

## Sparks Edition

### REMEMBERING LAURINDO ALMEIDA: A MUSICAL GIANT

by F. Norman Vickers



Lorenzo Almeida plays at PCC. Photo by F. Norman Vickers.

September 2, 1917 was the birthdate of jazz and classical guitarist Laurindo Almeida. So, on the occasion of his birth, it is appropriate to share some wonderful personal recollections. As a jazz fan and amateur guitarist, I was familiar with some of Laurindo's recordings on Capitol and Concord Jazz.

The first Pensacola JazzFest was held in spring of 1983 and was held under the auspices of the Pensacola Arts Council with radio station WUWF-FM and newly formed Jazz Society of Pensacola. Our only out-of-town jazz artist was guitarist Chuck Wayne who was playing his last year with pianist/composer George Shearing's Quintet. The rest of the performers were local professional and amateur jazz musicians and local high school and college jazz bands.

For the second year, the Arts Council Committee elected to bring Chuck Wayne back and to invite harmonica/guitarist Jean "Toots" Thielemans and classical/jazz guitarist Laurindo Almeida. I was designated the contact person for both Thielemans and Almeida. The committee was working on a tight budget so our artist budget was necessarily small. I called Thielemans and Almeida, introduced myself and asked if they'd be interested in coming to our young festival for the relatively small fee which we were able to offer. Both answered in the affirmative. It was a wonderful festival. When Wayne or Toots was the leader, he'd invite the other one as a guest and the fact that Toots was also a chromatic harmonica player, it didn't seem that we had too many guitarists. Laurindo played from charts, usually with a drummer and bassist, so we used our local artists drummer Jim Servies and string bassist Harvey Etheridge as Almeida's back-up musicians.

Laurindo and I became friends and over the several years he returned to Pensacola three more times to perform for the Jazz Society and, during those visits, performed at St.

Christopher's Episcopal Church for two special concerts. I visited in his home a couple of times in Northridge overlooking the San Fernando Valley. My last visit to his home was Labor Day weekend 1994. His home had been damaged by the previous earthquake and, because he had foresight to have appropriate insurance, he was living in another home while his was under repair. The earthquake had damaged his five Grammy awards and he'd just gotten replacements from the academy—much larger and elegant than the original awards. I encouraged him to take one out of the case so we could photograph him with it.

Allow me one anecdote here. Laurindo performed music behind the opening scene in Clint Eastwood's western movie, *Unforgiven*. The reviews of the movie were mixed in that there was considerable violence. However, because Laurindo told me that he'd done the long guitar theme, I attended the movie. That opening pastoral scene was lovely-- horses, blooming meadow in a Canadian spring and the classical guitar piece was appropriately beautiful. However, in watching the movie credits, Laurindo's name didn't appear. I later mentioned it to Laurindo and he replied: "Yes, Eastwood requested that I play for that scene, walked through while I was recording and gave me a 'thumbs up,' and then sent me a BIG check!"

He succumbed to a malignancy July 26, 1995 at age 77 but he was teaching, recording and performing until a week before his death. Laurindo's archives are at the U. S. Library of Congress. He had composed more than 1000 separate pieces including 200 popular songs. His legacy lives on in recordings and music books. Any piece he recorded, he published the score for sale. There are also multiple YouTube offerings which I encourage you to sample. 🎸

### CURT BOL BAND PERFORMS FOR JAZZ PENSACOLA

by Barbara Little

The Curt Bol Band thrilled Jazz Pensacola members and the numerous Curt Bol Band fans in attendance with their virtuoso performance of Al Jarreau favorites August 19th at Phineas Phogg's. The band is comprised of some of the finest, most experienced musicians in the Northwest Florida area --Curt Bol on vocals, Steve Watkins on guitar, Tom Latenser on bass, Rocky Sleight on keys and Joe Lyons on drums. Their individual impressive musical histories and talents are enhanced by their long association with one another producing tight, flawless performances.

Moreover, for the Jazz Pensacola event they graciously invested a great deal of practice time to navigate the beloved Jarreau tunes making each their own. Curt's

incredibly talented daughter Lara Marina Bol enhanced her father's performance with subtle background vocals and a stunning duet. Lara also provided an interesting history of Al Jarreau, a wonderfully informative feature of Jazz Pensacola's themed jazz performances

Curt's voice ranging from a sexy baritone to a lilting tenor 2 is perfectly suited to honoring Jarreau. Starting off with the uplifting *Mornin'*, Curt wowed the audience reaching a sparkling high A enhanced by Lara's high C on the "touch the face of God" lyric. Curt's cessation of smoking several years ago has resulted in the best voice of his life with the widest range and purest tone. He delivered the favorite Jarreau jazz ballads *Teach Me Tonight* and *All or Nothing at All* in romantic, fully voiced treatment with improvisational filigree where most appropriate. The band confidently operated in the same wave length to deliver a smoothly contoured, groovy *Tell Me What I Gotta Do*.

For *It's Just Talk*, Curt tilted his vocal magnifying glass in volcalese for a truly amazing amalgam with Steve Watkins' guitar, Tom Latenser's bass, Rocky Sleight's keys and Joe Lyons' drums. Lara teamed beautifully with her father on a duet of *We're In this Love Together* which shone with sparkling profundity. A heart melting, evocative *After All* soared from tactile to airy and back again so that the lyric captured the ghost of every memory in the audience. The band demonstrated its mantra of "having the best time possible" with the music in Bol's superb scatting teamed with the funky instrumental performance of Watkins, Latenser, Sleight and Lyons in *Roof Garden*. The performance of Jarreau favorites wound up with *Since I Fell for You*, but the audience in a long standing ovation entreated an encore so the band turned to the Irving Berlin classic *Let's Face the Music and Dance*, leaving the entire crowd raving with appreciation and praise for the Curt Bol Band.

The Curt Bol Band has had the standing gig at the Five Sisters Sunday brunch for almost five years, and while it is so crowded that tables are rarely found, standing is well worth it for the pleasure of listening to the exceptional performers. I know I am not in the minority for a vote that they be featured at Jazz Fest 2020.

The history of each band member is very impressive and well recounted on the website [curtbolband.com](http://curtbolband.com). 🎷

## KATHY LYON RECORDS NEW C.D.

by F. Norman Vickers



Photo of Kathy Lyon's new C.D.

Pensacola jazz activist and vocalist has just recorded a CD entitled *Nothin' But Love*-- featuring Houston Person. This was recorded in April 2019 in studios in Teaneck, NJ. Kathy tells us that tenor saxophonist Houston Person was helpful in getting this project to completion. Her other artists include pianist Lafayette Harris, Jr.; guitarist Peter Hand; bassist Matthew Parrish; and drummer Vince Ector.

Kathy is featured on all twelve numbers but all the musicians all have their opportunity in the musical spotlights. Veteran saxophonist Person, of course, is strongly featured. All the tunes likely will be familiar even the casual jazz listener. Kathy's vocalizing will be familiar to Pensacola jazz fans, of course. But for those who are not, she delivers the vocals in a precise, delicate and melodic way. A few of the song titles are included so that reader may get a flavor of the selections: *I Remember You*; *Come Rain or Come Shine*; *Good Morning Heartache*, and *Everything Happens to Me*.

Kathy was unavailable at the time of writing this review. Otherwise, I'd have gotten some comments directly from her. Perhaps that will come at a later time. However, I'm aware that she will be a featured performer at the Roswell, NM Jazz Festival Thursday-Sunday Nov. 17-20. And I understand that she is to be a featured performer on a Jazz Cruise later in the year.

For Kathy's local schedule, see her website [www.KathyLyonMusic.com](http://www.KathyLyonMusic.com). There, one may sign up for notification for her upcoming engagements. Kathy appears locally approximately monthly at the Seville Quarter Sunday brunch. To purchase a CD, contact Kathy through her website or directly at her gigs. This CD will soon be available for check-out at the Jazz Room in downtown West Florida Public Library. A previous CD of Kathy's, *Here's to Life*, is already in the collection. 🎷

Want to become a Jazz Pensacola member? Email [info@jazzpensacola.com](mailto:info@jazzpensacola.com) for information.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR JAZZ EDUCATION WITH JAZZ PENSACOLA

by Carolyn Tokson

Jazz Pensacola has as one of its major goals to offer opportunities for jazz education. Our president, Fred Domulot is the adjunct professor of percussion and Jazz Band/Jazz Workshop at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville and a teacher and band director at the Pensacola Montessori School. Vice-President Dave Schmidt has close contact with band directors through his business Schmidt's Music and has been recognized as a "Champion of the Arts" by the Escambia County Fine Arts Department and as a "Friend of Education" by the Escambia Association of Administrators in Education. Our former president, Roger Villines taught at Pensacola State College. Last February, Roger led rehearsals for the two Tate High School Jazz ensembles in preparation for their performance in the Statewide Music Performance Assessments. Results showed that both bands did well. Founding member Joe Occhipinti also coached local school bands last spring.

The format of our Jazz Gumbos provides not only entertainment, but also education about a jazz musician, type of jazz, or a specific period of jazz history. Our September Gumbo highlights the transition of Jazz to Motown with Nobius and the upcoming October Gumbo features the music of Nora Jones with Isabelle Schrack.

Every Jazz Jam, held the first Monday of the month, offers students at all levels the opportunity to perform with a house band of professional musicians. Our youngest performer was ten years old. Usually we have high school and college students attend and perform at every jam. The Student Competition held every March reaches out to both high school and college student musicians. Fred, Dave and Roger encourage band directors to send students who compete in either the high school or college instrumentalist division or the vocal division. Board Secretary Carolyn Tokson keeps in touch with students from previous competitions as well and students in the Lamont Belmont Youth Band led by Jazz Pensacola member and volunteer, Vivian Lamont. If you know a young musical student, encourage him/her to participate in our jams and student competition which occurs in March. We are eager to bring in young musicians and keep up with their progress as they move from amateur to professional musicians. Many of our prior winners are now professional musicians performing in the area. To support our efforts in jazz education, join JETS (Jazz Education Team Supporters) with a tax deductible gift of \$100.

Jazz Pensacola also has a Vickers Artist in Residence Fund with the goal of providing funding for an visiting artist who will provide educational experiences for music students such as a master class and a concert. This endowment fund is named in honor of the founder of the Jazz Society of Pensacola, Dr. Norman Vickers. Thanks to a generous donation two years ago from Bob Byrnes, jazz guitarist

Gene Bertoncini was able to offer a master class in guitar, a concert to students at PSC, and a performance at a Jazz Pensacola concert open to the general public at the Opera Center. Donations may also be made to the VARF through the Jazz Pensacola Office.

Join Jazz Pensacola and become a participant in our efforts to continue jazz education. We can't do it without your support! 

## MUSIC IN DOWNTOWN PENSACOLA

by Carolyn Tokson

Pensacola is jam-packed with musical opportunities across the city, but for now let's focus on downtown. Downtown Pensacola is dominated by **Seville Quarter** where there are opportunities to experience blues, jazz, Latin dance, karaoke, and special events.

The opening of **The District** across the street from Seville Quarter adds an elegant spot for some quiet music with a grand piano as well. You can often catch Jim Andrews there with his saxophone as well as Bobby van Duesen or Al Martin on the ivories.

**Vinyl Music Hall** is a solid choice for music, offering a plethora of genres of entertainment regularly. Simply exploring the events on the website is a dizzying experience. Jazz Pensacola is scheduled there for the Foo Foo Fest with Big Bad Voodoo Daddy November 4th, 2019.

The beautifully restored **Saenger Theatre** is just beginning its fall event series with a mix of comedy and music, then in December will see the first of a four show Broadway series.

**V Paul's Italian Ristorante** on Palafox Place offers a pleasant selection of live music on Fridays from 6 to 9 PM.

**Jackson's Steak House** offers an evening of jazz from time to time; one coming up on September 26 features Ellen Vinson and Bobbie van Duesen.

**Chicago Bar and Grill** offers comedy, rock, and blues on Gregory St. as well as their Sunday Sangria. Rocky Denny has been performing there.

Then there's **McGuire's Irish Pub**, the only venue on this list that encourages the audience to join in and sing Irish drinking songs along with the band.

**Five Sisters Blues Cafe** is an ever popular place to eat and hear some blues. You can catch Michael Mc Cartan there as well as Curt Bol who last month played for the August Jazz Gumbo.

There's always live music on the Deck at the **Fish House** on the weekends.

In the historic district, there's often live music at **Hub Stacy's** and sometimes at **Lucy's in the Square** across the street.

A little further west on Garden St. is **Live Juice Bar** which often offers live jazz as well as other music.

That about wraps up the musical tour of downtown Pensacola. We'll explore another part of town another time.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 16, 2019**      **Jazz Gumbo**  
Nobius: From Jazz to Motown  
Phineas Phogg's  
6:30-9:00
- Oct. 7, 2019**      **Jazz Jam**  
The Vineyard on 12th Avenue  
6:30-9:00
- 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

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: BAPTIST HEALTH CARE

by Carolyn Tokson



**BAPTIST**  
HEALTH CARE

From health care to human services - when there's a need, Baptist Health Care is here to help. Our legacy is one of action that began more than 68 years ago with our founders' bold vision to bring more modern health care to the community. That legacy has guided us throughout our history, and it has also guided our Mission of helping people throughout life's journey. We are currently comprised of three hospitals, four medical parks, Andrews Institute for Orthopedic & Sports Medicine, Lakeview Center, and a large network of primary care and specialty physicians. With more than 7,300 employees and employed physicians, Baptist is the second largest non-governmental employer in northwest Florida. We're transforming for the future and planning the development of a new main hospital at the southwest corner of the intersection of Brent Lane and I-110 in Pensacola and reimagining our current E Street campus. This investment represents our commitment to serve the people of Northwest Florida and South Alabama now and for many generations to come. Jazz Pensacola is grateful to Baptist Health Care for its continued sponsorship of Jazz Fest. 

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