

THE CAT'S MEOW



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Larry Conger & His Cornet Join the Crew

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

Our good Friend, Larry Conger, will join the rest of the guys for our February Concert. And just to remind you, Larry grew up on the West Coast getting his start with Turk Murphy. But he polished his musical skills at Ithaca College in New York. Ithaca College is not well known in this area but it has a distinguished list of graduates including; Bob Iger, current head of the Walt Disney Company, Rod Serling of “Twilight Zone” fame, Jessica Savitch, the first female news anchor, and a whole host of people who’ve made big names in broadcasting, movies & Broadway. And as befitting a school focusing on the Arts, you can see the scene below when you visit the college.



Art work atop one of the newer buildings at Ithaca College.

If you google “Ithaca College” you can see a lot of great views from the campus including scenes of Lake Cayuga. But the winter pictures of the campus look **cold!**

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.

Of course, I think that Larry got his real musical training when he joined Turk Murphy at Earthquake McGoon's in San Francisco. Larry says that Turk always had about 400 songs in their repertoire at any one time and that he would add 25 each year (if I remember correctly) and drop 25 that he felt had gotten old.

I looked up some information about Turk and here are some little known tidbits. He contributed a lot to the music on Sesame Street. In fact, he did the song that is always used for the opening. And the guy playing trumpet on the piece is none other than Wynton Marsalis. The music on "Street" may not be Dixieland but it has always been good music. And it gave a lot of kids a good introduction to the world of music. I'm guessing that Turk got involved with Sesame Street through his good friend, Ward Kimbal, animator for Walt Disney. Ward was a good trombonist in his own right, playing with a bunch of fellow Disney animators who formed "The Firehouse Five plus Two". And Ward is the only person I've ever heard that Walt labeled a genius.

Another tidbit, one of Turk's songs has the unusual name "I'm Pistol Pete". Pieter Meijers, leader of the Three Rivers Jazz Band, recounted the origin of the name. It seems that in the middle of the night when Turk and his wife were sound asleep, Turk sat up suddenly and said, "I'm Pistol Pete". Then he flopped back down. Turk might have continued to be sound asleep but now Turk's wife was not. She was wide-awake! Still, she waited till the next morning to ask Turk what that was all about. He said, "I have no idea but I've just written a new song and it needs a title. Now I have one".

To me, the most amazing part of this story is Turks's wife waiting till the next morning to ask. How many wives would wait that long?

There are lots of good songs played regularly on the west coast but these songs seldom make it to the East. And I think that's a shame. I'd be hard pressed to name any right now. The only one that comes to mind right now is "Sage Hen Strut" by Lu Waters. But I've heard lots of others on trips out there.

NC Jazz Festival

A reminder; the NC Jazz Festival is Feb 7 & 8 in Wilmington, NC. There is a limited amount of Dixieland but there is a lot of good jazz played by really fine musicians. And the acoustics are the best of any festival I've attended. Plus it is a "no smoking" venue as befitting a festival started by a physician. If you have a chance to go, I think you would like what you hear.

Lastly, I want to thank Jerry Bright for taking over last month. I had developed a really nasty sinus infection that laid me low. You would not have wanted me here. Jerry & Pat also deserve thanks for setting up the sound system each month. Plus, Jerry is a spark plug with lots of organizations in the Midlands.

Remember, you can always check out the Carolina Jazz Society on our website at: www.carolinajazzsociety.com. Plus you can contact us by snail mail at:

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Red Smith, Editor