

Swingtime

The Region's Only Good Music Magazine!

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Peg Delaney, Linda Brown and Patti Melita with Kristina Johnson and Alyssa Falk-Verheyne

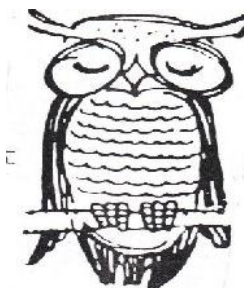
Gals Who Play Jazz to Play for Swingtime on June 11

Gals Who Play Jazz is a special project of professional jazz artists and friends, Peg Delaney (piano), Linda Brown (bass), and Patti Melita (vocal). The trio originally teamed up to create a retrospective program for Women's History Month (March), to showcase the contributions of female composers and musicians of the jazz era. They have added a saxophonist and drummer for our concert.

(Continued on Page 8)

The Night Owl

By C. ROBIE BOOTH



Paul Mastriani, ultra-gifted pianist and composer, died in February 2017, peacefully in the arms of his wife. He was 81.

Few musicians had more friends and admirers. I've seen players waiting in line to jam with him. He could play anything: traditional, blues, bop, whatever happened to be the latest "thing." He was tender on ballads and would swing like hell on anything else.

He won last years' Lifetime Achievement Award from *Swingtime* magazine. The vote by past winners was unanimous. His award reads: "Swingtime presents its annual Lifetime Achievement Award to Paul Mastriani, a brilliant pianist, influential composer and close associate of the most important jazz musicians in the region."

Two years ago he led a group for a *Swingtime* Jazz Society concert that brought the house down. Many hip listeners agree it was the swingin'est.

His first lengthy engagement was as pianist for the Gene James Trio. The old Governor's Inn on Western Turnpike in Guilderland was a regular engagement.

Bobby Massaro was drummer and vocalist and the girl singer was the glamorous Dyanne Marlowe. She recalls:

"He was kind and generous and always told me I didn't need to have a great voice if I could feel things in my heart and project that to the audience.

"We were playing the Causeway Towers in Miami Beach when Frank Sinatra called us to his table and invited us to play the Fontainebleau. We didn't because Bobby couldn't make it and I was getting married.

"Paul was a singer's pianist. He was a great writer, a wonderful composer. He wrote 'Santa, Bring My Baby Back to Me.' I cried when I sang it."

Paul had a long friendship with saxophonist Nick Brignola, who made the group a quartet when he joined them for several gigs. Paul enjoyed playing with trumpeter Bobby Tessitore here and later in Florida. And of course, with his son PJ, Paul Junior, a big league drummer. He



Photo by C. Robie Booth

Paul Mastriani and Dyanne Marlowe, singer and later leader of her own big band, at a luncheon in 2015. They were two-thirds of the Gene James Trio in the 1960s.

was often co-composer and pianist with singer Jody Shayne. Close friends with Peg and Bill Delaney, Colleen Pratt and a host of other top-flight musical figures.

Half Notes

Things were looking up for WMHT t'other Saturday night. Austin City Limits (usually rock 'n' roll or country) had a 50-minute tribute to Lady Day (Billie Holiday) by singer Cassandra Wilson. She was wonderful!

Then came "Front and Center" from Iridium in New York City with Southside Johnny and the Asbury Dukes. Good fun jazz with country and rock elements.

Non-subscribers can always get free copies of the latest [Swingtime](#) magazine at Colonie's Sanford Town Library, **(Continued on Page 11)**

RENNIE CRAIN...93 AND STILL GOING STRONG

By NED SPAIN

When Rennie, Bobbie and I headed for the living room for this interview, Rennie sat at the grand piano and began to play. I said to him, "Is that a Steinway?" He replied, "No, it's 'I Remember You'." So I knew right then that I was in for a fun interview. At 93, Rennie's sense of humor remains intact as does his 35-year marriage to Bobbie.

Rennie has traveled far and wide, but was born and grew up right here in Delmar, attending Bethlehem Central High School, class of '42. He entered RPI the following September majoring in chemistry. After completing freshman year he enlisted in the Army, where he served as a medic for three years. During this time he was already playing professionally on the piano and trumpet, as well as arranging for groups in the United States and Germany. Upon return he resumed his studies at RPI but soon transferred to Brooklyn Poly to take advantage of the New York City performance opportunities as he completed his degree in chemical engineering.

During college he had many opportunities to accompany famous singers such as Rosemary Clooney, Eydie Gormé and others. He also played with Red Norvo, Tex Beneke and Glenn Miller while studying at Juilliard. During school he also worked for Pfizer Chemical.

After graduation he accepted a position with Sterling Winthrop, completing a 30-year career right here in Rensselaer. Rennie has shared the stage with many of our locals, both here and out of



Rennie at The Fountain, June 10, 2011, with Skip Parsons' Riverboat Jazz Band. Photo by Cliff Lamere.

town, including the Colonie Coliseum band, Al Quaglieri, Buddy Bedell and Skip Parsons, with whom he currently plays.

Rennie has no plans for retirement!

We're lucky to know Rennie Crain
Whose skill on the keyboard brought fame.
At age ninety-three
Just for you and for me
I'm surprised that he's still in the game.

APFJ to Celebrate its 30th Anniversary Year

In 1987, Butch Conn started the concert series A Place For Jazz as a way for audiences to enjoy the music in a comfortable, acoustically superb setting. In the succeeding years, he and his loyal volunteers presented some of the greatest jazz musicians and singers. Since Butch's death in 2005, the APFJ board and volunteers have carried on his vision. We dedicate the 2017 season to that purpose! See musician drawings on page 5.

September 8: The Larry Willis Trio

Pianist Larry Willis was born in New York City. After his first year at the Manhattan School of Music he began performing regularly with Jackie McLean. He has performed with a wide range of musicians, including seven years as keyboardist for Blood, Sweat & Tears. He spent several years as pianist for Nat Adderley, as well as Roy Hargrove. He received the Benny Golson Jazz Master Award at Howard University in 2012.

September 22: The Chembo Corniel Quintet

Percussionist Wilson Chembo Corniel is making a return visit to APFJ, this time as leader of his own group. He teaches percussion at SUNY Purchase. He is currently leading his own Latin Jazz quintet. He earned a Grammy nomination in 2009 for "Best Latin Jazz Album."

October 6: The Jackie Ryan-Shelly Berg Duo

Vocalist Jackie Ryan grew up listening to a unique blend of voices. Her father was of Irish



descent, and sang classical pieces around the house in his trained baritone. Her mother was Mexican and crooned Spanish folk songs to her as a child. Pianist Shelly Berg has recorded

several albums with his trio. In 2007, he was named dean and professor of Music at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. Berg was nominated for a 2015 Grammy Award in the Best Arrangement Instrumental and Vocals category. He is the music director of The Jazz Cruise.

October 20: The Jeff Siegel Sextet

Jeff Siegel was the longtime drummer with pianist Lee Shaw, along with bassist Rich Syracuse. Siegel's latest CD is "King of Xhosa," with Syracuse, bass; Erica Lindsay, sax; Francesca Tanksley, piano; African trumpeter Feya Faku and percussionist Fred Berryhill. This is the group that will play for us.

November 3: The Don Byron Quartet

Don Byron is a gifted performer on clarinet, bass clarinet and saxophone. He has been nominated for a Grammy Award for his bass clarinet solo on "I Want to Be Happy" from the album "Ivey-Divey." He has worked as a professor at The University at Albany, teaching composition, improvisation, music history, clarinet, and saxophone.

All concerts will be held on Friday nights at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady. Visit aplaceforjazz.org for further details.

Frankie Capp and Dave Bournazian

Drummer Frankie Capp, who leads a great California big band called Jugger-naut, recently published a memoir in which he describes growing up and joining a band in Massachusetts with our own Dave Bournazian. Saxophonist Bournazian was also leader of Dyanne Marlowe's Big Band of the Northeast.

In part, Frankie says: "We had to change our ethnic names to ones that sounded professional and easier to pronounce, so Dave Bournazian was changed to Dave Bernie and Frank Cappuccio became Frankie Capp.

"... Dave went on to become a most respected and honored teacher and band director at Mohonasen School District in Albany, N.Y." (Frankie meant Schenectady, of course).

— TIM COAKLEY



Larry Willis



Chembo Cornelius

Musician drawings © by Tony Avacato



**Jackie Ryan
& Shelly Berg**

Don Byron



Jeff Siegel



Swingtime Snapshots

For the area's most up-to-date jazz calendar, visit APlaceForJazz.org/calendar.htm



Sonny & Perley & Children

A quintet set up their recording studio in Guilderland Town Library April 24. A heartwarming feature was the addition of a volunteer children's chorus on "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing," center above, directed by Perley Rousseau. Above left, she solos on Peggy Lee's "I Love Being Here with You." They recorded five takes.



Artists on the CD

Sonny Daye was pianist and director of the recording. Above he is backed by bassist Bobby Kendall. Reed player was Nate Giroux (left) and on valve trombone is Tyler Giroux (who also played euphonium, rather unusual on contemporary recordings).

Photos by C. Robie Booth

Gals Who Play Jazz to Play for Swingtime on June 11

(Continued from Page 1) Gals Who Play Jazz can now be seen and heard throughout the year in an assortment of venues, performing insightful and timeless selections from the Great American Song Book and original compositions in the creative and improvisational idiom of jazz.

Peg Delaney plays sophisticated piano jazz, drawing from American, Latin and Brazilian idioms. Her trio has Bill Delaney on upright bass and features fine poignant vocals by drummer Earl Davis. The trio is featured on their CD entitled "If I Had You," a wonderful collection that pays homage to seldom heard melodic gems and jazz standards. Earl's warm voice illuminates the beauty of the ballads and the snap of the swing. Peg's more recent CD, "Hotline," features emotionally evocative Latin Jazz melodies with beautiful interplay between guitar and piano. Peg has been a two-time recipient of the New York State Council for The Arts: Meet the Composer Grant and was semifinalist in the Musician Magazine best unsigned band competition. Author of a book of transcriptions of solos by Nick Brignola, Peg has been recognized by National Jazz Educators, Saxophone Journal, and New York State Music Teachers Association.

Linda Ellen Brown (double bass/electric bass) has performed on many stages in jazz chamber ensembles, big band, musical theatre, radio, and concert venues including Alive at Five, Regatta Fest, Tulip Fest, First Night, Jazz on Jay, Proctors, Victorian Stroll, Falcon Ridge, Dance Flurry, Page Hall (Northampton, MA) and Rhythmfest (Asheville, NC). Linda was a member of the "Airwaves" jazz group for two decades; leads "Linda Brown Jazz Project"; founding member of the "Gals Who Play Jazz" and can be heard on Michael Benedict's "The New Beat" (2006). She studied piano with Grace Walrath, guitar with Jack Fragomeni, theory with Nick Brignola and Leo Russo, electric bass with JB Dyas, and double bass with Steve LaSpina, Mike Wicks and Rich Syracuse. Linda holds a B.S. in arts management from Sage College Troy and a master's in public administration from UAlbany. She is a member of AFM Local 14 (Board of Directors 2006-2013).

Patti Melita has become known throughout the northeast for her smooth renditions of traditional swing tunes in tempos specifically suited for dancing. With the Gals Who Play Jazz, she is heard performing tunes of various styles. She was a long-time co-director of the celebrated Dance Flurry Festival and, together with Teresa

Broadwell, coordinated the DanceFlurry Organization's monthly swing dance events for sixteen years. She has been an official consultant at Falcon Ridge Festival in Hillsdale since it began presenting dance events. Patti's expertise on music that motivates people to dance enabled her to put together a variety of material on her CD, "Swing It!" that defies the listener not to dance or, at the very least, begin the toe-tapping exercise. She is the leader of the dance band, Patti-O & The Hip Hooligans. Her other music-related activities include her position as secretary/treasurer of the Albany Musicians' Association, Inc., Local 14 AFM; President of the New York State Conference of Musicians, AFM; treasurer of Swingtime Jazz Society; and board member of A Place For Jazz, Ltd.

Kristina Johnson has been directing the music performance groups and teaching music history at SUNY Cobleskill since 2001. The college offers a jazz band and choir which perform for various events such as homecoming weekend, commencement and showcase concerts. On the professional side, Professor Johnson has been playing saxophone for a few decades. She started performing in big band and jazz quartets during high school under the renowned band leader, John Rinaldo in Los Angeles. Her love for jazz and dance bands has continued through the years. For the last 18 years, she has been the lead alto saxophonist for the Joey Thomas Big Band. The swinging Albany-based, Grammy-nominated ensemble performs Sinatra and World War II music. The group has backed up the legendary Temptations.

She also performs in various groups such as The Sam Whedon Band, Brass'O'Mania, The Blues Maneuver that play funky dance grooves while the whole room is dancing and the walls are vibrating ...and of course, The Gals Who Play Jazz.

Academically, she holds a bachelor of arts in music from UC Santa Cruz, bachelor of science in education from SUNY Oneonta and a master's in music education from The College of Saint Rose.

Alyssa Falk-Verheyen is a drummer, percussionist, educator, clinician and composer, based in NY state. Her talents and unique style have led her around the world to perform in a variety of settings including the Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Festival, TD Niagara Jazz, Toronto Jazz Festival and Montreal Jazz Festival, among many others. She has been fortunate enough to share the stage with nationally ac-

(Continued on Page 10)



Proudly Presents

Gals Who Play Jazz



Peg Delaney, Linda Brown and Patti Melita with
Kristina Johnson and Alyssa Falk-Verheyn.

Sunday, June 11, 2017, 4-7 p.m.

Including an open jam session



Renaissance Hall
820 Eastern Avenue
Schenectady, NY
See map on page 11

Pub menu and beverages available for purchase
Open to the public - \$15/person (\$5 for students)

Reservations: Ralph Rosenthal at (518) 423-9343 or rosenthalralph@verizon.net



Photo by Charlene Fallon

Swifty's Honors Retiree McNeill

Michael McNeill cuts the cake in April at Swifty's restaurant at 95 Everett Road, West Albany. The retiree spent 20 years as a state corrections officer. Bartender Lolla Fiacco baked the cake.

Gals Who Play Jazz (Continued from Page 8)

claimed artists such as Christine Jensen, Ingrid Jensen, David Restivo, Pat Labarbara and Steve Wilson, just to name a few. Alyssa is an avid educator, having mentored jazz students as part of the Always on Stage Festival (PEI, Canada) and is also on faculty as part of JazzWorks Canada's summer program in Ottawa. She has maintained a strong presence in both the NYC and Toronto (Canada) scenes, regularly performing at clubs such as the Iridium, Smalls, The Rex, Jazz Bistro, etc. Alyssa has recorded as a drummer on a varie-

ty of different albums. She can be heard most recently on NYC-based guitarist Eric Divito's album "Breaking The Ice" and is looking forward to her upcoming recording with JUNO-Award-winning, Toronto-based pianist David Restivo. She currently resides in the Albany area with her husband and two children and teaches orchestra in the Queensbury School District, while also maintaining a rigorous performing schedule both locally and internationally. Alyssa received a masters in jazz drumset performance from the Manhattan School of Music and a bachelor's in music education/percussion performance from the Crane School of Music.

The Night Owl

Continued from page 2

d'Raymonds restaurant in Loudonville and Swifty's restaurant and pub on Everett Road in West Albany. . . Elks members can find them at the lodge off Route 155 in Latham. The on-line version, at swingtimejazz.org, is in color.

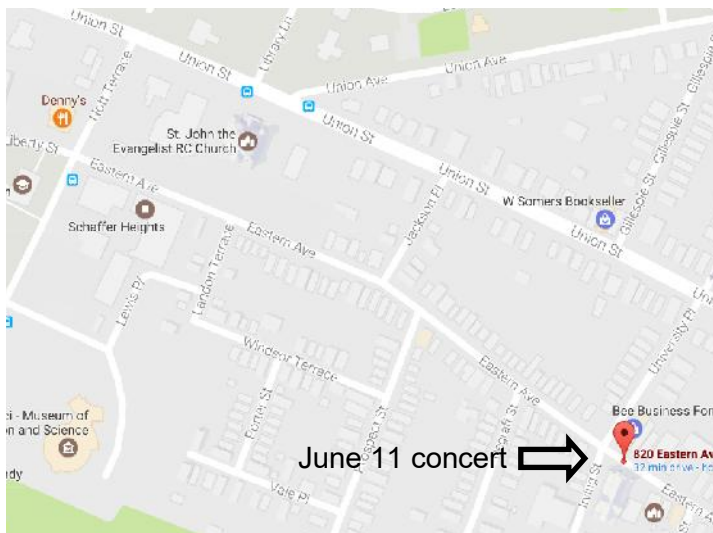
The recent Albany Tulip Fest had 14 live musical events. Not one was jazz.

The 29th annual Falcon Ridge Folk Festival Aug. 4-6 at Hillsdale in Columbia County features **Patti Melita**, **Paul Rosenberg** and **Sawyer Fredericks**, among three dozen other performers and groups. Call 860 364-0366 for information or reservations.

Fond farewell to **Charles Jones**, the retiring organist and choir director for St. Pius X Church in Loudonville. I've sung with, or for, many excellent leaders. He was the best. Good luck with his next endeavor in Florida.

Straight ahead, little friend.

Stay on the Beat
Catch us at
SwingtimeJazz.org



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☐ Yes, I'd like the e-version so I get it sooner, and in color!

Lee Shaw Scholarship Fund

To honor the memory of jazz pianist **Lee Shaw**, a scholarship will be awarded yearly to a high school senior planning to pursue jazz studies in college.

This fund is under the umbrella of the not-for-profit Swingtime Jazz Society. Contributions to this fund should be made payable to SWINGTIME JAZZ SOCIETY and mailed to Patti Melita, Treasurer, PO Box 1906, Schenec-



tady, NY 12301 with "Lee Shaw Scholarship Fund" in the memo line. Please remember that Swingtime Jazz Society is a 501(c)(3) organization; this means your donation is tax-deductible and it should qualify if your employer matches your charitable contributions.

For information about the scholarship, contact Chairperson Peg Delaney at pegjazz1@gmail.com or 518-237-3129.

We are pleased to announce that Swingtime Jazz Society has been entered into the GE Foundation Matching Gifts Program database. G.E. donors may now register their donations for matching to SJS at www.gefoundation.com/matchinggifts.

Join Swingtime Jazz Society

The **Swingtime Jazz Society** roster of members has reached 86. You are encouraged to join us by using the coupon on this page.

The Society's mission is to promote quality jazz by employing the finest regional artists for four or five events every year. The format is two hours of concert-cabaret music by the featured artists, followed by a one-hour jam session open to all cats.

All members have a full vote on future attractions and electing officers of the non-profit corporation. We also have a wonderful series of dinner meetings hosted by members. There is a once-only fee of \$100 to join.

See Pages 1, 8 & 9 for our June 11 attraction, **The Gals Who Play Jazz**.

I want to join the Swingtime Jazz Society. Enclosed find my lifetime membership fee of \$100.

Name _____

Address _____

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Mail to: Patti Melita, SJS Treasurer
PO Box 1906
Schenectady, NY 12301

C. Robie Booth

6 Briarwood Road

Loudonville, NY 12211-1102

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