

A TOAST TO THE TOAST

by Crystal Joy Albert

Bathed in the warm glow of my baby pink spotlight, I was wrapped in the candle lit cocoon called "The Toast".

It was a club filled with very hip, well-dressed and successful New Yorkers...new types for me (no Proper Bostonians!)

There was so much fun, hilarious jokes, much applause and freedom to pursue any musical direction I would ever dream of to the approval of the audience swinging with me around the piano bar, buying drinks lined up on the piano. They filled the red leather booths and were served with speedy professional waiters and bartenders all snazzy in crisp red jackets, white shirts, black ties, black pants and highly polished black shoes.

And the food was great! It was a limited menu provided by Pan She San an incredible chef who turned out delicious roast pork, Moo Goo Gai Pan, Egg foo young, fried rice and barbecue ribs. It was perfect for the room! I learned lots just watching him cook!

Every night one could expect to see celebrities such as Dick Van Dyke, Count Basie, Bobby Short, Harold Arlen, Chuck Connors, Carmen McCrae. Dorothy Kilgallen called it the Toast of the town! But the regulars were the sparks for the great atmosphere. They were Wall-Streeters, garment district manufacturers, advertising agency executives, lawyers, doctors and their dates...all music lovers! One of the regulars was a beautiful actress who turned out to be my biggest fan. She brought many celebrities to meet me and at one point talked seriously about managing me. Turns out she was the successful manager of her husband, Don Elliott. Don was an extraordinary multi-instrumentalist who played and recorded Vibes with George Shearing, played mellophone, trumpet, sang, produced music for commercials and was a multi award Clio award winner. I thought seriously about it. The Toast was sublime during the week, but on the weekend it was a different story. It devolved into singles ready to mingle. The guys would rudely describe the gals as "CBS" (come by subway) or "NBC", no ballin' chicks! But the gals were needy and noisy! They were not listeners!!! It was a mad house. It was on one of those raucous evenings that Doris brought ---Steve Allen, Jane and Audrey Meadows to hear me! Even though they sat at the VIP booth right next to the piano, it was hard for them to judge my talent. Nevertheless they liked what they could hear enough to invite me to sing in a quieter atmosphere in Steve's office. They loved me and that was the start of something big! I signed with Doris Elliott as my manager and good things came my way! 🎷

MEET PIANIST AND COMPOSER CAMARA KAMBON

by F. Norman Vickers



Photo of Camara Kambon.

Many Jazz Pensacola members have had opportunity to see and hear our jazz pianist Camara Kambon at jazz jams or jazz gumbo events. However, it's not likely that they have had opportunity to learn about his fascinating background.

Camara grew up in Baltimore and showed talent for music early. At age 10 he began studies at Peabody Preparatory of Johns Hopkins University. He graduated from Friends School and Peabody with honors in both musicianship and classical/jazz piano. He had received several scholarships including the Eubie Blake Scholarship. During his high school years he had opportunities to play with various artists including Dizzy Gillespie and Max Roach.

Following high school graduation, he attended Berklee College of Music in Boston. He used skills in performance and composition he'd learned earlier from various music camps. He began composing for films and TV. One composition, a score for the film "Sonny Liston: The Mysterious Life of a Champion" was written while a senior at Berklee. Subsequently he received an Emmy Award for the score, becoming the youngest composer to have received that award at age 23.

Subsequently, he moved to Los Angeles and did extensive work in collaboration with film director Oliver Stone.

Camara lives at Pensacola Beach. He says that technology is such that he can work anywhere and that this gives him an opportunity to experience different environments which is inspiring. We wish Camara well in his several endeavors and we are blessed to have such a talented musician to perform for us.

A longer interview can be seen on our website www.jazzpensacola.com. 🎷

PLAYING BY EAR AND BY EYE

by Roger Villines

Jazz improvisation, which is basically making and playing a little composition in real time, is a creative act coming from the performer's personal storehouse of ideas and techniques. Students often remark that they just can't think of anything to play. Two concepts that are crucial to this ability can be termed as "playing by ear" and "playing by eye."

First, playing by ear. If you can't read music at all, or can't see at all, playing by ear is all you have got. And, if you are sufficiently gifted, it can be all you need. Playing by ear involves trained listening, then storing of sounds and patterns, then the ability to perform based on those stored sounds and patterns. Tone, tuning, vibrato, style and many other nuances of performance are rooted in hearing. Music lives in the realm of hearing. The more you listen and take in – the better player you can be – up to a point.

For most of us moderately gifted mortals, the playing by eye part can help greatly in achieving a higher level of jazz skills. Of course, first in the line of eye skills is proficiency in reading musical notation. But then in addition to the notes, what about all those colorful jazz chords we see symbolized on the music sheet. How can you know what tones will fit well in the harmony you are about to improvise on. That is when the playing by eye skills really kick in. Chords and scales are like letters in the alphabet that are used to make words in a story. Today's jazz theory teaches a correlation between chords and scales, or in other words, when you see or play a C major chord, the improviser learns that the appropriate scale would probably be C major. I say probably, because it could also be C lydian, which is the 8-note scale built on the fourth note of the G major scale. Taking this much further, the many possible chords in jazz (or any music genre) harmony can be correlated with various scales and modes to serve as resources for improvisation. This gets complicated. This is why we go to music school and read technical books and spend lots of time and effort learning stuff.

Ironically, the best "by eye" players are able to hear in their mind what they see on the paper. One of my lab band instructors at University of North Texas asked the band during rehearsal one day to "show me the music." We all held up the part we were reading. He then said, "No, that is the paper, not the music." The trick is to turn the notes and info on the paper into a musical performance. That means transforming what you see into what everyone hears. This skill can also be applied to play improvised melodies and patterns based on internalized knowledge of the notes and sounds of chords and scales. Now we are getting into advanced performance territory.

The skills and knowledge of playing by ear and by eye end up working together in a synergistic way. This can also be explained as a coordinated left brain plus right brain

thought process. Left brain analytical/methodical plus right brain creative/sensory equals best artistic outcome. So if you really want to be a great jazz improviser, listen to lots of good jazz, internalize the sounds, study jazz theory, then add that knowledge to your internalized sound bank. Then when your solo comes up and you look at the lead sheet with melody notes and chord symbols you can hear in your mind what it might sound like before and while you are playing that great solo. 🎷

UPDATES ON STUDENT JAZZ COMPETITION WINNERS

by Carolyn Tokson

Isabell Peterson, winner of the vocalist portion of several Jazz Pensacola Student competitions is beginning a year of graduate school at UWF where she sings with the UWF Singers. Last year Isabelle also sang with the Pensacola Opera Chorus in Romeo and Juliette. She teaches vocal and guitar lessons here in Pensacola and is the music director at The Church of The Nativity of our Lord. Isabelle was the featured performer with Gino Rosario at Tuesday Jazz Night recently.

Andrew Tinch, guitarist, and winner in the April Student competition, has entered the Frost School of Music with a scholarship from University of Miami. Andrew recently performed a concert for the Gulf Coast Jazz Society which honored him with another scholarship. 🎸

JAZZ EXPERIENCE IN DOWNTOWN MOBILE

by Cay Simpson

Discover a relatively new Live Music Venue – The Listening Room of Mobile. It features local, regional, and national musicians in an intimate setting without outside distractions – truly a pure listening experience.

On a recent Thursday evening, Chip's Jazz 5 was in rare form - Headed by Chip Herrington on cornet, harmonica, and vocals along with Gino Rosaria on keyboard (Pensacola's own), Dave Webb on bass, Larry Carter on sax, and Jimmy Roebuck on drums. The night began with a Chet Baker number "There Will Never be Another You" followed by a Herbie Hancock tune. Then onto a classic Duke Ellington number. Next a blues song by Mose Allison was interspersed with Chip on the harmonica. Afterwards, Jazz 5 launched into "Lazy River" with quintessential jazz improv. A break was provided by "One Note Samba" and "Wichita Lineman." Then few more jazz standards ending the evening with "Show Me the Way to Go Home." It was as a truly spectacular evening of jazz with exceptional musicians!

So plan a trip over to The Listening Room of Mobile owned by Jim Pennington. Reservations recommended. Upcoming show info with ticket cost, location, phone, hours, etc. can be found on website – thelisteningroommobile.com.

DISCOVERY AT THE LIBRARY SALE

by Carolyn Tokson



Mystery author and jazz drummer, Bill Moody.

The Evan Horne mystery series by Bill Moody was a great new discovery for me. I picked up a book, *Fade to Blue*, donated by former board member, Mike Lynch, at the Jazz Pensacola table at the West Florida Public Library's fall book sale. The Friends of the Library allow Jazz Pensacola to piggy back on their sales with a small space for our own book and CD sales. This year a contingent of board members and volunteers assisted Norman Vickers in the two day event. Jeff Elliot, Carolyn Tokson, Justine Ward, Tom and Brenda Bell, and Ron Shelton spent a few hours with Norman spreading the gospel of jazz and encouraging patrons to visit the Jazz Room on the second floor. Norman entertained the book buyers with a few songs on the piano donated by Dr. Bobby Andrews. Our sales earned \$111.

Well, back to the Evan Horne series. The fictional hero Evan is a jazz pianist in the Los Angeles area where he is romantically involved with a glamorous FBI agent and has a city cop as his best friend. Evan tends to use his brain rather than muscle to solve the crime, but the story never lags and is chock full of musical references and events. It makes for an enjoyable read and contains plenty of suspense. The author, Bill Moody, was a drummer who toured with Maynard Ferguson, Jr. Mance, Jon Hendricks and Lou Rawls. He wrote his first Evan Horne mystery in 1994 and in 1996 followed it with *Death of a Tenor Man* which explored the death of saxophonist Wardell Gray. He wrote seven Evan Horne novels and a dozen or more short stories in collections as well as two espionage novels. He also wrote *Jazz Exiles* about his years living and working in Europe. Moody also taught creative writing at University of Nevada and Sonoma State University as well as hosting a weekly jazz radio show in northern California. He died in January of 2018, but his books are still available online. I plan to pick up every one I can find. 🎷

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROCKY DENNY

by Carolyn Tokson

Congratulations to Rocky Denny, a frequent attendee at Jazz Jams and Gumbos. An article about Rocky and his musical career is featured in the online magazine *Jazz and Blues Florida*, a publication of the North Florida Blues Society. Rocky has recently been performing at the Chicago Grill. 🎷

ATTENTION STUDENT JAZZ MUSICIANS!



You are invited to submit an entry to the

2020 Student Jazz Competition

- College Instrumental
- High School Instrumental
- Jazz Vocal

- Three finalists from each Division will perform in the live finals at Phineas Phoggs in Seville Quarter on Monday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m. This event, which will be the March Jazz Gumbo, is free and open to the public.
- Awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each Division, ranging from \$100 to \$500, will be presented at the conclusion of the event.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, February 21, 2020

Ask your band/chorus director for an application,
or go to jazzpensacola.com to download a PDF.



Questions?
Send email to info@jazzpensacola.com
or call (850) 433-8382
Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Want to become a Jazz Pensacola member? Email info@jazzpensacola.com for information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct. 21, 2019** **Jazz Gumbo**
Isabelle Schrack does Nora Jones
Phineas Phogg's
6:30-9:00
- Nov. 4, 2019** **Big Bad Voodoo Daddy**
Foo Foo Fest Event
Vinyl Music Hall
Doors Open at 6:00
Tickets: \$25
- Nov. 10, 2019** **Jazz for Justice**
Seville Quarter
11:00am-7:00pm
- Dec. 9, 2019** **Jingle Jazz**
North Pole Panic
Phineas Phogg's
6:30-9:00

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: THE STUDER FOUNDATION

by Carolyn Tokson



A consistent sponsor of Jazz Pensacola's Student Competition, the Studer Foundation has as its goal to improve the daily life of the community by funding other non-profit organizations who serve the poor, children, education and the elderly. The Foundation was founded in 2011 after the sale of the Studer Group. Funded by private funds from Quint and Rishy Studer, the foundation has given over \$4,000,000 in financial donations since then. The Studer Foundation Board is filled by Studer Family members and meets twice annually to consider applications submitted for funding. Jazz Pensacola is grateful for the support of the Studer Foundation. 

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