

# THE CAT'S MEOW



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

## Aletha Jacobs Ticks the Ivories

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

2:30-5:00 pm, Sunday, February 7, 2016,

**Bruce Clark won't be able to make this concert and we'll get to hear John Miller on trombone instead.** It's wonderful to have Dick Goodwin as our band director because he has just about every musician in the area on his contact list. He is never at a loss when we need someone to fill in.

Last Month Aletha was away and someone said she was attending a seminar on teaching jazz? **As far as I'm concerned, I think she would do very well as the instructor!** In fact, I told someone she was at a meeting of the "Jazz Educators Network". But she corrected me saying she was at the **Jazz Education Network**. And she is a member of the Music Teachers National Association and an accomplished teacher as well as performer.

Aletha is a product of the USC School of Music by way of Columbia College. In her role as jazz education, she has written a book called "Rock Around the Keys", an intermediate level piano book introducing students to improvisation. It would seem to me, that getting students to improvise would be a bit like getting someone to go off the high dive the first time. It must be scary for the student and there's likely to be some flops the first few times.

Aletha is also a fine singer and is a member of Carolina Alive and the Sandpaper Singers. In fact her chorale works have been used in North Texas State Summer Camps. Then recently, Aletha has done a workshop at Bowling Green State on Jazz Vocal Studies.

I'm not sure of the details but Aletha has done several tours with an Armed Services Program and has done some work with the State Department in South America and the Mediterranean Sea.

By the way, if this newsletter seems a little skimpy, it is. I just got back from a wonderful trip to the Galapagos Islands and Cloud Forests in Ecuador.

**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.

## **Jelly Roll Morton**

I can't talk about pianists without mentioning the person I consider one of the great pianists of any genre. Plus, he had a huge impact on all phases in the early jazz. Listen to Maple Leaf Rag by the early rag-timers and then listen to what Jelly Roll does with it. He opens up a huge range of possibilities. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy Rag Time but Jelly Roll is responsible for a huge transformation. In fact, I think he ranks up there with any of the great pianists. You should be able to find his "Sidewalk Blues" on "You Tube". Listen to it and see if you hear what I hear (hmmm, seems like there may be a song by that name but nobody has turned it into a jazz standard). Ignore the hokum at the beginning. Early jazz musicians had to do a lot of that sort of thing just to get recorded. The early recording executives thought hokum had to be there to hook in new listeners. Or more likely, they didn't understand what they were listening to and thought it would not sell without some "humor".

About a third of the way through the recording, I hear "Liebestraum" - but a version that would make Liszt jealous with envy. I've asked musicians about this and mostly I get a noncommittal answer. When I asked my wife, she says, "there's something there but I'm not sure what" (Note, for those who don't know, my wife and I are both big music lovers, but I don't think we have a single CD in common. Her CD's are almost all classical and my CD's are almost all early jazz).

I took my wife to New York on our honeymoon and as an extra special treat, I took her to "Jimmy Ryan's" to hear Wilbur DeParis and his "New New Orleans Jazz". Then after our sons were born, she brought them to our Jazz Concerts regularly. That's why it was years before I found out that she wasn't really a jazz fan. But she is a good wife and has the quickest mind of anyone I know. I really admire that. My brain is more of the plodding type. **But now that I think it over, I still think it was awfully thoughtful of me to take her to Jimmy Ryan's.**

Besides, my wife has a lot of other fine qualities even if our musical tastes are incompatible. She later explained that her family listened to classical music exclusively when she was growing up even though it was the era of the big hands. She never heard jazz during the time when teen-age brains hone in on a particular music genera (Note, my mother-in-law was an art teacher and her Aunt was a fine sculptor. I knew enough to take my wife to the Art Museums in NY on our honeymoon). And in fact, I enjoy many of the great artists work.

If you ever get a chance, go see Salvadore Dali's "Crucifixion of Christ" or the primitive painter Rousseau's Jungle scenes. By the way, Dali's "drooping watches" pays homage to Einstein's Theory of Relativity.