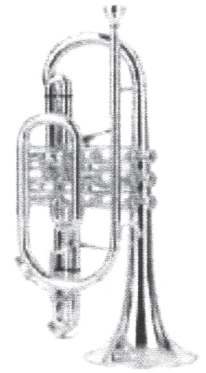


JAZZ SOUNDINGS

THE PUGET SOUND TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY



June 2022

Volume 47, Number 6

ON JUNE 19, ANDREW OLIVER AND HIS JAZZ BUDDIES PRESENT AN AFTERNOON WITH JELLY ROLL MORTON!

By George Swinford, with input by John Ochs



Andrew Oliver

Andrew Oliver, a Morton specialist, is our June bandleader. He was extensively profiled by John Ochs in the *Jazz Soundings* for May. To briefly recapitulate, he grew up playing classical piano in Portland. He studied music at Loyola University and immersed himself there in the New Orleans jazz culture. He finished his studies at Portland State University. In 2013 he moved to London, where he anchored some of the country's best traditional bands, being featured on 11 CDs. Most notably, he teamed with reedman David Horniblow to learn and master, in a single year, all of Jelly Roll



David Evans

Morton's 95 known compositions. In 2020 he returned to Portland, where he has been active in a dizzying variety of musical projects.

Andrew will be bringing Portland reedman David Evans to play clarinet. Since David is a stranger to most of us, some biographical notes seem in order. He began playing professionally in his native Alabama before he was old enough to drive to his gigs. (Shades of Benny Goodman!) He has performed and recorded with and arranged music for dozens of musicians. He composed the theme music for

Rebecca Kilgore's radio program, *Listen Here*, and arranged music for Mahalia Jackson's 100th birthday concert in New Orleans.

A 1984 scholarship to Loyola University brought him to New Orleans, where he quickly became a busy commercial and jazz musician. From the late '80s to the mid '90s David was musical

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WHERE:

Ballard Elks Lodge
6411 Seaview Ave. NW
Seattle, WA

WHEN:

June 19, 1–4 p.m.

ADMISSION: Pay only at door
PSTJS members, \$12
Nonmembers, \$15

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

FURTHER INFO: Carol Rippey,
425-776-5072, or www.pstjs.org.

Plenty of free parking; great view & dance floor; snacks, coffee, and other beverages available.

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UPCOMING PSTJS EVENTS

June 19: Andrew Oliver and His Buddies

GIGS FOR LOCAL BANDS

RAY SKJELBRED TRIO

Saturday, June 11, 7–9 p.m., Ray Skjelbred Trio,
Kenyon Hall, 7904 - 35th Ave. S. W., Seattle

Saturday, July 23, 5–7 p.m., Ray Skjelbred Trio,
Royal Room, 5000 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle. Website:
<http://theroyalroomseattle.com>

MATT WEINER & FRIENDS

Wednesdays, 7–10 p.m.
The Pink Door, 1919 Post Alley, Seattle
(206) 443-3241; website: <http://thepinkdoor.net>

JACOB ZIMMERMAN 3

Thursdays, 9–12 p.m.
Il Bistro, 93 Pike St. Suite A., Seattle
(206) 682-3049; website: ilbistro.net

ALEX GUILBERT

Thursdays, 6–9 p.m., Alex's Duo, Rouge Cocktail
Lounge, 10204 Main St., Bellevue. (425) 454-8455.

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**The advertising deadline is the 10th of the month
for the next month's issue.**

Ads must be submitted in a JPG or PDF format.

Mail checks *in advance*, payable to PSTJS to:

Gloria Kristovich
P.O. Box 373
Edmonds, WA 98020-0373

PREZ SEZ

By Terry Rogers

Oh boy, that was fun!

I am writing this two days out from our band performing at the PSTJS May meeting. I will admit that there is always a component of worry when performing for this organization that revolves around the existential questions of: are we good enough, do we have the right musicians, are we playing the right tunes, are there too many vocals, are all players happy with the number of solos...you get the idea. Even considering all of those concerns, the fact remains that we did it and carried it off pretty well. And that is the main message; you just have to get out there and make it happen.



The core of our band—piano, tuba and sax—has been playing together for almost 40 years. Four other original members have moved on to the great jam session in the sky. Banjo and clarinet have been with us for many years, and it was great to have Bert Bertram back with us for his wonderful trombone work and crowd-pleasing, showman-style vocals. And Ron Rustad's vocals are always a highlight.

It is said that there is diminishing interest in "this style" of music, particularly by the younger set. I find this to be interesting, because almost all of the music played today—rock, swing, rap, modern jazz, country, blues, and bluegrass—has its origin in the foundation of "America's music"—what we call Dixieland or traditional jazz. Tune structure, chord progressions, melody lines, and rhythmic underpinnings all come from this music that was born out of the American experience, starting in the Mississippi Delta. It reflects the multicultural and mixed social and community experience, speaking to the struggles and joys of our country's citizens in the first part of the 20th century.

Remember that this was a time before radio and movies with sound tracks. Thus local, frequent, and available live music carried not only the entertainment burden, but also told the stories of love, loss, enjoyment, and heartbreak of the citizens. It is not "old time" music; it is our collective music, reflecting not only who we

are but also who we have been. It is our history put to music.

With respect to the thought that it might be outdated, consider that one of the world's most recognizable and accomplished musicians, trumpet player Wynton Marsalis, frequently gathers other terrific musicians to play traditional jazz, even at Carnegie Hall. He clearly understands and embraces the importance of this "old time" music as the basis for all that has come since then.

Let's keep this going. And thanks for your continued support of the PSTJS.

Bring a guest or two for the June session. It will be terrific.



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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!

ANDREW OLIVER AND HIS JAZZ BUDDIES*(Continued from page 1)*

director on the steamboat Delta Queen. In addition to performing he wrote and arranged on-board musical shows. He also researched, created and presented special programs on different periods of American music to groups from the Smithsonian, Stanford, Harvard, Yale Universities, and the Center For Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. At home in the Northwest since 1994, he keeps a busy schedule as a working musician. As a teacher, David is associated with Lewis and Clark College and Maryhurst University.

The second Buddies reedman needs no introduction. He's Jonathan Doyle, who last played for us with the T.O.P. Jazz Band in March.

Bassist Matt Weiner is also quite a familiar figure on our bandstand. Matt last played for us with Jacob Zimmerman last April. Andrew remarks, "There aren't a lot of people who can play slap bass, and he does it well."

Matt recommended Josh Roberts as "the perfect guitarist for the June gig." He also last played for us in April and he'll complete the Buddies quintet.

Andrew believes there's no danger that our audience will find a full afternoon of Morton tiresome, because Jelly Roll's music provides a wealth of diversity on its own. He explains, "We'll be mixing together arrangements of well-known compositions with tunes from late in his recording career, which are really interesting and underplayed. Numbers like "Fickle Fay Creep," "Sweet Peter," "Mississippi Mildred," and other obscure pieces. We'll open a window into Morton's world of thought and explore all the different elements of his music, including blues, stomps, ragtime, the Spanish tinge, and other things."

Andrew plans to vary the program by dividing the quintet into smaller units for others, as did Morton himself. Andrew's challenge as an arranger and musician is to walk a fine line between note-for-note recreations of Jelly Roll's arrangements and leaving room for personal creativity. He says "Learning and studying what was done and then trying to do something similar, but not exactly the same, is a very interesting exercise. It's fun to play transcriptions of things but I definitely like to do something with them, whether it's just improvising on a song in a

certain way or taking something like a rag and playing more it like a stomp."

It sounds like a challenge indeed! Join us at the Ballard Elks on June 19 to hear Andrew Oliver and His Jazz Buddies meet that challenge. It will be a different musical experience for us, one rooted in jazz tradition, yet danceable and entertaining. See you there!

GRAND DOMINION PLANS ABANDONED!

By John Ochs

As you all know, our plan to celebrate the Grand Dominion Jazz Band's 40th anniversary with a special concert has been beset by one unfortunate circumstance after another. Originally scheduled for March 2020, the date had to be postponed because of COVID-19. After the pandemic settled down a bit, the date was reset for April 2021, only to be put on hold again, due to trumpeter Clint Baker's heart surgery.

When we learned Clint had recovered well enough to play local gigs in California, we contacted band leader Bob Pelland to reschedule the concert for the coming fall season. Unfortunately, after polling the rest of the band Bob learned that the health of several other members had become so fragile as to preclude his ability to guarantee the band's appearance at a date certain.

Consequently, we are forced to abandon this project and to offer refunds to those who have pledged money for the cause. To those who have pledged money, a form regarding the disposition of your pledge is enclosed inside this newsletter. Please fill out the form and mail it to the address indicated.

We're looking for new members
YOU can help with little effort by
bringing just one of your friends
or family members into our club.
If WE ALL do that, our membership
will double.

JELLY ROLL MORTON: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

By George Swinford



We conclude our spring concert series with a program of the music of Jelly Roll Morton, one of the towering figures of early jazz. In speaking of the music of the early 20th century, trombonist and band leader Turk Murphy said this in 1955: “Jelly Roll Morton is the man of that period I admire most of all (for) his musicianship and his writing and his taste, a taste that came from the fact that this was the music that he knew best.” Murphy added: “Out of the two-hundred-ninety tunes in our book, for example, thirty to thirty-five are by Morton.”

So who was this guy? Well, the man the world knows as Jelly Roll Morton was a French Creole, born Ferdinand Joseph LaMenthe in New Orleans, possibly as early as 1880 or as late as 1885, as Morton sometimes claimed. His parents were unmarried, and no original record of his birth is known to exist. Like many Creole children in New Orleans, young Ferd was exposed to classical music and to a variety of musical instruments. His final choice was piano, but only after conquering his fear that playing piano would make him seem effeminate. By his own accounting,



Morton’s formal instruction was minimal, yet by 1904 he was a full-fledged Storyville “professor,” playing piano in Hilma Burt’s upscale Basin Street brothel. He claimed that he adopted his salacious professional name because he “didn’t want to be called Frenchy.” Perhaps also he didn’t want to bring shame to his respectable sisters, his family having disowned him for his disreputable associations.

Leaving New Orleans as a young man, Morton roamed the United States and parts of Mexico, playing solo piano in red-light districts, leading small combos, and composing appealing tunes, many of which have become jazz standards. He was a pool shark, he competed with and learned from other pianists, appeared as a comedian on the vaudeville stage, and practiced more nefarious professions, as opportunity offered. His tune called “The Seattle Hunch” gives evidence of a stopover in our city. It’s claimed that he was the first person to use written musical notation to document jazz music, with his “Original Jelly Roll Blues” in 1915.

Settling for a while in Chicago in the mid 1920s, he became a recording artist for RCA Victor. With his Red Hot Peppers, a band of New Orleans expatriates, he recorded such jazz classics as “Black Bottom Stomp,” “Grandpa’s Spells,” “The Pearls,” and “The Original Jelly Roll Blues.” Later in the ‘20s, the prime location for hot jazz shifted east, so Jelly left Chicago for New York. He reconstituted his Red Hot Peppers band there. Using the best New Orleans-oriented musicians he could find, he continued to record for Victor. He also continued to play solo gigs and lead small ad hoc combos and, as always, to compose.

With the onset of the Great Depression and the end of Prohibition, the taste of the music-buying public changed. Victor declined to renew his recording contract and Jelly’s glory days began to fade. Although he maintained a prosperous appearance as long as he could, he was scuffling hard for money. He attempted to join ASCAP and gain an income from the performance of his many compositions. His membership was finally granted, but ASCAP then treated him shamefully, doling out a bare minimum, while white composers such as Irving Berlin were reaping great profits. As the ‘30s continued, his health began to suffer. He was unable to pay for proper medical treatment.

In 1938, folk music historian Alan Lomax hired Jelly to document early New Orleans jazz for the Library of Congress. In an unprecedented series of sessions, Jelly

(Continued on page 7)

Photo Review of Jacob Zimmerman & His Pals, April 24, 2022

Photos courtesy of Lynn Graves



Band: Josh Roberts, guitar; Ray Skjelbred, piano; Matt Weiner, bass; Jacob Zimmerman, reeds; Emily Asher, trombone. Everyone had a grand time: listeners, camera buffs, cakewalkers, and musicians alike.

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JELLY ROLL MORTON (Continued from page 5)

described the New Orleans beginnings of jazz and the personalities involved. He told of being an inventor (sometimes *the* inventor) of jazz, in the height of the Ragtime era. Those recordings are still available and are fascinating to hear.

Throughout the '30s, Morton's health and his fortunes continued to decline. Finally he found himself at a dismal second-floor club in Washington, D.C., a place called The Jungle Inn. There he was manager, bouncer, and bartender, as well as entertainer. One night he was stabbed there, in a scuffle with a friend of the owner. While he was still recovering, he made a final desperate attempt to recoup his fortunes with a mid-winter drive to California. His failing heart precluded any success he might have had there, and he died in Los Angeles on July 10, 1941. Fewer than a hundred people attended his funeral, just one of them white. His union dues were paid in full, so Local 767 sent a wreath. A band was formed, but the priest said it would be undignified and he forbade it. Jelly's last journey, to Calvary Cemetery, was silent. The pallbearers who lowered his body and threw a few handfuls of dirt into the grave were Kid Ory's band, the first black jazz musicians to ever record, back in 1921. So, from the 1880s to 1941, that was Jelly Roll Morton.

HOLOTRADBAND CDs AVAILABLE

By Gloria Kristovich

We have been generously given a large supply of the two holotradband CDs by the Holo family. The titles are:

- *Linger Awhile*
- *Saturday Night Function*

The cost of each will be \$3 with the proceeds going to our general fund, per Dave's sister Mary's wishes.

These will be available at our concerts and order forms will be available also.

Please email me at kristovichg@gmail.com if you have any questions.



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