

THE SQUEAKY "X" SYNDROME

by Roger Villines



Roger Villines leads the house band at a Jazz Jam.

It's Saturday morning and while doing some chores around the house I turn on the TV and select the Music Choice Jazz Station. Soon, a solo erupts from the speakers that garners the comment "oh boy, another squeaky sax solo." Another descriptive phrase I have heard likens the sound to "strangling a goose." Sometimes it is followed by the equally popular extended drum solo, but that's for another article.

Although saxophones are particularly well suited to squeaking, honking, rapid fingering maneuvers, and other discordant sounds, the idea and similar effects can be done on any instrument whether it be the piano (the forearm smash), clarinet (max blow above high C), violin (screech bowing), guitar (max distortion) or even trumpet (real high and loud). Therefore, to partially mitigate the anger and resentment of all those saxophonists out there, I will simply label it the squeaky "X" syndrome, and you can fill in the "X" with the instrument of your choice. So, how does this squeaky "X" syndrome fit into the world of jazz we all love and promote. Where did it come from? Why does it happen? What can we do about it?

First, jazz musicians did not originate the squeaky "X" syndrome. Classical musicians really got into this around 1910, continuing to the present day, with practices like increased dissonance, atonality, serial/twelve tone composition, use of not-usually-considered-musical sounds, free/spontaneous performance and many other innovative techniques. Such methods can produce a squeaky orchestra, opera, or other classical ensemble. This was good because music was art and artists were supposed to express themselves and create art and pleasing the audience became a lesser consideration. The same phenomenon happened in modern visual art and sculpture. Jazz didn't get far out until the late 1940s and early 1950s, about the time that jazz

also decided to become "art" music. Jazz coincidentally also became more of a concert music rather than dancing and social music.

Another source of more strident sounds in jazz comes from some musical practices by tribal Africans, which then of course became part of the mix of ingredients to form the musical gumbo we call jazz.

Therefore, the squeaky "X" syndrome happens in jazz because, in the context of contemporary music practices and principles of music making in general, it is a justifiable tool in the performer's arsenal – especially when it comes time to kick it up a notch. Emotional contrast or contour – excitement versus tranquility, tension versus release, storm versus calm – is what makes music interesting and captivating. Honks and squeaks can definitely increase tension and excitement. Five to ten minutes of honks and squeaks will kick it way on up there. Could it be that it comes down to considerations like how much for how long and who is listening and where.

So, in your jazz listening experience you perceive an instance of the squeaky "X" syndrome— what can you do? First, you most quickly conclude that this performance was not meant to be background or easy listening music. If you are at home or in your car and wish for background or easy listening music, you can take appropriate action, such as manipulation of the on-off switch, channel selector, or other audio control device. In a conversational club environment, legs can take you to a different place. If seated in a huge auditorium having paid big money for the tickets, keep in mind that the performer is attempting to elevate the excitement level and express emotion and produce an art jazz listening experience. I say give the performer a chance to make his musical point and then decide whether the overall show gets a thumbs up or thumbs down. Remember that John Coltrane did great ballads and lots of accessible jazz in addition to his more far out renderings.

So, there you have it, a totally scientific treatise dealing with the squeaky "X" syndrome. You may now consider these thoughts on the matter as you chose your level of acceptance of the squeaky "X" syndrome in your world of jazz. See you at Jazz Jam and Jazz Gumbo. 🎷

JAZZ NOTES

by Carolyn Tokson

June looks to be a promising month for jazz in the Gulf Coast. Six Jazz Pensacola members closed out the Memorial Day weekend by driving over to Mobile to enjoy MOJO's (Mystic Order of the Jazz Obsessed) program with Roman Street featuring brothers Noah and Josh Thompson, and another set of brothers, Brian and JoJo Morris. It was a night of lively music with MOJO's famous jambalaya and a full house of about 200 folks at their new venue at Central Presbyterian Church on Dauphin St.

Jazz Pensacola is opening the month of June with the Jazz Jam Monday June 3 (outside if weather permits) at the Vineyard. President Fred Domulot and board member John Link will be with Fais Do Do in the Here Comes the Sun Concert Series in Rosemary Beach. They put on a fabulous evening for Jazz Pensacola during Mardi Gras. A few days later on Sunday June 7, pianist Gino Rosaria will stage his live recording CD release party at 7 PM in Seville Quarter. His new single "Night Groove" featuring Marcus Anderson has had amazing air play and is climbing Billboard's charts. Jazz Fans could have a difficult time deciding where to go for brunch on Sundays with Joe Occhipinti and his Jazzabouts at Seville Quarter, Curt Bol's Jazz Quartet at the Five Sisters and Al Averado at Mc Guires Irish Pub. Plus you can wake up later Monday mornings with Joe O and his Jazzabouts at the Drowsy Poet.

Father's Day brings a very special artist to Pensacola at It's Personal by Sheila. Cindy Bradley, whose latest single "Everyone But You" hit #1 on Billboard's Smooth Jazz Charts, plays trumpet and flugel horn and has made a bright mark on the jazz scene all over the US. She is a regular at the Seabreeze Jazz Festival at Panama City Beach.

The next day, Jazz Pensacola's former president Roger Villines will heat it up at the Society's Gumbo leading Trumpets in Time on Monday June 17 in Phineas Phogg's at Seville Quarter.

Jones and Company have several gigs in Destin; Cedric Brooks and Alvin King are easy to find at Kazoola's in Mobile. James Burt Kimberl is at the keys Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at the Magnolia Grill in Ft. Walton Beach.

Check out Jazz Pensacola's website at www.jazzpensacola.com to find all the latest places to hear jazz in the area. Also check out the blogs by Jazz Pensacola president Fred Domulot and CD and book reviews by Norman Vickers. 🎷

LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO MY SONG, MA

by Fred Domulot

"Look What They've Done to My Song, Ma" is one of my favorite tunes covered by the great Ray Charles. It was written by Melanie Safka, whose fans knew her simply as Melanie. She was a Woodstock performer and a writer of other great hits.

Ray Charles' version is a killer version!

The song is about how music companies change artists' music, and their true message. They can ruin the deepness of an artist because their intentions are to make money... take control. This happens every day.

But look at what positive change can do, look at what we've done to Jazz Pensacola: We received the 2019 Majority Opinion Research Survey of Events & Festivals, which is done annually for Visit Pensacola/Escambia County.

Check this out, according to the report:

- The 2019 Pensacola JazzFest attracted an estimated 17,000 attendees, which surpasses previous years.

- 31% of the 2019 event attendees were visitors to Pensacola, which is a record high for this event.

- 85% of the destination visitors (26% of total attendees) were aware of the event before visiting (up from previous years), and 59% came to Pensacola specifically for the event (also up from previous years).

- 12% of attendees spent the night in paid accommodations (highest since 2014) and stayed an average of 2.0 nights (similar to most years).

- Factoring in that 59% of the destination visitors at the event specifically came to Pensacola for the event, it is estimated that the 2019 Pensacola JazzFest generated 745 room nights in Escambia County, which is another record high for this event.

- On average, destination visitors attending the 2019 Pensacola JazzFest spent \$691.01 during their stay (more than any other year, except 2015 and 2016) and resident parties spent an average of \$63.29 (more than any other year, except for 2015) in the course of attending the event.

- All together, it is estimated that the 2019 Pensacola JazzFest attendees contributed \$1,505,020 to the Escambia County economy (more than any other year).

- Factoring in that 59% of the visitors at the event specifically came to Pensacola for the event, it is estimated that the event directly aided in \$992,920 being spent in the Escambia County economy (yet another record high for this event).

- According to the 2019 Majority Opinion Research Survey of

Events & Festivals, Jazz Pensacola broke many records with its last JazzFest.

-One of the significant growth areas is how we are reaching out via social media. From April 2 to April 29, Facebook analytics show: posts reached 12.2K, had 2.9K engagements, 218 link clicks and 77 new page likes. Shout out to: Mike Suchcicki, Jazz Pensacola administrator Alice Crann-Good and Jazz Pensacola board member/secretary Ali Egan for this growth! Well done!

Plus, Jazz Pensacola's 2019 Student Jazz Competition In March was a tremendous success. The students, families and guests greatly enjoyed having the annual event at Phineas Phogg's in Seville Quarter. Giving the competition a "real life" performing experience with a jazz room vibe was a very positive change.

Our community recognition is reaching new heights. The Downtown Improvement Board has asked Jazz Pensacola to orchestrate the July Gallery Night with a jazz theme.

And, get this. Jazz Pensacola recently came in 3rd out of 37 grant applications for 2019 Foo Foo Festival grants! Another shout out to our administrator Alice Crann Good for the grant writing. Full funding! Our act this year will be Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. More info on that soon.

Even so...

"It's the only thing that I could do half right...and they've turned it upside down."

Just be nice. Listen to "Sketches of Spain" in the morning, it will change your day. 🎷

THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR

by Ali Egan



Roger Villines leads the house band at a Jazz Jam.

Jazz Pensacola is quickly approaching the end of our fiscal year, and we are excited about the success this organization has seen over the last eleven months. During this year's record breaking JazzFest, we had 17,000 attendees and contributed an estimated \$1.25 million to the downtown economy over those two days. Our student jazz competition also had record-breaking attendance and we took in more donations than in any year past. In addition to these annual

events, our monthly, staple events of the Jazz Jam and Jazz Gumbo have also been highly successful thanks to the sponsors and volunteers from the membership.

At the end of this fiscal year, four board members have been reelected to their second terms: Dustin Bonifay, Fred Domulot, John Eisinger, and John Link. Two new board members have been added, bringing the board up to nine members starting in July. The two new board members are Carolyn Tokson and Paul Bruno.

Looking to the future, we are excited to have been awarded a \$35,000 grant from Foo Foo Fest, allowing us to bring the national act Big Bad Voodoo Daddy to Pensacola in November. Big Bad Voodoo Daddy regularly fills 3000 seat auditoriums across the country. In addition to this event, our annual student jazz competition will take place in March of 2020 and the 37th annual JazzFest will take place in April of 2020. Additionally, with the support of the membership, we hope to provide new opportunities for young Pensacolians to become involved with Jazz Pensacola.

At this time I would like to thank some individuals who made this year as successful as it was. First, I would like to thank Carolyn Tokson. Not only has she been leading the charge with the Sparks, but she is also responsible for soliciting donations from many of the corporate sponsors for JazzFest. Next, I would like to thank Alice Crann Good, our office administrator. Each year Alice, with the help of Roger Villines and John Eisinger, writes the operational and event related grants that keep Jazz Pensacola running. I would also like to thank the volunteers that work all our events, such as running the table at our monthly Jazz Jams and Gumbos, as well as those that run our 'departments' at JazzFest: Herman Arringron, Tom Bell, Dustin Bonifay, Jim Crumlish, Fred Domulot, John Eisinger, Jeffrey Elliot, Jim Green, Pat Griffin, Paul Herrick, Ashley Hicklen, Ed Morrison, Joe Occhipinti, Mike Potters, Dave Schmidt, Mike Suchcicki, Carolyn Tokson, Roger Villines, and Mike Warren. Many of our volunteers come from the Sparks, a group of Jazz Pensacola members who volunteer, spread the word, and fiscally contribute to Jazz Pensacola. Thank you to all the Sparks, who want Jazz Pensacola to be the best organization possible. Finally I would like to thank my fellow board members. I am so thankful to be surrounded by such a great team of fantastic professionals with industry experience. Without this team in place, I am certain Jazz Pensacola would not have had such a successful year.

The future of Jazz Pensacola looks bright, and I am thrilled to see what the next year brings. Thank you to all. 🎷

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 3, 2019** **Jazz Jam**
The Vineyard on 12th Avenue
6:30-9:00
- June 17, 2019** **Jazz Gumbo**
Trumpets in Time
Phineas Phogg's
6:30-9:00
- July 1, 2019** **Jazz Jam**
The Vineyard on 12th Avenue
6:30-9:00
- June 17, 2019** **Jazz Gumbo**
Camara Kambon Tribute TBD
Phineas Phogg's
6:30-9:00

TWO FAVORITE JAZZ BLOGS

by Norman Vickers

Today (5-28-19) was a red-letter day for Vickers, and, I believe for Jazz Pensacola. Two of my favorite blogs had artists who had performed for Jazz Pensacola previously. Michael Steinman's blog jazzlives.wordpress.com featured a group from the West Coast which included jazz pianist Carl Sonny Leyland, clarinetist Jacob Zimmerman, bassist Marty Eggers and drummer Jeff Hamilton. There were several videos from the March 3, 2019 Monterey Jazz Festival. So why was this especially important to me? Jazz Pensacola has been blessed to have pianist Sonny Leyland and bassist Marty Eggers to appear at our JazzFest in the early 2000s. And having seen them at jazz festivals elsewhere, it was like a visit from old, dear friends. Also, Michael Steinman is a good friend to us as well. When drummer Hal Smith brought his Kid Ory tribute group for our November 2017 jazz event co-sponsored by ACE (Arts, Culture, and Entertainment), the event was videotaped and Steinman featured it on his blog.

Jazz writer Marc Myers' jazzwax.com blog today features vocalist Stephanie Nakasian. There are several clips of her performance from outstanding recordings, including one video of her performing with a band led by Pete Rugolo who was Stan Kenton's composer/arranger. The significance is that The Jazz Society of Pensacola had Stephanie and her pianist husband Hod O'Brien in Pensacola for an early performance in the 1980s. Then in the early 2000s, Stephanie and Hod performed again for Pensacola JazzFest. At that time, their 13 year old daughter Veronica also sang a number with her mother. Subsequently, Veronica, now performing as Veronica Swift, has graduated from Frost School of Music in Miami and has embarked on her own signing and recording career.

In today's interview, Myers leads Stephanie through various stages of her career including Hod's death in 2016.

I have had opportunity to review both of Marc's books: *Anatomy of a Song* and *Why Jazz Happened*. In addition to writing a daily jazz blog, Myers is also a regular columnist for the Wall Street Journal—one column is weekly and the other is monthly. His interviews with interesting persons are not all related to jazz, they can be authors, actors or other persons of interest.

To the credit of both Michael Steinman and Marc Myers, there is a long index of their previous work so this information is readily available for those who are interested. Thanks Michael and Mark for making my day!

See jazzwax.com and jazzlives.wordpress.com for the columns and sign up, if desired. 