

THE CAT'S MEOW



PO BOX 50806 Columbia, South Carolina 29250 803-432-1504

Bruce Clark Will Lead This Month

**The Lourie Center at Maxcy Gregg Park (just off Pickens near Blossom)
2:30-5:00 pm, Sunday, March 1, 2020**

What a fun concert last month with the **Flat Out Strangers doing gypsy jazz!** In my opinion Django was a musical genius who has never received the full recognition he deserves. If you want to hear some more of that music, it is available by the maestro himself on remastered records. You can find them for sale on the internet and you can listen to a number of his recordings for free on “You Tube”. But if you want to hear more, the **Flat Out Strangers** play it at various spots around town, especially at Lula Drake Wine Parlour. Check out the internet to find where they are playing.

This month our usual crew will be on the bandstand with Bruce calling the tunes, setting the tempo and most likely providing some historical touches.

Unfortunately, while everyone else was playing gigs elsewhere around town last month, Bruce was home nursing an aching back.

But Bruce had been very busy before his back got his attention. Bruce did the Christmas Production at Mt Horeb UMC Church and the production was seen by more than 5000 people! But, turns out Bruce’s job was arranging and conducting not playing (he says he’ll read the contract more closely next time).

Next Bruce joined the Palmetto Brass for a concert at the Trenholm Road United Methodist Church. Then he joined a fine orchestra led by Marc Rattray to do a Christmas presentation.

Bruce also joined Doug Graham and Charlie Polk for the Village Square Production of Newsies, The Musical, (a musical inspired by a real life strike by newsboys in New York in 1899). The show has music by Alan Menken (The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast and Aladdin among others). And the lyrics were by Jack Feldman who wrote The Lion King.

THE CAROLINA JAZZ SOCIETY was founded in 1958 to enjoy Dixieland Jazz, one of America's original art forms.
Concerts are \$10 for non-members, \$5 for members, free for Patrons and young people under 18.

The Wilmington NC Jazz Festival

I've gone with friends to the Jazz Festival in Wilmington NC for many years. The Festival has always featured a wide variety of jazz styles. And it includes some "mix and match" sessions by putting musicians who don't play together very often and I think that gives a chance for new ideas to be generated.

The Festival starts with workshops on Thursday with musicians working with local students at different schools in the Wilmington Area. Musicians featured at the festival fan out to various schools in the area. This year two groups "the Jon Hill Quartet", and then Veronica Swift joined the Emmet Cohen Trio for a set. The evening ended with a jam session with the two groups on the stage along with Adrian Cunningham, a really good saxophonist and flautist who also is the manager for the event.

Saturday begins with a brunch for those who are "Patrons". It features a series of sets with a talented amateur invited to sit-in with each group of professionals. But the sets on Friday and Saturday are the real highlights of the program with different groupings of professionals.

A new performer, Ben Polcer, came up from New Orleans this year. Long time members of our club will remember that his father, Ed, was a special guest at our concerts for many years. Ed played a fine cornet and it is obvious that Ben learned at his father's feet.

Niki Parrott is a fine bassist and a really good singer (and I don't give that accolade very often). This was a special week for Niki. She is Australian but had just gotten her US citizenship papers (but I don't know if those fires back home had anything to do with her decision to emigrate).

A SC saxophonist, Houston Person (who grew up in Florence) was also featured. And to my surprise I found out that Houston has more than 75 albums under his name and has received the Eubie Blake Award.

Chuck Redd is both a fine drummer and an equally good vibraphonist. And what I didn't know; Chuck got his start with the Charlie Byrd trio at the age of 21! Then, he was a member of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra for 15 years – obviously a rather precocious youngster.

Lastly, there is another precocious youngster, Jonathan Russell, who plays violin. I think I first heard him at age 14. I must admit that Violin is not my favorite instrument but his musical ability shone out even at that young age and it has become more impressive as he has matured. But I've never heard him do any Django Reinhardt pieces and, in my opinion, he is missing a real opportunity because Django played regularly with the violinist Stephane Grappelli as part of the "Hot Club of France".

Red Smith, editor
farrensmith@bellsouth.net