

GROWING UP IN JAZZ

by Ron Shelton



Ron Shelton reads his manuscript. Photo by F. Norman Vickers.

At age eight, I began to study piano but gave it up a year later for a greater interest in sports; I regret that now.

When I was ten years old my father took my mother and me to New York City for a family vacation. One day, while there and visiting many museums and historical sites up until about seven p.m., he decided he wanted to have dinner at Franks Restaurant, a famous eatery in downtown Manhattan. I was exhausted and begged out of going. Dad said O. K. but asked me if I knew how to get back to our hotel, the Theresa, located uptown at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue. I said no but if he told me the directions, I could find it. Surprisingly, he said to catch the 7th Avenue subway, get off at 125th Street and walk one block to the Theresa Hotel. He gave it no thought, so I didn't either. When the subway reached 125th street, I got off and began walking to the hotel. On the way, I passed the Apollo Theater and noticed the midnight show was featuring the Andy Kirk Band and singer, Dinah Washington. This excited me to no end as I had heard about Dinah and knew that Andy featured a homeboy on trumpet, Arthur Capehart. I couldn't wait to tell Dad about the show and convince him to take me to see the performance. I went to my room and waited for Mom and Dad to get there. I waited until about 11:45 p.m. and they had not yet come in. I decided that I could not miss the opportunity to see and hear these great artists, and off I went to the Apollo. The cost of admission was fifty cents, and I had a dollar!

When Dad and Mom checked into the hotel around 2:30 a.m., they asked the bellman if I had arrived safely and he told them, yes, about fifteen minutes ago. Dad was shocked and rushed to the room to comfort me and inquire of my whereabouts. I told him I had waited on them but did not want to miss the start of the show. Dad hugged me and said he wanted me to be a man, but not that fast! He promised he would never do it again. I felt grown and loved and began my jazz journey.

I was hooked on jazz after that venture and began listening to as much jazz music as I could. When I was about fourteen years old, my dad bought my little brother a set of drums. This baffled me as I thought I should have been the one to get them. So I just learned how to play them and eventually joined a local group called The Swingsters to hone my jazz affection. We played local clubs, schools or wherever we could get a gig.

When I was sixteen, I spent a vacation with my aunt in Detroit. She was a jazz enthusiast and took me to my first nightclub, the Frolic Show Bar. George Shearing was the featured artist. Later I saw Lennie Tristano at the Flame Club.

Dad bought our first records to the home. They were Stan Kenton, Gene Krupa, and the "Jazz at the Philharmonic" groups. During my high school days, "The Chitlin' Circuit" bands were touring throughout the East and South, I saw such bands and combos as Wynonie Harris, Ray Brown, Charles Brown, Sir Charles Thompson, Amos Milburn, Roy Milton, Bull Moose Jackson, Luck Millinder, Louis Jordan and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson.

After graduation from high school, I continued my education at Howard University in Washington, D. C. and visited the Howard Theater often. I saw the bands of Count Basie, Erroll Garner, Clifford Brown, Max Roach, Bud Powell, Wild Bill Davis, Charles Mingus, Kenny Clark, Sonny Rollins, Buddy Rich, Bill Evans, Earl Hines, John Coltrane Art Blakey, Cannonball Adderley, Hank Mobley, Nat King Cole, Wynton Marsalis, Ahmad Jamal, Milt Jackson, Sonny Stitt and Johnny Hartman. Stitt and Hartman were personal friends of mine.

After retiring from the U. S. Government, I moved to Pensacola and joined the Jazz Society and supported its efforts to enhance jazz in this community. It has been an enriching experience and one that I will cherish and continue to grow in my love for jazz.

I have been involved in jazz since the late forties and have witnessed the stylistic shifts and new influences in this ever evolving music. "Keep Jazz Alive" is an objective of mine in my senior years. 

VICKERS GETS MENTIONED IN THE SYNCOPATED TIMES

by F. Norman Vickers

Larry Melton, columnist for The Syncopated Times (TST), a monthly jazz newspaper published in Utica, NY, has written a column reviewing the history of the newspaper since its transition from the former publication, The American Rag. That transition from editor Don Jones, of Apple Valley California, to current editor Andy Senior in Utica occurred in early 2016.

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Melton reviews the transition and mentions other columnists including Lew Shaw, Russ Tarby, associate editor Joe Bebco and Pensacola's own Norman Vickers. Melton wrote, "I learned of F. Norman Vickers' passion for music and medicine from the book, 'Doctors Afield' edited by Mary G. McCrea, et al, and was intrigued by Dr. Vickers' interest and extensive background in Jazz. His knowledge of the history and music began to grow while he was at SMU in the 1940s. I was still in elementary school when he was entering college. All these men have been at this a very long time."

The article reviews additional columnists and jazz stories up to the current issue. One of the reviewers of jazz books and CDs for TST is Scott Yanow who has an extensive bibliography of books as well as multiple reviews and CD liner notes.

TST's major focus is early jazz and swing but current books and recordings are prominently featured as well. Jazz magazines JazzTimes, Downbeat, and The Syncopated Times are also available in the Jazz Room at the downtown West Florida Public Library. Jazz Pensacola is a longtime advertiser, initially in The American Rag and then subsequently in The Syncopated Times when it made its transition in 2016. One may subscribe for print edition or online edition/ or both. See www.syncopatedtimes.com or write TST 1809 Whitesboro St., Utica NY 13502-3719. 🎷

JANUARY JAZZ JAM

by Carolyn Tokson

The January Jazz Jam was a marvelous evening of music as the house band was joined by numerous musicians. Trumpet player, Roger Villines, past president of Jazz Pensacola, led the house band with John Link, Board of Directors member on keyboard, Grammy winner, Steve Gilmore on bass, and Fred Domulot, president of Jazz Pensacola on drums. They were joined at various times by saxophone players Kyle Baker and Cole Kariher; drummers Corbin Walsh and Jenson Cadenhead, vocalists Isabel and Gabby Schrack as well as Art Carnrick singing and playing guitar. To top it off, an entire band, Chill Zone, performed with Dr. Louie Watson on guitar, Delroy Canton (aka Bonez) on saxophone, Ernest Toole on drums, and Felix Simmons on bass guitar. Cole and Corbin are both students at Gulf Breeze High School and Jenson, Isabel and Gabby are students at UWF. There were two renewals of membership and two new memberships. Check the Jazz Pensacola website to see our upcoming schedule of events and plan to be at the next Jam. Jams are held bi-monthly on the first Monday of the month at the Vineyard on 12th Avenue in the second floor of the old Sacred Heart Hospital Building. By the way, the food at the Vineyard is superb. Try the lamb lollipops if you are a carnivore. the gluten-free chocolate cake is divine. There are vegetarian and vegan options as well. Bring a friend, or why not a few friends. It's always a night of good music and fun. 🎷

JAZZ PARTY; WITH DELFEAYO MARSALIS AND UPTOWN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

by F. Norman Vickers



Jazz Party CD Album Cover

When this CD arrived for review I thought that, if it were anything like he previously produced CDs, trombonist-bandleader-composer Delfeayo Marsalis would produce another musically challenging and thought provoking recording. He doesn't disappoint.

As with his previously produced CDs including Southern Gentleman—a duo recording with his pianist father Ellis and Make America Great Again, recorded with his big band we get a sly tongue-in-cheek sociological essay along with an interesting commentary on how the recording was produced. Delfeayo composed and arranged most of the music whereas other band members also made contributions in the composition and arrangements. Delfeayo and his big band perform on most Wednesday nights at Snug Harbor on New Orleans' Frenchman Street and this recording favorably reflects their work together.

As the name of the recording implies, this is upbeat, contemporary New Orleans party music. Any of this would be appropriate for a "second-line" celebration.

Along the sociological line, D. Marsalis has composed a tune he calls Mboya's Midnight Cocktail. Liner notes indicate the Mboya is Delfeayo's autistic younger brother. There is a one-way conversation in a crowded bar between the cocktail waitress and the mute patron. And, on the last cut on the album, the composition is played again without the speaking part.

If well executed New Orleans party music is on your wish-list, this is a recording for you, but you'll need to wait for the February release. 🎷

Do you have a birthday coming up? A great way to celebrate is to host a Jazz Jam on the first Monday of the month or a Jazz Gumbo on the third. We've had some terrific parties sponsored by members. The cost is \$300 for a Jam and \$400 for a Gumbo. Plan ahead and see if this would be a pleasant way to celebrate some special event and support Jazz Pensacola at the same time. Remember that a donation to the society is a tax-deductible expense. It's a win-win situation.

JAZZ ROOM AT WEST FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARY

by F. Norman Vickers

Historical Background: There was a small collection of jazz LPs at the downtown library. The Jazz Society of Pensacola (now DBA Jazz Pensacola) started in 1983 and was incorporated at a not-for-profit organization in 1984. This was the time, also, when CD recordings were beginning to supplant the long playing records.

Some of the Jazz Pensacola members approached the director Eugene Fischer about that collection. He indicated that he would like to have a significant jazz collection but didn't have that expertise. With that information and desire, some of us from Jazz Pensacola volunteered to assist in helping build a significant collection. We partnered with record producers George Buck of New Orleans (Jazzology Records and a number of other companies) and Gus Statiras of New York and Tifton, Georgia. So, the early 1980s were the beginnings of the jazz collection at the downtown library. The Friends of the West Florida Public Library were willing to partner with us and have, from the beginning, matched the monetary donation of Jazz Pensacola. Of course, jazz books were also part of that collection and then as jazz videotapes were supplanted with DVDs those were added as well.

This jazz collection was originally housed in the main portion of the library, but when the new addition to the library in 2013, it essentially doubled the available space. Subsequently, the original portion of the library was renovated and there was space allocated for a jazz room. Dr. Ralph Knowles made a significant donation toward the establishment of the jazz room. A plaque in the jazz room indicates that donation was made in memory of his wife Janet, also a dedicated jazz fan. A committee from the Jazz Society which includes Norman Vickers and Ralph Knowles has worked with library staff and Friends of WFPL regarding content and additions to the collection. And, as mentioned, the Friends of WFPL have always matched the monetary contributions of the Jazz Society. Currently, the collection is valued at \$20,000. The collection includes play-along music books and recordings as well as the Charles Anderson Fakebook series which contains approximately 9,000 jazz tunes, some of which have never before been printed as sheet music.

Also there are framed jazz posters, photographs and paintings in the jazz room and adjacent rooms which also enhance the jazz theme. These photos include Pensacola jazz artists who made a success in the larger jazz world. They include Gigi Gryce, Bulee "Slim" Gaillard, and Dr. Don Shirley.

Current director of WFPL, Todd Humble, has researched the subject and has discovered that there is only one other public library in the U. S., in Washington state, which has a dedicated jazz room. There are other libraries which have rooms dedicated to music, but only one other which is solely

dedicated to jazz.

Currently, the working members of the jazz room team include WFPL Director Todd Humble, 850-438-5048; Amy J. Horosky, library adult services director 850-436-5055; representing Jazz Society of Pensacola, Inc. Dr. Ralph Knowles 850-494-7958; and Dr. F. Norman Vickers, 850-324-5022.

Again, the Jazz Society and West Florida Public Library are grateful for the continuing partnership of the Friends of the WFPL for their assistance in this program. 

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH GUMBOS

by Carolyn Tokson

You are in for a treat! January 20, local saxophonist, Jim Andrews leads a talented quartet of musicians featuring the music of Grover Washington Jr., one of the all-time great saxophone players. He is joined on keyboard by Bryce Lyublanovits, a winner in our 2019 Student Competition; Aundre Conner, bassist and a winner in our 2018 Student Competition; James Proctor, vocalist and drummer.

Then in February, Jazz Pensacola offers the Super Jazz Gumbo fundraiser with the band Corporate America (NOLA). This group has been together since 2010 and have a reputation as a premier Funk, R&B, Soul/ Rock and Roll Band in New Orleans. The band captivates audiences with their wide rang of music and the chemistry between band members. This should be a night to remember. That's on the 17th... President's Day.

March is only one month before Jazz Fest April 4 and 5 and the perfect time for one of my favorite nights of the year which features the Jazz Pensacola Student Competition. Finalists in high school and college instrumental and voice categories will perform with a professional band and walk away with monetary rewards to further their education in jazz music. The youthful energy on the stage is palpable in the audience who usually give this evening rave reviews. So mark down March 16, and while you are at it, write a check for \$100 if you would like to be a member of the JETS (Jazz Education Team Supporters). It's tax-deductible and makes it possible for us to give the awards to such talented young musicians. 

GET YOUR GIG POSTED ON THE JAZZ PENSACOLA WEBSITE

Are you a working musician? Did you know that you can have your gig posted on the Jazz Pensacola website calendar by contacting our office by email at info@jazzpensacola.com or by calling the office at 850-433-8382. This service by Jazz Pensacola offers a place for local residents and out-of-town visitors to learn about jazz events in the area as well as gives musicians free publicity for their gigs. 

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 20, 2020** **Jazz Gumbo**
Jim Andrews plays the work of
Grover Washington Jr.
Phineas Phogg's
6:30pm-9:00pm
- Feb. 5, 2020** **2020 Snowbird Extravaganza**
Jazz Pensacola presents Art Carnick
Skopelos at New World
11:00am-1:00pm
- Feb. 8, 2020** **Volunteer Meet Up**
Coffee & Chat
V. Paul's Italian Ristorante
10:00am-11:00am
- Feb. 17, 2020** **Super Jazz Gumbo**
Corporate America
Phineas Phogg's
6:30pm-9:00pm

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: CUSTOM CONTROL SOLUTIONS

by Manfred Lander



Custom Control Solutions, Inc. is a leading Manufacturer of Industrial Pre-Fabricated Steel Buildings, Control Panels, Analyzer Systems and Systems Integration in the Gulf Coast Area. We manufacture products for not only for clients in the local area, such as Ascend, International Paper and ECUA, but also clients in the industrial sector world-wide. Our work has been installed in paper mills, power plants, oil refineries, chemical plants and more. The items we manufacture run the processes in industrial plants and help to produce the products you use every day. CCS works behind the scenes to make sure consumers have the goods they need; everything from the gas you put in your car to the glass on your smartphone, helium for medical use and the diapers young families need. CCS is proud to be a part of the Escambia County community and has 2 locations in the Cantonment area. We employ 45 people and are supporters in the local schools for trade education: welding, electrical and instrumentation and control. CCS has been in business for 15 years with growth every year, thanks to our excellent reputation for a quality product, delivered on time and on budget. CCS is a proud sponsor of the Pensacola Jazz Fest because we recognize that life isn't only technical. The arts are what make life beautiful. 

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.

Thank you to our new members from December 2019!

James Green
Bill and Beth Blank
Mark Gillman and Jeff Nall

