

JUNE + JULY 2018



Jam KOJH

Jazz Ambassador Magazine



Mutual Musicians Foundation:

History Looking Forward... and Broadcasting

Brandon Draper: Never a Single Drum Set

Jam's Wonder Woman Retires

AMERICAN JAZZ MUSEUM

1600 EAST 18TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, MO 64108

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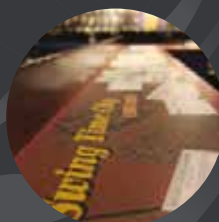
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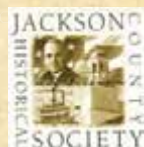


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STEPHEN MATLOCK

Jam Online...and We Don't Mean a PDF

Jam is about to be showcased its own website. At long last, you'll be able to read the magazine not just in print or in an awkward PDF, but with links to each article on its own web page which will automatically adapt to the size of the screen on which you're viewing it. Our articles, photos and ads – all about Kansas City jazz – are going to be searchable all over the world. First up will be articles from our last issue, on 18th and Vine. Then this issue will join the site. All subsequent issues will receive the interactive treatment and, over time, we expect to add back issues as well.

When the site is active in June, you'll find it at jazzambassadorsmagazine.org.

Also in June, on Thursday the 21st, is the Jazz Ambassadors' next Meetup. Each month the Ambassadors officers and crew

get together with our members and anyone else who would like to join us. This time we're at Hush Speakeasy at 1000 Broadway at 5:30 p.m. We start with a quick update meeting followed by jazz, dining and drinks. Music by Eclipse Trio starts at 6:30. We'd love to see you there.

We'd also love to see you at 2018's Supper Club, an evening of fine food, wine and jazz. Our first with Les Dames d'Escoffier was a magnificent success, raising money for our Tommy Ruskin Scholarship Fund. We'll be doing it again on Friday, September 14th. Angela Hagenbach will be the Master of Ceremonies. Lonnie McFadden will be among the performers. Set aside the date now and watch for more details to come.

Which brings us to some bittersweet news. After ten years of selling ads for *Jam*, Connie "Crash" Humiston is retiring. Over much of the last decade, Connie was the name many of you associated most closely with the Ambassadors and *Jam*. We're sad to see her leave, but happy that it will give her more time to spend with grandchildren. "Crash" always did know the right thing to do.

The right thing for you to do, if you haven't yet, is to join the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors. You'll receive each issue of *Jam* in the mail and you'll be supporting not just this magazine, but an organization which for over a third of a century has been advocating for jazz in Kansas City. You can find the membership form at kcjazzambassadors.org. Or we'll be delighted to tell you all about us at our Meetup at Hush Speakeasy on June 21st! 🎷

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Jam

Jazz Ambassador Magazine

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On the Cover:

Jam sessions started at 1823 Highland 88 years ago. Soon, they will be broadcast from there, both on the internet and on the air, over the Mutual Musicians Foundation's radio station, KOJH.



Massive Changes at the Jazz Museum

A scathing report commissioned by the city has prompted the Executive Director and 14 of 22 members of the board of directors of the American Jazz Museum (AJM) to resign, as the city considers how to reorganize the museum under new leadership.

In evaluating the museum's vision, *American Jazz Museum: Organizational Assessment* says, "Despite being open for 20 years, AJM lacks a clearly defined vision and identity. The Museum is alternatively described as a museum, jazz club, or theater; an event space or museum; a 3rd District project or citywide organization; a community center or national organization..."



Report on the American Jazz Museum

The report notes that "AJM does not have complete inventories of its collections, the conditions in which collections are displayed and stored are less than ideal, no qualified staff member is devoted full-time to collections care and documentation, and there are no formal collections policies or procedures to guide collections stewardship."

The report states that the museum ran a \$650,000 deficit on top of losing nearly \$447,000 on its 2017 festival. It says, "AJM's overspending and Jazz Festival losses, combined with changes in leadership at the Board and staff levels, insufficient financial accounting systems, and insufficient financial expertise on the part of the Executive Director, led to a major financial crisis at the Museum."

The report concludes, "AJM needs a complete rebirth, starting with its leadership, but continuing with a revamped financial model, visitor experience, and operational infrastructure."

It lists 26 recommendations for changes. Its highest priority recommendations include:

1. Refresh the staff and Board leadership of the Museum.
2. Form a Planning Committee of City, Board, staff, and community leadership to lead AJM through the planning process.

3. Engage in a highly inclusive strategic planning process to redefine AJM's mission, vision, core values, and organizational goals and priorities.
4. Contract with exhibit designers to develop an overall Visitor Experience Plan that rethinks the entire museum experience.
5. Consider closing the Museum for a predetermined period of time (approximately one year...)

The city has decided to proceed at this time without closing the museum.

The City Council has directed the City Manager to hire an Interim Executive Director for the museum. As *Jam* goes to press, staff member Marissa Baum is serving as Interim Director of Operations to ensure consistent operations support until an Interim Executive Director is named.

Jazz Calendar by Email

In the 1980s, Kansas City jazz fans could call the Jazz Hotline and hear a prerecorded listing, updated weekly, of all of the jazz performances across town. In 2018, email has supplanted phone recordings and Kansas City jazz is keeping pace.

Green Lady Lounge, with the dogged work of *Plastic Sax* blogger Bill Brownlee, is already putting the city's most comprehensive jazz calendar online. Now it can be emailed to you each Tuesday. Go to kansascityjazzcalendar.org and scroll to the bottom of the page. There, enter your email address to start receiving the 21st century version of the Jazz Hotline.



Jazz calendar email

Metheny Foundation Announces Scholarship Winners

Vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Dylan Brendel, a senior at Lee's Summit West High School, has won the Metheny Music Foundation's 2018 Knight Award. Brendel is also a student at Summit Technology Academy, and this fall he plans to attend the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

The foundation also awarded its annual music camp and summer studies scholarships for 2018 to Brett Barger (clarinet, Lee's Summit West High School), Angel Brock (viola, Pleasant Lea Middle School), Cara Cha (viola, Lee's Summit Senior High School), Izzy Julo (cello, Pleasant Lea Middle School), Kailee Loffer (violin, Pleasant Lea Middle School), and Aaliyah Roland (violin, Pleasant Lea Middle School).

The Metheny Music Foundation introduced its first college music scholarship in 2013.

Luqman Hamza

Luqman Hamza died in late April.

Congressman Emanuel Cleaver honored Hamza on his 84th birthday. From the Congressional Record of September 16, 2015:



Luqman Hamza with his wife Raynola in 2007. Photo courtesy of Bill Brownlee and Plastic Sax.

"Mr. Speaker, the 1930s and 1940s produced the names of jazz legends like Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, and Mary Lou Williams, who either began their careers or played in Kansas City's storied 18th and Vine District, which I proudly represent. Among those legends was Luqman Hamza, who honed his musical skill listening and playing alongside these extraordinary musicians.

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“Originally born in St. Louis, Missouri on September 15, 1931, Hamza’s mother passed away when he was only 6 years old. He was blessed to have been raised by foster parents, Isaiah and Elizabeth Cummings, a Christian minister and his wife, in Kansas City, Missouri. Hamza once related how impactful his foster father was, comparing his life to a history book. Cummings’ father had been a slave and his mother a Native American Indian, which helped shape Hamza during his formative years.

“Hamza grew up in Kansas City’s 18th and Vine District, surrounded by music. Just a stone’s throw away lived Charlie Parker and dozens of clubs were located within the district’s six-block area. Hamza began singing for pocket change around his home when he was only a young child. From age 11 until he was 17, Hamza studied voice and piano under the Reverend John S. Williams. Williams, a minister and choir director at the Bethel Church, was also a music teacher at Lincoln High School and is known to have helped educate many of Kansas City’s finest musicians.

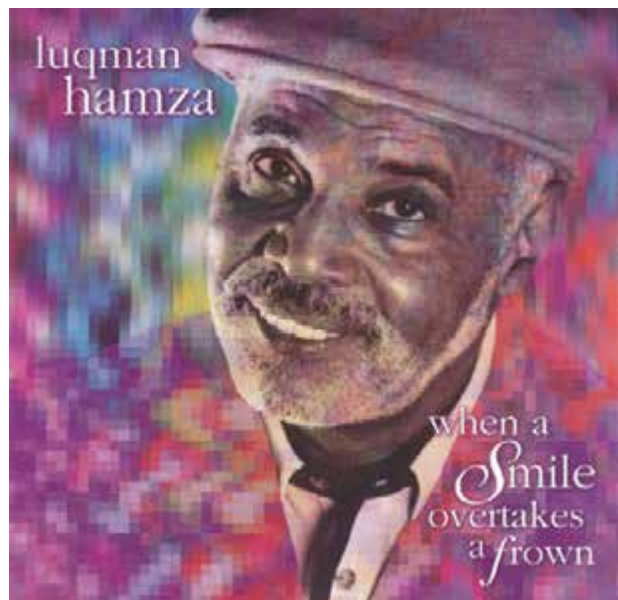
“At the age of 12, Hamza, along with boyhood friends Sonny Kenner, Lucky Wesley and various other artists, formed a group known as the Four Steps and later renamed to the Five Aces. This group would play at several clubs in the 18th and Vine District, including Scott’s Theater and the Chez Paris. The young band won a statewide high school talent contest in 1948,

which allowed them to play on the Bob Hope show at Municipal Auditorium Music Hall. They would also land a live radio broadcast on KIMO every Sunday for several weeks. Hamza co-wrote his first chart-hitting release, “When You Surrender,” with Ted Battaglia when he was only 19 years old.

“Hamza’s experiences included playing with Charlie Parker when he was in town, and later with Miles Davis. By 1954, Hamza would venture out of Kansas City to continue his professional development. He returned to St. Louis, where he found work at the Glass Bar and the Toast of the Town. He then moved on to Chicago, where he thrived while the jazz scene was at its zenith. He lived and ‘gigged’ in Chicago for over a decade, playing at numerous established clubs, such as the Black Orchid and the Playboy Club.

“Although Hamza was raised in a Christian household, he began to explore Islam while in Chicago and became a Muslim in the mid 1960s. He grew up with the name of Larry Cummings, but adopted the name Luqman Hamza during this time. He held that name in great reverence, as it held personal significance and he felt it should be treated with respect and honor. The name Luqman was mentioned in the Quran as the wise man, and the name Hamza was that of the Prophet Mohammad’s uncle.

“In 1971, Hamza returned to Kansas City to raise his own family. His music career would continue to thrive as he became the featured performer at Kansas City’s Playboy Club until it closed a few years later. Hamza continued to play around



Hamza’s 2007 CD, *When a Smile Overtakes a Frown*

Kansas City at various clubs until he ventured to St. Louis in 1992, before returning to Kansas City just five years later.

“In 2000, at the age of 69, Hamza released two nationally acclaimed recordings, *With this Voice* and *When a Smile Overtakes a Frown*, which received strong praise. Hamza was honored with the American Jazz Museum Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008 when they highlighted his work with the Five Aces, amongst other achievements.

“In addition to a successful personal career, Hamza has also committed himself to mentoring and tutoring future musicians at his alma mater, Lincoln High School. He still performs regularly, oftentimes in a quartet that includes his lovely wife and songstress, Raynola. Hamza once commented, ‘I love music, and it doesn't matter to me about being no star. I'm blessed to be at my age and be able to sing, play and make people enjoy, that makes you rich.’”

In a 2001 review of his CD, *With This Voice*, *JazzTimes* wrote, “Hearing this resplendent set of 13 romantic standards, you’ll wonder why 68-year-old Kansas City singer-pianist Luqman Hamza (formerly known as Larry Cummings) has gone largely unheralded in spite of a smooth-tenor vocal style that is better than those of his major inspirations, Nat King Cole, Charles Brown and Billy Eckstine.”

Luqman Hamza was 86 years old.



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A nighttime photograph of the Mutual Musicians Foundation building. The building has a brick section on the left and a stucco section on the right. A window on the stucco wall is illuminated from within, showing a grid pattern. A street light pole is visible in the foreground. The text "Mutual Musicians Foundation: History Looking and" is overlaid in pink. There are also large black musical notes on the right side of the image.

Mutual Musicians Foundation: History Looking and

The Mutual Musicians Foundation building in 2013

Forward... Broadcasting

On Monday, December 2, 1929, a half dozen of Kansas City's best jazz orchestras and 2200 patrons filled Paseo Ball Room at 1414 E. 15th Street – its facade is still there – for a Battle of the Bands. The *Kansas City Call* proclaimed, “The crowd did everything but hang on the ceiling. The lobby was jammed; the dance floor was jammed; the seats along the wall were jammed; and the balcony was groaning from too much population.”

Bennie Moten's Victor Recording Orchestra, Walter Page's Blue Devils, and Andy Kirk's Clouds of Joy were among the bands helping their union, Musicians Protective Union Local No. 627, raise the money to finish converting an apartment building at 1823 Highland Street into their headquarters.

They succeeded. The union dedicated its new home on Sunday, May 4, 1930. Presumably, jam sessions inside the building

By Larry Kopitnik

MUTUAL MUSICIANS FOUNDATION CONTINUED

started that night. 88 years later, they haven't stopped. In fact, they're about to be broadcast all over the world.

Touching Back With Growth

Kansas City has seen jazz clubs and festivals thrive and we've seen them wither. We celebrated when our museum opened and, more recently, we've winced at its struggles. The jazz district flourished, it decayed and, as the last issue of *Jam* described, it may be on the precipice of flourishing again.

But that one-time union headquarters – for the last forty to fifty years, we know it as the Mutual Musicians Foundation – has remained a Kansas City jazz icon. Step inside and you're standing where Count Basie and Lester Young and Mary Lou Williams and Big Joe Turner socialized and jammed. Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie met in there. It's where generations of jazz musicians have learned from the masters who preceded them.

In 1981, the Foundation was named a National Historic Landmark. The government says the recognition is for “nation-

ally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.” That fits. Inside 1823 Highland, you can touch history and it touches back.

It touches back, in part, through those jam sessions. Each Friday and Saturday night – Saturday and Sunday morning, actually – from one to five a.m., on the second floor, a quartet anchors as musicians rotate on and off stage. Some come by after their regular gigs, which might have included sets at the Majestic or Green Lady Lounge, or which might have been backing Stevie Wonder at the Sprint Center (yes, members of Wonder's band joined the jam after his last KC concert).

By three a.m., the building is packed. Mutual Musicians Foundation (MMF) chairman James Hathaway says, “The first two hours they trickle in then at three here they come. If you don't believe me just stand and look at your watch.

“They never, ever disappoint.”

Photo taken at the dedication of the Musicians Association Building – today, the Mutual Musicians Foundation – on May 4, 1930. The two musicians on the right behind the “Bennie Moten's Victor Recording Orchestra” banner are Jimmy Rushing and Count Basie. Photo used by permission of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Libraries, Dr. Kenneth J. LaBudde Department of Special Collections.



Fans know the Foundation jam sessions. Hathaway explains, “It’s word of mouth. Open up on any other day and nobody comes. They all say, ‘My friend told me about about this place.’ Sometimes people come and their friends dragged them here. ‘I know this place you need to come to.’ I’ve seen people come in and say, ‘This ain’t my style.’ They’re mad. But by the end of the night, they’re having a good time. Then they come to me and say, ‘I like it here.’ Everybody here kind of knows each other now. We see a lot of the same people. They’re looking out for each other.”

The crowd, though, typically mixes local fans with visitors. Hathaway notes, “Last Saturday night, I was out there when a man came up and talked with me. He was telling me that he had his son with him. They had driven from Des Moines, Iowa. He said, ‘I came here two weeks ago and I came back. Now we’ve got to get out of here because we have a long drive home. But I’ll be back next week.’”

“He said his son was trying to learn how to get into the flow of jazz on the saxophone and he was getting discouraged. I told him, ‘All of these other cats were young once. It takes time. It’s just about hanging and growing.’”

Mentoring has always been important here. Musicians trading ideas in the Foundation is a key to perpetuating jazz in Kansas City. “You’ve got to teach these people music in



Downstairs during a jam in 2010

general,” says Hathaway. “You teach them right, then they’ll grow. You want these young guys. They play a different kind of music. They’re making music with all kinds of things, with computers and all. So just the fact that they want to come in here and pull out their saxophone and want to learn about Bird [Charlie Parker], that’s important. Those cats will keep this going.”

“They come in here and have their energy. People tell me, ‘You know what I like about this place? I feel that energy.’ That’s all it is. It’s the energy and the spirit in the place.”



MUTUAL MUSICIANS FOUNDATION CONTINUED

MMF secretary James McGee elaborates. “This is really a home for the musicians and the patrons who come in to listen. If you see a musician playing somewhere else in town, they’re passionate about what they’re doing, but they’re playing a job. By the time they get to the Foundation, it’s about learning, experimenting, trying to push the envelope. If people are interested in seeing musicians in their raw element, this is the place.”

Hathaway adds that the Foundation is like “none of the other places around town. [As a musician], you can do what you want to do here. But I need eighty per cent of what you play to be what they call jazz, or coming from that angle. Show me some improvisation. Don’t play the same songs over and over. Come out here and try to grow.”

KOJH On the Internet and On the Air

But the Mutual Musicians Foundation in 2018 is more than late night weekend jams. It is also home to a radio station broadcasting on the air through parts of Kansas City and on the internet everywhere.

In January, 2015, the Foundation was awarded a permit from the Federal Communications Commission to build a low power radio station. Winning that permit over evangelical churches and Spanish language stations, MMF’s application promised, “With a radio license, the Mutual Musicians Foundation would be able to educate the public about Kansas City’s jazz heritage by broadcasting live and recorded jazz music, conducting interviews with local jazz musicians, and playing historical programs that cover jazz history and Kansas City history.”

From the call letters available, the Foundation chose KOJH, representing Kansas City’s Oldest Jazz House.

The station took a bit longer to get off the ground than originally planned, but it started broadcasting over the internet in August, 2017 on KOJHFM.org. Then last December, from a studio inside 1823 Highland and an antenna atop the Arts Asylum building at 1000 E. 9th Street, KOJH started broadcasting at 104.7 FM.

“Our main coverage area encompasses the central business district, the northeast area and east downtown, which covers the 18th and Vine area,” James McGee explains. “It’s a low power

The Mutual Musicians Foundation building in the 1930s. Photo used by permission of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Libraries, Dr. Kenneth J. LaBudde Department of Special Collections.





The official banner for Musicians Local 627

radio station, so it's not meant to go fifty miles. It's meant to go to the community and speak to the community.

"By the time we get to full range we should reach to about to 63rd Street south and west to the river. We're not broadcasting at that yet. We've got some adjustments still to make at our site."

"Right now," says McGee, "the internet station is broadcasting some of our first original content. We have a talk show from our partners at the Arts Asylum. We also have Joe Dimino's Neon Jazz show rebroadcasting." Neon Jazz streams daily at noon. The Arts Asylum program airs Mondays at 2 p.m.

"Then we have just music broadcasting," McGee continues. "Different genres of jazz air at different times. We also throw a little bit of soul in there, and hip-hop that speaks to the jazz sound. It has to be something that ties back into jazz. Eighty per cent is jazz format and the rest is talk and community. We're continuously building the shows for that."

104.7 FM launched with preprogrammed music. But in June, McGee says, "the two platforms will merge. What you hear on the internet is what you'll hear on the radio station. Our original programming, our community programming, as well as the music shows and our live shows will all be synced together.

"There may be special occasions where we broadcast something different on the radio station because it's more localized, or times when we do it on the internet because we want to reach the international market. Different time zones might require different programming."

Original shows are being planned to feature members of the Foundation. "We're already working on those," McGee says. Members of the communities covered by 104.7 FM's broadcast signal can propose programs as well. "At the end of the day, KOJH is a low power FM community radio station. We have a real emphasis on having the community involved with the programming."

But beyond the preprogrammed music and talk shows, KOJH is preparing to share with the world the Mutual Musicians Foundation's heart and soul, the music which has secured its place in jazz lore. McGee assures, "We'll definitely be broadcasting the Friday and Saturday night jam sessions.

"We're just in the process of miking the room properly, making sure we can put out a good signal for what goes on the air, and figuring out a schedule where we're getting the best performances out to the people. That's definitely part of the programming. We should be starting that in June.

"That's one of our big targets on the internet, because we'll be able to broadcast to people in Europe and Asia, in different time zones. It's one o'clock here, but they're six, seven, eight hours ahead there, so it makes sense."

Developing original programming is a gradual process. "The radio station is funded at this point by the members [of the Foundation] and our fundraising that we do on weekends," says McGee. Weekend fundraising means the jams. "We're not receiving any outside funds to be able to supplement the cost of equipment."

Radio equipment in 2018 is not entirely what it used to be. Communicating between the studio inside the Foundation

continued on page 17



MMF secretary James McGee

2001 KANSAS CITY
BLUES & JAZZ FEST



CONNIE HUMISTON: FOR A DECADE, JAM'S

WONDER

WOMAN

For the past third of a century, a plethora of volunteers and a handful of contractors have passed through the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors and *Jam* magazine. But over the last ten of those years, none has been more closely associated with the groups than Connie Humiston – or, as she playfully referred to herself for much of that time, Connie “Crash.”

Connie “Crash” is retiring.

When Chuck Chapman, owner of Chapman Recording and Mastering, retired last year, he commented, “Connie...I want to thank you for your *Jam* service and all you’ve done and do for the jazz community. You are the image of Kansas City jazz and supporting musicians. One was here yesterday and we were talking about all you’ve done, and it not being what is used to be, especially in the 1930s. No one in the past ten years has done what you have.”

Officially, Connie sold the ads that paid *Jam*’s bills. Unofficially, “Crash” was *Jam*’s wonder woman.

Her involvement with music dates to 1982 when she and her husband Denny owned Denny’s Excalibur, a blues club in Hutchinson, Kansas. “We were on the same routing as the Grand Emporium,” she recalls. “I got to know the musicians back then.” Denny died in a car accident in 1987.

Connie remarried and lived several places around the country, but eventually she settled in Kansas City, initially in an apartment two blocks from Kansas City’s blues destination, the Grand Emporium. “The first thing I got when I moved here, after I was divorced,” she says, “was a credit card in my own name and my Blues Society card.

“I met 300 people in three months by volunteering for Blues Society events.”

In February, 1997, she filled an opening with the Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival, staged annually in Penn Valley Park. She was one of two full time festival employees but brought no experience in producing festivals.

“Thank God for tenured volunteers,” she says. During the festival, “people were calling me on the radio asking, ‘What do I do?’ I said, ‘What did you do last year?’”

Wonder women can be quite practical people.

“I did accounting, public relations, media relations. I oversaw the talent committee, the volunteer committee, the beverage committee, the finance committee. We had eight committees. Then I booked 54 acts on four stages.”

BY LARRY KOPITNIK

CONNIE HUMISTON CONTINUED

The International Festival and Events Association, or IFEA, awarded Best Educational Program to the festival for Soul School, a program Connie established.

Legendary jazz saxophonist Illinois Jacquet “was the headliner of the evening,” she remembers. “People could see him at one or two in the afternoon in an intimate environment and



ask questions.”

The festival ceased operations in March, 2002 when, following the 9/11 tragedies the previous year, the summer event had raised just \$15,000 of its \$675,000 budget.

In 2008, the Jazz Ambassadors called. *Jam*'s ad salesperson, Ed Fenner, had died unexpectedly.

“I got repeated calls from Shar Valleau and Jim Ramel to sell ads for *Jam*,” Connie explains. “I said, ‘No, I have no sales experience.’ Jim said, ‘I’ve hired 500 sales people in my life. You can do ad sales.’”

Jim was right. She took over advertising with the August/September, 2008 issue. But it wasn't an easy start.

Support Live Jazz in KC

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A Sustaining Partner

“There were no electronic records,” she says. “Ed didn’t throw anything away. There were eight boxes to go through. I didn’t know who was accounts receivables. I didn’t know who was the decision maker. I didn’t know the acronyms, like KCJO. I cried. I was building it from scratch.”

For the record, KCJO is the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra. Connie knows that now.

“*Jam* is internationally recognized,” she says. “From the Netherlands to Tokyo they read it, and from high school students to retired people.”

As Ad Manager, “I was doing the billing. I was ad copywriter. I’d look at an advertiser’s web site and make bullet points and send suggested ad points. We’d make proofs for advertisers.” She also organized events for the Jazz Ambassadors.

Connie looks back fondly on her years with the jazz festival and with *Jam*. The best part, she says, was “getting to know the people, like Alaadeen, Jay McShann, Sonny Kenner, Luqman Hamza, Myra Taylor.”

Especially Myra Taylor.

In 1999, friend Dawayne Gilley convinced Connie and two of her friends to drive Taylor to the second annual Blues Masters at the Crossroads Concert in Salina, Kansas. In her obituary of and tribute to Taylor in *Jam* in 2012, Connie wrote:

“We didn’t even get out of town before someone was hungry. With Myra riding shotgun, we pulled through a fast food drive-through. The youth must have thought us a sight, so Myra asked, ‘What are you looking at? These are my daughters. They all have different daddies, but I can’t remember who their daddies are.’

“So Myra became ‘Mama’ in our never-ending quest to find our daddies that took us on innumerable adventures and annual road trips to Salina – Mama, in her 80s and 90s, being the wildest one.”

Connie recalls watching *The Last of the Blue Devils* at her house with Taylor “and she’d point out, ‘so-and-so, he was a great musician. He was also a gambler and a woman chaser.’”

Now wonder woman is ready to retire. “*Jam* and the Jazz Ambassadors are in capable hands,” Connie says. “I have a granddaughter on the way and a four-and-a-half year old grandson. I just downsized my home. I want to focus on my grandkids. It’s time for me to do what’s really important.”

But Connie “Crash” Humiston will not forget the music. “This a blues and jazz town. There’s nothing like this city. I’ve lived in Dallas, Atlanta, Tuscon. Nothing is like Kansas City. Blue Mondays, the Mutual Musicians Foundation jams, they’re unique to Kansas City.

“I got to know all these musicians, their struggles, their heartaches, their triumphs. And the listeners, too. It’s not just about the musicians. It’s about the community.

“There’s been a lot of changes. But the music is always there. We have something that no other city has. We’re where the blues met jazz.”

and its tower at 9th and Holmes is streamlined. “Before the station signal was sent through microwaves, satellite to satellite,” McGee explains. “Now it’s a digital signal. It’s basically an internet connection that sends signals back and forth from the station to the tower.

“The digital age has ushered in less of a need for the bulkier items that come with traditional older radio stations. Some equipment is still fundamental, like the mixing console and microphones, but everything today is pretty much run off of a central computer and software.”

At 1823 Highland, 88 years of tradition is meeting the digital age.

Integrating With the Community

The Mutual Musicians Foundation, outside of the radio station, is closed except for the weekend’s late night jams. But, says McGee, “this summer we’re starting to implement more programs throughout the week. We’re trying to find ways to incor-



MMF chairman James Hathaway

porate what the younger guys do with jazz. A lot of these guys are into production and composing, so we’re setting up showcases and platforms for those producers and those composers to come in.

“We’ve also had showcases with record labels. We invite people to come out and hear the artists play. We may have an A and R person who sits in and listens to a particular musician. We recently partnered with the American Jazz Museum for the International Jazz Day celebration. We also had Friends of Alvin Ailey involved.

“We’re positioning ourselves to find more partners, to co-produce events together.”

Foundation chairman James Hathaway leans forward in his chair. “People try to disclaim this area, like it’s not still relevant,” he says. “They’re still talking about 1930, 1940, what those guys did. What they did is great. It’s honorable.

“We’re trying to keep the tradition going, but we’ve got to grow. The only way we can do it is to grow these musicians.”

In this new book from University of North Texas Press, Carolyn Glenn Brewer chronicles the controversial and inspiring history of the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, where founders Carol Comer and Dianne Gregg fought for equality not with speeches but with swing, without protest signs but with bebop.

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BRANDON DRAPER

NEVER A SINGLE



PHOTO BY JASON DAILEY

DRUM SET

BY JOE DIMINO

One Sunday of each month, the Plaza jazz club Jardines was packed. Alaturka filled it with an amazing blend of jazz and Turkish music. When the ensemble's percussionist, playing the darbuka, moved from Kansas City, a unique void was left in the group. After all, there's not a lot of darbuka players in town.

Brandon Draper filled the seat. Draper brought drums, sure, and traditional percussion instruments. But each month, he also surrounded himself with quite untraditional percussion instruments. Alaturka evolved as Draper met the group's unique Turkish jazz voice with his own imprint.

"When I set up a drum set, I'm building something new every single time," Draper says. "I was fascinated with children's books with pulley systems. So, as I have learned all of these new worlds and instruments, I have blended techniques.

"I'm not good at playing the exact same thing over and over night after night. That's partly why I'm constantly changing and evolving into different things."

Draper grew up building drum sets. His father liked to build things. His father also was a musician who turned down the Rolling Stones.

"In 1976, my dad got a call from Keith Richards to come out to Massachusetts and play with the Rolling Stones in the studio," Draper recalls. "My dad plays the Hammond B3 and is ridiculously good. My sister had just been born and after he got the call he freaked out and realized that if he left for the Stones, he was going to lose his wife and not be a part of his daughter's life. So he said no."

Draper grew up in the small town of Lindsborg, Kansas hearing this story. From an early age, he learned the balance between chasing your dreams and taking care of your family.

THUMPER TO PERCUSSION

Draper's father was a prolific blues musician who regularly filled the house with musicians. "There was a studio in the basement," Draper says, "and that's where the bands would practice and record."

At an early age, Draper earned the nickname Thumper. "As a child, it was a comforting for me to lay on my stomach

and thump my leg to go to sleep," he recalls. That might just be where his interest in percussion began.

Quickly, he graduated from leg thumping to hitting pots and pans around the house. Then, he says, "at age five, I began drum lessons. I took lessons all through school and at 11, I won a State of Kansas drum set completion in the 18 and younger category."

By the age of 14, Draper was on the road to performing with his father.

"My mom didn't think it made sense for me to go out on the road with the guys until I had a driver's license," he remembers. "So at age 14, I had a permit. The funny thing is that I never drove the tour van."

In 1995, Draper sat in a hotel room in McCook, Nebraska while on tour with his father, watching TV and eating takeout. "I said to my dad, this is awesome. This is the life. I'm on the road and I'm getting paid and we are just watching basketball," Draper recalls. "So my dad shut the TV off and said, 'No, Brandon, this isn't it. You don't want to be just hopping from hotel to hotel. You need to go to college and you need to keep studying.'"

Teenage dreams met the real world.

Draper attended Behtany College in Lindsborg then graduate school at the University of New Mexico in Santa Fe, earning a degree in classical percussion. He subbed in the Santa Fe Symphony and started playing drums with veteran pianist Kevin Hays. "He was living in Santa Fe at the time and I really got my butt kicked and refined playing with him," Draper says.

The blues and jazz influences were always there. "Through my dad I listened to a lot of Jimmy Smith and blues guitar music from the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughn, Albert King and Buddy Guy," he says. "I had a cassette as a kid with Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich doing one of their historic drum battles. I wore the crap out of listening to that non-stop."

Draper consistently looks for new ways to approach the drums. While in graduate school, he hit a slump with his jazz drum set. Most musicians go through this at some point, he says. "So I took my drum set and set it up backwards, left handed. I played on it like that for a while to challenge myself to come



Brandon Draper at Jazz Winterlude, 2012

up with new ideas and play different ways. That resulted in new set ups.

“I don’t have one drum set I throw into the car seven nights a week. The influence for creating new set ups and instruments all came from seeing my dad build and construct things. Even continuing to this day, he is still building.”

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Draper’s musical interests break the boundaries of jazz. “I toured with an L.A. band called Particle. That was a band that played live electronic dance music,” he explains. “I got way into that. It was glitchy and complicated electronica music. It is all percussion, rhythm and sound.”

From there, Draper performed with the band Quixotic and with Alaturka.

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“It’s like playing a part. I was heavily involved theater in high school and college,” he says. “That idea of whatever the gig is, that’s the role I’m playing now.

“I’m a little eccentric. I’m very adventurous. I won’t stay in a box. I love being on the edge with jazz. I love being out there.”

Today, Draper’s career revolves not just around performing, but also teaching. He started at a charter school in Santa Fe. In 2006, he moved to Kansas City and joined the staff at Shawnee Mission West High school, where he directed the drum line and percussion activities. While there, he met Bobby Watson and soon he was on the staff of the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Conservatory of Music and Dance, teaching drums.

“The first student I had was one of the most brilliant young musicians alive and his name is Ryan Lee,” Draper says. “Those lessons were scary because that kid was so talented that I didn’t know what to teach him. He was so good.”

Draper pushes his students to find their own musical voice and not to sound like him. “I have a lot of energy,” he explains. “I approach music with a lot of positive energy. I want to inspire. That’s the main thing, that a student is inspired to find what makes him click.”

In 2011, Draper left UMKC for the University of Kansas, where he teaches today.



Brandon at Take Five, 2015

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Brandon Draper is excited by what he sees in Kansas City jazz.

“When I moved here in 2006, there were a lot of young people doing adventurous new things. It has ballooned so much,” he says. “There are so many incredible musicians that 20 years ago you would not have had, that crosscut of modern and traditional.

“It’s always changing. It’s surprising. It’s untouchable. It gets to the edge of every value. You can be waiting for the next thing and you don’t know what it’s going to be as a listener and as a player. It’s incredibly advanced language and when you play with the best, the possibilities are limitless.”



PHOTO BY JASON DAILEY

JUST STARTING

Even at age 40, “I feel like I’m just getting started,” Draper says. He has a new band named #4 Drum with four drummers playing short sets. He’s preparing to release the debut album of the Draper Family Band. In the upcoming year, he plans 450 shows in the venture Drum Safari with his wife Teryn, a former grade school teacher, teaching kids and traveling the country. Then, he’s headed to Milan, Paris and Montreux with the KU Jazz Ensemble to perform a Flamingo Jazz Suite.

“I’m not good at playing the exact same thing over and over night after night,” he says. “That’s partly why I’m constantly changing and evolving into different things. Playing in a pit orchestra for six months is not for me.”

During his years of travel, Draper’s music grew, from Kevin Hays advising him not to emulate other drummers, to the complexity of Steve Coleman’s compositions. But even anchored now with a university, he finds himself working on more projects and staying on top of the music industry. “I get to contact the cats that I have played with over my entire career,” he says. “Some of them will come in and others Skype in and talk to the kids. So, though I’m not out on the road doing all the crazy stuff, I get to stay connected with all these guys. Now that I’m connected with them, I’m actually playing more.”

When not raveling, lessons from his childhood, on the importance of family, return. When ended countless nights the road in 2015, he would play guitar for his daughters each night.

“That was my gig. I played a 30 minute gig in my daughter’s room,” Draper says. “That was the most amazing thing. I don’t need to play that for anyone else. That is my audience.”

Draper reflects. “I want to continue doing what I’m doing. My wife calls me a ‘hypomaniac’ and a friend of mine recently said that I was like a chameleon. I grew up skateboarding and I’m adventurous. I’m the one who is going to jump. If we are on a cliff and a body of water is below, I’m going to jump. Let’s go.”

“There are no boundaries. In my musical path and personal life, there are simply no boundaries.”

NEXT JAM

The University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance is home to one of the nation’s premiere jazz education programs, headed by Bobby Watson with Dan Thomas. In the next *Jam*, Dan takes us through the program which continually attracts some of the country’s best jazz talent to Kansas City.

CLAIRE MCDONALD

Volunteering in the Name of Jazz

We all have a role to play in preserving the legacy of jazz. At the American Jazz Museum (AJM), we particularly rely on our volunteers to help us advance our mission. Two of the museum's most devoted volunteers are Neil and Mary Powers. Neil and Mary drive all the way from Leawood, Kansas to 18th and Vine every Saturday morning to volunteer.

The couple is known for their dedication, and we wanted to learn more about what brought them to AJM in the first place and what makes them so passionate about their commitment to volunteering and jazz.

Neil and Mary moved to the Kansas City area from Florida in 2005 to be closer to family. They knew that they wanted to spend the rest of their retirement giving back to the community. "This is part of our schtick," Neil told me, as I spoke with them outside the entrance to the permanent exhibition on a Saturday morning. "We volunteer six days a week. We go to thrift stores, church, reading clinic, food kitchens, and Saturdays we're here." When I asked what drew them to the jazz museum initially, Mary explained, "We were active in the jazz clubs in St. Louis, where we lived and raised our children, and we were very active in the jazz club down in Florida. We've always had a feel for it. Every time we get to a new town, it's like a magnet draws us to it." Neil smiled and offered a simple answer, "I'm a jazz nut."

In the thirteen years that the Powers have been volunteering at the museum, they've rotated through various jobs. They've served as ushers in the Gem Theater, performed clerical work in the administrative office, and archived in the museum's collections. Neil described the archives and preservation work to me, including the museum's extensive record collection, adding, "I think Mary and I touched every single one of those records." Right now, they are the first faces visitors see as they go into the museum's permanent exhibition, ready to pass out a map and explain the layout of the space.

They have many special memories of the American Jazz Museum, but one in particular stands out to Neil. "We came one night to the Blue Room and I met Thelonious Monk's



Neil and Mary Powers

son. To meet his son was something else. I'm a Thelonious guy," he laughed, pointing to his Thelonious Monk t-shirt. It was then that I noticed his baseball cap read "Meet Me at the Blue Room."

Neil mentioned that he shares his love of Thelonious Monk with his son, and he's glad he's been able to pass on his passion for jazz. This led Mary to observe that many people in my

generation, millennials, don't seem to have a strong interest in jazz. While I agreed to some extent, I suggested that the history of jazz is similar to the development of my generation's popular music: rap/hip-hop. These genres, separated by decades in American music history, were both rooted in the African American community before they took the mainstream music scene by storm. At this, Neil mused, "Rap music, as I understand it, is written by those who are speaking their piece and saying 'this is wrong.' If you listen to John Coltrane playing *Alabama* right after Selma, he's spilling his guts and telling it like it is. And Charlie Parker, he's not just twittling around. He has all of these things that he's trying to say, and the only way he can express himself is through his horn."

Neil's passion for jazz is immediately evident when he talks about it. Mary explained how she's come to appreciate the genre through him: "I think jazz is important to me because Neil likes it so much. We've been married 67 years, so we've known each other quite a long time, and you rub off on each other." This is clear to me, as only a strong commitment to the legacy of jazz would lead them to dedicate so much of their time to the museum. "I have a little expression about the jazz museum," Neil offered, as our conversation came to an end. "Jazz didn't start here, but in the history of Kansas City there is a chapter you could call jazz and in the history of jazz there's a chapter you could call Kansas City. There's an overlapping there. What happened here in the 1920s and 1930s is an important part of history."

As the museum works to preserve that history, we're proud to have Neil and Mary help us tell the story. ||

Todd Strait There'll Be Some Changes Made

Personnel: Todd Strait, drums and vocals (track 9); Bill Mays, piano; Bob Bowman, bass; Danny Embrey, guitar; Laura Caviani, piano (track 11); Kai Strait (track 10) and Naomi Strait (track 11), vocals.

Tracks: There'll Be Some Changes Made, Für Elise, Kids Are Pretty People, It's Just Talk, In Her Family, Tip Toe, Infant Eyes, Lullaby For Omi, Old Folks, Once Upon a Dream, What a Wonderful World

Recording Engineer, Justin Wilson. Mixing Engineer, Eldar Djangirov. Mastered at Sound 81 Productions

This is actually Todd Strait's first recording as a leader. So it should be no surprise to *Jam* readers that it is a very personal statement from Todd and his family (musical family as well as *family* family) who join him on the record, and is a special event for his many fans. Each track is a personal dedication from Todd.



The musical family includes guitarist Danny Embrey and bassist Bob Bowman, who we have heard playing with Todd for several decades. The surprise member is ace pianist and arranger Bill Mays, who Todd has known since he was in New York City in the 1980s. Before Bill moved to NYC, his Los Angeles-based trio included Danny, another connection.

Mays' contribution to the record are massive. He is the arranger, and as such helps bring Todd's musical dedications to life. He is also, of course, a piano master, and is featured extensively, including a fabulous unaccompanied reading of Pat Metheny's "In Her Family" and perfect accompaniment to Todd's heartfelt singing of "Old Folks." (Yes, Todd has a pleasant deep voice, and tells a great story here.)

Several tracks are strictly the Mays/Bowman/Strait trio. "Für Elise" is Beethoven translated to piano trio and features that Bowman counterpoint that we love and one of his beautiful solos, too. "Kids Are Pretty People" is one of Thad Jones' great lines, here thoroughly deconstructed and full of tempo changes and pushes and pulls after opening as an easy walk. Thad also wrote "Tip Toe." When the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra plays it there is a long piano intro, so it seems just right for this great

trio. Bob has another super solo here, along with some call and response with Todd's brushwork. "Infant Eyes" is one of the great ballads, with a beautiful melody to embellish, which Bill and Bob nail. Bill somehow fits in a quote from "Going to Chicago" in his solo. Todd is super throughout, featuring his excellent cymbal playing.

Danny is added on three tracks. The title track opens the disc with a swagger, and there are indeed meter and tempo changes. The solo sections open in three, then move to a blistering four before returning to the swaggering shuffle that opened the tune. Todd's solo is especially strong. Danny swings like mad on Metheny's "It's Just Talk," over strong Mays comping. "Lullaby for Omi," composed by Todd for his daughter, features Danny on the easy melody and he also solos in the perked-up solo section. It is a pretty melody, too, especially as they close.

The final two selections feature the vocals of two of Todd's children. He recorded his son Kai when he was five singing "Once Upon a Dream" unaccompanied, and Mays and the trio build the track around that voice. It is exquisite. "What a Wonderful World" is sung by Omi when she was seven, over an accompaniment Todd, Bob and pianist Laura Caviani recorded at one of Laura's sessions. It is fabulous, as she really creates some emotions from this great song.

This one is highly recommended!

—Roger Atkinson

The Charles Williams Trio Flavors of Jazz

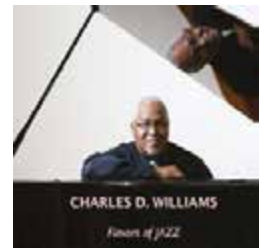
Personnel: Charles D. Williams, piano; DeAndre Manning, bass; Mike Warren, drums

Tracks: I Can't Help It, Machee', Wonderful World, In My Solitude, Chelsea Bridge, Speak Low, Billie Jean, Emily, Yesterday, Everything Must Change, Miss Celies Blues

Recorded, mixed and mastered at Sound 81 Productions, Kansas City, Missouri, by engineers Justin Wilson and Davy Langerak.

I have always found the music of Charles Williams to be easily approachable, the kind of jazz that comes easy to the ears, ultimately inviting and relaxing. *Flavors of Jazz* confirms this view.

The album title implies multiple "flavors" and delivers on the promise. Williams presents a nice variety of tracks that reflects his musical loves. The



trio swings on “Speak Low,” finds a hypnotic “Poinciana”-like groove on “I Can’t Help It,” shuffles along on “Billie Jean,” is tender on “Emily” and the Williams original “Machee” (dedicated to his daughter, and the only Williams composition on the disc). He brings his own style to the Ellington/Strayhorn tracks, evoking Erroll Garner on “In My Solitude” and turning “Chelsea Bridge” into a soul-jazz tune on electric piano. He also has a dramatic side, as heard on “Everything Must Change.”

The tunes from the Michael Jackson songbook are especially strong; Charles is adept and finding more contemporary material and adapting it to the jazz setting. Williams swings the heck out of “Billie Jean,” his two-fisted power riding over the Mike Warren shuffle (and there aren’t many shuffles quite like a Mike Warren shuffle) is exciting. It is the Warren rhythm that sets the stage for “I Can’t Help It,” too. Warren finds the right rhythms that just make the trio sound great. His playing on “Yesterday,” for example, has a subtle backbeat that is always there but never intrusive. He continues the same support for bassist DeAndre Manning’s fine solo (there are many on the CD). Mike and DeAndre work together like hand and glove throughout the record.

My favorite track might just be the closer “Miss Celies Blues” from *The Color Purple*. Williams plays this unaccompanied in a stride style. It is a great little melody, and Charles finds just the right tempo to let it ease out. It is a great tune, and he lets the tune be the star, the melody never too far from sight. It is the final flavor, the perfect dessert, after this enjoyable journey through what Charles Williams does best, mixing durable jazz classics and some of the best contemporary popular material played in his own style. It is all approachable and relaxing, occasionally swinging and exciting, and ultimately satisfying.

—Roger Atkinson

Ottawa University Jazz Singers Bravo!

Tracks: Tenor Madness, The Meaning of the Blues, Look For the Silver Lining, Angel Eyes, In My Life, Bye Bye Blackbird, Little Sunflower, A Time For Love, Insensatez (How Insensitive), Just Friends, Air (Bach), ‘S Wonderful

Recorded 2014-17 by Lynn Allred, LA Audio (even numbered tracks) and Louie Pagán, Positive Productions (odd numbered tracks)

Jazz pianist and composer/arranger Michael Pagán has taught at Ottawa University for seven years now; for five of them he has directed the Bravo! Jazz Singers. In February, they released this album. He has done a stellar job preparing his vocal jazz ensembles for an excellent



recording, appropriately titled *Bravo!* With twelve tracks (ten of which are Pagán arrangements) that clock in under an hour, the album features students, alumni, faculty, and guest artists

delivering both vocal and instrumental solos. With selections culled from various sessions documented between fall, 2014 and spring, 2017, this compilation disc represents what Pagán hopes to be the first of many to come, in an attempt to spotlight jazz music at Ottawa University.

Alumnus pianist Brad Smoot opens the set with a brief solo on Sonny Rollins’ “Tenor Madness,” a tune learned entirely by ear with no sheet music for the ensemble, and features tenor vocalist Boyd Wilson’s scat singing and Nick Penichet on drums. The tune ends in beautiful stacked harmony with great intonation.

Janelle Bailey leads a vocal quartet for a pair of tunes—the beautiful ballad, “The Meaning of the Blues” and a bossa

nova-flavored rendition of “Angel Eyes.” Pagàn takes a short, sweet piano solo, while a mellow-toned ‘bone solo is provided by alumnus Alex Paul.

Jerome Kern’s “Look For the Silver Lining” opens with a clever piano quote by Pagàn, borrowed from “Lullaby of Birdland.” The Beatles standard “In My Life,” arranged by Steve Zegree, is delivered a capella and performed as an octet, and “Bye Bye Blackbird” has a tasty solo offered by guitarist Forest Fowler, a former student from 2015.

One of the most beautiful arrangements of Pagàn is his rendition of Al Jarreau’s lyrics to Freddie Hubbard’s “Little Sunflower.” This one focuses on adjunct faculty member Aaron Lindscheid’s flugelhorn talents, with alumnus Joel Steelman singing bass.

“A Time For Love” is an a capella arrangement for ten vocalists with tight, dense harmonies. Jobim’s classic bossa nova “How Insensitive” highlights adjunct faculty members and soprano singer Jacquelyn Houts Wilson (singing first in Portuguese, then in English) followed by OU adjunct faculty guitarist Jeff Shirley, who takes a succinct solo. A string quintet adds extra color to this number, making it the largest ensemble piece of the project with seventeen performers.

“Just Friends” has a clever opening line – a scat quote from the tune “Four,” followed by Nick Rowland on sax. This tune is harmonized and delivered in the same vocal style as Juan Garcia Esquivel’s Randy Van Horne Singers – the same ones as Hannah-Barbera T.V. show theme songs like the Flintstones and Jetsons.

J.S Bach’s “Air” is a change of pace (the only classical piece on the disc), a septet accompanied by light brushes on drums and pizzicato bass, reminiscent of something Brian Wilson would have done – extremely tasty, light and, well, airy.

To close the album, Gershwin’s “S’ Wonderful” features excellent playing of OU’s Director of Jazz Studies Todd Wilkinson on alto sax, faculty percussionist Keith Mallory on drums and guest vocalist Laura Chalk accompanied by a quintet for the harmonized scat solo right before Todd’s sax solo.

Pagàn is obviously proud of his students and faculty colleagues, and he should be – the company he keeps here are worthy of his best jazz choral arranging efforts, and they all definitely deliver the goods here. Bravo!

—Wayne Goins

Cubanisms Acento Cubano

Personnel: Michael McClintock, Cuban Tres; Fedra Cooper and Bruno Bessa, vocals; Mark Strozier, flute; John Currey and Robert Beasley, percussion; Forest Stewart, bass

Tracks: El Cuarto De Tula, Tanta Saudade, La Tarde Se Ha Puesto Triste, Boliviana, Inolvidable, Summertime/Blue Skies, Aguanile

Recording engineer, editing and mixing by Nathaniel Espy.
Mastered at Weights and Measures Soundlab by Duane Trower

One would make a mistake by assuming that Kansas City jazz is only about the music that emerged from Kansas City in those wild 1930s that changed the musical world. Recent decades show that regional jazz musicians have had their ears readily open to a broad spectrum of sounds from south of the border, from Brasil and Argentina to Mexico and, with *Cubanisms*, Cuba, all a part of our musical diversity.



The fusion of jazz and Cuban music is one of the oldest of jazz fusions, most famously one of Dizzy Gillespie’s many lasting contributions. Many of us enjoyed hearing and watching him perform this music. When he was not playing his trumpet, he moved to percussion, and often danced as if he could not help but dance. *Acento Cubano* is like that; even non-dancers may want to get up and at least wiggle a bit. The rhythms are that contagious.

Michael McClintock visited Cuba in 2013 and the Cuban Tres (a guitar with three pairs of strings that are tuned in octaves that are important in Cuban music) came home with him. It does have a unique sound, and that sound permeates the music. McClintock utilizes it as both a solo and rhythm instrument, as if it were an acoustic guitar. He has a particularly persuasive solo on the opener “El Cuarto De Tula”, which along with “Boliviana” are songs associated with the Buena Vista Social Club, the band that reminded the world of the rich Cuban popular music tradition a couple of decades ago. The unique tuning of the Tres is apparent on “Tanta Saudade.”

McClintock has plenty of help with the rhythm from bassist Forest Stewart and the percussionists. They give the music momentum and rhythmic density. Vocalists Fedra Cooper and Bruno Bessa have strong expressive voices throughout.

While the authentic music is the obvious star, Mark Strozier’s excellent flights on flute are my favorite part of this excellent record. Strozier soars on his solos and provides super counterpoint behind the vocalists. He and McClintock weave magic when they are playing simultaneously. He plays clean and growls when the occasion calls for it (but does not resort to this technique so often that it becomes a cliché) and sounds great throughout the registers. I love his playing in this setting. It fits perfectly.

I frankly had no idea what to expect from this record, and after several listens I am still delighted. There is a rich musical tradition in Cuba, and *Cubanisms* will hopefully spread the word.

—Roger Atkinson

LOCAL LIVE JAZZ & BLUES

18TH & VINE

- J Bayou on the Vine**
1601 E. 18th Street 816-599-7812
Fri. - Sat. — Live music 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
- J The Blue Room**
18th & Vine 816-474-2929
Mon. — Blue Monday Jam
Thurs. - Sat. — Live Jazz
- J Kansas City Blues & Jazz Juke House**
1700 E. 18th Street 816-472-0013
Thurs. - Open Jam session 7:30-11:30 p.m.
Fri. - Live Band 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Sat. - Live Band 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- J Mutual Musicians Foundation**
1823 Highland 816-471-5212
Fri. - Sat. — Late Night Jazz 1:00 a.m.

DOWNTOWN

- J Black Dolphin**
1813 Grand 816-215-2954
Fri. - Sat. — Live Jazz 7:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- J The Brick**
1727 McGee 816-421-1634
Live Jazz & Eclectic
- J The Chesterfield**
14th & Main 816-474-4545
Wed. — West Coast Swing
Fri. — Swing
Sat. — Salsa
- J Corvino's Supper Club**
1830 Walnut 816-832-4564
Tues. - Fri. — Jazz Soloist 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. — Jazz, Latin 9:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
- J Green Lady Lounge**
1809 Grand 816-215-2954
7 days a week — Live Jazz
- J Hush Broadway**
1000 Broadway, Suite (913) 203-9884
Thurs. — Live music 7:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.
Fri. — Live music 9:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.
Sat.-Sun. — Live music 8:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.
- JB The Kill Devil Club**
14th & Main 816-588-1132
Fri. - Sat. 8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- J Majestic Restaurant**
931 Broadway 816-221-1888
7 days a week — Live Jazz
- JB The Phoenix**
302 W. 8th Street 816-221-jazz
Tues.-Thurs. — Live music 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. — Live Music 4:30 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Sat. - Sun. — Live Music 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- B Prohibition Hall**
1118 McGee 816-446-7832
Thurs. — Blues Jam 7:00 p.m.
- J Reserve Restaurant & Lounge**
Ambassador Hotel
1111 Grand Blvd 816-298-7700
Sat. — Live jazz 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.
- J The Ship**
1217 Union Avenue 816-471-7447
Thurs. — Live Jazz 9:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- J Tank Room**
1813 Grand Blvd 816-214-6403
Mon. — Live Music 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.
Sat. — Live Music 8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
- J Yj's Snack Bar**
128 W. 18th Street 816-472-5533
Wed., Thurs., and Sun. — Live Jazz

MIDTOWN/WESTPORT

- J Californos**
4124 Pennsylvania 816-531-1097
Live Jazz
- JB Jazz - A Louisiana Kitchen**
39th & State Line 816-531-5556
Mon. - Sat. — Live Music, 7:00 p.m.
- B The Levee**
16 W. 43rd St. 816-561-5565
Wed. - Blues Jam 8:00 p.m.
Thurs. - Sat. — Live Music
- JB Westport Coffeehouse Theater**
4010 Pennsylvania 816-756-3222
Wed. - Thurs. — Live Music
- B Westport Saloon**
4112 Pennsylvania 816-960-4560
Mon., Thurs. — Live Blues 9:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Tues. — Blues Jam 10:00 p.m.

PLAZA

- J American Slang Modern Brasserie @ InterContinental Hotel**
401 Ward Parkway 816-303-2945
Sundays: Jazz Brunch w/Jessica Page Duo 10am-2pm
Tues. - Thurs. Live Music 7-11pm
Fri. - Sat. - Live Music 8:00 - Midnight
- J Café Trio**
4558 Main Street 816-756-3227
Tues. - Wed. — Live Jazz 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Thurs. - Sat. — Live Jazz, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
- J Eddie V's**
700 W. 47th St. 816-531-2537
7 days a week — Live jazz in the lounge
- J Parkway Social Kitchen on the Plaza**
616 Ward Parkway 816-214-5616
Live music every Thurs. - Sat.
- J Raphael Hotel, Chaz Restaurant**
325 Ward Parkway 816-756-3800
Mon. - Sat. — Live Jazz
Sun. — Jazz Brunch 10:00 - 1:00

NORTH

- J Cascone's North**
3737 North Oak Trfy. 816-454-7977
Sat. — Live Jazz
- B Frank James Saloon**
10919 MO-45, Parkville 816-505-0800
Thurs. — Open Mic 7:00 p.m.
- B The Hideout**
6948 N Oak Trafficway
Gladstone 816-468-0550
Mon. — Blues Jam 7:00 p.m.
- JB Johnny's Back Yard**
1825 Buchanan, NKC 816-985-1157
Fri. - Sat. — Live Music 9:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Sun. — Blues Jam 7:00 p.m.
- J Repeal 18th**
1825 Buchanan St., NKC 816-527-9819
Wed. - Sat. — Live Music
- J Soirée New Orleans Bistro**
14121 Earthworks Drive
Smithville 816-476-6002
Fri. - Sat. — Live jazz 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

EAST

- B B.B.'s Lanside BBQ**
1205 E. 85th Street 816-822-7427
Tues. - Sun. — Live Blues
Sat. 2:00 - 5:30 — Jazz & Blues Jam w/Mama Ray

- B Bodee's BBQ & Burgers**
522 S Main, Grain Valley 816-867-5511
Fri. — Jam 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Sat. — Live Blues 8:00 p.m.
- B Daily Limit**
523 E Red Bridge Rd 816-942-0400
Fri. — Live Blues 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
- B Dirty Harry's**
3100 MO-7, Blue Springs 816-224-2779
Wed. - Fri. — Live Blues
- B Joe's Standard**
1204 NW Hwy 7,
Blue Springs 816-228-4878
Wed. — Jam 7:30 - 11:30 p.m.
- B Knuckleheads**
2715 Rochester Ave. 816-483-1456
Wed. - Sun. — Live Music
Sat. - Sun. — Blues Jam 1:00 p.m.
- B Konrads Kitchen**
302 SW Main,
Lee's Summit 816-525-1871
Fri. — Live Blues 8:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
- J The Piano Room**
8410 Wornall Rd. 816-363-8722
Fri. - Sat. 8:00 - 12:00 — Dave McCubbin

SOUTH

- J Bristol Seafood Grill**
5400 W. 119th St. 913-663-5777
Sun. 5:00 - 8:00 — Live Music
- J Cascone's**
6863 W.91st. Street 913-381-6837
Sat. — Live Jazz 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.
- J Gaslight Grill and Back Room**
5020 W. 137th Street 913-897-3540
Wed. - Sun. — 6:30 Lynn Zimmer Jazz Band
- J La Bodega Tapas & Lounge**
4311 West 119th St. 913-428-8272
Sun. — Live Music 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- B Llyewelyn's**
6995 W 151st. 913-402-0333
Tues. — Blues Jam 7:30 p.m.
Sat. - Sun. — Live Music
- J The Rooftop at The Grille
at Park Place**
5270 W. 116th Pl 913-766-0920
Fri. - Sat — Live jazz 7:30 - 10:30 p.m.
- J Sullivan's Steakhouse**
4501 W. 119th St. 913-345-0800
7 days a week — Live Jazz

WEST

- JB 4220 Rhythm & Blues Lounge**
4220 Leavenworth Rd,
KCK 913-232-9827
Sun. — Jazz/R&B/Blues Jam 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.
- J Jazz at Legends**
1859 Village W Pkwy,
KCK 913-328-0003
Wed. - Sat. — Live Jazz
- B Kobi's Bar and Grill**
113 Oak, Bonner Springs 913-422-5657
Sun. — Live Blues 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
- J Lucky Brewgrille**
5401 Johnson Drive 913-403-8571
Thurs. — Live Jazz 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

J Jazz B Blues

LARRY KOPITNIK

Wanted: A Business Person

Maybe my experience can help.

I took over the Kansas City Jazz Commission in 1987 after its treasurer stole \$6400 in city funds from the commission and two chairmen resigned in quick succession. The City Auditor launched an audit of the commission. A young attorney argued to a City Council committee that it should end Jazz Commission funding. The commission's executive director left for California.

Kansas City's highest profile jazz organization – a city commission, no less – was in turmoil, staining the image of jazz as stories about it splashed across the front pages of *The Kansas City Star* and the *Kansas City Times*.

The mayor needed to appoint a new chairman. He didn't know me. But nobody else was dumb enough to volunteer for the position, someone he did know vouched for me, and I was appointed.

I was fortunate to be surrounded by an executive committee of outstanding people. Together, we lobbied the City Council for funding and slowly organized successful programs which caught the public's attention. The city restored most of the Jazz Commission's funds and we hired a new executive director, which led to donors returning to support the the commission's projects and staff.

The Kansas City Jazz Commission continued under two or three more chairmen after I moved on.

The relevance of this tale is pretty obvious, isn't it?

A report commissioned by Kansas City and prepared by Museum Management Consultants (MMC) harshly but fairly evaluates the American Jazz Museum's financial and operational debacles. "Interviewees described the Museum as in a 'state of chaos,'" the report says, "suffering from 'gross mismanagement,' and needing 'a reset.' Nearly everyone who spoke with MMC pointed to AJM's financial position as the most pressing issue. The financial crisis became visible with the losses from the 2017 Kansas City Jazz and Heritage Festival, but were compounded by ongoing overspending, inadequate accounting systems, a

lack of transparency, insufficient oversight, and a lack of leadership. The resulting dire financial picture led to major cuts to programming and staff, and negative publicity that 'has hurt the Museum's credibility' with potential donors, collaborators, and visitors."

The financial mismanagement stands out. AJM went from \$223,311 on hand at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2016 to minus \$24,764 at the end of fiscal year 2017 to over a million dollars in debt (the city has bailed them out). They started using *QuickBooks for Non-Profits*. "Until AJM's new QuickBooks system allowed AJM to see the true cost of running it," the report says, "the Blue Room was believed to be profitable; instead, FY17 data showed a net loss of almost \$200,000."

The next Executive Director of the American Jazz Museum needs to be a successful business person. No lines on the applicant's resume are more crucial than those pointing to proven acumen in running a million dollar business.


He or she can then surround himself with directors and managers experienced in entertainment, education, marketing, fundraising, and museum collections and operations. Much of that talent is already on the AJM staff.

The day will return when thoughts of festivals can fill the AJM air. But right now, the museum needs a business leader who can recognize and set necessary goals, work with the team to meet those goals, not spend more revenue than AJM takes in, and restore the confidence of Kansas City.

Kansas City's civic community and donors want jazz to succeed. They recognize this is our international renown. But they will not risk their resources on an institution or a culture not ready for their support. Well-meaning Kansas City jazz organizations bring a sorry history of failed programs and financial loss. The American Jazz Museum has added to the stain.

Now it's the museum's turn to rebound. It was on a much smaller scale, to be sure, but my experience says they can.

Kansas City jazz needs the American Jazz Museum. Admit it or not, it's our centerpiece. Of course, no matter what happens at the museum, clubs like Green Lady Lounge will continue to thrive, and jam sessions will still crowd the Mutual Musicians Foundation on weekend nights, and the UMKC Conservatory will continue to draw outstanding young musicians. But the museum and 18th and Vine stand out when visitors come to Kansas City looking for jazz. And visitors come to Kansas City looking for jazz.

One more thing, Kansas City jazz institutions. When are we going to stop shooting ourselves in our own damned foot? 



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Chamber Ensembles – Tuesday, June 26, 7:30 pm

Chamber Orchestra – Wednesday, June 27, 7:30 pm

Blanche Bryden Collegiate String Quartets – Thursday, June 28, 7:30 pm

Chamber Ensembles – Friday, June 29, 7:30 pm

Blanche Bryden High School Concert – Saturday, June 30, 3:00 pm

Chamber Orchestra – Saturday, June 30, 7:30 pm



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