

THE CAT'S MEOW



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

Jim Ruth, the Fine Clarinetist Out of Charlotte, Will Join Doug and the Guys This Month

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

2:30-5:00 pm, Sunday, November 6, 2017

Note - DST ends Sunday



It's been a long time, too long in fact, since Jim Ruth made the trip down from Charlotte to play with our guys. We are about to rectify that.

We first heard about Jim from Jack Sutherland, our former trombonist from Tiega Cay. Jack said, "there's a new guy in Charlotte who plays a great clarinet and soprano sax. It would be fun to hear Jim and Doug play together." And was Jack ever right! It was an exciting concert. And Jim's been back several times but not recently.

A man of many talents, clarinetist Jim Ruth, is a widely respected musician and educator who hails from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Along with the clarinet, Jim plays all the reed instruments as well as the trombone, drums, bass and banjo.

Jim began his professional career as a member of the Canadian Forces Big Band and was also a member of the Canadian Forces Dixieland band. After his discharge, he worked as a per service player with symphonies in both Canada and Minnesota. During that time he also performed with many Dixieland bands on the river boats in Minneapolis.

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.

If you remember, Jim was scheduled to join our guys for a concert in last May but got caught up in a multiple car crash that put he or his wife in the hospital with serious, but not life threatening, injuries. Fortunately, they have recovered.

I keep being amazed at the versatility of the musicians who play with us. Jim once made a recording of a classic dixieland piece (or maybe it was a full CD) and had a producer listen to it. The producer said, "this is pretty good. Who else is in the band?" Jim said, "No one! I played every instrument on the recording". **That boggles my mind!**

I took piano lessons as a kid and the teacher suggested learning the scales. But thinking like a budding physicist, I said, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the notes on the paper and the 88 keys on the piano. Once you realize this, there's no need to learn the scales. Had I been more knowledgeable of physics, I would said, "of course, there is that correspondence, but there are patterns between the notes and some of those patterns sound a lot better than others! Learning scales, teaches those patterns. I say that now in typical physicist mode, having arrived at that conclusion without consulting any musicians.

But the main reason I didn't continue with the piano lessons, I kept hearing improvisations by some of my favorite musicians and I can't even imagine those changes. Later, when my son got a degree in music, he said to his teacher, "I want to play anything I can imagine." His teacher gave a wise answer. He said, "that's a very good goal but as you progress to the point that you can play what you can imagine now, you will be able to imagine other things by then that will still be out of reach.

My son is a pretty good musician and as a 13 year old, he played his synthesizer for a children's opera at the Fine Arts Center in Camden. The opera was by Gian Carlo Menotti, the founder of the Spoleto festival in Italy and the Spoleto Festival in Charleston. Afterwards, Menotti said afterwards, "I've done this opera in Paris and New York and you did a better job than any either of the keyboardists there". I don't know Menotti but I suspect he is not one to hand out gratuitous compliments. My son is a pretty good musician but the real reason he succeeded was that he was a big fan of Star Trek. He used the sounds he had heard on the show to fuel his imagination and was able to please Menotti. Fortunately, he realized after getting a degree in music that he did not have the proper temperament and, like me, went into a completely different field.

Red Smith, Editor (farrensmith@bellsouth.net)