



IN THE MOOD

The Olney Big Band
NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION - AUGUST 2007

Volume 2, Number 4

Dear Members:

Welcome to a special edition of The Olney Big Band Newsletter. This distinctive issue of our quarterly newsletter is produced to celebrate the Olney Big Band's designation as Ambassadors of Big Band Music by the Sally Bennett Big Band Hall of Fame during our concert on August 2, 2007. Congratulations to all, and enjoy.



CD AVAILABLE!

Our "Generations" CD is available for a donation to the band of \$15 + \$3 s/h. Mail checks payable to the Olney Big Band to 15310 Layhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

www.olneyjazz.org

Ambassadors of Big Band Music!!

OBB is First Recipient of New BBHOF Certification

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

For the fledgling Olney Big Band (we are only 4 years old in 2007), this concert was oh so special. A mountaintop experience. The audience was good size (someone counted upwards of 350 people in attendance), the weather was hot (low 90s), but the sun went down behind the hill separating the two shopping centers just as we started our theme song, and a nice breeze started wafting over all of us. Always a good sign.

Following our theme song ('SWonderful, by George and Ira Gershwin), Ben Grisafi (Vice President/Trustee of The Big Band Hall of Fame) was introduced. Mr. Grisafi explained the genesis of and criteria for awarding the Certification as Ambassadors of Big Band Music. The Sally Bennett Big Band Hall of Fame, presently located in West Palm Beach, Florida requires big bands who are candidates for Certification as Ambassadors of Big Band Music to "perpetuate, promote, and perform with integrity" the sounds of the big band era.

Other factors that enhanced the Olney Big Band's Certification included our recent CD recording (Generations), our concerts and dances for senior citizens to recall the music of their youth, our work with younger people to make them aware of big band music, and our quarterly newsletter, In The Mood, that includes stories about big bands and big band music.

Mr. Grisafi reported that he recommended the Olney Big Band for this high honor for these principal reasons.

After a short acceptance speech by myself, and countless photos - then came the concert. My oh my - what a concert! Our opener was



Ben Grisafi Presents Dr. Rip Rice with the Award

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Harry James' Back Beat Boogie, featuring trumpet player Jeff Summers. Jill Sandler sang The Lady Is A Tramp, and Brad Bawek sang The Way You Look Tonight.

Then came a special feature – our “Ben Grisafi set”, in which we played four of Ben’s many arrangements. The first, My Buddy, has a special story connected with it. This number was first written (by Gus Kahn) as a waltz in the World War ONE time frame. It was a tear jerker, sung by grieving girl friends when learning that their soldier boys had been killed in France. And it was sung by American soldiers when one of their buddies was killed.

I read the verse of My Buddy – to set the stage –

Life is a book that we study
Some of its leaves bring a sigh
There it was written, my buddy
That we must part, you and I

Pretty somber stuff.

But then in the early 1990s, along came Ben and wrote this chart of that doleful song that really swings. In fact, the premier of Ben’s My Buddy was in Carnegie Hall, for opening a Jerry Vale (the vocalist) concert in 1994.

Next Ben came to the bandstand and took over the first tenor sax chair for the Big Band Blues, then a beautiful ballad he had arranged for tenor sax, Talk of the Town, and finally, Tea For Two. This number, “T-4-2” also has an interesting history. Written originally for the 1925 Broadway production, No, No, Nanette, the number was sung originally as a duet between a boy and girl imagining their life after marriage. The tune was very popular for a time, but then died from boredom.

A few years later, soft shoe dancers revived T-4-2 as a stop-time background for soft shoe dance routines, and the number was the dominant soft shoe dance number for quite a few years. But it died out again when soft shoe dancers passed from the scene.

In the mid-1950s, the Latin dance craze hit the USA. Suddenly, big bands, who had never played Latin music, were faced with audiences demanding Latin charts. What to do? No less a swing band than Tommy Dorsey stepped up with Tea For Two, but with a cha-cha rhythm. This caught fire throughout the States. In fact, youngsters of that generation still think of T-4-2 as a cha-cha, not as a fox trot.

Then, in the early 1990s came Ben Grisafi. He took this cha-cha, soft-shoe, male/female duet tune and swung it in true big band style. It took about 70 years and many iterations and changes in rhythm, for it to emerge as a newly accepted Big Band Standard.

Following T-4-2, Ben came off the bandstand and stood toe to toe with me and my tenor sax. After the Band got the next number started with round-the-band solos, Ben and I soloed back and forth and then together on Duke Ellington’s classic C-Jam Blues. What a jam session! What a ball!!!

The Band opened the second set with Benny Goodman’s Bugle Call Rag, followed by Jeff Summers playing and Brad Bawek singing, Bunny Berigan’s recording of I Can’t Get Started. Next Jill Sandler sang Nice Work If You Can

The First Certified Ambassadors of Big Band Music

by Ben Grisafi,
Vice President/
Trustee of The Big
Band Hall of Fame
West Palm Beach, FL

I first got involved with the Big Band Hall of Fame in 2004 approximately one year after my arrival in the West Palm Beach area from Long Island, NY. Within a short time I started looking for ideas by which I could help perpetuate music of the Big Band Era. Ideas such as college big band competitions, monthly concerts at the Big Band Museum, and awarding certificates to the numerous big bands scattered around the country (and world) that are still flourishing in spite of the seeming decline in popularity of big band music. The Ambassadors idea came to me about two years ago but was put aside and never developed until just recently.

After receiving the current CD of the Olney Big Band, then checking out their website and newsletter, I realized that this band is the perfect candidate and

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Rice from page 2

Get It, and Murray Green (lead alto sax) was featured on the beautiful ballad, Lushabye.

Jill sang The Glory of Love, then Tony Settineri (1st trombonist) was featured playing Tommy Dorsey's theme song, I'm Getting Sentimental Over You. Brad sang Count Basie's Every Day I Have The Blues, and Dennis Johnson (1st tenor sax) was featured on his soprano sax playing The Second Time Around.

The Band Closed with two all-time big band classics – Glenn Miller's In The Mood, and Benny Goodman's Sing, Sing, Sing, featuring Dennis Johnson doing Benny Goodman's clarinet solos and Bruce Davies following in the steps of Gene Krupa on drums. .

What a concert ! A truly blessed event !

Thanks to all, The Ripper



Grisafi from page 2

fit my certification concept to a “T”. The Olney Big Band is the first recipient of Big Band Ambassadors certification, and I intend to embellish upon this concept with bands all over the world. After informing Rip Rice of my intention to award this certificate, his “boy” vocalist (and graphics arts specialist in real life), Brad Bawek designed a beautiful logo for the Ambassadors certificate. With permission from Brad and the Olney Big Band, I will include it on every future Big Band Hall of Fame Ambassadors certificate. As a bonus, and with Brad’s help, I am initiating singular “Ambassadorships” to writers, singers and any individual who does his /her part to keep big band music alive.

Performing with the Olney Big Band on Thursday evening, August 2, was a real treat. Not only did I get to play, but they were kind enough to include four of my arrangements in their program. The highlight was “jamming” with Rip toward the end of the first set on C-Jam Blues.

My two daughters Lynn and Lauren, along with their husbands and four boys, were well represented with their friends and families. My grandsons Brandon, Jared, Henry and Sean could be heard saying “that’s my poppy.” They have never seen or heard me perform in person, so it was a treat for them as well.

I’m looking forward to my next visit to Maryland and hopefully can catch another performance of the Olney Big Band.

Keep swingin’ guys and gals. It was a pleasure being part of the Olney Big Band, if only for a brief period. Stay well. □



Rip Rice and Ben Grisafi splitting fours

Sally Bennett “Big Band” Hall of Fame Museum

The late Sally Bennett was the founder of the Big Band Hall of Fame that first began in Cleveland, Ohio. In recent years, the artifacts have taken residence in the Bink Glisson Historical Museum in Yesteryear Village on the South Florida Fairgrounds.

The Museum commemorates the famous Big Bands, Vocalists, Composers and their All-American Popular Music.

Displays of memorabilia include Tommy Dorsey, Buddy Rich, Glenn Miller, Sammy Kaye, Benny Goodman, Harry James, Duke Ellington, Guy Lombardo and many more.

Yesteryear Village is on the South Florida Fairgrounds in suburban West Palm Beach off Southern Boulevard 1.5 miles west of the Florida Turnpike. For additional information, contact Elizabeth Speigle, Yesteryear Village Curator, at (561) 795-3110 or via email: elizabeth@southfloridafair.com.

The Olney Big Band - Ambassadors of Big Band Music!!

August 2, 2007 - Olney Towne Center



Key Personnel

Music Director: Dr. Rip G. Rice
Asst. Music Director: Dennis Johnson
Business Manager: David B. Schumer

Officers

Dr. Rip G. Rice, President
Robert Redding, VP for Public Relations
David B. Schumer, Secretary/Treasurer

Board of Directors

Dr. Rip G. Rice, Chairman
Brad Bawek
Merle Biggin
Thomas Harwick (Founder)
Dennis Johnson
Glenn Ochsenreiter
Robert Redding
David B. Schumer
Richard Sonnenschein



**THE OLNEY
BIG BAND**

IN THE MOOD

Editor/Designer: Brad Bawek
Contributing Editor: Robert Redding

Send newsletter submissions to: bbawek@comcast.net

OBB Events Schedule

Sunday, August 12 - The Oak Room, Sandy Spring Firehouse, Dance and Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Sunday, August 12 - Heartlands Senior Living Village, Ellicott City, MD, 6 to 7 p.m.**

Sunday, Sept. 9 - The Oak Room, Sandy Spring Firehouse, Dance and Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Sunday, September 16 - Old Towne Festival, Gaithersburg, MD, Noon to 2 p.m.

Saturday, October 6 - Sandy Spring Friends School, Retirement Dance, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.**

Sunday, Oct 14 - The Oak Room, Sandy Spring Firehouse, Dance and Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Sunday, Nov 11 - The Oak Room, Sandy Spring Firehouse, Dance and Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Sunday, Dec 9 - The Oak Room, Sandy Spring Firehouse, Dance and Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

REHEARSALS

Mondays
Aug 20 – Sep 10, 24 – Oct 1, 15 – Nov 5, 19 – Dec 3, 17
All full band rehearsals

* The Oak Room at Sandy Spring:
<http://www.ssballroom.com/>

** Closed to Public

PHOTO CREDITS

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