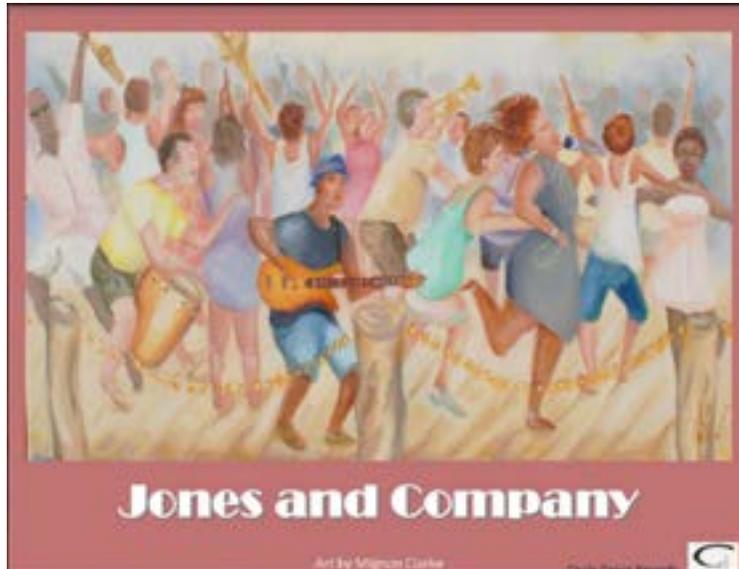


JONES AND COMPANY CELEBRATE 30-PLUS YEARS.... AND COUNTING!

by Dr. Cheryl Jones



Artwork for the article by Dr. Cheryl Jones is by Mignon Clarke, a self-taught artist living in Battle Creek, Michigan, from the cover for *Raise the Roof*, an album by Jones and Company. Clarke says her work “was inspired by the band’s infectious energy and ability to make the crowd move. I just wanted to capture some of that magic.”

Since 1989, It's been a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of the musical group, Jones and Company, as this group of musicians continues to be celebrated and appreciated for weaving its beautiful musical tapestry that blends Jazz, Funk, R&B, Soul, and World Music. This has been our goal from the beginning: To transcend traditional musical boundaries while giving listeners a treat in innovative original artistic musical expression, for as long as we can!

It's been an exciting 30-Plus years as, over the years, Jones and Company has produced six artistically acclaimed albums, received multiple awards, while being featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles, as well as being featured on numerous live television and radio programs. The performance venues over the decades, including the night clubs, the festival stages, such as, The Pensacola Jazz Festival, The Panama City Jazz Festival, The Seabreeze Jazz Festival, have provided the arena for this band to perform its artistic original music from the depths of its musical Soul—compelling all to move and groove, and interact in such a joyous way. I've LOVED being a part of this experience! Whether playing an original song from any of our CDs, or performing arrangements of an old-school favorite, this band delivers a sound that makes it hard for folks to keep their seat! All of this culminating to make the

Jones and Company experience---TIMELESS!

Time flies when you're having fun, especially the fun I've had creating music with my talented bandmates. The rhythm section of Jones and Company includes: Denny Jones (Bass & Vocals); Yours truly, Dr. Cheryl Jones (Keyboards & Vocals, Music Director); Brent Purcell (Drums). Jones and Company also includes Ellis Jones (Trombone); Paul Scurto (Trumpet, Vocals); Ike Bartley (Saxes, Vocals); Wayne Burkholder (Guitar, Vocals). Jones and Company is grateful to include the musical talents of Stanley Watson (Drums); and John Link (Saxes, Vocals). Over the years, Jones and Company has also included: Al Alvarado (Sax, Flute, Vocals); Robin Shanklin (Drums); Stuart Redd (Guitar, Vocals); Chris Thomas (Drums). Special Guest Artists Include: Michael J. Thomas (Saxes, Vocals); Jennifer Morgan (Trumpet); Fly Dents (Saxes, Vocals); Gary Henry (Vocals)...as each has brought soooooo much to the Jones and Company musical experience for which I am ...we are, still, grateful.

There have been so many good times over the decades: We've opened up for Ben Vereen, The Commodores, Tuck and Patti. We've had great musicians sit-in with us, including Mickey Thomas of Jefferson Starship singing, 'On Dock of The Bay' at The Ole Florida Fish House; Steve Ferrone, of Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers and The Average White Band drumming with us at AJS on James Brown's hit song, 'Sex Machine'; and we certainly cherish our Destin Seafood Festival performance with the legendary drummer and vocalist, Jab'o (John) Starks. Such good times, indeed!

With these good times, the musicians of Jones and Company have certainly enjoyed performing with each other. I would say, perhaps two basic elements have kept us going over time: (1) The huge influence of Jazz on our music and preparation; and (2) Huge community support. Both of these elements encourage us to stay fresh---to stay new with our music.

The first element that has kept us going is: Jazz. Jazz influences us to practice—To stay on top of our musical game. Jazz commands one to woodshed...and to stay aware of what music, itself, might need or what music might like to do. Jazz allows us to, not only interact with music—But also allows us to interact with each other...To negotiate with each other...To inspire each other...To get exhausted from the experience and joy of playing with each other. Jazz allows us to consider all genres of music—all eras of music—and make older eras sound new...and current eras of music to sound classic with a lot of depth. This is the challenge for the artist; and Jazz gives us the medium with which to succeed. Not all musicians of Jones and Company claim to be Jazz musicians...BUT each appreciates the challenge and freedom that Jazz compels.

“Jones & Company” Continued...

The second element that has kept us going is: ongoing community support. Jones and Company would not be here for 30-plus Years if not for the wonderful support from the community! We've been invited to perform for family events, including weddings, Main- Street events, and birthday parties. There are folks who come out to see us EVERY WEEK!!! Folks of all ages, including young folks and folks-still-alive (as they say), come out, hang out, dance, and romance. To all you folks out there that are still "Jonesin' Company!"; we say: Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, All!!!

As you read this article, it is now, 2021....New beginnings!... a Fresh start!and Hopes for the future of Humanity, itself. As Jones and Company has celebrated its past, we are certainly grateful to be part of the future. Thank you, Jazz Society of Pensacola, for all you do for Jazz. Thank you, supporters in our community, for keeping Jones and Company relevant especially after all these years! We are in celebration mode. We are moving forward toward creating and releasing new music—and we are certainly hoping to be able to see you, all, soon, while The Jones and Company legacy continues to be written. Thanks for celebrating with us!

Additional Information: Jones and Company's most recent recordings, "Raise The Roof!" and "It's Christmas Time" are currently available on [CDBaby.com](https://www.cdbaby.com). For booking information check us out on [www.facebook.com/jonesandcompanyband.com](https://www.facebook.com/jonesandcompanyband) Dr. Cheryl Jones can be reached via e-mail at cheryldivajones@cox.net. 🎷

FAVORITE MEMORIES OF AL MARTIN BY HIS FRIENDS AND FANS

by Jazz Pensacola



Pensacola's beloved pianist, Al Martin (left), with his long-time friend Michael.

From Jo Mayo:

As a singer and performer, I had the pleasure and opportunity to work with Al Martin on numerous occasions throughout the past 30 plus years. One of my favorite memories is singing and performing with him during the production of "Ain't Misbehavin" at UWF's Performing Arts Auditorium and the Pensacola Little Theater. Al's role was that of the great Fats Waller and my role was that of Nell. Al's musical genius will remain forever etched in my heart.

From Michael J. McCartan:

I was not aware of the saying that "People come into your life for a reason or for a season or for a lifetime" when I played with Al Martin in 1978. I had been playing drums at Red Lane after traveling as a road musician for almost two years, I realized that I could not raise above the survival stage of paying for life's basic needs such as food, gas and shelter. Much less settling down in Pensacola and raising a family! I first played drums and sang with Al at the Perdido Bay Country Club with John Gemitti on sax in 1978. Al and I have had a musical and spiritual relationship ever since. He was like a brother to me; he would call me and say come play at the Pensacola Civic Center for the Escambia County School District or for New Year's Eve at Azalea Trace. We never rehearsed. Musically, I would just go where Al went when Al would say "Swing" in the middle of a ballad, and we would just swing away or in the middle of a swing song, Al would say "Latin" and off we went. I could feel what Al Martin was playing and what changes were coming and to have that kind of musical connection is a rarity. It was almost like magic!

Another saying that I am well aware of is "When the teacher is ready the student will come, when the student is ready the teacher, will come." Playing with Al was like taking a Master's Class in musical theory and performance. He taught me how to be a better musician, a better performer and a better person. We gave back to each other on stage and in life. This student will miss Al Martin and his kind and humble spirit. God Bless Al Martin.

From Dr. Sandra Winborne:

My favorite memory of Mr. Al is that he was such a kind person to me. While completing my dissertation, he assisted by accompanying me on a song I wrote for my doctorate. My defense went well, and he played at my doctoral gala. The gala was a black-tie affair, and Mr. Al knew that my brother traveled from New York to attend the event. Mr. Al made arrangements to order a tuxedo for my brother, and he said to me, "Please tell your brother to go over to the tuxedo shop, and they will measure him for his attire." He was a beautiful spirit, who served above himself, and I will miss him dearly. I hope to have his adult book completed sometime in 2021. Please look for it—the title: Talent Over Adversity.

From Nan DeStafney of Blues Angel Music:

Al Martin has been a teacher to me and with me for the past 4 years. We shared a teaching studio, taught group classes together and did video presentations together. My memory is of his giant hands and how they moved over the keys with grace and skill and perfection. He achieved his perfection with a gift from God and hours of practice most every day of his life. He demanded excellence from his students and made us all better musicians.

From Norman Vickers:

Shortly after I arrived in Pensacola in '65 to start my medical practice, I met Al Martin in a music store as he was demonstrating pianos. Then in the early 1980s when WUWF was producing some local TV shows, the Jazz Society would have opportunity to do a thirty-minute show with no stops, cuts or replays. Joe O. usually put the shows together and I would be the MC. Format was always the same, I'd do brief introduction of the music and players. Then we'd have about 12 ½ minutes of music and then a short break. During the break, I'd ask the musicians to comment about the selection or style of the music. Al, at that time anyway, was somewhat shy and would agree to play provided I didn't ask him any questions. My reply was, "We'll let your fingers do the talking."

Al had a longtime solo piano gig at Quality Inn on Scenic Highway. He knew the clientele well, who danced, what music they liked. It was a delight to watch him interact with his audience. Also, patrons would greet him on entering and leaving. He'd have a conversation and shake their hands. If you weren't watching, you would not know that he was playing, while greeting and conversing, with only one hand!

At a later point, Al had a long Christmas interview a Dollarhide's with Kathryn Daniel. He told about growing up in Pensacola and how his music teacher said he was an "OK student but he'd never make it as a music professional." I was privileged to witness that interview and he played Christmas music and accompanied Kathy Lyon on vocals. I wanted that interview saved for historical purposes but, as was the custom at WEAR-TV, the tape was recycled so it is lost to history.

Al was a charming person who made many people happy. I was pleased to be his friend.

Here's the Be All and End All from Peg Sheridan:

Early 2000's. My mother, "Big Peg" loved dancing to Al's music at the Ramada Inn on Scenic Hwy. One night in 2008, I was the only person there and Al played a private concert for me from 7-9 PM. Al played for many birthday parties for all my friends as we could swing dance. He also played at Ragtime Grill with Kathy Lyon every Saturday. About 12 of us always enjoyed them. During COVID-19, Cay Simpson and I went to The District to hear Al. On October 17, 2020, he played 57 songs and on December 2, 2020, he played 63 songs straight through. Editor's note: Peg's complete list of the songs is being attached to the email sending this newsletter. It's a lovely walk down Memory Lane to read the titles and have the melodies we loved to hear Al play pop into our minds. If I close my eyes, I can see Teet and Jim Crumlish dancing to them. Oh sweet memories!

Thanks to Michael McCartan for this link to Al playing Satin Doll. This is especially for Peg and Cay.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3emZ1ynms&list=PL501DF7774A87ECF6&ab_channel=TheUnchartedZone 

CONGRATULATIONS TO NINA FRITZ

by F. Norman Vickers

Pensacola artist Nina Fritz was honored in the winter issue of Coming of Age Magazine, sponsored by Council on Aging of West Florida. It details how Nina became interested in painting as she traveled with her military husband Norman to various duty stations. While they were in Japan, she became seriously interested in painting and this because her lifetime joy and occupation.

Nina has been a gracious benefactor to the Jazz Society as well. She has attended our annual JazzFest and allowed us to sell chances on a portrait for the winner. This is of a value in excess of \$600. And, she has donated some of her oil and watercolor paintings to the Jazz Society, some of which now are on display at the Jazz Room at downtown West Florida Public Library.

Congratulations to Nina and Norman. You are an asset to Jazz Pensacola and the entire Northwest Florida community!



CARTOON BEBOP REVIEW

by F. Norman Vickers

This interesting and unique CD crossed my desk recently and I was intrigued. This is a CD with eleven tunes, but none were familiar standards. The music was arranged for a 13-piece orchestra and all have been associated with the Miami musical community either as faculty of the Frost School of Music or having performed in the Miami jazz scene. Another aspect which will be of interest to our readers in the Florida Panhandle is that pianist Mike Levine is a frequent performer in this area, as he is a frequent part-time resident in our Port St. Joe area and when that occurs, Panama City's Gulf Jazz Society engages him to perform. I've been privileged to hear and meet him there. Another appeal is that the CD is dedicated to Miami musicians who have passed away this year, multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan and studio musician Mark Colby. Sullivan had appeared in our area on several occasions and was beloved by this jazz community.

The 13-piece band provides back-up for excellent solos by the various musicians. Most of the arrangements are by Dan Bonsanti with compositions by, among others, Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, and has used motifs by Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk.

The accompanying information sheet explains that Cartoon Bebop contains two of Corea's compositions "Got a Match?" and "Duende." Bonsanti was inspired to write the title tune "Cartoon Bebop" after hearing a Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoon, favorite of his. He used piccolo and tuba while adding Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk motifs.

In essence, an interesting and fun recording. It will be available online on January 15, 2020. For additional information: 14jazzorchestra.com and [facebook.com/14jazzorchestra](https://www.facebook.com/14jazzorchestra) 

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 3, 2021** **Jazz Jam**
The 5Barrel
121 S. Palafox St.
6:30pm-9:00pm
- May 15 & 16, 2021** **Pensacola JazzFest**
Seville Square
Schedule TBD

WHAT'S JAZZING?

by Carolyn Tokson

Let us sincerely hope that 2021 is a year of more activities and music in the jazz realm. Jazz Pensacola is grateful to have made it through this far. The large increase in corona virus illnesses is a clear concern and many of our plans have been curtailed. We eagerly await the spring and plans for JazzFest 2021 are underway for Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16 in historic Seville Square in downtown Pensacola.

Beloved Pensacola musician, Joe Occhipinti, made it into Rick Outzen's Winner's Column in the December 23, 2020 edition of InWeekly. Several members of Jazz Pensacola pitched in to make a poster of the article and photos that were published in the News Journal a while back. That framed poster is waiting to be presented to Joe as soon as we can meet again more safely. There is also an additional piece for the Jazz Room at the Spring St. Branch of the West Florida Public Library. You'll find Joe and his Jazzabouts at Alice's Restaurant on Tuesdays from 6-9 PM and at The Drowsy Poet from 10 to noon on Saturdays. Then he's at Calvert's from 12 to 2 PM for brunch on Sundays.

Other options for brunch include Al Alvarado at McGuire's here in town, Jim Andrews at the Breakfast Club in Perdido Key, The Guffman Trio at Emeril's in Miramar Beach, Jazz at Alice's on Bayview in St. Andrews, FL and with Roland Cobb at Dauphine's in Mobile. Later in the afternoon, you can catch January's featured writer, Dr. Cheryl Jones and Company at AJ's in Destin from 4-8 PM. They are also at Bric a Brac on Fridays from 7-10 PM. Jim Andrews and his sax are at Alice's Restaurant in Pensacola on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Congratulations to Dick Pace, pilot and flying instructor at Corpus Christi during WW II, on the News Journal article and photo showing him in a similar model plane as he flew way back then. He's been a regular at similar events and has donated his uniform (which by the way, he can still fit into at age 101) to the US Naval Aviation Museum. Kudos to our member Justine Ward who has started a Facebook Group for lovers of Big Band and Classic Jazz. It's open. Check it out. Norman Vickers' review of "Bah Humbug" by the Simeon Davis Group made it in the nationally syndicated Syncopated Times e-news, and Michael Steinman

used one of Norman's stories about Billy Butterworth in his national blog "Jazz Lives". On a happy note, best wishes go out to Donna Blackmon who is celebrating her birthday as I write. Presently, Vivian Lamont is recuperating at her daughter Laroyce's home after another hospital visit.

We are saddened by the death of Gus Fell who with his wife Ann was a faithful member of Jazz Pensacola and a regular attendee before the virus hit us. His obituary is on the Harper-Morris website. We extend our sincere condolences to Ann in her loss. As this article goes to press, I just learned of the death of Mark Purser, a very accomplished pianist who had played often with the Curt Bol Band. This marks another sad loss of the community. May you all stay well and safe in this new year. 🎷

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO JAZZ PENSACOLA

by Carolyn Tokson

Last year was a year of major challenges for small 501(c)(3) organizations like Jazz Pensacola. We have had to cancel various events as well as our JazzFest 2020. The Board of Directors has exercised caution in planning events and in our budgetary expenditures. We have been grateful for the personal gifts, business sponsorships, and state and local grants that have allowed us to continue even with unexpected stops and starts. We have experimented with virtual events and a virtual student competition. We had a sweatshirt sale as a fundraiser.

Sadly, it seems that the economy and our life as we once knew it is still not happening tomorrow. We continue to face many obstacles before we can all go back to a full schedule of live musical performances. That fact means that we do not have income from Jazz Jams and Gumbos on any regular basis. At the same time, we continue to have bills to pay. Please consider a generous gift to Jazz Pensacola as a way to celebrate a happy event or as a way to memorialize a friend who is no longer with us. Remember to renew your membership. You may make a tax deductible donation through our website www.jazzpensacola.com or by calling the office at 850-433-8382 and using your credit card. You can also send a check by mail to Jazz Pensacola, 3 West Garden St. Suite 418, Pensacola, FL 32503-5633. We also welcome sponsorships from local businesses. For more information, contact Carolyn at ctokson@hotmail.com. Do your part to keep jazz alive in this area. 🎷

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

With so many of us at home and not able to go out to hear what live jazz is available, we are listening instead to some of our favorite phonograph records, CDs, MP3s and streaming musical events. Send me an email at ctokson@hotmail.com so we have an idea of what are your favorites that help you while away the cares of COVID-19 and the challenges it brings. 🎷