

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Annual Jam Session



Sunday, June 26, 2016

2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Community Arts Center

414 Plush Mill Road

Wallingford, PA 19086

Directions at

<http://www.tristatejazz.org/directions-cac.html>

An annual Tri-State Jazz tradition, we will hold our Jam Session again this year at the Community Arts Center, Wallingford, PA 19086. Musicians who are interested will be invited to sit in with the “house band” shown below:

Bob Rawlins - Clarinet, Saxophones, Leader

Danny Tobias - Trumpet, Cornet

Franny Smith - Banjo, Vocals

Brian Nalepka - Tuba, Bass

Paul Midiri - Drums, Vibes, Trombone

Last year's event was another huge foot-stomping success and drew rave reviews. This year, music professor, hot reeds player, and Tri-State Jazz Society board member Bob Rawlins will head a core group of top New York and Philadelphia jazz Regulars. The music will include standards and traditional Dixieland favorites.

Bob Rawlins, who also led last year's Tri-State Jazz Society jam session, is a professor of music theory at Rowan University, and is the author of several books on jazz including *Tunes for the Twenties* and *The Real Dixieland Book*, a collection of 250 classic Dixieland tunes he compiled and edited while living in New Orleans.

ANNUAL TRI-STATE JAZZ MEETING

The Annual Meeting of Tri-State Jazz Society will be held on June 26 at the Community Arts Center, Wallingford, during the intermission of the Jam Session. The meeting will last 15 minutes. The agenda will primarily include election of Directors. The nominating committee has recommended the following nominees for Director to serve three-year terms:

Sanford Catz, currently President

Mike Mudry, currently Treasurer

Chic Bach, currently Sound Coordinator

Nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

Concert Admissions

\$10 First-time attendees and Members

\$20 General Admission

High school/college students with ID and children with paying adult admitted free

Pay at the door

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LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR JULY 2016 CONCERT

The Atlantic City Jazz Band will play a Tri-State Jazz concert on July 24, 2016 at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, Haddonfield, NJ.



The seven-piece ACJB is an authentic "tuba and banjo" ensemble and specializes in playing the music that swept the nation when the first jazz recordings were issued in 1917. The members are seasoned players who love the traditional style and deliver it in an energetic fashion. But their repertoire goes well beyond that, featuring the prime output of the skilled Tin Pan Alley composers who dominated music through the 1930s and beyond, and their zesty, spirited instrumentals are punctuated by an occasional vocal to capitalize upon the catchy lyrics of the period.

Their repertoire is always growing and includes pieces as old as Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton rags as well as pop tunes of the jazz era by George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. In 2004, band leader and since-retired trombonist Herb Roselle organized a touring band for a 10-day excursion to Italy and selected some of the finest musicians in the area. The band was well-received and decided to tour again the following year. Then, after a few more years of being a one-time/one-tour band, Roselle and co-founder Bob Rawlins decided to morph the band into a permanent group - and thus, in the fall of 2008, the Atlantic City Jazz Band was born. They have since become a fixture on the traditional jazz scene and in the spring of 2009 released their first CD, "Making Waves."

AL HARRISON DIXIELAND BAND MAY CONCERT REVIEW

The Time: Sunday, May 22, 2016
The Place: Haddonfield United Methodist Church
The Band: Al Harrison, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals and leader

Joe Midiri, clarinet, soprano sax and vocals
Fred Scott, trombone
Bill Schilling, piano
Bill Stumm, bass
Chic Sperell, drums

Since I began writing for the Strutter, I must have reviewed Al Harrison's group about half a dozen times, and in most cases, I would get a satisfying performance from the group - nothing glitzy or showy, but a good show. For this Sunday's concert, from the opening "Battle Hymn of the Republic" to the closing "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," something was amiss. Part of the problem was a new rhythm section; the other part was a sense of lethargy amongst the musicians, providing a tired, half-hearted, effort.



Photo by Jim McGann

There were some expected traditions. For example, Fred Scott's Teagardenesque lead during "Basin Street Blues," and the long teasing intros of the aforementioned "Battle Hymn.." and "Closer Walk," were expected, but there were several moments where no sooner than the last notes of the melody were played, it was play whatever jazz you like.

Some of the blame should be put on the rhythm section. Pianist Bill Schilling soloed in a manner similar to the styles of Oscar Peterson and George Shearing, with lengthy octave runs and chord clusters dotting his performances, without a hint of stride. Peterson and Shearing are great pianists,

but do you want to hear those sounds on a Dixie version of Pennies From Heaven? Drummer Chic Sperell lacked creativity in this setting, limiting himself to simple swing criteria, relying heavily on the hi-hats, and standard drum fills and accents (His "feature" spot on "I Found A New Baby" was limited to a trading four chorus with the horns!). Bassist Bill Stumm was the best of the three; while I am not ready to crown him the next Pops Foster. Stumm tried to adapt to the genre being performed in the rhythm section and the few solo opportunities he was given.

There were some good moments. Joe Midiri's clarinet and soprano sax work was polished and swinging as always, bringing some life into the performances, most notably his double timing and escalating riffs on "Beale Street Blues," swinging out of the gate on "New Baby," wailing soprano on "Pennies," and his creative chalumeau clarinet exercises on "Royal Garden Blues." In fact, the whole band performance of "Royal Garden Blues" should be noted with Harrison and Scott creatively dancing over the beat in their solos, and for the creative, almost free-form rideout chorus. Fred Scott had some good solos, particularly on "Caravan," sounding very close to Ellington trombonist Lawrence Brown. Also, Scott's soli on "Hymn" and "That's A Plenty" were noteworthy; the former solo sounding muted but played open, and the latter containing some tasty plunger mute. Finally, the leader's "flugelhorn" trumpet chorus on "I Found A New Baby" was a keeper.

On the whole, however, this Al Harrison Dixieland unit needed something to get it going. That something wasn't there on Sunday.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Tri-State Jazz Society memberships expire on June 30th each year. If you are a new member who joined after March 1, 2016, your membership won't expire until June 30, 2017, but all other memberships are due for renewal now. We will have extra volunteers on hand to accept your dues payments at Wallingford on June 26. We can accept cash or a personal check, but not credit cards. If you don't plan to attend that concert please mail a check with a membership renewal form from page 8 of this newsletter.

Basic membership dues are \$20 for individuals; \$40 for couples. As a member, you will be able to attend all concerts at half price until June 30, 2017. Members also receive the monthly Strutter newsletter by email.

Members pay half the General Admission price (\$10 when the full price is \$20) for all regular concerts throughout the membership year. It pays to be a member even if you attend just two concerts a year, but after the second concert, members continue saving \$10 per concert, compared to non-member rates.

PATRON AND SPONSOR MEMBERSHIPS

We hope you will consider renewing your membership at the Patron or Sponsor level. Your donations enable us to bring you top bands from this region and beyond without raising our admission prices.

Yearly dues for Patrons are \$100 or more (\$120 for couples). Sponsors dues are \$50 (\$70 for couples).

Printed copies of the Strutter are mailed to Patrons and Sponsors on request.

Tri-State Jazz Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt educational nonprofit corporation. The full amount of annual membership dues at the Basic, Sponsor or Patron level may be deductible as a charitable contribution for some taxpayers, but check with your tax advisor.

The Saga of the Bass Saxophone

Excerpts from Riverwalk Jazz

By Jim Cullum, Jr.

"Jelly Roll without the swing is like a martini without the gin," wrote critic/drummer Wayne Jones. I couldn't agree more. Swing is the one essential ingredient in all jazz. What is it, anyway? The answer is most easily found in listening to players who really swing. Number one on most lists is Louis Armstrong. In his wake, there are many other great swingers. We quickly add Benny Goodman, Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti, Earl Hines, Count Basie, and his great wave of sidemen at the top of a long list.

No doubt the relatively obscure name Adrian Rollini must be included in this group. Rollini never rose to great prominence and fame, probably because his main instrument in the 1920's was the awkward and cumbersome bass saxophone. Ah, but what an artist Adrian was! In his master hands, the elephant became a ballerina.

As the generations roll on, we, the inheritors of these traditions, sit in awe as Rollini appears like a polished diamond in priceless recorded treasures: the Beiderbecke, Red Nichols, Miff Mole, Venuti/Lang groups, all supercharged by Rollini, speak to us from across the years.



Adrian Rollini, Photo courtesy
Red Hot Jazz Archive

In his youth, my father, the late Jim Cullum, Sr., stumbled over this hot music and he never regained his equilibrium. Early on he discovered Rollini, so naturally he couldn't say no when an opportunity to buy a bass sax loomed up. The year was 1946, the price: \$50.00. The sax was a Conn, as Rollini's had been. Many of the instruments Conn made in the 20's have never been surpassed, especially those old bass saxophones.

Delighted, Dad lugged the new toy home to our Dallas living room where he played it about twice and then put it back in its huge case and stored it in the only place it would fit: behind the sofa. You see, Dad was mostly a clarinet player and the bass

saxophone was way down there at the other end of the reed family. Also, there was absolutely no one hiring bass saxophone players. Even Rollini had abandoned the bass sax 10 years earlier, and during part two of his career he played vibes and chimes exclusively.

But, what do you know? A little later that year, Adrian Rollini and his orchestra appeared for a two-week run at the Majestic Theater in downtown Dallas. Apparently, he had adopted early what has now become an industry standard: travel with a few key men and fill out the sections with local players.

Dad got the call to play in the Rollini sax section. Of course, nothing could have pleased him more and nothing would do unless Adrian came to our house for one of Dad's famous late-night jam sessions. Hand-picked Dallas musicians gathered in our living room feigning a casual nonchalance when, in fact, we were all excited. These were players who understood the difference. Wow! Adrian Rollini! The real thing! In person!

Dad and Adrian made their entrance.

Introductions and drinks were passed around and the party's noise level made a decided crescendo. The classic Beiderbecke records began to blast from our Magnavox. And then the sofa was moved out a little, Dad and Adrian stood between the sofa and the wall, and the bass saxophone appeared. Adrian balanced it against the back of the sofa and began to play along with himself on the old Bix records. The party fell silent. Everyone stood up or sat around in a circle, just soaking it up.

Having not touched a bass saxophone in years, Adrian was pretty excited. After about four records, he was beaming. He put down the bass sax and, in exuberance, actually jumped over the sofa into the room. Then he jumped back, grabbed the sax, and continued playing along. I, as a child, was unaware of the significance of this once-in-a-lifetime musical experience, but I certainly was impressed by that "crazy" guy jumping back and forth over the couch.

When the party was over, I had become fascinated with the bass sax that lived in its black case behind the sofa, sticking out at one end.

During these years, we lived in a sort of "family compound." My grandparents owned a small farm on the outskirts of Dallas and, as their children married, each was given a lot on which to build a

house. Most of our neighbors were aunts and uncles and cousins who, amazingly, seemed to get along very well (although I have heard that the volume from Dad's all-night sessions often strained relations).

Having observed Rollini, I now considered myself an expert on the matter of the bass sax which continued to live behind the sofa. For the next few years, I may have been its only visitor. I could show-off to neighborhood friends (mostly cousins) by opening up the musty case and attaching the neck and mouthpiece. With a big breath, I could produce a healthy honk.

Eventually, Dad quit the professional music business. We moved away to Venezuela, back to Dallas, and finally to San Antonio. The bass sax was stored in my grandfather's chicken house. Neighborhood children led by my cousins dropped in occasionally, shoeing chickens and blowing dust off the old black case as they, in my absence, showed off the mysterious piece of silver plumbing.

The years rolled by. We kids grew up. Dad again became a "pro" musician. The scene for us had long before shifted to San Antonio. The family neighborhood was gone. My grandparents' wonderful house was replaced by a Taco Bell. The chicken house collapsed. But somehow, the bass saxophone survived, its case reinforced with several rolls of friction tape.

One night in 1971, it finally, after a 50-year wait, made its professional debut at the Landing. It had been completely overhauled for the occasion. There it stood on the Landing stage, shiny as a new penny, fresh with silver plate and new springs and pads.

We had great fun with it for a few nights, but as the novelty wore off, the bass sax became only a bandstand decoration. Dad was a clarinet player at heart, and even the inspiration of the great Rollini wasn't enough to make him wish to trade in some of his clarinet solo space for solos on the bass sax.

One day, he announced to me that Charlie Boeckman, a clarinet player from Corpus Christi, wanted to buy the bass sax. Dad figured up the price: \$50.00 purchase price (in 1946) plus \$150 for the recent overhaul--a \$200 total. He didn't exactly apply increases from the Consumer Price Index. Off went the bass sax to Corpus Christi

where, again, it fell into disuse. Charlie Boeckman was a clarinet player, too.

Fast forward a few years and the Landing had become inspirational to one Drake Mabry, a symphony oboe player. He was there every night and once he said to me that he was drawn to our music because he had heard Adrian Rollini on record, and what he really wanted was a bass saxophone. Did I know where he might find one? I told him to call Charlie Boeckman and in a few nights, here was Drake grinning ear to ear holding the bass sax over his head like a barbell. Charlie Boeckman had applied the Consumer Price Index and then some. Drake had paid \$500.00.

Fast forward a little more. Enter tubaist Brian Nalepka who came to San Antonio from New York City to join our band. He had a bass saxophone in tow.

"Where'd ja get that bass sax?" I asked. "Well, they're hard to find." came the answer. "I got this one from a guy up in Connecticut, who only sold it to me because he was able to replace it with a silver-plated Conn from someone down here in Texas. Bought I think he said from some symphony oboe player! Stole it, really--only paid \$1,000.00."

And then, after a few more years, our band was playing at the national Ragtime Festival at St. Louis. The great jazz tubaist Mike Walbridge was there. We are longtime friends. Mike reported he had just purchased a bass saxophone that he understood had once belonged to my father. "Bought it from a guy in Connecticut," he said, "Really got it at a bargain price: only \$3,500.00."

After thinking a minute I said, "Mike, let me make your day and instantly add a couple of thousand more to the value, because when I was a little boy, I, personally, with my own little ears, listened to Adrian Rollini himself play that saxophone both before and after he jumped back and forth over our sofa!"

FUTURE CONCERTS



All Concerts from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

July 24, 2016 Atlantic City Jazz Band, This sextet includes Tri-State Jazz Society board members, Bob Rawlins on reeds and Nancy Rawlins on piano, Haddonfield, NJ

August 21, 2016 Rossano Sportiello, Solo Piano. One of New York's finest traditional jazz pianists in his first appearance at TSJS, Wallingford, PA

September 18, 2016 Dan Levinson and his Tiger Tulip Jazz Band, Long-time TSJS favorite leader/clarinetist returns to TSJS, Haddonfield, NJ

October 16, 2016 Ben Mauger's Vintage Jazz Band, They will play Dixieland and other early jazz, Wallingford, PA

November 13, 2016 Midiri Brothers Sextet, Joe and Paul have most recently been seen at TSJS with Neville Dickie, but the twins return to lead their own band. With Paul on vibes, expect mostly swing, Haddonfield, NJ

January 15, 2017 Barbone Street Jazz Band, Clarinetist Steve Barbone leads one of the area's best and most experienced Dixieland bands. It has become the busiest trad jazz group in the Delaware Valley, Wallingford

February 12, 2017 Marty Grosz and the Hot Winds, Guitarist and raconteur Marty Grosz is a legend of the jazz world. He returns with another edition of his quartet to perform old tunes you may not remember, Haddonfield

Wallingford: Concerts are held at the Community Arts Center, 414 Plush Mill Rd; just west of exit 3 of I-495 ("The Blue Route").

Haddonfield: Concerts are held at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Rd., just south of Kings Highway; about a ten minute walk from the PATCO train station.

OTHER JAZZ CONCERTS

PENNSYLVANIA JAZZ SOCIETY

www.pajazzsociety.org

(610)-625-4640

Dewey Banquet Hall, 502 Durham Street, Hellertown, PA. Concerts 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

July 17 Metropolitan Club Orchestra

October 23 Big Band Swing with Bill Warfield

NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

www.njjs.org

(800)-303-NJJS

NJJS also co-sponsors events at the Bickford Theatre and Ocean County College.

THE BICKFORD THEATRE

6 Normandy Heights Road

Morristown, NJ

www.njjs.org/p/services/bickford.html

All concerts 8:00 p.m. (973)-971-3706.

June 12 An Afternoon with Rosie and Mel

June 27 Singer & saxophonist Danny Bacher

July 11 Full Count Big Band

OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

Toms River, NJ 08753

www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html

(732)-255-0500

All concerts start at 8:00 p.m. Ocean County College campus, Community and Arts Center, College Drive.

CAPE MAY TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY

VFW Post 386, 419 Congress St.,

Cape May, NJ

www.capemaytraditionaljazzsociety.com

June 12 Midiri Brothers Traditional Jazz

July 10 Al Harrison Dixieland Band

August 14 Atlantic City Jazz Band

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More Volunteers are listed on our website at:
www.tristatejazz.org/officers.html

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