



IN THE MOOD

The Olney Big Band
NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2009

Volume 4, Number 1

Dear Readers:

Welcome to our first issue of the new year. The Olney Big Band is anxious to get swinging and bring you some of that wonderful music of the greatest generation. The new year always means a chance for a fresh start, and this year is no exception. We are happy to announce that we are bringing back swing to Sandy Spring!

After a years hiatus, we are reintroducing a monthly dance to Sandy Spring, MD. Now you can dance the night away to your favorites hits of the Big Band Era at the newly renovated Studio of Ballet Arts. We are slated to begin our Saturday night swingathons on March 7th, and continue them on the first Saturday of each month. Be sure to check out our flier on page nine.

Hope to see you there!



www.olneybigband.org

Quarter Notes Musings Of A Band Leader

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

Those close to the Olney Big Band know that I have a younger brother, Timothy Rice, who lives in Washougal, Washington, and is a big fan of big band music, and especially music of the great Glenn Miller. Most Miller fans also know that Glenn's real name was Alton Glenn Miller, and that he and wife Helen adopted a boy and a girl. The boy was named Alton Glenn Miller as well.

Recently I received an e-mail from Tim that expands on the derivation of the name Alton Glenn Miller in a very interesting manner – that I thought I would pass on to our readers.

I think I have mentioned that recently, when I watched for the umpteenth time, The Glenn Miller Story, and read on the final credits that his son was named Alton Glenn Miller, as he was. Well, I took Al (Alton) Miller's job at the old Washington (DC) Theater Club when he left it to go to Arena Stage. He disappeared from DC, and I last saw him at a funeral in DC.

I thought I'd made a Glenn/Alton connection until tonight when I thought I'd look him up on the internet. He's in Chicago and has a nice bio on the web. At the bottom is a blue key that asks "Where did you get that name"? I clicked the line and got the following. He's no relation to Glenn, but I thought this was interesting:

Alton B. Parker was the Democratic candidate for president in 1904, who lost to the "progressive" Republican, Teddy Roosevelt. On March 1, 1904, in Clarinda, Iowa, Alton Glen Miller was born. A month later, April 9, 1904, Alton Clyde Miller was born 1200 miles away, in Allentown, Pa. He was no relation. Neither Alton Glen, who later added an "n" to his middle name, dropped the "Alton," and became famous as the band leader, Glenn Miller, nor my father Alton Clyde, had any other Altons in their families. But when your last name is Miller or Smith (my paternal grandmother was a Smith), you look for distinctive first names, and I guess "Alton" was in the air. It doesn't necessarily indicate that my Dad's folks were Democrats, but I'd like to think they were. As the oldest son, I was named Alton Franklin Miller, with a different middle name to avoid the "Jr." And so I – like Glenn and who knows how many other Millers, Smiths, and Browns – was named after a failed presidential candidate whose name had a certain ring. That's a logical explanation, but here's a real coincidence: Glenn Miller's father was named Elmer. Alton C. Miller's father, my grandfather, was also named Elmer!

And now you know the rest of the story. Thanks Tim!!



“B” Side The Internet Miracle

by BRADLEY BAWEK

So your wife has finally convinced you it's time to clean out that stack of old records in the basement. You've been putting it off for years and feigning lower back pain to postpone the inevitable. Well spin jockeys, it looks like you can hold off the spring cleaning a little longer, because vinyl is back!

According to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) vinyl records experienced a 36.6 sales increase from 2006 to 2007.

In comparison, CD sales dropped 17.6 percent in the same period. Record industry analysts attribute the CD drop off to listeners increasing internet downloads and mp3 use, but are skeptical about the staying power of a true vinyl resurgence.

Some record labels are providing vinyl copies of new releases, but warn it still remains to be seen if the vinyl revival is a short-term trend. Regardless, the rising interest in vinyl has generated a surge in new and vintage record sales.

Vinyl aficionados profess that the analog format of records provides a higher quality than CDs and mp3s. They also point to the visceral experience involved in purchasing and playing a record. They describe the process of searching the shelves, handling the albums, enjoying the cover art, and hearing that first pop when the needle hits the record as cathartic.

With the availability of internet downloads and an ever increasing demand for smaller, more portable music devices, vinyl will certainly never regain the dominance it once enjoyed. However, until they can replicate the feeling you get when you discover a lost gem in the local record shop, or drop the needle on that Artie Shaw from your *cool uncle*, there will always be a place for a few stacks in the basement. At least until next spring. □

by DON KENNEDY

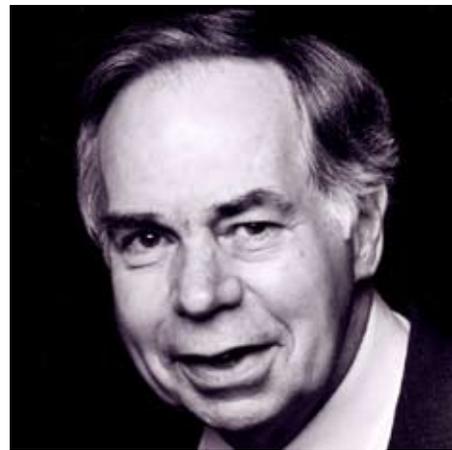
Twenty-three years ago when our local Atlanta Big Band program titled “One O’Clock Jump” (programmed at one o’clock as you can surmise) began to build an audience, a listener wrote to suggest we syndicate. It was an idea that never occurred to us, but we began to learn how syndication worked and before long assembled 140 affiliate stations all over the nation.

In those earlier days the re-named BIG BAND JUMP program had an appeal to stations wanting to fill weekends with meaningful programming. The regular staff at most stations worked Monday through Friday while interns or hourly young people eager to learn radio ran programs on the weekends.

Technical and corporate developments since that time have changed programming techniques. The Federal Communications Commission relaxed the limits for station ownership from a total of seven AM stations and seven FM stations to allow a single company to operate hundreds of stations, often several varied stations in one market. The so-called Adult Standard station in a city’s multi-station “cluster” was considered the least important of the group and was operated by computer, allowing some stations to take their entire week’s programming from a satellite feeding 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Enter internet stations, operated without government control or interference. Radio veterans, eager to supply the diminishing Big Band audience with meaningful programming, began operating full-time internet stations while individual syndicators such as BIG BAND JUMP were able to supply their programs to listeners. If a listener owned a computer BBJ was available anytime, starting when the listener clicked in.

To hear BIG BAND JUMP, simply go to www.bigbandjump.com and click on the underlined sentence at the top of the home page that says: Click here to listen now. With a little effort, listeners can



Don Kennedy, Big Band Jump Radio Host
photo courtesy of Don Kennedy

discover scores of internet stations to fit every taste as programmers from all over the nation and the world operate internet stations.

What will the specific future of Great American Music programming be, and what is the general future of radio? No one knows, of course, but early indications point to availability of internet programming on car radios. Already home radios allowing listeners to program such stations without needing a computer are being marketed in some places. In this high-charged rapidly changing technical atmosphere anything seems possible.

Radio stations have for some years added to their on-air audience by feeding their programming to the internet. In the past few weeks the opposite happened for the first time. An internet station’s programming (Martini In The Morning.com) is being used by a radio station, which could be the beginning of a trend.

Whatever occurs in the future, the internet is at this moment the sure source for Great American Music programming. There may not be a station carrying such programming in your area, for their numbers have diminished over the years, but the internet is your fall-back position for good listening. □

Don Kennedy is the host of the Big Band Jump radio program

The King of the Clarinet

by ROBERT REDDING

How many jazz lovers remember the exploits of Arthur Jacob Arshawsky? Some have called him “The King of Swing”, others have labeled him “The King of the Clarinet.” His life spanned 94 years, from May 23, 1910 to December 30, 2004. It was an exciting life that produced years of jazz contributions.

Mr. Arshawsky was born in New York City and grew up in New Haven, Connecticut. He began learning how to play the saxophone when he was 13 years old and by the age of 16, he switched to the clarinet and left home to tour with a band. For ten years he performed with a variety of bands, orchestras, and symphonic groups. During this time he changed his name to Artie Shaw.

Mr. Shaw came to be widely considered as one of the greatest jazz clarinetists, acclaimed composers and band leaders of his time. He was also the author of both fiction and non-fiction writings.

Shaw often took sabbaticals, quitting the music business to pursue other interests. One break included studying advanced mathematics.

He is often recalled as a “very difficult man”. Shaw was married eight times—to Jane Cairns (1932-33); Margaret Allen (1934-37); actress Lana Turner (1940-41); Betty Kern (1942-43), the daughter of songwriter Jerome Kern; actress Ava Gardner (1945-46); “Forever Amber” author Kathleen Winsor (1946-48); actress Doris Dowling (1952-56); and actress Evelyn Keyes (1957-85). He was also active in a core group of actors and



Artie Shaw in a scene from the movie *Second Chorus* in 1940. Photo courtesy of corbis.com

actresses who were trying to hold off communism’s influence in Hollywood.

During his career, Shaw often took sabbaticals, quitting the music business to pursue other interests. One break included studying advanced mathematics. In 1954, Shaw stopped playing the clarinet, citing his own perfectionism, which he later said, would have killed him. He spent the rest of the 1950s in Europe. He was a driven man who became a precision marksman (ranking fourth in the United States in 1962), as well as an excellent fly fisherman.

He was best known nationwide for his clarinet music. In the 1930s, he lived and slept clarinet day and night, practicing seven to eight hours a day. He first gained jazz recognition in 1934 with Red Norvo’s Swing Septet. Later in that decade, he gradually progressed from a proficient imitator of Benny Goodman to a real master of the clarinet.

Shaw became virtually incomparable in the beauty of his tone and his flawless control of the instrument’s highest register. In the words of Gunther Schuller, “He developed into a highly individual improviser, who, when really inspired, had not only an abundance of creative ideas but more than enough technique to summon them instantly and unerringly from his clarinet.”

The history of Shaw’s band development is almost unbelievable. He produced at least ten different bands from 1936 to 1955, when he withdrew from an active life in music. The long list of his multiple bands paralleled his long series of private life marriages. What follows is a brief synopsis of this unique history. The first of Artie Shaw’s orchestras lasted less than a year. It was a nine-piece band plus a four-string quartet. His concept was to integrate the strings into a small jazz group,

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

consisting of a series of “horns” and a rhythm section. (Glenn Miller attempted the same format in 1935, one year before Shaw). But, the Shaw combo was a band without a style - unsettled, eclectic, directionless, no swing rhythm at all.. Gunther Schuller said “Shaw’s first effort in 1935 at producing and leading a jazz orchestra was ‘rather pathetic’.”

In 1936, Shaw showed great improvement with a new standard 14-piece stringless band. He called it “Artie Shaw and His New Music.” He utilized a dixieland approach which featured his clarinet, Lee Castle’s trumpet and Tony Pastor’s tenor sax. His new musicians became well known-- Johnny Best, Bunny Berigan, George Arus, a young Helen Forrest—age 18, and Billie Holiday, one of the greatest singers of all time. Also, he attracted big band drummers Buddy Rich, Sid Catlett, and Chick Webb.

Shaw’s first great performance hit in the summer of 1938 was “Begin the Beguine,” the high quality product of Jerry Gray’s arranging talent. “S’Wonderful” also became one of the band’s best recordings. Yet, while his band played “In The Mood” long before Glenn Miller made it into the classic that it has become, Shaw never did record it.

The band held great promise, but in June, 1939 Artie Shaw suddenly suffered a nervous breakdown on the bandstand. It disrupted his recording skill. “Comes Love” took 17 takes. It was called “creative burnout.” In late November Shaw announced the disbanding of the orchestra.

After three and a half months, and a Mexican vacation, Artie revived himself. He visualized a 65-piece orchestra, but settled for 32 pieces—15 jazz musicians, 13 strings, and a wind quartet. It

was his new “Dream Band On The Road.” Shaw formed the “Gramercy Five,” a sextet (counting himself) that was the “jazz” nucleus of the full ensemble. Notable was the solo work of Artie, trumpeter Billy Butterfield, and the magnificent trombone solo of Jack Jenney in “Stardust”. Despite the impressive jazz of these soloists, Artie became restless and the band was disbanded in the spring of 1941.

It didn’t take long for Artie start again, and by the fall of 1941 he organized another group which included a host of brilliant musicians and alumni from his former bands. He was forced, however, to cut out twenty of them for lack of funds. Nevertheless, they were billed with the pretentious title of “Artie Shaw and His Symphonic Swing.” It was a 15-piece band plus a sizeable complement of strings. Shaw brought this orchestra into jazz, late-swing and modern jazz. It wasn’t symphonic at all. It was simply a fine dance band with strings, and an ability to play exceptionally good jazz and ballads.

Artie was assigned to a great band playing in battle zone venues. His band survived seventeen bombing attacks from Japanese Aircraft.

In January 1942 Shaw reported sick again. But in two months, he returned with a band—not his own, but belonging to Lee Castle. Its function was only to fulfill some theatre bookings he couldn’t avoid. Paul Jordan, composer, delivered the string section with unusually great quality. Shaw also attracted drummer Dave Tough; the great blues trumpet player, “Hot Lips” Page; tenor sax specialist George Auld, and arranger Ray Conniff. However, Shaw’s erratic conduct as a band leader continued apace. After recording the works of Paul Jordan, Shaw disbanded again.

Off in a new direction in April 1942,

Shaw enlisted in the U. S. Navy. He completed boot training, was stationed on Staten Island in New York, and served for a couple of months on a minesweeper. However, the Navy had other plans. He was put in charge of a pretty miserable band but his rank jumped to Chief Petty Officer. Later, he reached some influential ears in Washington and was assigned to a great band playing in battle zone venues, all in the Pacific Theatre. It wasn’t fun. His band survived seventeen bombing attacks from Japanese aircraft..

In 1944, Shaw returned to civilian life and created another jazz band. Roy Eldridge was its star soloist and Ray Conniff its chief arranger, and it had no strings. It released the new musical idiom-bop-which was appearing on recordings of Gillespie and Parker, as well as Woody Herman and Charlie Barnet.

This band, despite the Eldridge solo presence, was not a jazz soloist band. It was an ensemble band, an arranger’s band. Shaw’s role as solo clarinet became secondary to the band’s overall style and ensemble work. His playing became listless and redundant. A turnabout occurred. The huge string section with harp, plus a large woodwind group, including horns, said goodbye. Yet, this was the final substantial Shaw contribution to the Big Band or Swing Era.

As an about face, Shaw created a “New Music Quartet.” It was a seminal group formed in 1947, dedicated to the performance of the most advanced classical literature. This ensemble offered a high degree of technical perfection and high musical intuition, which proved that strings could swing, that it could become fully integrated and artistically contributive to a jazz

continued on page 5

continued from page 4

effort, and could play with impeccable taste. But, it didn't last long.

In 1949, Shaw embarked on a new and more ambitious venture, again outside the realm of jazz. He recorded eight short classical pieces by 20th century composers, adapted for clarinet and symphony orchestra. To Shaw, it demonstrated that he could hold his own with any clarinetist in the world, classical or otherwise, including his nemesis, Benny Goodman

Artie Shaw remained in music for another five years, performing with small groups. He even mounted one more short-lived large band in 1953, with commercial implications, such as the Jackie Gleason type of music. Unfortunately, Artie's health began to deteriorate. By the early 2000s, Shaw's records were selling and his radio broadcasts were reaching millions. It was Gunter Schuller who said "Perhaps the greatest of all the enigmas Shaw's life posed, a most profoundly perplexing one, is

how a true musician of his remarkable talents could so unconditionally leave music." Shaw's message to the world was "I can try anything", and he did. □

References: The Big Bands, George Simon; The Swing Era, Gunter Schuller; Artie Shaw, Wikipedia.

Artie Has the Last Word

The big problem for some people—and unfortunately I'm one of them—is that you eventually reach a point where you're never satisfied with what you are doing. I'm sure that holds true for anyone who tries to do something superlatively well, as a musician, a painter or even a writer. And I'm sure it also applies to great athletes. Think of what it takes to shoot a string of free throws in basketball, or sink a twenty-foot putt.—especially when there's a hundred thousand bucks or more riding on it. You have to reach a point where pressure simply doesn't exist. You finally get to where good enough isn't good enough. It's as if someone laid a curse on you. I was never satisfied.

There are about twelve different ways to play a quarter note, and some sixteen degrees between fortissimo and pianissimo. A great composer can express anguish or ecstasy in a brief musical passage. But how many people can understand the sound of a Monet water-lily or a Van Gogh cypress?

A lot of the music that bands like mine were playing fifty or sixty years ago was functional; people danced to it. I certainly had no idea

that a half-century later people would think of it as "concert" music. Or, just music, period.

Sure, "jazz" is supposed to swing, but what finally matters is that it's music.

That's why I dislike such words as "jazz" or "swing." I'm not comfortable with categories, and I distrust most definitions. The word definition is based on the word finite, which would seem to indicate that once we've defined something we don't need to think about it anymore. I believe some things should be kept open. Life can be quite complicated, so we tend to put things in neat little pigeonholes. But music can't be pigeonholed. Sure, "jazz" is supposed to swing, but what finally matters is that it's music. If it isn't music, why are so many people all over the world playing it, writing about it, teaching and studying it, or simply listening to it?

Do I miss anything about my years leading bands and being a public figure? Well, yes; if I think objectively I'd say I miss the ability to do anything I wanted. That's a rare experience. If you run a band, you're one of the princes of that music; you carry your own world, a complete world, around with you. You're the undisputed authority. It's very seductive, and you miss that. You miss the ability to say "This is no good, give me that."

At some point—probably while I was in the Navy, as a result of seeing the way those men reacted to our music—it began to dawn on me that whether I realized it or not I'd created a good-sized chunk of durable Americana. Something lasting. If that's the case, I can't think of a better footprint, and a better legacy, than that.

Artie Shaw Discography, 1936-1954



Artie Shaw and his orchestra swing for the troops.
Photo courtesy of Robert Redding

The Clarinet and the Evolution of the Big Band

by ROGER ALDRIDGE

I have loved the sound of a clarinet in a big band since I was a child. My mother being a Benny Goodman fan may have played a formative role in my attraction to the clarinet. Beyond that, the clarinet appeals to me as having a range of tonal expression – from sounding dark and mysterious to being an exuberant shouter (along with everything in between) that makes it a natural as a jazz instrument.

The clarinet has a long history and has earned a respected place in jazz. In fact, one can make an argument that the clarinet has been used in jazz longer than the saxophone. The clarinet played a key role in New Orleans and Chicago traditional jazz bands. It was used in a variety of ways in big bands of the late 1920s through the 40s. The clarinet fell out of favor with some post-WWII big bands. However, it experienced a renewal in the late 1950s and early 60s as a woodwind double and it continues to be used in many of today's big bands.

Generally speaking, there are four main ways for the clarinet (or multiple clarinets) to be used in a big band.

- As a solo instrument.
- In a clarinet section (typically 3 to 5 clarinets).
- Playing lead over the saxophone section.
- Blended, as an orchestral tone “color”, with other instruments.



Johnny Dodds was one of the greatest clarinetists of the 1920s.
Photo courtesy of www.tinto.demon.co.uk/

The Solo Clarinet

The clarinet has been used as a solo instrument from the earliest days of jazz. Some of the most influential early New Orleans jazz clarinetists were Johnny Dodds, George Lewis, Edmond Hall, Sidney Bechet, and Jimmy Noone. They were followed by the great clarinet work of Irving Fazola and Pee Wee Russell as jazz migrated to Chicago and New York. As large jazz ensembles evolved (generally speaking from the mid-1920s), it was a fairly common practice for their saxophone players to double on clarinet. Some of these saxophonists were accomplished jazz soloists on the clarinet. Names that readily come to mind include: Barney Bigard, Russell Procope, Jimmy Dorsey, Lester Young, Peanuts Hucko, Buster Bailey, Danny Polo, Mezz Mezzrow.... The list can go on and on!

Additionally, during the Swing Era the role of the clarinet soloist expanded to become that of a band leader and popular Star. Of

course, we are talking about Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. Goodman and Shaw greatly helped to popularize the clarinet as a big band instrument. Woody Herman did not have the level of Star popularity with the bobby-soxers as Goodman and Shaw. Nevertheless, he led a series of truly great big bands in which he was featured on clarinet and alto sax.

The Clarinet Section

Big bands of the 1920s and early 30s typically had a saxophone section of three players who often doubled on clarinet. Arrangers for these early bands (such as Don Redman) sometimes used three clarinets in harmony as an alternative to the sound of a sax section. Clarinet sections were used in both background and soli (section being featured) roles. Early examples of a clarinet section being used to great advantage in a big band include: Copenhagen (1924) and Livery Stable Blues (1927) by the Fletcher Henderson band as well as Yellow Dog Blues (1928) and The Mooche (1928) by the Duke Ellington band.

In the mid-1930s many big bands increased the size of their sax section to four players. ... This enabled some big bands to have four or five clarinets as doubles.

In the mid-1930s many big bands increased the size of their sax section to four players. Then, as

continued on page 7



Glenn Miller's band performing on the back of a tank transporter, outside Wycombe Abbey Grounds, outer High Wycombe, Bucks, UK, September 1944.
Photo courtesy of apps.buckscc.gov.uk/modes/projects/

continued from page 6

big bands evolved in the early 40s it became common to have five saxophone players. This enabled some big bands to have four or five clarinets as doubles. I think of the Claude Thornhill band as being the ultimate "clarinet band". At one time Thornhill had SIX clarinets!

Clarinet Playing Lead Over The Saxophone Section

Aside from the sound of Benny Goodman or Artie Shaw's clarinet soaring over a swinging big band, the most iconic sound of a clarinet in a big band is that of the Glenn Miller band. Glenn Miller was not the first arranger to have a clarinet play the lead voice over a harmonized sax section. However, Glenn Miller's use of a clarinet lead is memorable because the sound he developed is absolutely gorgeous. Tingles go up my spine whenever I hear it.

The genius of Glenn Miller in his use of the clarinet is not due to any unusual method of harmonizing the clarinet and saxophones. In fact, Miller used traditional close position 4-part harmony which had been used for years in various ways by every big band arranger since Don Redman. However, he did several things which taken together produced the Miller Sound.

The essential requirement that brought the Miller Sound to life was the execution of the music by the members of the Miller sax section.

First, Glenn Miller and his arrangers (such as Bill Finnigan and Jerry Gray) used a clarinet lead most often on slow or medium tempo songs which featured sustained notes in the melody. This created an effect of the Miller Sound being suspended in the air and enveloping dancers and listeners. It was extremely effective. Second, he restricted the

melodic range of his clarinet lead in a way that placed the harmonized saxophones in their higher range. To enable the saxes to play in this high range, Miller used two alto and two tenor saxophones (with the baritone saxophone player switching to alto). Melodies were harmonized to have the clarinet play the lead and the three harmony notes of a given chord below the melody were played by two alto saxes and one tenor sax. Finally, the clarinet melody was doubled an octave lower by the 2nd tenor sax.

The essential requirement that brought the Miller Sound to life was the execution of the music by the members of the Miller sax section. They had to play perfectly in tune, phrase the music in exactly the same way, and the speed and style of their vibrato had to be exactly the same. In other words, everything had to be perfect. This required a high level of musicianship and teamwork as a section. The result was a sound that is stunningly beautiful...lush, romantic, and breathtaking. Examples of Glenn Miller's clarinet lead include: Moonlight Serenade, At Last, Adios, and Serenade in Blue. Gorgeous music!

In contrast to the Miller Sound, the Duke Ellington band used a clarinet lead in a different style. Instead of close position 4-part harmony, Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn often used open or spread arranging voicings – typically with more dissonant 5-part harmony – for clarinet lead over saxes. By using open rather than close position harmony, the Ellington saxes were able to play in a more normal range (lower than Miller's saxes). Importantly,

continued on page 8

continued from page 7

this enabled the baritone saxophone to be used with a clarinet lead. In addition, a greater melodic range was possible with the use of open harmonic voicings. This gave the Ellington sax section more room to maneuver and enabled the band to use a clarinet lead on faster, up-tempo swing tunes. A great example of the Ellington band swinging away with a clarinet lead is Billy Strayhorn's Rain Check (1941).

Another difference in the use of a clarinet lead in the Ellington band was instead of all of the saxophone harmony parts being in parallel motion with the clarinet melody, Ellington and Strayhorn often utilized contrary motion between the higher and lower voices in the sax section. The sound of Harry Carney's baritone saxophone had a special role in the Ellington band. At times, Ellington or Strayhorn would write a contrary motion line (in relation to the clarinet lead) for the baritone sax and then harmonize melodic lines for other saxes up from the baritone sax.

This approach to big band arranging is significantly different from the traditional top-down method of harmonization. The result was a clarinet-lead-over-saxes sound that changes shape: moving from an open section sound inward to a tight sound or, conversely, moving from a tight sound outward to an open sound.

A singularly beautiful example of this Ellington-Strayhorn style of "line writing" with clarinet lead over saxes is found in Star-Crossed Lovers (part of the Such Sweet Thunder suite recorded by the Ellington band). The clarinet lead solo in Star-Crossed Lovers is brief; however, the

effect of the five independent lines played by the clarinet and saxes is so dramatic that it takes one's breath away. This method of contrapuntal or horizontal line writing has heavily influenced succeeding generations of big band arrangers.

Blending The Clarinet With Other Instruments

A traditional method of arranging for a big band is to have distinct saxophone, trumpet, and trombone sections – with the trumpet and trombone sections often being combined to play as a brass section. A common feature of big band music is having "call and response" between sections. This often takes place between the sax and brass sections. A similar technique – which never fails to drive swing dancers into a state of frenzy – is a building up of individual riffs between the sax, trombone, and trumpet sections.

Another approach to arranging for a big band – which has become a common feature of contemporary large jazz ensembles -- is to have instruments cross sectional boundaries to be used with instruments of other sections. Early examples of this approach can be found with Fletcher Henderson -- such as a clarinet playing with cup-muted trumpets. Other bands experimented with similar kinds of instrumental blending. In this respect, the Duke Ellington band represents the Mother Lode. Ellington is known for the innovative ways he combined instruments and created new and unusual tonal colors. As one example: the blending of a plunger-muted trombone, clarinet, and bass clarinet.

Ellington's approach to orchestration in expanding the scope of instrumental tonal colors in a big band – especially, in how he used the clarinet (along with the bass clarinet)



Edward "Duke" Ellington and Billy "Swea' Pea" Strayhorn answer questions in a WMCA New York radio station (c1943). Photo courtesy www.swingmusic.net

with other instruments in creative ways – had a significant impact upon other highly respected jazz arrangers such as Gil Evans, Eddie Sauter, Bob Brookmeyer, George Russell, Oliver Nelson, Gary McFarland, Thad Jones, Carla Bley, and others.

The renewal of the clarinet in modern big bands can be attributed in large measure to Gil Evans and other cutting edge arrangers who were influenced by Ellington and dramatically expanded the palate of big band tonal colors in the late 1950s and 1960s with the utilization of instruments such as flutes (including alto and bass flute), clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, English horn, bassoon, soprano saxophone, French horn, tuba, and eventually (starting in the late 60s) a variety of electronic instruments.

Another example of blending the clarinet with other instruments which HAS to be mentioned is the Claude Thornhill band. The signature Thornhill sound, going back to 1942, was the blending of unison clarinets (usually in the low range) with two French horns. What a sound!

The clarinet is truly a wonderful instrument. Happily, the Olney Big Band is carrying on the long and rich tradition of using clarinets in a big band. □

DANCE

Bringing
Back Swing
to Sandy Spring

Olney Big Band



Saturday, March 7, 2009, 8 -11 pm

Studio of Ballet Arts Ballroom

17810 Meeting House Rd., Moore Building, Suite 350

Sandy Spring, MD, 20806

(Directly behind the Sandy Spring Bank)

Complimentary Swing dance lesson at 7:30 pm

Tickets: \$15 General Admission Available at Door

Go to www.olneybigband.org for further details

Key Personnel

Music Director: Dr. Rip G. Rice
Asst. Music Director: Brian A. Damron
Business Manager: David B. Schumer
Sound Engineer: Paul Freirich
Band Historian: Dr. Sue Vazakas

Board of Directors

Dr. Rip G. Rice, President
Brad Bawek, VP of Design and Publishing
Merle Biggin
Barry Fell
Tom Harwick, Vice President (Founder)
Glenn Ochsenreiter
Robert Redding, VP for Public Relations
David B. Schumer, Secretary/Treasurer
Richard Sonnenschein

In The Mood

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

Friends of the OBB

The Friends of the Olney Big Band are people who love to listen and dance to big band music and are dedicated to keeping alive the spirit of American swing, dance, and jazz music. Friends support the efforts of the Band by encouraging volunteerism and by donating and soliciting and receiving gifts, bequests and endowments for the Band. Here is a list of our current Friends:

- Barry and Ali Fell - Benefactors
- Sandy Spring Friends School - Patrons
- Dr. Burkard Sievers and Rose Mersky - Contributors
- Charles and Elspeth Woodward - Contributor
- Halsey and Karen Smith - Contributors
- Mr. and Mrs. Alan Remson - Contributors
- Dorea & Kevin McMahan - Contributors
- Roger Aldridge - Contributor
- Larry Mizell - Contributor
- Paul Freirich - Soundman, Volunteer Extraordinaire
- Joe Karam - Honorary Friend of the OBB
- Barry Schwartz - Honorary Friend of the OBB

If you are interested in becoming a *Friend of the Olney Big Band* go to the OBB website and click *Friends of the OBB* for details.

OBB Events Schedule

Saturday, March 7 - Bringing Back Swing to Sandy Spring, Saturday Night Dance, Sandy Spring, MD, 8:00 - 11:00pm

Saturday, April 4 - Bringing Back Swing to Sandy Spring, Saturday Night Dance, Sandy Spring, MD, 8:00 - 11:00pm

Sunday, April 5 - 90th Birthday Celebration, Sandy Spring, MD, 1:00 - 4:00pm, Private Party

Saturday, April 25 - Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg, MD, 3:00 - 4:00pm, Private Event

Friday, May 1 - Swing Into Spring, Glen Echo Park Bumper Car Pavilion, Glen Echo Park, MD. Details at <http://www.seeonline.org/aboutSEEC.html>

Saturday, May 2 - Bringing Back Swing to Sandy Spring, Saturday Night Dance, Sandy Spring, MD, 8:00 - 11:00pm

Saturday, May 16 - Olney Days Celebration Concert and Fireworks, Olney Manor Park, Olney, MD, 7:30 - 9:00pm

Friday, May 29 - Friend's School Alumni Weekend Swing Dance, Sandy Spring Friends School, Sandy Spring, MD, 8:00 - 10:00pm, Private Party

Sunday, May 31 - Heartlands Senior Living Village Concert and Dance, Ellicott City, MD, 6:00 - 7:00pm, Private Party

Rehearsals

Mondays 8-10 pm
Mar 2, 16 -- Apr 6, 20 -- May 4, 18

*All full band rehearsals
Check OBB Players page on website for further details and updates*

For Band Information Contact

Dr. Rip G. Rice - Director:
301-774-9133
RGRice4ozone@aol.com

For Booking Information Check our Website or Contact

David B. Schumer - Manager:
301-598-2107
olneyjazz@hotmail.com

www.olneybigband.org