



IN THE MOOD

The Olney Big Band
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2008

Volume 3, Number 2

Dear Members:

Spring time is definitely swing time as we have some great events in store. On Sunday, April 6th we will be performing at the Big Band Brunch for the Woodfin Suites in Rockville. We will also be joining our contemporaries, the Mt. Vernon Swing Band, for a Battle of the Big Bands at Blues Alley (Georgetown, Washington, DC) on Tuesday, April 15th. Finally, we will be performing on Saturday April 26th at the Third Annual Swing Dance Fundraiser at Cedarbrook Community Church in Clarksburg, MD.

The OBB rolled out our new website filled with all sorts of goodies. It also contains back issues of this newsletter and up to date schedule info. Go to: www.olneybigband.org



www.olneybigband.org

Quarter Notes – Musings Of A Band Leader

Dr. Rip G. Rice - Music Director, Olney Big Band

The March 18, 2008 issue of the Examiner (www.examiner.com) carried a brief article that was very intriguing for this ageing band director and lover of big band music. It was a “3-Minute Interview with Charles Fishman”, written by Bill Myers of the Examiner.

“Charles Fishman, 66, is D.C.’s jazz man. A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Fishman retired from managing such legends as Dizzy Gillespie a few years ago and helped found D.C.’s annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. Fishman already is at work on the 2008 festival, scheduled to run Oct. 1-7, 2008.”

Myers asked Fishman only four questions, and the answers to two of them are what captured my attention and stimulated my musings.

Q. Has jazz stagnated? Is it looking into the past?

A. “I forgot who it was who said, you keep one foot in the past and one foot in the present and you keep moving forward. It’s constantly evolving. I think it’s a very healthy scene. Today’s musicians are far more versatile and virtuosic in many, many ways than the older generation because these kids study.”

MY comments – VERY true. It is overwhelming to hear high school jazz bands of today playing big band jazz music. The kids are so polished, so steeped in the theories of jazz harmonies and techniques of playing. And just like the way to Carnegie Hall, these kids practice more that I was able to at their teen-ages.

When I think back to my high school days (1937-1941) and even my early college days – we had no theories of jazz music. We simply listened to the records of the “masters” – Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, Charlie Barnet, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and many others. We listened – over and over again, memorizing each number and especially memorizing the solos. We stopped listening long enough to put horns to lips and then tried to duplicate those masterful solos. Sometimes we were pretty good duplicates of the originals. Even at my now tender age of almost 84, by golly, I can still play most of Illinois Jacquet’s classic tenor sax solo on Flying Home, and Vido Musso’s wonderful tenor solo on Eager Beaver. All without the benefit of theory.

Mr. Fishman is right – “today’s kids study”. But then they play. WOW!! How they play!!

Q. Why do you think rock ‘n’ roll displaced jazz so easily?

A. “One of the things that weighs on me ... is that jazz in the 1960s ceased to be a danceable music. If you go back to the ‘40s and look at the 10 best-selling albums, they were all jazz. And you could dance to them: Tommy Dorsey, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald.

As jazz developed, somehow the danceable part fell away. It became viewed as a more intellectually demanding kind of thing.”

My Comments: Mr. Fishman, you are spot-on. Big Band swing music was developed by musicians who had played for years in the “sweet” bands – who played danceable music, but otherwise was very boring (at least to the then-younger generation. When swing music broke through, there were two criteria for it – (1) the music had to swing (but that did not mean the music had to be fast – I’ve seen couples swinging to Glenn Miller’s Moonlight Serenade), and (2) it had to be dance-to-able.

Thank goodness there are those in generations following mine who appreciate the “dance-to-able” requirement for the music we love to listen to AND to dance to. Long may it wave!!!

For those interested, the complete link to the Bill Myers 3-minute interview with Charles Fishman is: http://www.examiner.com/a-1285132~The_3_minute_interview_Charles_Fishman.html. □

WHO NAMED THE COUNT AND THE DUKE?

There are numerous stories about how the Count and the Duke got their names, and the truth has been lost in time. Here are some answers.

There are at least three stories about William Basie being called Count Basie, a name he carried the bulk of his professional life.

Famous music producer and critic John Hammond has one version: “It was the announcer at WHB in Kansas City who dubbed Basie ‘Count’ because, as he pointed out, there was an Earl Father Hines, a King Oliver, and a Duke Ellington. I said Bill Basie deserved to join the royalty of jazz.”

Yet, Basie said when he first moved to Kansas City he thought up the name himself. Said he: “I knew about King Oliver and I also knew Paul Whiteman was known as the King of Jazz. Duke Ellington was also getting to be one of the biggest names in Harlem. On records and on radio Earl Hines and Baron Lee were also important names. So, I decided I would become one of the biggest new names. I actually had some fancy business cards printed up to announce it. They said ‘COUNT BASIE. BEWARE, THE COUNT IS HERE.’”

Arranger and sideman Eddie Durham tells a different story, dating back to the time Bill Basie was playing piano for Benny Moten. Eddie said: “I named Basie the Count. That’s when they started calling him ‘The Count.’ Benny Moten used to say, ‘Where is that guy? He ain’t no account! That was his expression, always. That’s why I wrote the tune called THE COUNT.’”

What about the mystical Edward Kennedy Ellington? He said he got his name DUKE during his teen years: “I had a chum, Edgar McEntree, a rather fancy guy who liked to dress well. He was socially uphill and a pretty good popular fellow all around the parties, and that sort of thing. I think he felt that in order for me to be eligible for his companionship I should have a title. So, he named me ‘Duke’.” □

Provided by Robert Redding
Courtesy - Big Band Jump Newsletter. March 2008

Henry “Red” Allen

Henry Allen Jr. (Red)
trumpet, leader, singer
Born; Algiers, La.,
January 7, 1908

This Jazz Trumpet Legend Was An Innovator In Technique

Red Allen’s mid 1930s recordings, and discs waxed in the mid 1940s, are among his most swinging.

In his heyday in the 1930s Allen was a trumpeter of great significance. More than any other “hot” jazz trumpeter before him he employed the use of long, flowing melodic lines. His sense of continuity had much in common with the style of Harry “Sweets” Edison who employed the same technique a few years later with Count Basie.

Red Allen made his first recordings with Clarence Johnson while on tour with the struggling King Oliver Dixie Syncopators in 1927. Like many jazz players from Louisiana during this period, Henry Allen then spent time playing on riverboats traveling the Mississippi. He made several recordings

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Henry Red Allen from page 2

under his own name in 1929 for Victor and then joined the Luis Russell Orchestra. Allen worked with the great tenor soloist Coleman Hawkins while in the Fletcher Henderson big band in 1933 and 1934 and many of his improvised solos were written in as part of arrangements by Henderson.

In 1934 and 1935 Red Allen made a number of recordings which were issued under his own name on the Vocalion, Parlophone, and Banner labels. His solos on sides like Truckin' and Down South Camp Meeting are among his finest on record. Allen was also a member of a swinging studio all-star band organized by songwriter, publisher and booking agent Irving Mills. He recorded with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band from 1934 to 1936 which waxed some fantastic sides on Columbia and its subsidiary Vocalion.

Red Allen was establishing himself as a premier soloist of the early swing period with many of the recordings done in the aforementioned settings in the early and mid 1930s. But in 1937 he rejoined the Luis Russell big band which was, by this time, being fronted by Louis Armstrong. Allen was relegated to merely a brass section man in this outfit, taking a back seat to the great Satchmo, until the group disbanded in 1940.

Red Allen then reinvented himself forming a sextet of his own which achieved great popularity in New York at clubs like Kelly's Stable and Café Society. This group, with occasional personnel changes, remained together until the early 1950s. His trum-



Henry "Red" Allen
- Photo courtesy swingmusic.net



Luis Russell's Orchestra; Left to Right: Red Allen, Greeley Walton, Paul Barbarin, Charlie Holmes, Luis Russell, Albert Nicholas, Will Johnson, Pops Foster, J.C. Higginbotham, Otis Johnson
- Photo courtesy www.duke.edu

pet and vocals can be heard on swinging jazz and quasi R&B sides from the mid 1940s such as "Get The Mop," "The Theme," and "Ride Red Ride."

From April of 1954 Allen was a member of a Dixieland style house band at the Metropole in NYC. In 1957 he was seen in the film "The Sound Of Jazz" and in the fall of 1959 he toured Europe as a sideman with Kid Ory.

In the early sixties Red continued to play at the Metropole and other NYC jazz clubs and made occasional trips to Boston and Chicago. Between September of 1961 and March of 1963 the Red Allen Quartet was recorded live three times at the London House in Chicago.

Red Allen continued to stay active in the mid 1960s but was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer late in 1966. Nevertheless he embarked on a tour of Great Britain returning back to the U.S. just six weeks before his death on April 17th, 1967.

Recommended recordings include several of his recordings with Fletcher Henderson including "Down South Camp Meeting," "Hocus Pocus," and "Wrappin' It Up." A number of recordings under his own name are also noteworthy including "Truckin'" and "Rug Cutter's Swing" from 1935 and 1934 respectively. Some of his mid 1940s sides are also enjoyable including the aforementioned "Get The Mop," "Ride Red Ride," and "The Theme." As with any of the sides we single out you will find them to have a smooth, flowing, steady rhythm. □

- www.swingmusic.net

BENNY GOODMAN REVISITED

Carnegie Hall Salutes “The King Of Swing” Benny Goodman With A Special Rose Museum Exhibit Commemorating The 70th Anniversary Of His Historic 1938 Carnegie Hall Debut

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Date: March 12, 2008 - Jenny Algarin

Carnegie Hall will commemorate the 70th anniversary of legendary clarinetist and bandleader Benny Goodman’s January 1938 Carnegie Hall debut, one of the most celebrated moments in jazz history, with a special exhibit in the Hall’s Rose Museum. The exhibit—which salutes the “King of Swing” with highlights from his 44-year association with Carnegie Hall—opens on April 16, 2008 and runs through the end of the concert season on June 30, 2008.

The special exhibit includes flyers, original programs, photographs, and concert footage as well as Benny Goodman’s Buffet clarinet, the instrument that he was actively using until the time of his death in June 1986. The clarinet—which was donated by Goodman’s daughters Rachel Edelson and Benjie Lasseau—was the first donation made to Carnegie Hall’s Archives and Rose Museum in 1988, becoming the Museum’s symbolic cornerstone. Additional items on display include an original program from a concert of January 9, 1939, during which Béla Bartók’s *Contrasts* for violin, clarinet, and piano received its world premiere (the piece was specially commissioned by Goodman); rarely seen photographs of the *Contrasts* manuscripts, courtesy of Peter Bartók; as well as manuscripts and an intact ticket for the performance of the *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* by Paul Hindemith, courtesy of Paul Hindemith Papers, Irving S. Gilmore Library of Yale University.

Goodman’s dozens of Carnegie Hall performances, between 1938 and 1982, showcased his talents as one of the greatest clarinetists of all time. In his many appearances, Goodman reached beyond his definitive and influential work in jazz to also perform many classical works that he commissioned from some of the most important composers of his day, including Bartók, Copland, Poulenc, and Hindemith. The sold-out Carnegie Hall debut performance by Goodman and his band on January 16, 1938 is considered by many to be one of the most important dates in jazz history, marking the first time that people sat in a concert hall to hear swing music, rather than dance to it. The concert, which was credited with bringing swing music into the mainstream, was recorded and later released on Columbia Records in 1950; *Benny Goodman: The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* has never been out of print and remains one of the best selling jazz recordings of all time. Items on display from Goodman’s 1938 debut performance include the only known intact ticket surviving from the concert as well as concert program, sheet music, and photographs. Film footage taken during the 1938 concert will be shown on two screens in the Rose Museum.

Located on the 2nd floor of Carnegie Hall, the Rose Museum is free to the public and is open Monday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and is also available evenings to Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage concert patrons. Funded by the Susan and Elihu Rose Foundation and opened in 1991, the Rose Museum chronicles Carnegie Hall’s history and exhibits its archival treasures to the public. The permanent exhibit contains a chronology of events from 1891 to the present, a history of the building, and items relating to the many notable figures who have walked through the Hall’s doors.

Exhibit Information:

BENNY GOODMAN AT CARNEGIE HALL - Wednesday, April 16 through Monday, June 30, 2008

Rose Museum at Carnegie Hall 154 W. 57th Street, 2nd Floor

Hours: Mon – Sun, 11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Admission: Free

Provided by Eric Hoffman

THE BEST HISTORIC YEAR FOR SWING - 1938

From both a calendar and a Big Band perspective the key element of 1938 was the January 16th Carnegie Hall Benny Goodman Concert. Two years earlier, Goodman's Band had been the first to reach marketable numbers with swing, which until then had limited public appeal. Not easy to imagine today, booking the Goodman Band in Carnegie Hall for a pure sit-down concert was a vast financial risk in those days. There was no assurance anybody would show up.

The promoters needn't have worried. By the time the date of the concert came, Benny Goodman himself couldn't get last-minute tickets for members of his family. Overflow demand put some of the audience in seats on the stage. By the time the evening ended, another social barrier to swing was broken; swing was being talked about in all levels of society. Still today, the digitized version of that historic New York concert is in demand. But, as the year rolled on, other events made their mark both musically and historically.

A then obscure radio actor who, despite his youth, had formed a respected repertory group he called Mercury Theater, frightened all of America with a simulated network radio news flash about Martians landing in New Jersey. There was panic across the nation as the "news story" unfolded. Mercury Theater's director, Orson Welles, had to apologize to the public the next day.

In an equally bizarre tale, an aviator named Douglas Corrigan will forever be known as "Wrong Way Corrigan" for saying he planned to fly from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in his light plane, but wound up in Dublin, Ireland.

Your Hit Parade led off the year with the top song being ONCE IN A WHILE, soon replaced with BEI MIR BIST DU SCHOEN sung by the three Andrews sisters from Minnesota. As the baseball season approached, new band leader Larry Clinton wrote a song about New York Giant's pitcher Carl Hubbell's screwball he called THE DIPSY DOODLE. Clinton, however, had a top hit record of his own, the undisputed recording success of the year, MY REVERIE, sung by the band's vocalist Bea Wain, who was also Larry's wife.

A teen aged kid who wanted to be a top dancer instead won an amateur contest as a singer. She wrote and recorded A-TISKET, A-TASKET in 1938. It was the public's first knowledge of Ella Fitzgerald.

Bob Hope was born a new star that year in the motion picture "The Big Broadcast of 1938", singing THANKS FOR THE MEMORY. Hoagy Carmichael and Frank Loesser produced TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE and HEART AND SOUL just before Christmas in 1938. Another late-year entry was the witty SMALL FRY recorded by Bing Crosby in tandem with Johnny Mercer.

Cole Porter's output during the year included MY HEART BELONG TO DADDY. ONE O'CLOCK JUMP was popularized in 1938 as hard-core band fans listened to the new sounds of Count Basie. George Gershwin died in 1937 but the two Gershwin brothers' love songs, LOVE IS HERE TO STAY and LOVE WALKED IN introduced in 1938 were destined to become a permanent part of American music.

1938 was, indeed, very good year for America, both musically and historically as the Big Band Era expanded and the depression wound down. Young citizens were dancing, listening to the radio, and attending movies as peace for the United States seemed assured. □



Courtesy - VIEWIMAGES

Provided by Robert Redding
courtesy - Big Band Jump Newsletter, August 2007

SWINGING IN SAVANNAH

For those of you who have been with the OBB for awhile, you may remember “Dancin” Dave and Eileen Ewing. They provided free swing lessons during many of our performances, particularly at our Sandy Spring Firehouse brunches. They recently moved to Savannah, Georgia, and have been featured on one of the local morning news programs. Please check out the video of their interview at: <http://www.thecoastalsource.com/news/local/16608406.html>

Below is the trailer copy for the interview. Keep on swinging guys!

SAVANNAH, GA -- When doctors told Eileen Ewing a medical condition would eventually take away her mobility, she barely let the diagnosis settle in before she got moving. Ewing credits “Lindy Hop Swing” dancing, also known as the “Jitterbug,” for helping her fight Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia, two conditions she’s had since the late 1990s.

Eileen’s husband, Dave, is her life partner and her dance partner. The Ewings teach “Lindy Hop Swing” twice weekly in Savannah. The Ewings moved only recently to The Coastal Empire from Washington D.C. Introducing more people to this lively dance form is their mission in their new town. The Ewings say “Lindy Hop Swing” dancing became very popular in the United States during the 1930s and 40s. The dance somewhat fell by the wayside after World War II. Eileen says the dance form she knows and loves did not make a strong comeback until the late 1980s.

Thursday, March 14th, Eileen and Dave Ewing will speak at Magnolia Manor in Richmond Hill. The event is part of a monthly lecture series put on by the retirement community. The lecture, “Lindy Hop Swing Dancing...Then and Now,” is open to the public. The lecture starts at 5:30 PM. There is no cost to attend. □

SWING DANCE STYLES

Dozens of significant regional swing dance variations are alive in the USA and Europe. The number of distinct regional styles is far greater than the number of distinct musical styles. To make matters even more interesting, not only do important sub-regional variants exist, but experienced and creative dancers may have radically different (fascinating, beautiful, and developing) personal styles! Many swing dance forms originate in a specific city, in a particular dance club, or even owe their birth to a one inspired individual. An abbreviated list of some of the major USA variations follows:

Lindy, Jitterbug: Harlem, NYC • Carolina Shag: Myrtle Beach, SC • ‘50s Rock & Roll: Philadelphia, PA

West Coast Swing: Southern California • Balboa, Bal Swing: Southern California

Bop (Beach Bop): Jacksonville, FL • DC Hand Dancing: Washington, DC

St. Louis Imperial: St. Louis, MO • Push: Dallas, TX • Whip: Houston, TX

An estimated less than 2% of all swing dancers have any accurate idea of what swing forms outside of their region look like (the vast majority of Northern swing dancers have never seen Shag; the vast majority of Southern Shaggers have never seen Jitterbug or Lindy Hop). Or else, they may have a distorted image based on observing an eccentric version of the dance.

Kurt Lichtmann
Cornell University, Ithaca NY Swing Dance Faculty, Phys. Ed. Dept

THE ARRANGERS - Billy May

The arrangers were often unknown cogs in the Big Band wheels, creating the sounds we identified with certain bands. This is the first in a series of articles about those often forgotten men who wrote on buses, in hotel rooms, and even in taxicabs on the way to recording sessions.. This first of the series spotlights Billy May, whose output was prolific without sacrificing quality and humor.

A doctor may have been the reason Billy May began his career in music. As a youngster he suffered from asthma and the doctor suggested to his parents that playing the tuba might help his breathing. The tuba therapy worked and it was while playing tuba in the high school band he began to think about other instrument's parts in the music, leading to a self-taught arranging skill. He switched to trumpet as a more musical instrument and began a professional career in 1933 playing with local bands in his native Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, including a Polish-American band and a hotel band led by Barron Elliott.

It was in 1939 when Charlie Barnet was appearing in Pittsburgh that Billy May went to see him and applied for a job playing trumpet and arranging. Barnet recalled May as a chubby kid with his shoes cut out on the side for comfort, but, despite his ragged appearance, Billy May turned out a series of arrangements for the Barnet band. Most notable, of course, was his arrangement of CHEROKEE, said to have been written on separate slips of paper for each musician and handed out at the recording session. It is interesting also to note that the RCA Victor executives did not want to release the Barnet recording of CHEROKEE, thinking it would not appeal to the public. It was Charley Barnet's first million selling recording.

After an October 1939 fire that destroyed Palamar Ballroom along with the instruments and arrangements of the Barnet Band, it was Billy May who helped to rewrite the entire Barnet book from scratch.

In 1940, May joined the Glenn Miller band, where his arrangements included Take the A-Train and Serenade in Blue. With the Miller band, May was perhaps best known for his trumpet playing, notably on Miller's recordings of I Dreamt I Dwelt in Harlem (1941) and American Patrol (1942).

He worked with an impressive roster of singers, including Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Peggy Lee; provided the music for a series of children's story-and-song albums; and indulged his sense of humor as the musical director for the iconoclastic comedian Stan Freberg.

Billy May worked best under pressure. Sinatra is quoted as saying, "Recording with Billy May is like having a bucket of cold water thrown in your face. Riddle will come to the session with all the arrangements carefully and neatly worked out beforehand. With Billy May, you sometimes don't have copies of the next number until you have finished the one before."

The musical output of Billy May is so vast it fills a book titled simply "The Music of Billy May," 568 pages noting hundreds of recordings. He's the one who arranged and recorded the 14 volumes of TIME-LIFE LPs, reproducing famous Big Band hits, a massive undertaking released in the early 1970s.

He contributed to the advancement of music nationally and internationally since he joined the Charley Barnet Band in 1938, immediately distinguishing himself as a music innovator. For 66 of his 87 years he contributed a prodigious amount of work to the acclaim of musicians and the listening public worldwide. He died on January 21, 2004. □



Billy's sense of humor shines for CHA CHA!
- Photo courtesy vinylloungehut.com

Provided by Robert Redding
- courtesy Big-Band Jump Newsletter, March 2008, and Peter Keepnews, The New York Times

Key Personnel

Music Director: Dr. Rip G. Rice

Asst. Music Director: temporarily vacant

Business Manager: David B. Schumer

Sound Engineer: Paul Freirich

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**THE OLNEY
BIG BAND**

IN THE MOOD
Editor/Designer: Brad Bawek
Contributing Editors: Robert Redding, Rip Rice
Send submissions to: bbawek@comcast.net

OBB Events Schedule

Tuesday, Apr 15 - Battle of the Big Bands, Blues Alley, Georgetown, DC, 8 -9:15 p.m.

Saturday, Apr 26 - 3rd Annual Swing Dance Fund Raiser, Cedar Brook Church, Clarksville, MD 7-10pm

Saturday, May 17 - Olney Days Festival, Olney Manor Park & Swim Center, 7:30-9:00 pm.

Wednesday, Jun 18, Strathmore Swings - Summer Concert, Strathmore Arts Center - North Bethesda, MD 7- 9pm

Saturday, Jun 7 - Strawberry Festival, Sandy Spring Museum, Sandy Spring, MD. 2 - 3 pm

Monday, Jun 9 - Sandy Spring Museum, Sandy Spring, MD. 7 - 9 pm

Saturday, Jun 21 - Franklin Delano Roosevelt fund raiser for the American Cancer Society. Olney Theater. 12 - 1pm

Thursday and Friday, July 18 and 19 - Montreux Jazz Festival, Montreux, Switzerland, Parc Vernex - Under The Sky Festival Stage



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