

THE CAT'S MEOW



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

Doug Graham, Clarinetist Extraordinaire

Capital Senior Center at Maxcy Gregg Park (just off Pickens near Blossom)

2:30-5:00 pm Sunday, October 6, 2013

I told Doug that Dick Goodwin's Big Band had the best reed section in the Southeast and maybe in the Nation. Doug replied, "I don't know about that but it sure is the smallest". Both statements are true because the **reed section consists of Doug Graham.**



At a recent concert at the Fine Arts Center in Camden, the DG Big Band had three trumpets (including Dick), three trombones including our own Bruce Clark and a sub up from Charleston (who played a really good trombone). But Doug held his own vs those big sections. Doug can handle the reed section by himself because he plays clarinet or sax as needed for the song or just that particular section of the song.

Of course, like most modern musicians, Doug can handle all the various genre. In addition to playing great traditional jazz, Doug plays in Dick's Modern Jazz Quintet, and the Big Band. What's more, until recently Doug was also first chair with the USC Symphony and the Augusta Symphony.

It still boggle's my mind that he can do this. I remember growing up in the '30's and listening to classical musicians trying to play jazz. It was embarrassing. They just didn't have a clue (but there was a bass player back then who did both and did it very well). I didn't learn that he played both genre until much later. And unfortunately, I don't remember his name.

Our own website

Don't forget to check out our own website. Steve Hait set it up and deserves all of our thanks. It is important to make use of the alternate media these days and Steve has taken us into the modern world. Thanks Steve! You can get there via Google or just enter:

Web Page - <http://sites.google.com/site/carolinajazzsociety>

Facebook Page - www.facebook.com/pages/Carolina-Jazz-Society/139716539538011

And this is a good time to thank all of our volunteers, Steve Hait, Rowena Nylund, Anna Amick, Jerry & Pat Bright, Joanne Newman and all the members who bring goodies to share. **What a great club!**

Marion McPartland

Most people remember Marion from “Piano Jazz”, her long running program on NPR. But she had a long and very successful career before that. She was an influential musician with both great technique and longevity. A child prodigy, she began playing piano at age three. She had classical training but fell in love with American jazz, much to the dismay of her parents and teachers. She began touring professionally at age 20 and she never looked back from that start.

Because of that talent, she would have been successful no matter what. But the big turning point in her life was meeting Jimmy McPartland. Jimmy had been part of the Austin High Gang in Chicago and was selected personally by Bix Beiderbecke to be his replacement with the Wolverines. Bix had promised the band to find a replacement before he left to join Paul Whiteman. In fact, Bix not only chose Jimmy, he helped him pick out a new horn that Jimmy would use for the rest of his career. Bix told Jimmy (who was still just a teen-ager at the time), “I like you kid. You sound like me but you don’t copy me”. And he took time to give Jimmy some lessons. Incidentally, one of my first records was Jimmy playing “Waiting for the Sunrise”.

Jimmy was drafted in WWII as a soldier, not part of a USO group. But he took his cornet with him wherever he went. And as his troop ship docked in Glasgow, Jimmy took out his horn and played “Loch Loman”. There wasn’t a dry eye in the crowd.

Jimmy’s unit landed in Normandy not long after D Day. He fought across France and on into Belgium. Then, as fighting began to ease, touring USO groups would invite him to play with them. That’s how he met Marion. They began playing together and married in Aachen shortly after Germany surrendered.

Jimmy brought his new bride back to Chicago but they moved to New York after a short time. There, he encouraged Marion to develop her own style and to form her own group. He also used his contacts in the jazz community to introduce her to musicians and agents in the city. That’s how her long running gig at Hickory House started. Her trio there included the drummer, Joe Morello who went on to become part of Dave Brubeck’s trio.

And I suspect it was Jimmy’s influence, along with her obvious talent, that got Marion included in the famous picture of jazz musicians entitled “A Great Day in Harlem”.

Marion had both technique and imagination to burn. Her style was unmistakable. But she was so flexible that she could play with musicians in a wide range of styles. That along with her genuine enthusiasm is why she was such a good host of “Piano Jazz”.

And one last bit about Jimmy. I spent one summer working at the GE Research Lab just outside Schenectady, NY. GE had purchased an estate on the Mohawk River and used the large house on the site as the administrative building. The house came with a nice patio and rose garden. During the summer, concerts were held in the rose garden, often a harpist or a string trio doing classical pieces.

But some of the researchers complained to the lady who headed the guest musician committee that she never had any jazz. She resisted saying “Jazz is trivial. Besides I don’t know any jazz groups”. They said, “get Jimmy McPartland”. She eventually relented and was resigned to having to shepherd “those jazz musicians” around. But she found Jimmy to be very charming as an individual and the music exciting. She had never listened to jazz before and was captivated. She began organizing groups to go on Friday nights to the club in New York where Jimmy was playing .

Red Smith, Editor