

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

June 2016

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THE BJA NEWSLETTER

WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

Baltimore As A Jazz City: Part II

The Importance of Innovation

By George Spicka

George Spicka's article is an opinion piece. His views do not necessarily represent those of BJA or its board.

"With Baltimore being located between Philadelphia and D.C., it has little chance of being known as a jazz city." – Baltimore Jazz Advisory Committee (1993)

In spite of this dire prediction, just ten years later, Barry Glassman founded the Baltimore Jazz Alliance. How well I remember that first meeting—a room packed with performers and aficionados expressing their desires and concerns. A dream was born, a dream that has been sustained and grown now for thirteen years.

Am I surprised? Not at all. Jazz musicians are some of the most passionate people I know. As illustrated in "Baltimore as a Jazz City: Part I," the key is attitude. But before the BJA starts patting itself on the back, we need to consider: Why did it take a non-native, a person from New York, to recognize that Baltimore was indeed a jazz city, and to initiate a dream that is now the Baltimore Jazz Alliance?

This question suggests that the inaction of the jazz community is responsible, in part, for some of the problems we face. One frequent complaint is that Baltimore has no annual jazz festival. This is especially painful when you consider that Chicago has sponsored a jazz festival since 1979. That's 37 years. While writing for *Maryland Musician* magazine, we once got a seven-page press release about this event, which boasted how Chicago "nurtured" artists who went on to become major players. The thing is, Chicago's jazz festival actually began in 1974, put on by the community rather than by the city. It was only after five years of effort that the government finally understood its significance and decided to get involved.

Putting on our own festival will yield far better results



than will complaining about the lack of one. To paraphrase what I said back in '93, "Forget about BOPA (Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts - ed.) and instead carve out our own niche. All the BJA needs to do is believe." It's all a matter of vision. As the song goes, "Keep your eyes on the prize."

The Maryland State Arts Council has a long-term goal of turning Maryland into a "Mecca for the Arts." Their first priority is excellence. Considering the jazz talent this city has, the BJA has no worry here. We do fail when it comes to the second priority, innovation. However, as shown by the two composer showcases and the *The Baltimore Real Book* (I believe the only such publication in the nation), we have innovators too. I'm guessing it's either the lack of awareness or lack of interest that causes the BJA to continually miss this wonderful opportunity to be on the leading edge of the arts scene.

One of the things that drew me to jazz was its spirit of innovation. At that time, the early '70s, we not only honored

(continued on page 3)

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance (BJA) is a grass-roots organization of jazz aficionados, musicians and venues dedicated to enhancing and promoting jazz in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. New members sharing this passion are always welcome as the BJA continues its efforts to build a stronger and better networked jazz scene. Together we can help this music thrive in the region and reward listeners and musicians alike.

BJA Priorities

- To develop new audiences for jazz
- To strengthen communication within the jazz community
- To improve media relations on behalf of the jazz community
- To bring greater visibility to the entire array of jazz offerings in the Baltimore region
- To provide greater access to performance opportunities for Baltimore-area jazz musicians

Visit www.baltimorejazz.com for information about our accomplishments and future goals.

Baltimore Jazz Alliance
847 North Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Please direct your questions and comments to:
webmaster@baltimorejazz.com

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JAZZ JAM SESSIONS

Where the cats congregate to groove and grow!

*** NOTE: As these events may be subject to change, it's always a good idea to CALL AHEAD for CONFIRMATION!**

MONDAYS

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Monday night jam sessions hosted by Hot Club of Baltimore, mostly Django Reinhardt music, 1930s-'40s & standards. 22 W. North Avenue. 8-midnight. 410-244-8447

Amy's Place – Every other Monday featuring house band SPICE. 5517 Ritchie Highway, Unit B, Brooklyn Park. 8 pm. 410-725-9131 or 410-725-9193

NEW! Club 347 – Every Monday jam session/open mic hosted by Dawoud Said, Johnny Jones & Jesse Powers. 347 N. Calvert Street. Musicians/vocalists are welcome. 8-1:30 pm. 443-506-7200

Sign of the Times – Clarence Ward III presents The Session. 139 N. Belnord Avenue. All are welcome to come out and express yourselves. No cover, one drink minimum. Come on in and swing with us. 8:30-11 pm. 410-522-0600

TUESDAYS

Randallstown CC – Open Jazz Jam Sessions/Book and Poetry Readings every Tuesday at 6-8 pm. Hosted by Derrick Amin. 3505 Resource Drive, Randallstown. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. Sponsored by BJA. 410-887-0698

WEDNESDAYS

Conah's Bar & Grille – FIRST and THIRD Wednesdays. Jazz jam session hosted by Charles Eron Trio. 84 E. Main Street, Westminster. 7-9:30 pm. 443-821-3267
charleseronjazz@gmail.com

49 West Café – FIRST and THIRD Wednesdays. "Starr's Jazz Jam" at 49 West Street, Annapolis. Hosted by John Starr and house band. Musicians and singers very welcome! Delicious and reasonably priced food and drink available! \$10 cover. 7-10 pm. Reservations 410-626-9796

Homeslyce – Todd Marcus leads jazz jam sessions every Wednesday. Musicians and singers welcome. 336 N. Charles Street. 8-11 pm. 443-501-4000

THURSDAYS

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Jam sessions hosted by Mike Raitzyk. 22 W. North Avenue. 8-11 pm. 410-244-8447

The Place Lounge – Jam session/open mic hosted by Spice. 315 W. Franklin Street. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 7-10 pm. 410-547-2722

If you know of local jam sessions, please share the information with our readers by emailing the details to the editor at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

If any of the jazz jam sessions listed are discontinued, PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

Help us support live jazz in Baltimore by becoming a member of BJA. See page 11.



Photo courtesy of Jesse Powers, Jr.

The Spice Band's Jam Sessions at The Place

(Third in a series)

By Evon Winborne

SPICE, Left to right:
Dawoud Said, Jesse Powers, Jr., Johnny Jones

At 7 pm on a Thursday evening The Spice Band—Jesse Powers, Jr., bass; Dawoud Said, keys; and Johnny Jones, drums—is just getting started at The Place Lounge. Before Open Mic Night begins, the band grooves together, setting the tone for the evening. Any given Thursday will see the regulars with a few newcomers mixed in for variety. The Spice Band provides a comfort zone for participants because they know so many

standards and blues tunes.

This is my escape for the week. I don't want to be "discovered" or use this as a stepping stone for future gigs. I just want to sing. Singing with a live band is very different from karaoke. When the stars align just right, you and the band are in a groove that everybody can feel. The musicians are playing and the vocalists are vibing and it is a beautiful thing to experience.

The wonderful component of Open Mic Night is its spirit of inclusion. Seasoned musicians as well as amateurs may step up to the microphone. The Place has a welcoming atmosphere that invites visitors to stay and enjoy the entertainment, as the owners walk around meeting and greeting the clientele. I am revitalized every Thursday by the energy generated by the band and the participants.

Baltimore As A Jazz City

(continued from page 1)

early innovators; we talked about the creative work of living artists, my two favorites being Bill Evans and Miles Davis. Over decades I noticed that support for jazz innovation waned. It was as if the people whom one would think would be the most interested in promoting a fundamental aspect of the spirit of jazz had hit a wall that prevented them from imagining the future. It was as if the derisive notion that "Jazz Is Dead" had come true.

Of course that's nonsense. Jazz innovation did not end with the death of Miles Davis.

Creator of over 600 works, composer George Spicka has had his work performed at venues like the Kennedy Center, American Music Center, Blues Alley and Maryland Public Television. His latest group, The Spicka Ensemble, is set to debut new work that unifies jazz and modern classical concepts.

Some of BJA's ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Visit our website for more: www.baltimorejazz.com

- Established a partnership with Eubie Blake Center
- Produced our monthly newsletter since 2004
- Received grants from Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance and BOPA
- Co-sponsored (with Baltimore Composers Forum) Baltimore Jazz Composers Showcase
- Co-sponsored (with Peabody Conservatory) a vocal workshop
- Sponsored the Youth Jazz Congress, through a grant from BOPA
- Sponsored a booth at Artscape every year since 2005
- Developed Jazz for Kids
- Released two compilation CDs—*Baltimore Jazzscapes* and *Baltimore Jazzscapes II*
- Sponsored a forum on The Business of Baltimore Jazz
- Published *The Baltimore Real Book*, with 54 compositions by 18 Baltimore jazz artists
- Participated in the Baltimore Festival of Maps
- Awarded scholarships to talented young musicians
- Provide a user-friendly, free jazz calendar to our website
- Presented live jazz series at Tremont hotels and Bertha's restaurant
- Presented 26 bands at Artscape, 2008 – 2011
- Sponsored weekly jam sessions at Randallstown Community Center
- Established a partnership with WEAA-FM
- Started the BJA Big Band
- Informed musician members of performance opportunities and offered discounts on concert tickets and music supplies/services

Trading Conversations: When Improvisation Enters the Dialogue

By **Mónica López-González**

During a recent workshop I gave on storytelling, neuroscience and musical improvisation, I was asked during the Q & A: Do you believe improvised music is our best narrative tool for expression? My answer was about the differences and similarities between music and language; the remarkable correlation between musical elements like mode, pitch, tempo, and rhythm, and our behavioral expression of emotion (such as the tendency to combine minor keys, lower pitches, and slower tempi to represent sad, gloomy times); and, most importantly, what makes musical improvisation such a special activity to understand how our minds deal with the daily and spontaneous problem-solving moments of navigating our world.

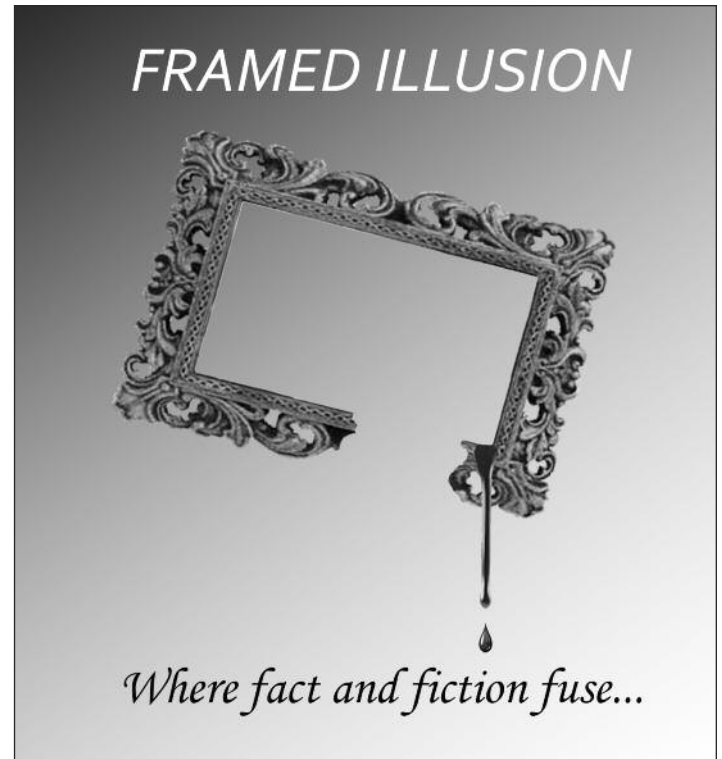
For the past couple of years I've been creating and producing through La Petite Noiseuse Productions a set of theatrical productions that push the boundaries of audiovisual storytelling: *The Final Draw* in 2014, where pianist and composer César Orozco improvised emotionally rich melodies in reaction to a couple's dialogue in a cabaret; and *In Session* in 2015, in which pianist and composer Todd Simon improvised striking melodies and nuanced textures in reaction to a psychotherapist and her client's conversation during a session. Together, these projects exemplified the incredibly acute capacity of an improvising musician to translate in real time emotional, bodily and conceptual situations into consecutive phrases without once missing a narrative beat.

That brings up the question: What if there are two musicians each, reacting to the same conversation and yet spontaneously communicating musically with each other? June sees the premiere of *Framed Illusion*, my one-act play set in an interrogation room during a murder investigation. Musicians will improvise to the dialogue, sliding between fantasy



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICO SARBANES

Framed Illusion features Baltimore's own rising star, composer, trumpeter and vocalist Nico Sarbanes.



and reality. I enthusiastically look forward to hearing how the musicians will trade phrases as the actors take turns in a game of wits!

Framed Illusion features Baltimore's own rising star, composer, trumpeter and vocalist Nico Sarbanes; Canadian-born bassist and recent graduate from Peabody Conservatory Alex Fournier; and Maryland's own wonderful actress and recent graduate from Salisbury University, Linda Bancroft.

Framed Illusion premieres at Baltimore Theatre Project, June 2-12, then debuts in cabaret style at Germano's. For more information, visit www.lpnproductions.com.

Monica López-González earned a Certificate of Art in Photography from Maryland Institute College of Art and a Ph.D. in Cognitive Science from Johns Hopkins University.

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http://jazzway6004.org/buy_tickets_and_merchandise/
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The Case For Original Jazz

From George Colligan's blog *Jazz Truth*
January 24th, 2016

Imagine a world without Thelonious Monk's music. Imagine a world with none of Wayne Shorter's music. Imagine a world where no one would say, "Let's play something by McCoy Tyner." In this alternate world, Coltrane never wrote "Moment's Notice," never wrote "Naima," never wrote "Giant Steps." In this same world, Joe Henderson never composed "Recorda-Me," or "Serenity," or "Black Narcissus." He also never had a career resurgence with *Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* because Strayhorn, in this alternate world, never wrote "Isfahan," "Upper Manhattan Medical Group," or "Blood Count." I think most true jazz lovers would agree that this is a world we would rather not live in.

I want to make the case for original music. What do I mean by "original"? In some ways, the word "original" implies a unique approach, something breaking new ground, or something that revolutionizes a musical genre or galvanizes a group of musicians, or even a generation. That's certainly a wonderful thing. However, I'm really just talking about new content. We can't expect everyone who writes a new song to reinvent the wheel. Furthermore, it's often difficult to sense the unique approach or new ground being broken upon the first hearing. Word of this new approach has to permeate musical culture. Monk was doing innovative things in the 1940s, but the world did not really recognize this until twenty years later.

... In order to have a stable life, when we settle down (meaning marriage, family, house, job, community, etc.) we accept that many things in our lives will likely not be new. For this reason, in our artistic life, or in our search for entertainment (music, visual art, food, travel, movies, TV, plays, books, shopping, etc.), we look for "the new" because it is the safest way to experience newness. Movies and books and paintings and plays take us to new places, let us spend time with new people, allow us to experience new things, without all of the hassle of actually visiting new places.

This is why I love to compose new music, and why I am an advocate of new music. The idea of creating something new from scratch is another human need. Some people cook food, other people make beer, others build model airplanes, write stories or paint. I write music. I do it because I love the satisfaction of putting melody, rhythm, harmony, and structure together to make something that a few hours or even minutes before didn't exist. Furthermore, musical composition is a world where no one can tell you you're wrong (which is quite untrue of the real world). Even a composition teacher cannot tell you that you are wrong. He or she can



only give you advice. You are never wrong when you are composing music.

Also it is essential to note that, in jazz, a composition might seem like it's not comparable to a Beethoven sonata. However, the beauty of jazz is that our compositions are improvisational vehicles: they are topics of conversation given to us by the composer on which we can improvise our own melody or harmony or rhythms. To be perfectly honest, I see composing and improvising as interrelated; they are the same process at different rates. The fact that you can improvise within a composition but also develop a composition while improvising is what makes it all come together. Further, a new composition makes you improvise differently.

I can't help but lament the fact that, in some American genres like country, rock, pop, and hip-hop, there is an assumption that 98 percent of the time, an artist will bring original music to the show or recording session. If the book of music for a band in this genre contains a majority of tunes that are already associated with artists, the group is usually considered a "cover band." Such a band, while often a lucrative vehicle for its musicians, will likely never rise beyond local success. You won't see a Journey cover band performing on *Saturday Night Live*. It's just not going to happen.

... What if Thelonious Monk only performed the music of Duke Ellington? What if McCoy Tyner only played tributes to Gershwin or Cole Porter? What if John Coltrane couldn't work unless he played "A Tribute to Lester Young?" What if Wayne Shorter couldn't work unless he offered "A Tribute to Jerome Kern?" Back in our alternate world, an entire body of jazz composition has been wiped out. One of the hip things about the hard bop era were its effort to return to the roots of jazz in blues and gospel and danceable rhythms in order to have a wider appeal, and yet the great hard bop composers like Lee Morgan, Horace Silver, Shorter, and Benny Golson never stopped creating their own music. What if they had only played jazz standards? We would be missing a huge body of work.

Jazz is a living music. Jazz musicians improvise and write our own music, and we have our own concepts. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, but we must have the freedom to make our own musical decisions. If jazz musicians can't do that, then jazz will become like classical music: a museum. I'm not anti-tradition: I teach Jazz History at Portland State University, for crying out loud! Plus, I insist my students know other people's tunes as part of their repertoire studies. Jazz, unlike genres such as country, rock, pop, and hip-hop, uses the lessons of history to move forward. The question is, do we want to move forward?

George Colligan, who spent his formative years in Columbia, MD, is a New York-based pianist, organist, drummer, trumpeter, teacher and bandleader. He has released 24 recordings and has toured, recorded and/or performed with a long list of jazz giants. He is currently a member of Jack DeJohnette's New Quintet. www.georgecolligan.com

BJA Member Benefits

Your support is crucial to the success of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance! When you join, membership benefits include receipt of our monthly newsletter, discounts on BJA merchandise, advance notice about all BJA events, and of course the satisfaction of being a part of Baltimore's best source of information and advocacy for Jazz.

But that's not all! The following venues and other businesses offer discounts to BJA members:

- An die Musik offers 10% discount for BJA members for music purchases at the An die Musik record store.
- Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society offers BJA members a \$2 discount off the general admission price. Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.
- Eubie Live! at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center at 847 N. Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.
- Jazzway 6004 offers BJA members a \$5 discount on performances at their venue.
- Germano's Piattini often offers discounted tickets to specific events for BJA members, announced by email.

BJA Member Notes

WELCOME

We welcome our new BJA members: Edward Hrybyk, Alexandre Abdoulaev, Lafayette Grier, Bernadette Green and Steve Johnson

WAMMIE WIN FOR SETH KIBEL

Seth Kibel's 2015 CD release, *No Words*, has won the Wammie (Washington Area Music Award) for 2015 Jazz Recording.



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**Enrollment deadline is June 30, 2016, but most spots will be gone
by the end of May. Call NOW to reserve your spot.**

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www.MarylandSummerJazz.com



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WARREN WOLF



JEFF ANTONIUK



PHOTO COURTESY OF WEAA

BJA board member Marcellus "Bassman" Shepard interviewed bassman Nathan East about his self-titled album *Nathan East* on his radio show at WEAA May 7th. You may now hear it on www.baltimorejazz.com.

Writers wanted to review jazz performances, venues and CDs; and write relevant articles for the BJA Newsletter. Contact the editor at: jazzpalette@gmail.com



Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute presents A Writers Workshop with best selling author Marita Golden

**Thursdays, June 30-July 21
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This four-week workshop will introduce novice writers to the basic elements of writing and storytelling. Whether you are writing fiction or nonfiction, an essay or a short story, this workshop will develop your skills in narrative, character and story.

To apply: submit a one-paragraph statement of your goals for the workshop, what you want to learn about writing. If you are working on a writing narrative, you may include a description of the writing project.

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For participants over 25, the fee is \$50.

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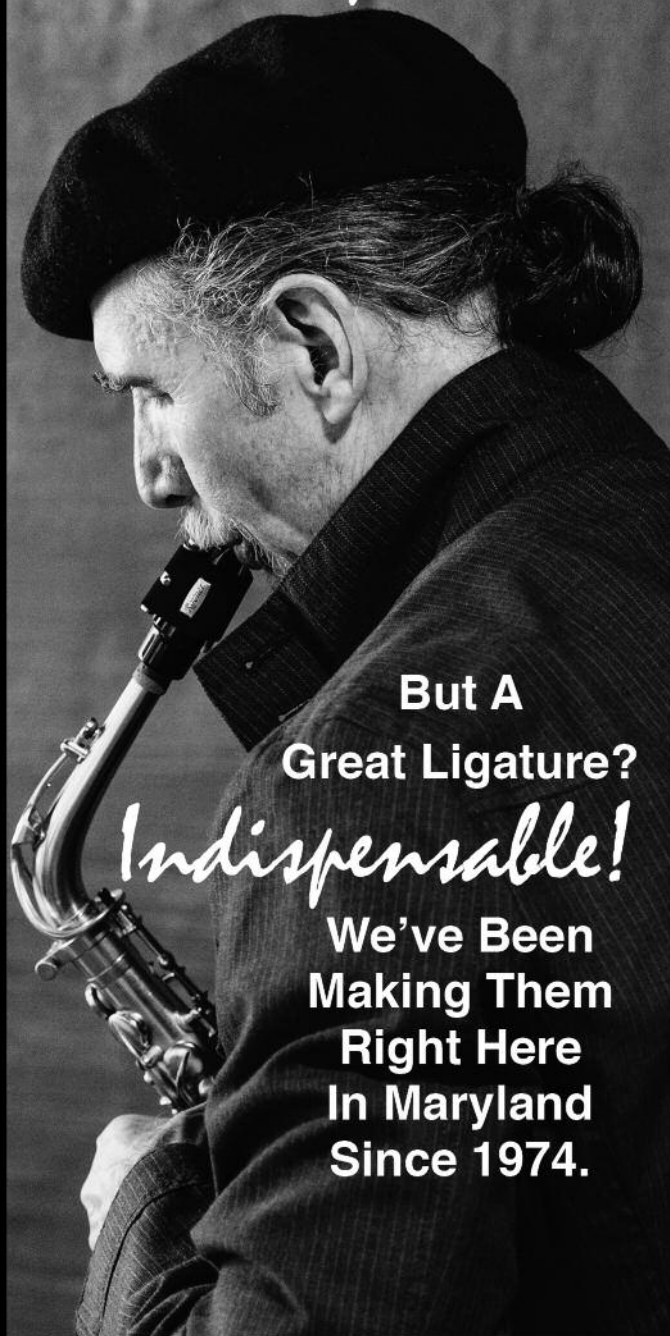
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The Eubie Blake Cultural Center continues to offer a variety
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minute sessions, beginner to advance levels. (piano, guitar,
bass guitar, trumpet, saxophone)

DANCE

Dance for young people is available at the Eubie Blake
Cultural Center on Thursday-Saturdays provided by
RaynFall Dance and on Tuesdays and Saturdays by Keur
Khaleyhi African Dance.

The CARL GRUBBS Jazz/String Ensemble will
perform at ARTSCAPE on July 17 at 8 pm
at Falvey Hall, Brown Center, Mt. Royal Avenue.

LEFT BANK '66 CD available from BJA!



You may now buy the CD *Left Bank '66* directly from BJA.

Recorded in 1966 at the
Madison Club, the CD features
Baltimore sax legend Mickey
Fields and guitarist Walt
Namuth, who joined the Buddy
Rich Big Band the following
year. These two huge talents

were rarely recorded, adding to the value of this CD. In his *City Paper* review, Geoffrey Himes wrote, "If you care at all about the history of Baltimore music or the history of the jazz saxophone, this is a recording you need to hear."

Six tracks include Sam Jones's "Unit 7," Monk's "Well You Needn't," Miles Davis's "Pfrancin" and "The Theme," Benny Golson's "Stablemates," and Billy Reid's "The Gypsy." Phil Harris is on bass, Claude Hubbard on piano and Purnell Rice on drums. Total playing time = 67 minutes.

To purchase *Left Bank '66*, you may pay \$15 via PayPal at baltimorejazz.com or write a check for \$15 to:

BJA, 847 North Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Please
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1. At the top of the calendar, follow link to OBTAIN USER NAME AND PASSWORD.
2. After your ID and password have been confirmed, log on, click on the date on the calendar when the event will occur, and follow the instructions for filling in the fields.

Questions or comments to:
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\$60 for 1/2 page	(3 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. wide x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. high) vertical ad
\$120 for full page	(7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. high)

Payment (checks only) payable to BJA should be mailed to:

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or via PayPal at www.baltimorejazz.com (click Donate button)

Please indicate ad size and month(s) for placement.

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jazzpalette@gmail.com
www.jazzpalette.com

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please return this form along with your check to:

THE BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

847 N. Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

Your membership card will be mailed to you or the person named below.

Note: All contributors of \$75 or more get a free BJA baseball cap.



First Name _____ Last Name _____

Street Address _____ Apt/Suite No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone(s) _____ Email _____

Please DESCRIBE yourself: (just one please) ☐ Music Lover ☐ Musician ☐ Producer/Promoter ☐ Agent

☐ Media ☐ Club Owner/Manager ☐ Non-profit or Educational Institution ☐ Other _____

AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION: ☐ \$25 Basic ☐ \$50 Sustaining ☐ \$50 501(c)3 Organization ☐ \$75 Other

☐ \$100 Patron ☐ \$200 Corporate ☐ \$15 Student – (copy of ID required)

Thank you for joining! Your membership makes a difference!

BJA has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. Anything pledged above the basic \$25 membership is tax deductible and greatly appreciated!



BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

847 North Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
BJA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization



June 2016

Dedicated to promoting **JAZZ IN BALTIMORE!**



THANK YOU!

For making our Spring Membership Drive
as **HUGE SUCCESS!!**

It's not too late to become a member. Contact Carla Robinson
at 443.885.2075 or pledge securely
online at WEAA.org TODAY!!

IF YOU MADE A PLEDGE, AND HAVE NOT FULFILLED,

CONTACT US TODAY 443.885.2075!

YOU ARE THE "WE" IN WEAA

**VISIT WEAA.ORG for a complete list of all of
great summer Jazz events for the entire
family!**

Want to promote your event or business to more than
125,000 weekly listeners? Contact us to become an
underwriting partner today!
443-885-3564. We would love to work with you!