

PUMPING IVORY...SOME SYNCOPATED MUSINGS FROM 45 YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL PIANISTIC PRESTIDIGITATION (PART 2)

by Bobby van Duesen



Bobby van Duesen

“L.B.”...Larry Butler was a two-time Grammy winner and produced albums that sold 200 million copies. He was an inveterate prankster and my good friend. When a solo piano record I released in 1998 did very well, I ran into L.B. and told him (rather smugly) that my record had sold a thousand copies. He said he had something for me. Fast forward a couple months, and I ran into him in a recording studio. There, with great fanfare, he presented me with a (very nicely framed) squashed hub-cap (where the 'gold' record would have gone) with my album cover in the middle and a gold plaque that read “The Naked Piano, Bobby van Deusen Certified TIN”. I cherished that gift, lost it (and everything else I had) in Hurricane Ivan.

“Bud Black”...Born 50 years too late, Bud was the Emcee on the Delta Queen for many years. He did a gag where he actually sang Chattanooga Choo Choo backwards (Oo-ch oo-ch A-goon-a-tatch, if you're wondering). He was a brilliant improviser and showman in the great tradition of vaudeville. I once saw him stroll down a passageway eating a banana, when an unfortunate passenger happened along the opposite direction. Not missing a stride, he held out the banana peel to the passenger and said 'Hold this for me, would ya?' and continued on his merry way. Still makes me laugh.

“The Corn Palace” ...I signed with a concert promoter in Minneapolis in 2015 and have been playing shows all over the country. The very FIRST show with Allied Concert Services was in Mitchell, South Dakota at a venue called the 'Corn Palace'. I pulled up and thought “What in the Sam HELL have I gotten myself into?” (I'm thinking 'Bubba's Country Bunker' from the Blues Brothers, got the picture?) It's an

enormous building, flanked by minarets and decorated with murals the size of baseball diamonds made entirely from corn husks. The Steinway 'D' on the stage put me at ease a little, and when the curtain came up and I got a look at the audience I thought “I KNOW you....” and we gave them a terrific show.

“Are ya QUITTIN?” I was packing up from a brunch at Seville and headed for the door with my keyboard under my arm and passed a patron who inquired “Are ya QUITTIN?” I replied “No, the high temperature light came on and I'm taking it outside to cool down”. “Smart” he said, thoughtfully. “Why do you still practice so much?” I think I'm starting to see some progress.

“The Tape Ball”...I was gifted a wadded up ball of gaffers tape by the GM of the Saenger Theater, and found out later that it's a great compliment to get the tape ball after a run. I still keep it on my keyboard stack when I play a show.

“Ellen”...I was performing at a surprise birthday party for a local philanthropist and was asked to accompany a singer I didn't know for a few tunes. She wanted a Melissa Manchester song called 'Come in From the Rain', but wasn't sure of the lyrics. I told her I'd feed them to her. She opened her mouth and just sang the socks off the tune, I asked her what her name was and would she like to make a CD. That started a wonderful professional and personal relationship, we've done 5 records together (all used to raise lots of money for various charities). Her name is Ellen and she's my bestie. 🎷

DR. NORMAN VICKERS NAMED “JAZZ HERO” BY JAZZ JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

by Carolyn Tokson

Howard Mandel, president of The Jazz Journalists Association recently named Dr. Norman Vickers as the “2021 New York City Jazz Hero”. He is labeled as an “activist, advocate, altruist, aider and abettor of jazz”. Dr. Vickers was nominated by many journalists and supporters of his work. He was recognized for his founding and stewardship of the Jazz Society of Pensacola, now known as Jazz Pensacola, for his establishment of the Vickers Artist in Residence Fund (VARF), and for his many years of writing articles for publication in jazz journals and newspapers as well as his regular blog on our JazzPensacola website. He was congratulated for his tireless efforts in “connecting the community around historical and traditional jazz.” Dr.

“Jazz Hero” Continued...

"Jazz Hero" Continued...

Vickers is a frequent contributor to The Syncopated Times jazz newspaper which featured a photo and full page article about him several months ago. One may see an online text which explores Dr. Vickers' many activities which have merited this prestigious award at www.JJAAwards.org.

Congratulations to Dr. Vickers on his recent 90th birthday and on receipt of this well-deserved award. You may read his recent blogs at www.jazzpensacola.com 

JAZZ PENSACOLA AND THE PENSACOLA/ NORTH WEST FLORIDA COMMUNITY

by Paul Bruno

I have noticed in almost every great community, small or large, there are similar attributes that are shared. The people have a sense of place, they are proud of where they live and of the history they share. The community cares about each other and the overall well-being of the residents. The community also is interested in a quality of life that is more than just dollars and cents. The Arts, and in particular music, seem to always be a part of the heartbeat of the community. It could be classical, bluegrass, rock 'n roll, rap, hip hop, country 'n western, or jazz. The arts and music help to make the community a well-rounded and pleasant place in which to live.

Jazz Pensacola, was founded back in 1983 (almost 40 years ago) here in Pensacola. The original name of the not-for-profit was "The Jazz Society of Pensacola", now shortened to JAZZ PENSACOLA ! As an organization, Jazz Pensacola has a rich and proud history of creating the annual JazzFest, having monthly jazz jams, bringing in national acts, and encouraging and supporting students with instruction and jazz competitions. We all know that 2020 has been a difficult year for the music scene because of the coronavirus. Things are looking much brighter for 2021 with the vaccine coming on line and we are looking for a much better musical year. Jazz Pensacola has done its best to keep the music alive with remote and virtual concerts as well as promoting student competitions and awarding recognition and prizes to up-and-coming musicians ! I would like to ask that you take a minute to help Jazz Pensacola continue its' mission. Let's keep the MUSIC ALIVE !! Please join us in helping our community continue its rich history of music. You can do this by becoming a member of our great organization, Jazz Pensacola. Membership is a vital way for us to support our mission and for Jazz Pensacola to continue to serve our community. Individual, Family and Corporate sponsorships are available and I thank you in advance for your support. Please go to www.jazzpensacola.com for information.

LIVE STUDENT COMPETITION HELD IN SEVILLE QUARTER

by Carolyn Tokson



Jensen Cadenhead performs at the 2021 Student Jazz Competition.

Jazz Pensacola was proud to present a live Student Competition in Phineas Phogg's at Seville Quarter this year after last year's virtual competition due to the corona virus. Congratulations to the winners of the 2021 Student Competition!

Winners in the College Instrumental Division were:

- Jensen Cadenhead, a student at UWF, drums, \$500 in first place
- Max Levesque, UWF, bass, \$300 in second place
- Brianna Marler, NWFL State College, trombone, \$150 and
- Katarina Marshall, NWFL State College, tenor sax, \$150 in a tie for third place

High School Division:

- Joshua Mullikin, Booker T. Washington High School, tenor sax, \$400 in first place.

Roger Villines served as Master of Ceremonies. Judges were Rebecca Barry, Allen Beeson, and Steve Gilmore. The accompanists were George Petropoulos on piano, Dr. Bob Andrews on bass, and Steve Maniscola on drums.

We are grateful for the support of our sponsors: Arts, Culture and Entertainment, Inc., Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, The Great Gulf Coast Arts Festival, Studer Foundation, Schmidt's Music and Adriane "Cookie" Kichler. Other Jazz Education Team Supporters (JETS) were: Laura Arguea, Robert and Margaret Byrnes, Steve Douglas, John and Myrl Eisinger, Paul and Marliese Herrick, Dr. Rovena Hillsman, Patricia Knowles, Marty Libowsky, Kathy Lyon, Knox and Holly Parker, Joe Spaniola, Tom and Karen Stanmore, Carolyn Tokson and Jeffrey Elliot, Dr. Norman and Betty Vickers, Roger and Kat Villines, and Justine Ward. 

WHAT'S JAZZING?

by Carolyn Tokson

Well, Spring has indeed sprung and the beautiful weather has arrived. How glorious is it to enjoy this time after our dark year of the corona virus! Jazz Pensacola is moving toward our JazzFest Saturday and Sunday, May 15 and 16 in Seville Square. We will not be providing chairs this year, so spread the word that you should bring your own lawn chairs for seating. This is a health precaution as well as an idea we have discussed for years at board meetings. We will have seating in the VIP area. We will be taking all recommended precautions in regard to social distancing and encourage you to wear a mask when you are near others. Gratefully we will be outside and the beautiful breezes from water nearby make our festival a safer and more pleasant place to be. Fred Domulot has finalized our performers and most of the ones that we had planned for last year are still able to be a part of this 37th JazzFest. Please visit our website at www.jazzpensacola.com to learn about the headliners and acts. We will have our Beer and Wine Tent which was a big hit last JazzFest as well as our Merchandise Tent which offers teeshirts, posters, hats, and various items. We will also offer a selection of vinyl LP records for sale. Please support our efforts in these areas; they make a major difference in terms of our ability to support local jazz.

There's plenty of live jazz in town and in the area. The 5 Barrel on Palafox is the place to be for the Jazz Jam on the first Wednesday of the month. Curt Bol's Jazz Quartet is at The Five Sisters from 11-3 for Sunday Brunch. Al Alvarado is at McGuire's Irish Pub from 11-2 Sundays. There's also a Jazz Brunch at Alice's here in town on Sunday also. . Joe Occhinipinti is at Alice's every Wednesday night and at The Drowsy Poet from 10-2 on Saturdays. Jim Andrews is outside at the Cactus Flower on Thursdays and at Alice's on Fridays and Saturdays. He's also at the District often.

Rebecca Barry is at The Cigar Bar in Daphne on Thursdays from 6-9PM. Alice's on Bayview in St. Andrews offers live jazz on Friday nights and has its Jazz Brunch from 10:30 to 1:30 on Sunday. The Shrimp Boat offers live jazz on Friday nights from 5-9 in Panama City. The Guffman Trio is at Emeril's in Miramar Beach from 10:30 to 2:30 on Sundays. Jones and Company is at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar in Destin from 4-8 Sunday evening. James Burt Kimberl has been playing at the Magnolia Grill in Ft. Walton Beach on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

If you're in the mood for Blues, the Northwest Florida Blues Society is offering music every Monday night in Seville Quarter from early in the evening until 11PM. First there is a local musician, later a touring act, then a jam. Sounds like a lively evening. Thanks to Michael McCartan for keeping me informed.

MOJO (Mystical Order of the Jazz Obsessed) offered a Jazz al Fresco event at the Central Presbyterian Church in Mobile with Vibration Configuration (Corky Hughes, Jojo Morris,

and John Milham). Guests brought lawn chairs and non-perishable food for the Food Pantry at Central and enjoyed a lovely jazz event outdoors.

Sheila Green recently held a Tribute to Maxwell featuring the vocalist Dominique at her "It's Personal" venue on West Cervantes. Sheila does a fantastic job at keeping smooth jazz alive in Pensacola.

Tickets are on sale for the Gulf Coast Summer Fest Jazz Edition September 4 and 5 at the Pensacola Community Maritime Park. As usual, Mr. William "Cadillac" Banks Sr. has enlisted an impressive list of smooth jazz performers for this event. There will be an All White Kickoff Party on Friday September 3 which promises to be an elegant affair. He's also planning a jazz get-together event for fully vaccinated attendees at an earlier date. The event is in the planning stages.

Congratulations to Sheila Overstreet whose artwork was chosen as the 2021 Pensacola JazzFest poster. Congratulations also go out to Dr. Norman Vickers who was named a "Jazz Hero" by the Jazz Journalists Association recently. That's a pretty special 90th birthday present. Best wishes also go to guitarist and vocalist, Mike Potters and to Catherine Barnett on their recent marriage. Mike has been our mainstay at the Kiddie Jam for JazzFest for years. A photo of Paul Bruno at the Camellia Garden Tour at UWF was in the Pensacola VIP magazine recently. Congratulations especially to Chris Hopkins whose new album Chris Hopkins meets the Jazz Kangaroos recently won the Coleurs Jazz Hit award in Paris, France. Norman Vickers reviewed the album in our December 2020 newsletter. Birthday greetings to Roger Villines, Crystal Joy Albert, and Tom Latenser who turn a new year this last month. An especially happy birthday wish goes to Norman Roberts, retired pharmacist and loyal Jazz Pensacola member, who turned 94 years old. Kathy Lyon is happy to have her daughter and grandchildren here for a visit, but she is disappointed that the Sarasota Jazz Fest had to be cancelled. Look for an article by Kathy soon.

Sadly, Patricia Knowles fell and broke her hip and is in rehab at the Willowbrook part of Azalea Trace. Marliese Herrick is at home recuperating from recent shoulder surgery. We wish both of these lovely ladies a speedy recovery with minimal pain.

Thanks to a recent donation by Robert and Margaret Byrnes and the fact that the Vickers Artist in Residence Fund (VARF) has reached its goal of a \$20,000 threshold, the board of Directors have formed a new Action Team consisting of Bob Byrnes, Dr. Vickers, Don Snowden and Roger Villines to plan an artist in residence program for the future.

Dr. Joseph Spaniola and the students in UWF 's Jazz Combo have faced challenges this year in terms of practice and performance. Here are links to their recent outdoor concerts. Thanks to Joe for keeping us in the loop. The UWF Jazz Combo, March 16, 2021: <https://youtu.be/WGImiZHTYG4>

"What's Jazzing" Continued...

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 5, 2020** **Jazz Jam**
The 5 Barrel
121 S. Palafox St.
6:30pm-9:00pm
- May 14, 2021** **Artist Meet & Greet**
The District; Upstairs Lounge
7:00pm - TBD
- May 14, 2021** **Headliner's Jazz Jam**
The District; Upstairs Lounge
7:00pm - TBD
- May 15 & 16, 2021** **Pensacola JazzFest**
Seville Square
Schedule on jazzpensacola.com
- June 2, 2021** **Jazz Jam**
The 5Barrel
121 S. Palafox St.
6:30pm-9:00pm

"What's Jazzing" Continued...

The UWF Jazz Combo, March 18, 2021: <https://youtu.be/JFaJRwGX6T0>

A special thanks to the West Florida Public Library which is celebrating Jazz Appreciation Month and highlighting jazz materials. That is much appreciated and a good use of the Jazz Room collection. 🎷

REVIEW OF ROSSANO SPORTIELLO'S THAT'S IT!

by Dr. F Norman Vickers



Cover for Rossano Sportiello's 2020 Album, That's It.

Here's another delightful solo piano recording from my friend Rossano Sportiello. He is a prolific pianist generally small group or solo. This recording marks his 30th year as a professional pianist. He started young so he's still in his prime. Most of the seventeen songs recorded on this piece are longtime jazz standards. For example: Smoke Gets in Your Eyes, Fine and Dandy, Bewitched, Bothered and

Bewildered and The Sheik of Araby. There are a couple of original compositions by Rossano and Bach's Prelude in C Minor.

There are liner notes which give a bit of Sportiello's background including a photo with him and Rachel Domber, head of Arbors Records. It was the late Mat Domber and Rachel who were early champions of Rossano's career. Pensacola fans will remember Rossano's appearance at Pensacola JazzFest a few years ago. And a personal highlight for me was hearing him perform some years ago at an Arbors Jazz Party in Clearwater. He astounded the audience by playing Chopin's Revolutionary Etude—first he played it straight and then he improvised on it by adding stride bass. I think Chopin would have applauded!

The CD will soon be available for check-out at the Jazz Society of Pensacola's jazz room at downtown West Florida Public Library. And there are numerous You-Tube offerings of Sportiello available for your edification and pleasure.

CD is available for purchase through usual sources, Arbors Records and from Sportiello.

Contact him at: 175 Thirteenth St. # 17A, New York, NY 10011. 🎷

SPECIAL THANKS TO PHILLIP MICHANOWICZ

by Carolyn Tokson

Thanks to the efforts of Phillip Michanowicz, band director at Pace High School, Jazz Pensacola gained 64 new student members. He apparently was the creator and organizer for the Jazz Hang sponsored and financed by Schmidt's Music as well. Dave Schmidt informed me of my error and he says the credit all goes to Phillip. So, let me get the record straight and say how grateful we are to Phillip for his enthusiasm and participation. 🎷

"I had spent many years pursuing excellence, because that is what classical music is all about... Now it was dedicated to freedom, and that was far more important."

- Nina Simone

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Jocelyn Brown & Bill Gardener