

THE CAT'S MEOW



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Reggie Sullivan to be Featured

Lourie Center at Maxcy Gregg Park (just off Pickens near Blossom)
2:30-5:00 pm Sunday, November 3, 2013

This month, Reggie will lead the group. That means you will get to hear his great bass work as always and a good chance we'll get to hear him sing. Reggie's reputation is growing around the state and around the nation both as a bassist and as a bandleader. We are lucky to have someone with his talent as part of our group.

Of course this brings to mind other bass players I've enjoyed over the years. A good place to start would be Wellman Braud who played bass with Duke Ellington. Wellman provided a firm foundation in the early Ellington bands. It always seemed to me that the solid background he provided gave the great soloists in the Ellington band more freedom to improvise. He was never as well known as his successor Jimmy Blanton but I always enjoyed the early Ellington Band with Wellman providing a strong bass line.

Jimmy Blanton succeeded Wellman and revolutionized bass playing during his short stint with Ellington. He turned the bass into a solo instrument, not just a part of the rhythm section. He did all this in a very short time because, sadly, Jimmy contracted TB and died at age 23.

Slam Stewart was another great bassist with a very different style. He bowed the bass and hummed along with it. It was a unique and effective technique. He said he got the idea from a street musician who played violin and sang harmony in falsetto. Slam said it was awful! But he couldn't get the sound out of his mind. At some point he realized, "I can do something with this". He began humming in harmony an octave higher as he bowed the bass. I thoroughly enjoyed all the things Slam did on bass. If you have a chance, get a CD or listen to him on YouTube. Later, Major Holley heard Slam and adopted the style. But Major had a deep bass voice. The timbre of his voice combined with that of the bass also produced a unique sound.

And once or twice a year for many years, Bob Haggart was our special guest. Bob spent winters in Florida and stopped to visit with one of our members on his way to NYC. We took advantage by featuring him when he was in town. Bob not only played a superb bass, but he was also known for the songs he wrote. "Big Noise from Wenetka" is probably best known but he wrote several other very good songs, including "I'm Free". Linda Ronstadt gave it new lyrics and turned it into a big hit under the name "What's New". Other songs included, "South Rampart St Parade", "Dogtown Blues" (a fine song that didn't get much air time) and "My Inspiration".



Reggie Sullivan

Reggie hasn't been on a world tour recently but he stays very busy all around the state. He played a gig in Little River and headed out immediately to play a wedding in Camden. Then he did "Fall for Greenville". And there was a gig at "Bubba's Love Shack" in Murrells Inlet. Then add in the Hartsville Fall Music Series along with his regular gig with Rooftop Rhythms in Richland Fashion Mall. This is just a brief sampling from his busy schedule.

Milt Hinton

And I couldn't leave out Milt Hinton from the list of outstanding bassists. He could be counted on to play any style jazz and play it well. Producers and musicians both loved having him on a set. His work was always a wrap on the first take. That ability to play excellent bass with any group made him the most recorded musician in New York for much of his career.

And this reminds me of a bit I wrote many years ago. But if your memory is no better than mine, you probably won't mind the repetition.

Milt was a featured musician at the NC Jazz Festival in Wilmington, NC. One of the people at the table where I was sitting was a minister, who was the Chaplain at the University of Tennessee.

Milt Hinton (cont)

The minister had been given tickets to the concert but wasn't sure he really ought to be in this environment and was pretty sure the music would be awful.

But after the first few bars, his face lit up and he said, "This is joyous music! This is happy music! It is wonderful music!" To cap it off, at the break, Milt happened to walk past our table.

I knew that Milt was a Deacon at his church in Brooklyn and I introduced him to the Minister. They talked for a few minutes and the minister began taking notes.

As Milt walked away, the minister turned to us and said, "I'm going to write a scholarly article on Jazz for an Ecclesiastical Magazine".

I'm guessing that if it was accepted, it was the first articles on jazz to make it into that magazine.

The Dick Goodwin Big Band

Marjorie Barnes will join Dick's Big Band at Trustus Theater, November 19 & 20 at 7:30 pm. During the first half "Unbound Dance" will join the guys for a rousing version of Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing". During the second half, Barnes (who was a member of "Fifth Dimension" and an original cast member of "Ain't Misbehaving" on Broadway) will join the band using special arrangements Dick has done just for the show. Dick says he has worked with Marjorie before and "she is a fine singer and a dynamic entertainer". Tickets are \$40 and all proceeds benefit Trustus.

It is worth pointing out that the **Carolina Jazz Society** is part of a much larger music and arts scene in Columbia. But we are important because no one else brings the joyous foundations of jazz.

You can check us out at our website: <http://sites.google.com/site/carolinajazzsociety>. And you can contact us by snail mail at: **PO Box 50806, Columbia, SC 29250.**

Red Smith, Editor