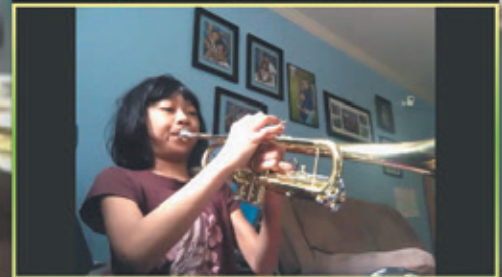
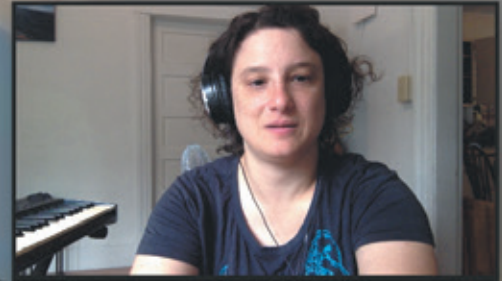


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EARSHOTJAZZ

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

March 2021
Volume 37, No. 03
Seattle, Washington



Seattle JazzED Pushing Forward in Epic Times

Jazz Prep for Beginners Trumpet class led by Samantha Boshnack (top right)
Screen capture courtesy of Seattle JazzED

The Sound at the End of the Tunnel

First of all, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. Beyond that, here's hoping that the longer, warmer, and brighter days of spring will shine some much-needed rays of optimism on the funky scenario into which these historic times have delivered us. With this March issue of *Earshot Jazz*, we're finding hope in the jazz artists and audiences here in the Puget Sound region, delivering news that celebrates the past, present, and future of one of the most dynamic and resilient jazz scenes in America.



John Gilbreath photo by Bill Uznay

We're delighted to begin this issue with a cover profile of Seattle JazzED. This city's jazz education programs have always been nationally respected. So much so, that they've helped to build the civic value system for jazz here. But Seattle JazzED has taken the best of Seattle's existing programs to a whole new level. Check Paul Rauch's profile of JazzED's investment in a jazz future of inclusion, accessibility, and swing.

March always brings the annual Golden Ear and Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame Awards to Seattle. In addition to its core mission of recognizing outstanding accomplishments by our own resident artists each year, the awards are also a great opportunity for the long view, to take stock of the overall face and sound of this incredible community, especially through these difficult times.

These individual artists are the standard-bearers for our communal energies. We encourage you to join us online at our YouTube channel on March 12, 7:30pm, streaming from the Royal Room, with music by Alex Dugdale FADE Quartet.

We're also super excited to be launching an amazing schedule of weekly livestream concerts, produced under all safety protocols from two major venues, and providing some much-needed churn in the stagnant waters of paid gigs for Seattle artists! We'll be weekly on Friday nights from the Royal Room, and bi-weekly on Saturday nights from Town Hall Seattle. Check the schedules in this issue, and warm up the old hi-fi set for some great Seattle jazz, every week from Earshot Jazz with more details at earshot.org.

See? I told you we have good news. One can almost begin to imagine a gradual easing of our shared circumstances here in the Puget Sound region. The Sound at the end of the tunnel!

As always, we invite you to join us. It is so fantastic that this monthly magazine is still distributed free of charge all around the greater Seattle area. Shoutout to Dan Dubie, our distribution czar. You can also make a membership donation and receive it by US Mail. And you can always find us at earshot.org! See you at the Golden Ear Awards Party!!

Thank you!!

JOHN GILBREATH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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NOTES

"First Sundays Concerts" Series Presents The Mark Lewis Quartet

Bainbridge Community Piano Association presents the Mark Lewis Quartet. Postponed due to COVID-19, the Mark Lewis Quartet concert has been rescheduled for Sunday, March 7, at 4pm PST as a virtual concert. The event will feature Mark Lewis (saxophone), Bill Anschell (piano), Clipper Anderson (bass), and Mark Ivester (drums). Ticket holders will be able to view the concert for three weeks. For tickets visit firstsundaysconcerts.org.

KNKX Receives Doris Duke Award

Local jazz radio station KNKX 88.5FM has been selected as one of five radio stations for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's newly formed Jazz Media Lab Award, launched in January 2021. The three-year award program, targeted at the country's most dynamic and forward-thinking non-profit jazz radio stations, aims to bolster each radio stations' individual strength and collective resilience as essential players in the jazz ecosystem. KNKX, along with KMHD Portland, KUVO Denver, WBGO Newark, and WRTI Philadelphia, will each receive grants of up to \$275,000 over three years. As well as being used for core support, the program will also provide the resources to advance strategies to diversify the radio stations' listening bases and invest in new media platforms. For more information about this award visit ddcf.org.

Artist Trust Announces 2020 Fellowship Awardees

In February, Artist Trust announced the nine recipients of the 2020 Fellowship Awards, which includes artists across genres from around Washington state. Each recipient receives an unrestricted cash award of \$10,000. This year's recipients include jazz musician, composer, and community organizer Benjamin Hunter. We congratulate all the awardees. The next cycle of the Fellowship awards opens in October 2021, with a deadline of November 8. More

information about the current recipients can be found at artisttrust.org.

Office of Arts and Culture Youth Arts Grant Application

The City of Seattle's Youth Arts Grant application is now open. Designed to support equitable access to arts and cultural learning for Seattle's middle and high school-aged youth, the program is held outside school hours. Individual teaching artists and organizations are encouraged to apply to the program. Projects must take place between September 2021–August 2022, and recipients will receive \$6,000 distributed over a year. The application deadline is March 22, 2021. Follow this link for more details: seattle.gov/arts.

4Culture 2021 Project Grants

4Culture Project Grants will open for application on March 17, with an April 28 deadline. The three project grants cover the disciplines of arts, heritage, and preservation. Workshops and videos are available to help applicants. Follow this link for more details: 4culture.org/project-grants.

Best of the Blues Awards Ballot Available

The Washington Blues Society ballot is available for the "Best of the Blues Awards" program. Voting is available for members

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Help promote the Seattle Jazz community!

Earshot Jazz Editor

The *Earshot Jazz* magazine is looking for a new editor. This is a part-time contract position. Visit earshot.org for more information.

Earshot Jazz Writers

Earshot Jazz is looking for freelance writers to contribute to the *Earshot Jazz* magazine. Assignments include special features, profiles, previews, and reviews. Visit earshot.org or write to editor@earshot.org for more information.

JazzED: Pushing Forward in Epic Times



Screen capture of Virtual Girls Jazz Day led by instructor Kelly Clingan (top row, second box from the left) courtesy of Seattle JazzED

BY PAUL RAUCH

Jazz education in Seattle has proliferated generously over the past thirty years, with nationally acclaimed programs at Garfield and Roosevelt High Schools leading the charge. The two Seattle programs, led by Clarence Acox and Scott Brown, respectively, have seen their meteoric rise validated with success at the prestigious Essentially Ellington competition at Lincoln Center. Acox and Brown have been the beneficiaries of ardent parental support, leading to benefits for the students previously viewed as unattainable, including opportunities to travel to and perform in Europe.

With a vibrant jazz history, an active and innovative modern scene, and the best high school programs in the country, it would seem that jazz music in Seattle would easily swing into the 21st century with ease. For students, jazz would remain a great source of personal expression in both a musical and cultural sense. Yet aside

from the aforementioned schools, as well as several quality middle school programs, opportunity for students at the majority of Seattle schools was rudimentary at best. The music and culture, which had largely been sustained by the oral tradition, now fell into the hands of educators—and the inequity of school music programs in the city.

Current JazzED Executive Director Laurie de Koch was a band parent and a front row witness to both the success of the programs, and the obvious challenges they faced going forward.

“My own children were fortunate enough to be in the band programs at Washington Middle School and Garfield High School, they were getting opportunities left and right. That included traveling to Europe. I noticed that despite the fact that we were in these very ethnically, culturally, economically diverse schools, the band room tended to look pretty white, pretty male, and pretty resourced,” she recalls.

De Koch, a professional with an extensive background in arts management, believed she could make a difference. She understood that the life-transforming experiences of her own children meant so much less when viewed through the lens of social injustice. Assisted by Acox and other parents, she formed JazzED in 2010, with an aim to provide equal opportunities across the board for students from grades 4 to 12. It gave all Seattle area students access to play in ensembles, receive top quality instruction, and integrate themselves in the jazz tradition. The program grew to over 1,000 students and reached 6,000, including JazzED sponsored assemblies in area schools.

Still, as the program grew and proliferated, the marks of systemic racism were obvious, with the top-level ensembles appearing largely white and male.

“We’ve always been an organization committed to equity, so we’ve been doing that work from the beginning. We’ve been

“The families who need the most, were going to be affected the most.” –Ricardo Luna

JazzED identified two daunting issues: one was the severe economic hardship that COVID triggered, and the second was the challenge of serving beginner students. Despite digital access increasing the reach of the program, questions remained about the viability of instructing beginner students on Zoom. While the program operates on a no-questions-asked sliding scale, the pandemic deepened the financial challenges already experienced by area families. Another obstacle was how to physically get instruments into students' hands. Youth Development Director Ricardo Luna donned the superhero cape for this one, diving into a three-week experimental launch for beginner students.

Luna managed to provide instruments, either by delivering them in person or by mail. Virtual programs proved to be viable, and will continue to present positives moving forward post-pandemic. The tuition standards already established proved their

“We’ll be really digging into using music as a tool, not only for individual expression, but for social change.” –Kelly Clingan

“Part of the initiative is to break through those barriers and systemic problems where families felt they needed to come to somebody and ask—you take that away and just put it on an application and it’s done. We found that more families came and joined us who were kind of in the middle—they were economically doing

Education Director Kelly Clingan weighs in on JazzED's response to 2020. Clingan emphasizes that even though the alternative access has been a challenge, it's also been a major positive. "It's been super fun," she says unabashedly. She has tailored the programming to meet the epic circumstances faced by our community, both before and during the pandemic. The racial reckoning American society is experiencing has further informed JazzED's programming, such as teaching awareness of the social responsibility musicians inherit in times

The project includes “a deep dive into what was happening in society at the time the song was composed, and what was going on in the life of that artist,” says Clingan. “We’ll be really digging into using music as a tool, not only for individual expression, but for social change.”

She also addressed the essential tool of listening to jazz, of introducing students to

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the art form's formidable recorded history. After all, you can't learn to swing without experiencing the vibe and cadence of classic recordings played by the masters.

"One of the very first things we did in COVID times was to launch an online guided listening series of some of the great albums that our teachers talk through. We coupled it with some lesson plans and worksheets for teachers to use," she remarks proudly.

Moving forward in 2021 will be a read and react scenario for JazzED. They are planning digital programs for this summer, with the hope of hybrid opportunities for live programming dependent on the state of the pandemic. The aim is for full, in-person programming in September.

Looking further ahead, JazzED is teaming with Community Roots Housing in the creation of a new building that will house the program, as well as provide affordable housing in the Rainier Valley. Being constructed on the former site of the Imperial Lanes Bowl, fundraising for the project has been undaunted by the worldwide pandemic. Indeed, 2020 proved to be a record year for the program in those terms. The plans for the new space provide ample hope for the future, emboldened by the consistent generosity of the Seattle community. That generosity of spirit is front and center for Executive Director de Koch.

"This is a story of hope," she says. "This building will be a community gathering place where our kids and their families can

come and feel they are a part of something that is their home where they share power in this place, that they see themselves there as a part of a community. All of that in this time of inequity being highlighted, is really important. This building has given people a way to really plug in and be a part of something helpful."

For the second year running, JazzED's most important fundraising event will be presented virtually. "Soundtrack for the Future Virtual Gala" will be streamed live from the Royal Room on March 18 at 7pm. Student stories, live performances, new videos, and Virtual Fund-a-Need will highlight the evening. Information for this important event is available at seattlejazzed.org/gala.



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NOTES, FROM PAGE 3

only. The awards ceremony, which is the 30th annual, will take place on April 18. The voting deadline is March 9, 2021. For information visit wabluess.org.

COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund

Washington State artists of all disciplines who have been affected by COVID-19 financially and have not yet received funding from the Artist Trust COVID-19 Relief Fund are invited to apply. Priority is given to individuals who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, including artists from historically marginalized communities, BIPOC artists, artists who are immunocompromised, artists who identify as LGBTQ, artists with immigrant status, and artists living with or having disabilities. Artists interested in applying can do so from March 5 at the Artist Trust website. The application deadline is March 26, with funding to be distributed in early April. The grant amount will be \$1,000 per person. For details visit artisttrust.org.

Seattle Jazz Artist Relief Fund

The application period for the second round of SJARF is now closed. Earshot Jazz will distribute funds early this month. It was an honor to administer this program and bring much needed support to the community. We thank the Rainier Institute and Foundation for making this program possible.



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SHUNPIK

Talking Seattle Jazz with Jazztalk Seattle



Max Holmberg photo by @monkifoto



Josh Hou photo by Rosanna Sze

This story begins as all good stories do: with a teenager studying Latin percussion in Kuala Lumpur. The teenager was Josh Hou, whose podcast with Max Holmberg is Jazztalk Seattle, a monthly podcast on SoundCloud where they talk about Seattle's jazz scene with local musicians. But, back to Kuala Lumpur. "My percussion teacher was playing a gig in a smoky bar where he brought in a full band to play a tribute to Mongo Santamaria...I *needed* to play like that." Play, he did and does—both accordion and keyboards.

For Holmberg, his love of jazz began during childhood: his mom would play Count Basie's music a lot. "My mom was a pianist and singer and encouraged me to get into playing music." Play, he did and does—drums and percussion.

Their musical backgrounds, and their enjoyment of listening to jazz (for Hou his first jazz albums were Dave Brubeck and Eddie Palmieri; for Holmberg it was the likes of Oscar Peterson and Papa Jo Jones), led the two to think that, perhaps, they could talk about what they loved and what they were already immersed in: Seattle's jazz community.

"We started out talking about records," Hou says. The podcast is a few years in now. "We were listening to records and even discussed things that we were practicing. Pretty soon we transitioned to inviting guests on to talk about their projects and recently released records." Recent guests to Jazztalk Seattle have included Alex Dugdale, Jacqueline Tabor, Max Walker, Frank Vitolo, and many others. "I really love to be able to dig deep," Hou says of the podcast. "It's nice to find out what other musicians are up to, what inspires them."

Both Hou and Holmberg are inspired by Seattle's local scene. "Jazz musicians in Seattle tend to be open-minded in their approach to jazz," notes Holmberg. "This has given birth to a thriving avant-garde scene." Hou concurs: "A lot of musicians are happy to play in various musical contexts, which leads to some interesting genre-bending projects."

Alas, much of these projects are in quarantine with COVID still raging. Audiences are part of Zoom calls and Facebook live events. Both podcasters miss the live aspects of shows and miss the places in Seattle that showcase jazz talent, like Angry Beaver,

Capitol Cider, and Owl & Thistle that have regular jam sessions. Holmberg says, "I like that there are many different venues, each with their own crowd and vibe." One might play Count Basie classics. Another might play music heard in smoky bars in Kuala Lumpur. All of this cross-pollination, genre-bending, and world-expanding has been taking place in Seattle, and championed on the Jazztalk Seattle podcast.

Though they've been at it for some time, there's so much more they want to do.

For example, Hou would love to interview accordionists he admires, like Richard Galliano and Toninho Ferragutti. For Holmberg, it would be jazz legends like Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, and Kenny G. "They have each strongly approached their music in their own way."

COVID continues but, perhaps, there's a finish line on the horizon. Vaccines are beginning to be rolled out. Both Hou and Holmberg are excited about rolling out new episodes (Kate Voss and Jason Goessl episodes are out now). And, also, celebrating the diverse landscape of Seattle jazz. —Jonathan Shipley

Earshot Jazz Announces New Weekly Livestream Series at Royal Room

Earshot Jazz is excited to announce a new weekly livestream series: Earshot Jazz Live from the Royal Room. We'll be presenting music that celebrates some of Seattle's most talented ensembles. March lineup is below and April lineup will be announced soon. Concerts are offered free of charge. Check earshot.org for streaming details and more info.



Alex Dugdale FADE Quartet (Cole Schuster, Greg Feingold, Alex Dugdale, and Max Holmberg) photo by Daniel Sheehan

Friday, March 5, 7:30PM PST

D'Vonne Lewis Limited Edition

World-class drummer D'Vonne Lewis, who burns the stew of jazz, funk, and R&B, leads Limited Edition—an extraordinary ensemble of Seattle talents, featuring saxophonist Cliff Colón, bassist Farko Dosumov, and vibist Jacques Willis. Expect deep grooves, lots of love, and a scintillating ride.

Friday, March 12, 7:30PM PST

Golden Ear Awards Party w/ Alex Dugdale FADE Quartet

Come join the party as we celebrate the outstanding achievements of Seattle jazz artists in 2020. Acknowledging the difficult circumstances that artists and community organizers have been struggling under, we thank everyone for

their contributions to the Seattle jazz community this past year.

Helping us to celebrate is the super-charged, hard-driving sound of the Alex Dugdale FADE Quartet featuring the multi-talented composer, instrumentalist, and tap-dancer Dugdale, along with his solid crew—bassist Greg Feingold, guitarist Cole Schuster, and drummer Max Holmberg. The FADE Quartet's livestream performance will bookend the Golden Ear Awards ceremony. Golden Ear and Seattle Hall of Fame recipients will be accepting their awards in a pre-recorded video segment.

Friday, March 19, 7:30PM PST

Elnah Jordan and Eric Verlinde

Powerful soul and blues vocalist Elnah Jordan and one of the most in-demand

Seattle pianists Eric Verlinde were festival favorites—don't miss their upcoming performance. Longtime musical partners, they've honed their deep musical connection, seamlessly melding jazz, gospel, and rhythm and blues. This night promises to be extra special as Jordan celebrates her birthday and Verlinde celebrates his wedding anniversary.

Friday, March 26, 7:30PM PST

RAE

Bassist Abbey Rae Blackwell has been a bright, emerging force on Seattle's creative jazz scene for several years. Working here with drummer Evan Woodle and keyboardist, Matt Williams, her music seamlessly combines lyrical melody with unexpected harmonies, creating an avant-garde undercurrent that is focused yet laid back.

Earshot Jazz Live at The Forum

Earshot Jazz and Town Hall Seattle are excited to announce the reboot of the livestream collaboration: Earshot Jazz Live at the Forum. We'll be presenting resident and nationally known artists every other Saturday night starting in March. Tickets start at \$15. For more information go to earshot.org.



Marc Seales photo by Daniel Sheehan



Jovino Santos Neto photo by Daniel Sheehan

Saturday, March 13, 7:30PM PST

Marc Seales Trio

Pianist, composer, and Professor of Jazz Piano at the University of Washington, Marc Seales is the Dean of Seattle jazz pianists; acclaimed both locally and internationally. His elegant, blues-inflected playing is influenced as much by the Black Church as by jazz artists such as Herbie Hancock, John Coltrane, and Wynton Kelly. Seales is joined by consummate bassist Jeff Johnson and versatile New York-trained drummer Stefan Schatz.

Saturday, March 27, 7:30PM PST

Jovino Santos Neto Quinteto

The brilliant pianist and composer combines jazz and the stylings of his native Brazil with his Seattle all-star band: bassist Chuck

Deardorf, drummer Mark Ivester, percussionist Jeff Busch, and vibist Ben Thomas. This long-standing Seattle ensemble locks in musical mastery, marvelous chemistry, and palpable joy with each performance.

Saturday, April 10, 7:30PM PST

Clinton Fearon

As part of Town Hall's Global Rhythms series, Earshot Jazz co-presents the Jamaican-born, composer, vocalist, and instrumentalist Clinton Fearon. After more than a decade as a member of the legendary band the Gladiators, Fearon left Jamaica in 1987 and made his home in Seattle, where he formed the bands The Defenders and Boogie Brown Band. Fearon creates imaginative, poetic, music informed by his reggae roots in the hope of a better world—experience his magical

guitar and vocal performances infused with messages from the heart.

Saturday, April 24, 7:30PM PST

Ayesha Brooks, Wayne Horvitz, Ha-Yang Kim

World-renowned composer, pianist, and master of electronics, Wayne Horvitz takes the stage with guitarist and vocalist Ayesha Brooks, and cellist Ha-Yang Kim. Brooks, a contestant on *The Voice*, draws from varied inspiration from gospel and jazz, to hip-hop and rock. Kim draws from numerous traditions including Western classical, avant-improv, and East Asian music. This trio, who performed in the recent Earshot Jazz Festival, is not afraid to stretch musical boundaries and ride new sonic waves.



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kandace springs, 2018 studio session
photo by parker miles blohm / knkx



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Performing the Interim: Wayward in Limbo Continues

The Chapel Performance space, a 100-person concert hall on the fourth floor of the century-old Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford, has remarkable resonance. Beside yellow paneled walls, stained-glass windows on either side of the room let in natural light over the wood floors to the low, rounded stage, framed by pillars that curve up into a spacious, white ceiling. Here, for ten nights a month, audiences have gathered to intimately witness artists perform new and experimental music for the Wayward Music Series. Now the space is closed indefinitely.

Until it opens, Nonsequitur, the nonprofit behind the series, continues to curate and commission music, regularly posting recordings online via its website and SoundCloud, and encouraging listeners to pay artists directly. Since April, head of Nonsequitur and program curator Steve Peters has invited artists to provide at-home recordings or previously unreleased mixes of material.

“We are focused on supporting artists from the Seattle metro area—Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Bellingham, Eastside, etc.,” Peters writes over email. “People who would normally be playing at the Chapel, Gallery 1412, the Royal Room, or more underground venues.” Peters has also invited formally Seattle-based artists with ties to the local community, such as trombonist Naomi Siegel, who released an improvisation with live electronics about her pregnancy, “Gestation,” on August 7th, two days after recording.

Other artists have taken the opportunity to share documents of their practices, translating the presence of the room into new expressions, often with a meditative or contemplative aspect. One half of Mamiffer and Mára, Faith Coloccia used field recordings from Vashon Island with her two-year-old son for a haunting meditation on language and lineage in November. In July, guitarist Michaud Savage furthered



Melia Watras photo by Michelle Smith-Lewis

his striking compositional voice with a politically charged work, with guests, cellist Lori Goldston and writer Christopher Lee.

Peters emphasizes the work of other younger artists like La Sonora Clandestina, Pink Void, Nordra, Kole Galbraith, and others. In July, composer Marguerite Brown released a cycle of microtonal chamber pieces; in May, flutist Leanna Keith improvised variations around a void on various instruments. Virtuoso vocal performances, from Blessed Blood to Haruko Crow Nishimura, have inspired Peters as well: “I’d also love to hear a real-life duo of Amelia Love Clearheart and Tamara Zenobia,” he says.

Since Nonsequitur’s still paying rent on the chapel, Peters has also overseen recordings in the Chapel for artists not set up to record at home, as “that room loves music,” he writes. These too, have kept to the program’s wide range. In October, clarinetist Angelique Poteat joined the Artemisia Wind trio to record original chamber pieces and Melia Watras



Michael Jinsoo Lim photo by Michelle Smith-Lewis

(violin) premiered a collection of graceful, hope-inspired pieces with Michael Jinsoo Lim (violin). Sound artist Susie Kozawa explored the space in August, and Kyle Hanson debuted a new bellows technique on accordion in January. Other chapel recordings include a stirring reflection on the past by Ahmad Yousefbeigi, Kurdistanian vocalist in July, and Stephen Fandrich’s sublime prepared piano variations on a Tyvan melody in August.

“I have no idea what is coming up. It just depends on whoever comes through week by week,” Peters says on upcoming concerts, though listeners can expect releases from Ha-Yang Kim and Alex Guy, and perhaps more archival works like the 2009 concert with Harold Budd and bassist Keith Lowe, released last month. These recordings, available for free, make up a remarkable record of the ways, from coding to clarinets, that local artists continue to examine what an indefinite time discloses. —Ian Gwin

Visit waywardmusic.org to hear the recordings.

Jim Knapp

*Throughout the year, Earshot Jazz is proud to be sharing brief excerpts from the forthcoming book, *After Jackson Street: Seattle Jazz in the Modern Era*, by Seattle's preeminent jazz writer, Paul de Barros. Picking up where de Barros' *Jackson Street After Hours* (Sasquatch Books, 1993) left off, the new book will be published by the History Press of Charleston, S.C., and will feature fascinating interviews with the familiar artists and under-sung heroes who shape the vibrant jazz scene of the Pacific Northwest.*

In August, 1979, when I was thinking about moving to Seattle, I happened upon a concert at the Moore Theatre by the Composers and Improvisors Orchestra (CIO) featuring guest artists Sam Rivers and Dave Holland. "Wow," I thought, "if that's the kind of music they play here, Seattle must be OK!" Forty-two years later, I am still eternally grateful to trumpeter, composer and CIO founder Jim Knapp, for helping me make the decision to live here.

Knapp started the CIO in 1977, six years after he replaced exiting faculty member Floyd Standifer at Cornish College of the Arts. Featuring top Seattle players such as reed man Denney Goodhew and bassist Chuck Deardorf, among others, the CIO not only showcased artists such as Rivers, Holland, Gil Evans, Bob Brookmeyer, Ralph Towner and many others, but served as the house organ, if you will, for the luxuriously lyrical compositions of Knapp himself. Over the years, Knapp, who came to Seattle from his hometown of Chicago, in 1969, has not only given us great music—on stage and on discs such as *First Avenue* (ECM) and *Secular Breathing* (Origin)—he also assembled and led an illustrious jazz faculty at Cornish in the 1970s and '80s that included bassist Gary Peacock, trombonist Julian Priester, pianist Art Lande, drummer Jerry Granelli and vocalist Jay Clayton, not to mention Seattle stalwarts such as Goodhew, Deardorf, Dave Peck, Dave Peterson, and Joni



Jim Knapp photo by Steve Korn

Metcalf. Just as my discovery of Knapp came about as a happy accident, so, too, have some of the developments in Knapp's career also come by surprise, as you will see from the excerpts below, taken from three interviews conducted in 2020, and 2021. —Paul de Barros

* * *

When I first moved to Seattle I was looking for work, naturally, and one of my jobs was as a Fuller Brush Man, going door to door. One day, I was on Queen Anne Hill and a very nice, elderly lady and I got to

talking and she said, "Oh, my son's a musician." "Oh, really?" "Yes," she said, "his name is Gary Peacock." For me, there were three bass players who were changing the way it goes—Charlie Mingus, Scott LaFaro and the third was Gary Peacock—so naturally I hung out a little longer. She said he was just back from Japan where he'd been studying oriental medicine. Well that's nice, I thought, and I went on with my route. A while later I was at a bookstore and a guy walked in and I just knew it was Gary Peacock. We had coffee and talked about music. So after I got the gig at Cornish to start a jazz program, they needed a theory teacher, so I suggested Gary. Of course all the students wanted to study bass with Gary and eventually he taught that, too. He was very influential on the Cornish scene and helped establish Cornish as an internationally known mecca for jazz music. I think a lot of the (other) teachers came there because of him.

About that time, I had also gotten to know Dave Holland quite a bit—he came through town a lot—and I remember he insisted, "Whatever you do, include free music in the curriculum. It's too easy to just let it go by." And I did it, and I think that's one thing that set the Cornish program apart from others. It wasn't just about teaching "the rules of jazz." There was always a free ensemble.

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MEET THE BOARD

Sheila Hughes

Continuing our series, Earshot Jazz would like to introduce you to our board members. They're a group whose work often goes unnoticed by the broader public, but we value their expertise and their dedication to Earshot Jazz. This month, please meet Sheila Hughes.

Sheila Hughes (she/her)

**Board Treasurer/Finance
Committee Chair**

**Board member since 2018,
Friend and Fan for 30 years**

I came to love Earshot Jazz quite early in its inception—the organization came on the scene right around the time that I wandered into Seattle and jumped into a funky little arts nonprofit called One Reel. Upon learning of Earshot, I remember thinking, “What a great name!,” having no idea of the connections to come.

Like Earshot, One Reel was started by a scrappy team of arts-makers. I joined 6 other folks and worked out of a rodent-infested firetrap in Belltown—together we were the producing nucleus of Bumbershoot. My six-month Bumbershoot gig turned into a two-decade adventure, as One Reel grew to take on events like Summer Nights at the Pier, WOMAD, Lake Union Family Fourth, and Teatro ZinZanni.

But what a different time and town Seattle was in the late eighties, when Earshot was first conceived. Sort of a scruffy, magical and weird place, the city felt wide open and super-inexpensive, like anyone with a half-good idea and some focus could get something started, and did. Theaters popped up in alleyways and bars. Bookfairs, open mics, and slams were a thing. And live music was everywhere—seedy haunts, fisherman bars, dance clubs. Places like the Comet, RKCNDY, the Croc, Tugs, Vogue, Rebar, Jazz Alley, OK Hotel, Sit 'n Spin and The Cloud Room—they were like a little string of pearls that lay between One Reel's Belltown office and my apartment on Capitol Hill. I was 26 and in love with this town.



Sheila Hughes photo courtesy of Sheila Hughes

As hand-crafted festivals, Earshot, Bumbershoot, Bite and Folklife were sort of Seattle's OGs, soon joined by EndFest, WOMAD, Sasquatch and lots of other great music events. But Earshot always had a special cool about it, popping up around the city, stretching out into new venues, and always refusing to become a reductive, headline-based event like many jazz festivals.

One Reel and Earshot's booking worlds sometimes touched as we both brought artists like Zakir Hussain, Branford Marsalis, Arts Ensemble of Chicago, or Sonny Rollins to Seattle, as well as NW faves like the Tiptons, Bill Frisell, Skerik, Greta Matassa, Marina Albergo, and many, many more. But what I really loved was that Earshot found the exciting edges. More of a funk, soul, and world music lover, I wasn't jazz educated...and Earshot took me into new territory—Hermeto Pascoal, Los Muñequitos De Matanzas, DakhaBrakha, most recently Jazzmeia Horn and Egberto Gismonti. Sometimes it was the beginning

of a lifetime appreciation. Other times it just blew me out of my seat, like one show about which jazz reviewer Jason West said: *What could be described as R2D2 on herbal ecstasy or two elephants making love to a men's glee club was, according to DJ Spooky, “a musical conversation” between himself and (Wayne) Horvitz.*

Since One Reel, I've served as director of Icicle Creek Center for the Arts, Gage Academy, and now Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA), but am still an unapologetic festival-head—I love the special magic that's created when a critical mass of explosive talent is squeezed into time and space. So when I got to BIMA and found a vibrant museum whose jewel box auditorium sat empty most of the time, I reached out to John Gilbreath to see if he'd partner on a Kitsap extension of Earshot Jazz Festival—the Within Earshot Jazz Festival at BIMA was born.

Since joining the Board, it's been a challenging and always-interesting ride, but

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Frank Kohl *Solitude*

SELF-RELEASED

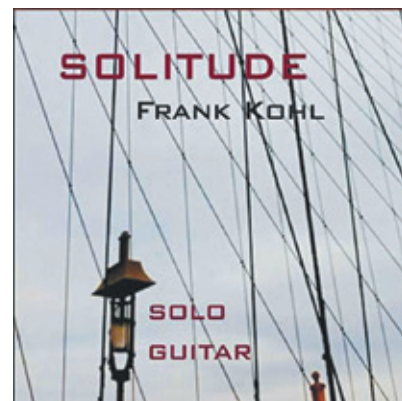
In jazz music, solo performances on piano or guitar are the noblest of ventures. No other format leaves the artist quite so vulnerable, and represents a task so daunting. The rewards are rich however, for once the player achieves a portion of success in pairing melody and harmony, the music can go in any direction that the player wishes.

Guitarist Frank Kohl has run the proverbial gamut as a jazz guitarist. His journey has taken him from his native New York City, to the San Francisco Bay, and since 1990, to his adopted home in Seattle. All the while, he has maintained his precision playing within the great jazz guitar tradition that includes heavyweights Jim Hall, Grant Green, Barney Kessel, and Peter Bernstein.

With *Solitude*, the entire sum of Kohl's creative intuitions come to light, illuminated by the oneness of his warm, exquisite

tone. His sound is barely amplified and is characterized by his mastery of the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic elements of whatever piece he chooses to interpret. In a sense, his playing is aural, playing ideas that come to mind in the moment, as opposed to relying on set patterns his fingers may chance upon. These are the essential points that draw a listener into a solo performance, more so than the particular tunes chosen to perform. In Kohl's case, the clarity of his technique is almost an afterthought, a vessel to carry his expressive capabilities.

Kohl composed about half of the album's thirteen tunes, and also included standards—from Ellington's "I Got it Bad," to the Jobim gem, "Once I Loved." His intimate relationship with originals truly comes through, as the lush, memorable melodies are strongly stated enough to stand on their own. "Solitude" and "Still Missing You" offer rich melodies steeped in melancholia, accentuated with grace and beauty by Kohl's colorful voicings, and daring connecting runs. It is within his



own tunes that he need not feel indebted to tradition, or past masters. In either case, he knows how to create space and pause within a tune, surrounding the listener with its beatific qualities.

The great solo guitarists are remarkably proficient at interpreting the nuances of bebop and post-bop vocabulary in an orchestral sense. *Solitude* presents Kohl at his introspective best, lyrically and spontaneously setting himself apart from common expectations. —Paul Rauch

Spontanea *Quintaphonic*

RIGHT BRAIN RECORDS

Consisting of Scott Schaffer (bass), Carol J. Levin (electric harp), Kenny Mandell (saxophones, flutes), Matthew Benham (guitar), and Colorado-based James Hoskins (cellist), the improvisation ensemble Spontanea has only played a handful of times live. Shortly before the pandemic, however, they were able to record a follow up to their last release, 2020's spacey *Chromasonic* (also on Schaffer's independent label Right Brain Records). Their newest presents another superb collection of improvisations—the quintet's collective searching, charged with the taut motion of uncertainty, could not have been more timely.

Hoskins sets the scene on the opener, "Inverted Rainbow," with a long, melancholy arco tone. A specialist in Mediterranean string music, Hoskins provides a lyrical counterbalance to the group's wanderings.

Evoking the shakuhachi with breathy flute harmonics, Mandell adds a spray, like plays of light off water, as Benham's eddying guitar effects return their reflections. Schaffer comes in with scratchy cords on the mandola, while the group's caution gives way to the stream of events—almost imperceptible interactions between players that mount like leaves stuck in water.

The quintet's instruments intertwine on "Svaha," a spine-tingling group drone like a glance down a chasm. Benham processes industrious shredding as Levin picks pentatonic melodies, the swirling plunge wired with Mandell's percussion hits, until a slight chord barely marks the surprising end. Smaller group pieces like "Dos Espadas," a slow-branching study in tonal parallels by Mandell and Hoskins, demonstrate the well-tuned camaraderie of the group. "Tres Horas" matches string timbres with fretless bass, the electric guitar's hall of mirrors, and the sudden plucked splash of Levin's harp. Ambitious within the small scale of their pieces, the



improvisors are able to convene intricate parallels out of nowhere, a higher reason of the indeterminate.

"Primordia Discordia" dissociates this process in a clever staging of harmony's antinomies. Beginning with a sunny dance of cello and harp, metal shreds and overblown sax squeals enter like an afterthought, only to disrupt the tranquil setting with their own jubilations. Like the group's eclectic approach to instrumentation and timbre, the group's sense of humor matches their

collaborative concentration. Levin, who often adds effects to her instrument, easily fits the harp's to Mandell's classically avant-garde blowing.

For the remarkable last track "Quintaria," the group follows through a delicately drifting, uneasy mood, faint as semi-darkness before day's end: as a broad cello melody slowly glistens, odd sounds set in like shapes in the dusk. It's only from a long-sustained and developed intimacy that the quintet can summon, so gradually and carefully, the diffused gestures of this lasting instant, to show time coherent by its dispersal. Here, as in the natural world, the conditions and relationships that make this perception possible are a precious epiphany. —Ian Gwin



KNAPP, FROM PAGE 12

(In the early '70s) there was a band in Seattle led by a drummer named Joe Field called Matrix. I played trumpet. It was an interesting band that had both classical and jazz players. Ron Simon played bass guitar—he was principal bassist in the Seattle Symphony—and there was violin and viola, all electric, amplified. It was a pretty good band. It was kind of like what I thought baroque orchestras must have been like, in Bach and Handel's time, which I thought was an interesting time in music. It dissolved when Joe moved out of town, but the Composers and Improvisors Orchestra was kind of my version of that band. The CIO was more jazz—it had acoustic bass, whereas that band was more of a rock band—but I liked the instrumentation. And it was Joe's idea.

The story about how First Avenue (a free-improvising trio with Goodhew and cellist Eric Jensen) came together is interesting. Eric was on the faculty at Cornish and he wanted to do this Stockhausen piece that had this elaborate setup of equipment and precise timings of this and that, so we were sitting in his living room trying to figure this stuff out and I said, "Why don't we just improvise? It'll sound just as good!" So we did, and we had such a great time playing together, cello and trumpet—and Denney was just a natural addition—that that became the trio.

HUGHES, FROM PAGE 13

last year eclipsed all. The COVID-related devastation that's ripped apart Seattle's music scene continues to stun, with those most hurt being individual artists, venues, and neighborhood businesses. Rebuilding that special ecology is going to be critical to the survival of all musicians, especially next generation—and Earshot plans to be a part of that effort.

And 2020's cultural shift to dismantle systemic racism and social injustice has raised serious issues and opportunities for every cultural organization. Earshot is no exception to that, and has a special responsibility since it's dedicated to advancing Jazz, a Black American art-form. The organization moved quickly to self-education and community activism, but as a board and staff we're all painfully aware of how much more needs to be done to truly embody anti-racism. I'm humbled to be working alongside a board of directors and staff who are challenging the organization from the inside out, and who intend to rebuild Earshot with laser focus on racial equity and social justice and intentionality of commitment. I see Earshot Jazz as learning, stumbling, failing, and moving forward. I know I speak for all of us when I say we'd welcome the support and help from anyone who shares in this passion—it's an exciting and urgent time.



Jazz Prep for Beginners Trumpet class led by Samantha Boshnack (top right)
Screen capture courtesy of Seattle JazzED

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