

Dreaming of Jazz in Paris

by Carolyn Tokson

So what do you dream about in those moments when you relax and sit back? One never gets to old to dream, do they? Not this girl! It's a humid dark night here in Pensacola. The sky is a bit foggy and I hear "A Foggy Day in London Town" floating through my brain, waiting for the chord that sends shivers up my spine. I've been working on the jazz newsletter and various projects all day. Time to have a light supper of soup and salad and sit in my Eames chair with a glass of wine and look at the tiny Christmas tree on the sideboard.

Paris! That's the only place I'd rather be or dream of being now. Paris is always good for me. For jazz too. Somehow this coronavirus has kept me here the last few years when my instincts would have had me on a plane to that lovely city on the Seine. Paris is a jazz capital, thanks to Black soldiers who came there in World War I. At a time when U.S. troops were still segregated according to race here, the French were not as concerned with such distinctions. The Black troops of the 369th Harlem Infantry Regiment Band led by Lt. James Reese Europe brought the sound of jazz to France. The band performed in small villages and larger concert halls and introduced the French to a new genre. Later in the post-war years, many musicians and dancers went to France and played in the small cabarets in Montmartre. Americans Sidney Bechet and Louis Armstrong crossed the Channel from London and made it to Paris. The singer Adelaide Hall opened a jazz Club in Paris and Josephine Baker left Harlem and took Paris by storm.



Juliette Greco and Miles Davis in Paris in 1949

In 1926, Bricktop, an American singer, opened a club frequented by Cole Porter and Mabel Mercer. Lionel Hampton and Cab Calloway played there. Copying the wide trousers worn by Calloway became a symbol of the Zazus, a French subculture of young people who loved jazz. Bricktop's club closed in 1936 several years before the Nazis arrived and condemned jazz as "degenerate music". Two French jazz aficionados Charles Delaunay and Hughes Panassié started the Jazz Hot Club in Pigalle in 1937 and a jazz magazine. Django Reinhardt

and Stephane Grappelli formed an all French jazz band, the Quintette du Hot Club de France and toured the country spreading the gospel of jazz. Django was born in Belgium, but he held French citizenship and was of the Manouche-Romani descent. While living in a gypsy caravan in Paris at the age of 18, he suffered serious damage to two fingers in a fire that destroyed his caravan. The paralysis to his fretting hand did not hold him back. We still refer to his type of music as "gypsy jazz".

Even the Nazi ban on jazz didn't keep the French from their exploration into the genre. Listening to records of New Orleans style jazz and swing grew in the soundproof

underground cellars of the Latin Quarter. Reinhardt's "Nuages" became an anthem of the Resistance in the jazz clubs where Resistance members Josephine Baker and the Hot Club's cofounder Jaques Bureau carried messages. Even Louis Armstrong used the name Jean Sablon.

After the war, jazz flourished again. Boris Vian, a poet, writer and engineer by profession opened his club Le Tabou in 1947. The First International Festival de Jazz in 1948 brought Americans Dizzy Gillispie and Coleman Hawkins. Soon Parisians were able to hear the Charlie Parker Quintet, Miles Davis, Thelonius

Monk and Mary Lou Williams who became idols to young French musicians.

Sidney Bechet knew the restraints of racism and the lack of appreciation for his form of jazz in his native country. His grandmother had spoken French and he was born from a respected Creole family in New Orleans. He had been the unruly boy who stayed out of school to learn jazz and his family had not approved at all. Yet, in France he was adored for his expertise on his soprano saxophone and his compositions. Even more, he was a Black American musician who mentored and encouraged young French musicians in this new creative art form.

Miles Davis also became a superstar among French jazz fans and he and Juliet Greco were admired by the French public when such an inter-racial relationship was scorned by Americans.

Since then, America's own brand of music has flourished in Paris, and there are still plenty of jazz clubs available in the various arrondissements. My particular favorite one is Aux Trois Mailletz where trumpeter Bill Coleman,

Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon played among others. Nina Simone went to Paris in 1981 to rebuild her career and worked regularly at Aux Trois Mailletz. The cafe gets a bit boisterous as the evening progresses; it opens at 7 PM and closes at 5 AM. I've spent many a pleasant evening having dinner and a glass of red wine there only a short walk from the hotel I used to return to every September after I retired. The newer Le Caveau des Oubliettes which is always full of young musicians and devotees in my favorite area of Paris near Notre Dame on the Left Bank is just around the corner. These two places are true old "caves" where the stone ceilings are arched and the spaces small and crowded and evoke the time when jazz was indeed hidden. I miss them.



Nina Simone with her close friend, the author James Baldwin.

The reality is that I can't go to Paris now. C'est la vie! My grandmother used to play a lovely song on her piano and sing "When I Grow Too Old to Dream". I'm not there yet. Paris will wait for me. 🎷

A local note on Sidney Bechet.....

Regarding Sidney Bechet, Norman Vickers relates two anecdotes involving Pensacola. Some years ago, Betty Vickers was doing research about Pensacola history and came across a newspaper article which involved Bechet. It seems that Bechet was traveling and came to Pensacola for a one-night event in the late '20s or early '30s. There was a dance hall on second floor of building on first block of South Palafox, east side of the street. There was a small group of jazz musicians who played on a narrow elevated stage. Bechet played his soprano saxophone while sitting on a chair on the dance floor.

As many of our readers know, Bechet, a New Orleans Creole, immigrated to France after WWII and lived there for the rest of his life. **Jacques Gauthé**, a French teenager, heard Bechet perform and was inspired to learn saxophone and play like his idol, Bechet. Gauthé immigrated to the New Orleans as an adult, organized The Creole Rice Band and ran a jazz room, dedicated to Bechet, of course, at Le Meridien Hotel on Canal Street. The Jazz Society of Pensacola was privileged to hear Gauthé and The Creole Rice Band at the Executive Club on Water Street in downtown Pensacola. Gauthé died at age 67 in his birthplace, Gaujac, France June 10, 2007.

January's Gumbo: The Legacy of Horace Silver and Art Blakey

by Carolyn Tokson

January's Jazz Gumbo features The Legacy of Horace Silver and Art Blakey. This event was scheduled in September, but cancelled due to the coronavirus spike. Gratefully, we will be able to enjoy this music this month. Featured musicians are Allen Beeson and Jonathan Martin on trumpet, Cynthia Domulot on keys, Tom Latenser on bass and Jazz Pensacola president, Fred Domulot on drums.

The Jazz Room at the West Florida Public Library offers several resources to learn more about the two musicians. There are three DVD's all from the Jazz Icon series featuring the music of percussionist Blakey.

One covers the 1958 concert in Brussels of Blakey's Jazz Messengers with Lee Morgan on trumpet, Bobby Timmons on piano, Jymie Merrit on bass and Benny Golson on sax. This concert features a "tour de force" of Blakey playing Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia". Another DVD of the 1959 concert in Paris features a new addition, Wayne Shorter on tenor saxophone and Walter Davis Jr. on piano. The final DVD is of the 1965 concert in Paris of the New Jazz Messengers with a 24 minute version of Freddie Hubbard plying his "Crisis". Numerous CDs of both artists are available. The CD Horace Silver and the Jazz Messengers is available. This CD contains pianist Silver's first hit "The Preacher". Both Silver and Blakey had careers that spanned decades and contributed much to the evolution of jazz.

* Our August 2021 newsletter ran an article by Dr. Norman Vickers about the Pensacola connections to Howard Silver. That article is available on our website at www.jazzpensacola.com 

Austin Paul Jr. Plays Sax on Alicia Keys' New Album

by Carolyn Tokson

Local saxophonist, Austin Paul Jr., is basking in the glow of Alicia Keys' latest release "Keys" as well he should since he is the saxophonist on the recording. Jon Pareles wrote

an in-depth review of the double record in the New York Times of December 11, 2021. He points out how in the "Originals" half of the album, that the vocalists uses only a small number of musicians as opposed to her earlier 2020 album "Alicia" in which she used far more collaborators. Austin has a



Austin Paul Jr.

chance to really shine in the "Unlocked" version of "Skydive" with a noticeable saxophone flourish.

Austin is accustomed to the limelight. For years he has been featured at The Apollo in New York City for the New Year's Eve event. He played for Gen. Colin Powell's First Gala Ball with Kenny G. He's played at Seabreeze Jazz Festival and up and down the east coast. He was saxophonist for Disney Entertainment before the coronavirus pandemic. He has had a busy schedule of late playing for NBC's the Voice finals in October, at the Pensacola Interstate Fair, the Beach Hits Radio Music Festival and a show at Vinyl recently.

Jazz Pensacola has a right to be proud of Austin's success. He won cash awards in the 2011 and 2012 Jazz Pensacola Student Competition when he was a student at Booker T. Washington High School before he went on to study music industry and business management at Florida A and M. His musical talent was obvious from an early age when he began performing at the New Dimensions Christian Center in Pensacola. His talent, his love of music and his mastery of the saxophone have earned him a place in both the blues and jazz communities. 

West Florida Public Library on Spring St. Offers Afternoon Jazz Series

The West Florida Public Library downtown is offering a free monthly concert on the first Tuesday of each month at 1 PM. The next concert will be **January 4, 2022** with Joe Occhipinti and friends. There will be free water and popcorn. Snacks are available at the library's cafe for a fee.

The first concert was Tuesday, December 7 and garnered 38 delighted visitors who enjoyed the music of **Joe Occhipinti** on saxophone, **Roger Villines** on trumpet, and **Chris Saunders** on keyboards and vocals. Their repertoire included several songs about New Orleans and standard jazz classics.

Quite a few Jazz Pensacola members were there: **Robert Windt and his family, Val and Craig Chapman, Alan Kulkin, Justine**

Ward, John Fountain, Dr. and Mrs. Norman Vickers, Claire Massey and Bart Daughety and several groups of folks, I didn't recognize. Joe graciously gave took some time to talk about Jazz Pensacola and had copies of our newsletter out for guests to take. The lively music did much to brighten a very cloudy day.

Thanks to **Lindsey Corey, Amy Horosky and the administration** of the West Florida Public Library on Spring St. for their enthusiastic support of music and the Jazz Room. If you haven't visited it, please do. It's only one of two jazz rooms in libraries in the US and offers a large selection of books, CDs, and DVDs. The current estimated value of the Jazz Room collection is now at \$20,000. The photography and artwork in the Jazz room, adjacent hall and rooms is also most interesting and colorful. 🎷

Remembering Dave Frishberg

By F. Norman Vickers

Most jazz fans remember vocalist, composer, pianist Dave Frishberg. He died on November 17 at age 88. In recent years he has been living in Portland, OR and has been relatively inactive because of an unspecified illness.

Frishberg grew up in St. Paul, MN and took piano lessons as a youngster. After graduation from U. Minnesota with a degree in journalism, military service for two years followed. In 1957, he moved to New York City where he had opportunity to hear many of his jazz great idols as well as perform with various groups.

At this period, he began to write and record some of his own songs. These included I'm Hip, My Attorney Bernie, and Can't Take You Nowhere. His Van Lingle Mungo included names of baseball players.

Dave spent some time in Los Angeles pursuing his musical career and then moved to Portland, OR. He had a five-year duo gig with vocalist Becky Kilgore. Becky is a favorite on the jazz party circuit and appeared at our 1999 Pensacola JazzFest along with drummer Hal Smith.

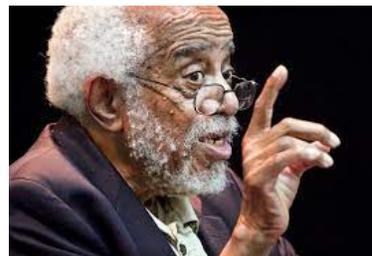
Frishberg collaborated with Bob Dorough on some Schoolhouse Rock recordings which were popular as teaching tool for kids.

I had opportunity to see and hear Frishberg in the early 2000s when he and Dorough were performers at the Arbors Jazz Party that year.

There are lots of offerings on YouTube so take the opportunity to hear Frishberg for the first time or to refresh your memory. It will be a treat! We will miss you, Dave. 🎷

Honoring Barry Harris

By F. Norman Vickers



Barry Harris, jazz pianist

Barry Harris, jazz pianist and teacher (December 15, 1929 –December 8, 2021) died in North Bergen, NJ of Covid just one week short of his 92nd birthday.

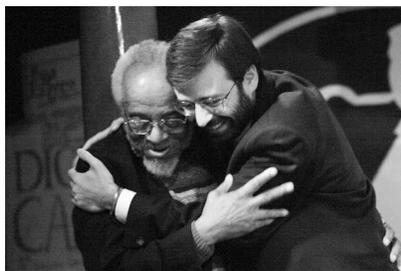
Harris was active from the 1950s up until the time of his death. He was associated with Thelonious Monk, Cannonball Adderley, Charlie Parker and many others.

The purpose of this notice is not to try to tell his entire story; it is much too long and complicated. But it is hoped that I will arouse your curiosity to search further.

My interest in Barry Harris was aroused when I was reading about Thelonious Monk. As some of you know, Monk had some psychological problems and Baroness Nica de Koenigswarter bought a house in New Jersey and invited Monk to live there. He did so until his death and never played piano all that time. (There is lots of material in the Jazz Room at West Florida Public Library about this.) Turns out that Barry Harris was living there at same time. In reading Harris' obituary, I learned that Harris was again living in Nica's old house. She had been long dead, and Harris had arranged with Nica's relatives to continue living there.

"Honoring Barry ... Continued"

It was fascinating, too, to read about Harris' weekly jazz workshops. He would charge \$15 to attend and it was open to all comers. Hence, there was a mixture of students, rank amateur to seasoned professionals. Recently, my pianist friend Rossano Sportiello attended one which was recorded on video and Sportiello had it on his YouTube video. 



Jazz pianists, Barry Harris and Rossano Sportiello

Among Harris' many honors are the following:

- ◆ 2000 American Jazz Hall of Fame for Lifetime Achievements and Contributions to the World of Jazz
- ◆ 1998 Lifetime Achievements Award for Contributions to the Music World from the National Association of Negro Musicians
- ◆ 1995 Doctor of Arts—Honorary Degree by Northwestern University
- ◆ 1995 Presidential Award, Recognition of Dedication and Commitment to the Pursuance of Artistic Excellence in Jazz Performance and Education
- ◆ 1995 Honorary Jazz Award by the House of Representatives
- ◆ 1989 NEA Jazz Master.

Jazz Pensacola would like to welcome to new members:

Sara Altmann
Laura Arguea

For more information about Jazz Pensacola you can call the Jazz Pensacola administrator Alice Crann Good at (850) 433-8382, M-Th 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., or visit our website at www.jazzpensacola.com.

Upcoming Events for Jazz Pensacola

Save the Dates!

-  Monday, January 17 Gumbo: **The Legacy of Horace Silver and Art Blakey**
-  Monday, February 21 Gumbo: **Mardi Gras Celebration with The Village Brass Band**
-  Monday, March 21 Gumbo: **The Jazz Pensacola Student Competition**
-  Saturday and Sunday April 2 and 3: **Jazz Pensacola JazzFest Seville Square**
-  Monday, May 23 Gumbo: **High School Bands Concert**
-  Monday June 20 Gumbo: **Women in Jazz: All-Female Band**

-  Monday, July 18 Gumbo: **Salute to Female Vocalists**

Jazz Jams Temporarily Suspended

Jazz Jams will be temporarily suspended until the board can find a more suitable venue that serves food and makes charging admissions more feasible. During the pandemic, we lost our site at the Vineyard in the Old Sacred Heart Hospital when the owners decided they had to close the restaurant. Since then, we have had jams at The Five Barrel on Palafox and have not charged admission. Instead we have taken donations.

Presently, Fred Domulot, our president, is seeking a new site where it is more feasible to charge an admission fee and especially a venue where food is available. We thank the owners of The Five Barrel for their hospitality at a time

when we were facing serious challenges with the coronavirus.

Stay tuned and look for a Jazz Alert to inform you of new developments.

What's Jazzing

by Carolyn Tokson

Happy New Year! Let us hope that 2022 brings us opportunities to grow and flourish. We have had enough challenges in the past two years with the coronavirus, and Jazz Pensacola has come through with renewed strength and vigor. So many exciting doors are opening in music.

Congratulations to **Dr. Joseph Spaniola**, Brass professor and Director of Jazz Studies within the Dr. Grier Williams School of Music at the University of West Florida campus here. Several of his recently released compositions and recordings have received honors both here and in Europe.

Jazz Pensacola is grateful for the **gifts of generosity** made by several members. We especially thank Dr. Michelle Brandhorst for her donation to our General Fund. Members who have joined or renewed their membership at one of the advanced membership levels. are: **Dr. Michelle Brandhorst, John and Myrl Eisinger, Knox and Holly Parker, Roger and Kat Villines, Adriane "Cookie" Kichler, Sara Altmann, Alan Kulkin, Allen and Stella Beeson, and Paul Bruno.**

Thanks to **Steve Douglas** for his recent contribution on Giving Tuesday. Remember that your donations to Jazz Pensacola are tax-deductible.

Thanks to the Jazz Pensacola friends who sponsored the December Jingle Jazz event in memory of our recently departed friend Jim Crumlish. **Donors were: Paul Bruno, Paul and Marliese Herrick, Peg Sheridan, Carolyn Tokson and Jeff Elliot, Norman Vickers, and Justine Ward.** Thank you for your open hearts. The Epps Christian Center sends much gratitude for the large donation of non-perishable food donations given by attendees to the holiday event.

It was a treat to see so many people we haven't seen recently at Jingle Jazz. **Mel and Susie Kaylor Briggs** were there; they met at Jingle Jazz 6 years ago and are celebrating their sixth wedding anniversary soon with a cruise to Curacao. A crew of Jazz Pensacola members used to sit with them at Gino Rosaria's Tuesday Night Jazz in Lili Marlene's. Susie, a talented artist, captured those moments in a painting which I only recently saw. It's very easy to identify not only Gino's band but also several Jazz Pensacola members: Carol (Gabby) Barrett, Peg Sheridan, Tom and Brenda Bell, Ralph Knowles and Vivian Lamont. I have a print of the painting hanging on my wall now. It is a poignant memory of those times and of some of our friends who are no longer with us.

Gino Rosaria's new single release featuring Judah Sealy is due out January 10. Gino will be announcing a new series of concerts next month, but he's taking a break from his heavy schedule for some down time before launching a new Gino product line soon.



Kathy Lyon's new release "Who Knew?" is coming out January 15, 2022 from Montrose Records. It's a 6 song all original EP with Rich Chromé featured on guitar. Kathy's songwriting skills are taking her into new dimensions. Her earlier CD "Nothing But Love" is climbing the charts. Kathy will be having a release party soon and is beginning to work on a tour.



There is plenty of live jazz here in the area. Visit our Jazz Pensacola website to

"Jazz has endured because it doesn't have a beginning or an ending. It's a moment."

- Robert Altman.