
March, 2017

The ATJS Jazz Messenger is circulated mostly by e-mail, and is published as we have an important message or gather enough material to assemble a new issue. We are halfway through the 2016-17 season, as good an occasion as any to crank out a new issue.

President's Message



We are well into the 2016-17 ATJS season. Things have gone well thus far, with four strong traditional jazz concerts and a highly successful 15th Annual ATJS Jam Session on January 8. As always, we want everyone with an interest in traditional jazz to come to Cap City Comedy Club, have a good time, and help keep the wonderful music that is traditional jazz alive and well in the Greater Austin Area. We are working through our eleventh season at Cap City Comedy Club.

The new season has seen good performances by the old reliables Silver Creek Jazz Band and the New Orleans Jazz Band of Austin, and two of the newer traditional jazz ensembles in the area, the Dirty River Dixie Band and La Grosse Tete. The ATJS Jam Session drew over 215 attendees, of whom 34 performed. This was one performer short of the record set in 2015. As usual, several new performers not previously known to the Austin traditional jazz community came forward, including two adventurous high school students.

Attendance at ATJS events continues to be a continuing concern for an organization holding concerts in a venue which will comfortably hold 300 patrons. Cap City Comedy Club has been a good home for ATJS for ten seasons, and we want to stay put. The Society averaged 120 persons a show during the fall, then pulled in 215 people for its annual outreach event, the ATJS Jam Session. New Orleans Jazz Band of Austin pulled in 156 people. We try to schedule around important events and holidays, but it is sometimes hard to say when a good crowd will show up on Sunday afternoon.

This year, we have one new band to present. Ron Fink and the Rowdies will be joining us from the Dallas area. We anticipate that the band will be spearheaded by three mainstays of recent All-Star concerts: Bob Krenkel on reeds, Brian Standridge on trumpet and Gene LeBeaux on trombone. This should be a splendid concert, and I hope everyone can attend.

We have two groups visiting from the San Antonio area: the Mission City Hot Rhythm Cats and the ever-popular Band Aid Jazz Band. They are following on the heels of an exciting new band from the Mission City, the Dirty River Dixie Band. Three local bands have already performed: Silver Creek Jazz Band, La Grosse Tete and Tommy Griffith and the New Orleans Jazz Band of Austin. The slate will be completed by the ATJS All-Stars on June 11.

We live in an age when traditional jazz festivals and societies are cutting back or going out of business. Here in Austin, we have managed to hold the line, and preserve our great music for a few more years. Someday, it would be great to break whatever invisible barriers have been holding us back, and begin drawing 200 people per concert. In the meantime, we will move forward one event at a time, one season at a time. Your Directors are trying a variety of marketing ventures.

Dave Stoddard

Thanks to our Poster Hosts!

Every month, the Society puts up posters for its concerts. Here are our current poster venues.

Cedar Park Public Library	Leander Public Library	Round Rock Public Library
Music and Arts 2541 South I-35 Round Rock, TX	Premier Music Academy 1400 E. Old Settlers Blvd. Round Rock, TX	Half-Price Books 1601 South I-35 Round Rock, TX (and occasionally in other stores)
Strait Music Company North 13945 Research Boulevard Austin, TX	Strait Music Company South 2428 W. Ben White Blvd. Austin, TX	Sam Bass Music 801 Brandi Lane Round Rock, TX
Capital Music Center 6101 North Burnet Road Austin, TX	Austin's Musical Exchange 6015 Burnet Road Austin, TX	Westbank String Shop 6301 Manchaca Road Austin, TX

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ATJS Annual Survey

The Austin Traditional Jazz Society will soon be sending its annual survey out. For the first time in a number of years, the survey will be mailed to all Society members, with instructions for easy mail-back. All members are urged to voice their opinions on a variety of topics affecting the Society.

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Current ATJS Board of Directors

Dave Stoddard	President
Tom Straus	President Emeritus
Wes Lokken	Treasurer
Martha Stoddard	Recording Secretary
Becky Maddox	Director
Lynn Serrano	Director
Bill Troiano	Director
Nancy-Jane Griffith	Director

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HELP WANTED: Your Austin Traditional Jazz Society is in need of volunteers. We are one Director short. Help in staging concerts is always welcome (front desk folks), and we could really use someone with expertise in social media such as Twitter and Snapchat.

A Texas Jazz Legend: Jim Cullum, Jr.

Jim Cullum, Jr. is a jazz cornetist and the leader of the Jim Cullum Jazz Band. His childhood was spent in the Dallas area. He is the son of Jim Cullum, Sr., a respected jazz reed player who performed with Jack Teagarden and Jimmy Dorsey. Because of the influence of jazz on the household, Jim, Jr. grew up listening to jazz records and jazz bands, and developed a love for early jazz. He formed a traditional jazz quartet while in high school.

Jim Cullum, Sr. was interested in running a jazz club, and opened the Hollywood Club on a desolate stretch of commercial highway near Dallas. Traffic was sparse, the club roof leaked and eventually the enterprise collapsed. However, it was an interesting experience, and the groundwork was laid for much better things to come.

Jim, Jr. attended Trinity University, and San Antonio became his home. He and Jim, Sr. founded the Happy Jazz Band, with Jim, Sr. on clarinet and Jim, Jr. on cornet. In 1963 a group of San Antonio business investors founded The Landing, a new jazz club on the Riverwalk. This venture was a success. A year later the Happy Jazz Band began broadcasting on a San Antonio radio station.

The Happy Jazz Band was also a great success, playing an average of three nights a week, appearing in jazz festivals and releasing several 33 rpm records. It continued until the death of Jim, Sr. in 1973. In 1974 Jim, Jr. unveiled the Jim Cullum Jazz Band, a full-time traditional jazz ensemble with the best players Jim, Jr. could attract. Over the years these sidemen (many with long tenures) have included Allan Vaché, Evan Christopher, Ron Hockett, Brian Ogilvie, Randy Reinhart, Mike Pittsley, Don Mopsick, John Sheridan, Hal Smith, Howard Elkins, Jim Turner, Buddy Apfel, Cliff Gillette, Bobby Black, Mark Hess and Ed Torres.

The Jim Cullum Jazz Band has released 23 jazz CDs, played at jazz festivals and other venues all over the United States, and had several notable foreign tours. When not on the road, the band played six nights a week at The Landing. The club itself moved several times and wound up in the Hyatt Hotel. The band hosted the National Public Radio Show Riverwalk Jazz for many years. In 2012 Jim Cullum donated the show's materials to Stanford University.

In 2010 Jim Cullum, Jr. sold The Landing to a new owner, hoping to continue playing there without the responsibilities of running the club itself. Ultimately this was not a success. By the end of 2011 the club was headed in a different direction and the Jim Cullum Jazz Band was looking for new local playing venues after 37 years. The band has performed at several San Antonio establishments since then, but the band has shrunk to a quartet and is now playing about three nights a week.

In October, 2016 the City of San Antonio issued a Distinction in the Arts award to Jim Cullum, Jr. for his lifetime achievements in jazz. Readers of jazz history will be hard-pressed to find a longer or more successful career as a player, a bandleader or as a club owner. One is reminded of the glory days of Pete Fountain and his long run in the French Quarter of New Orleans. Jim and Pete were friends, and Jim played for Pete's funeral in August, 2016.

On a more local basis, the Jim Cullum Jazz Band's run in San Antonio has afforded Austin jazz fans the opportunity to hear a world-class traditional jazz ensemble any time they wanted to make the trek down I-35. The band has made a series of notable appearances for the Austin Traditional Jazz Society, and holds the ATJS record for the largest audience at a Cap City Comedy Club concert with 263 attendees.

When many people think of traditional jazz, they tend to think of cities like New Orleans, New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Jim Cullum, Jr. proved it could be done just as well in San Antonio.



Remaining 2016-17 Schedule

- March 12 Band Aid Jazz Band
- April 9 Mission City Hot Rhythm Cats
- May 7 Ron Fink and the Rowdies
- June 11 ATJS All-Stars

All concerts will be from 2 to 5 p.m. at Cap City Comedy Club, 8120 Research Boulevard, Austin, TX (US 183 at Anderson Square).

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A Century of Recorded Jazz

On February 26, 1917 the Victor Talking Machine Company recorded a series of jazz records by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a quintet from New Orleans. The very first side was The Livery Stable Blues, and the record sold over one million copies. The ODJB became a pop culture sensation, on a scale not seen again until the Benny Goodman Orchestra launched the Swing Era in 1935 and the Beatles burst onto the pop music scene in the early 1960s.

The success of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band recordings launched jazz into a new mass medium. From the inception of jazz in 1895 (generally accepted as having began with the Buddy Bolden Band in New Orleans) until 1917, the only way to hear jazz was to be within earshot of a band which was playing. Recordings themselves were a 19th century invention, but it took time for jazz musicians and recording companies to find each other.

Contemporary accounts relate that some bandleaders were reluctant to record for fear of being imitated. Recording companies found the new music unfamiliar and jarring. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band had a recording session with Columbia in January, 1917. Columbia refused to release the results because they feared they would not sell. Once the ODJB Victors paved the way, however, a succession of jazz bands found their way into recording studios. Jazz records became a staple of the record-buying public.

In 1920 radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh became the first commercial broadcasting station in the United States, and a new mass medium was opened to jazz in time. For many years, jazz performances were broadcast live. The broadcasts themselves were sent into the airwaves and are long gone. Recordings made of the broadcasts are our only archival resource.

Listening to early jazz recordings requires a certain education of the ear. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, while full of energy, was stiff and rag-timey. One can detect no improvisation, now held to be the heart of traditional jazz. The recordings themselves were primitive by today's standards. The recording industry had gone from cylinders to 78 rpm discs, but the recordings themselves were made with the now long-discarded acoustical process. Musicians played into a horn, which transferred the sounds through a diaphragm of oscillating sheets of various materials to a needle cutting grooves into a wax record. The musicians had to spread out to have roughly the same volume of sound for the horn, and impact sounds such as drums were muffled or discarded entirely.

In the mid-1920s acoustical recordings were succeeded by electrical recordings. Now the band played into a microphone which transferred the sounds to the wax record. The mastering process also improved, and the best electrical recordings made in 1926 (also by Victor) sound surprisingly good even by today's standards. The wax record was eventually replaced by a master recording tape. The 78 rpm record soldiered on into the 1950s but was supplanted and then replaced by 45 single-play and 33 rpm long-play records. LPs were the industry standard until the introduction of compact digital discs in the early 1980s.

Jazz records furnish an invaluable historical resource for the followers of jazz. Early jazz records, imperfect as they sometimes are, furnish the only known examples of the playing of many jazz pioneers. We will never know for sure what pioneers who did not record or whose recordings have been lost sounded like. These include such important figures as Buddy Bolden, Freddie Keppard, and Emmett Hardy (said to have had a major influence on the style of Bix Beiderbecke). Later records give a very good idea of the player's style and abilities.

A century on, we continue to record jazz performances. Thanks to re-issues and the presence of many historical recordings on Internet sites such as YouTube and the Red Hot Jazz Archive, we can readily access many early jazz recordings.



The Mission City Hot Rhythm Cats



When: Sunday, April 9, 2017 from 2 to 5 p.m. Doors open 1:00 p.m.

Where: Cap City Comedy Club, 8120 Research Blvd. (US 183) at Anderson Square in North Austin.

Admission: \$10, Students and members of Austin Jazz Society, \$5.00. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

Features: Good food (kitchen open 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.), full bar to 5:00 p.m., (suggested minimum: 2 items, food and/or drink). Two dance floors, large free parking lot with unlimited overflow a block east. Hall holds up to 300 people — lots of room for all! ATJS concerts are Family-Friendly!

www.atjs.org

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ATJS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization