

# Swingtime

*The Region's Only Good Music Magazine!*

Volume 28, Number 4

Published by C. Robie Booth

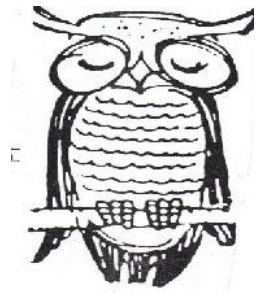
Winter 2017-18

## **Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes Swinging for Swingtime on Jan. 14**



**JAZZ VIBES** is an ensemble featuring Michael on vibraphone, David Gleason on piano, Pete Sweeney on drums and Mike Lawrence on bass. The repertoire of the group includes straight-ahead jazz standards, Latin-American songs and original material. Jazz Vibes has been the leading vibraphone group in New York's Capital Region for over a decade. See Pages 8 and 9 for details.

# The Night Owl



## Ye Olde Puzzler

Our mystery man had his first band in 1923 on the West Coast. His sidemen included Frankie Carle, Alvino Rey, Warren Covington, Shorty Sherock, Bobby Hackett and Ronnie Kemper.

His singers were Frank DeVol, Art Carney, Donna and Her Don Juans, Gordon MacRae and the King Sisters.

He owned the Trianon Ballroom, a hotel, restaurant and condominium. His orchestra had six-year runs at the Drake in Chicago and the Biltmore in New York. He had an extremely successful amateur talent show on radio with many of its winners, including Dick Contino, joining the orchestra. He died Dec. 1, 1986, at age 85.

First correct answer to C. Robie Booth wins a lifetime subscription to **Swingtime**.

## Half Notes

Isham Jones, bandleader of the 1920s, '30s and '40s, wrote more than 100 tunes including "I'll See You in My Dreams," "It Had to be You" and "Swingin' Down the Lane."



Photo by Georgie Wonders

**Linda Egan Johnson with C. Robie Booth. She is his favorite big band singer. Linda has been the featured vocalist with the Georgie Wonders' Orchestra since its inception.**

Roger Wolfe Kahn's sidemen included Miff Mole, Joe Venuti, Dick Johnson, Perry Botkin, Charlie Butterfield, Jimmy Dorsey, Babe Russin, Chauncey Morehouse, Artie Shaw and Gene Krupa; vocalists Scrappy Lambert and Libby Holman.

Gloria Hart, Jimmy McPartland, Benny Goodman, Bud Freeman and Dave Tough all worked for Art Kassel and His Castles in the Air. If you guessed they are from Chicago, you are right.

**Continued on Page 10**

# An Open Letter from Joe Barna

Hello, Everyone,

As some of you may or may not have noticed, I stopped pursuing playing opportunities and booking bigger shows after the Van Dyck concert on 8/25/17. This was a decision made based on two items.

First, I wanted to focus more on being a better father to my little girl. She's a special person, and I was too career-driven to really invest myself into being the greatest papa I could be. Now I believe I have found the balance between artist and parent. Savina is the most important person in my life and music is the greatest source of expressing my love for her.

Second, I didn't really know why I was playing anymore. Jazz is life to me. It gives me what I put into it and rewards me in ways other things just have never been able to. I don't think of it as music as much as I believe it is a spiritual relationship that one must be fully devoted to, both in the player role as well as supporter role. I was seeing great support from the fans, however very little from the actual musical community. I've always believed that without the participation from the musicians, the music will never have the full opportunity to blossom and pay forward all the riches it so badly wishes to share.

Well, things are getting better ...

I've decided to once again head up a brand new monthly series called "JAZZ IN THE NOW" at the beautiful Troy Kitchen, 77 Congress St. in historic downtown Troy. This series will be the first Thursday of the month and will feature the best and brightest talents from the Capital Region with periodic guests such as Chris Potter, Joe Magnarelli, Dick Oatts and many others. (See Page 7 for Troy Kitchen's third-Thursday offering.) The series is geared to be inclusive as every month the other jazz artists in the region will be completely welcome to sit in with the group and experience the same joy as that month's performers. I'm not giving up on getting cats out to hear and play with each other. It is

the foundation on which this music stands and without it the music will always be at a standstill.

The Troy Kitchen is family friendly and welcomes parents to bring their children. We welcome the opportunity to engage not only the adults, but also those young minds who could greatly benefit from such an experience. They will see not only a great show, but will also be engaged by a community of musicians who include one another and show love, admiration and respect for one another.

The shows will be FREE, having the compensation for performers come from donations of all those that have graciously chosen to come and spend one evening a month with us. There is no financial commitment unless you choose to give of yourselves toward the artists.

The first show will be on Thursday, Jan. 4, from 7-10 p.m. with these featured musicians:

Adam Siegel - alto

Mark Kleinhaut - guitar

Otto Gardner - bass

Joe Barna - drums

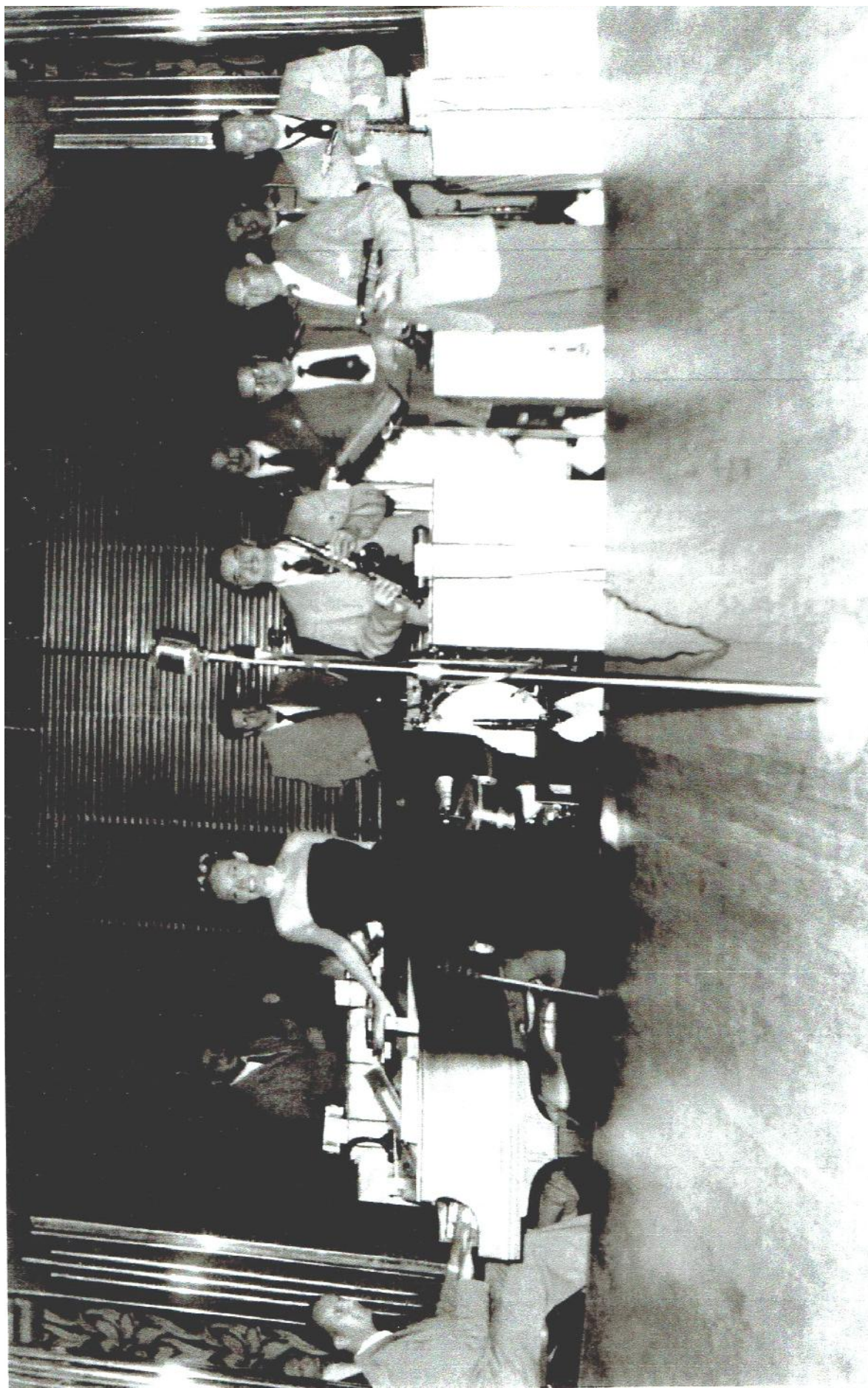
+ guest soloists.

We encourage each of you to mark it in your calendars now. Invite friends, family and fellow musicians. Come be a huge part of the success of another worthwhile live jazz exploration and be transported by the wonder and beauty of the unknown. We invite all ages, races and appreciators to take part in a journey through rhythmic bliss and harmonious exuberance. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for taking the time to resend this personal invitation to your Facebook friends, email lists and personal contacts.

We hope you will join us. We wish to leave you each month feeling a little more uplifted and excited than you might have been before you came through the doors that night and found your favorite seats.

Happy Holidays,  
Joe Barna





**The Francis Murphy Orchestra, L-R:** Chet Potts, p; Dominic Catoggio, bass; Lily St. Cyr, vocalist; Pat DeBlasio, drums; Buddy Bedell, sax; Shields Bruct, trumpet; Al Lanese, sax; Francis Murphy, trumpet; unidentified; Godfry "Gopper" Reiche, sax. The photo was taken at Riley's Lakehouse in Saratoga circa late '40s or early '50s.



# Searching for Francis Murphy

By C. Robie Booth

**Michael Catoggio** of East Greenbush is on a search for people with any connection to the late Francis Murphy, who led the Capital District's most popular big band of the 1930s and '40s.

Michael's father, Dominic, who died when his son was seven years old, was bassist and guitarist with that band for 20 years. Michael's only memory of seeing the band in person was at Hawkins Stadium. He also heard them live on radio stations WABY and WOKO from 10:30–11 p.m.

We do know, from *Times Union* writer Tip Roseberry on May 15, 1950, that

Murphy began as a violinist, studied at the Walter Damrosch School of Music, and played with a Russian symphony orchestra. A musicians' union strike prompted his return to Albany in 1921.

Veteran professional jazzmen have told me Murphy couldn't swing, but the fact that he spent a year with the Glen Gray Casa Loma band would belie that opinion.

Catoggio is working with long-time jazz buff **Bill Schilling** researching "the local music scene from 1938 to 1942." **Swingtime** will have an exclusive story when they have finished their study.



## Need a Tax Break?

The SWINGTIME JAZZ SOCIETY is a 501(c)(3) corporation, which means that your donations are tax-deductible. Please send contributions to

Patti Melita, SJS Treasurer  
PO Box 1906  
Schnectady, NY 12301



# Swingtime Snapshots



At the Swingtime Jazz Society concert on Oct 8, 2017, at Panza's on Saratoga Lake: Charles Cornell, Steve Kirsty, Nate Giroux and Matt Niedbalski (above). The jam session featured Cornell with Howard Lester, Jack Speraw, Tim Coakley and Steve Horowitz (below). All photos at the concert by Jerry Gordon.





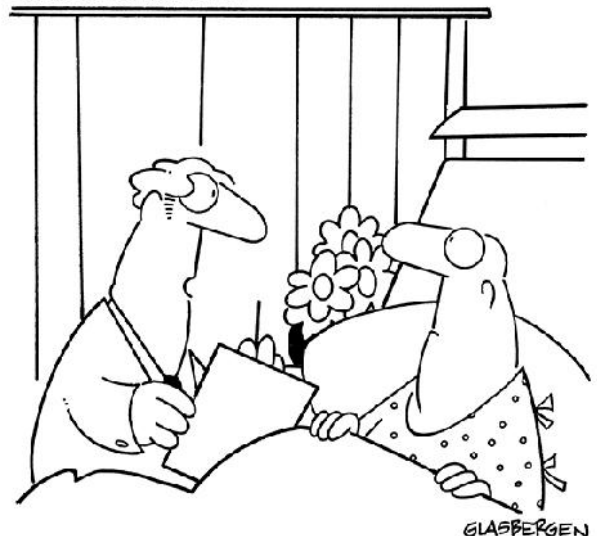


The **Phil Allen Concert Jazz Band** in a somewhat more casual setting than you'll usually find them. L-R: Tyler Giroux, Chris Pasin, Michael Benedict, Lou Smaldone, Wayne Hawkins, Kevin Barcome, Dave Fisk, Lee Russo, Scott Hall, Phil Allen, Dylan Canterbury, Steve Lambert. You can hear the band the third Thursday of every month at Troy Kitchen, 77 Congress St in Troy. Troy Kitchen has a nice stage for the band, a bar and lounge with comfortable, casual seating and a food court featuring eight vendors offering a wide variety of eclectic dining choices. (See Page 3 for Troy Kitchen's first-Thursday offering.) Photo by Beth Chapin Reineke.



The October 8 jam session included vocalists Patti Melita (L) and Maggie MacDougall.

© Randy Glasbergen / glasbergen.com



*"Your new pacemaker comes with Pandora so you can always have a song in your heart."*

# Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes on Jan. 14

**Michael Benedict** studied percussion with Jim Petercsak at the Crane School of Music at the State University College of New York (SUNY) at Potsdam and graduated in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in music education. He later attended the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University under the tutelage of Keith Copeland and graduated in 1990 with a master's degree in jazz studies. Michael served as a graduate teaching assistant to Dan Morgenstern at the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies. He has performed and/or recorded with jazz luminaries Gary Smulyan, Harry Allen, Dick Oatts, Steve Nelson, Sharel Cassity, Bruce Barth, Joe Locke, Rene Flemming, Gene Bertoncini, Marian McPartland, J.R. Monterose and Nick Brignola. He was a member of the Spike Jones Orchestra and the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra. He has toured the United States extensively, performing at numerous concert halls, colleges, clubs and festivals and has performed in Europe. In 2012, Michael went on a US State Department tour of Tunisia, Africa, where he taught and performed with the Planet Arts Trio. Michael is currently the leader of three ensembles, Jazz Vibes, BOPITUDE and The Gary McFarland Legacy Ensemble.

He has released five recordings to date. *Downbeat* magazine picked BOPITUDE "Five and One" as one of the best albums of 2013. His most recent release, "Circulation: The Music of Gary McFarland," was an Editor's Pick in *Downbeat* and listed as one of the Best Jazz Albums of 2015 by National Public Radio and critics Ted Gioia and Scott Yanow. After teaching high school band and jazz ensemble in the northern Catskill region of New York State, Michael retired in 2015 after a 25-year tenure. He has served as the past president of the Albany Musicians Union and the Greene County Music Educators Association. He is currently a member of the National Association for Music Education and the New York State Band Directors Association. Michael is an artist endorser for Grover Pro Percussion Sountone Cymbals and Regal Tip Drumsticks.

**David Gleason** is a pianist, composer, music educator and ethnomusicologist. He received an M.A. in music from Tufts University, where he

studied ethnomusicology and composition. As an ethnomusicologist he researched Caribbean folk and popular music in Puerto Rico and Cuba. His fieldwork culminated in a thesis entitled "La Parranda Puertorriquena: The Music, Symbolism and Cultural Nationalism of Puerto Rico's Christmas Serenading Tradition."

As a jazz and Latin pianist he has performed with ensembles such as RumbaNaMa, The Boston Latin Band, The Either/Orchestra, Altiplano, Mojive and the Kinewe African Drum Ensemble, as well as with renowned musicians like Laurel Massé, Fred Wesley, Danilo Perez and John Fedchock. He currently leads the acclaimed Latin jazz ensemble Sensemaya.

He studied music education and jazz studies at the Crane School of Music in Potsdam. He also studied jazz piano with the Capital Region's Lee Shaw. He has taught music theory, International Baccalaureate music and jazz ensemble at the Sayles School of Fine Arts and World Music at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

**Mike Lawrence** has been playing the upright bass since age 10 and the electric bass for over 15 years. He has freelanced in a variety of settings - everything that requires a bassist from jazz duos to 20-piece big bands, blues, rock and funk groups to singer/songwriters. His primary focus is now playing with various jazz musicians as time allows. He has performed with his fair share of artists in and around the Capital District. Recent gigs include Keith Pray's Soul Jazz Revival, Dave Gleason/Pete Sweeney/Sensemaya, The Yuko Kishimoto Trio, Joe Finn, Mark Capon, Mike Benedict's Jazz Vibes, Charlie Smith Blues Band and Tas Cru Blues Band.

Teaching has occupied many of his daytime hours for the past seven years both at public school and with private bass students; he holds a master's degree in music education from Boston University, bachelor's degree in music education from the College of Saint Rose and certificates from the multiple summer programs he attended at Berklee College of Music when he was a teenager.

**Pete Sweeney** is a drummer, author and educator living in the Capital Region. He studied with Dave Calarco and Joe Morello. He has performed, toured, and

(Continued on Page 10)





*Proudly Presents*

## **Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes**



Michael Benedict, Dave Gleason, Pete Sweeney, Mike Lawrence

**Sunday, January 14, 2018, 4-7 p.m.**

**Including an open jam session**



**Renaissance Restaurant  
820 Eastern Ave  
Schenectady, NY**

**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](mailto:rosenthalralph@verizon.net)**

# Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes on Jan. 14

(Continued from Page 8) recorded with many great musicians such as Pat Metheny, Larry Coryell, Lee Ritenour, John Abercrombie, Robben Ford, Andy Summers (The Police), Ronnie Earl, Duke Robillard, Ed Mann (Frank Zappa), Frank Gambale, Lorne Lofsky, "Dangerous" Dan Toler, Johnny "Clyde" Copeland, Mick Goodrick and Steve Bailey.

He has written 20 instructional books for the Alfred Publishing Company, including the "30 Day Drum Workout," "The Versatile Drummer"

and the "Drum Atlas" books on Cuba, Jamaica, Salsa, and Brazil. He teaches or has taught at the Berkshire Music School, Bard College at Simon's Rock, the Troy Music Academy, Union College and the Crown of the Continent Guitar Foundation. He is a member of the Latin jazz group Sensemaya, as well as the leader of his own groups.

He is an endorser of Mapex drums, Sabian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks and Aquarian drum heads.

*For the area's most up-to-date jazz calendar, visit [APlaceForJazz.org/calendar.htm](http://APlaceForJazz.org/calendar.htm)*

## *The Night Owl*

Continued from page 2

### *Looking Forward*

"Alice in Wonderland" at the Rep in Albany features five actors "in this delightfully diverse adaptation of Lewis Carroll's classic novel," says the flier. It's March 10. Call 518-445-7469 for details or reserved seats.

One of my very favorite plays is at the Rep (Capital Repertory Thea-

tre, North Pearl Street in downtown Albany) April 6–29. "Blithe Spirit" shows "Noel Coward's classic wit is in full form when a sé-ance gone awry brings haunting and hilarious consequences," we're told.

### *Artie Shaw Film*

Artie Shaw at his peak is shown in "Symphony of Swing" shown t'other night on Turner Classic Movies. It featured the great clarinetist, drummer Buddy Rich, thrush Helen Forrest and singer Tony Pastor, who also happened to be lead chair saxophonist. He later led a very popular big band which featured Albany's **Al Quaglieri** on trumpet, along with the Clooney sisters and arrangers Henry Mancini and Nelson Riddle.

### *And Gordon Parks*

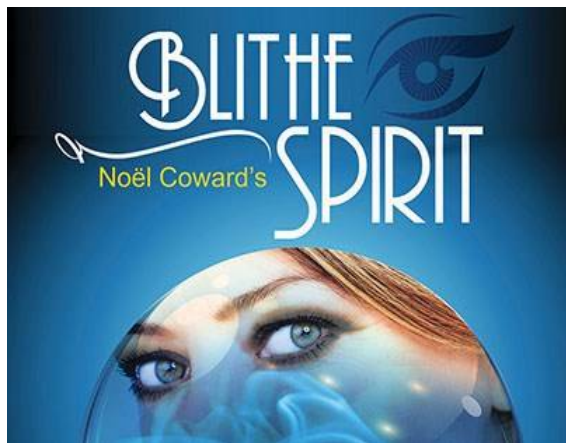
Gordon Parks' "The Learning Tree" aired recently. The pioneer black photographer wrote, produced, directed and did all of the photography on this brilliant 1969 film. It could be considered an evolution of education with a human touch. Uplifting.

### *Breaking News*

We just learned of the passing on December 16 of Keely Smith, the singer who, with her husband Louis Prima, was part of the most successful Las Vegas lounge act of the 1950s. She was 89. 15 (or more?) years ago, Bev Elander interviewed Keely for this publication. We're hoping to re-run it in the next issue.

**Straight ahead, little friend.**

**-C. ROBIE BOOTH**





# Preserving Lee Shaw's Memories and Memorabilia

By Peg Delaney

Anyone who knew Lee Shaw knows she loved jazz so much she recorded everything onto cassettes. From the radio she recorded Marian McPartland's "Piano Jazz," Jim Wilke's "Jazz After Hours," Bill McCann's Saturday morning show on WCDB, Tim Coakley's jazz show on WAMC and Nancy Wilson's show, plus she recorded herself in clubs, teaching lessons, or while practicing and exploring songs. There were perhaps 6,000 cassettes. A few thousand went to the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame along with Lee's awards and the photos she had in her music room walls. Before Lee died, her house was being sold and historian Jeff Kos came and brought these items back to Oklahoma. Jeff got to visit with Lee then and of course she played for him!

Now don't forget there were still thousands of cassettes left. Skidmore College was also a beneficiary of Lee's musical items but there is not one cassette player to be found on campus. They didn't want them. So ... many large boxes filled with cassettes sat in the Delaney garage for two years—until this Thanksgiving 2017!

This summer, I had been meeting with Diane Reiner and Beverly Elander to go through personal items of Lee's. Lee had kept a diary while she was in high school that was precious along

with letters she wrote to her parents while in college. All are very telling of this young Lee and her perseverance to learn all about piano. Later journals tell of living in Puerto Rico, learning Latin music, the move to the Mohawk River and sitting in at the Petit Paris and of the clothes she wore on her gigs and concerts.

Diane, Bev and I realized these journals, diaries, family photos and personal items needed to be archived and in one place, so Jeff Kos and the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame agreed happily to come and get the rest of Lee's items. He came to the Delaneys' the night before Thanksgiving, not in the two-door panel van he was supposed to rent but in a Ford sedan that was donated to the museum. We were able to pack that car to the ceiling with 17 of the 20 boxes. Jeff stayed with us for Thanksgiving and left the day after. Lucky guy! He got a taste of my cooking. The Thanksgiving dinner was great as were breakfast and lunch the next day!

Jeff told me The Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame would like to have a future memorial concert with Lee's students and this is a quote from Jeff: "We are looking forward to studying and sharing Lee's life and legacy with the world."

This week I shipped the last 3 boxes to Jeff along with the Tupperware he left in my refrigerator!

## 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](mailto:pegjazz1@gmail.com) or 518-237-3129.

# Join Swingtime Jazz Society

The **Swingtime Jazz Society** roster of members has reached 88. 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 Jan. 14 attraction, **Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes**.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Mail to: Patti Melita, SJS Treasurer  
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Schenectady, NY 12301

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## *The Index*

Francis Murphy Orch ..... Pages 4, 5  
Joe Barna ..... Page 3  
Lee's Memorabilia ..... Page 11  
Lee Shaw Scholarship Fund ..... Page 11  
Michael Benedict Jazz Vibes .. Page 1, 8, 9  
Night Owl ..... Page 2  
Swingtime Jazz Society ..... Page 12  
Swingtime Snapshots ..... Pages 6, 7