

# THE CAT'S MEOW



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## Jim Hall, Percussionist Extraordinaire

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

2:30-5:00 pm Sunday, December 4, 2016

**Jim Hall** will call the tunes on Sunday. And he will have two new faces on the bandstand. **Sam Edwards** will replace **Reggie** on bass and Sam's father, **Cleve** will be subbing for **Aletha** on keyboards. We really are lucky to have Dick, with his extensive contacts in the music world to be our band manager. He can find excellent musicians to fill in when our regulars are out of town. And as they say, "variety is the spice of life". I'm looking forward to hearing the variety they will bring.

I also think you will be interested in what Dick had to say about Jim (Dick's words are better than mine and way more authoritative). "**Mr. Hall continues to amaze me with his technique, stylistic integrity, and good taste. The first time I saw and heard him he was the drummer with the North Texas One O'clock band ... the premier college band in the country. I thought at the time that life would be good if I could have a chance to make music with him. That was over 45 years and umpteenth-thousand performances ago! Life is good**".

### Jim Hall, the Early Years

I enjoy getting to know a bit about the background of our musicians. And I think you will be interested in what Jim had to say (I will add, he had a strange start for a professional musician, especially a premier percussionist).

I noted that Jim is both a fine drummer and a very good guitarist and wondered about that. Here is Jim's answer in his own words: "I started out my musical life very young when my parents gave me a Ukulele. This was back in the days of the Arthur Godfrey shows when the Uke was very popular. From that I graduated to the Guitar, learning the Chet Atkins finger picking style until I discovered jazz around 1958. I was already playing gigs on guitar in some of the rhythm and blues bands in the Charleston, WV area where I grew up."

THE CAROLINA JAZZ SOCIETY was founded in 1958 to enjoy Dixieland Jazz, one of America's original art forms

### Jim Hall, the Early Years

Jim Continues “for some reason, after I discovered jazz, I wanted to play drums so I began to take lessons from a man in Charleston who was the best jazz drummer around. The famous Basie drummer, Butch Miles, and I lived close to each other and he also studied with this same drummer. Needless to say it was difficult to get recognized as a drummer after being known as a guitarist for years. And then there was the fact that Butch was the greatest drummer (at 18yrs old) in the entire state by far. So, I didn't really become an accomplished drum set player until I went to North Texas State as a graduate student. As you probably know, NT has 8 or 9 jazz big bands (called lab bands) that are titled after the time of day they meet.

For instance the 3 O'clock band meets at 3 pm Monday through Thursday....The 1 O'clock, which is the best band, meets at 1 pm. When I went to NT and had to audition for a lab band, I made a much higher band on guitar but wanted to be a drummer. So, I took the lowest band on drums and put the guitar under the bed for pretty much the next forty years. I believe that answers your question about which instrument I prefer.”

Jim's explanation for the band titles made me wonder if “**One O'Clock Jump**” came out of the One O'clock band at North Texas State but I could find nothing indicating a connection. Any musicologists out there want to fill us in?

But all this made me remember the early pioneers. And that got me to thinking about drummers from the past that I've had the pleasure of hearing in person. I heard “Baby Dodds” (baby because he was the youngest of the many Dodd children – a group that included the great clarinetist, Johnny Dodds). I was not impressed by Baby Dodds drumming. But it was at the end of his career and in researching this, I found out that he had suffered a stroke the year before.

I never had the chance to hear Gene Krupa in person but he certainly was an outstanding drummer. I did get to hear Cozy Cole and his “million dollar drum set”, at the Metropole in NYC. The Metropole must have been near Times Square. And it was a long narrow room with just enough room for the band to stand behind the bar, a line of stools long the bar and maybe one row of tables to the side. As I remember, Cozy was a spectacular technician but I preferred the drummers at Jimmy Ryan's, Zutty Singleton and Freddie Moore; not as spectacular perhaps but they and the rest of the musicians played so well together.

Both Zutty and the clarinetist, Omer Simeon, had played with Jelly Roll Morton. And like Jelly Roll, the leader, trombonist Wilber DeParis, often included brief quotes from classical pieces. Listen for it, you can hear just a bit on Wilber's composition “Martinique” and on “Wrought Iron Rag, has a bit of fun using a bit from “Anvil Chorus” to great effect.

Red Smith, Editor