

Jam

Jazz Ambassador

FEBRUARY+MARCH 2017



Remembering
Ron Ubel

Documentary
Love Letter
to KC Jazz

Eddie Moore

JAZZ AND MERGING GENRES

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SAT./MAR. 25

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FRIDAY 24 * JUST A TASTE A JAZZ FUNK & R&B • ECLIPSE STRAIGHT-AHEAD JAZZ
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MARCH 2017

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A Meeting, a Party and a Surprise

The bylaws of the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors – the organization which publishes *Jam* – state that an annual meeting for all members, where officers for the coming year are elected, must be held each December.

We like to make that meeting a party.

On December 13th, Jazz Ambassadors (and potential Jazz Ambassadors) filled the back room of the Uptown Arts Bar at 36th and Broadway. A La Mode, Jessica Poell and Clayton DeLong's wonderful duo performing classic jazz, provided the night's music (be sure to check out the review of their new CD in this issue). We served snacks, awarded door prizes and, most importantly, we had a chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones. We welcome the new members who joined the Jazz Ambassadors that night. It was a delightful evening for jazz lovers.

We also tended to business. I was re-elected president of the Ambassadors for another year. Jen Wismeier was re-elected as treasurer. Kris Siriwangchai, Lynn Abrams and Cheryl Anderson return as directors at large. But the Jazz Ambassadors added a new secretary. Welcome aboard Greg Howard, who brings business experience and a strong desire to jump in and help. His enthusiasm is infectious.

And we had a surprise...or at least a surprised winner. The Ambassadors named Pam Hider-Johnson as Jazz Ambassador of the Year. Anyone who knows Pam knows her decades-long dedication to the preservation and promotion of jazz in this community. She was helping to stage 18th & Vine Jazz and Heritage Festivals in the 1980s, carrying tables and chairs out of the Boone Theater building (which we then knew as the Armory building) at 18th and Highland. For years, she helped keep the

continued on page 21



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Jam

Jazz Ambassador Magazine

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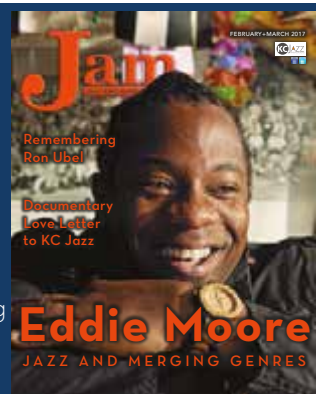
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On the Cover:

Photographer Jason Dailey captured this shot of Eddie Moore in Yj's on 18th Street. Moore is blurring genres and blending them into music that is clearly jazz, introducing the music to a fresh generation of fans.



A Love Letter to Kansas City Music

"I grew up wanting to be a musician," said Javon Diallo French. "It's still my first love."

It shows.

French calls his new documentary, *Kansas City Dreamin': Music in the Shadows*, "a love letter to my city." It celebrates a decade of his capturing this community's music scene, particularly our jazz musicians, in exquisite black-and-white photography.

If you're a regular at The Blue Room, or at Kansas City-area jazz festivals and jazz events, odds are you've seen French. He'll be looking around a corner, or maybe halfway back in the room, or off to the side of a stage, with his Canon camera, snapping photos.

Some of his first were of saxophonist Bobby Watson who, upon seeing the shots, told French, "You really captured something. You're not just taking pictures, you're documenting."

"I always remember that," said French.

Watson was right. A pastiche of French's photographs glides between and through interviews with Watson and other Kansas City musicians and artists, demonstrating the importance of music, especially jazz, to this city's fabric.

While over half of the film focuses on jazz, French also covers Kansas City natives like Janelle Monae (with an amazing array of photos from her concert at the Uptown Theater), Marva Whitney (not just James Brown's favorite, but one of the most sampled art-

From the Film



Clockwise from upper left: Bobby Watson and Hermon Mehari, Janelle Monae, Gerald Dunn, Chalis O'Neal



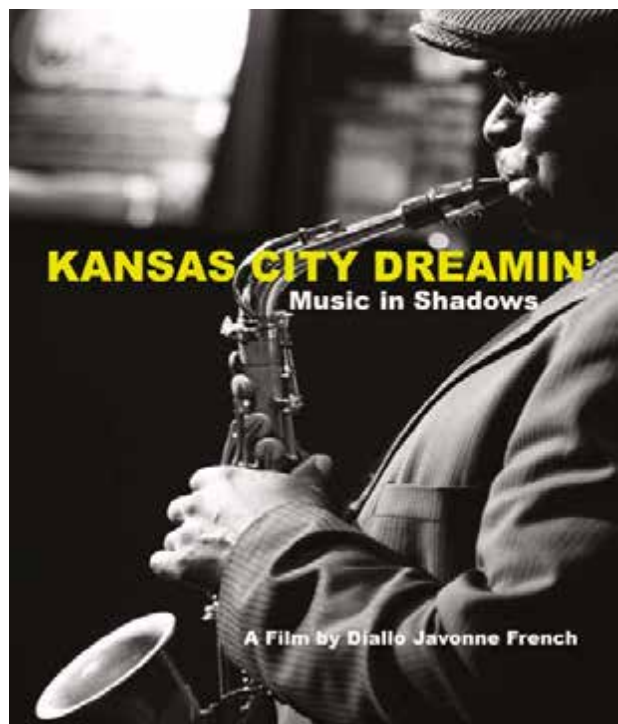
PHOTOS BY DIALLO JAVONNE FRENCH



Diallo Javonne French

ists in hip-hop) and Tech N9ne. They're included, French said, because "I wanted to inspire the next generation, those kids who are in Paseo [High School] now."

Also mixed with a recent interview of Watson are clips of the saxophonist performing at a much younger age. "I thought that people's favorite part of the film might be the hip-hop part or the Janelle part," French explained, "but it's been a mix.



The documentary's poster

Some of the younger people have liked the Bobby Watson part best. My cousin, who is not a jazz fan at all, said "forget Janelle, forget Tech, Bobby Watson is god."

Smart cousin.

French receives no income from the documentary. "I just want people to see it," he said.

You can stream *Kansas City Dreamin': Music in the Shadows* at <https://vimeo.com/192114835>.

continued

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Donivan Bailey

If you ever enjoyed Lonnie McFadden at The Phoenix on a Friday evening, odds are that you heard drummer Donivan Bailey. Bailey died on December 2, 2016.

Bailey was a native of Kansas City, Kansas and studied with Leon Brady. Over the years performed with Ahmad Alaadeen, Bobby Watson, Kevin Mahogany and, of course, the McFadden Brothers.

But what those of us who enjoyed his music, especially Fridays at The Phoenix, will remember most is his gregarious personality and that smile which never seemed to leave his face.

Donivan Bailey was 46 years old.



Donivan Bailey

Godfrey Powell

Just before press time we learned that Godfrey Powell died on January 16. The Kansas City, Kansas native performed for more

than 65 years and was one of the last six surviving members of the original American Federation of Musicians Local #627 big band. Powell played classical trombone with the Kansas City Philharmonic and trumpet with a who's-who of Kansas City big bands: the Bobby Stafford Big Band, Oliver Todd's Big Band, Eddie Baker's New Breed Orchestra, the Junior Williams Big Band, Willie Rice's Big Band and the Elder Statesmen of KC Jazz Little Big Band. Godfrey Powell was 79 years old.

Bobby Watson at the Symphony

The Kansas City Symphony has announced their 2017-18 Pops series and the schedule includes *A Tribute to Kansas City Jazz: From Basie to Bebop* featuring Bobby Watson.



PHOTO BY LARRY KOPITNIK

Bobby Watson

They describe the show like this: "From the great Count Basie to Charlie Parker and Bobby Watson, the Kansas City Symphony pays tribute to Kansas City's homegrown jazz musicians and timeless tunes. Special appearances by trumpet player Hermon Mehari and Chuck Haddix, the producer of KCUR-FM's *Fish Fry*. You'll love this saucy, special performance of KC jazz, presented in association with the American Jazz Museum."

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This is very advance notice. The show is next year, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, February 9th through 11th, 2018. But they'll sell you tickets now through the Symphony box office at 816-471-0400. More information is at kcsymphony.org.

Winterlude Concludes With a Bang

The last two shows for Johnson County Community College's (JCCC) re-conceived Winterlude series are on February 26th and March 19th.

February offers what has become an all-too-rare opportunity to hear Beau Bledsoe's Turkish jazz ensemble, Alaturka, with Bledsoe on guitar, Rich Wheeler on saxophone, Jeff Harshbarger on bass and percussionist Brandon Draper. This performance also includes guest violinist Zsolt Eder.

Alaturka once filled the venerated Jardine's with fans on one Sunday night each month. If you're not familiar with Alaturka, know that



Alaturka

this a chance to enjoy some of Kansas City's best musicians playing a classically unique style of jazz that you're unlikely hear elsewhere. The show begins at 7 p.m. in Polsky Theater.

In March, *Jazz 100* celebrates the 100th birthdays of Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonius Monk, Mongo Santamaria and Ella Fitzgerald. Former Gillespie pianist Danilo Perez directs a band with vocalist Lizz Wright, tenor saxophonist Chris Potter, trumpeter Avishai Cohen, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, bassist Ben Street, drummer Adam Cruz and percussionist Roman Diaz.

The show starts at 7 p.m. in Yardley Hall with a pre-show talk with Chuck Haddix at 6 p.m. Tickets are available through the JCCC Box Office at 913-469-4445 or online at jccc.edu/TheSeries. ||

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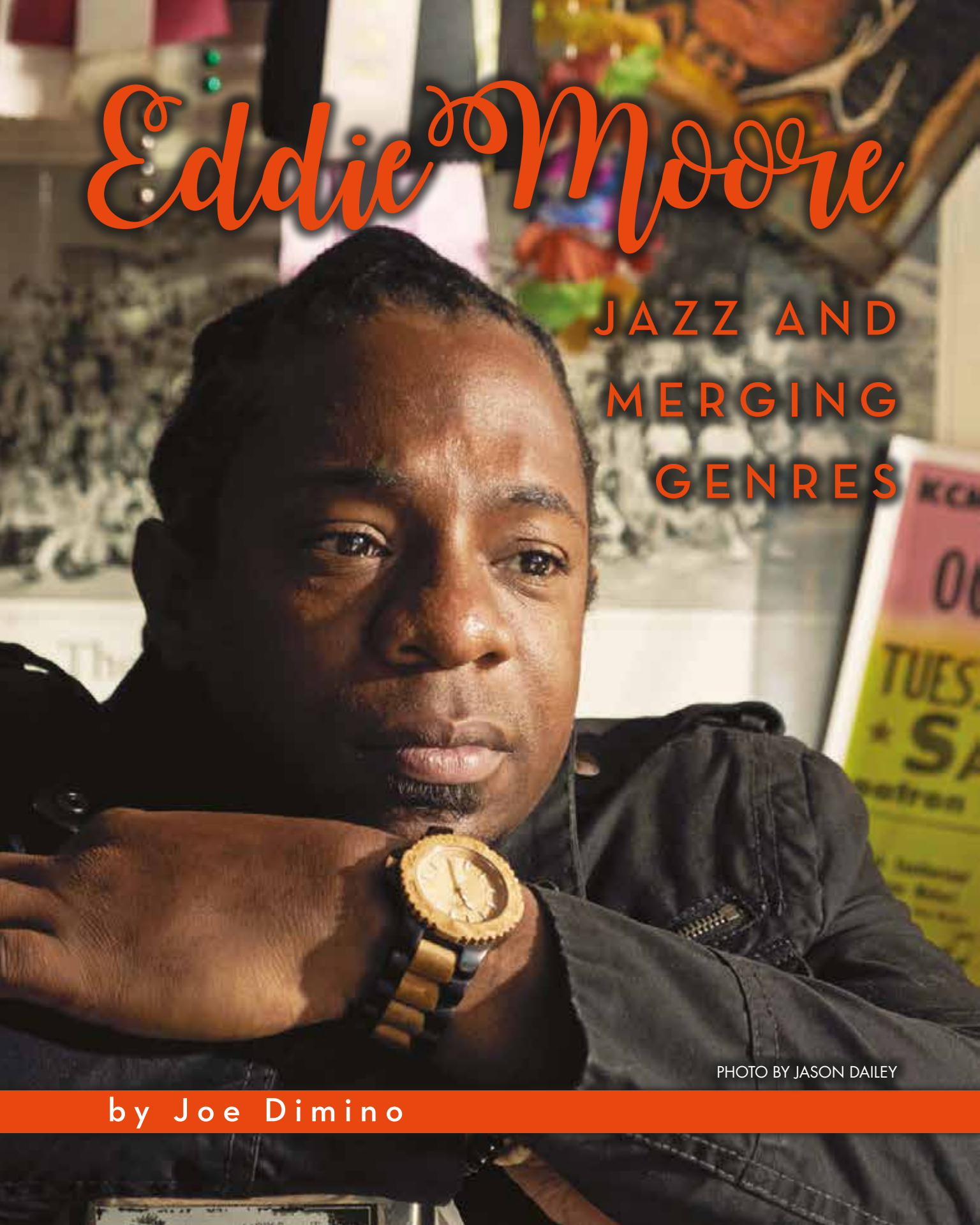
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Eddie Moore

JAZZ AND
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PHOTO BY JASON DAILEY

by Joe Dimino

The crowd was young, mostly twenty-somethings. The doorman checked IDs as they walked in – how often do you see that in a jazz club? – quickly filling tables then standing and crowding shoulder to shoulder. Maybe they were here for the rapper who would join the band a bit later. Maybe they were here because The Tank Room is someplace where twenty-somethings gather in Kansas City on a Friday night. But on stage, Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle were playing jazz from their new CD, *Kings and Queens*. Around the room, fingers were tapping on tables, heads were bobbing, bodies were swaying unknowingly.

About 45 minutes into the set, rapper Kemet Coleman, also known as the Phantom, joined. Yet the music barely changed. There was an adjustment for rhythms of rap, but Moore, bassist DeAndre Manning, guitarist Adam Schlozman and drummer Zach Morrow still played exquisite solos. They still, clearly to anyone who knows the music, played jazz and the twenty-somethings loved it.

This late December night marked two years since Eddie Moore started co-hosting a monthly jam at The Tank Room, next door to Green Lady Lounge. The keyboardist, composer and educator is blurring genres with his music. He is one of the musicians cultivating a fresh audience and leading jazz in Kansas City into the 21st century.

Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle. Left to right: Adam Schlozman on guitar, DeAndre Manning on bass, Zach Morrow on drums, Eddie Moore on keyboards.

PHOTO BY LARRY KORTNIK



Houston to the Outer Circle

Eddie Moore was born in Los Angeles and raised in Houston, where he remembers skate parks and listening to Mos Def and Tribe Called Quest. He also remembers his father's love of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Robert Glasper's 2003 album *Mood* caught his attention. Moore's interest in jazz quickly grew.

"When I went to Texas Southern University, I learned a lot. I didn't know how to play jazz, so I spent those five years learning jazz," Moore said. "I really learned how to groove there. A lot of the groove stuff in modern jazz was coming out of Houston."

He had graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance when a clinic and a conversation piqued interest in Kansas City.

"I was at a clinic for Delfeayo Marsalis and Dr. Wayne Goins from K-State talked for a while after hearing me play," Moore said. "He offered me a shot to come to the Kansas area, but I had my eye on New York. After our talk, he told me about UMKC and Bobby Watson and since my dad's side of the family was from KC, I made the move."

continued

Moore graduated from the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance with a Master of Arts in Jazz Studies in 2012. But at the start, he explained, “I was a rebel mentality kind of dude. I didn’t want to do the classical courses. Dan [Thomas] and Bobby said they would get me out of it. They let me have piano trio as a class and I started playing with [bassist] Dominique Sanders and [drummer] Ryan Lee. Even though I never played in a trio, they let me go with it.”

At UMKC, Moore found the freedom to explore and uncover his own musical voice. In Kansas City, he found a community full of young jazz talent and clubs that provided unique opportunities to perform.

Moore has played with Logan Richardson, Krystal Warren and Tivon Pennicott. “You have to come to the table for the knowledge of improvisation and it’s humbling playing around them,” he said. “I was learning the language and going deeper into the road of jazz. These guys are great examples who you can learn from.”



PHOTO BY JASON DAILEY

After graduating from UMKC, Moore formed his own band, the Outer Circle. “The name of the band came from the notion that I’m an outer circle person,” he said. “I’ve never been an inner circle kind of person. The pianist is always on the outside, so it made sense.”

Moore has recruited some of the city’s best young musicians to the Outer Circle. One key to the band’s success, he says, is having fun.

“Whoever we meet and get into the band, it’s all about guys having a good time. It’s about getting a group and not just being a sideman.”

Another key to success is writing.

“I have been pushing them to write. I feel most bandleaders do that, like with Miles Davis. I grew up listening to him and he did that,” Moore said with enthusiasm. “It’s not all Miles, but it’s the band. That whole vibe, they shape the music with their personalities. So it’s not just what Eddie wants, but what we all want.”

Kings and Queens

Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle has released three CDs. Their first was *The Freedom of Expression*. Their second, *Live in Kansas City*, was recorded at Green Lady Lounge and made NPR’s list of top jazz releases of 2015. Their latest, out last October and their first on the Ropeadope label, is *Kings and Queens*.

Kings and Queens was recorded at Weights and Measures Soundlab, in the Crossroads district, with sound engineer Duane Tower.

“We spent a lot of time recording this and trying out different things,” Moore recalls. “We sonically wanted it wider and Duane is a master of that. We ran everything as live as we could. It was real time. Even the delay was in real time.”

The centerpiece of the album is a 3-part suite inspired by African-American history.

“This album,” Moore explained, “is about how African-Americans have a huge hand in creating jazz music, which is a true American art form, and they don’t realize that.”

Compositions are built from Moore’s personal experiences.

“We come from kings and queens. It’s a crazy time now. I’m 30 and still experiencing the same thing my parents were going through in the civil rights movement 50 years ago. I’m just looking around thinking, ‘what happened?’ That’s why I picked a historic old world feel.

“Matt Leifer and I were in Costa Rica when that Michael Brown incident was happening and we were watching that from a third person perspective. It was crazy it was happening in St.



PHOTO BY JASON DAILEY

Eddie in YJ's

Louis and we were telling folks we're from Kansas City. It was a big deal.”

(Michael Brown was shot by a police officer in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri in 2014.)

But the album's compositions are not just Moore's writing. “I'm glad to have all the [band members] on the album. All the guys wrote a piece. It's very diverse and well-rounded. The band is collectively speaking out.”

Musically, *Kings and Queens* melds jazz with reggae and hip-hop. “In a reggae situation, the piano is not important,” Moore explains. “So what I am doing is using delay. I like that sound and love what I'm doing. My heart is in it and I bring that sonically into the music.

“It's not about the genre. It's about the art of improvisation and the history of it. It's interesting being in Kansas City and the home of swing and the nostalgia. They get the concept and have been getting it for a long time. Jazz is just improvisation.



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“Hopefully we get listeners who are not in a box. It’s totally jazz but it’s also just music. Hopefully the listener relaxes and goes on the journey with us, getting their minds going on



PHOTO BY DIALLO JAVONNE FRENCH

issues of what is going on with African-Americans these days and the true history, especially with how infused the music is in our culture.”

Charlotte Street

Also last year, Moore won one of Kansas City’s most most prestigious arts honors as a 2016 Charlotte Street Generative Performing Arts Award recipient.

The Charlotte Street Foundation website explains the award’s significance: “Charlotte Street launched its Generative Performing Awards in 2008.... With the 2016 Awards, Charlotte Street has continued to act as a catalyst for discovering and supporting contemporary performing art, and has now distributed

\$118,000 to 17 performing artists creating original new work in the fields of dance, theater, music, performance, spoken word, and hybrid/interdisciplinary performance-based forms. These Awards aim to recognize and meaningfully support artists producing exceptional performance-based work that is original, innovative, and progressive.

“Each artist will receive an unrestricted cash award of \$10,000.”

Good timing. Just before recording *Kings and Queens*, Moore’s musical gear was stolen.

In announcing the award the Charlotte Street Foundation said, “Accomplished pianist, composer, educator and bandleader, Eddie Moore is one of jazz music’s rising stars.”

Jazz and Kansas City

Eddie Moore came to jazz while listening to Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, Jason Moran and Thelonious Monk. His musical vision was refined at the UMKC Conservatory and, as his CDs and live performances demonstrate, continues to grow.

For jazz, Moore said, “Kansas City is incredible. I don’t know if we understand how special it is. I don’t know if we see it because we are living it. Everyone I run into in KC at jam sessions can play and the vibe is good. People are experimenting and writing incredible things.

“It’s exciting. When people come out here, I think they will change their perceptions of us as a jazz city.”

How does Moore view his future?

“I want to keep living here in KC and traveling, giving the people the music. I want to share the vibe that we have so much fun creating here around the world. I want to collaborate with more musicians.

“There are,” Eddie Moore excitedly adds, “lots of interesting projects on the horizon.”



PHOTO BY LARRY KOPITNIK

Eddie in The Tank Room

REMEMBERING RON UBEL

“A recording engineer has to be a combination bartender, psychotherapist, technician and musician, and have the ambidexterity of an octopus.” So goes a favorite saying by Ron Ubel, a man who would know about such things and who has been proving his mettle in each regard for over 30 years.

Ubel’s Soundtrek Studios are where a good chunk of the area’s musical magic is captured, distilled and polished before being released. And it is the congenial, relaxed atmosphere created by Ron Ubel and his staff – including longtime colleague Grant Schainost – that assures the best performance an artist is capable of bringing to the studio.

“The general feeling we aim for is to make the musicians on the other side of the glass as comfortable as possible,” Ubel says. “The lighting, the temperature, the surroundings, a well-maintained and tuned piano.... even the amenities like coffee and drinks. It’s all part of an overall attitude, which is to make the musicians feel at home.”

Ubel’s love affair with recording began in his native St. Paul, Minnesota, where, as a teenager in 1959, he stumbled onto an opportunity “quite by accident” to record a performance by a friend at a neighborhood church.

“A friend of mine was the organist at a local church that had wonderful acoustics,” Ubel recalls. “One night we went in there and he started playing some very beautiful French organ music. I asked him if there were any recordings of these incredible pieces, he said no, and I said, ‘well, why don’t we make some?’ So I borrowed a tape recorder and two mikes and went back to the church to record my friend at the organ. I remember being absolutely mesmerized by the fact that I could do something like this, and I was hooked. To make a long story short,



PHOTO BY PAUL SMITH

Ron Ubel (left) with cornetist Gary Sivils at Soundtrek in 1994

“The Many Sound Treks of Ron Ubel,” written by former Jam editor Mike Metheny, was originally published in April of 1994. It is reprinted here as a tribute to Ubel who passed away last November.

BY MIKE METHENY

REMEMBERING RON UBEL CONTINUED

I later went to the bank and borrowed enough money to start my own studio. That's how it all began."

After setting up shop in St. Paul with that first studio, one of Ubel's road projects involved traveling to Omaha, Nebraska, where, for the next five summers, he would record the perfor-

mances of visiting choral groups at Boy's Town. These trips led to an unexpected career detour.

"In 1966, after the studio in St. Paul went out of business, I was asked to be a counselor at Boy's Town. Seems they'd noticed I had a good rapport with the kids when I was there

A PARTIAL LIST OF PERFORMERS RECORDED BY RON UBEL

Milt Abel	Carol Comer	Gary Helm	Gerry Leonard	The New Jazz	Doug Talley
Craig Akin	Debra Cordero	Lisa Henry	Carroll Lewis	Order Big Band	Donna Tucker
Zack Albetta	Bill Crain	Bonnie Herman	Kim Liggett	The New Red Onion	Julie Turner
James Albright	Gary Dammer	Bryan Hicks	Jack Lightfoot	Jazz Babies	Natalie Twigg
Karrin Allyson	Dan DeLuca	Rich Hill	Don Lipovac	Mike Ning	The UMKC Jazz
Clint Ashlock	Ray DeMarchi	Gary Hobbs	Russ Long	Bob Ousley	& Show Choir
Doug Auwarter	Everette DeVan	Paul Hofmann	Mark Lowery	Kim Park	Don Van Fleet
David Basse	Ed Dix	Kathleen Holeman	Kevin Mahogany	Charles Perkins	Nancy Van Fleet
Vince Bilardo	John Doubleday	Rick Holland	Jim Mair	Maria Perry	Mike Warren
Megan Birdsall	Brandon Draper	Matt Hopper	Mannheim Steamroller/	Ed Pharr	Bobby Watson
Jake Blanton	Carol Duboc	David Hungate	Chip Davis	Geneva Price	Richard Webster
The Boulevard Big Band	Gerald Dunn	Dave Izzard	The Ray Manning	Hannah Reimann	Randy Weinstein
Bob Bowman	Millie Edwards	Carmell Jones	Singers	Steve Rigazzi	Al Wiley
Bob Branstetter	John Elliott	Sherry Jones	Frank Mantooth	Ron Roberts	Rich Wheeler
Tim Brewer	Danny Embrey	Kansas City Brass	Arch Martin	The Rogers Brothers	Mike White
Bob Brookmeyer	George Evans	The Kansas City	T.J. Martley	Richard Ross	Greg Whitfield
Walter Bryant	Pete Eye	Jazz Orchestra	Marilyn Maye	Tommy Ruskin	Tim Whitmer
John R. Burr	Rod Fleeman	The Kansas City	C.W. McCall	The Scamps	Rob Whitsitt
Gary Burton	Gary Foster	Symphony	Mike McGraw	Lloyd Schad	Bram Wijnands
Bill Caldwell	Mark Franklin	Keith Kavanaugh	Jay McShann	Kirby Shaw	Roger Wilder
Tim Cambron	Mike Fryer	Lee Kavanaugh	Frank Meeker	Gary Sivils	Todd Wilkinson
Steve Cardenas	Charles Gatschet	Ken Kehner	Hermion Mehari	Paul Smith	Claude "Fiddler"
Margaret Carlson	Kevin Gianino	Tom Kennedy	Greg Meise	Jay Sollenberger	Williams
Joe Cartwright	Gil Goldstein	Stan Kessler	Hal Melia	Gerald Spaits	Gregory Hickman
The Cathedral Singers/	Max Groove	Steve Lambert	Mike Melvoyn	The Spirit of Kansas	Williams
Richard Proulx	Angela Hagenbach	Julius La Rosa	Mike Metheny	City Orchestra	Pat Wilson
Laura Caviani	Steve Hall	Ben Leifer	Pat Metheny	Brian Steever	
Laura Chalk	Bob Harvey	Matt Leifer	Bettye Miller	Todd Strait	
Matt Chalk	Brad Hatfield	John Leisenring	The Steve Miller	Kerry Strayer	
Pete Christlieb	Wayne Hawkins	Garry Leonard	KC Big Band	D.J. Sweeney	



Ron Ubel (left) and former *Jam* editor Mike Metheny at Soundtrek in 1998

those summers recording, so someone suggested I join the staff. I did that for a year, working with kids from troubled homes and backgrounds. It was a very rewarding experience and completely unrelated to recording. To this day I try to stay in touch with many of those kids."

In 1967, however, an engineer friend in Omaha heard that Ubel was in town and successfully lured him back into the studio, thus beginning what would be a 13-year association with Sound Recorders, a studio that eventually opened a branch in Kansas City, sending Ubel there in 1974 to oversee the new operation. Then, in 1980, the opportunity to strike out on his own came along and Ubel started Soundtrek, a studio that spawned additional branches in Overland Park and the Country Club Plaza.

In the 14 years of Soundtrek's existence, Ron Ubel has had numerous musical encounters and associations that remain etched in memory. Of the many notable performers who have laid down tracks with Ubel at the controls, a few stand out. Like, for example, singer Marilyn Maye.

"We've done a lot of recording over the years with Marilyn. And there was one session that was really incredible but never released. She had an accompanist for a while named Mark Franklin, and it was uncanny how he could crawl inside her head and anticipate her every move. One time they both came in and recorded some beautiful ballads, just the two of them. It's still in the can, but maybe someday someone will come along

COMPETITORS REMEMBER AND ADMIRE

"It may be unusual for someone to acknowledge respect for a competitor, but that is what I had for Ron Ubel. I always felt he was great for the marketplace, providing honesty while delivering the highest quality. I think it made me better by striving for the 'Soundtrek bar.' Through the grapevine, I would hear things about Ron and would try to incorporate anything usable into our process. I have been modeling my studio after Ron for years. He was always so friendly and nurturing any time we spoke. He will never be replaced and will be missed by all of us in the business."

— *Chuck Chapman, Chapman Recording & Mastering*

"Ron was an inspiration to me in many ways. First he was always personable and we got along very well even though we were competitors. That's not something you always get in business relations. He also ran his business well and gave me helpful advice many times. Finally, I used his and his team's attention to audio quality and comfortable surroundings as an enviable example for the growth of my own business over the last 31 years. Ron was one of the good ones and I'll miss him." — *Bill Crain, BRC Audio Productions*

and want to release it. It's vintage Marilyn Maye." (*Rapport: Marilyn Maye & Mark Franklin Communicate* was released in 2000.)

Although sessions at Soundtrek cover the gamut from big band and classical to voice-overs for TV and radio, audio-visual for in-house productions and some jingle work ("our bread and butter... helps keep the doors open"), it is Ron Ubel's involvement with the Kansas City jazz community that piques his passion for a music indigenous to the area. He clearly enjoys that facet of his job.

"Kim Park, Bob Bowman, Todd Strait, Paul Smith, Gary Sivils and so many others I could name... they are all legends to me. Working with Karrin Allyson on her first album and having the conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, Bill McGlaughlin, on board as the A&R man, that was great. And then there was the big band thing we did, the Kansas City Spirit Orchestra. Working with all these fine musicians reminds me that jazz is alive and well in this town."

continued



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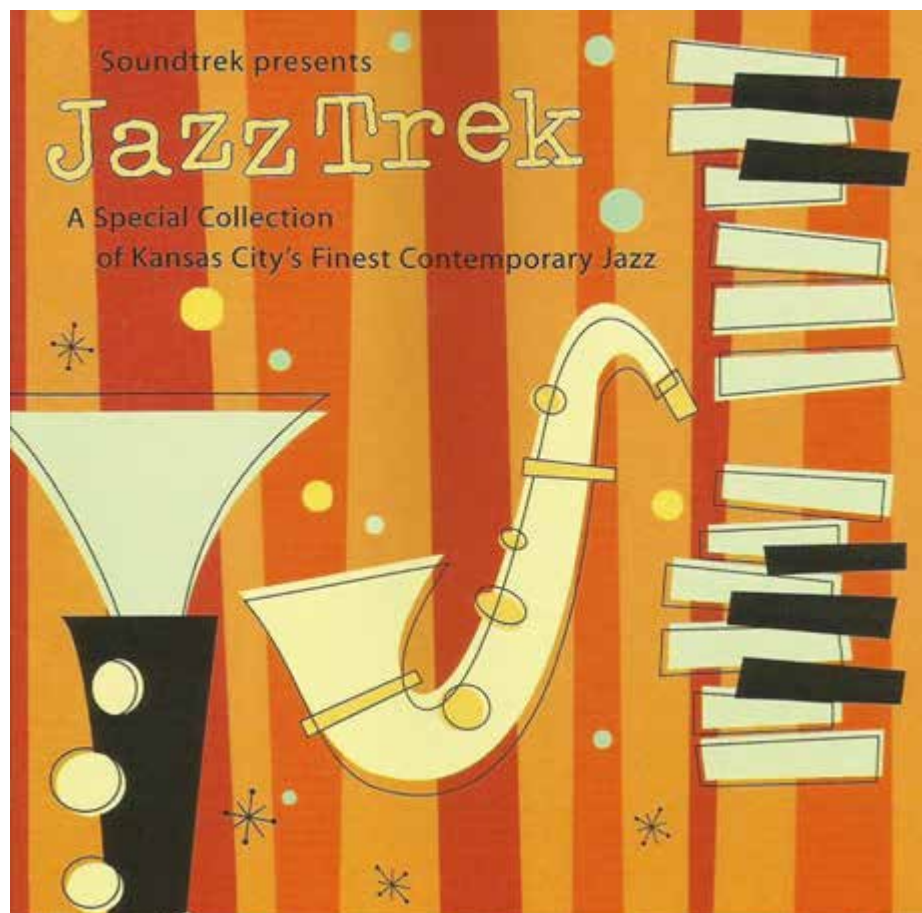
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FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Another interesting part of being a recording engineer, as Ubel readily admits, is keeping up with the technological advances that seem to define so much of what is going on in today's

studios. For someone who started out with an old reel-to-reel and two mikes, it can be a mind-boggling thing to behold.

"It's all going beyond my gray matter! And to think that I started out as a hobbyist with that one tape recorder. Since then I've seen the evolution of the mixing console in the late '60s and its perfection in the '70s. Then digital came along in the '80s, and now there's DAT [digital audio tape]. DAT has been a real savior. It's very clean, no noise reduction is needed, and it's a great storage medium and a great way to mix down to two tracks. There's also digital tape multi-track recording, audio-on-computer, ADAT [8-track digital] on ½ inch video tape, digital work stations where everything goes right to hard disk.... It's a lot of fun trying to stay up with the advances that are leading into the 21st century." Such wondrous hardware may make for new challenges and revelations, but in the final analysis, it's the music itself that keeps Ron Ubel going.

"Although we do want to be on the leading edge of what we're doing, we still want to maintain the wonderful association we've been blessed to have with recorded jazz in this market. I'd love to see a whole collection of artists come along, develop and stay right here in Kansas City."



Jazz Trek was a compilation sampler released by Soundtrek Studios in 2003. It featured Vince Bilardo, Joe Cartwright, Marilyn Maye, the PBT Trio (Paul Smith, Bob Bowman, Todd Strait), Paul Hofmann, Ed Dix and Bob Brookmeyer, Gary Sivils, Interstring (Danny Embrey, Rod Fleeman, Bob Bowman, Todd Strait), Kim Park and Karrin Allyson, The Leonard Brothers, Bill Caldwell and Everette DeVan, Russ Long, Kerry Strayer, Gary Foster, Mike and Pat Metheny.

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We are honored to continue the legacy of Ron Ubel (1939-2016)
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It's a wish shared not only by those who would like to see the return of a thriving Kansas City jazz scene, but by those who have grown to admire someone who is both the aforementioned hybrid of ambidextrous technician-musician-therapist-bartender, and one who thoroughly enjoys what he does while doing it so very well.

Ron Ubel: skillful engineer, gracious host, unabashed jazz fan and consummate gentleman. And, after all these years, still having a great time on the other side of the glass.

For information about the Ron Ubel Music Foundation, contact Justin Wilson at 816-872-8855. :||



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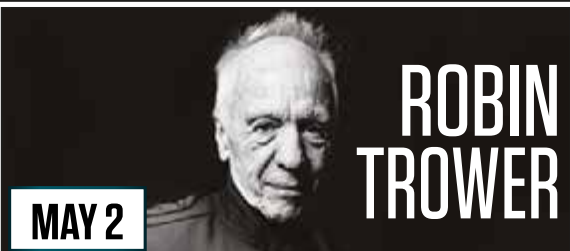
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GALE TALLIS

Looking Ahead and Looking Back

February's Folly jazz concert features a pianist moving jazz forward with the same spirit as the young musicians dominating Kansas City jazz today. March's concert features a pianist described as a "one of jazz's most convincing anachronisms," but in a joyful way. As will be clear when you read on, we're excited about both.

Robert Glasper

Robert Glasper's first musical influence was his mother. She sang jazz and blues professionally and took him with her to clubs rather than leave him with a babysitter. He'll tell you that he first developed his sound in church, where he mixed gospel harmonies with jazz.

Glasper is known for melding genres. He played piano and keyboards with bassist Christian McBride and with trumpeters Terrence Blanchard and Roy Hargrove. He has written fresh arrangements of Herbie Hancock standards. He recorded for the legendary Blue Note label. He was musical supervisor and arranger for Don Cheadle's 2016 film biography of Miles Davis, *Miles Ahead*. Miles was one of his major influences. Yet his 2012 album, *Black Radio*, won the Grammy Award for best R&B album.

Glasper, like so many of the young musicians you hear in Kansas City's jazz clubs today, is reaching beyond the confines of traditional jazz. He is reshaping the boundaries between genres and finding a fresh jazz voice. Glasper's music is built on the jazz that broke out of Kansas City eighty years ago. Those are the roots. But Glasper understands that no music can stand

still and survive. He personifies jazz as musicians are defining it in Kansas City.

Glasper is recognized internationally as one of the leading voices in jazz and one of the most innovative. His music can take unexpected twists but will also glide with smooth harmonies and inspired solos. *Billboard* described it this way: "It's like you're listening to an impromptu jam session, where everything and everyone is clicking on all cylinders.... There's no stopping Glasper, and thank goodness for that."

Robert Glasper comes to the Folly on Saturday, February 18th at 8:00 p.m. His show is preceded by a JazzTalk hosted by Steve Irwin at 7:00. Call the Folly ticket office at 816-474-4444.

Cyrus Chestnut Trio Featuring Warren Wolf

Cyrus Chestnut's piano dances. Listen to his album released last year, *Natural Essence*. That essence you hear is unbridled, soulful swing, a taste of hard bop, an underlying gospel joy, all riding elegant sophistication.



Robert Glasper



PHOTO CREDIT TORE SÆTRE / WIKIMEDIA

Cyrus Chestnut

Chestnut has toured with Jon Hendricks, Betty Carter, Wynton Marsalis, Terrence Blanchard and Donald Harrison.

He's backed Dizzy Gillespie, Freddie Hubbard, Bette Middler and Kevin Mahogany. That's quite a résumé.

Time called Cyrus Chestnut "the best pianist of his generation." The *New York Times* described him as "one of jazz's most convincing anachronisms whose crisp articulation and



Warren Wolf

blues inflected harmony evokes another era.... What makes his music fly is a complete security in his style, and that sense of untroubled self-assurance." The *New York Daily News* heralded Chestnut as the rightful heir to Bud Powell, Art Tatum and Erroll Garner. In an interview on National Public Radio for *All Things Considered*, Chestnut said, "If I can send one person home after a performance feeling better than when they arrived, then I've done my job and I sleep good at night."

Vibraphonist Warren Wolf will join Chestnut. Wolf has toured with Bobby Watson and Christian McBride. Both of his first two albums featured Mulgrew Miller on piano. The second one added Jeff "Tain" Watts on drums. On his latest album, *Convergence* (released last year), he's joined by McBride, Watts, pianist Brad Mehldau and guitarist John Scofield.

Cyrus Chestnut and Warren Wolf join forces at the Folly on Saturday, March 4th at 8:00 p.m. Before the show, a JazzTalk hosted by Bob McWilliams starts at 7:00. Call the Folly ticket office at 816-474-4444.



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2016/17
JAZZ



Robert Glasper

February 18
ROBERT GLASPER TRIO

March 4
CYRUS CHESTNUT TRIO
featuring **WARREN WOLF**

April 7
DONNY McCASLIN TRIO

May 19
ELIANE ELIAS

7:00 pm JazzTalk
8:00 pm Concert



Cyrus Chestnut



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JESSICA THOMPSON

Celebrating Women in Jazz and National Jazz Months at the Gem

February is Women in Jazz Month. April is Jazz Appreciation Month. What better way to celebrate than with a Grammy winner – Diane Reeves – and a Grammy winner and NEA Jazz Master – Jack DeJohnette.

Women in Jazz and a Grammy Winner

In celebration of Women in Jazz Month, the American Jazz Museum presents Dianne Reeves, four-time Grammy winner and one of the pre-eminent jazz vocalists in the world. With a repertoire ranging from jazz to soul and including R&B, Latin, and pop, Reeves, “has one of the most powerful, purposeful, and accurate voices of this or any time,” according to Wynton Marsalis. On March 25, 2017 at 8:00 p.m. she will share her breathtaking virtuosity, improvisational prowess, and unique Jazz and R&B stylings during her live performance at the iconic Gem Theater, honoring women in Jazz and their contributions.

Reeves has recorded and performed extensively with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. She has also recorded with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, was a featured soloist with Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic, and served as first Creative Chair for Jazz for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. She is the first singer to ever perform at the famed Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Reeves worked with legendary producer Arif Mardin (Norah Jones, Aretha



Diane Reeves

Franklin) on the Grammy winning album *A Little Moonlight*, an intimate collection of standards featuring her touring trio. In recent years Reeves has toured the world in a variety of contexts including a program entitled “Sing the Truth,” a musical celebration of Nina Simone, which also featured Lizz Wright and Angelique Kidjo. She performed at the White House on multiple occasions including President Obama’s State Dinner for the President of China as well as the Governors’ Ball.

In 2014, Reeves released *Beautiful Life*, her first album in five years. Produced by Terri Lyne Carrington and featuring Gregory Porter, Robert Glasper, Lalah Hathaway, and Esperanza Spalding, *Beautiful Life* was nominated for the 2015 Best Jazz Vocal Performance Grammy award.

This concert is part of the events honoring Women in Jazz Month. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster or the American Jazz Museum box office at 816-474-6262.

National Jazz Appreciation Month With an NEA Jazz Master

NEA Jazz Master and Grammy winner, Jack DeJohnette is one of the greatest drummers in the history of the genre. DeJohnette, along with Ravi Coltrane and Matt Garrison, will

continued on page 26



Jack DeJohnette Trio

A Memphis Challenge and New Blues News

Hello music lovers! The Kansas City Blues Society (KCBS) is in Memphis on the first of February for the International Blues Challenge (IBC). This year we are proud to have Amanda Fish (in the band category), Brody Buster (solo/duo act), and Levee Town (best self-produced CD) representing all of Kansas City. For those of you that aren't aware of the IBC, look at the Blues Foundation website at www.blues.org. This is the premier event for up and coming blues artists. Blues societies from all over the world are represented. The Kansas City Blues Society has been a supporter and participant since its inception.

KCBS is proud of the continuing growth with our Michael Shannon Musician's Fund. In 2016 the KCBS, through this fund, donated nearly \$18,000 in grants to local musicians who were in economic need due to medical issues. The fund is for all local musicians and music industry professionals. To apply for assistance or to make a tax-deductible donation, go to www.BlueSocietyKC.com. In the coming months we will be hosting fundraisers and benefits to support this important program. Details on those to come.

The month of February will also see the launch of *Blues News* in an email-based format. It will include calendars, artist reviews and other information pertinent to the Kansas City's

blues scene. To sign up, go to www.BluesSocietyKC.com and submit a request to have your email included. Your email will be secure and never shared. This will be a great way to keep up with all that is happening in the Kansas City blues community.

This past month, the Kansas City Blues Society held its annual meeting and elections. I want to welcome our newest board members, Craig Whittington and Jim Funderburke, to the board of directors. They bring great skill sets to the board and I look forward to working with them. At the meeting the membership provided great ideas to expand and make our Blues Society better. The board of directors will take all the ideas into consideration as we move forward. Thanks to everyone who participated.

If you enjoy listening to the blues – come on, who doesn't? – and want to get out and hear the great musicians for which Kansas City is known, there are a couple of different ways to stay up with what is going on. You can go to www.BluesLoversCalendar.com and get the weekly calendar of venues and players. Or head over to the Kansas City Blues Society website and sign up to receive our email blasts and new *Blues News* newsletter. It's all right at your fingertips. I personally hope to see you out and about. Don't hesitate to say hello! :||

PRESIDENT'S CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Mutual Musicians Foundation vital. She's a founding member of KC Jazz ALIVE, the organization that has reinvigorated the annual 21 Sax Salute at Charlie Parker's gravesite on the August Saturday closest to his birthday. She helps with dozens of other activities, many of which go unrecognized but all of which benefit musicians and jazz in Kansas City. Congratulations to Pam Hider-Johnson!

The Jazz Ambassadors are laying plans for 2017. The updated board of directors will soon be meeting to strategize on new events, new ways to raise funds, and more ways to pull this community together around our rich heritage.

The Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors is a more than 30-year old not for profit organization supporting jazz in Kansas City. Our Musicians Assistance Fund is a confidential resource available to all musicians for financial assistance in meeting

medical bills, housing and living expenses, and funerals. Our Tommy Ruskin Memorial Scholarship Fund for Jazz Education helps aspiring artists to apprentice under some of this city's jazz masters. The fund is named in memory of the great KC jazz drummer who himself mentored numerous other musicians.

And let's not forget that we publish the magazine you're reading right now.

Our financial support comes mostly from Jazz Ambassador memberships, tax deductible donations and fundraising events. An individual membership costs just \$35 annually and includes *Jam* mailed to your home. Even if you didn't make it to the December meeting/party, we'd love to have you join us. You can fill out the membership form in this issue or email our treasurer at Jenwismeier@gmail.com. :||

Deborah Brown Quartet + Sylwester Ostrowski Kansas City Here I Come

Personnel: Deborah Brown, vocals; Sylwester Ostrowski, tenor saxophone (tracks 1, 3, 7-9); Rob Bargad, piano; Essiet Okon Essiet, bass (tracks 1-4, 9, 10); Joris Teepe, bass (tracks 5-7); Newman Taylor Baker, drums; NFM Leopoldinum, Chamber Orchestra and Christian Danowicz, principal violin (tracks 1, 8, 9); Kevin Mahogany, vocals (tracks 2, 4)

Tracks: Ask Me Now, Teach Me Tonight, Lullaby of Birdland, My One and Only Love, Before It Was Fun, Kansas City Here I Come, Summertime, How Deep Is the Ocean, Pannonica, Cry Me a River

Recorded 2016 at Republica Studio, Lubrza, Poland. Mastered by Alan Silverman, Arfi Mastering, New York City

Deborah Brown is one of the elite jazz singers, and she traveled to Poland in 2016 to share the gift of Kansas City jazz, resulting in this superb CD.

Deborah and her colleagues hit all of the bases on the two Monk compositions: a swinging rhythm section with textbook-perfect comping from Rob Bargad, fabulous scat vocals, fine tenor sax solos from Sylwester Ostrowski, and the NFM Leopoldinum chamber orchestra providing fullness in the background. Brown shares the microphone with fellow KC native (and an elite vocalist in his own right) Kevin Mahogany. They play off each other just the way you would expect, trading phrases and enjoying some winning call and response on the easy sway of “Teach Me Tonight” (if there is a KC jazz fake book, this would certainly be in it), and warm and emotive on the ballad “My One and Only Love,” from the Johnny Hartman songbook that Mahogany features.

Saxophonist Ostrowski is a fine mainstream player and fits perfectly in the set. I especially liked his swinging bop solo on “Lullaby of Birdland.”

I have not heard pianist Bargad in quite some time, and this set reminds me of his skill as an accompanist and soloist. Listen to his work on “My One and Only Love” for an example of how to support a vocalist. Bassist Essiet Okon Essiet is also first-call, and his work on this ballad is also strong.



“Before It Was Fun,” which has a lyric by Brown, has Deborah singing the melody in unison with Ostrowski, who follows with his own solo. I liked drummer Newman Taylor Baker’s cymbal work here, and how Essiet plays the melody behind Bargad’s solo. Brown opens “Summertime” with Bargad, slowly, then they swing it KC-style. When Deborah emphatically sings “swingin’” here, she means it. Of course she does her masterful scat here, too. And check out Bargad’s duet with Baker. This is one of the most forward-thinking arrangements of this classic that I have heard, a lot of fun. “How Deep Is the Ocean” has Brown’s clear voice with the strings, just beautiful music.

Then there is the title track, which they perform like the hard boppers would. It opens with Brown soaring over Boris Teepe’s bass, and when the rest of the rhythm section wails she states how we have a “crazy way of scatting” here, and then shows us some. Ostrowski also wails, Bargad comps, Baker accents, and Deborah soars over the whole thing. Play this version for the folks who are tired of this song.

This CD is a great addition to the long list of super Kansas City jazz by one of its most devout ambassadors, Deborah Brown.

See the video on the making of this CD on Deborah’s website, www.deborahbrown.net

—Roger Atkinson

Gerald Spaits Solo Bass

Personnel: Gerald Spaits, bass

Tracks: Wide Open, Single Petal of a Rose, Manha de Carnaval, 4th Bass, These Foolish Things, Lulu’s Back in Town, Somewhere, God Bless the Child

Recorded at Surreal Sound, Kansas City, Missouri. Mixed and mastered by Tom Placek

We do not often come across solo bass recordings, surely because the instrument has a somewhat limited sonic range, making it difficult to sustain interest in an individual tune, not to mention an extended program.

This is not an obstacle for Gerald Spaits, one of Kansas



City's master musicians. Rather than an extended program, Spaits has selected eight tracks with strong melodic content, rich harmonies, and does not attempt long improvised solo statements. The result is a very listenable twenty minute EP that never gets bogged down.

Gerald contributed two originals to the EP; "Wide Open" is the first. It has a standard AABA form with memorable melody that Spaits runs through for a single chorus. It's a great intro to the EP. "Single Petal of a Rose" is beautiful Ellington. It not only has one of Duke's most beautiful melodies, but also great harmonies that Spaits nails with rich strummed chords. Gerald follows this with "Manha de Carnaval," with its underlying bossa nova rhythm shining through. Gerald has devised a fabulous intro for his arrangement, which he reprises to close.

"4th Bass" is the second original, and is based on an intricate bass line that is played twice followed by a release, much like a blues structure. Spaits features that great chording technique on "These Foolish Things" and "Lulu's Back In Town," the latter of which answers the question "Can a solo bass swing?" with an emphatic "yes!" Listen to how he bends the notes in those chords on "Lulu," too. And listen to the fullness of the tones on the melody of "These Foolish Things."

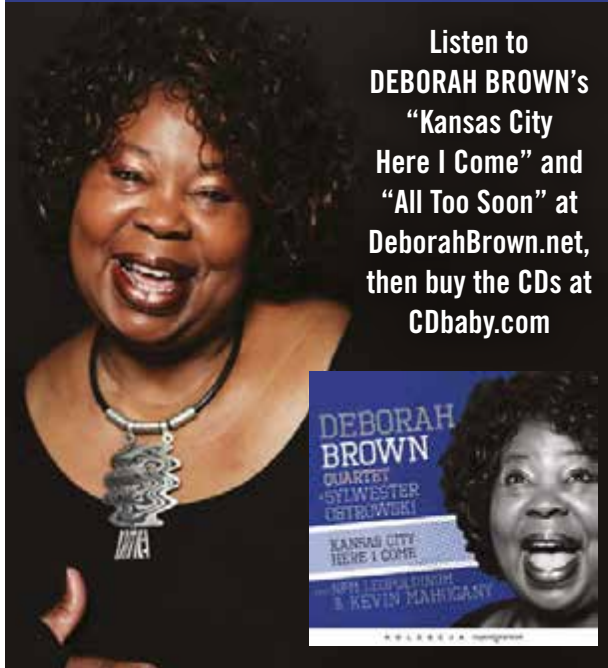
"Somewhere" is another strong, memorable melody that Gerald presents in a stunning arrangement again featuring strong chords embellishing the melody. He then closes an equally memorable "God Bless the Child," with a short tag line

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used in the intro, which he returns to during the melody and in the closing.

I may have enjoyed a longer program, but cannot argue that this EP is a perfect length for this solo bass recital, highlighting the composing and arranging skills of Gerald Spaits, as well as his formidable technique and love of a great melody. The bass has a beautiful sound in this master's hands. All of Gerald's fans will want to hear this.

—Roger Atkinson

A La Mode C'est si Bón

Personnel: Clayton DeLong, guitar; Jesica Poell, vocals, percussion and kazoo; Adam Galblum, violin (tracks 1, 2, 5); Marvin Gruenbaum, violin (tracks 3, 4, 6-8); Steve Rigazzi, bass (tracks 1-3, 5-7); James Albright, bass (tracks 4, 8); Miguel DeLeon, congas (tracks 3, 8); Michael Pagán, piano (track 4); John Blegen, clarinet (tracks 5, 7); Peter Shilliday, spoons (track 5)

Tracks: When I Get Low, I Get High, C'est si Bón, Nature Boy, Don't Get Around Much Anymore, Zazou, Autumn Leaves, Diga Diga Doo, Cry Me a River, Angel Eyes

Recorded and mixed by Robert Rebeck at Chapman Recording Studios, Lenexa, Kansas

A La Mode is the KC-based duo of UMKC Conservatory grad guitarist Clayton DeLong and classically trained vocalist Jesica Poell. On *C'est si Bón* they only perform as a duo on the ballad closer "Angel Eyes." On the other tracks they expand to a quartet and more to explore the world of Kansas City Jazz and "gypsy jazz," two genres that have *swing* as a common underlying principle, on a selection of tunes from over sixty years ago. The result is a collection that is quite enjoyable.

The key additions to the duo are violinists Adam Galblum and Marvin Gruenbaum and bassists Steve Rigazzi and James Albright. It is that combination of rhythm guitar, violin and bass that provides that "gypsy jazz" sound.

Galblum is the violin lead on the opener "When I Get Low, I Get High," a swinger featuring swinging solos from Galblum, DeLong and Poell (on kazoo). Poell's vocal is a delight here, growling and handling a rather difficult tongue-twisting section without flaw. And, yes, she does swing, too, with strong help from the DeLong rhythm guitar, Rigazzi's bass, and perfect melodic counter melody from the violinist. The same group returns for the easy swing of the title track, which Poell sings in French. Galblum again stars here, both in his responses to Poell's vocal phrases and in his solo. DeLong follows with his solo, and by this time it is no surprise that Rod Fleeman was



one of his teachers. Rigazzi gets a chorus before Poell closes. "Zazou" is the last number featuring Galblum. John Blegen is added on clarinet and provides support behind Poell's vocal (French again) and her kazoo in addition to his swinging solo. Galblum also swings like mad on his turn and is with Blegen behind in support of a kazoo solo and Poell's vocal close. This one swings like mad, and the spoon percussion from Peter Shilliday gives that a huge assist.

Marvin Gruenbaum is the violinist on the remaining tracks. He provides the intro to "Nature Boy," which also gets a Latin swing treatment with the addition on Miguel DeLeon on congas. Marvin soars on his solo statement. Poell's vocals soar as well, especially in the closing chorus where she shows off her extensive range. Ellington's "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" is another tune that easily falls into this genre. Pianist Michael Pagán makes his only appearance here, and his inclusion results in this sounding more KC swing and less gypsy. James Albright has a fine bowed bass solo, too. "Autumn Leaves" opens with Gruenbaum stating the melody, with Poell singing the French lyric. Marvin has a beautiful melodic chorus, as do Rigazzi and DeLong.

Poell hums some kazoo to introduce "Diga Diga Doo" before jumping into the vocals. Blegen returns here for the lead solo, and he swings it hard, as do DeLong and Gruenbaum on their turns, including a round of "fours" before Poell returns on kazoo. "Cry Me a River" is given a Latin treatment similar to "Nature Boy" with DeLeon returning on congas. I enjoyed the Albright bass solo here.

This is a very enjoyable recording that serves as a fine introduction to the music of A La Mode.

—Roger Atkinson

Ervin Brown I'm So In Love

Personnel: Ervin Brown on all instruments, including guitar, alto sax, tenor sax, soprano sax, flute, keyboards, bass and drums.

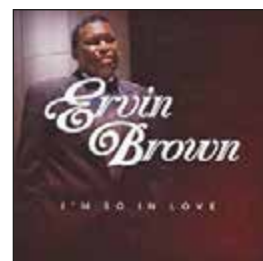
Tracks: Melodic Mood, Ony's Song, Last Chance for Love, You Promised Me, My Three Babies (AJA), I'm So In Love, Song for Wes, When Will You Learn, Cruising on the Coast, Precious One, It's All a Dream

Mastering by AudioVision Productions, Dave Brock.

All songs written and arranged by Ervin Brown.

Ervin Brown grew up at 19th and Highland Streets, a block from the Mutual Musicians Foundation, where he earned the nickname "bug" because musicians knew when he came in he would ask or "bug" them about their music. Nickname aside, it paid off.

Brown's CD, *I'm So In Love*, is the culmination of those lessons,



albeit gliding with a smooth jazz groove atypical of the music most often associated with Kansas City's National Historic Landmark.

Brown plays all of the instruments on each number: guitar, alto sax, tenor sax, soprano sax, flute, keyboards, bass and drums. The result is densely layered music, albeit sometimes too densely layered. On some numbers, solos struggle to rise above the rhythm. I wished, for instance, that the interesting saxophone work was mixed to stand out more on the opener, "Melodic Mood."

Brown is at his best on guitar, playing with an invitingly rich tone and imagination, evoking the jazz side of George Benson. You especially hear it on the title track and on "Ony's Song." But the beat underneath competes with the solo. A more subtle and supportive rhythm track allows Brown's evocative guitar to glide on "Song for Wes" and "When Will you Learn."

One person playing all all roles is an intriguing concept. But history's most compelling jazz is about building a synergy and a single voice between multiple musicians, and the magic which develops when a variety of thoughts and talents meld to create music greater than the sum of its individual parts. That's not part of this CD. Here, rhythm can be repetitive and many numbers fade off rather than coming to the definitive conclusion more common in jazz.

Clearly, Ervin Brown's guitar solos can excite with emotion and vitality. Listen closely for the guitar, pull it out over the rhythm, and you hear an intricacy of fresh ideas. There's a tenderness to his saxophone – I especially hear it on "Cruising on the Coast." Brown's talents and his musical abilities are captured on *I'm So In Love*. Now I want to hear that guitar, especially, and that sax riding over a rhythm laid down with other musicians, as part of a jazz ensemble. Just as clearly, Brown would enthrall in that situation as well.

—Larry Kopitnik

||

A graphic with a black background and white text. At the top, it says "Support Live Jazz in KC" in a cursive font, flanked by musical notes. Below this, the name "Mike White" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath the name, it says "JAM Supporter" in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. A horizontal line separates this from the phone number "816.753.9200". Another horizontal line follows, leading to the email address "mike.white1940@gmail.com". At the bottom, it says "A Sustaining Partner" in a cursive font, also flanked by musical notes.

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NEXT JAM

Next Memorial Day weekend, the American Jazz Museum launches a new festival in the 18th and Vine district. One of their goals is to put Kansas City on the international jazz festival map. Kansas City has a long history of staging jazz festivals. We'll look back at a few of them in the next issue of *Jam*.

celebrate National Jazz Appreciation Month with a thrilling concert at the Gem Theater on April 22, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.

DeJohnette grew up in a family where music and music appreciation was a high priority. Beginning at age four, he studied classical piano privately and later at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. He added the drums to his repertoire when he joined his high school concert band at age 14. "As a child, I listened to all kinds of music and I never put them into categories," he recalls. "I had formal lessons on piano and listened to opera, country and western music, rhythm and blues, swing, jazz, whatever. To me, it was all music and all great. I've kept that integrated feeling about music, all types of music, and just carried it with me. I've maintained that belief and feeling in spite of the ongoing trend to try and compartmentalize people and music."

Upon entering the Chicago jazz scene, DeJohnette experimented with rhythm, melody and harmony. Opportunities to drum alongside Rashied Ali in the John Coltrane Quintet came quickly, along with international recognition during his tenure with the Charles Lloyd Quartet. He also joined Miles Davis's group just prior to the recording of *Bitches Brew*, an album that triggered a seismic shift in jazz and permanently changed the direction of the music. Miles later wrote in his autobiography,

"Jack DeJohnette gave me a deep groove that I just loved to play over."

With a career spanning five decades and including collaborations with some of the most iconic figures in modern jazz, DeJohnette has developed a versatility that allows room for hard bop, R&B, world music, avant-garde, and just about every other style to emerge in the past half-century. After being inducted into the Modern Drummer Hall of Fame in 2007 and Percussive Arts Society's Hall of Fame in 2010, he marked his 70th birthday by receiving a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Fellowship.

Despite all the awards and accolades, DeJohnette continues to make the creative process his highest priority. The list of creative associations throughout his career is lengthy and diverse: John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, Keith Jarrett, Chet Baker, George Benson, Stanley Turrentine, Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland, Joe Henderson, Freddy Hubbard, Betty Carter, Esperanza Spalding, Bruce Hornsby, Jason Moran and so many more.

This concert is part of the events celebrating National Jazz Appreciation Month. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster or the American Jazz Museum box office at 816-474-6262. ||

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Thurs. — Millage Gilbert's Big Blues Band 7:00 p.m.
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Sat. Blues Jam 2:00 p.m.
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Sat. - Live Band 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.
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1823 Highland 816-471-5212
Fri. - Sat. — Late Night Jazz 1:00 a.m.

DOWNTOWN

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1727 McGee 816-421-1634
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Sat. — Salsa
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Fri. — Live Music 4:30 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Sat. — Live Music 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
and 4:30 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
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1118 McGee 816-446-7832
Thurs. — Blues Jam 7:00 p.m.
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4112 Pennsylvania 816-960-4560
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Tues. — Blues Jam 10:00 p.m.

PLAZA

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- B Llywelyn's**
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Sat. - Sun. — Live Music
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KCK 913-232-9827
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J Jazz B Blues

A Hundred Years Later

In 1917, Bennie Moten organized his first band, B. B. and D., (for Bennie, Bailey and Dude, with Bailey Hancock and Dude Lankford). Musicians Protective Union Local No. 627 was founded with 25 members. The previous September, Major N. Clark Smith moved from directing bands at Western University, in what is today Kansas City, Kansas, to Lincoln High School. At Lincoln he trained musicians like Walter Page, Harlan Leonard, Julia Lee, Jap Allen, and Lamar Wright. In 1930, Local 627 would dedicate its new union hall at 1823 Highland Street with 347 members. Among those members: Moten, Page, Leonard, Lee, Allen, and Wright.

In 1917, the puzzle pieces that would lead to the creation of a unique style of jazz in Kansas City were starting to fall into place.

Kansas City in 1917:

Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle take the stage at The Tank Room, just as they have done on the fourth Friday of each month for two years. I'm the old guy in the room. Everyone else is probably 30, 35 years younger. I may be the only one who wasn't carded when walking in. But never mind all that. The room is full. Eddie glances at his keyboards and starts playing. His eyes close. He doesn't need to look, he feels the music. DeAndre Manning, Adam Schlozman and Zach Morrow join in. Quickly, the room is engaged. Some people are talking and socializing but more are listening to the music. I look around. People at other tables are focused on the stage. They're smiling, broadly. Adam breaks into an amazing solo. This is jazz. Sure, it's jazz which has absorbed the modern sensibilities that the musicians playing it hear every day. But the old guy in the room can hear the blues underlying this music. We're listening to jazz.

Next door, at the Green Lady Lounge, Chris Hazelton's Boogaloo 7 is jamming to another packed room. Boogaloo 7 features a front line with horns, Pat Conway on congas, and a more raucous, booty-shakin' (that's the term Chris uses) presentation. The crowd here is older. I lean against a wall close to the stage – there are no open tables – and look around. People nearby are focused on the band. They're smiling, broadly. Brett Jackson, on baritone sax, breaks into an amazing solo. I can hear the blues underlying the music, and in this crowd I'm not thinking I may be the only one. We're listening to jazz.

Down 18th Street, in the Blue Room, Tyrone Clark and True Dig is performing. I'm not there to hear them, but Tyrone's R&B and soul-laced compositions typically cut a middle ground between the Boogaloo 7 and Outer Circle sounds. Downtown



N. Clark Smith in 1914

at the Majestic, Bram Wijnands, no doubt, is swinging his wildly infectious barrelhouse piano. Earlier in the evening, at the Phoenix, Lonnie McFadden enthralled what was almost certainly a standing room only crowd with his R&B-tinged trumpet and amazing dance.

Add whatever qualifier you want to the music – modern, R&B, soul, barrelhouse, booty-shakin' – but every one of these audiences, whether they knew it or not, was listening to jazz.

This is the evolution of what started to fall into place in Kansas City in 1917.

Jazz is a cornerstone of this city's identity. And that modern identity is not just the jazz that was, but jazz styles ranging from what you'll hear at the Green Lady to what you'll hear on the fourth Friday of each month in The Tank Room.

A year and a half ago in my blog, in a posting which coincided with a change of leadership at the American Jazz Museum, I posed this thought:

This is a growing, evolving jazz scene. Who ties it all together? Who examines the history, the up-the-Mississippi-from-New-Orleans-but-something-different-happened-here story of jazz, its expansion into bebop and fusion and all the other sidebars, its influence on rock, then its continued recasting into newer sounds and ideas and experiments? In Kansas City today, a fan can be immersed in jazz. But who is embracing the complete story? Who is wrapping their show-and-tell around the ongoing advancement of the music?

At the time, the implication was that the museum had a responsibility to provide this context. They still do. But so, I now realize, does *Jam*.

Jazz is a growing. It must, to stay meaningful to that younger crowd embracing Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle, who will still be listening when the last of us old guys leave the room.

Highland Cemetery is a short drive from the better known Lincoln Cemetery, where Charlie Parker is buried. In Highland, you can find the grave sites of Bennie Moten and Julia Lee. I understand that N. Clark Smith is buried there, too.

I suspect that somewhere each of them is smiling because the music they started a hundred years ago now defines Kansas City and, through a variety of styles, continues to evolve. :||

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