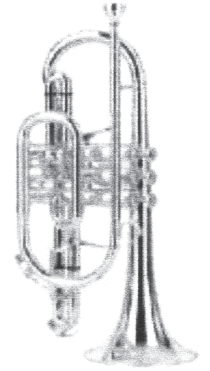


# JAZZ SOUNDINGS

THE PUGET SOUND TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY



October 2022

Volume 47, Number 8

## IT'S ABOUT TIME! JOSH ROBERTS LEADS THE COMBO FOR OUR OCTOBER 16 CONCERT!

By George Swinford

By music director John Ochs' count, Canadian guitarist Josh Roberts has played as a sideman on no less than sixteen of our concerts. For some time now, he's been leading small combos, and lately even big bands in Vancouver. On October 16, in a role that seems long overdue, he'll lead a sextet of top-notch musicians for PSTJS.



*Josh Roberts, leader & guitar; Ray Skjelbred, piano; Noel Gotfrit, bass (insert); Jacob Zimmerman, saxophone; Eric Eagle, drums (insert); and Emily Asher, trombone.*

Along with Josh on banjo and guitar, we'll hear locals Jacob Zimmerman

on reeds, Ray Skjelbred on piano, and Eric Eagle on drums. Josh is bringing bassist and composer Noah Gotfrit down from Vancouver. The trombonist will be Emily Asher.

Two members of this group are new to us, so a bit of introduction is in order. First, about Noah Gotfrit: In 2014, Noah interrupted his music studies at Capilano University in North Vancouver to immerse himself in the rich jazz culture of New Orleans. In 2017, after three years of touring North America and Europe with a variety of jazz, swing and folk ensembles, he returned to British

Columbia to complete his bachelor's degree in Applied Music. Since then, he's been involved in music projects with the cream of Vancouver's traditional jazz and swing dance communities.

Eric Eagle is a highly regarded Seattle drummer who is a regular member of several groups, including the Emerald City Jazz Band and the Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble. He works the swing dance circuit with such frequent PSTJS musicians as Jacob Zimmerman, Alex Guilbert, and Jonathan Doyle. In 2020, Eric would have played

with Ray Skjelbred and His Cubs at the Lacey Festival, but the pandemic intervened. Eric is a fan of jazz guitar, which makes him a natural choice as Josh's drummer.

Emily Asher is hardly a stranger here; she comes from this neck of the woods. She has

*(Continued on page 3)*

### WHERE:

**Ballard Elks Lodge**  
6411 Seaview Ave. NW  
Seattle, WA

### WHEN:

October 16, 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](http://www.pstjs.org).

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

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### UPCOMING PSTJS EVENTS

November 20: Black Swan Classic Jazz Band, with Marilyn Keller

December 18: Ray Skjelbred's Yeti Chasers

January 15: TBA

February 19: The Ain't No Heaven Seven

### GIGS FOR LOCAL BANDS

#### RAY SKJELBRED'S YETI CHASERS

October 29, 7–9 p.m.  
Third Place Commons, Lake Forest Park

#### RAY SKJELBRED

November 26, 4–6 p.m.  
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](http://ilbistro.net)

#### ALEX GUILBERT

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

### JAZZ SOUNDINGS

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Kathy Bruni, Editor: [pstjs.editor@gmail.com](mailto:pstjs.editor@gmail.com)

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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

Philosophers and the like have often talked about the primitive existential issues that vex humankind. Things like death, loneliness, and freedom. The fourth in this group is the hard-to-define but quite potent issue of what I call worthwhileness. Kind of like, when I am gone will I have made any mark at all? Did I even scratch the surface of worthwhileness?



I was reminded of this heavy stuff a few days ago when I was told that the Society, your Jazz Society, had received a very generous donation from a similar organization that was shutting down and had some money left in the bank. The Lighthouse Jazz Society of Seaside, Oregon, which had sponsored and run the Seaside Jazz Festival for many years, was throwing in the towel. I suspect that it was lack of interest, and lack of interested and willing people to do the work to make it happen. You know the word: volunteers.

I know that you love this music. You love to listen to it and dance to it. You might even bring a friend or neighbor or relative to a meeting now and then. You kinda suspect that someone arranges for the bands and someone brings the donuts and makes the coffee, someone sets up the sound system and someone watches the gate and takes the money, pays the band and keeps the books. They also write articles and put together the monthly publication. There is a name for these people. They are called *volunteers*. Who would have thought? Those who do this work are not in any sense exclusive. They are just the opposite, and they would love to include you in experiencing the joy and satisfaction of contributing to the ongoing sustenance of this enterprise. If you are asked, please say yes. Better yet, why not just, you know, volunteer.

Which brings me to what I mentioned in the first paragraph. I am certain that our organization was chosen for the substantial gift as a way to honor a super volunteer: one of us, the late Judy Levy. Judy and I were very good friends. She was a reliable supporter of our band from its inception and was a strong leader of the PSTJS for many years. She was a force behind the Festival in Ocean Shores and also

worked nonstop for the Festival in Seaside. Did she make a difference? Oh yes, she did. Did she leave a mark? Affirmative. This gift from the Seaside Festival sponsoring organization is proof positive that becoming involved—sharing yourself and your skills—is not only rewarding but actually makes an impact. We are grateful for the donation and grateful that we benefited from the energy and presence of Judy Levy. She volunteered, and we are all the better because of it. It's now your turn. If you are asked, please say yes. Better yet, why not just...wait for it...volunteer?

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### **JOSH ROBERTS COMBO** *(Continued from page 1)*

returned to the Northwest after twelve years on the New York scene, where she established her reputation as a jazz trombonist and leader. She's currently teaching in Bellingham's public schools and at Western Washington University. She played for us most recently with Jacob Zimmerman's combo, just last April.

Conversations between Josh and John Ochs lead us to expect to hear music referencing such jazz guitarists as Johnny St. Cyr, Bud Scott, Teddy Bunn, and the great Eddie Lang. We'll probably hear a few New Orleans standards, too—maybe even a guitar or banjo solo.

As did the jazz guitarists of the twenties and thirties, Josh Roberts recognizes that his role in the band is not so much to be heard as to be felt. He expresses it this way: "I try to be a propulsive force in the band by providing a consistent rhythm. I focus on creating a driving quarter-note line by playing four notes to each bar. This applies even when the rest of the band is playing a two-four beat. On those tunes, I might change my accenting a bit, but I still play consistent harmonic notes on all four beats to keep the rest of the band on track." About his function in the band, as well as about his overdue appearance as leader of one of our groups, we're right to say, "It's about time!"

That propulsive four-to-the-bar rhythm Josh speaks of should make for good dancing. No doubt we'll hear some tunes we haven't heard for a while. With the same instrumentation as last April's session, plus drums, and with four of the same players on the stand, it will be interesting to compare leader Roberts' musical choices with those made by Jacob Zimmerman a few months ago. Join us on the 16th at the Ballard Elks for Josh Roberts' 17th session with us, and his first PSTJS session as leader.

## JOSH ROBERTS: SIDEMAN AND BANDEADER!

By John Ochs



One of the bittersweet consequences of being a charter member of an organization continuously active for almost 48 years has been the opportunity to witness an ever-changing landscape of musicians and bands. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, recent seasons have taken a toll on bands we have long enjoyed. However, it's good to remember that the word

"bittersweet" has two sides to it, like a penny shiny on one side but tarnished on the other.

This month, we flip the coin and shine the spotlight on Josh Roberts, a still-young veteran of the jazz wars whose sextet is headlining our monthly concert for the first time. An online review of past *Jazz Soundings* reveals the surprising fact that since 2014, he has anchored more rhythm sections than any other guitar/banjoist we have hosted during the same time period. I say surprising because I suspect many of us have scarcely given a thought as to why this seemingly retiring musician is the choice of so many bandleaders. Truly, if the word "unsung" has any meaning at all, it applies to Josh and his contributions to our organization.

Josh's very first appearance at our jazz society goes all the way back to April 2004 when, as a 17-year-old high-school senior, he played banjo in the now legendary 51st Eight jazz band. Organized in 1998 as a Dixieland-style combo at Chilliwack (B.C.) Secondary School, the band by 2001 had already been invited to the famous Sacramento Jubilee Jazz Fest as the festival's first "youth band" from Canada. Excited at the prospect, the band's eight members chose "51st Eight" as a band name, possibly with the thought that the drive along California Highway 51 into downtown Sacramento would become for them the yellow brick road leading to fame and fortune. If that was their hope, it was not that far off the mark, because afterward, the band was widely regarded as the best youth band ever seen at the festival.

Josh was not yet a member of the 51st Eight for its 2001 Sacramento appearance, but his brother Jeremy was then the band's drummer, as well as its co-founder. So when the banjo chair opened a few months later, Josh auditioned and became a member at the ripe old age of 14. Along with playing clarinet in his high school and college concert bands for the next eight years, he would anchor the band's rhythm section for the duration of its existence.

Graduating from Chilliwack Secondary in 2004, Josh enrolled at Vancouver's Capilano University, where most of his band mates were already in attendance. Notwithstanding his student and 51st Eight obligations, he soon took on the added job of moonlighting on Saturday nights on banjo and guitar with Simon Stribling's New Orleans Ale Stars at Bukowski's bistro on Commercial Drive in Vancouver.

The year 2004 was particularly eventful, not only for Josh but also for the entire 51st Eight. This was due in part to its added recording activity and increased number of festival appearances, but mostly because of the rising popularity of swing dancing in Vancouver, all of which advanced the group's transition from a "youth band" to a regular working band. As time passed, the band's workload would grow to an average of one festival a month, even as it was adding more local gigs to its schedule each year.

Things changed dramatically for the band in 2009. In recognition of the swing-dance craze, the band changed its name to "The Big Bang" and began its inevitable evolution into a special event/reunion-type band as its members dispersed after graduations. Most notably, trumpeter Bria Skonberg, who already had been appearing off and on as a guest artist on the East Coast and in Europe, moved to New York, where she since has become an internationally celebrated instrumentalist, singer, composer, arranger, and recording artist. A few years later, saxophonist Evan Arntzen left Vancouver for New York, where he also has settled into prominence as a fixture at the city's best venues and orchestras.

Josh's music playing never missed a beat during this transition. Offers for work as a sideman came from night-club/festival band leaders like Simon Stribling and Jen Hodge, and from swing-dance cooperatives like Lindy Hop, Camp Jitterbug, and Rhythm City Dance. Soon, he was leading small bands at these jobs, featuring music modeled after the Benny Goodman Sextet and Artie Shaw's Gramercy 5. In 2015, he added big-band organization to his

resumé, assembling orchestras of anywhere from 10 to 15 members to perform his arrangements of music by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, and Chick Webb at important Vancouver dance events like the annual Lindy Bout competition and the local celebration of swing-dance legend Frankie Manning's 100th birthday.

Josh had few occasions to perform for us after his 51st Eight days until 2014, when bandleader Tom Jacobus invited him to play banjo and guitar in the Evergreen Classic Jazz Band. At about the same time, Josh began to work swing dances in Seattle, where he met Jacob Zimmerman, who in turn introduced him to bandleaders Ray Skjelbred, Jonathan Doyle, and Casey McGill. Since then, Josh has appeared regularly at our concerts in bands led by Jacobus (4), Zimmerman (3), Skjelbred (2), Doyle (2), Claire McKenna, Paul Woltz, Marc Caparone, Jen Hodge, and most recently Andrew Oliver.

The reason these bandleaders so admire Josh's musicianship is his understanding of his role in any setting. In addition to technical facility, he brings to the band good judgment, self-discipline, a vast knowledge of jazz history, and a deep respect for whatever genre of music the band is representing.

This month, however, he will be appearing not as a sideman for someone else, but as leader, arranger, and soloist in his own band. We expect that presenting Josh in this enhanced setting will give us all a better appreciation of his importance to our Society and why he is held in such high regard by his peers.

We hope to see you at the Ballard Elks club on October 16!



**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!**

## MY TWO CENTS' WORTH

By Gloria Kristovich

I'm happy to report that 39 of the holotrband CDs have removed themselves from my garage. The mail order part of that is seeming to work well. If any of you have used (or lost) your order form, there is another one available on our website, [pstjs.org](http://pstjs.org).

Thanks to Mary Holo, Dave's sister, for her gift of those four big boxes of *Linger Awhile* and *Saturday Night Function*. **Please** try to think of someone you could buy some CDs for, either at one of our concerts or by mail order.

### Hot Food at the Elks

If you would like to order hot food at the Elks for the October concert, please check our website for information beforehand. Hot food may or may not be available. Info will be posted as soon as WE are informed of the situation



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  
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### PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE

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Or phone: 425-776-5072.

**THANK YOU.**

# A LOOK AT THE PSTJS SCRAPBOOK—APRIL 1986

*Original layout courtesy of Diane Fehring*



***Evergreen Classic Jazz Band***

*Top: Al LaTourette, banjo, & Paul Woltz, bass saxophone*

*Center: Dave Holo & Dave Loomis*

*Bottom: Bandleader Tom Jacobus, tuba, and Dan Grinstead, 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.*

## PSTJS HAS A YOUTUBE CHANNEL!

We are pleased to announce that you can access the Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society's new YouTube channel as follows:

1. If you read *Jazz Soundings* online, click this link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKrTj5vJuXGkztByAZzMXkw>
2. If you read the *Jazz Soundings* paper edition, either type the above link onto your browser's address line or go to the YouTube website and search "PSTJS." The PSTJS channel should appear at or near the top of the listings.

Presently, the channel offers three videos:

- Andrew Oliver and His Buddies' June 2022 Jelly Roll Morton concert
- A Day of Appreciation for Bert Barr - Part 1
- PSTJS Bert Barr Event 2019 Part 2 YT

There will be more to come. Please subscribe (at no cost) and help us grow our channel!



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