

## BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

## SUMMER 2020

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

Michael Raitzyk: <i>Everything Must Change</i> .....	3
To Speak or Not to Speak? .....	4
Where Are They Now? .....	5
Ultrafaux's <i>Tangent: A Stylistic and Rhythmic Adventure</i> ....	6
Before They Played Jazz .....	7
Four Perspectives: Music In The Time Of Coronavirus .....	8
Whit Williams: Master Musician and Mentor to Many .....	9
BJA Member Notes & Benefits .....	10

VOLUME SIXTEEN + ISSUE THREE + THE BJA NEWSLETTER + WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

## PIANIST JUSTIN TAYLOR Excited By The Spark Of Jazz

by Eric Byrd



PHOTO CREDIT: ROLAND DORSEY

**“Jazz had that spark,” Justin Taylor explains to me in a phone conversation.**

It's that spark which has propelled this “young lion” forward throughout all of his musical endeavors. (And there have been many). He is an artist without limits. He has stayed true to what excited him about

music in the first place: the spark of ideas, the spark of improvisation, the spark of interacting with fellow musicians who share his drive for music and jazz.

Born and raised in a northeast Baltimore neighborhood near Morgan State University, Justin Taylor benefitted from a musical and church-going family. “My father got me and my brother into the piano to stay out of trouble. It kept me busy and focused; I was practicing scales and all that,” Taylor recalls. Piano lessons began in elementary school from a teacher who also worked as a musician in a lot of churches. “My dad was a deacon in church,” says Taylor. “I started playing for school and eventually began playing in church as well.”

Musicians and recordings made early and lasting impressions on him. Taylor recalls, “George Duke, Joe Sample, Richard Smallwood, Stevie Wonder—all of their music influenced me a lot.” With that backdrop, he started playing his first professional gigs in middle school. While some of us at that age were riding skateboards and playing tag in the school yard, Justin played at the NAACP annual banquet and other formal events around the city as a member of the Winston Middle School jazz band. “It was inspiring for

(continued on page 2)

## Introducing BJA Member Grants

by Ian Rashkin, President BJA

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance has sponsored and cosponsored many different projects over its 17 years: three CDs, the Saxophone Colossi, two Jazz Composers Showcases, the BJA Big Band, the Youth Jazz Congress, the Jazz for Kids educational programs, the *Baltimore Real Book*, a dedicated jazz stage at Artscape, various Jazz Appreciation Month celebrations, the Baltimore Jazz Fest, the Madonnari Arts Festival, Summer Music Moves, the Baltimore Jazz Conference, and much more. Each has been very successful in its own way, and we are extremely proud to have helped to bring these projects to life, enriching the Baltimore jazz scene with each one. Whether they were led fully by the BJA, or in partnership with other organizations, we have strived to be inclusive, diverse, and artistically excellent, and thus to bring value to the jazz community.

(continued on page 5)

Baltimore Jazz Fest is just one of the events made possible by the Baltimore Jazz Alliance



PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE ONEY

From left: Brian Kookan, Robert Shahid, Greg Hatza, Peter Fraize at the first Baltimore Jazz Fest, Druid Hill Park, 2016

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](http://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](mailto:webmaster@baltimorejazz.com)

#### BJA BOARD

Tyrone Crawley  
Alice Downs  
Steve Everette  
Jean Farnsworth, Secretary  
Liz Fixsen, Editorial Committee Chair  
Robin Houston, Treasurer  
Ian Rashkin, President  
Theresa Sise  
Rená Sweetwine, Vice President  
Barry Glassman, *Founder and Emeritus*  
Camay Calloway Murphy, *Emerita*  
Mark Osteen, *President Emeritus*

#### NEWSLETTER

Gail Marten, Jazz Palette  
Editor/Designer

## Justin Taylor: Excited By The Spark Of Jazz

(continued from front page)

me! Formal music training was a little boring, but jazz had that spark. You could be more creative. To me jazz and gospel and blues were coming from the same place. You could be more inventive, there was more space to be creative." That musical worldview fit young Justin quite well, as that was where he was coming from anyway: he was still a very active musician in churches in and around the city.

He graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in 2002 after maintaining a very active musical career there. While he still didn't exactly know what he wanted to do, opportunity presented itself in a band called Seven. Taylor reminisces fondly, "We did rock, R&B—everything except gospel. It was a big fusion of genres coming together. This all started about eleventh grade." Seven rehearsed for five to six hours after school. With time spent on this band, on his solo artist performing calendar, in church and more, his schedule was booked up. It was also around this time he got into keyboards and synthesizers, rather than just developing on the acoustic piano.

Wanting to get out of Baltimore "just to see something else," Taylor says, Seven moved into a one-bedroom apartment in North Hollywood, CA, near Universal Studios. In search of the elusive record deal, Seven did more rehearsing than gigging and eventually he returned home to Baltimore. Still having a spark for creative growth, he attended Essex Community College to get his piano chops together. There he continued to develop the classical and reading side of his musicality, which led him to Towson University a few years later where he could finally drill down on his jazz development.

And develop he did. Albums such as *The Real McCoy* by McCoy Tyner, *Smokin' at the Half Note* by Wynton Kelly/Wes Montgomery and Robert Glasper's *Black Radio* have shaped his recent musical point of reference, as Taylor has become

an in-demand artist and sideman in Baltimore and beyond. "I have performed at the Kennedy Center, Hard Rock Cafe at the Beverly Center, Rhumba Room at Universal City Walk, An die Musik, the Bowery Room in New York City and Baltimore's Keystone Korner." Fine musicians like Tim Green, Jake Leckie, Corinthia Cromwell, Carl Grubbs, Sam King, Herman Burney Jr, James King, Rick Watts, Christopher Rhoades, Benny Russell, Tessa Souter, and Reginald Cyn-tje have all employed his artistry.

It's no wonder all this musical and life experience has led to this moment—finally creating a full recording project as a leader. The song "Trees" was released in 2019 on all digital platforms. More recorded music is on the way: this pandemic has only provided a comma, not a period, to the musical conversations yet to come. "I'll see what happens," says Taylor. "Trees," he adds, "is a fusion of styles: Influenced by Corey Henry (a great multi-keyboard instrumentalist), synths, piano, (Fender) Rhodes, soul music, classic music like Marvin Gaye, Stevie [Wonder] stuff . . . that's where I'm at. This new recording will be a reflection of where I'm going [with jazz]."

From his earliest experiences to this moment, Justin Taylor is still excited by the spark. And it is this spark that will continue to thrust him toward more great music.

Eric Byrd is a jazz pianist and leader of the Eric Byrd Trio (with bassist Bhagwan Khalsa and drummer Alphonso Young, Jr.). The trio has performed extensively throughout the region and across the globe with some of the most recognized artists of jazz. Byrd, Khalsa, and Young hold advanced degrees in Music History, African American Music and Jazz Performance. They frequently give clinics on music history, jazz and the relationship between the spirituals/gospel, blues and jazz. They have been sponsored by the United States Embassy as Kennedy Center/U.S. State Department Jazz Ambassadors, touring and performing worldwide. Byrd is returning as a writer for the Baltimore Jazz Alliance newsletter.

# MICHAEL RAITZYK

## *Everything Must Change*

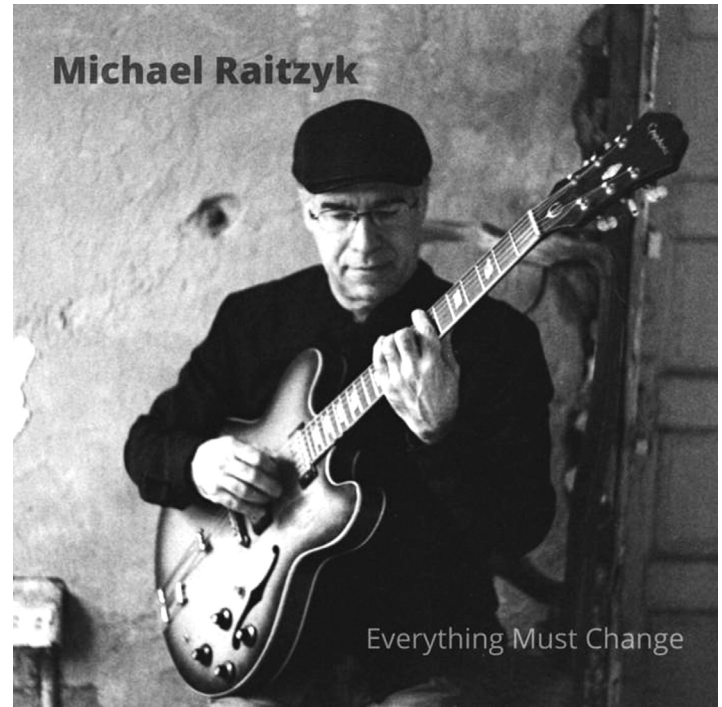
by Pete Naron

Making a solo jazz guitar album is no easy feat. Far more than simply sticking a microphone in front of a proficient player with a good instrument and rolling tape, a solo guitar album requires significant mastery of the instrument and a good working knowledge of harmony in order to figure the bass lines and chord inversions that allow the guitarist to accompany himself while playing the melodies and improvisations. Both skills are amply demonstrated in local guitarist Michael Raitzyk's recent album, *Everything Must Change*.

Raitzyk has been performing and teaching around Baltimore for some 35 years and is a well-known figure in the jazz community. In that time, he has worked with a veritable who's who of area musicians and at more venues than we can count. Other releases in his catalog include: *Blues for Jakob* (2003), *Live at Café Hon* (2006) (as a trio with Jesse Powers and Jesse Moody), and Michael Raitzyk's *Organic Trio* (2011) (featuring organist Greg Hatza and drummer Mike Kuhl).

Covering an eclectic mix of songs ranging from pop to rock to show tunes to liturgical Hebrew, *Everything Must Change* is—as might be expected of a solo guitar set—a mostly mellow, easy listen. According to his liner notes, Raitzyk has chosen songs that have special meaning for him, including the title track, “Everything Must Change,” a languid urban soul number from Quincy Jones’s 1974 *Body Heat* that provides a strong close to the album. And it's always nice to hear “Skylark,” especially after I fell in love with Linda Ronstadt's version back in the '80s. (I was already in love with Linda.) Others, like “Darn That Dream” and “Old Devil Moon,” while not obscure, aren't heard much (at least not in the circles I travel in) and it's good to hear them included. And I have to thank him for turning me on to Luis Bonfá's “The Gentle Rain.” It's a beautiful bossa nova, which he takes for a lovely, long ride.

The pop songs on the album, including The Hollies “Bus Stop,” Joni Mitchell's “Woodstock,” and Nirvana's “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” have been arranged so that they would never be confused with the originals (take that, Kurt Cobain). Raitzyk has definitely put his own stamp on them. On my copy, the songwriters aren't credited, but I've since learned that “Breathe” is a Raitzyk original that has nothing to do



with the Pink Floyd song of the same name. Raitzyk's “Breathe” is a very pretty tune, with a sultry beat and delightful harmonic complexity.

According to his website ([mraitzyk.com](http://mraitzyk.com)), Raitzyk is new to fingerstyle chord melody playing and, if so, I'd say he has a bright future. As I've suggested, *Everything Must Change* is an ambitious project and there are times when the playing does feel more deliberate than energetic. As a live performance however (i.e., single takes, no overdubs), that's like a knot in a piece of fine wood furniture or an air bubble in a piece of blown glass—an imperfection that validates the beauty of the art.

The songs are good, the playing's good, the material thoughtfully selected, the arrangements intricate, and the improvisation masterly. It would be great fun to hear him do it live. But until we're allowed out again, this will have to suffice.

Pete Naron plays guitar with The Fabulous Swingtones and The Cockeysville 'Billies. As “Tom Cattin,” the driving force behind The Cattles, he has amused dozens of cats and kittens with the lyrics to many of their biggest hits, including “Please Feed Me,” “I Want to Catch That Mouse,” “Can't Buy Me Mice,” and “Hunt Together.” His picture (with The Loose Shoes Rhythm Band, at the Marble Bar) graces the cover of the inaugural issue of the *City Squeeze*, precursor to the *City Paper*.

*“You have a whole collection of musical ideas and thoughts that you’ve accumulated through your musical history – plus all the musical history of the whole world – and it’s all in your subconscious – and you draw upon it when you play.” – JOE PASS*

# To Speak or Not to Speak?

That is the question for musicians playing live concerts.



by Liz Fixsen

In this time of the coronavirus pandemic, many musicians are performing on Facebook videos and livestream concerts. While this is one way to stay connected to their audiences, it is clear that the musicians keenly miss the two-way interaction that happens between performers and listeners in a live event. Even though listeners will post “applause” emojis and admiring comments during a livestream performance, it just isn’t the same as having real human beings sitting in the same space and responding—be it by uttering an occasional enthusiastic “Yeah!” or by bobbing their heads in time to the music or by warmly applauding for solos and when the piece ends. As the last notes of some dazzling piece of music fade away, as the musicians face the silence of the empty room, they may only turn to each other to release their feelings of elation and to exchange plaudits.

Something else I’ve noticed is that the musicians seem to talk more, as though the additional dimension of communication will make up for the loss of physical presence of the audience. Noticing this trend made me think of a Facebook conversation from January of 2019, when I posed a question: how much should musicians interact with the audience in a live performance?

Most commenters said that bandleaders should introduce the players, use a microphone to do it, and do it when the audience can hear, which is not during loud applause. This seems like a basic courtesy to the audience and the sidemen (or side women). Most leaders do observe this rule, although I recall a concert by a major jazz artist who never introduced her side players until the very end of the concert, and then only over the loud applause. By that time, I was so exasperated that I was ready to strike my name off her fan list. At least nowadays there is no loud applause to drown out the introductions.

What about introducing the tunes? Several responders favor telling the audience the titles and composers of the selections and even giving some additional information to a novice audience. New York saxophonist Julian Brezon (from

Easton, MD) says the performer should “share relevant information about the music if it expands the emotional narrative and helps engage the listener, and share personal stories if it relates to the music.” He recommends giving some basic explanations to an audience of less seasoned listeners. For example, “If you don’t know what 12 bars means, it’s harder to follow along with a blues.” Baltimore saxophonist Jim Martino recalls a concert with Brazilian guitarist Diego Figueiredo at An die Musik some years back. The audience was very small; all were sitting in the first couple of rows. Martino recalls that Figueiredo pulled his chair up to the front of the stage and explained some of the subtle differences among the various classic Latin forms. “I distinctly remember,” says Martino, “the feeling that we were being treated like guests in his living room.” I’m with Martino. That kind of interaction helps forge a bond between musician and audience and creates a loyal following.

There is a happy medium between talking too little and talking too much. Brezon notes that Ornette Coleman (the legendary jazz saxophonist, violinist, trumpeter and composer) rarely spoke during his performances—but he was playing his own music, with a long-time ensemble, for audiences who knew him and his work. So “he didn’t need to talk, and evidently didn’t want to.” But Baltimore saxophonist Derrick Michaels says, “I’ve seen otherwise accomplished musicians ignoring the audience, playing in spite of folks rather than WITH them, and further alienating folks from this music. This detracts from the music and the culture in the big picture.” Guitarist Rodney Kelley says that people come to a concert not just to listen—or they would stay home to listen—but to be entertained. “Adding a human element always wins,” says Kelley. “It is so boring to go watch a band performance that makes you want to watch paint dry because there is no interaction.”

Brezon gives an example on the other end of the spectrum, of a performer at the erstwhile Bohemian Caverns who once spent at least 15 minutes of a 45-minute set taking about his great sax player and his new fiancée (not, I think, the same person). And one of my favorite Latin jazz pianists tends to get a bit too loquacious at his concerts; I find myself thinking, “just get on with it, man—play the damn song, already!” Baltimore drummer Nick Costa puts it in a nutshell: “I think it’s important to engage the audience, not alienate it. Don’t dumb down, don’t pander, and don’t ramble, but help them come along on the musical journey with you.”

There is a difference between a concert, where people come to listen, and a restaurant or bar, where people come to drink and socialize, with the music as background. My interlocutors feel that in this setting, musicians should mainly just shut up and play. But I have enjoyed being acknowledged by my musician acquaintances when I arrive to dine or drink, and I’ve appreciated it if they comply with a request for a song—and now and then, even let me sit in to sing a tune.

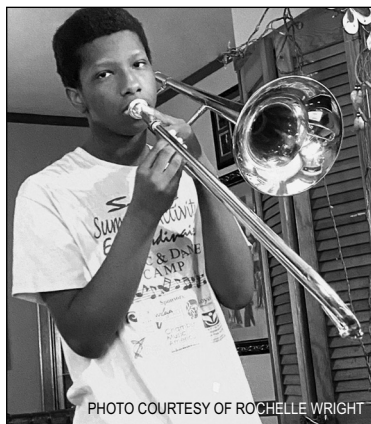
Jazz is different from other musical genres. Because it occu-

pies such a small niche in public listenership, one of its delights is the ability of fans and players to make a personal connection. A certain level of interaction with the audience helps to foster that experience and allows the audience to feel as though they are co-creators with the musicians. This is part of what makes jazz so unique and so treasured by its aficionados.

Liz Fixsen is a jazz pianist, jazz vocalist, jazz enthusiast and church musician. She has written numerous articles and reviews for the Baltimore Jazz Alliance and serves on the BJA board. Liz teaches English as a Second Language through Howard County Library and taught Professional Writing at University of Maryland for many years. She works with Jazz Beyond Borders promoting jazz and world-music artists.

## Where Are They Now?

By Bob Jacobson



### DANIEL WRIGHT

Trombonist Daniel Wright received our Next Generation Artist Award at SAX camp in the summer of 2017, when he was in middle school. He will soon enter his junior year at Parkville Senior High, where he has been playing in the concert band under the direction of Ryan Pil-

lius. Daniel is also in Parkville's magnet program in interactive media and its gifted and talented program. He has returned to SAX camp each summer and last summer he also played his first paying gigs in the band at Fresh Start Church in Glen Burnie, recruited by fellow SAX camp veterans and BJA award-winners, Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey.

*Reach a targeted jazz market by advertising in the BJA Newsletter.*

*Our advertisers report that advertising in our newsletter has resulted in a significant increase in fan and client bases and boosts attendance at events.*

Each issue potentially reaches at least 600 readers/jazz lovers.

BJA ad placements are low in cost and high in impact.

See page 11 for details.

## Introducing BJA Member Grants

*(continued from front page)*

Starting with our new fiscal year (July 2020), BJA invites you—our members—to engage with us directly to support *your* vision of creative possibility in the Baltimore jazz scene. We will continue to do what we think we do well and continue to partner with other organizations when we see opportunities to help. But we are also committed to helping our members realize their ideas for a better, stronger, jazz community.

What does that mean? Very simply, our members—musicians and listeners alike—are eligible to apply to the BJA for financial support for *any project that contributes to or enhances the Baltimore jazz scene in any way*. This might mean, for example, helping to pay for recording for a debut CD; it could mean helping to fund a special performance or series; it could be buying instruments for a struggling music education program, or bringing in a guest artist to teach aspiring jazz students; it could even be helping to fund a jazz-themed mural, or a book of jazz-related photos. We want to hear what you think would have a positive impact on Baltimore jazz, and if we agree, and are able, we want to help.

Of course, the BJA is a small organization, and our pockets are not deep. It's impossible to say that we will be able to fund every request that comes our way, or that we'll be able to fund most projects in their entirety. As requests come in, we will weigh them in terms of impact, relevance, and potential for success, as well as in terms of their cost in relation to our available budget. Without a doubt, there will be projects that we would like to fund but are beyond our means. Even those, though, we hope to hear about; our support need not be strictly financial, and there may be cases where we can help by finding partners, collaborating on grant requests to larger organizations, and just by helping with promotion or logistics.

We are excited about this new program, and not only for the benefits it will bring to our grant recipients, but for the benefit it brings to all BJA members. Your support has always been extremely important to our mission and to everything we do to further that mission, and you will be able to see your membership dues directly helping other members and their visions for our shared jazz community—a true jazz alliance that can only bring us further together in our love of the music and culture that we celebrate every day.

For more details on the criteria and process for application, please visit <https://www.baltimorejazz.com/bja-member-grants/>, and as always, we thank our members, and invite anyone else to join the BJA today!

**Deadline for ad reservations  
for the Fall 2020 issue – August 15th**

# ULTRAFAUX'S *TANGENT*

## A Stylistic and Rhythmic Adventure

by Kris Belgica

Critical praise has greeted *Tangent*, the latest album by Ultrafaux, Baltimore's well-known gypsy jazz ensemble. Tom Cole, senior editor for arts, music, and culture on NPR/Pacifica Radio, writes: "Ultrafaux stands out from all of the other Django Reinhardt-inspired bands because they perform original material." Sam Sessa of the Towson-based radio station WTMD says, "Just when you think you've got this band pegged, they surprise you. This is some of their most adventurous and beguiling music yet."

Ultrafaux is composed of musical powerhouses Michael Joseph Harris (lead guitar), Sami Arefin (rhythm guitar) and Zach Serleth (upright bass). Their original gypsy-jazz-inspired compositions range from melodic tongue-twisters to carefully crafted musical dialogues.

Much of their musical personality is drawn from a combination of international styles, such as French musette, Brazilian choro, Romani folk songs, and Balkan music. In their fourth album, *Tangent*, they reflect such traits as key shifts, the inclusion of movements, odd meters, and chromaticism. Their sound is also influenced by Romantic classical composers Debussy and Ravel, but above all, by the music of Django Reinhardt, a Romani-French jazz guitarist and composer of the 1930s-40s.

However, this time Ultrafaux departs from its usual trio format to partner with several guest players. The artists featured on this album represent some of the world's most vibrant jazz communities, including Nashville, New Orleans and, of course, Baltimore.

"The album is an intimate experience, offering a variety of instrumentation and a wide dynamic range."

Harris, the group's bandleader and composer, patiently orchestrated the recording process over two years, working with artists from near and far: on clarinet, Giacomo Smith from London and Connor Stewart from New Orleans; on violin, Nashville's Patrick McAvinue (a Baltimore native) and Boston's Jason Anick; on accordion, Dallas Vietty from Philadelphia. Nashville musician Geoff Saunders is guest bassist on a few tracks as well. As compared to Ultrafaux's previous albums, the addition of these sounds allows them to gain a foothold in new musical territory.

The album is an intimate experience, offering a variety of instrumentation and a wide dynamic range. It also brings in a few changes to the band's usual configuration by including more arrangement-based songs and fewer improvised solos.

# TANGENT



"Just when you think you've got this band pegged, they surprise you."

The first track is "Jaguar," a composition rich in exploration and imagination. The song has a driving introduction that creates a sense of adventure and excitement, reminiscent of the theme songs of popular television series such as *The Walking Dead* and *Stranger Things*. I was gripped by a sense of urgency that eventually softened into a rhumba-style climax, which released me into a sweet—almost romantic—ambience. Anick enters to enhance the mood with a series of violin arpeggios.

True to its name, "Convergence" blends gloom with optimism. One might say it is a contemporary cousin of French musette, or "bal-musette," which was a popular Parisian waltz music during the late nineteenth century. Now the intent is geared toward thoughtful listening. As the song ends, Vietty guides the listener into a dreamy, polyrhythmic conclusion on his accordion.

Harris also reintroduces three of his originals previously recorded in 2014, "Dame Ivre," "Je Ne Sais Pas," and "Racer X," this time adding violin, accordion, and clarinet. When comparing each recording to their older versions, it was very clear to me how much of an impact these new instruments made. The addition of these sounds was like witnessing the rebirth of a phoenix.

Something that took me completely off guard was the title track, "Tangent." Instead of the usual swing guitar rhythm that we are used to hearing from Ultrafaux, it was a funk composition in 7/8. It stands out proudly and unapologetically. Harris and Anick display high levels of performance chemistry, much like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, as they share the same lines, trade solos, and come back together to head out in synched unison.



Arefin briefly takes a break from his solid rhythm work to show off his improvisation skills on “Bayou Blues.” His unique style of playing always leaves me feeling pleasantly shocked. Here, he hops between light-hearted melodic simplicity and cacophonous cascade.

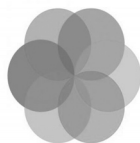
*Tangent* is, indeed, a showcase of artistic clout, and all the players’ efforts contribute to a charismatic collaboration that invites us on a stylistic and rhythmic adventure.

The album can be purchased digitally or hard copy on Bandcamp or michaeljosephharris.com. Follow them on their Facebook page to catch their live-streamed concerts as well!

Kristoffer Belgica is a Texas native who moved to Maryland in 2015. He is a swing guitar player currently studying gypsy jazz with Sami Arefin. He plays with the DC-based gypsy jazz band Swing 5 and Baltimore Swing Drop. His regular performance venues include The Rye in Fells Point, Maryland Meadworks in Hyattsville, and assisted living and retirement communities.



This project has been funded by Mayor Jack Young and the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts.



CREATIVE  
BALTIMORE  
FUND

BALTIMORE  
OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS  
Arts • Events • Film



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK OSTEEN

Mark Osteen and Daily Planet

## Before They Played Jazz

by Bob Jacobson

Here's former BJA president Mark Osteen (middle of top row) in 1979, at age 25. The band is Daily Planet, which played nightclubs, taverns and one-nighters throughout the Pacific Northwest. Their varied repertoire included some of the more sophisticated rock of the period (e.g., Steely Dan, Doobie Brothers, McCartney) and progressive rock (Queen, Kansas, Styx). Osteen was the front man, also playing saxes, keys and congas. He writes that “The band was terrific musically but we didn't get along too well.” He eventually quit to go to graduate school.

Today Mark teaches English at Loyola University Maryland, has authored several books and leads Cold Spring Jazz Quartet, in which he plays saxes and sings.

Bob Jacobson has written for *DownBeat*, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com) and [jazzreview.com](http://jazzreview.com). He also wrote chapters on Ellis Larkins and Hank Levy in the 2010 book *Music at the Crossroads: Lives and Legacies of Baltimore Jazz*.

BJA is dedicated  
to promoting Jazz  
in Baltimore!

# Four Perspectives: Music In The Time Of Coronavirus

by Liz Fixsen

During these extraordinary times, we at the BJA have been following the many novel ways in which musicians are staying engaged with audiences, and we have asked three musicians and one presenter to give us their perspective, under the title “Music in the Time of Coronavirus.” You can read all four articles on our website, [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com). Whether you are a musician or a fan, these articles are bound to offer some interesting insights and probably provoke some stimulating dialogue.



Aaron Hill (piano) and Clarence Ward III (trumpet)  
live streaming at An die Musik

**Saxophonist Derrick Michaels** wrote “Back to the Basics,” musing that jazz musicians can use this time to explore their art in more depth. “We now have the time and the space to rejuvenate our creative intentions and contributions,” Michaels writes. “By revitalizing our personal creative processes, we can surmount this experience as inspired artists.” At the same time, jazz lovers deprived of live concerts can listen to seminal recordings in more depth: “Slow down and let the music envelope you. Pay attention. Revel in the power of music, rather than relegating it into the background of other activities. . . . Turn off your phone, close your laptop, shut your eyes, and delight in the sensory bliss that is this music. You will not be disappointed!”

**David Crandall, saxophonist, media artist, and writer/editor** contributed “Word from the Digital Frontier” to describe a range of digital applications, programs, and tools for teaching, performing live-stream, and recording, both individually and collaboratively—and for earning some cash. Crandall observes how the technology is changing the world of artistic perform-

ance: “Our strangely warped sense of time during the COVID shutdown has brought about new flexibility in scheduling. . . . Scheduled shows aren’t just for 8 pm anymore and can be watched—and tips collected—at any time.”

At the end, Crandall asks, “Will new forms of music emerge from the spongy time-sense of internet latency? Will the newly upended pyramid of the music business yield new ways of surviving and building community? Unknown. Unknown. The only thing for it is to stay loose, keep your chops up, and follow the changes, right? And always—always: look out for each other.”

**Henry Wong, owner of An die Musik (ADM)**, one of Baltimore’s premier jazz venues, gives a presenter’s perspective. “We’ve been privileged to present Baltimore-based musicians, who are among the best in the world, and who choose to carry on the historic jazz tradition cultivated right here over many generations,” says Wong. Warren Wolf, Sean Jones, Eric Kennedy, Joel Santiago, and Clarence Ward III, Todd Marcus, Irene Jالenti, and Alan Blackman are a few of the musicians who have played from the ADM stage, facing a video camera and empty seats with as much grace and humor as they can muster. “Tickets” to purchase an access link are \$5, although additional donations are welcomed. The links remain ‘live’ for some days, enabling listeners to enjoy the performances at their own convenience. Wong says, “Regular patrons find comfort in watching performances taking place in a familiar space.” He adds, “Our live streaming events provide not just entertainment, but also a sense of belonging, just as our venue did before the pandemic.”

**Bassist Eddie Hrybyk, who teaches at Baltimore School for the Arts**, wrote “The Show Must Go On,” and he is doing his part by putting on bi-weekly “Charles Village Porch Concerts” from his front porch, joined by one or two other Baltimore musicians, including Clarence Ward III, Dan Wallace, Todd Simon, Jack Naden, Nataly Merezchuk and others. Hrybyk writes, “The concerts have evolved into a wonderfully positive gathering from a safe distance with local residents donning masks, standing yards apart, and dancing on the sidewalk,” all while the performance is live-streamed on Facebook. A sign hung on the railing of the porch invites listeners to contribute “tips” via Venmo, and Hrybyk urges music lovers to “please continue to support local artists, venues, and small businesses. A small contribution goes a long way for a community struggling to find income.” Hrybyk dedicated one day’s tips to the Maryland Food Bank. Charles Village Porch Concerts are held on Wednesdays at 5 pm on 28th and Calvert Street and Saturdays at 11 am on 28th and Hunter Street. Hrybyk’s final word to the jazz community: “Stay positive, spread joy, follow CDC guidelines, and hopefully we will emerge from this crisis stronger than before.”



# WHIT WILLIAMS – Master Musician and Mentor to Many



by Gail Marten

Saxophonist Whit Williams, a major figure in the Baltimore jazz scene, passed away on May 20th, 2020, at the age of 87. Because of his versatility in performing many types of music, Williams was one of the most sought-after professional musicians in the Baltimore area.

Thomas “Whit” Williams was born in Macon, NC. After serving as a paratrooper in the United States Army 82nd Airborne Division, he moved to Baltimore where he attended Morgan State College (now Morgan State University). While at Morgan, Williams played in the string ensemble as well as the woodwind section of the concert and marching bands. He continued his education with graduate work at Towson State University and Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. From 1958 to 1995, he taught music in the Anne Arundel public schools.

Not long after moving to Baltimore, Williams performed with the historical Royal Theatre Band, one of the stops on the “Chitlin’ Circuit.” His band experiences included work with Rivers Chambers Society Band (1960-1971), Bobby Felder Band (1965-1971), touring with Gladys Knight Band (1981-1987), and a European tour with Ed Williams Band.

In 1981, his interests and experiences came together when he formed Now’s The Time Band. The band’s name reflected their love of the tune by the same name, composed by jazz legend Charlie Parker. Now’s The Time Band gave concerts and performed for a wide variety of events in the Baltimore-Washington corridor and along the East Coast. The album *Now’s The Time Big Band* was well received, and *DownBeat* magazine awarded it 4.5 stars.

Because of his versatile ability to perform many types of music, Williams was one of the most sought-after professional musicians in the Baltimore metropolitan area, performing in the stage productions *Lady Day at Emerson Bar and Grill* (1993), *Dinah Was* (2000) at Center Stage in Baltimore, *A Love Supreme* (2002) at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, and *The Wiz* (2010) at Center Stage in Baltimore. He performed as backup entertainer for such artists as Aretha Franklin, Diahann Carroll, Pearl Bailey, Sarah Vaughan, Anita Baker, Bob Hope, The Mannhattans, Barry White, Tony Bennett, Sammy Davis, Jr., Lionel

Hampton and Steve Allen.

Whit Williams was honored with BJA’s Lifetime Achievement award in 2011. He was a highly respected musician and mentor to the many musicians whom he guided, inspired and encouraged over the years.

The following tributes were written to Williams by some of the Baltimore musicians whom he guided, inspired, and encouraged over the years.

Knowing Whit Williams throughout any musician’s career definitely had its advantages. Having doors opened by him, being invited to “scrimmages,” or running ideas by him always resulted in memorable lessons. No matter the musical circumstances, Whit was always there, reigning supreme. The music world is a much better place because of Thomas “Whit” Williams—an ultimate mentor in music and in life.

– Charles Funn (Baltimore trombonist, bandleader)

Whit Williams was the most humble musician that you could encounter. He was the musician’s musician. Although his musical abilities were extraordinary and his talent exceeded others’ many times over, you could always count on him to encourage other musicians to be their best through his gentle and persuasive personality.

– Phill Butts (percussionist, bandleader)

I had a great time playing in the Whit Williams big band the few times I got to. Every musician who played in his band had a great deal of respect and admiration for him. Every interaction I had with him showed me he was a kind and generous man. He will be greatly missed by the Baltimore music community.

– Daniel Wallace (saxophonist, bandleader)

Whit was a towering music hero in Baltimore, and I had the distinct pleasure of working with him on a couple of gigs around 2004-2005. I was still learning, and I’ll always remember how kind and supportive he was of musicians trying to learn and make their way through the music. My deepest, heartfelt condolences go out to his son and master musician Tom Williams.

– Marianne Matheny-Katz (vocalist, bandleader; co-owner of Jazzway 2004)

I had the privilege of playing next to Whit in Dr. Phill’s Big Band in 2017-18. Though he was having some physical problems, Whit read the charts great and always came up with a solid, inventive solo; plus he never lost his sense of humor.

– Bob Jacobson (clarinetist, saxophonist, bandleader)

## BJA Member Notes

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Anthony Booth, Eric Byrd, David Crandall, Marc Izzi, Duane Martz, Parris McGhee-Bey, Peter Naron

### ERIC BYRD TRIO

In 2020 the Maryland State Arts Council bestowed upon The Eric Byrd Trio a \$10K Independent Artist Award (IAA) for notable artistic achievement.

### EBBAN DORSEY

Alto saxophonist Ebban Dorsey was accepted into the National Youth Orchestra Jazz program with Carnegie Hall—the youngest one accepted this year. They were planning to tour South Africa, but plans may be changed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### JOSHUA ESPINOZA

Congratulations to pianist Joshua Espinoza, who received a 2020 independent artist award from Maryland State Arts Council.

### SETH KIBEL

Saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer Seth Kibel has just received a Regional Independent Artist Award for Performing Arts from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC).

### GEORGE SPICKA

In late April, as part of a public education project presented by Baltimore's Institute for Behavior Resources (IBR) REACH Health Services, George Spicka composed the background music for a series of seven videos. He also served as a judge in the Society of Composers/ASCAP, Undergraduate Level Composition Competition.

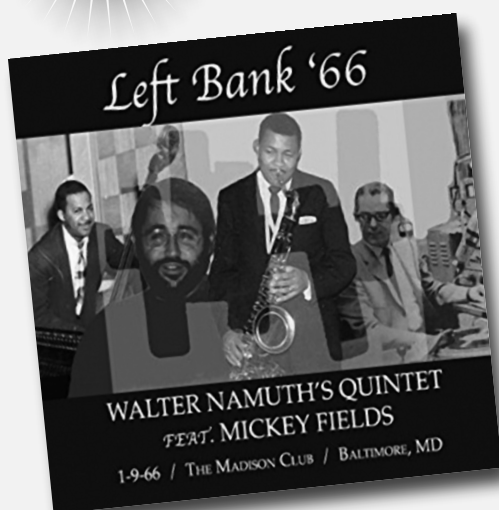
## BJA Member Benefits

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 businesses offer discounts to BJA members:

- **Keystone Korner Baltimore** is offering \$5 discounts to BJA members for all shows. Discount is available at the door, not for online ticket purchases.
- **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 North Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.
- **Germano's Piattini** often offers discounted tickets to specific events for BJA members, announced by email.
- **Jazzway 6004** offers BJA members a \$5 discount on performances at their venue.

## LEFT BANK '66 available 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](http://baltimorejazz.com) or write a check for \$15 to:

BJA, 847 North 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.

## display advertising

### LOW RATES FOR AD PLACEMENT

Reach a targeted jazz market by advertising in the BJA Newsletter. **LIMITED SPACE.** Reserve early.

**Deadline for Fall (October, November, December) issue: August 15th.**

**Print-ready display ads\* to: jazzpalette@gmail.com**

BJA reserves the right to reject inappropriate copy.

**\*Ad Specs:** Original B&W line/vector artwork in jpg format at 600 dpi are preferred. Pixel-based images (photos) should be 300 dpi or higher resolution.

#### AD PLACEMENT RATES AND SIZES:

\$15 for 1/8 page	(3⅞ in. wide x 2¼ in. high)
\$30 for 1/4 page	(3⅞ in. wide x 4¾ in. high)
\$60 for 1/2 page	(7½ in. wide x 4¾ in. high) horizontal
\$60 for 1/2 page	(3⅞ in. wide x 9¾ in. high) vertical
\$120 for full page	(7½ in. wide x 9¾ in. high)

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

**BJA**, 847 North Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21202  
or via PayPal at [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com) (click Donate button)  
Please indicate ad size and month(s) for placement.

**REMEMBER...BJA offers free online promotion of your jazz events!**

Enter your gigs at: [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com)

Direct questions or comments to:  
[webmaster@baltimorejazz.com](mailto:webmaster@baltimorejazz.com)

## Do you need a display ad?

JAZZ PALETTE GRAPHIC DESIGN will design your print-ready display ad for a reasonable fee.

[jazzpalette@gmail.com](mailto:jazzpalette@gmail.com) • 410-290-5638  
[www.jazzpalette.com](http://www.jazzpalette.com)

**GAIL MARTEN, EDITOR/DESIGNER**  
**BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER**  
[JAZZPALETTE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JAZZPALETTE@GMAIL.COM)  
[WWW.JAZZPALETTE.COM](http://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)

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

*Thank you for joining! Your membership makes a difference!*





BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

847 North Howard Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

BJA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization



SUMMER 2020

JULY / AUGUST / SEPTEMBER

*Dedicated to promoting Jazz in Baltimore!*

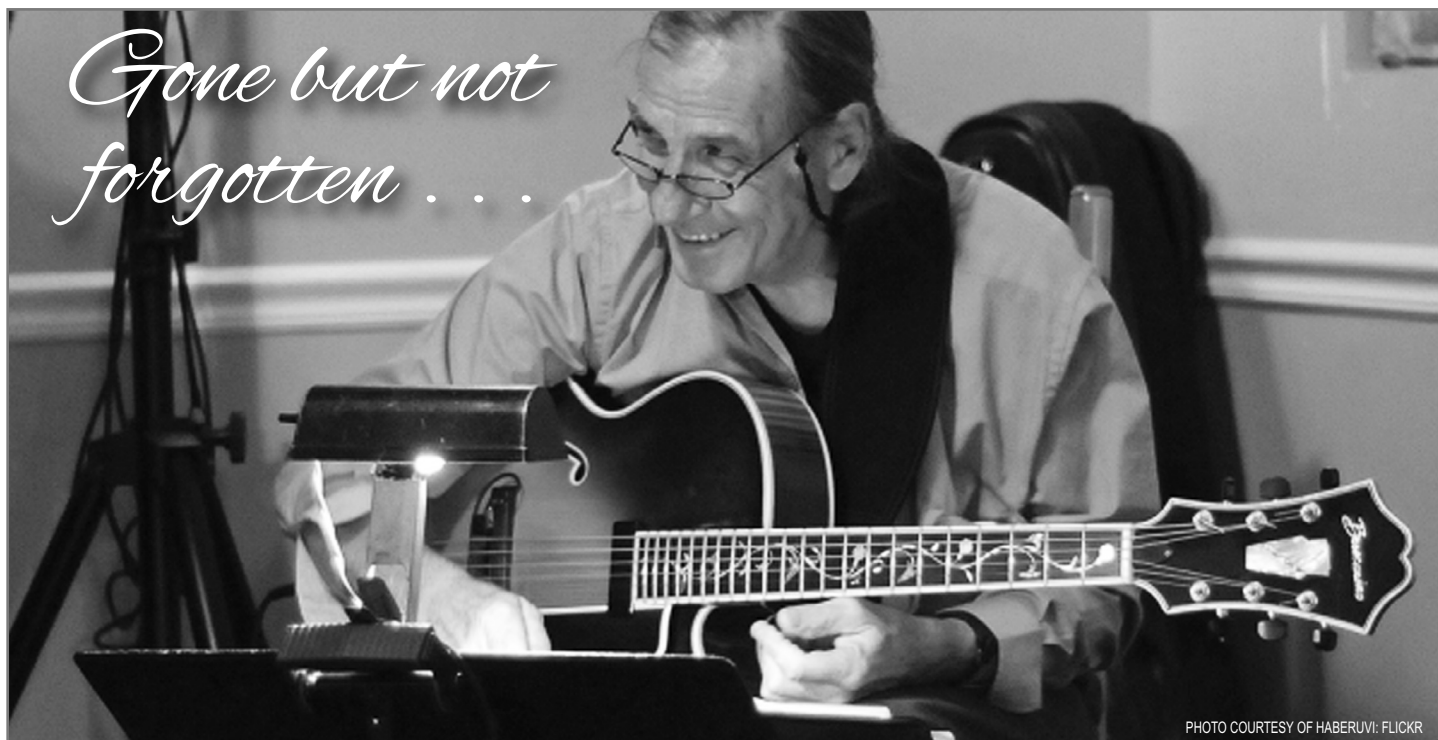


PHOTO COURTESY OF HABERUVI: FLICKR

REMEMBERING PAUL WINGO, who led a band at Bertha's Restaurant on Tuesday nights for more than 30 years.

More about this Baltimore treasure at: <https://baltimorejazz.com/wingo>