees were also given a touring opportunity and radio and television appearances. “This was a deliberate long-term strategy to create an award to bring the finest living jazz musicians to the attention of the American people, and to create a space in American culture in which jazz was discussed and honored.” Further, Gioia thought that jazz needed media coverage on a regular basis. The result is a Sirius/XM Radio broadcast of an “NEA Jazz Moment” on their news channels almost 100 times a day, reaching millions of people. “It’s a matter of getting the public used to hearing that jazz is one of the things the media discusses.”

Where does the NEA Jazz Masters program go from here? “The next president will choose the next NEA chairperson, and I think that person will continue the Jazz Masters,” Gioia stated. “The real question will be [maintaining] the level of commitment and focus that I have. If you study the history of the NEA, one of the ironies is it does seem to do better under a Republican president. It seems counterintuitive, but historically accurate. It was a very small program until Nixon grew the budget by twenty-fold. Reagan was the person who created all of the existing national medals for artists: the National Medals of Arts, Humanities and, under his chairmen, the National Heritage Fellow Award. People forget that [Reagan] was, after all, an artist, and he understood how important art was to people. He was the only artist we’ve ever had as president. I feel that we’ve taken the NEA from something that was somewhat controversial to something that has almost universal support in Washington. We have bipartisan, bicameral support. I know that congress will continue to support it and I hope the future president will do the same.”
William Claxton invented cool. Before he snapped his now-famous black-and-white images of West Coast jazz musicians in the early 1950s, the music they played was called “linear” or “contrapuntal.” After Bill’s photos began appearing in magazines and on album covers, critics started making the connection between the musicians’ cool persona and their music’s laid-back sound.

Of course, during his long career, Bill took many photos besides those of Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, Bud Shank, Russ Freeman, Teddy Edwards and others. Yet it’s his images of West Coast jazz musicians that remain the most iconic and haunting. Bill’s photos gave West Coast jazz an identity and mystique by codifying the characteristics of cool. They also came to define the quintessential spirit of postwar American youth.

All of which did not go unnoticed by Hollywood. The movie studios picked up on the laconic romanticism and restlessness of Bill’s photos, casting Marlon Brando, James Dean and Montgomery Clift as detached, misunderstood youth. Marketers, too, caught the subtext of Bill’s photos, and to this day continue to feature brooding teens in T-shirts and chinos in ads to attract America’s young.

What’s more, Bill changed the way jazz artists were perceived by fans. In the ’30s and ’40s, most jazz photos featured musicians formally dressed, playing instruments in densely packed smoky clubs. The photographer took you down the steps of a noisy jazz club, gave you a front-row table and made you feel the excitement of what jazz music and the nocturnal jazz culture were all about. Images focused on the scene rather than the preen.

Bill bucked convention when he first began photographing jazz artists in Southern California. Rather than glamorize artists, Bill knew there was more to the story than cool style and fashion. There was pain and tragedy, and both needed to be documented.

With the rise of the LP in the mid-1950s, 10- and 12-inch covers needed photos on the front and back. Bill’s close relationship with West Coast artists made him the ideal choice for record studio shoots. “By 1955, the rush to produce jazz LPs and their cover art became so frantic (recording day and night), that we constantly had to invent new ways to sell these jazz artists visually,” Bill wrote in 1992 in the introduction to the coffee table book California Cool. Musicians trusted Bill, and you can see this in his album photos for artists like Chet Baker, Buddy Collette, Shelly Manne, Jack Montrose and Lennie Niehaus.

But there was much more to Bill’s 1950s photographs than just cool, talented young jazz artists. You sensed that beneath the dazed innocence was a dark charm. These guys clearly weren’t the boys next door. There was an edge, a danger, in the faces of artists such as Baker, Mulligan, Art Pepper, Larry Bunker and Hampton Hawes. Lurking behind the test-pilot crew cuts, baby faces and cocky grins were people who lived a high-stakes life.

From the mid-1950s onward, we start to see artists’ expressions change subtly in Bill’s photographs. Musicians who in the decade’s early years exuded a chips-fall-where-they-may confidence now appear a little doubtful and tattered. As narcotics permeated the West Coast jazz subculture, some of Bill’s subjects were users and alcohol abusers. As their health deteriorated and careers gave way in some cases to short prison terms, the glow of immortality started to fade, with expressions showing the strain of the jazz life.

Meanwhile, the rising popularity of Elvis and early rock-n-roll didn’t help, steadily reducing the size of jazz’s audiences and record label budgets. In retrospect, what we see in Bill’s photos from the second half of the 1950s are the diminishing hopes of artists who once thought they had the world by the tail and that cool jazz would remain
After a stroke in 2003, Richard Sudhalter was diagnosed with multiple system atrophy. When he died in September 2008, the jazz world lost one of its most esteemed authors and scholars.

Sudhalter’s *Bix: Man & Legend* was recognized upon its 1974 publication as the first jazz biography to meet the standards maintained by scholarly studies of classical composers. I read it and discussed it on my radio show. A couple of years later I saw Sudhalter onstage at the Smithsonian, where Martin Wil- liams produced a decade-long series of concerts — a kind of summing up of the history of jazz.

I remember Martin coming out from the wings, saying something about Beiderbecke’s “Keatsian” passage through his brief life, and then introducing Sudhalter, who took the concert’s lead on cornet and also emceed the evening. Richard eerily channeled Bix while providing insights into the life and artistry of the legendary cornetist and composer, who drank himself into the grave at the age of 28.

Several times in the 1980s I saw Dick Sudhalter in performance, and I reviewed him for *The Washington Post*. I caught him in Annapolis at the King of France Tavern with the Classic Jazz Quartet, whose other members were Dick Wellstood on piano, Joe Muranyi on clarinet and curved soprano saxophone and Marty Grosz on guitar. In his teens, Sudhalter had played in Boston clubs, sitting in at George Wein’s Storyville and Mahogany Hall with Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, Vic Dickenson and other major players. In the 1970s, in London, he organized the New Paul Whiteman Orchestra. In addition to his albums with the CJQ, Sudhalter recorded with Barbara Lea and Bob Dorough and released albums under his own name.

Though Sudhalter’s *Lost Chords* was attacked from some quarters, it was widely praised by others as a landmark work.

After our 1980s encounters, years went by before I saw Dick again. The occasion was a reception arranged by editor Sheldon Meyer for Oxford University Press jazz authors. The venue was New York’s Jazz Standard on the evening before the 2001 IAJE conference began. Dick greeted me with, “We’re old fogies now, Royal.”

Sudhalter authored two more books: *Stardust Melody: The Life and Music of Hoagy Carmichael* and *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915-1945*. The former was well received but the latter was attacked, from some quarters, with derision and hostility. Some of Sudhalter’s obituar- ies unfairly emphasized this treatment of what was in fact a landmark work. *Lost Chords* was widely praised for correcting the notion that the roots of jazz were only in African-American culture and that its development was virtually without significant contribution by white musicians.

For *Lost Chords*, Sudhalter thoroughly researched and documented the involvement of myriad white players, including Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Jimmy Dorsey and Mildred Bailey, incontrovertibly establishing their legacy and influence. In the book’s introduction, he made it clear that, “Though this is not a book about black musicians, they are a consistent and necessary presence throughout, helping to shape the work and attitudes of the white players as surely as white traditions, attitudes, and musicianship shaped theirs.” He added, regarding black musicians, “Their primacy, and the reverence in which they are held, belong to the unquestioned foundation on which the entire edifice rests.”

Richard never became a member of the JJA, responding to my urging that he do so with the declaration that he was “not a joiner.” Majoring in English literature and music at Oberlin, where he also studied the trumpet, he later became not only an author but also a journalist of wide reach and deep experience. During the 1960s he was a reporter for UPI in Munich and Eastern Europe, covering such events as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. During this time he got to play with many European musicians, touring with them and appearing in concert halls and radio and TV studios. He was jazz critic for the *New York Post* in the 1970s and ’80s, wrote many liner notes and shared a 1982 Grammy for notes he and John Chilton wrote for a Bunny Berigan boxed set.

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News of Members

DAVID R. ADLER wrote a piece on drummer Francisco Mela for Jazz Times; liner notes for guitarist Brad Shepik’s Human Activity Suite: Sounding a Response to Climate Change (Songlines); and a feature for The Philadelphia Inquirer on Sci Fi Philly, a new avant-jazz series at the Ethiopian restaurant Gojo in West Philadelphia.

LARRY APPELBAUM gave talks at the American Center and the Union of Composers Club in Moscow; was interviewed on Kultura Television and Radio Russia; reviewed the Jazz in the Hermitage Garden festival for Jazz Times; wrote two pieces for Jazz Tokyo; reviewed two Julian Benedikt films on DVD for the Music Library Association Journal; and wrote Before & After pieces for Jazz Times with Jeremy Pelt, Taylor Eigsti, Billy Cobham and Jacky Terrasson.

GEORGE AVAKIAN received from the French government the Légion d’Honneur, as Chevalier d’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in the highest degree (that of Commandeur), at a small private ceremony in New York in November.

KEN DRYDEN is working on liner notes for 19 individual CD anthologies to be issued by the Italian label I Miti Del Jazz in 2009. The artists will include John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Charles Mingus, Phil Woods and others.

SID GRIBETZ of WKCR-FM was named Best Jazz DJ in the “Best of New York” issue of The Village Voice, October 15-21, 2008.

RUSTY HASSAN participated in events at the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival in Washington, DC. He led a discussion with Monty Alexander, who was performing at Blues Alley during the festival; and introduced McCoy Tyner at an outdoor concert near the Washington Monument. On his WPFW radio show, Rusty interviewed A. B. Spellman.

THOMAS JACOBSEN published a review article of two recent CDs by New Orleans clarinetist Evan Christopher in the September issue of The Clarinet. He also reviewed the two latest recordings by clarinetist Ron Odrich in the same issue. Thomas traveled to South Africa in October and had a look at the current jazz scene in Johannesburg, about which he intends to write soon.

ROZANNE LEVINE, clarinetist/composer/photographer, performed with her group Chakra Tuning at Roulette in New York on December 8. Joining her were saxophonist/clarinetist Mark Whitecage, clarinetist Perry Robinson and violinist/vocalist Rosi Hertlein. This was Rozanne’s second appearance at Roulette. The group performed selections from its upcoming CD, Only Moment, as well as new compositions and improvisations. Visit www.erjn.it/mus/whitecage/projects.htm for more information.

DAN OUELLETTE has finished writing Ron Carter’s biography, Ron Carter: Finding the Right Notes, the first book project by ArtistShare using the same model as the company’s CD releases. The 500-page book will be available as of the first week of December, exclusively online at amazon.com, artistshare.com and the project Web site, danouellette.artistshare.com. The team working on the project includes artistic designer (and Jazz Notes art director) Forrest Bryant, reader/editor Barbara Hanning of the City College of New York, cover photographer/designer Carol Friedman and such photographers as Paul Hoeffler and Stuart Brinin. The chapter on Ron’s involvement with hip-hop artists appears in the January issue of Downbeat.

BOB PORTER now has a website: www.jazzetc.net. Features include reviews, essays and an LP auction. Comments are welcome.

W. ROYAL STOKES’s Growing Up With Jazz: Twenty-Four Musicians Talk About Their Lives and Careers was reprinted in paperback in the fall of 2008 by Oxford University Press. Royal is presently preparing a fourth volume of profiles based on his interviews with jazz and blues musicians. He is also combing through letters and documents going back a century and a half for a family memoir he is writing. His novel Backwards Over will see publication in 2009. Royal also seeks a publisher for a follow-up volume to his Swing Era New York: The Jazz Photographs of Charles Peterson. Don Peterson has compiled more than 200 photographs by his late father that were not included in the 1994 book. Many of these have not seen print since the 1930s and ’40s and some have never been published.

RON SWEETMAN recently donated his 10,000 LPs, 2000 78rpm, 1000 books, numerous cassettes, innumerable magazines and five massive metal LP shelves to Brock University, in Ontario, Canada, where they will be catalogued and will form part of the university’s Archive of Popular Culture. Ron retained his CD collection for use on his weekly jazz program In a Mellow Tone at CKCU-FM 93.1 in Ottawa.

JOHN R. TUMPAK’s article “Joe Liggins: The Honeydripper” appeared in the October 2008 issue of L.A. Jazz Scene. Along with Louis Jordan, R&B legend Liggins was a pioneer of the jump blues.

MYLES WEINSTEIN of Unlimited Myles, Inc., recently signed vocalist Jane Monheit to his roster, which also includes Regina Carter, Billy Childs, Kenny Barron, Vijay Iyer, Luciana Souza, Russell Malone, Stefon Harris and Miguel Zenón, recently selected as a 2008 MacArthur Fellow. Myles commissioned Childs to create a violin concerto for Carter, which will premiere with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 2010 under the direction of conductor Leonard Slatkin. Myles has also created a touring
EVEN AFTER COMPREHENSIVE JAZZ surveys like Scott DeVeaux’s *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* or Gunther Schuller’s earlier *The Swing Era*, there is much about jazz historiography that has yet to be told. One area that doesn’t get as much attention is what I’ve come to call, for want of a better term, the “jazz place” study. Dempsey Travis’s 1983 *Autobiography of Black Jazz* was an oral history of Chicago clubs on the south and west sides, the traditionally black neighborhoods, from the early 1920s through the mid ’50s. More recently, photographer Lewis Watts and author/photographer Elizabeth Pepin published *Harlem of the West*, a 2006 survey of the jazz era — 1941 through the late ’50s — in the Fillmore district, the historically black neighborhood of San Francisco, in its pre-’60s hippie heyday.

Now with Patrick Burke’s *Come In and Hear the Truth: Jazz and Race on 52nd Street* we get a rigorous examination of the historical main street of jazz in midtown Manhattan. There are spots in this meticulously researched book in which every line or assertion is supported by a footnote. In one case, describing the street’s early exclusivity based on race and gender, Burke states: “52nd Street’s tenure as a jazz center thus began in a club [The Onyx] dominated by white men, whose notions of authentic jazz were to play a persistent role in the street’s culture even as its performers and audiences became increasingly diverse…. ” The footnote in support of that statement is almost two pages long.

For most readers this may be problematic, but as you read on it’s clear that this is not another book describing the surface features of that famous strip. It’s a serious social and cultural reflection on how and why a street, in the middle of the largest city in the U.S., during a period of extreme racial and sexual segregation, came to exemplify signs of an integrated and reasonable society, based on musicians’ mutual respect and love of their art.

The book follows a strict chronological order of developments that are surprising and fascinating. We find out, for instance, that the first black musicians of note to perform on the street in the early ’30s were Willie “The Lion” Smith and Art Tatum, and it was through the persistence of a liberal-minded club owner that they were paid a salary instead of the usual practice of just sitting in and jamming. From ’30s to the mid-’40s there was of course a decline in popularity of swing (read “dance”) bands and the rise of the small-group play of bebop, which emphasized individual instrumental expertise. Burke gives the impression that, at least on 52nd Street, this development was more a function of spatial limitations in clubs than the decline of the quality of big band charts. Through Burke’s discussion, one gains an understanding of the modern notion of the jazz club as listening room. And just as now, economics is shown to have been an important factor.

In regard to inevitable arguments about authenticity and appropriation, Burke, to his credit, gives the facts straight up, again with ample supporting evidence, allowing for the fact that exclusivity was the order of the day for the first denizens of the various clubs. Of particular interest is Burke’s discussion of what might be called the psychosocial underpinnings of musical curiosity. One gains a whole new insight into the phenomenon of the minstrel show.

As years went by, things began to relax on the racial and sexual fronts, at least on this particular street, but not without persistent troubles (which Burke details). After all, the Civil Rights era, with some nominal and actual social integration, didn’t really begin in the U.S. until the mid-’50s. And this country still has a way to go in fulfilling its own dream of equality. But it’s taken a little less time for the melting pot that is New York City truly to meld together. On 52nd Street, asserts Burke, the city got a big musical and cultural head start.
Three Wishes: An Intimate Look at Jazz Greats
Compiled and Photographed by
Pannonica de Koenigswarter

Abrams Image, New York, 2008; 320 pp.; $19.95 paperback

Review by Michele Drayton

Some books are meant to savor, and this is one of them. Called “Nica” or “The Baroness” by the many jazz musicians she befriended, Pannonica de Koenigswarter photographed and jotted down wishes of 300 musicians between 1960 and 1970. The result is a tantalizing read, which this reviewer devoured after glancing at the first wish.

Each page offers a discovery, a glimpse, if ever so briefly, into the personality of musicians who created precious music. For those of us whose only links to this era are music, articles and books, the off-the-cuff remarks in this volume provide, if nothing else, an inside look at an enviable friendship. Musicians wrote more than 20 songs in which Nica’s name appears — Horace Silver’s “Nica’s Dream” and Kenny Dorham’s “Tonica” among them.

Their wishes cover the gamut: money, social justice, recognition of and respect for the music, peace, immortality. Perhaps these wishes reveal how much these musical giants were just like regular folks. A few musicians said they wanted to go into politics, real estate or the technical side of radio and television. Many wished to master their instrument.

Some wishes were introspective, such as one from a composer and arranger who said he wanted “to be me.” Still others had a philosophical tilt: one pianist wanted others to know that civilization did not mean living a frustrated life. A guitarist expressed a beautiful contentment for music and family: “Would a million dollars help me play a good chorus? Or give me more to the one I love?” A saxophonist and composer wanted to transfer his wish to his wife. Humor shows up again and again: “Coitus!” proclaimed a pianist who beckoned the author to a nearby hotel to reveal wishes two and three.

The photos are as valuable as the words. The Baroness shot many in her Weehawken, New Jersey home, capturing famed musical cats along with those on four legs (likely rescued by the author, an animal rights activist). Thelonious Monk called the house Catsville, and then, the Cathouse, because it served as a gathering place and safe haven for musicians. His wife, Nellie, called Nica “a very sincere friend,” according to the introduction written by the author’s granddaughter.

Nadine de Koenigswarter’s introduction and Gary Giddins’s foreword provide context for those unfamiliar with the author, who lived a storied life of her own. Her banker-father named her Pannonica, for a butterfly he discovered while indulging his passion for entomology. She was a member of the Rothschild family, an artist, a participant in the French Resistance movement, wife and mother of five. A separation from her husband brought her to New York, where she was introduced to Monk’s music. In time, she made many friends, joined the musician’s union and used her influence to improve the working life of musicians. She also compiled this project, a lasting gift to jazz lovers who wish to know more about the men and women behind the music.


Photograph by Norm Harris.
Deaths in 2008 and Late 2007.

R.I.P.

Compiled by W. Royal Stokes and Ken Franckling

PETE CONDOLI • IRENE REID • MIRIAM MAKEBA • LA VAUGHN ROBINSON • JOHNNY BRUNIOUS • TEO MACERO • GUS GIORDANO • JIMMY GIUFFRE • HUMPHREY LYTTLETON • JIMMY SYLDE • PATTI BOWN • JIMMY McGRIFF • FRANZ JACKSON • BILL FINEGAN • ESBJÖRN SVENSSON • RONNIE MATHEWS • JO STAFFORD • JOHNNY GRIFFIN • LEE YOUNG • JERRY WEXLER • LARRY EANET • RICHARD SUDHALTER • WILLIAM CLAXTON • NEAL HEFTI • DAVE MCKENNA • PETER J. LEVINSON • STUDS TERKEL • ROSETTA REITZ

Trumpeters Pete Condoli, Bob Enos, Tommy McQuater, Calvin Owens, Keith Smith, Johnny Moore; trumpeter, pianist, bandleader and arranger John Brunious; trumpeter, clarinetist, bandleader, broadcaster and author Humphrey Lyttleton; trumpeter and composer Donald Erb; trumpeter, composer and arranger Neal Hefti

Cornetist, bandleader and writer Richard Sudhalter

Trombonists Deryck (Kanga) Bailey, Ralph Hutchinson, Jimmy Cleveland; trombonist and writer Campbell Burnap

Saxophonists Phil Bodner, Phil Urso, Franz Jackson, Hal Stein, Danny Moss, Johnny Griffin, LeRoi Moore, Ray Reed, Arne Dommerus, Leo Curran Pat Crumly; saxophonist, songwriter and bandleader George Lee; saxophonist, bandleader and jazz educator Jack Oatts; saxophonist, composer and educator Donald Walden; saxophonist and clarinetist Gene Allen; saxophonist and bandleader Mario Schianno; saxophonist, educator and civil rights activist Andy Goodrich

Clarinetist Mahlon Clark; clarinetist and saxophonist Henry Mackenzie

Multi-reed player Alfred J. Gallodoro; multi-reed player, composer, arranger, bandleader and educator Jimmy Giuffre

Multi-instrumentalist, composer and label owner George Davis

Violinist Titi Winterstein

Pianists Chris Anderson, John Arpin, William Doc Hunter, Patti Bown, Gerry Wiggins, Jack Percifil, Bobby Tucker, John Young, Larry Eanet, Bheki Mseleku, BJ Papa (William Jackson), Marc Moulin, Dave McKenna; pianist, bandleader and arranger Bob Florence; pianist, bandleader, arranger and composer Bill Finegan; pianist, bandleader and composer Esbjorn Svensson; pianists and composers Ronnie Mathews, Joseph Diamond

Keyboardist Merl Saunders

Organists Winston Walls, Jimmy McGriff

Vibraphonist Walt Dickerson

Drummers Tony Reedus, Buddy Miles, Rob Blumenthal, Allan Ganley, Bill Reichenbach, Bobby Durham, Kostas Kouvidis, Randy Kaye, Peer Wyboris, Earl Palmer, Jimmy Carl Black, Mitch Mitchell; drummer and producer Lee Young; drummer and percussionist Diego (Mofeta) Iborra

Percussionists Tata Güines (Federico Arístides Soto), Tommy Lopez, Sr., George Gaber, Norman Hedman, Long Joe Rodriguez

Guitarists Hiram Bullock, Joe Beck, Wayne Wright; guitarist, singer and bandleader Frankie Tam Sr., guitarist and educator Werner Pohlert

Bassists Earl May, Dennis Irwin, Hubie Crawford, Dave Carpenter, Jushi (Jean Segal), Wilfrid Middlebrooks; bassist and composer Israel “Cachao” López

Singers Evelyn Knight, Julián Lláños, Jo Stafford, Ralph Young, Gene Puerling, Clea Bradford, Connie Haines, Yma Sumac; singer, bandleader and actress Irene Reid; singer and activist Miriam Makeba; singer and guitarist Henri Salvador; singer, guitarist, trumpeter, clarinetist, bandleader, producer and manager Jeff Healey; singer, pianist, bandleader and composer Iris Bell; singer, composer and guitarist Dorival Caymmi; singer and actress Edie Adams; singer, actress and painter Estelle Reiner

Dancer, educator and writer Gus Gior-dano

Tap dancer Jimmy Slyde; tap dancer and educator LaVaughn Robinson

Blues, R&B, soul, zydeco, gospel, etc. performers Al Wilson, Ira Tucker, Bo Diddley, Isaac Hayes, Pervis Jackson, Nappy Brown, George Jones, Levi Stubbs, Evelyn (Cookie) Gabriel, Dee Dee Warwick

Blues radio hosts Dee (Cap’n Pete) Henderson, Steve Ladd

Composer Lew Spence; composer, producer and record company executive Clyde Otis; composer and trombonist Earle H. Hagen

Writers Ed Fenner III, Werner Burkhardt, Edgardo Vega Yunqué; writer and bandleader Harry O. Brunn; writer and educator Wilfrid Mellers; writer and broadcaster Erik Eriksson; writer and publicist Peter Levinson; writer and producer Juul Anthonissen; writer, producer and activist Rosetta Reitz; writer, educator and clarinetist John Fell; writer, jazz critic, syndicated radio talk show host and actor Studs Terkel

Poet Hayden Carruth; poet and performance artist Peter Rühmkorf

Painter Iba Ndiaye

Broadcaster Bill Pandozzi; broadcaster and promoter Norm Bobrow

Photographers David Gahr, William Claxton; photographer and cultural archivist Michael P. Smith

Filmmaker George Lamboy

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popular forever. Which created an odd juxtaposition, since so much of the music continued to sound friendly and almost childlike in its transparency and simplicity.

Ultimately, what’s so captivating about Bill’s early 1950s photos is the spirit of hope and exuberance. West Coast recording opportunities were abundant, jazz musicians were the hip darlings of the press and the music sounded eternal. But rather than merely glorify artists, Bill knew there was more to the story than cool style and fashion. There was pain and tragedy, and both needed to be documented.

So Bill waited for those moments when uncertainty and vulnerability crept into the eyes and smiles of his subjects. And when he saw doubt through his lens, Bill’s index finger slowly squeezed down on the shutter-release button. Which is precisely what makes Bill’s photos special today. Like the musicians in his photos, Bill was an artist.

Marc Myers is founder and editor of jazzwax.com, one of the most popular daily jazz blogs.