

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

Winter 2019

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VOLUME FIFTEEN + ISSUE ONE + THE BJA NEWSLETTER + WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

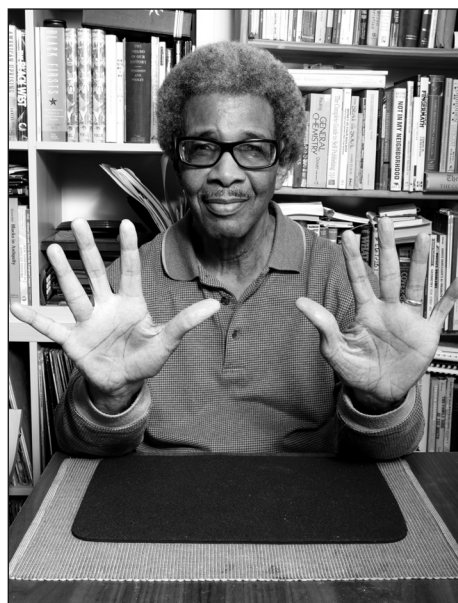
Gentle Genius: Charles Covington

By Brian V. Jones

Genius comes in many forms: loud and brash, demanding attention and tainted with narcissistic hubris; or understated and gentle, so quiet it goes unnoticed in a world where a cacophony of stimuli vies for our attention. Charles Covington, Jr. is a distinguished exemplar of the latter. At seventy-seven this gentle man is disarmingly brilliant and still capable of rendering virtuosic performances on either the piano or the Hammond B-3 organ.

Covington, a mostly self-taught Baltimore native, is a treasure trove of jazz lore who appears on over seventy-five albums. As a junior high student, he was expelled from school when he was caught in the band room picking out chords on the piano. The rock-and-roll-loving-Fats-Domino-fan's introduction to jazz came as a high school senior when his principal played jazz over the intercom before the start of classes. After hearing Erroll Garner and Ahmad Jamal, Covington was "hooked" on jazz. When he heard Ray Charles he decided he had to imitate that sound. As his exposure to jazz grew, he became determined to "find his own way." Covington could hear any tune and "duplicate it." Gifted with perfect pitch, by his own admission he became a jazz "fanatic."

Following a stint in the army, Cov-



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN V. JONES

ington returned to Baltimore determined to learn music and play jazz. He enrolled in the only jazz class offered at Peabody Conservatory. He was not allowed to attend classes, because people of color were not welcomed at Peabody at that time, so he took instruction at his teacher's home. Covington continued teaching himself piano and organ, spending fifty cents an hour to rent practice space at the Hammond Music School in Baltimore.

According to Covington, his real music education came through haunting the clubs on the famed Baltimore Street in downtown Baltimore. Once

the home of night clubs and strip clubs, Baltimore Street provided Covington with an opportunity to hear a myriad of musicians and styles. While his skills were still in their infancy, he apprenticed himself to a local singer named Peaches who took a liking to him and took him under her wing. Peaches exposed the neophyte who never drank or smoked to Baltimore's club world. His challenge was to learn and play from her personal songbook.

Under Peaches' mentorship, Covington got to know all the musicians "on the Block," memorizing twelve to fifteen songs daily so he could play anything. Experiencing disparate treatment from a musician's union that favored whites, he and other musicians of color were required "not to stand out" during their breaks.

As Covington's fame grew, he studied Fats Waller, Ray Charles, Wild Bill Davis and Jimmy Smith. He perfected his use of the sustain pedal on the B-3. Musicians spread the word about this young cat who could play anything. Earning steady money and developing a loyal following, Covington became an opening act at the Royal Theatre in Baltimore. His big break came when a local drummer invited him to play in New York. In the audience was George Benson's manager who, after hearing Covington play, invited him to tour and

(continued on page 5)

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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NEWSLETTER

Gail Marten, Jazz Palette
Editor/Designer

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

An die Musik Live! – 7:30-9:30

409 N. Charles Street. Jam sessions **SECOND and FOURTH** Mondays. Hosted by Joshua Espinoza, piano, and Alex Meadow, bass. Adult \$10, Student \$5. No charge for participating musicians. joshua.espinoza@gmail.com

The Avenue Kitchen – 7-10

911 W 36th Street. Hosted by guitarist Michael Joseph Harris, featuring the music of Django Reinhardt, Gypsy jazz, swing, trad, Dixieland, blues, standards, bossa nova, Gypsy rumba, musette waltz, and bebop. Room for dancing. Full bar with extensive draft beer selection and food menu. No cover. 443-961-8515

Terra Cafe – 8:30-11:30

101 E 25th Street. Clarence Ward III presents The Session. All are welcome to come out and express themselves. No cover, one drink minimum. Come on in and swing with us. 410-777-5277

TUESDAYS

Randallstown Community Center – 6-8

3505 Resource Drive, Randallstown. Sponsored by BJA. Hosted by Derrick Amin. Jam sessions/ book and poetry live reading. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 410-887-0698

Showroom Bar at Motor House – 7-10

120 W. North Avenue. **Second Tuesday of each month.** Jam session that sometimes features all original music (bring your charts!)

The Judge's Bench – 8:30-Midnight

8385 Main Street, Ellicott City. Charlie Schueller leads informal jam sessions on the **FIRST TUESDAY** of each month. 410-465-3497

Trinacria Cafe – 7-9

111 West Centre Street. Hosted by Liz Fixsen with the Now-and-Then Jazz trio. **THIRD TUESDAYS.** Instrumentalists and vocalists welcome (vocalists, bring charts). No cover. 443-759-4082

WEDNESDAYS

49 West Café – 7-10

49 West Street, Annapolis. Hosted by John Starr and house band. **FIRST & THIRD** Wednesdays. Musicians and singers very welcome! Delicious and reasonably priced food and drink available! \$10 cover. Reservations 410-626-9796

The Judge's Bench – 8:30-Midnight

8385 Main Street, Ellicott City. Charlie Schueller leads informal jam sessions on the **THIRD WEDNESDAY** of each month. 410-465-3497

HOMEslyce – 8-11

336 N. Charles Street. Todd Marcus leads weekly jazz jam sessions. 443-501-4000

St. James' Episcopal Church – 7

19200 York Road, Parkton. Every Wednesday the Parkton Music Jam welcomes musicians to hone their skills.

THURSDAYS

The Place Lounge – 7:00-10:00

315 W. Franklin Street. Jam session/open mic is hosted by Spice every **THIRD THURSDAY.** Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 410-547-2722



*If you are aware of any changes in the jam sessions listed,
PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR at: jazzpalette@gmail.com*



Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society



THE PAT MARTINO QUINTET

Sunday, January 27, 2019 | 5 pm

Pat Martino, guitar; Pat Bianchi, organ; Alex Norris, trumpet;
Adam Niewood, saxophone; Carmen Intorre Jr., drums

\$45 General Admission | \$43 BMA Members/Seniors

www.patmartino.com



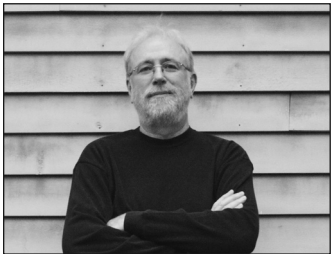
THE INGRID JENSEN QUINTET

Sunday, March 3, 2019 | 5 pm

Ingrid Jensen, trumpet and flugelhorn

\$45 General Admission | \$43 BMA Members/Seniors

www.ingridjensen.com



BILL O'CONNELL'S LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS

Sunday, April 7, 2019 | 5 pm

Bill O'Connell, piano; Andrea Brachfeld, flute; Lincoln Goines, bass;
Robby Ameen, drums

\$45 General Admission | \$43 BMA Members/Seniors

www.billoconnell.net



CHRISTIAN SANDS TRIO

Sunday, May 5, 2019 | 5 pm

Christian Sands, piano; Jerome Jennings, drums; Eric Wheeler, bass

\$45 General Admission | \$43 BMA Members/Seniors

www.christiansandsjazz.com

Please note: Programming is subject to change. Student tickets (\$10) will be sold only on day of concert, subject to availability, with valid student ID.

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BJA Members receive \$2 discount off general admission price!
Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.



The Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society is a non-profit organization and is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

BJA At Fifteen

Ian Rashkin, President



WOW. FOR FIFTEEN YEARS now the Baltimore Jazz Alliance has been serving the local jazz community through our calendar, our newsletter, our educational programs, our special events, and our outreach to new audiences. I wasn't around for the organization's inception, but when I moved to town and tried to find my way in the local jazz scene, I found the website (www.baltimorejazz.com) and

newsletter to be valuable guides. Nowadays, in between my day job and a bit of bass playing, I spend my time trying to find—and implement—ways that the BJA can help the Baltimore jazz scene grow. This past year, that has meant reaching out to form partnerships, presenting a free concert for Jazz Appreciation Month, working to improve our calendar, website, and social media offerings, and seeking grants to fund these projects. One of the most visible things we did this year was launch an initiative to send weekly email to over 2000 subscribers, listing all the jazz events in the area for the week. Along with this we've made a renewed effort to ensure that all the events we hear about get posted into the calendar, and by extension, into that email. From what we hear, this initiative has been very successful in raising awareness of the many jazz offerings available each week. In addition to this visible work, though, the BJA board has been busy forging and strengthening relationships, and developing ideas for ways that we can do more to help the scene.

Recently, another board member (Tyrone Crawley) and I attended the first Jazz Philadelphia Summit. Jazz Philadelphia (www.jazzphiladelphia.org) is a non-profit organization formed out of some of the same impetus that created the BJA—the desire to see jazz (audiences, musicians, educators, and students) thrive in a city rich with culture but lacking organization and promotion. For their organization's launch, they held a summit featuring workshops, panel discussions, performances, and lots of networking; I have to say, I came away inspired and full of ideas. I learned from the panels, and saw others learning and full of excitement. I met organizers, performers, presenters, and educators, all with a driving interest to improve both their own artistic endeavors and the community in which they work.

Over the years, many people—members and non-members—have suggested that the BJA could do more to engage the jazz community: to educate, connect, and inspire. But while we've always liked the idea of hosting informational

events, it has always fallen low on our priority list, because of time constraints, budget constraints, or competing initiatives. No more. Although the plan is still forming, rest assured that there will be a similar event of some kind in Baltimore. We will work with every organization that wants to take part, and will do all we can to connect people, inform people, educate people, and listen to people. BJA has been a valuable part of the Baltimore jazz scene for a decade and a half now, and although the services we've provided are valued, and valuable, contributions, there is more we can do, and we intend to take on that challenge. Look for more information as the year progresses, and if you want to get involved, we welcome you—get in touch! Baltimore has an amazing wealth of talent and artistry, and we intend to celebrate it, support it, and promote it in every way we can.

One of the ways we intend to celebrate Baltimore's wealth of jazz talent is to revive our efforts to establish a Baltimore Jazz Fest. To this end, we've partnered with another organization in Baltimore and are planning to present a festival in June of 2019. We'll be announcing more details soon, as well as putting together the lineup, so keep an eye and ear out for it! This is just one of several partnerships and events we are working on, but it's going to be an exciting one. As usual, we'll be looking for your help and attendance, and now more than ever we want to hear your input about what you want to see in this and other events, and how you want the BJA to support your jazz scene. Of course, we also continue to seek more involvement, via board membership, volunteering, advising, promoting, and of course, financial (tax-deductible) donations. In particular, we can use the help of artists/designers, writers, web/software developers, and grant-writers.

This is a great year for jazz in Baltimore, because you are going to make it great, and we are going to help.

IAN RASHKIN works as a software developer by day, and plays bass any chance he gets, with Mike 'n' Ike, the Liz Fixsen Trio, and other local artists. He has served on the board of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance since 2014.



Mayor Catherine E. Pugh
& the City of Baltimore

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This project has been funded by Mayor Catherine E. Pugh
and the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts.

Gentle Genius: Charles Covington

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play with Benson. Although the money was good, there were times when things were slow and “tight” on the road. With a growing family in Baltimore, Covington took up chess and, in an effort to make ends meet, haunted the chess clubs in New York where he hustled chess. True to form, Covington became obsessed with chess and rose to become one of the top ten black chess players in America. He still enjoys “Life Master” status granted by the United States Chess Federation.

Three years on and off the road with

... his real music education came through haunting the clubs on the famed Baltimore Street in downtown Baltimore.

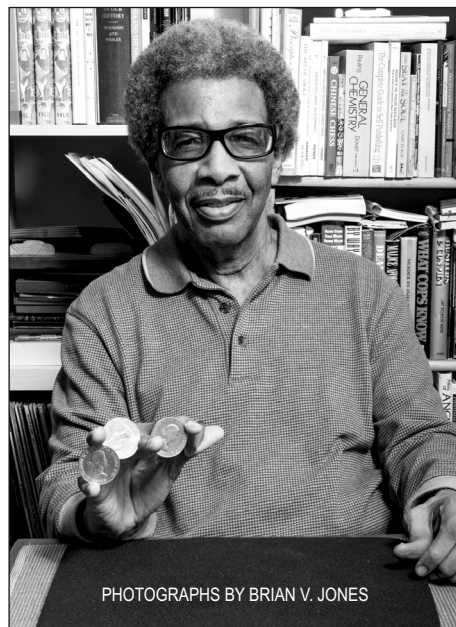
Benson took a toll on Covington, and the demands of family life required his presence at home. As a regular in the Baltimore and Washington music scene who was equally adept at piano or organ he earned “a solid living” working with many bands. He also toured in Europe and China with various groups. When asked why he never signed a record contract, his response was simple and direct: “I wanted to control my music.”

His fame and expertise as a jazz pianist and organist garnered the attention of none other than the Peabody Conservatory of Music, which hired him to teach jazz piano. His tenure there lasted twenty years. He also added to his resume a twelve-year stint as a professor of piano at Howard University.

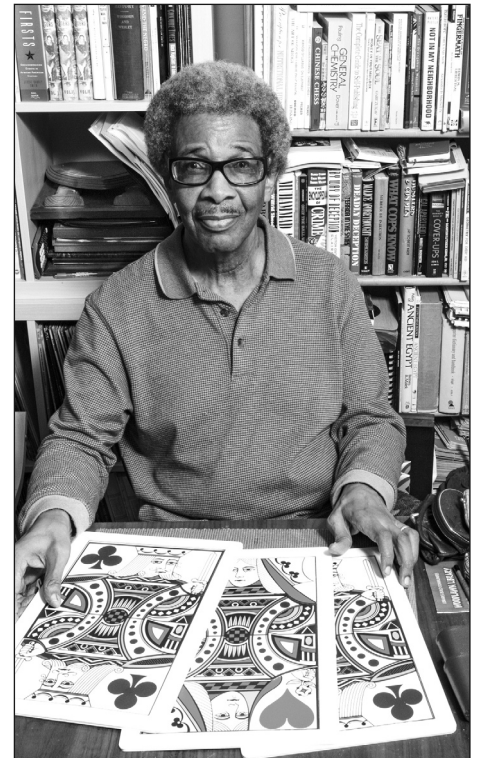
... he and other musicians of color were required “not to stand out” during their breaks.

As if music and chess mastery weren’t enough, Charles Covington is also a performing magician and has authored texts on mathematics, chess, and checkers.

Having had a life in jazz, Covington counts among his great experiences concerts performed at the White House, Kennedy Center, Peabody Conservatory of Music, Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Baltimore Museum of Art, Montpelier Arts Center, Eubie Blake Cultural



Center and many international venues. He appeared on Johnny Carson’s *Tonight Show* and recorded the album *The Shape of Things to Come*. Among the performers with whom he has recorded are J.J. Johnson, Ethel Ennis, O’Donel Levy, Nathan Page, and many others.



He was featured on the cover of *Expo Magazine* as Jazz Musician of the Year in 1983.

As jazz pianist in residence at the Kennedy Center, Covington performs there annually. One need only search YouTube to see his stellar performances on the K.C. Millennium Stage with a host of notable musicians as well as his many concerts at Howard University. Charles Covington, pianist, organist, chess master, mathematician, magician ... and gentle genius.

On Saturday, January 19th, Covington will perform from 7- 8:30 pm (dinner seating at 6 pm) at Germano’s Piattini, 300 South High Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. Purchase tickets (\$20) in advance at germanospiattini.com or 410-752-4515. Entertainment is for dining patrons only.

BRIAN V. JONES is a professor of photography in the Media Arts and Technologies Department at Montgomery College’s Rockville campus. His exhibition “Jazz” featured musicians from around the country with most performing in the Baltimore/Washington area. The exhibition can be seen on Facebook by searching Brian Jones.



Marianne Matheny-Katz



Irene Jalenti



Mark Osteen



Rhonda Robinson



Rená Sweetwine

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

Tips From Five Baltimore Vocalists

By Liz Fixsen

For anyone aspiring to be a better singer, here are some helpful tips from five Baltimore-area vocalists:

Tip #1: Regular vocal practice. Marianne Matheny-Katz has learned that ideally a singer should do 15 to 20 minutes of warm-up exercises a day. She fits her vocal warm-ups with her physical exercise routine, “because that’s when I feel the most warmed up.” She begins with ascending and descending scales and then lip trills, also in ascending and descending scales. Sharon Clark led her to greater awareness of engaging the diaphragm and positioning the tongue to create a richer sound—exercises that are not easy to master. Pianist Vince Evans taught her about phrasing.

Tip #2: Care for the voice. Every day, Irene Jalenti makes a strong infusion of ginger, cinnamon, turmeric and honey—warm in winter, cool or room temperature in summer. Every morning she drinks a shot of apple cider vinegar with lemon juice and cayenne pepper. This helps remove any night reflux and mucus from the throat while strengthening her immune system. During allergy season and winter, she does regular nasal rinsing and steaming with a small steamer device. She attacks congestion by adding one drop of peppermint oil or tea tree oil to open up respiratory passages. Mark Osteen advises singers not to eat during breaks; if they must eat, they should avoid anything with dairy products, which create mucus.

For vocal cords stressed by a cold or other factors, both Matheny-Katz and Rená Sweetwine recommend drinking lots of herbal tea with honey several hours before a performance to create a soothing and protective coating on the vocal cords. Sometimes just before a performance, Matheny-Katz adds a small teaspoon of olive oil for lubrication. As for colds—Rhonda Robinson’s voice teacher would always say, “Singers don’t get colds!!” Her “secret weapon” is NOW brand elderberry zinc lozenges.

Both Jalenti and Robinson recommend maintaining general good health: get plenty of sleep and rest, drink lots of

water, eat healthy foods, don’t smoke, exercise, and practice stress-reduction activities such as meditation. Osteen recommends a vigorous workout on the morning of a performance, one that gets the heart rate up to 120 bpm or more and forces the singer to breathe deeply for an extended period. That kind of exercise clears out the sinuses and removes mucus from the throat.

Tip #3: Pre-performance warm-up. When it’s time to perform, Matheny-Katz says, “It’s not a natural state of being to feel comfortable singing in front of an audience, so it takes adequate preparation.” She advises singers to complete warm-ups and run through the songs with the band if possible. Robinson recommends doing warm-up and cool-down exercises both before and after the performance. Sweetwine echoes this advice but suggests resting your voice right before a performance. Osteen adds that one should neither shout nor whisper on the day of a gig: as he learned from an ENT, whispering strains the vocal cords.

Tip #4: Techniques in performance. Robinson says, “You have to learn to breathe with your whole body, keeping your shoulders and throat relaxed. Learn how to project your voice without shouting or straining the throat.” Like her, Sweetwine says to avoid using the extremes of your voice—if you have a low, rich voice, know your range—and that singing high notes is likely to give you a sore throat. Good breathing techniques are important not just for singing, but also for talking.

Osteen believes that playing a wind instrument has helped him as a vocalist. “To play a saxophone properly, you have to breathe using your diaphragm, and that technique is also essential for vocal range and support. Breathing correctly helps to prevent vocal strain.” In contrast to Rená Sweetwine, he believes that singers can increase their range by tackling songs that force them to use the extremes of their range, though they should avoid doing that for long stretches.

Tip #5: Interacting with the band. A singer must be a musician, asserts Osteen. "After learning the tune, practice improvising over the changes. That's how you really get a feel for the harmonies." Robinson notes that she keeps her place in the form while bandmates are soloing by mentally singing the melody. For Jalenti, interacting with the band is essential. She loves actively listening to and responding to what they are doing with melody and phrasing. It could be a bass line, or a substitution on the piano, or a rhythm from the drums. She says, "You cannot perform as if you were singing under a background track at a karaoke. Every night's performance may be different."

Tip #6: Singing with meaning. For all these singers, singing is about sharing with the audience a story with personal meaning. For Robinson, it's something like a dramatic monologue in a theatrical performance. Jalenti learned from Jay Clayton the power of the lyrics and how to build a repertoire and a set list. Jalenti believes that it's all about authenticity, and she won't sing songs she doesn't like. The goal is not to show off her vocal abilities, she says, but to allow the music to happen organically and be unforced—and to have fun. Osteen adds: "Sing for yourself in the shower. At a performance, you should include the audience by making eye contact and talking to them, and above all by singing the lyrics as though you wrote them yourself."

THE FIVE VOCALISTS:

Irene Jalenti is a major vocalist in the Baltimore-Washington region and beyond. She earned a Bachelor of Music in jazz performance from Peabody Conservatory and a Master of Music in jazz studies from Howard University in Washington, DC. She studied with and was mentored by legendary singer Jay Clayton, pianist/singer/arranger Connaitre Miller, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, and saxophonist Charlie Young.

<https://www.irenejalenti.com>

Rhonda Robinson, jazz vocalist and flutist, has performed with her trio in a range of venues in the Baltimore area, including An die Musik and a regular Wednesday night Jazz Vespers service. She has studied with classically trained teachers, including Grammy-nominated Janet Lawson. She studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York and has years of experience in musical theater.

<http://rrjazz11.wixsite.com/rhondarobinsonmusic>

Mark Osteen has been performing professionally since the early 1970s. He studied at the University of Montana Jazz Workshops and sang lead for several rock and R & B bands in the Pacific Northwest before moving to Atlanta, where he founded a '60s revival group. In Baltimore he plays and writes arrangements for the Loyola University jazz groups and performs regularly with Cold Spring Jazz Quartet as a saxophonist and vocalist. See <http://www.coldspringjazz.com>, and <http://www.markosteen.com>

Marianne Matheny-Katz is another of Baltimore's leading jazz vocalists. Her "home base" is Jazzway 6004—literally her home with husband Howard Katz. Together they host jazz



Charles Covington

"A virtuoso pianist and spectacular talent, Covington's musical performances are enlightening and ENTERTAINING . . . His mastery of the keyboard is ASTONISHING."

SATURDAY, January 19th

7 to 8:30 PM*

(dinner seating at 6)

CHARLES COVINGTON, PIANO

HERMAN BURNEY, BASS

NASAR ABADEY, DRUMS

Art Tatum, Bud Powell, and John Coltrane were some of the few who each achieved the colossal feat of amending the aesthetic of jazz styles. Mr. Covington has achieved the colossal feat of demonstrating that it was possible to master all of these styles and to blend these disparate elements into a coherent, codified style by imposing the mark of his own personality.

THE CABARET at GERMANO'S PIATTINI

300 S. High Street, Baltimore, MD

Valet parking available

Tickets: \$20

Purchase in advance at germanospiattini.com

*(dinner seating at 6 pm)

Entertainment is for dining patrons only.

performances at this nationally recognized house venue. In 2014, she released a well-received album, *Somewhere in Paradise*. She has studied with several top-rated vocal coaches, including Jay Clayton, Vince Evans, and Sharon Clark.

<http://www.m2kjazz.com>

Rená Sweetwine performs in Baltimore with her band, Jazzy-N-Blue. She has also played with a Chicago-based band at Madam's Organ in DC. She studied with legendary Baltimore jazz singer Ruby Glover.

<http://www.jazzynblue.com/the-band.html>

BJA's Jazz for Kids

"The Baltimore Jazz Alliance came to our school and gave an amazing concert! It was highly interactive, giving the students the chance to sing along, get up on the microphone and try out all different kinds of instruments. The songs were some that everybody knew but done in a jazzy style. I have never had this many staff members coming up to me with so many positive things to say about an assembly before! SO awesome! I will definitely have them back again!"

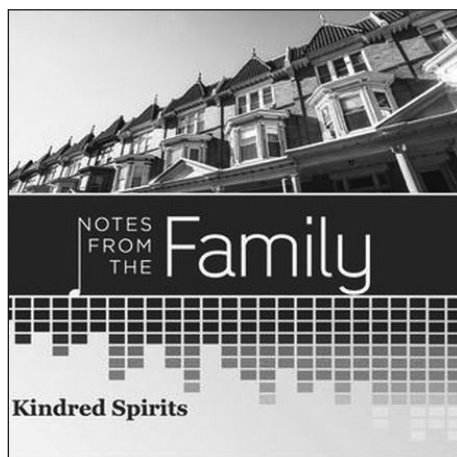
— Laura Allison, music teacher
Ridge Ruxton School, Towson, Baltimore County

Swinging New CD Features Two Generations

By Mitch Mirkin

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR. I'm talking not about the 1970s R&B classic by Sly and The Family Stone, but a 2018 CD titled *Notes from the Family*, headlined by Baltimore-based musicians Michael Raitzyk (guitar), Jesse "Jay" Moody, III (drums), and Jesse Powers, Jr. (bass) under the name Kindred Spirits. The trio reunites on this CD; they had a longstanding weekly gig at Cafe Hon in Hampden, and produced a CD back in 2006 called *Live at Cafe Hon*.

The new disc is a swinging collection of contemporary, Latin-infused, and straight-ahead jazz. The album's title reflects the fact that it features two generations of players. Moody's son, guitarist Jesse Moody, IV, plays on four of the seven tunes. His pulsating rock-inspired sound is a nice contrast to Raitzyk's mellower and more classic jazz-guitar vibe. Meanwhile, Raitzyk's two teenaged children, Jakob Raitzyk and Rebekah Geller, both play violin on "Ruby," an original by their father. Rounding out the group are two other stalwarts of the Baltimore jazz scene, Mark St. Pierre on percussion and Brandon Moultrie on alto sax and EWI (electronic wind instrument). In his liner notes, Moody III notes that Powers's musician kids, Asher Askew and Yezre'el Askew, couldn't make the gig



because they are currently in the military and he thanks them for their service. (As do I!) Powers himself was a career army musician, serving 34 years.

The CD is getting worldwide airplay and streams from places like Germany, Japan and Canada.

The group is solidly in the pocket throughout the recording. The lead tune, aptly named "Prime Cut," is a hard-driving funky original by Powers, who heads his own jazz-funk band called Spice (spicejazz.net). The number reminded me of "Some Skunk Funk" by the Brecker Brothers. A measure-long riff of sixteenth-notes played tightly in unison by alto, guitar and drums punctuates a complex but pretty melody line and changes. Powers's prowess as a composer is also evident on the tasteful tune "Hunter's Moon." Its easy-listening

vibe evokes Bob James's work from the late 1970s, such as his well-known "Angela," the theme from the TV show *Taxi*.

Powers has a penchant for pretty melodies. He also wrote "Santa Domingo" (perhaps a variation on Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital?). This jazz samba features Moultrie leading with the melody and soloing on the EWI, which is an air-driven synthesizer with a mouthpiece and woodwind keys, built for reed players. He makes skillful use of the EWI's pitch-bending capability. Powers contributes an impressive bass solo.

The CD is graced by two other originals: Raitzyk's "Ruby" which, as noted above, features his two violinist chil-

The new disc is a swinging collection of contemporary, Latin-infused, and straight-ahead jazz.

dren providing harmony and rhythmic accents. On this one, the guitarist sounds a lot like Pat Metheny, whom Raitzyk names as one of his key influences. "Judith's Song," also by the guitarist, is a charming tune with a playful melody. It's the most straight-ahead tune on the CD, with a walking bass line underpinning the solos.

The group made good choices with the two non-originals featured on the project: "Passing By," composed by Japanese saxophonist Sadao Watanabe, is a beautiful, tender tune that seems a good match for Moultrie's gentle EWI treatment. "Song for Bilbao," by Metheny, has a hard fusion edge that complements the softer vibe of the other tracks. Here too, Moultrie shines on the EWI, and Moody the younger delivers a dazzling guitar solo. Metheny's standard follows a Latin songo beat, a hybrid rumba-funk form with a 2-3 clave underpinning. It's held down nicely by Powers's steady bass work and a repeating guitar riff in the rhythm section. The drumming here is more fluid and



From left: Brandon Moultrie, sax and EWI; Jacob Raitzyk, violin; Mark St. Pierre, percussion; Jesse "Jay" Moody, drums; Michael Raitzyk, guitar; Jesse Powers, Jr., bass

free than in traditional jazz forms, and Moody moves skillfully and energetically around the drum set to propel the tune forward.

Jesse "Jay" Moody, III, it should be noted, has played behind many well-known jazz artists—people like Billy Harper, Barry Harris, Curtis Fuller and Lou Donaldson, to name a few. He is a regular presence in the Baltimore jazz scene.

Raitzyk, along with his jazz bona fides, is also heavily into klezmer music. That too is a family affair for him. He and his wife, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Judith Geller—whose father, Max, was a jazz and klezmer clarinetist—have an eclectic band called Charm City Klezmer. Like Moody a graduate of the music program at Towson University, Raitzyk teaches guitar at Howard Community College and also gives lessons via Skype as a complement to his work in various bands.

The new CD is available on his website (mraitzyk.com) and Moody's (jessemoody.com), as well as on CD Baby, Apple Music, iTunes, Spotify, and Bandcamp. Check it out and download a few tunes or the whole CD. Not only will you be helping the local jazz scene—after all, we're all family!—but the CD will be a memorable treat for your ears.

MITCH MIRKIN is a writer and editor with the research program of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He contributed to the recent BJA series of profiles on local big bands. Mitch has written several jazz compositions and is collaborating with a quintet to produce a CD featuring some of his work.



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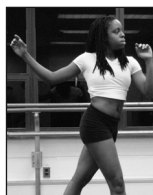
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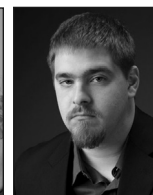
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Artist profile: Jazz Pianist Joshua Espinoza

By Liz Fixsen

As a child, Josh Espinoza fell in love with the piano in a rather unexpected way. There were no musicians in his family, and no piano in the home. But on trips to the shopping mall, the family would pass by a furniture store with a large, beautiful grand piano in the showroom, right in front of the window. The store manager allowed young Josh to sit and play around on that piano. He was also a big fan of the piano player at his church. As a child, he was involved in acting in musicals at church, school, and community theater. But once he started piano lessons at age 11, “that was IT,” he says, “I couldn’t think of anything else I’d rather do.”

The lessons were originally classical, but in his junior year of high school, he started taking lessons in jazz. However, his mom’s eclectic music tastes exposed him to a range of genres, including pop, R&B, and reggae, and he still listens to a lot of classical music, naming Bach, Brahms, and Chopin, with whom he was “obsessed” for a time. And of course those precursors to twentieth-century jazz, Ravel and Debussy. “Art Tatum is a direct descendent of Ravel and Debussy,” says Espinoza, and adds that much of his own composing is informed by classical music and its beautiful chord progressions.

As for jazz influences, Espinoza “fell in love” with the Stan Getz/Kenny Barron album, *People Time*, and still names Barron as one of his favorite jazz pianists, along with Keith Jarrett (minus the vocalizations). When playing swing, he aspires to a style combining Barron and Jarrett. When he was younger, he listened to a lot of Oscar Peterson, and loves his earlier albums such as his historic Carnegie Hall performance with Ray Brown.

But now Espinoza feels that Peterson plays too many notes. He admires how musicians like Miles Davis, Chet Baker, and Ahmad Jamal play with more space, atmospherically, saying a lot with



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA ESPINOZA

a little. He observes that there are players who have prodigious technique but aren’t always putting the melody front and center. He feels sometimes that when improvising, he is playing more notes than really necessary. He aims at achieving a melodic statement with a clear beginning and end, and he wants even the improvisation to sound melodically precomposed.

“Listeners deserve to hear songs
and melodies they love,
and we play them with
sophistication and creativity.”

Currently, Espinoza is listening to some noteworthy younger international pianists who aren’t getting the attention he believes they deserve, such as Israeli Shai Maestro, Swedish Esbjörn Svensson, Armenian Tigran Hamasyan, Estonian Kristjan Randalu (on an album with American guitarist Ben Monder), and American Gerald Clayton (from Los Angeles).

Espinoza’s greatest anxiety when he performs is that “I’m going to play something that I don’t really mean to play, like, to cater to a particular band member or person in the audience.” He aims to play authentically, in response to his own aesthetic urges, while still meeting the musical demands of the situation.

He is grateful to Todd Marcus for bringing him into the Baltimore jazz scene after he moved here from Indiana

in 2016. Around Baltimore, Espinoza has been hosting a Monday night jam session with bassist Alex Meadow at An die Musik. He has been playing at most of the other Baltimore jazz venues, including Hotel Indigo, The Elephant (with vocalist Irene Jalehti), HOMEslyce jam session, Bertha’s, and the 13.5% Wine Bar. He has also performed at important venues in Washington, D.C. (Kennedy Center, Atlas Theater, Mr. Henry’s, Smithsonian, Westminster Presbyterian). He has played with many of Baltimore’s best, including Warren Wolf, Sarah Hughes, Kris Funn, Eric Kennedy, Derrick Michaels, Mikel Combs, and Todd Marcus—as well as with his own trio, Combs (bass) and Jaron Lamar Davis (drums).

Espinoza is aiming to record his first album with his trio in early 2019. The album will feature mostly originals in a mingling of genres. He believes that the future of jazz is in the popular genres of the last 50 years—not leaving behind the great standards of the first half of the twentieth century, but moving forward toward the music of the Beatles, Burt Bacharach, the Eagles, and folk music that transcends generations. As Espinoza says of his trio: “Listeners deserve to hear songs and melodies they love, and we play them with sophistication and creativity. . . . Our original material is highly melodic and accessible, capturing the ear and imagination of our listeners. We are convinced this model will grow jazz audiences beyond their current confines, gaining new patrons for ourselves and venues alike.”

Learn more about Joshua Espinoza at www.joshuaespinoza.com.

LIZ FIXSEN is a jazz pianist, jazz vocalist, and jazz enthusiast. She has written numerous articles and reviews for the Baltimore Jazz Alliance over the years and has served for several years on the board of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance. She teaches Professional Writing at the University of MD and also works for The Phillips Agency and Jazz Beyond Borders doing promotions of jazz and world-music artists.

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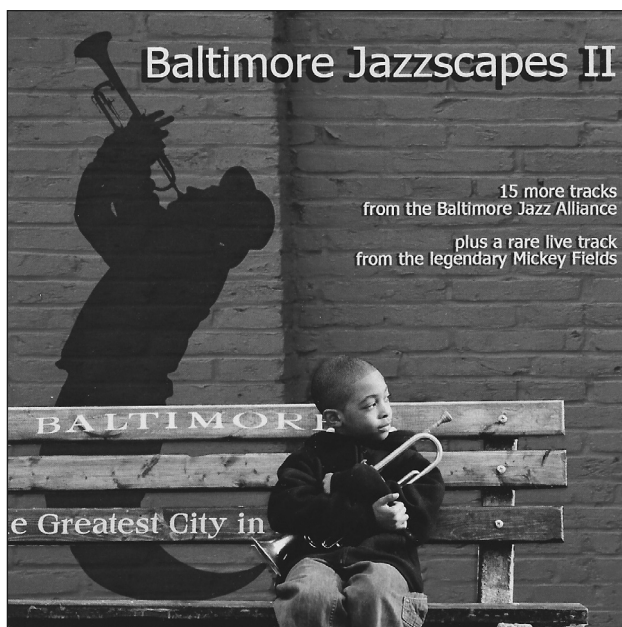
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 6. "Fallow" – Cold Spring Jazz Quartet 3:40
 7. "Moment's Notice" – Joel Holmes 4:28
 8. "What Have You" – Sandy Asirvatham 5:14
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 10. "Is It Love?" – Gail Marten 4:13
 11. "Crying Sky Blue" – Sean A. Lane 7:21
 12. "Across the Tracks" – Richard Walton Group 4:45
 13. "A Kiss Goodbye" – Phil Ravita 4:48
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ED HRYBYK

bright moments

By Ian Rashkin

I finally cracked the debut album by Baltimore bassist Ed Hrybyk, *Bright Moments*. I'm not sure what took me so long, but glad I got around to it. It's an excellent recording of a bunch of good tunes, featuring some of Baltimore's best musicians: Clarence Ward III, Samuel King, Daniel Wallace, Justin Taylor, Jim Hannah, Allen Bernard Branch, Sami Arefin, Matt Andrews, Shawn Simon, and of course, Ed Hrybyk on upright and electric basses. All of them play superbly, and they blend very well on a wide variety of tunes; I especially am struck lately by Taylor's playing, and this recording just reinforced that—plus, I think King and Wallace always complement each other perfectly. My favorite, at least on initial listen, was the tune "R.G.T." with its ostinatos, harmonic interest, beautiful counterpoint, and infectious groove. The bluesy ballad "Stuck" also made a strong impression, with Clarence delivering a poignant melody to perfection, followed by some very nice horn arranging and soloing. Overall, a great new record, and a great chance to hear some of Baltimore's fantastic talent. Congratulations Ed, great work!

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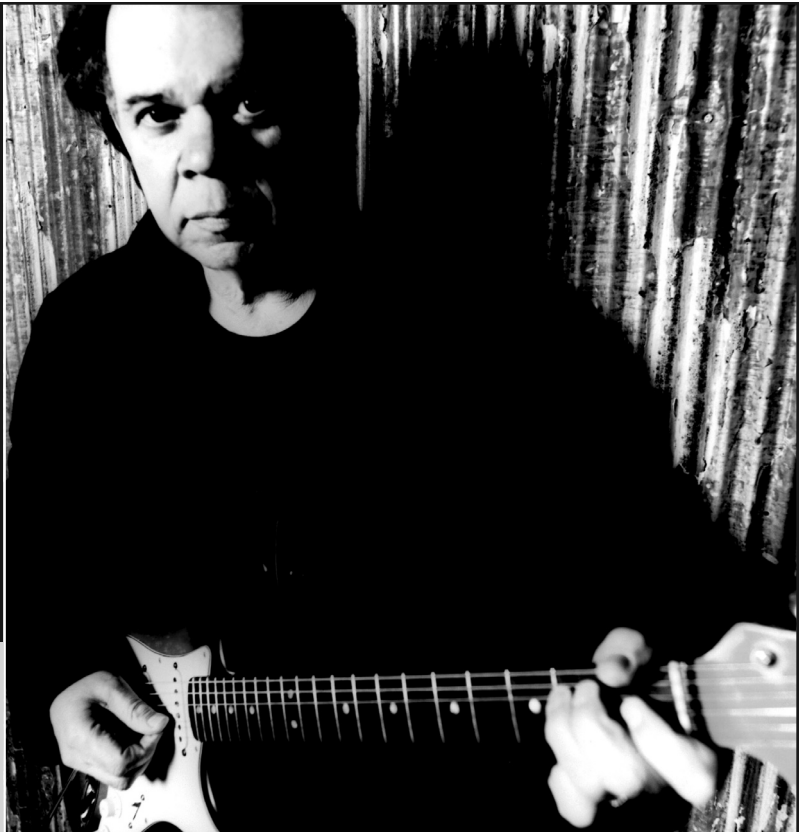
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