

THE CAT'S MEOW



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Bruce Clark to Lead this Month

Heyward Street United Methodist Church

2501 Heyward Street, Columbia, SC

2:30-5:00 pm Sunday, November 7, 2021

Daylight Savings Ends

The following is Bruce Clark's response to Red Smith's questionnaire:

Traditional playing opportunities have been few and far between. I feel very fortunate, even blessed to have maintained my position at Mt Horeb UMC throughout this ordeal. Despite the obstacles, I have managed to be part of the weekly music worship experience. Not a playing gig in the traditional since but still arranging, rehearsing, conducting, booking and yes, even a little trombone playing.

My "gigs" list from back in the day is held at <https://bruceclark.weebly.com/> Not often updated but sometimes when I'm down, I like to look back at where I have been.

Three of the teachers I hold in "high esteem" are the trumpet, clarinet and drummer that I sit on stage with for Carolina Jazz Concerts. At my daily gig, every day that I sit down to put notes on the page (or beg the computer to cooperate), I know that I am only able to do it at an acceptable level because they were and still are my teachers. There are none better!

I also want to give a "shout out" to our current piano player and vocalist, Aletha Jacobs. Her sound and style are always "spot on" yet she seems to get better every time I hear her. There is most definitely some soulfulness in that girl!

My mother played trombone which obviously influenced *my* decision to play the trombone. She had an exceptional sound. One that I am proud to say I copied. She did play in a dance band in her early years but gave that up to be an exceptional mother. Much later, she picked up the baritone horn and enjoyed several more years of playing.

Today, she is still a great supporter of music but chooses to enjoy performances via her computer in the comfort of her own home. Sounds pretty good to me right now.

As for playing other instruments... my teaching degree is in instrumental music. Band directors used to say: "somebody has to know the fingerings". I have played every instrument that I can think of to some degree, even learned harp footings and hand bell markings. I know agogic accents, know to avoid double flats and sharps, shy away from cut time and always, always add courtesy accidentals to the trombone parts. All of that adds to my very specific but not very marketable skill set.

I love it when the Carolina Jazz Society is introduced, boasting its inception in 1958. That happens to be the year of my inception or conception or birth or....you get the idea. It is indeed my privilege to be in the line of musicians who have contributed to this society over the years.

Red, you prompted an answer to the question: If music had not worked out, what would your second career choice be?

Over the years, I have considered that often. In high school, I filled out some kind of questionnaire from our guidance department. Its purpose was to suggest possible areas to consider as we continued our education. The top two occupations from my answers: Rabbi or Forest Ranger. I've never forgotten nor understood those results. Then there was the inexplicable, déjà vu like time in my life involving helicopters. That's another story. In my mind, music was not a choice, it just was.

And for final comments. This is not likely what you had in mind but I am currently vacillating between Rudyard Kipling and Woody Allen.

So with *sincere* apologies to Mr. Kipling, I offer a scant version of IF.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling