

JAZZ AT THE ZOO

Opening night for our 10th season of presenting our Jazz at the Zoo concerts found a really full, full house out to hear the ever-popular Mary Rademacher. Mary's scheduled performance for last season was rained out, and the weather was a bit shaky



all day on Monday June 14, but while the sun didn't shine, the rain did not appear, so all was well. Backed by keyboard-vocalist Mark Kahny with Hugh DeWitt on tenor, alto and flute and Bob Thompson on drums, the group gave a great performance.

The River City Jazz Ensemble, all 18 pieces strong, gave us an evening of great swing music for our June 21 concert. Kathy Wagner was an extra-added attraction with her varied vocal stylings on such numbers as "Route 66" and "A Tisket, A Tasket." A violent wind and rain storm held off until after midnight, but a prelude of a light shower prevented the band from playing their last number just before 8:30 PM.

and the beat goes on

7/5 **Western Michigan University Tribute Band** with **Evan & Edye Hyde**

7/12 .. **Grupo Aye** – Latin jazz band

7/19 .. **Arno & Randy Marsh Quartet**

7/26 .. **Tom Hagen Quintet** – tribute to George Shearing

8/2 **Vocalist Michelle Covington** with the **Scott Bell Quartet**

8/9 **Vocalist Claudia Schmidt** with **Quartet**

8/16 .. **Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra**

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR 2010 RECAP

Man of a thousand songs

The capacity crowd that turned out to celebrate John Shea as our 2010 Musician of the Year all seemed to enjoy our new venue at Centennial Country Club. The room was very open with a large dance floor. Tables were well spread out and nicely set, creating a very pleasant atmosphere. The food – roast chicken breasts and hand-carved roast beef along with delicious pasta and red-skinned potato salad – was very good. House salads and rolls were at the tables, along with coffee pots to enjoy with the tasty dessert brownies and lemon squares. The buffet table was set in a separate wing of the room, which facilitated everyone being able to serve themselves in a timely manner.

The quartet performed the first set piano-less, though it was obvious he was eager to leave his guest-of-honor table to join them! The music was great; a nice blend of jazz and ballad standards, which encouraged our guests to make good use of the ample dance floor, particularly during the last set which also found John adding some vocals to the mix. The music ended just after 9:30 pm, bringing to a close our 11th annual event celebrating one of our outstanding local musicians.

President Dona Raymer read and presented the Mayor's Proclamation which declared June 8, 2010 as John Shea

Day to our happy honoree.

John stated that he knows Mayor Heartwell personally, which made it even more meaningful to him. He then introduced the guests at his table, which included his brother and sister, along with some close friends. Dona then called out table numbers for guests to serve themselves at the buffet.



Filling in for our Vice President, Craig Benjamin, who was attending an out-of-state seminar, Board member John Miller presented John Shea with a special plaque naming him our 2010 Musician of the Year in recognition of his contributions as a performer and his dedication to the goals of the Jazz Society.

Before he could sit down, President Dona Raymer rushed



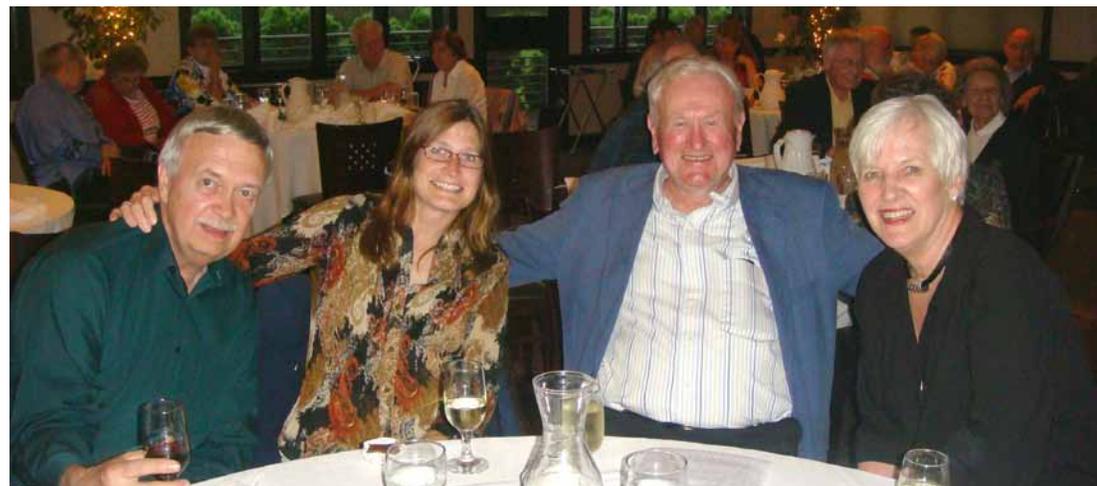
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back on stage to make a surprise presentation to John Miller. This was a President's Award to recognize his many contributions to the Society as a Board member for the past six years and as President from 2006-08. Board members may serve two



consecutive three-year terms, then are required to “lay out” for a year to make room for new faces... but the Board intends to assign John an ex-officio position to keep this valued member active in its management.

Treasurer Pete Proli made the next presentation to John Shea, which was a large framed poster of the June “Jazz Notes” cover story of this event. Our newsletter setup man, Chuck Neller, always does a beautiful job



of layout on this project, and John was obviously delighted to receive it. Pete then promenaded throughout the tables with it so our guests could get to see it up close.

Last but not least, membership chairman Betty Forrest presented John with an Honorary Life Membership card, properly laminated to last him for many years...

John selected his choice of players for his special event – the musicians he most likes to play with... Ben Jansson on tenor sax, Chris Lawrence on trumpet, Greg Sergo on the drums, and Matt Herridia on bass. They did great as a quartet for the first set, and even better when John joined them to make it a swinging quintet for the rest of the evening!

Our 2007 Musician of the Year, Tom Hagen and his wife Cherie, joined John Miller and Barb Keller at their table in time to enjoy the last long set of the evening, and even hit the dance floor along with many in the crowd who greatly enjoyed grooving to the music.

“Chet Baker: His Life and Music”

By j. de walk (2000) and

“As Though I Had Wings” – a memoir (pub. 1997)

Written by a Dutch author, this book (*His Life and Music*) naturally gives much emphasis to the wide-ranging career that Baker carved out for himself in Europe. It begins with the story of his death in May 1988 in Amsterdam and traces back and forth from early days to late ones; from the U.S. to Italy, France, Germany, Holland and Denmark where he spent most of his time from 1975 onward. It has the best description of his talent that I have ever read:

“He sat hunched in a chair, his trumpet at knee height, the horn very close to the microphone. He had a veiled, tender sound that seemed to come not from a trumpet but a flugelhorn. He was a relic of bygone times. Expressivity was foremost; his technique and grasp of theory were rudimentary. In his last years, he played with an effort and a dedication like no other. He turned his heart inside out so that listeners became almost embarrassed listening to him. He blew



By Betty Forrest

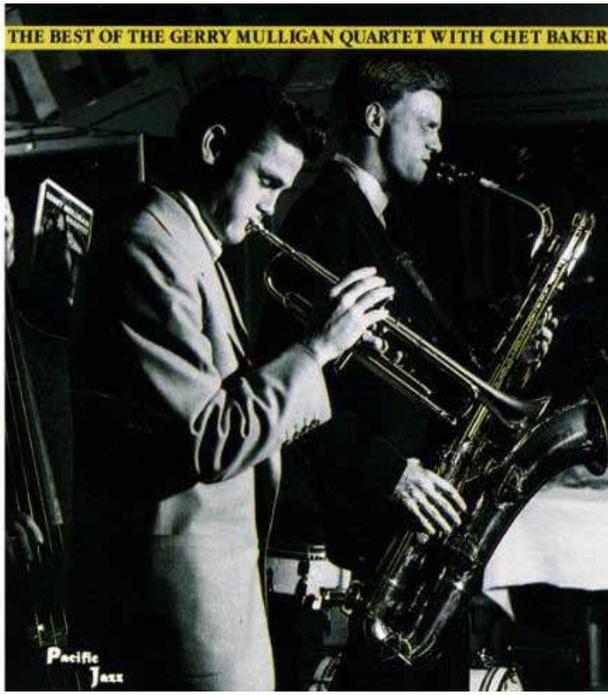


very softly, with a crystal-clear base and no vibrato. It was a flawless sound, with many undertones. Chet had little high end, but what he lacked at the top he made up for in the bottom. He had a splendid sound in the deepest register because his lips were so relaxed when he played. He gave the impression that he played each note at exactly the right moment, and that each note followed inevitably on the preceding one....on a good day. The other side of the coin is that he was one of the least consistent artists in jazz history. When not in good form, he could barely produce a note... a needlessly cruel parody of himself.”

The “Memoir,” published by Chet’s wife Carol nearly 10 years after his death, were from notebooks that he wrote from the mid-’50s to mid-’60s. They are as disjointed as one would expect from a serious junkie, but surprisingly literate. Here was a young man who had it all... movie-star good looks, great musical talent, early recognition with its accompanying fame and fortune. One wonders how he ever managed to perform at all! From his doting mother forward, he was always surrounded with enablers – whether wives, girlfriends, promoters, or other musicians. The only possible reason for getting this published had to have been to reinstate her position as Chet’s widow and mother of three of his four children. Chet had not lived with her and hardly seen the family from 1975 until his end at age 58.

He writes of his early years, born in Oklahoma 12/23/29, and the family moving to California

MULLIGAN/BAKER



in 1940. He quit school and joined the army at age 16; played in army bands for three years, playing by ear – he was never a good reader. Graduated from smoking pot to inhaling and injecting heroin by the early '50s, playing gigs in California with the likes of Vido Musso, Stan Getz, and even Charlie Parker for a two-week stint. Hit the big time when he hooked up with Gerry Mulligan and their piano-less quintet, who was also hooked on heroin. After they split up (Mulligan did some jail time for drugs) he hit New York and then Paris. Pages and pages of drug busts; this girl and that; this wife and then another... hanging out in Harlem with dealers where he'd go to "cop," get off, crash, and wake up with cockroaches crawling all over him! He did six months in jail in 1959 then off to Europe where he could get prescription drugs. His remembrances cover up until the early '60s, after he met Carol in Italy who became another enabler. The whole scene is dreadful, but he kept working through it all, in between getting busted and spending time in hospitals and infirmaries. The memoir ends in 1963 with a good year in Paris where he managed to stay clean for about six months, then back to Italy where he quickly got back into heavy drugs!

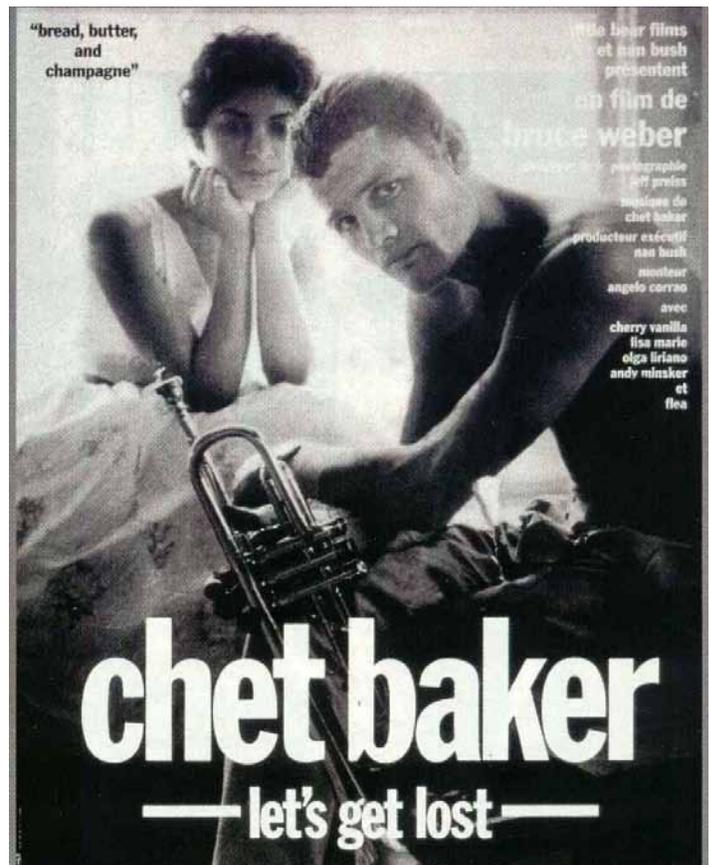
The "Life and Music" book consists of lots of interviews with other musicians and promoters who worked with him both in the U.S. and Europe. Most felt he lived a grim and gruesome life, but that he himself didn't see it that way because he was so stoned all the time. He had no sense of responsibility to himself or others, and had no permanent address after leaving his wife and children in New York in 1975. If he had to give out an address he gave Yale, Oklahoma where he was born! His best work was in the mid-'50s with his original approach and improvisations that were like small compositions. His first vocal recording, "I Fall in Love Too Easily," was in 1953.

Italy loved Chet from his first visit in the late '50s until

his last just before his death. By the mid-'70s, when he tried to make a comeback in New York, he was age 45 and looked age 65. The movie star looks were long gone, but many times the music was still there, although "cool jazz" was no longer in fashion. Many critics proclaim his last recording, made in Japan in 1987, was one of his best... he still had his beautiful sound and played jazz standards with great feeling, but his life was #1 about getting high and #2 playing music. In spite of this lifestyle, he never committed a crime to get drugs; he never dealt drugs. Everything was for his own consumption!

He spent half of 1987 in both the U.S. and Italy making the film "Let's Get Lost," a 120 minute documentary of his life directed by Bruce Weber, which was released in the U.S. just months after his death. The last year of his life he looked like a "dead man walking," but was earning about \$25,000 per month. The only things he owned, found in the hotel room he was staying at in Amsterdam when he either fell or jumped out a window to his death were \$30.00 in foreign cash, a cheap lighter and watch, his trumpet and drugs. His Alpha Romeo car was parked outside. Weber paid to bring the body back to California, and for the funeral. Still his legal wife, Carol had no money and had been raising their children at his mother's house, back in Oklahoma. Because there was always a question as to whether his death was an accident or suicide, no insurance was ever paid to her.

The book ends with 50 pages of discography, an amazing legacy for someone who fed himself with hard drugs for nearly 40 years. There are great pictures throughout the book that testify more harshly than words the toll they took.



WMJS Scholarship Fund

The WMJS Scholarship Fund is justly proud of its program of providing scholarships to students seeking to continue their jazz music education. The Society had managed the Jimmy Forrest Scholarship Fund since 1987, which was founded by his widow in 1980. When its funds were depleted two years ago, generous donations from our Society members enabled us to take over this worthy project.

Bass player Jordan Richards is the recipient of our 2010 funds, and he will be appearing with the Western Mich. Univ. ensemble at our Jazz at the Zoo program on July 5th. Jordan is a graduate of Northview High School where he was part of the excellent program under the direction of Max Colley, who retired last month after 30 years of producing award-winning musical talents. Jordan played horn until he found he could get into the jazz band if he switched to bass, which he immediately excelled at to the point where he was a member of the Mich. Youth Arts Festival All-State Jazz Band and the All-State Combo his very first year of participation.

He has been attending WMU for the past three years, playing in the Jazz Orchestra and with Gold Company, which had the honor of performing recently for President Barack Obama. He has formed his own Afro-Cuban



jazz ensemble, Mas Que Nada, which he will continue to work with while performing with various WMU jazz ensembles during his upcoming senior year.

One of last year's scholarship winners, tenor and alto saxophonist Randy Gist, was pictured in the June issue of *Downbeat* magazine as a winner in the Undergraduate College Performers category. He graduated from WMU in December and will be attending the University of Miami Frost School of Music this fall to continue study toward his Masters Degree in Music. You can see and hear him by going to: www.myspace.com/randroid3000. His goal after completing his studies is to pursue a professional music career in New York City. He would like to be quoted as saying, "WMU is the best school in the Universe". He and Jordan were roommates at WMU this past year.

Support Local Jazz Venues!

Michigan Jazz Fest, Sun. 7/18, 5 stages. Schoolcraft College, Livonia, noon until 10 PM

Evidence, Sat. 7/24 at 6 PM, 1st United Methodist Church, 111 E. Michigan, Battle Creek

Cooper VanLente Hay Trio, Wed. 7/12, 8 PM, Saugatuck Center for the Arts

Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra with Arno Marsh at Founder's Brewery, Sun. 7/18 at 5:30 PM

Terry Lower with Edye & Evan Hyde at Clara's Restaurant, Battle Creek. Thursday and Friday 6-10 PM on the patio. More info at terrylowermusic.com

Arno & Randy Marsh, Monday and Tuesday 7/12,13 at Grille 111, Rockford. 7-11 PM
Everyday People in Saugatuck Friday, 7/15, from 8-12 PM
Randy with **Rick Hicks** and **Chris Moberly** at the GRAM Fri 7/30, 7-9 PM

What Not Inn, Fennville
Jazz Jams Mondays 6-10 PM
Fri. 7-11 PM/ Sat. 6-10 PM
7/3 - Christy G 7/4 - Diego
7/10 - Entourage 7/11 - Tony Reynolds
7/17 - Mike Raleigh & Ricky Hicks
7/18 - Christy G 7/24 - Mary Rademacher
7/25 - Dan Jacobs 7/31 - Tony Reynolds
8/1 - Randy Mars

The Fred Knapp Trio, Tues. 7/13 at Grand Haven Central Park, 7 PM. Free. With the Groove Merchant Sat. 7/17 at 7 PM at the Saugatuck Brewing Co.

River City Jazz Ensemble with **Kathy Wagner** at the Lowell Showboat, Thursday 7/22 from 7-9 PM

Tom Hagen Trio with **Rick Reuther**, Thursday 7/22 at the Greenville Rhythm on the River, 7:30-9 PM

Red Jet Cafe, 1431 Plainfield NE, Mondays 6 until 9 PM
7/5 - Greg Miller 7/12 - Mark Kahny
7/19 - John Proulx 7/26 - Greg Avery

Bluewater Grille, 5180 Northland Dr., Tuesdays 7-10 pm
7/6 - Greg Miller; 7/20 - John Proulx

Mangiamos on Lake Drive SE, Wednesdays 7-10 PM, Wally Michaels

Gilly's at the BOB, Thursdays 7-10 PM, Mark Kahny with guest vocalists

Noto's from 7-10 PM
Wed. - Tom Hagen Trio
Thur. - Bob VanStee with Kathy LaMaar
Fri. - Tony Reynolds & Wally Michaels
Sat. - The John Shea Trio

Republic Bar at Division & Weston, John Shea Trio, Mondays at 8 PM

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JAZZ NOTES is sent to all members of the West Michigan Jazz Society to inform members of area jazz and to promote jazz in general. Your contribution to the West Michigan Jazz Society is Tax Deductible. JAZZNOTES is designed and produced by Chuck Neller of Positive Images, under the conceptual and editorial direction of Betty Forrest.

Interested in working on a committee? Yes No Later

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____ E-mail Address _____ Phone (_____) _____

Make checks payable to West Michigan Jazz Society and mail to: 304 Paris S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members
Board Meeting: Tues., July 27, 7 pm at Great Lakes Steak House

Dona Raymer - President735-4744
Craig Benjamin - Vice President.....233-9829
Jim Reed942-0239
Jack Morrison949-6339
Mary Rademacher...364-6609
John Miller949-7633
Marilyn Tyree363-7322
Deb Snow243-5226
Pete Proil.....866-0147
Jim Reed942-0239

Address and e-mail changes: Please notify Membership Chair (Betty Forrest, 458-0125). Bulk mail is not forwarded by the Post Office.

Articles, photos and comments are welcome! Send before the 20th of the month to:
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