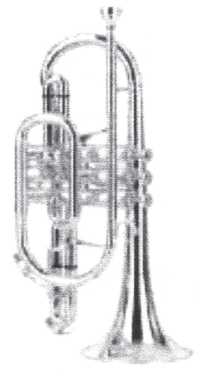


JAZZ SOUNDINGS

THE PUGET SOUND TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY



September 2015

Volume 40, Number 7

THE TRADITION ENDURES! THE BOB SCHULZ FRISCO JAZZ BAND WILL OPEN PSTJS' 2015-16 SEASON.

By George Swinford

On Sunday, September 20th, Bob and the band will provide an exciting "stomp-off" for our next series of concerts. This will be their 16th consecutive September appearance in Seattle. In all, it will be the 19th time they have played for our society. This certainly makes them part of our tradition.

That tradition has also come to include a Saturday gig for the band, first at the old New Orleans Restaurant, and now at the Royal Room, in Columbia City. On the 19th they will entertain us there from 4:00 pm until 7:00.

This is the line-up we'll be hearing this time around: On the front line, Bob Schulz, leading the band on cornet. On trombone,

Doug Finke, and playing that hot Chicago clarinet, Kim Cusack. Chicagoan Mike Walbridge will play tuba. Scott Anthony on banjo and guitar will be partnered with Hal Smith on drums and Seattle's incomparable Ray Skjelbred on piano.

These top-notch players share long musical associations with one another, some going back to Turk Murphy and the Original Salty Dogs. They have all had extensive playing and recording careers. Hear them at the Royal Room, at 5000 Rainier Avenue South, on Saturday the 19th and join your PSTJS friends at the Ballard Elks on Sunday the 20th to enjoy them once again.

WHERE:

Ballard Elks Lodge
6411 Seaview Ave. NW, Seattle

WHEN:

1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. **September 20**

ADMISSION:

\$12 PSTJS members
\$15 non-members. Pay only at door.

FURTHER INFO:

Carol Rippey 425-776-5072.

Or - website: www.pstjs.org. Plenty of free parking; great view & dance floor, snacks, coffee, and other beverages available.

MIKE DUFFY: A REMINISCENCE

By Ray Skjelbred

Mike Duffy, my first friend in music, and a friend for over 50 years, died recently. Seattle jazz listeners may know him as the bass player in the Grand Dominion band, or the Great Excelsior band, or the New Orleans Quintet at the New Orleans Creole Restaurant, or perhaps the bass player in a fine group called The Roadrunners, but I think back to when we were in our teens and beginning a new world at the University of Washington. We were excited about discovering jazz and we plunged into it with our souls, but we were also discovering literature, writing, politics, history, film and the endless world of

creative exploration. For us, that is what the time and place meant. It all went together. We wanted to expand our inner worlds and it seemed inevitable that we would both become jazz musicians, English teachers and lifelong friends.

Mike's background was different from mine. He had been playing bass when he attended Shoreline High School and had a network of friends who played music and were interested in jazz. And that included Bob Jackson (cornet), Bob McAllister (trombone), Rich Adams (clarinet), and Ed Alzman (drums), all original members of The Great Excelsior Jazz Band. I, however,

didn't know anyone. I played accordion, grabbed a washboard sometimes and had fantasies about being a piano player.

I met Mike after Sylvia Graf had bumped into him at a rummage sale while they were both looking for old jazz records. I knew the Graf family and Sylvia led Mike onto me and together we started listening to great, old jazz records at Bob Graf's house. Then I met legendary jazz pianist Johnny Wittwer, I took lessons, and pretty soon Mike and I were figuring out how to play jazz and seeking out music sessions with his Shoreline music friends.

Continued on page 3

Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society

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425-776-5072 www.pstjs.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Elks Lodge, Ballard, 6411 Seaview Ave N.W., Seattle
Sept 20 Bob Schulz Frisco Jazz Band
Oct 18 Solomon Douglas & group
Nov 15 Evergreen Classic Jazz Band
Dec 20 Ray Skjelbred & the Yeti Chasers

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Deadline is the 10th of the month for the next month's issue

Gigs for Local Bands

BELLINGHAM TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY

1st Saturday, 2 - 5 pm VFW Hall 625 N. State St
Sept. 5 Clamdigger Jazz Band
Oct. 3 Swing Patrol
Nov. 7 Uptown Lowdown Jazz Band (6 pcs.)
Dec. 5 Crescent City Shakers

BOB SCHULZ FRISCO JAZZ BAND

Sept 19 4 - 7pm Royal Room 5000 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle

BOURBON STREET ALL STARS

1st Tuesday, 5-9pm at McCloud's Grillhouse
2901 Perry Ave, Bremerton, WA 98310 Res: 360-373-3093

DAVE HOLO TRIO

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Sept. 4 5-8pm
Sept. 18 5-8pm

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Sept. 25-27 "Jazz Band Ball" - Surrey, BC. Canada
www.jazzbandball.ca

GREATER OLYMPIA DIXIELAND JAZZ SOCIETY

2nd Sundays 1:00-4:30pm Elks Lodge. 1818 Fourth Ave., Olympia
Sept. 13 Market Street Dixieland Jass Band
Oct. 11 Bellingham Dixieland All Stars
Nov. 8 Black Swan Classic Jazz Band
Dec. 13 Dukes of Swing

PEARL DJANGO

Sept. 4 11:30am Bellingham, Levitt AMP summer concert series
Maritime Heritage Park 1600 C St, Bellingham, WA 98225
Sept. 4 7:30pm Orcas Island Jazz Festival 917 Mount Baker Rd,
Eastsound, WA 98245 360-376-2281
Sept. 18 7pm Rick Singer Photography Studio 415 1/2 West
Main Ave, Spokane, WA 509-838-3333
Sept. 19 7pm Icicle Creek Center for the Arts, Snowy Owl Theater
7409 Icicle Road; Leavenworth, WA 98826; 877-265-6026

RAY SKJELBRED AND THE YETI CHASERS

Sept. 25-27 "Jazz Band Ball" - Surrey, BC. Canada
www.jazzbandball.ca

UPTOWN LOWDOWN JAZZ BAND

Sept. 19 4:30pm Highline Jazz Festival - Burien, WA
Sept. 25-27 "Jazz Band Ball" - Surrey, BC. Canada
www.jazzbandball.ca

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JAZZ SOUNDINGS



On Your Dial.....

Saturday

7 - 12 pm Swing Years and Beyond KUOW 94.9 FM

Sunday

3 - 6 pm Art of Jazz, Ken Wiley, KPLU 88.5 FM

Mike Duffy continued from page 1

We were always hungry to learn music from recorded examples so we quickly became record collectors, searching for gems in thrift shops throughout Seattle. I remember Mike would call me every night to tell me what new 78's he had found that day. Then he had an idea. I didn't exactly approve, but I went along with it. He believed that in old Seattle homes there had to be thousands of old records that were neglected, forgotten or in the way in attics and basements. "Why not go door to door and ask for records?" he said. We could claim to be music students at the University of Washington who were doing research on old recordings and maybe the resident might have something he/she could donate to our project. I wasn't convinced, but we did it and Mike did all the talking. And, of course, the result was that we ended up with thousands of records, most of which were really terrible and somehow we had to get rid of them. But the plan worked. We did get some good ones and the adventure was fun.

Daily life in those days consisted of discussions of musical and literary discoveries that we had made in the last 24 hours. Sometimes these discussions took place on the roof of Parrington Hall at the UW, a little location Mike had figured how to get to. The world was exciting and moving quickly.

In the summer of 1961, at the urging of cornet player Bob Cooke, we headed for Denver in Mike's old car. Supposedly we could easily find jazz work there, and it would be fun. I remember sleeping on the lawn in front of a library somewhere in Idaho, and generally having the sense of adventure that made us feel like real jazz musicians. The weather was hot and we stopped along the way to wade into a river somewhere. And when Mike said, "They say this is good for you," he was quoting a line from *The Grapes of Wrath* where Pa Joad and his brother wade out into a river on their way to California. He knew the line that fit the scene and he knew that I would know it too. In Denver we were the "Seattle Rhythm Kings" and we did find a little work playing ragtime and Jelly Roll Morton songs. Better than that, we made good friendships with many jazz people in Denver.

The Great Excelsior Jazz Band settled into its first real incarnation in 1962 during the World's Fair in Seattle. We played at a place called the West Side Inn, in West Seattle. The group consisted of Bob Jackson, cornet; Bob McAllister, trombone; Rich Adams, clarinet; Mike Duffy, bass, Bill Lovy, guitar and banjo; Ed Alsman, drums; Ray Skjelbred, piano. We

were pretty young but we really played New Orleans jazz. We had been learning along the way and the music was hot, passionate and authentic. Mike's bass playing was a big part of it, creating a powerful rhythm that established the band sound.

After the West Side Inn we played around Seattle for many years. I was also teaching school and Mike would follow soon after. In 1965 we made our first official record on the GHB label. The great blues singer Claire Austin had moved to Seattle and we combined forces on a record that still sounds good today. We were starting to feel like real musicians now. Mike has always been interested in recording projects that represented the art of music and also personal musical history. He was responsible for producing many other recordings by the Great Excelsior band, small groups of Seattle friends and musicians in the San Francisco bay area. Most recently Mike organized a CD featuring music performed by Mike, Jim Goodwin (cornet) and me.

For many years Mike and I had a jazz radio program on KRAB-fm, an independent listener supported station with creative and wildly diverse programming. It was the brainchild of Lorenzo Milam who set out to overturn all expectations of what radio could or should be. Our most dramatic time there came in 1968 when Lorenzo sponsored a political campaign for KRAB sound engineer Richard Greene, who ran a silent campaign in the Republican primary for Washington State Land Commissioner. Bert Cole, the Democrat, was the incumbent and he always won reelection, so the Republican candidate never really mattered. And Richard Greene won the primary! The whole idea was kind of a joke, but it became a high powered one. After the primary, Lorenzo and other KRAB associates kicked the campaign into high gear. It became national news, a big article appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* and Lorenzo hired Mike, Howard Gilbert (drums) Bill Lovy (guitar) and me to write campaign songs that would be recorded and appear on radio and TV spots. Greene had said that if elected he would be the kind of land commissioner who would "fearlessly commission the land." He would merge the towns of Pysht and Forks into one city of Pyshtforks and would appoint Bert Cole as his main assistant. Our songs were based on old blues and jug band numbers and given the mood of the campaign, they were crazy and funny. We all contributed to the lyrics but Mike was especially good with little twists of meaning and clever word choices. They are

still in my head. "If you think our state looks shabby, it's time to make a change, and if special interests are grabby, just pull his lever and dump the grange." Maybe my favorite was "our Republican choice, he, will give Spokane to Boise." Mike produced a little extended play 33 1/3 of these songs. They were delightful. There was much more to the campaign but that was our biggest contribution. Of course, Richard Greene lost the election.

In 1969, The Great Excelsior Jazz Band had a happy run at a place called the A and B Tavern in Renton, but it was at a time when things were changing. My family and I would move to Berkeley in August, Bob Jackson was unavailable and our friend Jim Goodwin was taking his place, and guitarist Bill Lovy was in poor health and had only a few months to live. At the same time we met Jake Powel who would soon take over for Bill. After I left, the Great Excelsior band kept going for years and I know Mike had a big part in keeping it together. The excellent Bob Gilman took my place on piano.

Mike and I kept in contact and visited back and forth between Berkeley and Seattle. In the late 1970's Mike came down to stay in Berkeley for a while, taking a couple of years leave of absence from teaching. And he connected with the wonderful music scene that had pulled me down there in the first place. Mike became the bass player in Ev Farey's Golden State Jazz Band, which included Bob Mielke and Bill Napier, two great jazz musicians. Mike also worked at The Point with Dick Oxtot, one of our early musical heroes. Mike also joined me on many occasions, especially at the Bull Valley Inn in Port Costa.

When Mike returned to Seattle, he was very active with the Grand Dominion band and the New Orleans Quintet, and when Hal Smith organized a group called The Roadrunners, Mike was part of it and Mike and I were playing together again.

I believe Mike had a melancholy strain, and a sadness that ran through his years. Music meant everything to him, but daily life seemed to get difficult for him. In the last few years of his life people didn't see him much. He stayed home most of the time, but when I visited him he was always interested in what was going on in the music scene that I knew about. He didn't want to be part of it, but it was in his heart and he loved to listen to music at home. He was a great listener, a deep man and a dear friend. He played bass with power and conviction and his sound was unmistakable. We went through many years together and I will always miss him.

Big THANK YOU to these sponsors for Bob Schulz Frisco Jazz Band 2015

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