

A VERY DIFFERENT...BUT IN SOME WAYS GREAT... YEAR!

by Kathy Lyon



Kathy Lyon's CD cover for "Nothin' But Love"

On March 7, 2021, I had my first gig in exactly one year... March 6, 2020 saw my last gig, at Seville Quarter's Sunday brunch, as the COVID pandemic changed everything. So when I performed at the District a couple of months ago, it was wonderful to see friends, and to SING! Of course, I've been singing during the past year, but to have an audience made it special.

When everything shut down last year, I was in Sarasota for their annual Jazz Festival. Imagine my shock when I pulled into the parking lot for the first evening's show, to see a big sign announcing that the Festival was cancelled. So I headed home, listening to the radio announcing that pretty much everything was cancelled. Once back home, I stocked up on supplies for an extended stay at home in Navarre. A longtime friend, Mike, who lives near Memphis, came down for a couple of weeks, and we ended up spending most of the lockdown months either at my house, his house, or traveling in my RV. So despite the pandemic and the rioting in the streets, we actually had a pretty wonderful year.

People have asked me what I've been up to during this most unusual year. A quick summary:

Like many people, I re-discovered some recipes I hadn't made in years, and enjoyed cooking everything from my family's traditional Czech bread to Chicken Picatta, schnitzel, Hungarian goulash (with home-made noodles!) and more. I've always loved to cook, but had gotten away from serious cooking over the years... nice to get into it again!

Fixing up things around the house was fun... little things that needed attention or re-organization, such as

closets, shelves, a new patio, etc. Still plenty to do, but nice to get some things squared away. Spent plenty of time relaxing by the pool too!

Did some great road trips, mostly in my Class B RV. Mike keeps a 4-wheeler in New Mexico, so we took it out into the Gila Wilderness and got way off the beaten track. On the first trip, last May, things were shut down everywhere, and we noticed how little traffic (other than trucks) there was. We also spotted lots more wildlife such as pronghorn antelope close to the highway. Things opened up considerably in June, but I have been very cautious about being out in public. What a relief to get both my vaccine shots! We also went out to Big Bend National Park in Texas, had beautiful weather during our trip, but that terrible Texas snowstorm was chasing us all the way back across the country.

Also went out to Colorado in November to help watch my daughter's kids (Leo was 2-1/2, and little Bella only 9 months) while they packed their house to move to Sarasota! Still about 8 hours away, but much better than 2 days! After a few months with my son-in-law's parents, they moved into the house that they bought, so I can't wait to go down for a visit.

Once again, I was part of the annual Pensacola Winterfest. I helped to totally redesign it for safety during the pandemic. Lots of people were so happy we had it at all, as so few holiday events were happening. I was unfortunately disappointed at the number of rude "customers" who threw fits about my asking them to wear a face mask while attending Winterfest...even in front of their children and despite their agreeing to do so when they purchased tickets. I guess their tantrum was more important than making a nice holiday memory with their families.

Musically, it's been a very interesting year. I had just completed putting together a promo package for my new CD, "Nothin' But Love", but everything as far as promotion was at a standstill. Since things are in the process of opening up, I'm getting ready to send a few out. In theory, I should be on Facebook and Instagram promoting all the time, but I guess social media just isn't my thing. I send out a newsletter when I have gigs, so perhaps that will be picking up.

I have been really working on improving my songwriting. I've written a few pieces over the years, but had never developed a "process" to actually work at it, instead of waiting for "inspiration" to strike. One inspiration to get back into it was a bolt out of the blue. A song that my late husband Tom and I wrote together is called "Red Sky", and was written based on our experiences talking with some of the military people we met during our USO tours in the

early 80's. We performed the song on our last tour in 1985, and someone made a cassette recording of it back then. Turns out that a lawyer who knew several of the musicians we had on our last tour had held on to that recording all these 35 years, and got hold of me through my website to discuss using it in a music production he was planning. He actually paid me a nice "chunk" for the rights to record it, and if it ever monetizes, I'll get royalties too! Quite a thrill, and recharged my interest in songwriting, too.

After getting a simple recording setup at home, I also got busy writing songs, using programs like Garage Band, iRealPro and Audacity to make simple recordings—not great quality but good enough to capture the song. I also learned a lot about video editing, and put together videos for several of my songs, which I was able to use for this year's "Jazz For Justice" fundraiser. I've learned a lot about copyrights, licensing, etc.

Last fall, still during the pandemic, my friend and I were out in New Mexico, visiting long-time friends — Rich Chorné is a fine guitar player and song writer, and he was just finishing up his latest album of original songs, titled "Mas". He asked if I'd sing the vocal part on two of his original songs, so got to record in a beautiful studio in Ruidoso with blues producer Richard Cagle. The album is now being played on over 300 radio stations in the U.S. and Canada — with one of the songs I sang selected to be the lead-off single! You can listen to Rich's album on any of the streaming services. Back at the beginning of May, Rich invited me to come out for a May 22 concert at a beautiful new venue in Cloudcroft, NM. It was a gorgeous day in the mountains at the Cloudcroft Brewery, that features a beautiful outdoor stage with great sound, lighting AND a sound man! Good crowd, fine musicians, and great music... only problem for me was the 8,600 ft. altitude! (After all, at home I live at 14 ft!) Felt great until after the show, when I felt really headachy and nauseous — altitude sickness! But shook it off and had a lovely day. I'll be linking some of the videos from that show on YouTube, so if you aren't already on my email list, email your email address to kathylyonmusic@gmail.com or go to my website to sign up (kathylyonmusic.com).

Rich and I are also planning more collaborating — I've got about 10 original songs ready to record, and Rich has several more, so we are planning to do some recording later this summer — he's got another show at Cloudcroft, and there's another concert with the sax player from his band, Frank Zona, that I've been invited to sing in. Look for news about a new album later this year!

I guess I have learned to appreciate simplicity more than ever. I've discovered my inner "hermit" and

savored the time spent alone. The blank pages on my planning calendar have been fine with me, although with the reopening after COVID, I'm adding a lot more events, including a couple more gigs in New Mexico later this summer. But I'm choosing to leave space for more spontaneous camping trips with Mike and/or my dog Bentley. I was so happy (and relieved) that I was able to go visit my 92-year-old parents and 5 sisters in Nebraska in May after everyone had been vaccinated. I also plan to include lots of little trips to Sarasota to spend time with my daughter and my grandchildren.

I've missed seeing friends at JazzPensacola events. Now that I'm vaccinated and things are looking better, I hope to reconnect with my jazz friends. Unfortunately, I missed the Pensacola JazzFest in May due to the trip out to New Mexico, but I plan to attend any other events I can, when I'm in town. I've also enjoyed getting out to see my son Greg Lyon performing in the area, I'm so proud of the talented professional musician he's become. If you're on Facebook, check out Greg Lyon, he's very good about posting dates and the venues where he is booked.

Working around what's turning out to be a busy summer, I hope to start picking up some more gigs here at home, so hope to see you soon! 

JAZZ PENSACOLA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER LAWRENCE YOUNG, JR.

by Carolyn Tokson

At the recent annual business meeting on Zoom, members voted to accept Lawrence Young, Jr. as the board member to fill the position left vacant by Tom Bell whose second three-year term expired July 1. The nominating committee comprised of board members Ali Egan and John Link and members Peg Sheridan and Noemi Ruiz highly recommended Lawrence because of his passion for music education.

Lawrence is the band director at Booker T. Washington High School serving as the director of the Marching Band, JazzBand, Concert Band/Wind Ensemble and Percussion Ensemble. Lawrence has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from the University of West Florida and a Masters in Education with an emphasis in music from Florida A & M University.

A native Pensacolian and the son of two career educators, Lawrence has a great love for the community. In his spare time, he is also a freelance drummer playing with various groups in the area.



Lawrence Young, Jr.

We thank Tom Bell for his long service in heading up a crew of 18 volunteers who handled event admissions for years and his serving as Team leader with his wife Brenda in the VIP Tent at JazzFest. Farewell Tom and welcome Lawrence. 🎷

WHAT'S JAZZING

by Carolyn Tokson

Jazz Pensacola is back on schedule with a Jazz Gumbo at Seville Quarter Monday, July 19. The Freedom Jazz Dectet will be playing and it promises to be a most entertaining evening. A few days after, the Sparks volunteers are having a special bash Sunday afternoon July 25 from 4:30 to 6:30 PM at V. Paul's Italian Ristorante on Palafox to honor founder Norman Vickers and his fellow founding member Joe Occhipinti. That event promises to be an elegant afternoon of hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and music. We are happy to report that as we go to press, that event is sold out.

For the latest calendar of live music in the area, blogs, and photos, visit the Jazz Pensacola website at www.jazzpensacola.com.

Dr. Vickers reports that his being named a "Jazz Hero" by The Jazz Journalists Association had become an "industry" with interviews and photo sessions with several local media and service organizations. Dr. Vickers was celebrated as an "Angel in our Midst" by Sue Straughn of WEAR TV. Joe O. was filmed playing music in the background. This honor was accorded to another Jazz Pensacola member Vivian Lamont several years ago and also to local jazz legend Al Martin. Congrats !

Thanks to Dr. Robert Harbour for sharing the poignant story about Paul Desmond's song "Audrey" written by Paul Desmond for Audrey Hepburn whom he never met. It was included on Dave Brubeck's Columbia Record album "Brubeck Time". For Hepburn's funeral, her ex- husband Dr.

Andrea Dotti called Dave Brubeck and asked if he would play the song at her funeral. Sadly, Desmond had died earlier and never knew that the lovely actress had listened to his song every night before she went to bed. The story came from "Take Five: The Public and Private Lives of Paul Desmond" by Doug Ramsey and was recently told in a comic-strip version by Paul Rogers in The New Yorker's Sketchbook in February 2021. The story came to him through one of his patients and he passed it along to us.

A special note of gratitude goes out to VIP Pensacola magazine for their two- page spread of photographs of our JazzFest in May. The Pensacola News Journal also had an online collection of photographs the day after. We are always appreciative of the coverage given to us by our local print and online media.

I hoped you marked your calendar for the 23rd Annual Gulf Coast Ethnic and Heritage Jazz Festival 2021 in Mobile Thursday, July 29 - Sunday, August 1. There's also the Marcus Johnson Summer Jazz Camp July 19-July 30. For more details, visit the website at www.gcehjazzfest.org Stay cool, beat the heat and keep on jazzing! 🎷



Photo by Dean Vanderhoof

FREEDOM JAZZ DECTET PLAYS GUMBO JULY 19

by Carolyn Tokson

This month's Gumbo is one you do not, let me repeat, do not want to miss. It has a cast of 10 seasoned musicians who play a variety of different jazz styles. They were a hit at our recent JazzFest and promise to be a major force for jazz in this area. The players are all from the surrounding area, but have only in the last year come together as a group. Mike Lyle, tenor saxophonist, and Allen Beeson, trumpeter, are co-founders. The remaining members are Bob Maksymkow on alto saxophone and clarinet, Jeffrey Lynn on baritone saxophone, Jonathan Martin on trumpet, Josh Bledsoe on trombone, Jack Zoesch on piano, Danny Infante on bass,

Pete Wehner on drums, and Patricia Lyle singing vocals. That's a tremendous history of jazz musicality with a wide circle of experience of military bands, performances with major artists and teaching at universities. Presently all the members live on the Gulf Coast.

Get ready for an evening that can swing from Latin grooves to something sultry, from be-bop to the familiar tunes from the last 50 years that you know so well. Freedom Jazz Dectet promises to offer an evening of sophisticated jazz in an informal setting. Bring your friends. Join in the fun. 

MEETING A LEGEND

by Bob Maksymkow



Bob Maksymkow on saxophone. Photo by Andrea Maksymkow

I was about 11 or 12-years old, growing up in Long Island, New York, when my Dad took me to a jazz concert. There was a theater in-the-round called the Westbury Music Fair in my home town that featured varied entertainment venues. I got to see Dave Brubeck, George Shearing and other well-known jazz stars.

One evening we went to see Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, performing with his All-Star dixieland band. I enjoyed the concert and remember seeing Joe Darenbourg on clarinet, Trummy Young on trombone and, of course, Louis on trumpet and vocals.

After the concert, my Dad took me backstage to meet Louis. He had changed into a tropical shirt and was soaking wet from just having played for a couple of hours. He was gracious with his time and we chatted for awhile. I mentioned that I was studying clarinet for a couple of years

and he imparted the following advice: "When you're knocked down in your pursuit of music, get right back up and continue your pursuit", or something to that effect. At my age, it wasn't the first time I ignored advice!

He gave me a couple of autographs, as did Trummy Young, Joe Darenbourg and the drummer, Danny Barcelona. I appreciated the generosity of his time and attention but missed the essence of his message.

About 10 years later, I saw him with his group again around '67 or '68 when I was playing an event at the Shoreham Hotel in D.C. with Sammy Kaye's band. Unfortunately, he was doing his show and we followed immediately with dance music, so I never had a chance to chat. By then, "Hello Dolly", released in '62, was a hit and he had performed it during his show. By that time, he had achieved super-celebrity status.

Years later, in preparing to teach a jazz history class at UWF, I did some research and realized the depth and his strength of character throughout his life. Here's a very abbreviated documentation of some of the highlights:

Satchmo was raised in a fatherless home in a rough neighborhood in New Orleans. At 17 he was performing in brass bands and on riverboats. At 21, he had moved to Chicago to play with King Oliver, then moving once more to NY, switching from cornet to trumpet to play in the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra.

His wife, Lil Hardin Armstrong, prompted him to read music, work on his classical chops, improve his dress and work on his career. Moving back to Chicago, his group, the Hot Five, recorded his first scat singing improvisations, in part responsible for his group becoming the most famous combo in the U.S.

Moving back to NY, his vocal stylings created some of the most popular recordings of the time, including "Ain't Misbehavin'","Stardust," and "Lazy River". He performed at the Cotton Club in Harlem and his trumpet and singing styles became the major influence on instrumentalists and singers of the times. Popular singers, such as Bing Crosby attributed his singing style to Armstrong. Billie Holiday, "Lady Day", the undisputed greatest jazz vocalist of her time, aspired to sound like an instrument and gave Armstrong credit for being her major influence. The rhythmic "lay-back" approach to her singing style mimicked that of the trumpet and vocal performances of Armstrong.

During the Great Depression, when jazz greats such as Sidney Bechet became a tailor and Kid Ory raised chickens to make ends meet, Satchmo moved to L.A. to do radio broadcasts and perform for the rich and famous. He continued pursuing his career with tours to Europe and the U.S.

His consistent performances (numbering more than 300 a year) world-wide, established him as an

American icon and cultural ambassador. Though suffering a generation gap with the introduction of bebop (he called it Chinese music), his recording of “Hello, Dolly” went #1, even dislodging the Beatles from that spot. He became the oldest chart topper at the age of almost 63.

I finally appreciated and respected the substance of the advice he offered, based on his life, and what it actually meant. As a child, I was totally unaware of the challenges he had to overcome and the heights that he had risen to. In learning about his life and career path, the significance of my meeting with him became more profound. 

CD REVIEW: GINA HARRIS; DEEP LOVE

by F. Norman Vickers



One of the joys of reviewing jazz books and recordings is opportunity to read about and hear music which one might not otherwise experience. One such example is this recording of an eclectic group of delightful tunes from Gina Harris, a jazz vocalist and vocal coach in San Francisco.

Ms. Harris and her pianist/arranger have selected an hour’s worth of tunes by familiar composers Burt Bacharach, Joni Mitchell, Matt Dennis, Jerome Kern and a couple of Brazilian tunes by Antonio Carlos Jobim. She uses a variety of accompanists on various tunes—violin, cello, Brazilian and Tunisian percussion—in addition to standard instruments—piano, bass, drums, and saxophone.

Ms. Harris also sings her variations on Dizzy Gillespie’s Night in Tunisia. Likely the most unusual tune on this CD is Kiss, by Prince. Ms. Harris supplies her own additional lyrics to this number.

This is not your usual jazz recording. Duke Ellington described his own music as “beyond category,” that

description might be applied here, but the similarity doesn’t go beyond the comparison. Applause also goes to pianist-arranger/producer Jason Martineau for his artistic contributions to this unusual and delightful CD.

For Pensacola residents, the CD is available for check-out at the Jazz Room at the West Florida Public Library and from the usual sources as well as www.ginaharris.com. 

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS FOR JULY 2021

Lana Servies
Phil Thomas Katt

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• Jazz Gumbo, Monday July 19, 2021	Freedom Jazz Dectet at Seville Quarter 6:30-8:30PM
• Sunday, July 25, 2021	Event to Honor Founders 4:30-6:30 PM V. Paul’s Ristorante
• Jazz Jam, Wednesday, August 4,2021	6:30-8:30 PM at The 5 Barrel on Palafox St.

“Everyone’s got to be different. You can’t copy anybody and end up with anything”

- Billie Holiday