

# THE CAT'S MEOW



PO BOX 50806

Columbia, South Carolina 29250

803-432-1504

**Heyward Street United Methodist Church  
2501 Heyward Street, Columbia, SC  
2:30-5:00 pm Sunday, March 6, 2022**

## **Dustin Retzlaff, our Multi-talented Bassist Will Lead the Group This Month**

But as usual, he will have plenty of help from the rest of the gang! When I say, multi-talented, that covers the waterfront. In addition to being a superb bassist, Dustin also tunes and repairs pianos (and keeps the club's piano in tip-top shape). Plus, I'm pretty sure Dustin still owns and operates a sawmill. What's more, Dustin is from Minnesota with about 250 acres of farmland that still produces. Smart thinking because, he can go up there where it's cool during the summer vs staying in SC where it is "somewhat warmer".

By the way, the lack of air-conditioning when the club was first formed is almost undoubtedly the reason we've never had concerts during the summer. At that time, many people spent summer weekends in the mountains and wealthier people had cottages there. In some cases, wives and children spent all summer in the mountains with husbands joining them for long week-ends.

Changing the subject. I think one of the reasons our club has been successful over our long history is because we've always had fine musicians who can play multiple genre (but I think they have more fun playing our kind of music). What's more, our audience comes to hear the music, not to have loud, booze fueled conversations with some kind of noise in the background. Who could ask for anything more?

It also helps that in the past, we've had a long line of line musicians as special guests (I miss that aspect now). Back then, we would plan on having a special guest two or three times a year. And Bob Haggart would stand at the top of my list of guests (remember "Big Noise from Winnetka"?). He always gave the club a special price because one of our members had made his basement available to Bob and a small group of other aspiring teen-age musicians to practice in (that was before our club member moved to South Carolina). Bob appreciated the gesture and reciprocated by stopping in Columbia each spring and fall while on his trips between Florida and NYC. Our club was the beneficiary of that friendship. But our musicians are multi-talented. I remember Dick Goodwin being asked to play bass on "Big Noise". Someone supplied the score

and spread it out on the floor. Dick took the bass to the front of the stage where he could look down at the score. He drug the bass along as he played. Or maybe I'm just remembering Dick recounting that event. In any case, it's another example of musicians overcoming unexpected obstacles to turn what could have been a disaster into a good concert.

Our band members are also good music educators. Several having served on the faculty of USC and other institutions. Of course, Aletha has been on the faculty at Columbia College for some time. But she has been at a few other institutions along the way.

Another guest musician, Pete Neighbor. (who makes his living playing on cruise ships) made Columbia his home for a few years. Pete now lives in Charleston (I discovered this when I checked the internet to find out when he might be available). And during my search, I discovered that Pete also plays the Oud (If you don't know what an Oud is, check the internet.

Bria Skonberg was another musician who really impressed me the first time I heard her play. That was at the Sacramento Jazz festival (and I've heard her at several Jazz Festivals since then). She was still a teen ager at time and living with her parents in Chiliwack, Nova Scotia). I think her father led the band and her sister was on trombone. The band was called the "Mighty Aphrodite Jazz Band".

Even though Bria was a teen at the time, it was obvious that she had real potential (borne out by her stellar career since then). I tried to get her as a special guest on a couple of occasions but her schedule and our budget never quite matched. Maybe one of these days?. She is a marvelous trumpet player and a fine singer (note I don't offer those accolades lightly).

Bring some friends to our next concert. What's not to like, a fine bassist calling the tunes with a really top flight crew on the bandstand with him. And an audience who came to hear the music. What's more, all this comes for a remarkably low price!

But I still need to remind you that Covid continues to "wend it's wicked ways!" Masks are still required!

Lastly, as a now retired industry scientist, I urge you to get vaccinated if you have not already done so. And please urge all your un-vaxed family and friends to be vaccinated. It will help save your friends, your family, your kids, and your grandkids! Yes it is a relatively mild illness in some cases. But all too often, it turns into a slow, life-ending slide into eternity. Above all, getting vaccinated could save you, your family, your friends (and innocent bystanders as well) from that sad ending.

Well yes, it might also help your enemies but that is a small price to play. Besides, from what I've seen in my long years as a member of the Jazz Society, I seriously doubt that any of you have enemies.

Now, I will step down from my soap-box.

But wait! There's more as that obnoxious commercial used to say. Bring some friends along. If they enjoy the music, they can become a member of the Jazz Society and by paying a small fee, they will get a reduced price of admission at each of the concerts for the next year.

**Red Smith, (Editor Emeritus)**