

The Cat's Meow



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While we eagerly await the return of Carolina Jazz concerts in September, here's a look back on its May performance with swing and gypsy jazz artists Les Flat Out Strangers. As a bonus, Chuck Braun shares some background on the tune "Undecided", which the bands performed in May.

Carolina Jazz pianist Aletha Jacobs with Flat Out Strangers vocalist Katie Gandy and bassist George Fulton.





Concert regular Chuck Braun provided the Meow with this brief history of the song “Undecided”, which the bands performed in May.

An accidental song title

“Undecided,” a classic swing tune famously recorded by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, has a unique background story.

One night the legendary band leader Benny Goodman stopped by the Onyx Club on 52nd Street in New York City to hear some tunes.

While there, Goodman’s attention was captivated by the first-time performance of a composition by trumpeter Charlie Shavers. Accounts differ about exactly what happened next, although everyone agrees about this: When Goodman asked Shavers about the tune, Shavers hadn’t named it yet, so he said the title was undecided.

That word stuck. Later, when the song was arranged for Goodman’s big band, the tune was titled “Undecided”.

The lyrics to the song were added years later.



Carolina Jazz leader and trumpeter Dick Goodwin with clarinetist Doug Graham, who plays with both groups, and Flat Out Strangers founder and guitarist Jerry Sims.



Flat Out Strangers bassist George Fulton and violinist Jim Graddick with Carolina Jazz drummer Jim Hall.

Carolina Jazz Society President and tubist David Roof leads the second line procession as the bands perform “When the Saints Come Marching In”, a Carolina Jazz tradition.





Next month, we'll explore the meaning of all those umbrellas.

Our next performance will be sometime in September. We'll share that date with you as soon as it's confirmed.

Until next time ...