

## NIGHT LOVE

by Rickey Duffey Jr.



Drummer Rickey Duffey Jr. ready to hit the drums.

I was born into a family that is musically inclined. As a young child growing up in Pensacola, my parents noticed instantly my love for music and especially my passion for the drums. My father, Rickey Duffy Sr., a musician and preacher, encouraged my gift and immediately began cultivating it. At the age of 2, my parents bought me my first drum set and poured music into me constantly. As the years passed, I gained more and more exposure, playing at local churches, with various groups and choirs during concerts and workshops.

When I reached high school I began to broaden my horizon in music under the direction of Mr. Terry Sanders. Under Mr. Sanders's direction I learned so much about not only music but a lot about life. I was a member of the Escambia High School Marching band "The Pride" and was a 4-year member of "The Diamonds" indoor percussion ensemble. I was also a drummer in the Jazz ensemble where I had my first opportunity to record.

I wanted to further my music career and got that opportunity in 2007 when I joined the New Orleans funk band, Nu-Beginnings and toured in Brazil with the group for several years. Different opportunities came from that where I began touring and recording with Erica Falls in Brazil as well. This is where I learned about the music business from many of the members in the band.

After touring in Brazil, I joined forces with and began mentoring two of Pensacola's up and coming musicians, Chris Snowden and the late Ramar Baker. I started playing with them, and together we become the most sought after trio in the area. From Gospel concerts, to smooth jazz and R&B concerts, if you saw one of us, you saw all three. I came back on the jazz scene and joined Gino Rosario for Tuesday Night Jazz in 2015. I'm also the drummer for the award-

winning band Groove Symphony.

I had the opportunity to teach high school percussion as well. I have taught at Gulf Breeze High School where I led the students to the GCGPC championship in 2015. I then spent four years as the director of percussion at West Florida High School. In 2018 I returned home to Escambia High School to become the director of percussion after Mr. Sanders retired.

This year, 2020 has been a very unusual year. When the coronavirus shut us down, the outside gigs were either put on hold or canceled all together. I was able to refocus myself and focus on my goals musically, all the while spending much needed time with my wife, my daughter and my two sons and preparing for our last son's arrival in January 2021. So the down time really allowed me to balance myself. I got started with the single and I wanted it to be special for my grandmother. My grandmother has always been a big influence in my life musically, and she was a huge music lover and musician herself. The single entitled "Night Love" was written by the great Jeff Lorber. My grandmother was an avid fan of Mr. Lorber. I thought it would be fitting to cover one of his songs. Sadly, my grandmother passed away in July and didn't get to hear the single. I decided to release the single on October 31 in her honor. It was a great experience working with some amazing musicians who are great friends of mine. Ramar Baker, Chris Snowden, Carlos Vizosa, Jordan Love, and Anthony Williams helped make the single come to life. A few months after we finished the single, we lost Ramar. He was like a little brother to me. He helped me arrange the single and also played a solo on the track. A week before the release of the single, we lost my father-in-law, Dr. Elder Bernard C. Yates. I decided to push the date back. On November 17, I made it official and the single "Night Love" was released. That was a special moment for me. The single is dedicated to my grandmother, Ramar and my father-in-law. Now, I'm focusing on finishing the project and releasing an album in mid-February.

## MUSICAL TREATS DURING LOCKDOWN

by F. Norman Vickers

Some delightful musical pleasures have come my way lately and I'm pleased to share.

Thanks to Cox Cable, a technician made a house-call and installed a new cable box, gratis. This new gadget allowed me to watch YouTube on my TV. There are advantages over computer or cellphone, namely: larger picture and better sound. And, bonus advantage, I get to sit in my easy chair!

More musical events are being presented on YouTube because of restricted travel and restricted gatherings because of the threat of transmission of Covid-19. A couple of months ago, I was able to watch the live presentation of

*"Musical Treats" Continued...*

*"Musical Treats" Continued...*

89th birthday celebration honoring multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan. I contacted him later by phone and letter. This was a few weeks before he died of advanced pancreatic cancer. I wrote up a brief story and obituary for our own newsletter and it was also used by The Syncopated Times. Most of you know that it is a successor to The American Rag.

I write this column the day after Thanksgiving. Tonight, I will watch, for free, a presentation by several groups for The San Diego Jazz Festival. Included tonight will be drummer Hal Smith and New Orleans pianist John Royen, both of whom have performed for Jazz Pensacola at various times. Last night, I was on a kick to watch master pianist Dick Hyman. As many of you know, Dick moved from New York City to Venice, FL a couple of decades ago. Dick can play in any style and had written instruction manuals. He and Woody Allen are longtime friends and Woody, a mediocre clarinetist by his own characterization, had a Monday night gig where he would surround himself with outstanding musicians. Hyman was his pianist for that event.

This explains why Woody never attended the televised awards ceremonies in Hollywood as that would preclude his clarinet gig!

Also, recently, I tuned in to the West Coast Ragtime Society and was thrilled with the presentations. As most of you know, of course, ragtime, primarily solo piano, was a precursor to jazz.

Recently the Hot Springs Jazz Society has made a Facebook and YouTube presentation and there is an upcoming presentation on YouTube by the Gulf Coast Jazz Society in Ft. Lauderdale.

And closer to home, just three days ago, I found a video of Johnny Gimble which was taken by our own Phil Thomas Katt several years ago. Johnny was primarily known as a country fiddle player, but he was an excellent jazz player. Originally from Texas, he was in Nashville at same time as fellow Texan Willie Nelson. It was during that time he discovered the campground at Ft. Pickens. So, Johnny and his wife would come back to Pensacola and camp there. Johnny came to an early jam session and we were so impressed that he was invited back for Pensacola JazzFest a couple times. A couple of years after Hurricane Ivan, Johnny came back with his guitarist son, his pianist granddaughter and her husband, a bassist. They played for a Jazz Gumbo and Phil made the video. Phil brought out the video, interviewed me to tell about our encounters with Johnny and produced the 13-minute YouTube video. Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/nL6YXVciwxs> If that doesn't work try UZ Johnny Gimble Our Love Is Here to Stay.

So, be adventurous and explore these possibilities. Remember, you can also check out materials from the jazz room at the downtown West Florida Public Library. Our own Jazz Pensacola website as well as that of the library have instructions on how to do it. Also, if all else fails, phone the library and they will assist you. 

## CHRIS HOPKINS MEETS JAZZ KANGAROOS

by F. Norman Vickers



Chris Hopkins by a red Steinway in Germany. Photo by Kuenstler.

Chris Hopkins is an American pianist who lives in Germany. He tours Europe and the U. S. where he plays piano with various groups and alto saxophone with his European group, Echoes of Swing. I have heard him perform at various U. S. jazz parties on both instruments. One duo piano event where he was paired with Dick Hyman was most spectacular. I have reviewed some of the Echoes of Spring CDs so was eager to review this one.

The Jazz Kangaroos, as you might guess from the name, are a seasoned Australian trio consisting of violinist/vocalist George Washingmachine (yes, that's his real name), guitarist David Blenkenhorn, and bassist Mark Elton.

All ten numbers on this CD are likely familiar to those even barely acquainted with early jazz and swing music. For example, Can't We Be Friends; Blue Lou; A Hundred Years from Today, and the Benny Carter/Spencer Williams tune When Lights are Low, should be familiar to most. Each member of this quartet has an opportunity to show his musical talents with support from the other three.

I learned from communication from Chris, that he has a two-night annual event for an appreciative audience using a different group each year. There is a YouTube posting of this event with a somewhat younger audience that I'm used to seeing at U. S. jazz events, a healthy sign! And speaking of YouTube, Chris appears on several on both piano and on alto sax with his Echoes of Spring group.

In summary, this is a fun CD which should appeal to a wide audience, especially those who love melody, early jazz and swing. It is available directly from Chris Hopkins' website: <https://Hopkins.Jazz.com/shop> or Amazon, Apple Music and Spotify.

## WHAT'S JAZZING?

by Carolyn Tokson

Here we are heading into a new year! 2020 has offered us enough challenges and we are looking for some good news on any front. It has been a particularly taxing year for small jazz organizations, jazz musicians and jazz clubs. Innovation and patience seem to be the keys to survival; jazz is still in the air. Did you read about the elderly retired gentleman

in Poland who pulled his keyboard to the window and serenaded his neighbors with jazz standards? His dream is to play with Tuba Skinny, but right now, it's too cold for him to continue his spring and summer window musical events. It's the same in NY with winter already in bloom. Luckily here in Pensacola, we have enough warmth that there may still be musicians sending music into the streets.



Roger Villines (left) and Noemi Ruiz play horns at a Jazz Jam.

That's what happens at the Jazz Jams at the 5 Barrel with the wide doors open. Fresh air coming in and jazz lifting into the air. Unfortunately, the Board of Directors of Jazz Pensacola felt it safest to cancel our annual Jingle Jazz fundraiser and any Gumbos until we have a better report of the situation with the virus. So stay tuned.



Fred Domulot (left), Dave Schmidt (center), and John Eisinger (right) at a Jazz Jam.

We have JazzFest scheduled for May 15 and 16, 2021 and are looking forward to better times by then. Until then, we will continue with Jazz Jams at 5 Barrel on Palafox. That's the first Wednesday of the month. 5 Barrel has a very good air ventilation system and offers the opportunity for keeping the wide doors open. We are also looking into the possibility of more online events. For the latest blogs and events, check our website at [www.jazzpensacola.com](http://www.jazzpensacola.com)

The Jazzabouts, led by Art Carnrick, continue to perform at Calvert's on Tuesdays, and Joe Occhpinti is at the Drowsy Poet on Saturdays and at Alice's Restaurant on Intendencia St. on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 PM. Then he's back at Calvert's for Sunday Brunch. A steady crew of Jazz Pensacola members have enjoyed the music of Jim Andrews

on sax outdoors on Thursdays at The Cactus Flower. The restaurant has heaters for the outdoor diners. At Mc Guire's Irish Pub you can find Al Alvarado on Sundays 11-2.

Two elegant evenings are in the works to put you in a festive mood. Gino Rosaria's 7th annual Christmas Jazz Concert is scheduled for Sunday, December 20, at Seville Quarter from 6 to 8 PM. It will be an exclusive event in an intimate setting to provide social distancing because of the coronavirus. Check out Gino's schedule for upcoming events at [info@ginorosaria.com](mailto:info@ginorosaria.com). Sheila Green is hosting her annual Red Celebration, Sunday, December 27 at 6 PM at It's Personal by Sheila, 2610 West Cervantes. Tickets cost \$65 and are available through 850-377-4692. This show features Julian Vaughn, Marcus Anderson and Lin Roundtree. If Shelia does it, it will be top-notch.

Jones and Company is at Bric-a-Brac in Destin on Fridays, 7-10 PM and at AJ's on Sunday's 4-8 PM. St. Andrew, FL offers live jazz on Fridays from 6-9 PM at Alice's on Bayview and at the Sunday Brunch from 10:30 AM-1 PM. The Shrimp Boat features live jazz on Fridays from 6-9 PM and Saturdays from 5-9 PM.

Kudos to Dave Schmidt, vice -president of Jazz Pensacola, who made the front page of the Pensacola News Journal with cogent advice about the city's need to deal with homelessness of citizens and the impact on the downtown ambience.

Congratulations are in order for our Jazz Pensacola Administrator, Alice Crann Good, who has announced the publication of her first children's book, Betsy the Bookworm's Book Revolution. Illustrations are by Danielle Swick. It is available for purchase on Amazon at \$12.99. Alice has written two more books that will be published in 2021. You might want to include that on your list of gifts for the children in your circle. Also remember Al Martin's children's book, Al's Ten Fingers.

Dr. Joseph Spaniola, Director of Music Theory and Jazz Studies at the University of West Florida has faced serious challenges in terms of finding ways for his jazz ensemble and jazz combo to practice or to present events in a safe environment. To meet coronavirus protocols, he has resorted to practices outdoors and had to cancel live concerts. Virtual concerts were the answer. Here are links to two concerts on YouTube. Thanks to Joe for cueing us in to these opportunities.

The UWF Jazz Combo: <https://youtu.be/B1r7TXqjPa0>

The UWF Jazz Ensemble: <https://youtu.be/UxwzMLbUgTU>

Another interesting online event featuring the Klezmer Company Jazz Orchestra is Hanukkah in Jazz Time to be presented Monday December 14 at 7:30 PM. If you miss it, they have several videos on their website and on YouTube.

Plan ahead for January. The JazzAid Live at Pinecrest Garden's Banyan Bowl offers the Glen Miller Orchestra Saturday, January 16 at 7 PM.

Best wishes to Holly Shelton as she recovers from recent

*"Jazzing" Continued...*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 15 & 16, 2021 Pensacola JazzFest**  
Seville Square  
Schedule TBD

*"Jazzing" Continued...*

surgery, and to Vivian Lamont who is back home after another stay in the hospital. We offer sincere condolences to Chuck Minnick, former Jazz Pensacola board member, on the death of his wife, Peggy. Also we were saddened to learn of the passing of Nina Walsh. Both Nina and Barney were regular attendees at the Jazz Gumbos; we will miss seeing them dance. Andi Greenlee who used to be a part of the admissions door crew is having a complicated surgery in Gainesville in early January. We send her all the best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Hannukah is already underway as I finish this column, and Christmas and Kwanzaa are on the horizon along with Boxing Day and New Year's Eve. Best wishes for joy and peace with whichever holidays you are celebrating at your homes and with friends and family. Please be safe and enter the new year in health with some jazz in your heart. Let us keep on keeping on and as Charlie Chaplin advises, "Smile".



## THE JOYS OF MEMBERSHIP

by Carolyn Tokson

My mother, Maxine Joyce, died four years ago this Christmas. The last really great thing that happened to her was Jingle Jazz. I was already ill with bronchitis which moved into pneumonia. I recall how excited she was that she was going even though I had to stay home. I made certain she was all dressed up in red and had lovely rhinestone combs in her French twist of white hair. Within a few days she was ill and after two weeks, hospice nurses arrived. We had already known that this would be her last year. Still she hadn't missed a single jazz event.

When we moved back to Pensacola from New York in 2012 and moved into Mama's home here, we knew very few people. We went to a Jazz Pensacola Blues night within about two weeks and that was the beginning of a love affair between my mother and jazz and blues. I recall her listening to Perry Como and Andy Williams when I was a girl, but jazz, never. She wanted to join the Society at intermission the first night. Kathy Lyon was working the door and Crystal Joy Albert and Norman Vickers were there welcoming the three of us. Their cordiality and the music made us feel included in a room of strangers.

From that night forward, my mother missed no single Jazz Pensacola event unless she was in the hospital or in rehab. She loved the music, the musicians, and the ambiance. Every

JazzFest she had to sit as close to the gazebo as possible even if she had a seat in the VIP tent. She invited her friends to come. She spread the gospel of listening to jazz to anyone who would listen. She waved at all the musicians she met and loved if they wanted to give her a kiss or hug. When we lost the venue for the Blues night, she was most unhappy. "What do you mean, only two events a month?" she asked. "Go find me some jazz!" she ordered. The Jazz Society of Pensacola had become our extended family by then. The events gave my mother's last years a joy at a time when she could not do the activities of her formerly busy life. She was in a wheel chair or on a walker and in her late eighties and early nineties. She loved being able to mingle with younger people who could still dance and be active. It gave her a freedom to expand her life at a time when it could have been a prison.

Membership is important. It gives one a sense of some sort of ownership and belonging to a group of people with common interests. It allows one to be a part of something larger than one's own small world. It invests the member in perpetuating jazz, a art form that will be here and all around the world in various forms, when we are no longer here. It brings a kind of joy and freedom that allows us to soar... even in a wheel chair. Renew your membership. It's not too late. Join and be a part of the invisible family of jazz. It could change your life. It did for my mother. It can for you. 

## DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

The challenges of COVID-19 are indeed real to a 501(c)(3) organization such as Jazz Pensacola. Many of the major non-profits are having to scale back events and close their doors as the virus rages. Naturally, we as a small jazz society are in the same situation as the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic Symphony, only we do not have the large endowment funds that they possess. If you have the means, think of making a donation to assist us as we navigate this uncertain time. Our board is being as thrifty as possible but there is still the office rent, the administrator's salary, the electric bill, the insurance. Remember, all donations are tax-deductible. You may send a check to Jazz Pensacola, 3 West Garden St. Suite 418, Pensacola, FL 32502 or you may call the office at 433-8382 and make a donation by phone. We appreciate your generosity.

"Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn. They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But, man, there's no boundary line to art."

- Charlie Parker