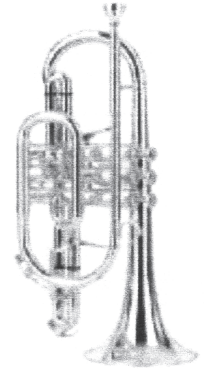


JAZZ SOUNDINGS

THE PUGET SOUND TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY



January 2024

Volume 49, Number 1

BE A PART OF HISTORY AS THE AIN'T NO HEAVEN SEVEN BEGINS ITS 41ST YEAR!

By John Ochs

As reported in recent issues of the *Jazz Soundings*, The Ain't No Heaven Seven (ANH7) hosted a gala celebration at the Royal Room on November 4, 2023, marking its 40th anniversary. On January 21, 2024, the band takes its journey to the next level by embarking on its 41st year as a jazz band at our first concert of the new year. Bandleader Dr. Terry Rogers' article in the October issue recalled the band's history, so rather than rehashing an already well-told story, this essay will try to give the reader an idea of just how remarkable it is for a band to keep going for such a long time.

The world has seen a lot of change since the ANH7 played its first gig in 1983. It was a time when home computers and cable TV were looked upon as nothing more than newfangled novelties, and people still relied on newsprint and the "Big Three" TV networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) rather than the internet for their news. Apple's Macintosh desktop computer and Microsoft's first Windows operating system had not yet been introduced to the marketplace. The worldwide internet was still seven years out, and high-speed broadband service would not be available in the home for two decades.

The free flow of information and the rise of the gig economy resulting from these advances have affected the ability of leaders in every field to keep specific groups of people together for long periods of time, but this is nothing new to the jazz world. King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, one of the most influential jazz bands ever, disbanded after just eight years (1917–25). Famous swing bands like those led by Benny Goodman (1934–49), Jimmie Lunceford (1929–47), Chick Webb (1926–39), Andy Kirk (1929–48), Cab Calloway (1930–50), and the Dorsey brothers (1927–56) all fell short of the ANH7's run. The list of prominent bands surviving over 40 years is a short one, mostly limited to iconic bands like those led by Duke Ellington (1924–74), Count Basie (1935–84), and Woody Herman (1936–86).

On the West Coast, Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, the first traditional-jazz revival band, lasted 11 years (1939–50). The Turk Murphy Jazz Band, the best-known revival band after Watters, kept the

faith for 40 years (1947–87). More recently, the High Sierra Jazz Band enjoyed a run of 42 years (1977–2019), likely longer than any West Coast festival band except the Uptown Lowdown mentioned below.

As far as Pacific Northwest bands are concerned, Bert Barr's Uptown Lowdown Jazz Band spanned a period of 47 years (1971–2018). Other jazz bands

(Continued on page 4)

WHERE:

Ballard Elks Lodge
6411 Seaview Ave. NW
Seattle, WA

WHEN: January 21
1–4 p.m.

ADMISSION: Pay only at door
PSTJS members, \$15
Nonmembers, \$20

Free admission for those under 21 who accompany a person paying admission.

FURTHER INFO: Carol Rippey,
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UPCOMING 2024 PSTJS EVENTS

Feb. 18: Alex Guilbert's Stampede Sextet
Mar. 17: Dave Loomis Septet
Apr. 21: Market Street Jazz Band
May 19: Seattle Trad Jazz Band

Raffle Donation

Accolades to Charla Sullivan, who turned the money received in the 50/50 draw on December 17 back to the Youth Scholarship Fund.

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JAZZ SOUNDINGS

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PREZ SEZ

By Terry Rogers

I am writing this in the evening after having listened and danced to The Yeti Chasers at our December meeting. It was a very enjoyable afternoon. This is a really good band, which played some lovely renditions of tunes that are known to us but played with such feeling for the music and for each other.



The band members are all skilled and talented musicians who play with taste and sensitivity. A key feature is how well they listen to and respect each other. Thank you Ray and the Yeti Chasers. Beautifully done!

Listening to them this afternoon got me thinking about the nature of traditional jazz: what it is, who plays it, and the various styles of its performance. And yet it is all traditional jazz.

Think of the Uptown Lowdown, with its two-cornet, brassy-centered approach (also with a world-class reed section), or Evergreen Classic, centered on presenting many tunes as they were originally played back in the day. Or the Rainier Jazz Band (who played at our wedding reception 37 years ago...), presenting their offerings in a true New Orleans style.

There have been many more over the years: Excelsior Jazz Band, Market Street Jazz Band, Holo Trad Band, New Orleans Quintet, Grand Dominion, Phoenix Jazzers, and Duwamish Jazz Band, to name a few. Each had its own style, in part influenced by the unique contributions by its members, and in part influenced by its leader and the path prompted by the leader in choosing the music and how it was to be played. The music thus presented was different in some respects, but the same in others. The players are there by choice and thus gravitate towards a collaborative grouping that satisfies their own wishes concerning the music chosen and how it is to be played and presented. Different but the same, it is all traditional jazz, the unique American art form that is the basis for so much of the music, jazz and otherwise, that has come to us since.

The Ain't No Heaven Seven plays for us in January, 40 years after the band was started. Of course it is different from years past, but the approach has always been to respect the music, the audience and each other. It has been a most enjoyable ride, and each of us is truly grateful for the opportunity to continue to

present this music. We are pleased to be joined by drummer Mike Daugherty, Steve Wright on cornet and reeds, and Andy Hall on trombone. We will have a really good time and I hope that you will join us and share the music with us. And why not bring a friend or two? I hope to see you then.

ONE red X on your *Jazz Soundings* label reminds you that it's time to RENEW your membership

TWO red XXs on your label means that you must RENEW NOW!

THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF JAZZ SOUNDINGS!

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The Royal Room, 5000 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle.

(206) 906-9920; website: theroyalroomseattle.com

THE AIN'T NO HEAVEN SEVEN (Continued from page 1)

like the Great Excelsior (1962–1991), the Rainier (1976–1990), the Grand Dominion (1983–2019), and the Evergreen Classic (1985–2019) all failed to reach the 40-year mark. The Duwamish Jazz Band, founded by Ray Johnston in 1979, deserves mention as a contender, but Ray died in 1999. After that, his wife Carol kept the band's name alive by booking jobs under the Duwamish banner, but the band's size and personnel varied from gig to gig.

For our January 21st session, the ANH7's personnel will be pretty much the same as for most of its recent PSTJS appearances. Dr. Terry Rogers will lead the band, playing alto and soprano saxophones. Dr. David Gilbert will play piano, as he has done since the band's beginning. Al Rustad, the third founding member of the band, will anchor the rhythm section of tuba. Other band members of long standing are Zane Smith on B-flat and bass clarinets, Andy Hall on trombone, Gene Silberberg on banjo, and Mike Daugherty on drums. Rounding out the ensemble, Ron Rustad will contribute vocals. Ron's rich baritone and creative stylings have brightened many local sessions ever since his early songster days with the Rainier Jazz Band in the 1980s.

Forty years as a band and still going strong is an achievement that deserves an extended celebration. If you missed the November 4th anniversary festivities, you can still participate by joining us January 21 at the Ballard Elks club when the Ain't No Heaven Seven breaks the 40-year barrier and marches triumphantly into the rarified air of its next decade. And please, bring a friend or two. Remember, those under 21 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult paying admission.



Upper row: Gene Silberberg, banjo; Al Rustad, tuba, Mike Daugherty, drums. Lower row: Andy Hall, trombone; Zane Smith, clarinets; Terry Rogers, saxophones; Ron Rustad, vocals; David Gilbert, piano.



NOTES AND COMMENTS

By Gary Milligan

I first heard about the Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society from Terry Rogers, whose acquaintance I had made around February of 2023. In our first encounter, it took the two of us all of about five minutes to discover that we were each musicians, that we were horn players, and that we had more than a passing interest in the form of music commonly known as jazz.

Master recruiter that he is, without breaking a sweat, Terry casually mentioned an organization he was involved with—the Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society. Intrigued, I soon found that Terry had gone ahead and basically just signed me up as a member. Soon, newsletters began appearing in my mailbox. (Note: not my Inbox—these came in through the Post Office!) Before long, I found myself, along with my fiancée, Heather, committing a few hours on a spring Sunday afternoon in the event room at the venerable Ballard Elks Club.

What struck me first upon entering the room was the magnificent view: The Sound, Olympic Mountains, the sky, boats and ships—vessels of all types cruising close by in and out of the nearby ship canal. It is very hard to beat that view anywhere in the city, in my estimation. Nice venue! Meanwhile, a crowd of around 40 generally “older” folks were milling about, sitting and chatting at long tables while musicians filtered in and began warming up.

A calm, friendly atmosphere pervaded the room. This was not surprising, given the event, but pleasing nonetheless. This type of vibe was indeed something you’d actually expect to find at a historical service club in Ballard on a Sunday afternoon populated by a roomful of folks who have “gotten on in years.” The stage was set, microphones in place, brief announcements were made, followed by an introduction of the band. Before long, some very pleasant music filled the air. There is nothing—repeat, nothing—quite like close-up live music as an experience. It was definitely happiness-producing. The description I would use for this music was, for lack of a better word, old-timey.

Turns out, I like old-timey music (and other stuff). I like ‘60s and ‘70s music, too. I grew up on a pretty wide musical palette that included the Beatles, Beach Boys, Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, Pink Floyd, Tower of Power, and Chicago (first two albums); my genres went from MoTown to soul, funk, R&B, and disco. I liked classical music as well. That’s all my dad listened to by the time the ‘70s rolled around.

But now when I hear traditional jazz that dates back to, say, the 1920s, I tend to sort of transport to an earlier time, way before I was alive. This is when my grandparents may have danced at speakeasies or forbidden jazz clubs. (My 1891-born grandmother often claimed the title “flapper” and brought out the corresponding dress as proof.) It hearkens to a time in our country when established norms were being challenged in very new ways, and jazz was integral to that scene, as well as being so much fun.

A bit of background on me. I grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and attended Indiana University, then transferred in 1977 as a junior to the University of Washington to major in oceanography. I lived briefly in Tucson, Arizona, after college, then moved back to Chicago for about 10 years until finally relocating to Seattle in 1989, where I’ve lived ever since. I have three children, now in their 30s and 40s, who themselves have produced five grandchildren, happily all located close by.

My musical experience began at around age eight, when my best friend Keith informed me he was now playing the trumpet and by virtue of so doing was a member of our elementary school orchestra. I urgently informed my parents, probably the same day, that I wished to start playing the trumpet, and thankfully, a trumpet was soon produced. Despite hearing how “hard” it was to play this instrument, I found I had little difficulty producing good-sounding notes from the start. I remember being amazed at how three valves could produce such an entire world of sound. I learned in fourth grade how to read music, and when, in a relatively brief period, I stumbled through “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” followed by (you know!) “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” I was completely and utterly hooked. I ended up taking lessons regularly, and was full-on in both band and orchestra in junior high school. I saved my money on a paper route to acquire a Bach Stradivarius 37 in seventh grade. I carried it most everywhere I went. I was named a Modern Music Master in eighth grade. I played in the jazz band in high school and absolutely loved it, but then quit and moved onto other things. Apart from a few decades away from the instrument in the early adult and child-rearing years, I am still playing 60 years later.

In recent years, I’ve played in a number of different blues, jazz, and rock bands, absolutely loving it. I got to play the Blues Brother’s version of “Sweet Home Chicago” in a swell wedding band. That experience made my life complete up until then.

(Continued on page 7)

Photo Review of Black Swan Classic Jazz Band November 19, 2023

Photos courtesy of Bob Morgan



The band: Marilyn Keller, vocals; Kit Johnson, leader and tuba; John Kaleta, banjo; Steve Matthes, clarinet; Rick Holzgrafe, trumpet; Don Stone, trombone; Ron Leach, drums, and Andy Hall, piano.

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The Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the performance and preservation of traditional jazz. Your membership and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Thank you.

NOTES AND COMMENTS (Continued from page 5)

For those readers who may be wondering, I have never been, and am not currently, a working oceanographer.

So, back to PSTJS and my experiences with the events this past year and with the organization. Over the years, I've learned enough about the history of jazz (and its parent, the blues) to know that this music form—traditional jazz—is part and parcel of all American popular music, from the famous big bands of the 1940s, on up to the music we hear today. That includes rap, hip hop, K-pop, and all the other “pops.”

Anyway, back to the Elks Club. As the music continued, folks started hitting the dance floor. A few were clearly highly competent dancers and knew the various steps of foxtrot, Charleston, and so forth. Other couples simply held each other gently and swayed to the rhythm. Now that's really sweet, I thought.

At some point, a parade broke out. This consisted of folks happily brandishing elaborately hand-decorated umbrellas—parasols, I suppose—that were brought out of storage. I had never seen that before. The parasol parade was, I learned, a PSTJS tradition from the time it was founded some 40-odd years ago. How corny! How lovely!

This traditional jazz is music, and an experience, that is worthy of being preserved, expanded, and brought to as wide an audience as possible. Events like these are really wonderful in keeping the music alive and, importantly, providing promotion and audiences for these bands. I say, bring the kids! They may not understand it, but I believe it will be good for them. And it may just infect them with enthusiasm for music, however they wish to express it.

The whole experience with PSTJS has been great fun. You might even see me there at some point with a single-digit-aged child related to me. And don't be too surprised if they summon the courage, of course, with their Papa's encouragement and participation, to grab a parasol and jump in.

We're looking for new members
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