

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

September 2015

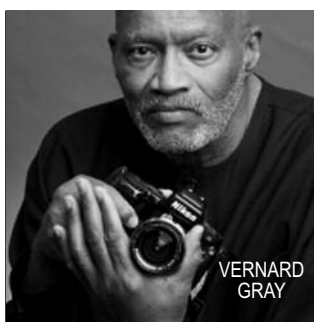
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VOLUME XII

ISSUE VII

THE BJA NEWSLETTER

WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM



VERNARD GRAY

I FIRST HEARD John Coltrane perform at the Bohemian Caverns, where owner Tony Taylor allowed me to sit on the steps to listen because I couldn't afford the

cover charge. I was in my early twenties and it was a magical experience that set me on a path of enjoying jazz over these past 50+ years.

In March 2008 I founded Baltimore's Be Mo Jazz as a series of conversations and performances to be patterned after Washington's Jazz in Southwest program, which is presented weekly at DC's Westminster Presbyterian Church. That single-location idea didn't work well with Baltimore audiences. I ended up presenting in community-based venues located in more than ten different Baltimore neighborhoods. Museums, art galleries, cafés, schools, hotels, concert halls and jazz clubs are among the many venues where I've presented more than 150 jazz performances and conversations to eager patrons, many of whom had experienced the historic Left Bank Jazz Society's Sunday concerts. Others were new listeners in search of jazz culture and history.

Between DC and Baltimore I've presented nearly 300 jazz-related conversations and performances, providing professional fee-earning opportunities for more than 1200 musicians. This is an extremely important point. If this art form is to survive, the artists who study, practice, innovate and perform it MUST be supported financially. My goal is to elevate the jazz conversation.



Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn and Danny Kaye

PHOTO COURTESY OF VERNARD GRAY

Celebrating Strayhorn!

By Vernard Gray

Last year I discovered that 2015 is the 100th anniversary of pianist/composer William "Billy" Strayhorn's birth. After many years of presenting mostly jazz performances I've decided that my work should educate the community about this American-born classical music, in both cultural dialogue and performance gatherings. The Celebrating Strayhorn! series was designed to accomplish both objectives.

Each of the gatherings is audio- and video-graphically documented so that we might review, edit and present the results of our work online. Technology supports online streaming of the gatherings as they occur, reaching a wider audience than the typical 50 to 75 patrons who regularly attend. However, it is the presentation of well-written and -researched documentaries that will have the greatest impact on the public.

Since February 2nd, 2015, we have presented more than twenty-five conversations and performances celebrating the legacy of Billy Strayhorn.

(continued on page 2)

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:
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Celebrating Strayhorn!

(continued from page 1)

Although he composed such classic pieces as "Lush Life," "Chelsea Bridge," and "Something to Live For" on his own, Strayhorn is best known as the composing partner of Duke Ellington; they co-composed some of the Ellington orchestra's most famous songs, like

"Take the 'A' Train," "Satin Doll," and the pieces in Ellington's *Far East Suite*.

The 100th anniversary of Strayhorn's birth will be November 29th, at which time we will present the Strayhorn Centennial Celebration event at the historic Saint Luke's Episcopal Church.

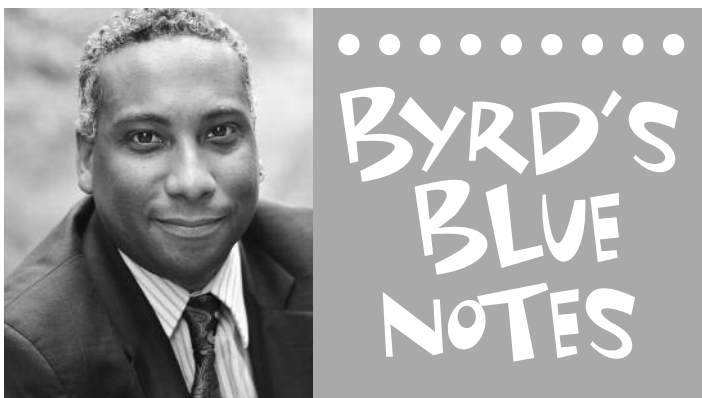
Because of technological advances, especially the Internet, we will invite patrons who attend our events to contribute in several ways. We will

- 1) Encourage patrons to use Periscope apps on their mobile devices (<http://www.periscope.com>) to video-record their experiences while sharing them with friends who can't attend.
- 2) Encourage visitors with digital still cameras to share their images on their social media networks and our Facebook site.
- 3) Employ streaming technology provided by one of our media partners, We Act Radio, to stream select series programs for those who can't attend.
- 4) Live-stream all the Kennedy Center millennium stage concerts on the Kennedy Center's website:
<http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/broadcast.html>.
- 5) Enable visitors to use the internet to find more information. Artist Curtis Woody created *Lush Life, In the Limelight At Last*, a quilt art collage focusing on Strayhorn's life pre-Ellington, his Harlem days and his Civil Rights activities in support of Dr. King and Medgar Evers. Visitors will be able to point their portable devices toward the artwork and actually connect to the Internet where they will find more information related to the information they've already selected. We will also offer fine art print reproductions of *Lush Life, In The Limelight At Last* for sale.

Strayhorn Centennial Celebration Series

Our Strayhorn Centennial Celebration Series, beginning on Saturday, September 26th, will present Strayhorn-themed programs at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, two Smithsonian Museums (American Art & Anacostia Community), Baltimore's Goucher College and The Inn at the Black Olive, The Phillips Collection, the Anacostia Playhouse, American University, the University of the District of Columbia, the Thurgood Marshall Center for Change, We Act Radio, the RISE Center at St. Elizabeth's. In addition to St. Luke's, there are the Wesley United Methodist, First Congressional Church of Christ, Metropolitan A.M.E., Atonement Episcopal and Faith United Presbyterian churches, Mr. Henry's on Capitol Hill, Vincino's in Silver Spring, Roti Mediterranean Grill, Brookland's Jazz and Cultural Society and the Dorothy I. Height Benning Neighborhood Library.

Strayhorn Centennial Celebration Events
take place September 26th through October 18th.
For details visit: www.eastriverjazz.net or call 202.262.7571



WHICH CAME FIRST The Chicken or The Gig?

By Eric Byrd

I am unabashedly old school. I secretly long for the days of Dr. J, with the big afro and the red, white and blue basketball. I remember when the King of Pop looked more like me than not, when MTV actually played music videos by Stevie Ray Vaughan and you could watch regular TV shows with your parents without being embarrassed by the risqué content. My three kids don't have cable in their bedrooms, they don't have cell phones, and they don't have Facebook. My wife and I actually want to be parents to our children, not their best friends, and we have standards. We celebrate achievement, not what's acceptable. You don't get money because you got good grades; good grades are what you're supposed to get. You earn money by doing work.

I love old school. I hated it when I was young, but I sure appreciate it now, not just as a parent, but also as a band leader.

When I started playing professionally, I had this crazy notion that I would book a gig under my own name only when I was ready. I didn't want to embarrass myself. I wanted to honor the music I claimed to love and respect. I didn't want to have to read every note and chord change of every single song in my repertoire. I didn't want to figure out on the spot how to cue my band. I didn't want to not play a song I liked because I couldn't play the bridge. I didn't want to spend most of my time promoting my gig instead of learning in the woodshed the music I was going to play.

When you love something, you want to be your best for it.

You serve the one you love; it does not serve you.

So which comes first? Preparedness or the gig? What's right? I don't know, but I have a feeling. If you've read my previous articles you are probably aware of a common theme: I believe there are occasions where jazz musicians can be enemies of the music. One way we can improve is in our preparedness, and another is our presentation of the music to the audience.

Not much makes me angrier than being on stage, playing the chart I was given and having some vocalist make an apology to the crowd: "We haven't really rehearsed that last song, so I'm sorry if it was a little rough." Musicians can play music notation, chord charts, rhythms and perform different styles. We're all striving to be musicians. The audience paid to hear musicians. Even more importantly, the music we claim to love obligates us to be the best we can be. I would make a very strong argument for being prepared.

Once you are prepared, and there's nothing wrong with soliciting the opinion of a more seasoned cat to assess your preparedness, THEN book a performance. Why not? You know the material. You've studied the songs inside and out. You've heard the intro the pianist is playing multiple times in multiple ways. You know the keys, the tempos and how to articulate what a bossa nova and a samba sound like. (Ask a drummer.)

Even greater, you can come to the bandstand with more confidence that will be audible to the musicians behind you and the crowd in front of you. Your band will work hard for you, want to give you their best. They'll play their hearts out for you because you've earned their respect in the practice room.

The audience will be with you from the downbeat. They'll pick up on the experience, not just the music. They will smile with you, laugh with you and fall in love with you, if only for one night. Your stage banter will draw them closer. They'll pick up on the silent communication going on between the musicians. They won't be able to describe it and they won't be able to tell you exactly why they like it. But they'll tell all their friends they had an experience, an encounter with you and the music that was more valuable than hearing it on the iPod.

Pianist/vocalist Eric Byrd has been an active member of both jazz and gospel music for over 20 years. The Eric Byrd Trio was US State Department Jazz Ambassadors and is currently on the Maryland Performing Artist Touring Roster. He has appeared on over 30 recordings and their latest recording is called 21st Century Swing. Eric can be reached via www.ericbyrd.com

The BJA is dedicated to promoting Jazz in Baltimore!
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piano



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drums



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bass


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8 pm

"He (Gilchrist) is tapping into Jazz's spiritual, historical and cultural roots. He's an old soul at ease in a modern world."

— Kevin Whitehead, NPR's *Fresh Air*

Baltimore-based pianist Lafayette Gilchrist has eleven albums to his credit as a leader and six as a sideman, and he spent a lengthy tenure with David Murray's Black Saint Quartet. Whether with his large band, the Volcanos, or in smaller ensembles, Gilchrist has an approach and presence that's drawn comparisons to royalty such as Andrew Hill and Sun Ra and his music has been featured in David Simon's acclaimed TV dramas *The Wire* and *Treme*. His last solo recording, *The View From Here*, has received rave reviews in the US and Europe.

Gilchrist has lately returned to his exploration of small group concepts, notably with his acclaimed trio INSIDE OUT featuring Michael Formanek and Eric Kennedy. This trio is the ideal vehicle for Gilchrist's compositions, which draw on early stride piano forms, filtering them through Monk and Ellington, then dropping his own DC influences into the mix!

TICKETS: \$38 General

\$33 BJA Members (per registered member) / \$18-students

All tickets include a merchandise raffle, soft drinks, an elegant dessert, fruit and cheese buffet, post-concert and a chance to mingle with the artists.

All tickets must be purchased in advance at:

<http://www.jazzway6004.org/products.html>

NO tickets at the door.

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Phone: 410-952-4528

www.jazzway6004.org

MICHEL NIRENBERG

RETRATO/PORTRAIT

By Ken Avis

Michel Nirenberg set out on this debut recording to build bridges between Brazilian contemporary music and American jazz. The bridge he's built will stand the test of time and bear repeated crossing. Exquisite execution and virtuoso performances underpin a well-curated selection of music which, true to the best principles of Brazilian composition, at no point requires you to form a search party to go out looking for the melody.

Nirenberg comes from a musical family in Rio de Janeiro, where he made a name for himself at festivals and in competitions before moving to the DC area in 2012 to study for his graduate degree in music. Michel is a welcome addition, judging by this recording. The DC-Baltimore area enjoys many fine performances of Brazilian-style jazz from a deep roster of musicians.

From the first beat, Nirenberg comes out swinging with the powerful opener "Chorinho em Aldeia / Na Glória." Clarinetist Severino Araújo wrote this first tune. "Na Glória" was penned by trombonist Raul de Barros, with Ari dos Santos. This combination of compositions from three of Brazil's brightest musicians activates your shoulders and hips, refusing to let you sit still. The vibrant, swirling sounds of carnival sweep up the listener with an open-hearted invitation to dance. Nirenberg's collaborators, including the rhythm section of the Lucini brothers (Leonardo, bass; Alejandro, drums), and on later tracks percussionist Bruno Lucini, breeze through the track with virtuosity and verve, imparting an irresistible energy to each heady chorus.

Those familiar with Brazil's classic styles of choro and samba will be delighted by this performance. Those less familiar may be surprised at the music's appeal. The music paralleled the development of jazz in the USA—small group, folkloric, acoustic music gave way to increasing levels of improvisation, moving to sophisticated orchestral arrangements. Perhaps this is why the music appeals so much to jazz listeners. At their best, both styles of music invite you to listen and move.

In his next tune, "À Deux," Nirenberg explores American jazz styling. He takes the scenic route to get there by introducing the tune with a tango that slides seamlessly into an atmospheric 1940s film noir-style piece featuring pianist Alex Brown. Throughout the album Nirenberg's original compositions sits well alongside the canon of Brazilian music and jazz gems such as Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol's "Caravan," interpreted with an appealing loping style that suits the mood of the album perfectly.

CD REVIEW

MICHEL NIRENBERG

RETRATO
PORTRAIT



His composition "Forró from the South" adopts the insistent rhythm of northeast Brazil's signature music, continuing to keep the listener engaged at the levels of the head and the hips. The track features Argentinian guitarist Danny Corteza and Lucini on percussion.

An album highlight is Nirenberg's solo saxophone performance of the intricate "Desvairada." Composed by one of Brazil's noted and influential guitarists, Anibal Augusto Sardinha, better known as "Garoto," the piece typically is performed on guitar, with a cascade of classical-style arpeggios. Garoto spent time in the USA in the late 1950s performing with Carmen Miranda. Duke Ellington and Art Tatum were regular audience members at his shows, such was the sophistication of his music. Nirenberg matches the speed, dexterity and melodiousness of the original. Where he finds time to breathe is a mystery!

"Samba da Virgínia" features a regular visitor to DC, Brazilian seven-string guitarist Rogério Souza, a player well worth catching when he will next be in town during September. Nirenberg also features Jacob do Bandolim on the choro "Santa Morena."

With a multi-instrumentalist classical background and influences that range from the Brazilian styles of Baden Powell and jazz through the Beatles to an enduring appreciation of Led Zeppelin, it's little surprise that Nirenberg brings melody, rhythm and diversity to his debut album, a dazzling delight from beginning to end.

Michel Nirenberg's next performance in Baltimore is scheduled for January 30th, 2016 at An Die Musik. Check out his music and find additional information at <http://michelnirenberg.com>

Ken Avis is the guitarist with world-jazz quartet Veronneau. He co-curated the Strathmore Jazz Samba Project festival, and his play *Bossa Fever* was performed at DC's Atlas Theater. Currently Ken is co-producing his second documentary movie, *Anacostia Delta*, about the music of DC guitarist Danny Gatton. www.VeronneauMusic.com



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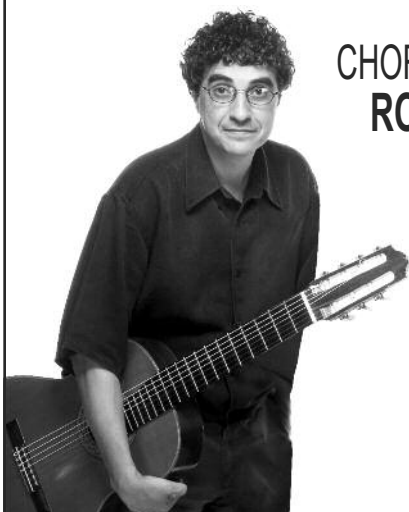
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Welcome New BJA Members!

Lyn McCormick, SAISA, Donna Jefferson, Deborah Brown, Nicolas Turek, Rachel McGrain, Rebecca Rothey, Bill Waldman, Philip Leaf, Michael Andom, Nathan Browneagle, Michael Halstead.

Promote your events FREE on the BJA Calendar.

YOU (musicians, promoters, club owners, etc.)

Post your own events at any time and also edit or delete previously entered events. It's extremely easy to use, so much so that our instructions are only two sentences.

Go to www.baltimorejazz.com and click on calendar link.

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:
webmaster@baltimorejazz.com**

Attention: ALL MUSICIANS

If you have a personal webpage that's not listed at the BJA Website, please email your link to:
webmaster@baltimorejazz.com



The John Lamkin "Favorites" Quintet

Wednesday, September 9th 6 to 9 pm

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Jessie Moody, drums



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**Have you been looking for jazz
in all the wrong places?**

**The jazz calendar at www.baltimorejazz.com
is the right place to find live jazz in Baltimore!**

DRUM GENIUS

Cool App For Practicing

By George Colligan

As a full-time music teacher and father of two, I have trouble finding the time to practice. I used to play and tour constantly, and I'm doing less of that these days. Before I was lucky enough to get called for gigs, I played a lot with the Jamey Aebersold play-a-long recordings; I still recommend this great series to my students. The recordings feature world-class rhythm sections and are a great way to practice keeping time as well as form. It's definitely more fun to play along with an Aebersold recording than with a metronome.

Recently, someone recommended a phone app called Drum Genius. It's an app with an entire menu of jazz drum loops



that I believe are either samples or reproductions of loops from players like Philly Joe Jones, Max Roach, Jack DeJohnette, Bill Stewart, and many others. There are many different styles and tempos. When I have a few spare moments, I put on Medium Swing or Fast Swing or Very Fast Swing, and the

rhythm helps keep my chops up. Obviously, it's not as satisfying as playing with a real band, but it makes practicing way more enjoyable. <http://jazztruth.blogspot.com>

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Left Bank '66 CD Available From BJA!



RECORDED IN 1966 at the Madison Club, *Left Bank '66* 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 www.baltimorejazz.com OR write a check in the amount of \$15 payable to: BJA, 847 No. Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Please make sure to type or print your street address. We will then send you the CD by U.S. mail.

bja member notes

Congratulations!

George Spicka was awarded a Free Fall Baltimore grant for his concert of original compositions, to be held at An die Musik. The concert, *Touched With Fire*, is his artistic contribution to the New Day Campaign, an arts initiative that challenges the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction.

Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra's album *Blues for Tahrir* received a 3.5 star review in the September issue of *DownBeat*. Reviewer Bob Doerschuk noted the particular contributions of bassist Jeff Reed and vocalist Irene Jalehti.

Greg Hatza received a Maryland State Arts Council mini-grant to support A Night of Healing, a jazz and gospel concert at St. Gregory the Great Church in the Sandtown-Winchester community.

bja member discounts

An die Musik offers 10% discount for BJA members for music purchases at the An die Musik record store.

Chamber Jazz Society of Baltimore 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.

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

NEW! Amy's Place – Monday Open Mic hosted by Spice. 5517 Ritchie Highway, Brooklyn Park. 8:30-midnight. \$5 cover (no cover for performers) 2-drink minimum. 410-725-9193

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Monday night jam sessions hosted by Hot Club of Baltimore, mostly Django Reinhardt music, 1930s-'40s and standards. 22 W. North Avenue. 8-midnight. Call Michael Harris for more information at 443-884-2123.

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

Café Noir – Every Wednesday jam session with Open Mic hosted by Scott Strother with Spice. 3627 Offutt Road, Randallstown. \$15 cover with open bar 7-8 pm. \$10 cover 8-10 pm. Proceeds benefit non-profit organization. 410-952-4009

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

Phaze 10 – Jam sessions at Phaze 10 hosted by April Sampe and The Next Level Band. 885 N. Howard Street. 8-midnight. 410-462-2010

THURSDAYS

Phaze 10 – First Thursday Straight Ahead Jazz Workshop Jazz Workshop hosted by John R. Lamkin II, 855 N. Howard Street. 7-11 pm. 410-462-2012

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

display advertising

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Please return this form along with your check to:

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



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We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization



September 2015

Dedicated to promoting **JAZZ IN BALTIMORE!**



"Billy Strayhorn was my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head,
my brainwaves in his head, and his in mine." – Duke Ellington