



# IN THE MOOD

The Olney Big Band  
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2007

Volume 2, Number 2

## Dear Members:

Welcome to the fourth edition of The Olney Big Band Newsletter. The excitement continues this year with the release of our first CD "Generations". Band members can contact Dave Schumer to purchase copies. We are also making the CDs available for a \$15 tax deductible contribution to the Band. CDs are currently available at our gigs and B.J. Pumpnickels, of Olney, MD.



## Special Dates:

### Gigs:

Apr 26, 28  
May 13, 19, 27  
Jun 10, 17, 23

### Rehearsals:

Apr 9, 23  
May 7, 21  
Jun 4, 18

See inside for full  
schedule details

[www.olneyjazz.org](http://www.olneyjazz.org)

## Letter to the Editor

### THE OLNEY BIG BAND RELIVES THE FAMOUS SWING ERA

In our January 2007 newsletter, the lead article focused on Gunther Schuller, musician extraordinaire. He was and is a distinguished American composer in both classical and jazz traditions. Many of us remember his local concerts as the director of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. We told our readers to await our next report on his "The Swing Era" which focused on that extraordinary period in American music history—1930 to 1945. Listen on...

This book is available to every interested musician today at your local book store. It is 919 pages in length, ending with a 4,000 item index, a \$30.00 bargain. It was published by the Oxford University Press in 1989. Our friend, Gunther, claims 30,000 listenings to jazz recordings in authoring this major work. Wow! The book contains a compilation which identifies the finest collection of famous jazz musicians. Its contents trace the history of jazz in the following ten chapters: The King of Swing—Benny Goodman / Duke Ellington, Master Composer / Louis Armstrong / The Quintessence of Swing (Luncheon and Basie) / The Great Black Bands (16) / The Great Soloists (13) / The White Bands (18) / The Territory Bands (50+) / Small Groups (6) / Things to Come

In addition to Gunther's musings he laboriously provides over 500 musical samples. For example, the most noted of them all was the famous Body and Soul performance of Coleman Hawkins in 1939. It is a majestic 64-bar improvisation, described by Gunther as having "a remarkable unity of content and form intellectually or in a more casual listening, just sense it unconsciously, instinctively. From the first rich baritone sounds, it holds our attention and takes us on a melodic/harmonic journey through a musical landscape without any fault lines."

If one were to construct a list of the dozen or so major stations in the development of jazz in the twenty years between 1926 and 1946, they would include such historic breakthrough creations as Armstrong's West End Blues, Henderson's The Stampede and King Porter Stomp, a half dozen Duke Ellington's works like Mood Indigo, Reminiscing in Tempo, Diminuendo, Crescendo in Blue and Cotton Tail, Lester Young's 1936 Lady be Good, Hawkins' Body and Soul, Tatum's Aunt Hagar Blues, the Gillespie/Parker Shaw 'Nuff, and Herman's Apple Honey.

Gunther added "That the Swing Era was an incredibly rich and exciting period is undeniable. And surely the reader if he is not



Photograph by Bachrach  
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already aware of it, will have come to realize and savor what was rare and good and special about the Swing and Big Band Era.” This was the period when the Swing Era was synonymous with America’s popular music, its social dances, and musical entertainment. He examines how the arrangements of Fletcher Henderson and Eddie Sauter—whom Schuller equates with Richard Strauss as a ‘master of harmonic modulation’—contributed to Benny Goodman’s finest works...how Duke Ellington used the highly individualistic trombone trio of Joe ‘Tricky’ Sam Nanton, Juan Tizol, and Lawrence Brown to enrich his elegant compositions, ...and how Billie Holiday developed her horn-like approach to singing”

The demise of swing and the big bands signaled the end of an era and the end of a remarkable two decades of music. Yet, many of the historic jazz numbers are played by the Olney Big Band, allowing them to endure to this day.

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## On The Town

Blues Alley Jazz Society Presents The BIG BAND JAM! Scheduled for April 20-29, 2007, the Big Band Jam is the biggest, baddest, broadest beat ever brought to Washington, D.C. ! Check [www.bigbandjam.org](http://www.bigbandjam.org) for details.

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## CD Responses

I love your CD! - Cathy, Silver Spring, MD

The balance was quite remarkable. It was obvious you all had played together for some time and were listening to each other. Kudos. By the way, everybody’s ties looked great.” - Sue, Catonsville, MD

I like the arrangements and they show off a hard driving band.

- HJ, Dripping Springs, TX

The band really sounds fantastic; the singers are excellent!

- Bob & Patti, Dumpfries, VA

Very professional band, unbelievable that you guys are amateurs.

- Sheldon, Delray Beach, FL

Love the OBB sound, Many thanks for sending the CD.

- Lois and Darl, Panama City, FL

We are thrilled with the album. It has the kind of music we love and you have done it soooooooooooooooooo well.

- Betty & Donnie, New Orleans, LA

Whew! the tempo on some of those is really, really hot. When is the second one coming out?

- Teri, Hilo, HI

Thank you for the CD. Jeff and I listen to it whenever we are cooking... We played it for his mom and grandmother and they loved it as well.

- Trisha, Houston, TX

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## Quotable

“There is no truer truth obtainable by man than comes of music.”

Robert Browning

## Songwriters’ Hall of Fame

Samuel Cohen aka “Sammy” Cahn was born in New York on June 18, 1913.

Early on, he learned to play the violin, and from the time he was fourteen he played in local Bar Mitzvah bands. While still in his teens, he played the violin in pit bands of burlesque houses.

He became friendly with fellow band-member, pianist Saul Chaplin, and they began writing songs together. In 1935 they wrote “Rhythm Is Our Business” for the Jimmy Lunceford Band. Lunceford recorded it, and it became the Lunceford Band’s theme song. In 1936 they had another success with “Until The Real Thing Comes Along”. In 1937, they adapted “Bei Mir Bist Du Schön”, which they mistakenly believed to be a Yiddish folk song—it was actually a modern Yiddish theater song by Sholom Secunda—into English for the then-unknown Andrews Sisters. The Andrews Sisters had a huge hit with the song, and Cahn and Chaplin were on their way.

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## Player Spotlight Dr. Sue Vazakas

Sue was destined to play in a symphony orchestra. She started with piano lessons in second grade, continuing to plink away for patient teachers even after her family moved from Virginia to New Jersey. Her father was a life-long devotee of classical music and opera; her mother was a lover of the flute and the harp. Young Susan surely had a future with one of the great orchestras.

The piano lessons stopped—there was no getting around the fact that young Susan loathed them. When she was in fifth grade, the band instructor came around to ask the children if they wanted to choose a band instrument. Several weeks later, blonde Susan lugged home an instrument case and proudly opened it to show her parents.

oh dear lord it's not a flute or a clarinet, it's not even an instrument that's welcomed by orchestras. It's...it's...a saxophone! An un-feminine, funny-looking alto saxophone!

Sue's father was deeply horrified. Sue's mother was also very unhappy, but knew that her headstrong daughter's instincts could always be trusted. Gradually Dad was talked into giving it a chance (or at least to stop making such a fuss).

Middle school band, first chair in the high school band. Then jazz band, where she was introduced to "In the Mood," "Sophisticated Lady," and other staples of big band repertoire. Wow, this kind of music is really great stuff!

Throughout her college years in New Jersey, Sue played with the Blawenburg Band, "The Oldest Band in New Jersey" (established in 1890). Moving to Massachusetts came next, and during those years while she worked on various graduate degrees, she didn't play sax at all, although she did learn to contradance. (Why? Because a professor she liked also contradANCED. He never did ask her out, but contradancing—basically square-dancing in lines--was great fun.)

Sue and her now-husband John moved to Olney in 1995. It was time to find a community band. The Olney Community Band (OCB) became her

band home, and being part of the OCB family meant everything to her. She eagerly joined the Olney Big Band when it formed in 2002, having switched to tenor sax a couple of years earlier and wanting to experience playing a different kind of music.

The way that someone learns something is by being in a group of people who are smarter or more experienced than you are. From (director) Rip Rice to everyone in the sax section, Sue has learned about the styles of the sax sections in the Basie band, the Miller band, and the other famous swing bands; about types of saxophones and mouthpieces and reeds; and most important, about how to play better, with more confidence and more precision. And because of this dear and wonderful group, she has, above all, learned to play with more joy.



Sue and her un-feminine, funny looking tenor saxophone.



A sample group of Sue's mentors.

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In 1942 Cahn began writing with Jules Styne. Among their songs were “I’ve Heard That Song Before” (1942); “I’ll Walk Alone”(1944); “Saturday Night Is The Loneliest Night Of The Week”(1944); “It’s The Same Old Dream” (1947); and “Time After Time” (1947); “It’s Magic” and “Put ‘Em In A Box, Tie ‘Em With A Ribbon” (1948). Other collaborations include “Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow”, “There Goes That Song Again”, “The Things We Did Last Summer”, and “Guess I’ll Hang My Tears Out To Dry”.

Sammy Cahn was friendly with Frank Sinatra from Sinatra’s early days with Tommy Dorsey, and in 1955, Sinatra introduced Cahn to composer Jimmy Van Heusen. Together they wrote “The Tender Trap” and “Love And Marriage” (1955); “All The Way” and “Come Fly With Me” (1957); “Only The Lonely” (1958); “Come Dance With Me”, “The Last Dance” and “When No One Cares” (1959); and 1965’s “September Of My Years”. They were also the producers of Sinatra’s 1959-60 television series.

In 1959 they wrote “High Hopes” for Sinatra’s film A Hole in the Head. The song won Cahn his third Oscar, and later (with a revised lyric) became John F. Kennedy’s campaign song.

In 1960, Sinatra recorded “The Second Time Around”. Cahn won his fourth Oscar, and Van Heusen his third, in 1963 for “Call Me Irresponsible”, from Papa’s Delicate Condition.

They wrote “My Kind Of Town” for Sinatra’s 1964 film Robin and the Seven Hoods. In 1965 Cahn and Van Heusen tried their hands at Broadway with the musical Skyscraper. The show was not a success, but it included “I’ll Only Miss Her When I Think Of Her”.

Cahn’s long association with Frank Sinatra led to Sinatra’s recording 89 of Cahn’s songs, many of them more than once.

He became a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1972. When his friend Johnny Mercer became ill, Mercer asked Cahn to take over as President of the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

In 1974, Cahn did a one-man show on Broadway called Words and Music. He performed it again on tour numerous times in the years that followed.

Courtesy: Songwriters Hall of Fame

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## Olney Big Band’s Mystery Player Corner

Who’s this swinging cat?



(answer on page 6)

## Artie Shaw Jazz Legend

Born Arthur Jacob Arshawsky May 23, 1910, in New York City, Shaw grew up in New Haven, Connecticut. Shaw began learning 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.

The band went to Cleveland, where Artie remained for three years, the last two working with Austin Wylie, then Cleveland’s top band leader, for whom Shaw took over all the arranging and rehearsing chores. In 1927 Artie heard several “race” records, the kind then being made solely for distribution in black districts. After listening entranced to Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five playing Savoy Blues, West End Blues, and other now-classic Louis Armstrong records from the late 1920’s, Artie made a pilgrimage to Chicago’s Savoy Ballroom to hear the great trumpet player in person. Back in Cleveland, Artie, now 17, won an essay-writing contest which took him out to Hollywood in 1928, where he ran

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into a couple of musicians he knew from New Haven who were now working in Irving Aaronson's band. A year later, at the age of 19, Artie moved to Hollywood to join the Aaronson band.

Shortly afterwards, the Aaronson band spent the summer of 1930 in Chicago, where Artie "discovered a whole new world" when he heard recordings of some of the then avant-garde symphonic composers' work: Stravinsky, Debussy, Bartok, Ravel, et al. This influence would soon surface in Shaw's own work when he began to use strings, woodwinds, etc. -- notably in a highly unusual album entitled *Modern Music for Clarinet*.

When the Aaronson band came to New York in 1930, Artie decided to stay there, and within the year, at age 21, he became the top lead-alto sax and clarinet player in the New York radio and recording studios. After a couple of years of commercial work, he became disillusioned and moved to an old farmhouse in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

In 1934 he returned to New York and resumed studio work to support himself. He made his first public appearance as a leader in 1936, in a *Swing Concert* (history's first) held at Broadway's Imperial Theatre. This proved to be a major turning point in his career, and would in fact ultimately have a significant impact on the future of American Big Band jazz. Shaw (who was then completely unknown to the general public) did something totally unorthodox to fill one of the three minute interludes in front of the stage curtain while such then established headliners as Tommy Dorsey, the Bob Crosby Band, the Casa Loma Band, etc. were being set up. Instead of the usual jazz group (a rhythm sec-

tion fronted by a soloist), Shaw composed a piece of music for an octet consisting of a legitimate string quartet, a rhythm section (without piano), and himself on clarinet. Fronting this unusual group, he played a piece he had written expressly for the occasion, *Interlude in B-flat*, which the group presented to a totally unprepared and, as it turned out, wildly enthusiastic audience. (This is the first example of what became known as "Third Stream Music.")

Shaw could scarcely have known that within a short time he would make a hit record of a song called *Begin the Beguine*, which he later jokingly referred to as "a nice little tune from one of Cole Porter's very few flop shows."

The breakthrough hit record catapulted him into the ranks of top band leaders. His band became enormously successful, and his playing was eventually recognized as equal to that of Benny Goodman. In response to Goodman's nickname, the "King of Swing," Shaw's fans dubbed him the "King of the Clarinet." Shaw, however, felt the titles were reversed. "Benny Goodman played clarinet. I played music,"

he said. Shaw prized innovation and exploration in music more highly than popular success and formulaic dance music. He fused jazz with classical music by adding strings to his arrangements, experimented with bebop, and formed "chamber jazz" groups.

Superstardom turned out to be a status that Shaw (as a compulsive perfectionist) found totally uncongenial. Within a year he abruptly took off to Mexico for another respite. In March of 1940 he re-emerged with a recording of *Frenesi*, which became another smash hit. For this recording session, he used a large studio band with woodwinds, French horns, and a full string section along with the normal dance band instrumentation -- another first in big band jazz history. Later that year he formed a touring band with a good-sized string section, with which he recorded several more smash hits, among them his by now classic version of *Star Dust*, plus a number of other fine musical recordings such as *Moonglow*, *Dancing in the Dark*, *Concerto for Clarinet*, and many others.



Artie Shaw, The King of the Clarinet

Artical by [www.artieshaw.com](http://www.artieshaw.com)

## Key Personnel

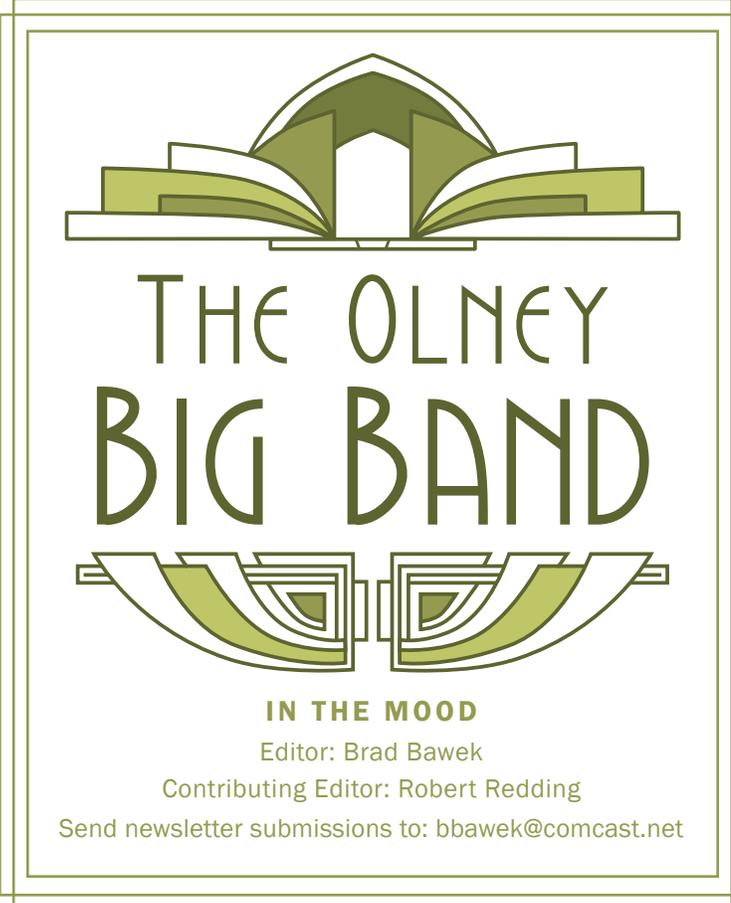
Music Director: Rip G. Rice  
Asst. Music Director: Dennis Johnson  
Business Manager: David B. Schumer

## Officers

Rip G. Rice, PhD President  
Brad Bawek, VP for Sound Equipment  
Robert Redding, VP for Public Relations  
David B. Schumer, Secretary/Treasurer

## Board of Directors

Rip G. Rice, PhD Chairman  
Brad Bawek  
Merle Biggin  
Thomas Harwick (Founder)  
Robert Redding  
David B. Schumer  
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Special Advisor -- Glenn Ochsenreiter



**THE OLNEY  
BIG BAND**

**IN THE MOOD**  
Editor: Brad Bawek  
Contributing Editor: Robert Redding  
Send newsletter submissions to: [bbawek@comcast.net](mailto:bbawek@comcast.net)

## OBB Events Schedule

Thursday, Apr. 26 - Rockville Senior Center 7:00-9:30 p.m. - 25th Anniversary Dance

Saturday, Apr. 28 - Cedarbrook Church, Clarksburg, MD 7:00-10:00 p.m. - Swing Dance

Sunday, May. 13 - The Oak Room at Sandy Spring, MD (times not yet determined) - Mother's Day Brunch\*

Saturday, May 19 - Olney Manor Park 7:30-9:00 p.m. - Olney Days Concert And Dance

Sunday, May 27 - Heartlands Senior Living Village (TBD) - Ellicot City, MD

Sunday, June. 10 - The Oak Room at Sandy Spring, MD (times not yet determined) - Mother's Day Brunch\*

Sunday, June 17 - Brookside Gardens, Silver Spring, MD 6:30-8:00 p.m - Outdoor Concert

Saturday, June 23 - Leisure World, MD 7:30- 10:30 p.m. - Crystal Ballroom Dance\*\*

## REHEARSALS

Mondays  
Apr 9, 23 -- May 7, 21 -- Jun 4, 18  
*All full band rehearsals*

\* The Oak Room at Sandy Spring:  
<http://www.ballroomatsandyspring.com/index.html>

\*\* Closed to Public

## OBB Mystery Player from page 4

That's Dave Schumer (The Shue) blasting away with the Clifton HS "Mustangs" Jazz Band circa 1957 in Clifton, NJ.

## For Band Information Contact

Rip Rice - Director:  
301-774-9133  
[RGRice4ozone@aol.com](mailto:RGRice4ozone@aol.com)

## For Booking Information Contact

Dave Schumer - Manager:  
202-498-8973  
[olneyjazz@hotmail.com](mailto:olneyjazz@hotmail.com)