THE PIANO MAN CELEBRATES WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS!

JazzCity: Erwin Helfer @80: Living Legend of Boogie and Blues
Friday, Feb. 19 at 7 PM
Austin Town Hall Park
5610 W. Lake St.

How many ways can we count the musical glories that Erwin Helfer has brought to Chicago and the world? Eighty seems a reasonable number – one for each year of his remarkable life, an ongoing monument to the blues as a well of personal expression, integrity and joy.

But let’s not get so impressed by the number of years this South Side native and Glencoe product has been around that we lose sight of his continuing vitality and importance. To listen to the series of wonderful albums he has recorded for the local Sirens label – the first to give him his due – is to hear an artist in full. To hear him in concert, with cohorts who couldn’t be more delighted to play with him, is to hear a soloist, composer, accompanist and ensemble player who never runs out of ways to entertain and surprise.

On this momentous occasion, those friends will include his frequent partner, saxophonist John Brumbach, who has been known to get him to play a hard bop classic or two; singer-pianist Barrelhouse Chuck, saxophonist Vince Salerno, blues singer Kathryn Davis, bassist Lou Mariano and drummer Bugs Cochran.

With the death of Pinetop Perkins in 2011, Helfer became the last major torch bearer for the Chicago-style boogie woogie and blues piano, as immortalized by the likes of Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis and Jimmy Yancey.

“I knew I loved the music, I loved these people, and I would just go down and hang out,” he once said, explaining how a kid from the North Shore infiltrated the world of Mama Yancey, Sunnyland Slim and Speckled Red, all of whom he called friends and mentors. “If people played music like this, I had to know who they were.”

With his love for blues and boogie, Helfer played a big role in importing it to the North Side, where he headed a Monday night session on Lincoln Avenue after getting his first gig there backing singer Barbara Dane. Many Chicagoans can thank him for the opportunity to hear such artists as Eddie Taylor, Blind John Davis and S.P. Leary.

But mostly, Chicago can thank Erwin for being Erwin. Tonight, Austin gets a chance to light his birthday candles. Happy 80th, Mr. Helfer!

Check out page 2 for the full JazzCity 2016 schedule.
JAZZCITY 2016 LINE UP

FEBRUARY 19, 2016
ERWIN HELFER @80: LIVING LEGEND OF BOOGIE AND BLUES
Austin Town Hall Park • 5610 W. Lake St.
Pianist Erwin Helfer is celebrating his 80th birthday with a few of his friends: pianist Barrelhouse Chuck; saxophonists John Brumbach and Vince Salerno; vocalist Kathryn Davis; bassist Lou Marini and drummer Bugs Cochran.

MARCH 11, 2016
NEXTGENJAZZ: THADDEUS TUKES SEXTET WITH SPECIAL GUEST ISAIAH COLLIER
Sherman Park • 1301 W. 52nd St.
Swinging into a new era, Thaddeus Tukes takes the lessons of Lionel Hampton and Milt Jackson into the 21st century. With Akenya Seymour, vocals; Julius Tucker, piano; Runere Brooks, bass; Alvin Cobb, drums and special guest, saxophone rising star Isaiah Collier.

APRIL 15, 2016
MUSIC FROM THE SOUL: REMEMBERING JIMMY MCGRIFF
La Follette Park • 1333 N. Laramie Ave.
Diane “Lil Sax” Ellis teams up with master Hammond B3 organist Chris Foreman, Andy Brown on guitar and Don Williams on drums for a tribute to the groovemaster Jimmy McGriff, who popularized the Hammond B3 organ by linking 60s soul with jazz improvisation.

MAY 13, 2016
THE LITTLE GIANT: RIFFIN’ ON GRIFFIN
Gage Park • 2411 W. 55th St.
Willie Pickens leads a tribute to the Chicago saxophonist “Little Giant” Johnny Griffin, one of the most talented American jazz musicians of his generation. With Geof Bradfield, Jarrard Harris and Irvin Pierce on saxophones, Larry Gray on bass and Greg Autry on drums.

JUNE 10, 2016
JAZZ CABARET: MARINARO TRIO
Columbus Park Refectory • 5701 W. Jackson Blvd.
Vocalist Paul Marinaro’s solid voice, cool attitude, and swinging swagger provide a counterpoint to the lush greenery and warm night at Columbus Park’s Refectory. With Tom Vitals on piano, John Sims on bass and Mikel Patrick Avery on drums.

JULY 15 & 16, 2016
10th CHICAGO LATIN JAZZ FESTIVAL
Humboldt Park Boathouse • 1301 N. Humboldt Dr.
This community celebration brings Latin jazz greats from around the country and right here at home to beautiful Humboldt Park.

OCTOBER 21, 2016
BEBOP BRASS PLUS! SPECIAL GUEST VICTOR GOINES
Grand Crossing Park • 7655 S. Ingleside Ave.
Pianist Miguel De La Cerna anchors a special edition of JazzCity’s brassiest tradition. With Corey Wilkes, Victor Garcia and Constantine Alexander on trumpets, Audrey Morrison, Steve Berry and Tom Garling on trombones, Marlene Rosenberg on bass and Ernie Adams on drums, and very special guest Victor Goines on saxophone.

DECEMBER 9, 2016
BIRD TO WORD: THE VOCALESE OF OSCAR BROWN JR’S 90TH
Hamilton Park • 513 W. 72nd St.
Vocalists Maggie and Africa Brown celebrate the 90th birthday of their father: singer, songwriter, playwright, civil right activist, poet, and actor, Oscar Brown, Jr. by presenting Brown’s vocalese compositions plus new material that plays homage to OBJ’s masterful lyricism. With vocalists Bobbi Wilson, Shawn Wallace on piano; Chuck Webb on bass and Kwame Steve Cobb on drums. Part of a year-long birthday celebration of the mastery of Oscar Brown, Jr.

JAZZGRAM Newsletter for the Jazz Institute of Chicago
A monthly newsletter published by the Jazz Institute of Chicago for its members. The Jazzgram represents the views of the authors and the editorial staff, and, unless so designated, does not reflect official policy of the Jazz Institute. We welcome news and articles with differing opinions.
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Founded in 1949, the Jazz Institute of Chicago, a not-for-profit corporation, promotes and nurtures jazz in Chicago by providing jazz education, developing and supporting musicians, building Chicago audiences and fostering a thriving jazz scene.
410 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 500, Chicago IL 60605
312-427-1676 • Fax: 312-427-1684 • JazzinChicago.org
While the Willie Pickens Trio started swinging soul into the next standard, the tall, thin vocalist, wrapped in a sleeveless, red dress, saw something unsettling from the stage and seized the sight.

“Get your hands out of your lap, sir. You’re a big boy now!” she said, smiling as the audience laughed along in casual-people time.

This vocalist, Bobbi Wilsyn – along with Pickens and other Chicago jazz musicians and supporters – received an award that August 2015 night at the Quarry from the South Side Jazz Coalition. Wilsyn, who settled for good in Chicago forty years ago, after touring nationally with entertainer Milt Trenier, earned honor for gently, and, sometimes, not so gently, nurturing vocal students at Columbia College since 1981. She is also known for her successful, long-standing residencies at the now-closed Back Room, and special guest appearances with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble (CJE), among many other venues and productions.

When discussing the humor that just happens naturally, she recalled that this ability to make people laugh began in Los Angeles, her hometown.

“I remember when I was a kid we would have to line up to get whoopins’ ” she said, during a recent conversation with the JazzGram.

“I was the last one, because I was the oldest…or maybe I just held back. Well, by the time it got to me, I was making a joke out of the whole thing and making people laugh.”

For now, the present, 2016, Wilsyn plans to bring another communications tool, motivational speaking, from the classroom to the general public. In January, Wilsyn – who is also a certified Religious Science Practitioner – premiered “Plan b: When Shift Happens,” at Unity on the North Shore. There, she delivered the morning message, sang with her trio, and conducted a workshop.

“I believe that we are all here for a purpose. Defining, discovering, unveiling our purpose is really valuable,” she explained. “When you have a purpose, you value yourself and others, because you know they have a purpose, too. Like I tell my students, ‘If you can apply it to your singing, you can apply it to your life.’”

Today’s students, she continued, do not benefit from hearing music in the home that came decades before they arrived, so she introduces them to cats like Cab Calloway, Prince, and James Brown through the Internet. “We can fight to preserve the history,” she said, “or we can gently preserve it by exposing our students to it.”

Students who have studied with Wilsyn, and then moved on to successful careers, include acclaimed actors/singers Aisha and Darius de Haas – whose mother, Geraldine, produced the South Shore Jazz Festival for thirty-plus years – and Maggie Brown, whose father, Oscar Brown Jr., recorded jazz standards featuring his lyrics and vocals.

“Besides being precise with her vocal technique, she is very wise spiritually,” said Brown, who studied with Wilsyn in the early ‘80s. “We are friends, and she always gives good advice that goes beyond vocal technique.”

Wilsyn and Brown have most recently performed at the DuSable Museum and the Carruthers Center with the Eleven Divas, a vocal ensemble that also includes Joan Collaso, Tecora Rogers, and Yvonne Gage. Wilsyn noted that Brown’s South side following helped expand her audience, as her previous engagements were mostly all on the North side.

“Once you see Bobbi, and you see her dynamite presence, you get it,” Brown said. “She is such an elegant woman, and she always looks like she’s just coming out of a Bentley.”

Although Wilsyn has earned senior lecturer-status at Columbia, her tenure as guest vocalist in the Chicago Jazz Ensemble remains vibrant. CJE’s conductor, the late Bill Russo, had rigorous demands that taught her how to hear and adhere to strong direction.

“Russo would say, ‘Bobbi! Don’t move while you’re singing!’ and ‘You’ve got to look like you’re the performer,” she recalled. “And then he had me singing these beautiful songs…recorded by Duke, Ella, Peggy Lee and the Stan Kenton Band!”

“Bill also wanted his band to have shined shoes, wanted to approve the costumes, and have a costume designer,” Wilsyn added. “Someone was dressing me, and I didn’t have to pay for it!? Well, I thought I had died and gone to heaven!”

BOBBI WILSYN TO ADD LIFE LESSONS AMID THE LAUGHTER FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

BY COREY HALL
**JAZZ EVENTS & AROUND TOWN**

**February 10** : Jazz Links Jam Session, 5:30-7:30pm, Chicago Cultural Center's Randolph Square, 78 East Washington.

**February 12** : Irvin Pierce at Jazz at the Logan presents CHICAGO STAGE, 6pm, Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E. 60th Street, free (see page 7)

**February 19** : JazzCity!, 7pm, Erwin Helffer @80: Living Legend of Boogie and Blues, Austin Town Hall Park, 5610 W. Lake St. (see page 1)

**February 19 & 26** : Chicago Symphony Orchestra: Christian McBride Trio/Willie Pickens, Stefon Harris/Rudresh Mahanthappa, 8pm, Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave. Use JAZZINST16 for 20% off all tickets.

**CLUBS**

*PLEASE NOTE: Not all clubs have their schedules set by our deadlines or present jazz exclusively. Call ahead or check their websites.

**ANDY’S**...11 E. Hubbard/312-642-6805
First Show @ 5pm & 7pm
Second Show @ 9:30pm & 11:30pm
Sundays: Pharez Whitted’s Late Night Jam
Mondays: Dana Hall’s Black Fire
Tuesdays: Vocalist Dee Alexander Quartet
Wednesdays: Andy Brown Quartet
Thursdays: Eric Schneider - Pat Mallinger Quartet
February 5 & 6: John Bany Quartet feat. Claudia Stefanski/ Chris Foreman & Soul Message
February 12 & 13: Guy King Quartet/ “The Living Bridge” CD Release feat. Artie Black and Jeff Swanson
February 19 & 20: Bobby Broom Trio/ George Fludas Quartet feat. vocalist Sarah Marie Young
February 23: Big Band Bones with Luke Malecwich and Luis Bonilla
February 26 & 27: Chris Foreman & Soul Message/ Guy King Quartet

**BACKROOM**....937 N. Rush St./312-751-2433
Music 7 nights a week

**BAR DEVILLE**...701 N. Damen/312-929-2349/
Tuesdays: 9:30pm, Jazz Series

**BENNY’S CHOP HOUSE**...444 N. Wabash/312-626-2444

**BUDDY GUY’S LEGENDS CHICAGO**...700 S. Wabash Ave./312-427-1190
Sundays: 5pm-8pm

**CHARLES HEATH PRESENTS**...Andy’s 11 E. Hubbard
February 11: Valentine’s Day Concert featuring Carolyn Fitzhugh, 11am/2pm $25 includes admission and lunch. 312-856-7992 for reservations.

**CITY LIFE**...712 E. 83rd/312-723-6700
Sundays: 8:30pm-12:30am

**CITY WINERY**........1200 W. Randolph St/312-733-WINE
www.citywinery.com

**CLOSE UP 2**...416 S. Clark/312-385-1111
Nightly: Contemporary (Smooth) Jazz

**CONSTELLATION**...3111 N. Western/www.constellation.org
Show times and cover charges vary. Most shows 18 and over.
February 3: 9:30pm, Rob Clearfield Trio: SOUND OF THE CITY WORKSHOP
February 5: 8:30pm, Rachel Drew and the Bitter Roots/ Funeral Bonsai Wedding
February 10: 9:30pm, Mars Williams, Samuel Mösching, Brian Sandstrom, Steve Hunt: SOUND OF THE CITY WORKSHOP
February 14: 8:30pm, Wet Ink
February 19: 8:30pm, Juan Pastor’s Chinchano
February 20: 8:30 & 10:00pm, Ambrose Akimnuse
February 24: 8:30pm, Ches Smith, Craig Taborn & Mat Maneri
February 25: 8:30pm, Frequency Festival: a peru.odic, Macrep
February 26: 8:30pm, Frequency Festival: Meehan/Perkins Duo, Tim Munro

**DRAKE HOTEL CHICAGO**......................140 E. Walton
Coq d’Or at the Drake Hotel/312-392-4622
Saturdays and Sundays: Jazz Vocalists, call for details.

**ELASTIC ARTS**...........2830 N. Milwaukee/elasticarts.org

**EVERYPEOPLE WORKSHOP**............For location, visit everypeopleworkshop.org, 8pm

**FEBRUARY 12**:
Wednesday SideBar Sessions sponsored by WDCB 90.9 Chicago’s Jazz Station, 8pm, $10 suggested donation
February 3: SideBar Sessions with New Standard Quintet
February 5: Tripwizir (CD release), The Velvet Jimis
February 10: SideBar Sessions with Peter Lerner Trio
February 14: Chicago Grandstand Big Band
February 17: Pete Eliman Big Band/ SideBar Sessions with Jarod Bufe Quartet
February 21: After Brunch Bash with The Telfons and Sunnyside Up/ Bill O’Connell’s Chicago Skyliners, Fenton High School Jazz Band
February 24: Chicago Jazz with Brienn Perry Quartet
February 28: John Burnett Orchestra with Frieda Lee

**GOOD LIFE CAFE**...........2057 Ridge Road, Homewood/708-960-0418
Every Thursday at 7pm

**GREEN MILL**...........4802 N. Broadway/773-878-5552
Sundays: 7pm-10pm, Uptown Poetry Slam /11pm, Soul Jazz Night with the Joel Paterson Trio featuring Chris Foreman Mondays: 9pm-1am, Patricia Barber Quartet
Tuesdays: 9pm-1am, The Fat Babies
Wednesdays: 9pm-1am, Alfonso Ponticelli and Swing Gita / 2am, Late Night Industry Set with the Frank Catalano Sextet
Thursdays*: 5:30pm-8:00pm, Andy Brown Solo Jazz Guitar Cocktail Hour Show / 9pm-1am, Alan Gresik Swing Shift Orchestra
Fridays: 5pm-8pm, “Flipside Show” with Chris Foreman on Hammond B-3 Organ/ 1am-4am,
After Hours Green Mill Quartet Jazz Jam Session
Saturdays: 3pm-5pm, The Paper Machete / midnight-5am, After Hours Jazz Party with Sabertooth Organ Quartet
9pm – 1am Weekend Shows
February 5: 9pm-1am, Orrin Evans Trio
February 6: 8pm-midnight, Ari Brown Quartet
February 12: 9pm-1am & 13: 8pm-midnight, Mama Digdowns Brass Band
February 19: 9pm-1am, & 20: 8pm-midnight, Greg Osby Quartet
February 26: 9pm-1am, & 27: 8pm-midnight, Jim Trompeter Quintet featuring Ralph Bowen

**HIDEOUT**............1354 W. Wabansia/773-227-4433
Two sets, 9:30pm (unless otherwise noted)

**HONKY TONK BBQ**...........1800 S. Racine/312-226-7427
Wednesday & Sunday Jazz (check website for schedule)

**HUNGRY BRAIN**........10pm, 2319 W Belmont Ave/773-935-2118, $10

**HYDE PARK JAZZ SOCIETY SUNDAY JAZZ AT ROOM 43**........
1043 E. 43rd, hydeparkjazzsociety.com, Sundays, 7:30-11:30pm, $10 cash admission
February 7: NO JAZZ TONIGHT - Closed for Super Bowl
February 14: Guitarist Peter Lerner
February 21: Bill McFarland & The Chicago Horns
February 28: Electric Bassist Frank Russell

**ILLIANA CLUB OF TRADITIONAL JAZZ**........The Glendora House, 102nd and Harlem, Chicago Ridge/708-672-3561, 2-5:00 pm
* $18.00 in advance; * $20.00 at the door.
Students with ID – free admission
February 21: Dave Drazin and His Ambassadors (Dave Drazin, Piano; Dave Mulvenna, Drums; Bernard Scavella, Tenor and Soprano)

**JAZZ COMMUNITY BIG BAND**...www.jazzcommunitybigband.com
A swinging 18-piece big band, led by Marianne May
February 27: 8:30pm, Frequency Festival: Claire Chase, Parlour Tapes + After-Party
February 28: 7:30pm, Frequency Festival: Dal Niente’s Hard Music, Hard Liquor
February 7: 10am Service, Park Ridge Community Church, 100 S. Courtland Ave., Park Ridge, 847-823-3164
February 9: 8 pm & 10 pm shows, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth Ct., Chicago, 312-630-0234 – Cover: $10; $5 students/ musicians/JIC members, $5 parking in the lot south of Jazz Showcase
Enjoy a 15% discount at Bar Louie, before the show!
(47 W. Polk, SW corner of Polk and Plymouth – just north of the Jazz Showcase). Discount applies to all regular-priced menu items.
Just mention Jazz Community Big Band.
Tues. February 23: 7:30 to 10:30 pm, Tuscano’s, 4926 N. River Rd., Schiller Park (north of Lawrence Ave.), 847-678-2800 – No Cover, Great Food – Dinner Reservations Suggested

JAZZ AT THE LOGAN .................................................... 915 East 60th Street
February 12: 7:30pm, Warren Wolf and Wolfpack Performance Hall, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts $35 / $5 students

JAZZY MONDAYS AT THE CENTER, A JCI/ICD PRODUCTION 700 E. Oakwood Blvd, Chicago/Reservations: 312-808-0005 Hosted by Joan Collaso & WVON’s Cliff Kelley, every 2nd Monday of the month! 6:30-9:30 pm. Doors open 6pm

JAZZ SHOWCASE ........................................... 806 S. Plymouth Ct./312-360-0234 Two sets at 8 pm & 10 pm Sun matinee at 4pm. Visit www.jazzshowcase.com for weekday JIC member discounts! JIC member card required.
February 8: 2 & 10 pm, Andrew Longaker Quartet with Andrew Longaker-guitar David Drower- tenor sax Kitt Lyles-bass Todd Naimo-drums
February 9: 7:30 & 10 pm, Vocalist Suneetha Vaitheeswaran Quartet
February 10: 7 & 10 pm, Vocalist Paul Marinaro Quintet
February 11: 4, 8 & 10 pm,´s World Jazz Revue
February 16: 8 & 10 pm, WDCB 90.9 presents Saxophonist Rajiv Hershenson, Jeff Kier, Lanny Grilly & Brian Sandstrom
February 23: 7:30 to 10:30 pm, Tuscano’s, 4926 N. River Rd., Schiller Park (north of Lawrence Ave.), 847-678-2800 – No Cover, Great Food – Dinner Reservations Suggested

JERRY'S SANDWICHES MUSIC ROOM.......................... 1938 W. Division /773-235-1006 / http://jerrysandwiches.com/ Monday-Wednesday: 8:30pm-11:30pm, All ages

JIMMY'S WOODLAWN TAP .................................. 1172 E. 55th/773-643-5516
Sundays: 9 pm, Curtis Black Quartet/Jam Session Second Set

THE LIGHTHOUSE .................................................. 1236 W. Chase/773-764-9414
Every other Thursday (free) featuring Jimmy Bennington

LILLY'S .............................................................. 2513 N. Lincoln/773-525-2422
Wednesdays: 9pm, Jazz Jam Session featuring the Corbin Andrick, Quintet with Marquis Hill, Dan Bruce, Katie Ernst, David Agee

LOGAN SQUARE STUDIO .................................... 2341 N. Milwaukee /847-962-5999
Wednesdays: 8:30-11:30pm, Grilly Brothers. Shows every Thursday 9 - 11:30pm

M LOUNGE ......................................................... 1520 S. Wabash/312-447-0201
Tuesday/Wednesday: 7pm, Jazz

MAYNE STAGE .................................................... 1328 W. Morse/866-468-3401
www.maynestage.com, 9pm

MISKÃ’S .............................................................. 2156 W. Belmont/773-935-5373
Sundays: 5:30pm-7pm, Improvisation jam session hosted by Josh Beatty/ Michael Baker/Henry Mayer

MULLEN'S BAR AND GRILL .................. 3080 Warrenville Rd., Lisle/630-505-0240

Thursdays: 8pm, Pete Ellman’s Big Band

MULLIGANS ..................................................... 5155 N. Lincoln/773-728-2354
Wednesday’s featuring Shelly Yoell Jazz Workshop, 7pm-10pm (free)

MULTI KULTI ...................................................... 1000 N. Milwaukee, 4th Floor, 10pm, Tuesdays: Jazz with Vincent Davis
Sundays: Improvisation jam hosted by Henry Mayer Music Monday: Inner City Studies, 770 E. Oakwood Blvd, 773-752-3955 Second Monday of the month: 7pm-10pm (doors open at 6:30pm). Hosted by Joan Collaso and WVON Radio personality Cliff Kelley

MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ......Nicholas Concert Hall
1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston/ 800-838-3006 / musicinst.org/jazz-festival

MYOPIC BOOKS ............................................. 1564 N. Milwaukee/773-862-4882 Mondays: 7:30pm, Improvised Jazz Series

NIRVANA WINE & GRILLERIE .............. 701 N. Milwaukee, Ste. 280, Vernon Hills/847-918-7828
Fridays: 7pm, Matt Persin Acoustic

NORMAN’S BISTRO ........................................ 1001 E. 43rd/773-966-5821
 Saturdays: 9:pm-midnight, Open Jam Sessions featuring Ernest Dawkins with Dennis Luxion, Michael Lough, and Isaiah Spencer

OLD TOWN ALE HOUSE 219 W. North/312-944-7020

PIANO FORTE .............................................. 1335 S. Michigan Ave/312-291-0000
PHyllis’ MUSICAL INN .................. 1800 W. Division/773-486-9862
POPS FOR CHAMPAGNE ...................... 601 N. State/312-266-7677
Sunday-Tuesday: 9pm, Joe Polcicastro Trio

THE PROMONTORY .......................... 5311 South Lake Park Ave. West, Chicago
(Hyde Park) promontorychicago.com

THE PUMP ROOM AT PUBLIC CHICAGO .......... 1301 N. State St. Every Wednesday night in the Library Bar. 7-10pm, no cover

THE RHYTHM ROOM ...................................... 1715 Maple Ave. Evanston, IL Friday and Saturday: 7pm-11pm, live jazz

RODAN ......................................................... 1530 N. Milwaukee/773-276-7036
Tuesday evenings: Jeff Parker, Josh Abrams, John Herndon, & Selina Trepp–weekly Experimental Live Jazz Set

SALT CREEK WINE BAR .......................... 8900 Fairview, Brookfield/708-387-2432
Every fourth Tuesday: 8-11pm

SERBIAN VILLAGE ......................................... 3144 W. Irving Park
Mondays: 9pm-1am, Pro Jazz Jam, Tom Muellner, piano, Jim Cox, bass, and Phil Gratteau, jam session

SKYLARK .............................................. 2149 S. Halsted/312-948-5275/10pm
Monday Night: Improvised Music Series

STUDIO 914 .................................................. 914 N. California
Sundays: 8/9:30pm Open Jam Jazz jam session, featuring Scott Hesse, John Goldman, Kendall Moore, Sam Jewell, Andrew Vogt

TOWNSHIP .................................................... 2200 N. California
Mondays: 9pm-12pm, Erwin Hefler with John Brumbach and Katherine Davis

TUMBÁO ....................................................... 3213 West Armitage, Thursdays/9pm
Thursdays: Music starts at 9pm, Live Latin Jazz, dinner and live performances by some of Chicago’s best Jazz/Latin Jazz Ensembles

TUSCANO’S .................. 4926 N. River Rd., Schiller Park/847-678-2800
4th Thursday of every month: Jazz Community Big Band

UNDERGROUND WONDER BAR ............ 810 N. Clark/312-266-7761
Nightly, Live Music

WATER HOle .................................................. 14th & Western Ave.
Wednesdays: 8-11:30pm, Weekly jam sessions on Thursdays – Velvet Sounds Series: A Tribute to Fred Anderson, house band: Scott Hesse, guitar, Michael Lough, bass, Justin Thomas, vibes. Every Last Friday of the Month Is Jazz Night

WHISTLER .......................................... 2421 N. Milwaukee, Logan Square/773-227-3530
Tuesdays: 10pm, Relax Attack Jazz Series

YASSA AFRICAN RESTAURANT .................. 3511 S. King Drive/773-488-5999
TRUMPETER MARQUIS HILL AND HIS BLACKTET surfaced on an early January Sunday evening at the estimable Room 43 for two smoking sets. I say “surfaced” because the various members have moved to both coasts and have tried their hands at other gigs. Thankfully, though, the leader Hill coaxes them back for the occasional hometown set. I tried to think what would draw a room full of people on a snowy night to hear these young musicians tear up. Well, the curious know that Hills’ band will come with something that will be talked about and they don’t want to miss it. It just so happened that the “something” was a preview of an upcoming recording of standards done up with some of Hill’s touches. Most of the tunes Hill chose to perform were from the Blue Note records catalogue of ‘60’s soulful hard bop, played by some of the most famous frontline combos of the day, with a couple of notable exceptions to be mentioned momentarily.

First, I should point out who made up this version of the Blacktet. Christopher McBride, newly returned from New York, was on alto sax; Justin Thomas (nicknamed “Justafan,”) came on with his famous mallets and vibraphone; Joshua Ramos provided contrabass work for the last EP Modern Flows (and he has played on most of Hill’s sets in the past year or so) and drummer/percussionist Makaya McCraven. Personally and musically, they know the leader and the leader knows them so well that, during the set they can jump into one of their tunes from that early record, the original composition “Black Harvest”, taking it at a breakneck tempo without a slip up.

The set started out with “Moon Rays” from Horace Silver’s 1958 release Further Explorations. The way this tune was originally constructed, with Art Farmer on trumpet and Clifford Jordan on sax, exemplified the Blue Note quintet sound prevalent in those days and it also provided the template for the Blacktet’s approach to the whole evening. Frontline unison playing of the first order was what was happening, with trumpet and alto either in unison or harmonizing the theme in unison, the horn voices merging into one, only to break out into intricately melodic solos. McBride and Hill can take much pride in how they have managed to develop this technique. Justafan’s vibraphone solo was as melodic and soulful as Silver’s had originally been on piano.

The next tune out of the box was altoist Gigi Gryce’s piece “Minority,” with its interesting theme morphing into a total band statement. Gryce’s Jazz Lab band, which at one point included trumpeter Donald Byrd, was very influential in the late ‘50’s for a number of reasons, not the least of which was Gryce’s effort to control his music publishing, something that Black musicians, including even Duke Ellington, had trouble impacting. Here we are some 60 years later, and young musicians like Marquis Hill have taken those early lessons to heart, managing to control most business aspects of their art. Interestingly, “Minority” was followed by a ‘60’s Donald Byrd piece “Fly Little Bird, Fly,” the up-tempo tune demanding all the technical dexterity that Hill and McBride could muster along with the fast pace set by McCraven. This paved the way for the Blacktet’s version of the Herbie Hancock ballad/standard “Maiden Voyage.” Once again, using the unison technique to play the famous theme of that tune, Hill and McBride floated on a softly undulating rhythmic cushion laid down by Justafan, Ramos and McCraven. The smooth vibrato of Thomas’ comping chords on vibes mirrored the later use of the same voicing on Hancock’s Fender Rhodes synthesizer when he would perform the piece in the early ’70’s. In fact, keeping with the idea of an homage to famous frontline play, the ethereal style of what these men played during “Maiden Voyage” seemed modeled on Hancock’s 1969 album “The Prisoner,” his tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, the frontline of that album composed of, among others, Joe Henderson on saxophone and Johnny Coles on flugelhorn.

To break up the evening and provide space for experimentation, Hill played a warm beautiful solo of “Polka Dots and Moonbeams” on his flugelhorn to intro “Maiden Voyage.” Later, to add a little funk to the proceedings, Ramos started up with an opening bass lick to a popping version of George Benson’s “Breezin.” The crowd recognized the piece and clapped along with the funky beat. This was a nicely rounded group of compositions to present on a Sunday night. And it was a great way to preview a new collection of work coming out from trumpeter Hill and his group of hometown musical giants.
The Jazz Institute of Chicago is excited to announce the launch of a new initiative for young women in jazz. The Women’s Leadership Initiative focuses on dialog, connection, and musical exchange between professional women musicians in Chicago and female students of jazz. The program consists of 18 young women musicians, ages 15-22, and four professional musician mentors: vocalist Dee Alexander, saxophonist Juli Wood, trombonist Audrey Morrison, and bassist Marlene Rosenberg. Students were nominated to apply for the program by their teachers and professors.

“We have seen a growing number of young women playing jazz in their school programs, in our Jazz Ambassadors, and at our Jazz Links Jam Sessions,” explains Lauren Deutsch, JIC’s Executive Director. “The natural next step was to bring these young women together and connect them with the veteran female musicians on the jazz scene.”

The 2015-16 Women’s Leadership Initiative includes three anchor events: two Dinner, Dialog, and Concert nights and one Jazz Workshop Day. The first dinner and dialog was held at the Logan Center prior to the Cecile McLorin Salvant concert. The Jazz Workshop Day will take place at the Logan Center on March 12 and includes instrumental and vocal master classes, improvisation workshops, a jam session, and a lunchtime leadership talk. The culminating meeting will be a dinner and dialog at the Symphony Center before the CJO Tribute to Sarah Vaughan.

This program is supported by the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, The Symphony Center, and the Edith Appleton Foundation.

The Jazz Links Artist Residency Program connects Chicago schools with master jazz artists for an 8-week residency designed to develop jazz skills in both students and their music teachers. In addition to working in the schools, the Residency Artists teach sessions to teachers during a one-day professional development workshop at Columbia College, and put on a live jazz concert for students at the Logan Center for the Arts. We congratulate the following schools on their acceptance into the 2015-16 residency program:

- Kelly High School - residency artist: Ernie Adams
- Solorio Academy - residency artist: Ruben Alvarez
- Lincoln Park - residency artist: Ari Brown
- McCutcheon Elementary - residency artist: Mwata Bowden
- Dixon Elementary - residency artist: Ernie Adams
- Morgan Park High School - residency artist: Mwata Bowden
- Whitney Young High School - residency artist: Katie Ernst
- Pritzker College Prep - residency artist: Katie Ernst
- Curie Metropolitan - residency artist: Ari Brown

Saxophonist Irvin Pierce leads his band for the pre-concert performance at Cafe Logan on Friday, February 12th from 6-7pm.

Presented in partnership by the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts and the Jazz Institute of Chicago, Jazz at the Logan presents CHICAGO STAGE showcasing local jazz artists in free pre-concert performances.

“We are thrilled to once again be partnering with UChicago Presents and the Jazz Institute of Chicago to present the Jazz at Logan Series and Chicago Stage performances,” said Bill Michel, Executive Director of the Logan Center for the Arts.
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