

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Rossano Sportiello-Stride Pianist



Sunday, August 21, 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>

Stride expert Rossano Sportiello makes his TSJS debut, bringing his eclectic, classically-trained pianism to Wallingford's Community Arts Center. The pianist describes his mission as "to play jazz and make it understandable to everybody. Most of all, I want to see people smiling and having fun!"

Born in Italy, Sportiello graduated from the Conservatory in classical piano in 1996. At age 16 he was performing professionally at jazz venues in the Milan area, and in 1992, he joined Europe's historic jazz band, the "Milan Jazz Group," touring with them throughout Italy and Western Europe until the end of 2000. Described by mentor/friend Barry Harris as "the best stride player" he has ever heard, Rossano has been enthusiastically received at the jazz festivals, and in 2009 received the Ascona Jazz Festival (Switzerland) Award for jazz

piano, particularly for his stride playing. Following his marriage to American writer Lala Moore in 2007, Sportiello established himself in NYC. He has performed with many of the world's finest jazz luminaries, including Clark Terry, Kenny Davern, Bucky Pizzarelli, Harry Allen, Bill Charlap, Dick Hyman, and many others, in venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, the Blue Note, Birdland, and Feinsteins, to name a few. Rossano has recorded 4 solo piano, 3 small group, and 3 classical CDs.

For more information, visit his website:
<http://www.rossanosportiello.com>.

To hear samples go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nehm-Tjxwwk>
or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve41vYaNPBc>

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 SEPTEMBER 2016 CONCERT

Dan Levinson and his Tiger Tulip Jazz Band will play a Tri-State Jazz concert on September 18, 2016 at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church,



Photo by Neal Siegal

Longtime TSJS favorite Dan Levinson returns with a new sextet, featuring vocalist Molly Ryan. A Los Angeles native, Dan has been based in NYC since 1983. Specializing in traditional jazz and swing, Dan's active concert schedule has taken him across the country and around the world, performing in Brazil, Japan, Iceland, and 19 European countries. As a member of Vince Giordano's Nighthawks, Levinson has appeared at Carnegie Hall, on Late Night with Conan O'Brien, and on Garrison Keillor's A Prairie Home Companion. He has recorded over 150 CDs, including 9 under his own name. In addition, he can be heard on the soundtracks to several films and television series, including The Aviator and Boardwalk Empire. His most recent TSJS appearance was in November 2015, with Banu Gibson.

For more about Dan and his many performing groups visit his website:
<http://www.danlevinson.com>.

To hear Dan with his Roof Garden Jass Band go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIQt2j7c_a8

ATLANTIC CITY JAZZ BAND JULY 24 CONCERT REVIEW

By Jim McGann



Photo by Jim McGann

The Band:

Bob Rawlins - clarinet, soprano, alto and c-melody saxophones
Franny Smith - banjo and vocals
Bob Ferguson - trumpet and flugelhorn
Larry Toft - trombone and vocals
Nancy Rawlins - piano and vocals
John McClernan - tuba
Chuck Harms - drums.

With the Democratic Party meeting in Philadelphia, I thought of a pair of interviews written by Bill Gottlieb for Down Beat in late 1946. One was Dave Tough claiming that Dixieland jazz "was once revolutionary stuff. But now it's just a straight-Republican-ticket kind of music." The summary of his commentary was that modern jazz was in and those preserving the old jazz were "going up a blind alley." Tough happened to be performing at Eddie Condon's, with a band playing not BeBop, but "plenty of rebop tunes in our own way." The following week, Gottlieb interviewed Condon, and while not calling his music Democratic, immediately responded to Tough's criticisms, referring to Bebop as "Ka-Lunk" music, and because Tough was playing with the big bands of Dorsey, Goodman, Herman et al for so many years, the drummer had "gotten into a negative frame of mind. No matter what he plays now, he says, "I don't like it." He went on to say he never led a Dixieland band, Chicago or New Orleans band. "All I'm aware of is good jazz and bad jazz," Condon exclaimed.

Regardless of your political party, it is safe to say there was no "Ka-Lunk" music performed by Bob Rawlins and his Atlantic City Jazz Band cohorts. The band which has played for TSJS about 7-8 years now, gave a concert with more than the usual tradjazz standards, but there was enough fresh material to keep someone with the not so negative 'frame of mind' of a Dave Tough, content.

Among the newer ACJB pieces were two Nancy Rawlins vocal features - "When Somebody Thinks You're Wonderful" and the rarely performed lyrics of "Take Me To the Land of Jazz." Another pair of vocal numbers, this time for trombonist Larry Toft, were "Little Girl," a tune once sung by composer Harold Arlen with Joe Venuti's Blue Four, and the usually swinging "I Never Knew" taken at a slower tempo to accommodate the vocal. Best of all was a song tailored for the vocal talents of Franny Smith: "Where did Robinson Crusoe go with Friday on Saturday Night?"

Toft, leader of the Red Hot Ramblers Band, was a welcome addition to the ACJB. His cone-muted response to Bob Ferguson's wailing plunger solo was a nice follow up and kept the tension going. His potent plunger solo on "It Don't Mean A Thing" was exceptional as was his Lawrence Brown open horn solo on "Crazy 'Bout My Baby."

Other noteworthy moments were Chuck Harms' "minimal" drum solo on "It Don't Mean A Thing..." - something that Dave Tough definitely would have loved - simply by doing less, the results appeared to be more. Bob Ferguson shined on "Nagasaki" with a plunger mute solo, punching out staccato notes all over the place. The horns giving an impression of ill health behind Franny Smith second vocal on "Doctor Jazz." John McClernan, rock solid tuba in the rhythm section, had solo opportunities on "Alice Blue Gown" and "Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gave to Me." And speaking of the Naughty Sweetie, Franny Smith's double talking "patter chorus" (as Bob Rawlins defined it) is always a delight, even though I cannot pick up half of what he is saying! Leader Rawlins had his moments on reeds; while I favor his Jimmy Dorsey-Benny Carter sweet toned alto. His clarinet had its moments, particularly the breaks on "Naughty Sweetie" and "Doctor Jazz."

The concert concluded with "At the Jazz Band Ball." Something that Eddie Condon would call good jazz. No "Ka-Lunk" delegates here.

MUSINGS

By Neville Dickie

FIFTY YEARS ON

Composer of the Charleston, Father of Stride Piano, Teacher of Fats Waller. Yes, I am referring to James P. Johnson who died just over 50 years ago, in 1955. His enormous talents went unappreciated and fewer than 75 persons attended his funeral in New York. As well as composing many wonderful piano solos, he was on something like 400 recordings as piano accompanist to singers in the 20s. His most famous composition was the "Charleston" - although he wrote dozens of others including "If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight", "Snowy Morning Blues" and the "Carolina Shout". His "You've Got To Be Modernistic" is without doubt the most difficult of all his Stride pieces (I've got the bruised knuckles to prove it!). By a lucky coincidence, I happened to be in the recording studio on November 17th (50 years to the day since his death) in Sacramento, so what better way to pay my respects than record two of his compositions - "Everybody's Doin' The Charleston Now," written in 1925 (four years after the "Charleston"), and a delightful song titled "Whisper Sweet, Murmur Low." Unfortunately, his talents were not appreciated by his family either - they chopped up his piano soon after he died.

CAN'T GET STARTED

A New Jersey pianist was playing solo piano in a fashionable, very noisy restaurant. After a few nights, he talked with the manager, suggesting he add bass and drums to overcome the nightly din. The manager, worried that a trio would be too loud, was assured by the pianist that the music would be unobtrusive. Opening night came for the trio, but as the musicians were setting up, the manager hurried over and nervously said "Don't forget to keep it soft, I've already received a complaint!"

I CAN'T ESCAPE FROM YOU-MANS

Vincent Youmans, composer of "Tea for Two", "Hallelujah" and "More Than You Know" didn't approve of his songs being given the jazz treatment. He said it was an insult to his composing abilities, and thought it blasphemous for any musician to do such a thing.

TUNES OF THE TWENTIES: A REVIEW by Rabbi Lou Kaplan

Persons who have regularly attended our Tri-State Jazz Society concerts have seen and heard Robert Rawlins. He has played clarinet in various bands we've featured and, at times, led our annual jam session. When Sandy Catz, Tri-State's president, introduces him at a concert, he mentions that Bob holds an academic position (professor of music theory) at Rowan University, has played in various bands, and is a member of our society's board of directors. To be more specific academically, Bob has written six books and published more than 100 music articles. As a musician, in addition to his current playing in various venues, I learned from his latest book, *Tunes of the Twenties: And all That Jazz-The Stories Behind the Songs*, that in the 1970s he worked in Jimmy Dorsey's band, led by trumpeter Lee Castle, and in the 1990s was an orchestra member for comedian George Burns's stage shows. Such a background surely makes Bob eminently qualified to research and write about the kind of music he lives and knows so well, *Tunes of the Twenties*.

I found the book an absolute delight. It even looks extremely attractive. Along with the book's title and author's name, the red and black cover is graced with a lovely young lady, dressed in 1920's fashion, with a long cigarette-holder in her braceleted left hand. Inside, the glossy pages are clearly printed with enough space between each line. A major plus is the inclusion of mostly colored photographs of sheet music covers for many songs, as well as pictures which shed light on aspects of some tunes (e.g., Basin Street in New Orleans; a telephone exchange that helps the reader understand "Hello Central, Give Me Doctor Jazz"; and London's St. James Warehouse, whose infirmary may have been the basis for "St. James Infirmary").

Of his most recent book, Bob wrote: "I wanted this book to be entertaining, and I certainly enjoyed writing it. But it also has a purpose--to bring this music to a wider audience and to enhance the experience of those who perform it, listen to it, and dance to it."

Well, I'm not one who performs music, having stopped clarinet lessons when a teenager. But *Tunes of the Twenties* has certainly entertained

and enlightened me about many songs to which I've listened and danced. In Bob's book every reader will learn something, usually a great deal, about each of the 250 songs discussed. Information is provided about the composer, lyricist, publishing, recordings, and a film, stage show, or television program in which the tune was played.

Occasionally, too, an analysis is given of the music. Much more often, a story or two is told about someone associated with that particular song. Let me share favorite examples of mine for the last two points.

"The verse [of "Poor Butterfly"] is imitative of traditional Japanese music and also manages to quote from [Giacomo] Puccini's opera [*Madame Butterfly*], while the chorus works in a conspicuous chord with an augmented fifth a la Puccini." "... the 1924 song 'How Come You Do Me Like You Do' uses nearly the same chords [as the 1918 "Ja-Da"]."

"It ["Way Down Yonder in New Orleans"] features a strange form which jumps to the bridge four bars early, leading to a total length of 28 bars for the song. The middle section has built-in pauses, both over the word 'stop,' and the tune has an unexpected harmonic shift near the end. Finally, there is a habanera section ..."

How many non-musicians know the meaning of augmented fifth, bridge, habanera, three-over-four syncopation (p. 60) pentatonic scale (p. 66), ostinato bass line (p. 69), and glissando (p. 219)? While an Afterward, 1870-1934 Chronology, Bibliography of 77 books, and an Index make up the book's last pages, it would have been helpful to add a page entitled Musical Terms.

As for stories, there are so many that it's difficult to choose only two. One of my favorites concerns what trumpeter Wingy Manone related about his friend, trombonist Jack Teagarden. Jack was so enamored of Louis Armstrong's recording of "Oriental Strut," that he insisted it should be available for all succeeding generations. "So they drove out on the plain, dug a big hole and buried a copy."

At a 1950 recording session a difference of opinion almost led to serious physical harm. Pianist Joe Sullivan, who had been drinking liquor, uttered a caustic groan when Bechet suggested the next tune, "Jazz Me Blues." Sullivan disapproved of doing yet

another overplayed traditional number that day. Bechet pulled out a knife, came near Sullivan's throat and threatened, "One more crack and I'll cut your head off." Sullivan lifted the piano stool as a defensive weapon; the recording session ended abruptly. When the musicians reconvened the next week, Ralph Sutton sat at the piano.

While not stories, there are many tidbits scattered through the book which provide interesting information. I'll cite four. One: By 1918 the members of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band "began to take turns in receiving composer's credit (and royalties) [for tunes they created in collaboration] by drawing names out of a hat!" Two: "Walter Melrose, who published compositions for [Joe] Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and other jazz writers, typically added lyrics to instrumental songs so he could collect half the royalties." Three: "There was a railroad signal used in the 1800s that consisted of a red ball on a pole. When the ball was lifted high, the engineer understood that the track was clear ahead and he was free to go at full speed. Since railroad workers often referred to the engine as the 'jack,' the expression 'ballin' the jack' soon took hold, meaning 'full steam ahead.'" That's the title's origin of the dance step and 1913 tune, "Ballin' the Jack." Four: "Even Benny Goodman, not one to give compliments freely, proclaimed his debt to Roppolo [of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings]: 'My idea of a great clarinet player ... was Leon Roppolo I did my best to sound like him.'"

Amazing to me is the wide range of recordings Bob Rawlins is familiar with and evaluates. He covers the field, from Bessie Smith, Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Condon, and Steve Barbone, to Charlie Parker, George Mesterhazy Trio, Paul McCartney, and Cleo Laine on *The Muppet Show*!

For the book's next printing--and I certainly hope that sales will necessitate it--close consideration should be given to some changes in the house editing style and to typesetting errors. However, two corrections are definitely needed regarding musicians. Wild Bill Davison is identified on page 30 as "a hot trumpet player who was associated with Eddie Condon from the 1940s through the 1960s." Every time I saw Wild Bill in those years (and later), his instrument was always the cornet. On page 81 a 1923 recording of "High Society" is

said to feature "Baby Dodds on the clarinet solo." It should read Johnny Dodds, Baby's older brother.

Such errors should not stop a jazz fan from buying and reading Robert Rawlins's outstanding *Tunes of the Twenties*. It's packed with well-written information about many songs we know and at least a few that may be unfamiliar. Thanks, Bob, for a book I've enjoyed immensely and will certainly be coming back to!

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 for the 2016-2017 year. We can accept cash or a personal check, but not credit cards. If you don't plan to attend the next 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.

We hope you will consider renewing your membership - or becoming a member - 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.

We are pleased to report that 90% of the 2015-2016 Patrons and 50% of the 2015-2016 Sponsors have already renewed their donations for the 2016-2017 year beginning July 1, 2016.

FUTURE CONCERTS



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

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, PA

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, NJ

March 12, 2017 Richard Barnes & the Midnight Society Orchestra. Led by guitarist Richard Barnes, this Philadelphia dance orchestra is dedicated to the preservation of 1920s red-hot jazz from the era of the flappers, Wallingford, PA

April 9, 2017 Stephanie Trick - Solo Piano. On tour from St. Louis, Stephanie first played at TSJS in March 2015. Widely considered one of the country's top stride pianists, she performs throughout the world, Haddonfield, NJ

April 30, 2017 Jerry Rife's Rhythm Kings. Hot Jazz inspired by the early bands of New Orleans, Wallingford, PA

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.

October 23 Big Band Swing with Bill Warfield

November 13 Jam Session

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.

August 24 Nicki Parrott and Friends

1867 SANCTUARY AT EWING

Scotch Road (Route 611), Ewing Township, NJ

August 19 Tom McDermott from New Orleans

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

August 14 Atlantic City Jazz Band

September 18 Jack Melton Jazz Band

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www.tristatejazz.org/officers.html

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