

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

WINTER 2022 INSIDE THIS EDITION

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BJA Board Welcomes Jazz Scholar Anna Celenza

By Mitch Mirkin



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNA CELENZA

Anna Celenza, who holds a PhD in musicology and recently joined the faculty of Johns Hopkins University, has written books for children and adults on an array of musical topics. She combines compelling storytelling with academic rigor in books about composers ranging from Bach and Beethoven to George Gershwin and Duke Ellington.

One of her more intriguing and eclectic titles, from 2017, was written while she was living in Italy with her husband, who is of Italian descent: *Jazz Italian Style: From Its Origins in New Orleans to Fascist Italy and Sinatra*. Previously, she had written and edited works focused mostly on classical music. The Italy book was her "first big jazz project" as a music scholar, says Celenza, who joined the BJA board this past September. She currently holds a joint appointment in JHU's Writing Seminars and the Musicology Department at Peabody. (Musicology is the scholarly analysis and research-based study of music.) Previously, she taught for 15 years at Georgetown University and nine years at Michigan State University.

Her knowledge of the Italian language was a boon to her research while in Italy, although the initial motivation for learning it was her family. "I first tried to learn Italian so that I could speak with my husband's grandmother at our wedding," says Celenza.

In fact, Celenza is well-versed in several languages, including German, Danish, and Dutch.

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Devron "Ace" Dennis Up-And-Coming Drummer

By Liz Fixsen



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACE DENNIS

Baltimore seems to be fertile ground for growing talented young jazz musicians. Almost any Monday night, at the jam session at Terra Café, you can see them lined up to show off their chops. And many of them are finding their way onto our local club stages. One of them is twenty-one-year-old drummer Devron "Ace" Dennis, a frequent member of the house band at Terra Café.

Luckily for us Baltimore jazz fans, Dennis did not pursue his earlier ambition of becoming a chef, or later, a carpenter—or a trombonist, which was the first instrument he tackled, at age 10. On and off from 2009, Dennis was a member of OrchKids, a program of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra directed by percussionist Brian Precht, who encouraged him to join the Bucket Band, an ensemble of players using improvised percussion instruments. OrchKids toured all over the East Coast. One memorable performance occurred when the group played with trumpeter Wynton Marsalis at the BSO's 2017 gala, and received a critique from him. It was in an OrchKids class that Dennis was introduced to jazz by saxophonist Russell Kirk. Another important early influence was drummer Gabe Bennett, who sparked Dennis's creativity. Since 2020, Dennis has been not only an alum but a teacher at OrchKids, and has taken a lead role in preparing music for virtual online "jam sessions" by OrchKids members after in-person classes were suspended due to COVID.

Dennis, the would-be carpenter (or chef), started high

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The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a
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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.

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AARON HILL'S "STREETS"

The Path To Musical Success

By Liz Fixsen

Among the various interesting sessions at the third annual Baltimore Jazz Conference (October 16th) was a talk by pianist Aaron Hill. He built his talk around the acronym, "STREETS," where each letter stands for a practice or attitude or principle that should be followed by any person looking for success as a musician—or in endeavor involving an interface with the public.

The first "S" stands for **sustenance**. You must ask yourself, what feeds or sustains you? What feeds your audience? A successful musician feeds both herself and her listeners.

The first "T" stands for **trust**. You must trust yourself and trust others. Be authentic, be vulnerable, be transparent. Trust yourself enough to take the risk of trying something new and learning from it.

"R" stands for **roots**. Water your own roots, maintain your craft, nurture your soul. And then build an audience from grassroots, and water it. Pour yourself into people, one at a time. Build relationships and community. Then take the music to the people.

The first "E" stands for **empathy**—for yourself and for your audience—a companion to "trust." Tune into and accept your own feelings; tune into and accept the feelings of your audience.

The second "E" stands for **equanimity**, or balance. In your musical journey, you'll have successes, and you'll have failures. You can't let the successes lull you into complacency, and you can't let the failures crush you into paralysis. Keep yourself grounded and centered.

The second "T" stands for **tools**. Use digital tools such as online music plat-



PHOTO COURTESY OF AARON HILL

forms to help build and audience.

The last "S" stands for **sustainability**. Your profession as a musician needs to be sustainable, just like any endeavor. Set realistic goals, and be diligent in pursuing them.

Aaron Hill's "STREETS" principles have led him to be a successful musician who makes connections with his audience, one whose scores of free public outdoor "street serenades" have indeed brought his music to "the people." You might hear more wisdom from Aaron Hill on his weekday morning talks via an online audio program called Clubhouse. You can hear him play keyboard at the Monday night jam session at Terra Café. And learn more at aaronhilltv.com.

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.

*At least one day out of the year, all musicians should just
put their instruments down and give thanks to Duke Ellington.*

— Miles Davis

BJA Board Welcomes Jazz Scholar Anna Celenza

(continued from page one)

Steeped as Celenza was in the musical traditions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, she eventually gravitated toward modern American music—namely jazz—as a focus for her studies. “With each project I found myself going later in time and closer to America. Eventually I realized I just need to write about jazz. That’s what I really enjoy studying.” Jazz had always been a part of her childhood. Her grandfather played saxophone with the Ted Weems Orchestra in Chicago in the early 1920s. “Because of this, everyone on my mother’s side of the family loved jazz and listened to the music all the time.”

Like most musicologists, she is also a musician. She grew up playing cello and drums. But in her junior year of college, carpal tunnel syndrome took her away from the orchestra and toward an academic career. “In school I was introduced to music history and found I really liked it. I liked studying the cultural context of music.” She says the carpal tunnel syndrome was a blessing in disguise, as it allowed her to discover her passion. These days she dabbles in jazz piano as a hobby. “I’m not good, but I’m having a really good time,” she affably admits.

*“ . . . jazz is a vibrant, living art form
that has the power to evoke joy, sorrow,
anger, and self-reflection . . . ”*

Celenza hopes to get involved in grant writing on behalf of BJA and the Baltimore jazz community. Among other projects, she would like to obtain funding to conduct a census of the city’s music community, similar to one she led for Washington, DC, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office, Capitol Hill Jazz Foundation and other DC organizations. The DC Music Census included a survey completed by anyone working creatively in music as a musician, producer, educator, or venue owner, or by anyone participating in any music-related product or service.

That is a healthy first step, she says, in identifying a community’s needs. It helps stakeholders better understand the “music ecosystem” in the city and reveals gaps that need addressing. It thus provides solid evidence for grant proposals. Celenza says a music ecosystem includes musicians, audiences, venues, schools, local government, the transportation system—all the factors that enable music to be played and enjoyed and to serve as a reliable and sustainable source of income for those who depend on it. She says one example of a gap in a city’s ecosystem would be a lack of midsize venues, with a predominance of only small open-mic clubs and large concert halls. That might force local musicians to go out of town for gigs in order to nourish their careers.

Another example: “You can open up a great venue, but if

you’re making your money mostly on booze, and there’s no public transportation—meaning people have to drive home—that’s not a good mix.”

Celenza co-founded the nonprofit Music Policy Forum, whose mission is to “develop vibrant music economies that support professional musicians, enhance communities, and support local creativity.” In her board member application, Celenza provided this spirited personal mission statement:

As a jazz scholar, educator, and fan with a track record in public policy initiatives, I believe that a healthy music ecosystem is one that builds bridges and connects with as broad a coalition of supporters as possible. . . . I also firmly believe that jazz is a vibrant, living art form that has the power to evoke joy, sorrow, anger, and self-reflection that in turn can lead to human flourishing, political action, and social justice. For all these reasons, I hope that I might become a part of the BJA and contribute to your work of helping the art form, and the community, thrive.

Mitch Mirkin is acting director of communications for the Office of Research and Development of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He is a longtime jazz lover and in recent years has devoted his musical talents to jazz composing. His original compositions are featured on two CDs—*Dance of the DNA* (2019) and *The Madison Avenue Shul* (2020)—with a third in the works for 2021.

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DAWN

An Expert Storyteller Finds Her Inner Voice

By Marianne Matheny-Katz

One of the qualities I always look for in an artist is a unique point of view—what they bring to the public conversation, something that is solely theirs. And so it is gratifying when an artist you have known for a while and watched perform and evolve creates a project that is extraordinary in its rich display of skill, personality, passion, and artistry—and crowned with a magical “something extra.”

Irene Jaleñti's new CD, *Dawn*, is all those things and more. It's a breathtaking recording, filled with shining moments of genre-bending musicality. The result is a statement of her commitment to her ancestral roots, her love of jazz and improvisation and her determination to forge something new and contribute to the future direction of vocal jazz.

The CD features four gorgeous original tunes by Jaleñti and six standards/covers that are inventively reimagined through Jaleñti's arrangements. Besides the dynamic vocals of Irene Jaleñti, the album includes the always impressive rhythm section of Baltimore-based musicians and educators, Alan Blackman on piano, Jeff Reed on bass and Eric Kennedy on drums. Her guest artists are equally impressive, with Sean Jones on trumpet and flugelhorn on five tracks, Chris Perez on guitar on two tracks, and vibraphonist Warren Wolf in a duet with Jaleñti on the title track.

Born in 1980 in Terni, Italy's central Italian region of Umbria, Irene Jaleñti comes from a musical family: her uncle, pop-star Sergio Endrigo, as well as her uncle Mario Jaleñti and cousin Francesco Jaleñti, both guitarists. Her father was a record store owner in Terni, and he encouraged all his daughter's musical pursuits, including the study of piano and guitar. As a result, music and industriousness come to Jaleñti as a normal practice.

After immigrating to Baltimore, she won a full scholarship at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, earning a BA in music and then went on to earn her master's degree at Howard University, where she also became part of Howard's renowned a cappella jazz ensemble, Afro Blue. She currently teaches jazz and commercial voice at Syracuse University and is an impressive and sought-after jazz vocalist on the DC-Baltimore-Virginia jazz scene.

While many of us were watching Netflix and baking bread during the pandemic, Jaleñti was inspired to pick up her guitar and begin writing songs that came from an inner voice during her sunrise routine and inspired by the instrumental works of her uncle and cousin. The first of these inspirations was “Alma Desnuda” (Naked Soul). Using an A-minor har-



Jaleñti has shown the world “a naked soul,”
and all listeners are enriched for it.

monic line, Jaleñti composed a tune that she first recorded on her phone. She was stunned when she played it back and realized it was the exactly the musical setting she was seeking for a poem by Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni. Storni's words begin with: “Soul that like the wind goes / wanders restless and at night / Sleeps sweetly in a crack.” The words continue with the vulnerability felt by the author:

I am a naked soul in these verses

A naked soul that anguished and alone,

Goes leaving its petals scattered

A soul that can be a poppy,

That can be a lily, a violet,

A boulder, a forest, and a wave.

Jaleñti's sensitive melody embraces these words as someone who is many things at once and is unflinchingly exposing herself to the world.

“That's How the Story Goes” is a fun, bluesy tune with clever lyrics and a knockout scat section. The tune complains about an individual who can't look at their own mistakes and urges that individual to dig deeper for an inner truth.

“Dawn,” the title track, is Jaleñti's musical setting of an ancient Greek poem by Meleager of Gadara. Warren Wolf's vibraphone softly cushions the ambivalent lyrics with his dreamy rendering of Jaleñti's melody: “Dawn, hateful to lovers, Why do you rise so quickly, Beside my bed, When I lie with him? Can't you turn around, Run back and be night again, And stop that sweet smiling, That pours out poison light?” The pairing of Wolf's instrumentation with Jaleñti's tender vocals is sublime and perfectly in sync. “Moon and Sun” is a hypnotizing ballad that represents a “meditation

on the cycles of day and night” with Jones’s horn underscoring Jalehti’s lyrics.

Jalehti’s covers are completely reinvented and feel like new tunes. The Brazilian “Carinhoso” is an example of choro or chorinho (a “cry” or “lament”). It is an Afro-Brazilian genre that originated in 19th century Rio de Janeiro. The arrangement with guitar and voice beautifully illustrates how well suited Jalehti’s voice is for this Brazilian genre. With Chris Perez’s guitar, it feels so authentic, you can imagine it pouring out of a club in Rio de Janeiro.

“Beautiful Love” is magnificently embellished with the overdubbing of Jalehti’s own vocal harmonies and scat phrases and her skillful trading of scat lines with Jones’s trumpet. Of “How Deep is The Ocean,” Jalehti explains: “I was inspired by the Afro-Cuban 6/8 rhythms that you find in songs like “Afro Blue” with a bass ostinato that underlines the almost obsessive feel of love described in the song.”

“You and The Night and The Music” is another tune with an Afro-Cuban feel and reminiscent of Horace Silver. Blackman’s piano and Jones’s trumpet trade some playful improvisational lines in their solos and then Jalehti’s vocals suddenly enter, an octave higher than her earlier vocals, giving urgency to the lyrics.

“Let it Be” is Blackman and Jalehti’s arrangement of the Lennon/McCartney song that I have heard them perform before. I am always blown away by Blackman’s piano and

Jalehti’s phrasing that creates a poignancy I had not noticed before.

Her album, for me, is like an emotional trip around the world. Her ability to synthesize jazz, world music, classical music, blues, and electronic genres is remarkably ambitious, especially for a first recording, and I am looking forward to her future projects. But for now, Jalehti has produced a compelling view of her inner voice in *Dawn*. In the words of “Alma Desnuda,” Jalehti has shown the world “a naked soul,” and all listeners are enriched for it.

Irene Jalehti’s CD and individual tunes can be purchased directly through her website—www.irenejalehti.com—and on iTunes and Amazon. Her upcoming performances can also be viewed on her website and include The Creative Cauldron, in Falls Church VA on February 4th, 2022, along with several others that will have details posted soon.

Marianne Matheny-Katz is an accomplished jazz vocalist well known in the Mid-Atlantic region for her 20 years of performing; two-time award winner of the Billie Holiday competition and praised for her 2014 album, *Somewhere in Paradise*. She and her husband Howard Katz co-founded and have run the popular non-profit Jazzway 6004 house concert jazz series for 14 years. Retired as an economist for the federal government (Army) in 2016, Marianne is currently working on recording her Joni Mitchell project.

Carl Filipiak

and the Jimi Jazz Band

Carl Filipiak, *guitar*

Frank Young, *drums*

Paul Hannah, *sax*

Matt Everhart, *bass*

Rachel Hall Pickett, *vocals*



Saturday, January 8, 2022

8 p.m.

Havre de Grace Arts Collective

HdG, MD

Saturday, February 26, 2022

7 p.m.

Music Land

Bel Air, MD

Saturday, April 9, 2022

8 p.m.

The Coop

Timonium, MD

Sunday, May 22, 2022

2 p.m.

Big Falls Inn

White Marsh, MD

Visit www.carlfiliapiak.com for more upcoming shows.

A Blueprint for Building Baltimore's Jazz Scene

By Anna Harwell Celenza

Jazz can play an invaluable role in creating and sustaining a city's cultural identity. Jazz provides a means for individual and group expression. It also has the power to build bridges between various ethnic, religious, social, and economic groups. When jazz is allowed to thrive in a community, the result often resembles a multicolored tapestry, where the integrity of each thread is strengthened by its contribution to the whole. Consequently, this blueprint for building Baltimore's jazz scene involves more than a single genre, more than music alone.

Like many cities, Baltimore suffered economically during the pandemic, and to borrow a phrase from Joe Biden, the time has come to "build back better." But what does that mean, exactly, when it comes to strengthening the city's jazz scene? Returning to conditions from 2019 isn't good enough. Baltimore's musicians and audiences deserve better. We need to borrow techniques from city planners and think outside the box.

This blueprint for building Baltimore's jazz scene involves five basic steps: 1. Identify the jazz community (musicians, venues, presenters, audiences); 2. Explore in depth the needs of the jazz community; 3. Identify city government policies that will benefit the jazz community; 4. Engage the broader arts community to get their buy-in; and 5. Develop audience interest.

Steps 1 and 2 could be effectively achieved by completing a music census, and as a new member of the BJA board I hope to lead this vital mission. A music census is basically an anonymous, on-line survey that is available for several weeks. The data gathered offers a snapshot of the current jazz ecosystem that can inform important decisions on the local level. The most difficult thing about launching a census is getting buy-in from the jazz creative community. The best way to do this is to spend several months hosting public forums and organizing meetings with all interested parties: musicians, venue owners, educators, arts advocates, non-profits, etc. These conversations are vital; they help determine which questions should be included in the survey. They also strengthen the community, because the data gathered will be shared with the *entire* community. The results will be posted on the BJA website.

Step 3 involves responding to the data collected in the census and pursuing change through public policy. As noted in the 2016 report, *The Mastering of a Music City* (IFPI and Music Canada): "Government policies have a direct impact on the ability of music businesses such as live performance venues, recording studios and rehearsal spaces to operate sustainably." In Baltimore, jazz is directly impacted by decisions involving business licensing, transportation and parking,



land-use planning, and noise ordinances. As advocates for jazz, we should make sure that decisions coming from local government do not unnecessarily hinder the growth and well-being of the jazz community.

Like many cities across the country, Baltimore is facing challenging decisions related to gentrification and urban growth. Currently, historically significant music properties are being threatened or have already been lost. Solutions to these challenges might include heritage designations, cultural zones, and policies based on the "agent of change" principle (the person or business responsible for the change must also be responsible for managing the impact of the change).

Data from the survey will also confirm needs surrounding local training and education programs, professional mentoring programs, access to hubs or incubators, and affordable housing. By attending to public policies like these in an informed, data-driven manner, the BJA can continue to build a supportive environment that enables Baltimore's jazz musicians to focus on what they do best: making great music.

We can't expect local government to understand instinctively the unique issues of the jazz community, but we *can* present a unified, coherent message that will educate them about our needs.

Step 4, engaging the broader arts community, involves acknowledging that the arts community, in general, is stronger when it is united. Although music, theater, visual arts, dance, etc. have different needs and challenges, we will all profit more by collaborating and sharing insights and information. Arts organizations shouldn't see themselves as competing with one

another for public funds and audiences. BJA has already started this process, shown in its partnership with the Bromo Arts District, but there are more connections to be made.

Finally, success in step 5—developing audience interest—can only come, I believe, if we dedicate time and energy to Steps 1 through 4. Baltimore has many untapped audiences for jazz: college students, all-age groups, and fans of other genres/artforms who haven't yet been properly introduced to jazz. We are lucky to have listening venues devoted to great music, and restaurants and non-profits committed to supporting local artists. But there is room to grow and a need for sustainability. Now's the time! The possibilities are endless!

Anna Celenza is a professor at Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of several books, including *Jazz Italian Style, from Its Origins in New Orleans to Fascist Italy and Sinatra* (2017) and *The Cambridge Companion to George Gershwin* (2019). She's also published eight children's books, including *Duke Ellington's Nutcracker Suite*. In 2016 Celenza co-founded Music Policy Forum, a non-profit that advises local governments about how to create sustainable music ecosystems.

Devron “Ace” Dennis

Up-And-Coming Drummer

(continued from page one)

school at Carver Vocational-Technical High School. He couldn't study drums there, and he was going through a period of tough times at home, so he ended up failing ninth grade. At this point, Brian Prechtel helped him get an audition at Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA). A summer at Interlochen Arts Academy, a prestigious music camp in Michigan, helped prepare him for the audition, and Prechtel pushed for his admission. At BSA, where he repeated ninth grade, Dennis was taught by saxophonist John Thomas, trumpeter Clarence Ward III, and bassist Eddie Hrybyk, who also helped the naive youngster become independent and self-sufficient from the age of 15. Meanwhile, Dennis attended Peabody Preparatory School by means of a scholarship through the school's Tuned In program and was mentored by Daniel Trahey. He studied classical music and music theory; bassist Blake Meister was another of his teachers.

Ward, Hrybyk, and the Dorseys, saxophonists Ephraim and Ebban and their mother Bernadine, were also highly supportive of the young drummer's growing career, bringing him into the hugely popular Monday night jam session at Terra Café, run by Clarence Ward III and Rufus Roundtree; Dennis eventually became a member of the house band.

Besides the Terra Café session, Dennis is a regular in Hrybyk's Tuesday Pop-Up Jam Sessions and Wednesday Charm City Porch Concerts. Dennis has played at various area venues: at Keystone Korner with trumpeter Brandon Woody's

band UPENDO and with the Dorseys; at the Walters Gallery with UPENDO; at An die Musik with Robbie Pate and later with the Triple Threat Brass; at Todd Marcus's erstwhile jam session at Home Slyce and at Ward's previous jam session at Tabor Ethiopian restaurant. Pianist Aaron Hill, who also plays in the house band at Terra Café, has this to say about Dennis:

“He has a flair like the young Tony Williams; a modern style like the world-renowned Chris Dave, and a respect for the straight-ahead jazz tradition, and he still appreciates pulling out a pair of brushes and playing on a soft ballad.... He's very mature . . . and also is very humble, yet when he lets out his fiery side, it's pretty amazing—like a phoenix rising!”

Eddie Hrybyk, his last teacher at BSA, says:

“Devron has a natural feel on the drum kit, and he plays with a great sense of time.... He grasps new ideas very quickly, which allows him to listen and react in real time when performing. [Since high school, he has developed] more control and most importantly a sensitive touch so he doesn't overplay. Best of all, he has fun doing it”

And Brian Prechtel writes:

“Devron is an instinctive and exciting drummer, comfortable in a variety of settings from urban to pop, funk and jazz. He possesses the rare gift of always being aware of the musical line and knowing just what touch the drums can provide to support and highlight the music.”

Dennis hopes to go to college, probably at Peabody Institute. He also hopes to form his own band with the Dorseys, playing originals, although he has not yet done much composing himself. Asked to name his favorite styles of music, he answers, “Black American music—jazz, gospel, Afro-Cuban, hip-hop, fusion”—but he loves all kinds of music: each has its own story to tell. If he gets called on a gig, he'll do it, no matter the style. As for his growing success in the jazz scene, he says, “God gave me not the gift of drumming but the gift of hustle and perseverance—a work ethic!” I'm pretty sure that God also gave young Dennis a good deal of natural talent to work with, and the jazz community in Baltimore and beyond is grateful for it.

"I Never think about the audience.

I just think about the band.

And if the band is all right

I know the audience is pleased.

I don't have to hold the audience's hand.

**I think audiences are hipper
than musicians think they are."**

— Miles Davis

Baltimore Jazz Alliance 2021 Year-End Report

By Ian Rashkin, Treasurer, Past President BJA



As 2021 reaches its final days, I'm thrilled to see so much of our treasured jazz scene coming back to life. Venues such as An die Musik and Keystone Korner are in some ways more vibrant than ever, with full schedules of live music that is also live-streamed for those not yet ready or able to return to the scene (I count myself among this group).

Meanwhile restaurants and bars such as Terra Cafe, Marie Louise Bistro, Bertha's, Tagliata, the Elk Room, and many more have resumed music scheduling, and new venues have opened. The new tradition of porch concerts has held strong up until the cold weather, and people have found ever more creative ways to bring live music to the Baltimore area. Of course some of our much-loved venues are still dark—Caton Castle, Jazzway, Germano's, and others, but happily, the tragic effects of COVID-19 on our music scene seem to be receding (hopefully a continuing trend!).

Throughout this season, BJA has continued to do our best to bring live music and information to the jazz community and to Baltimore at large. In fact, it's been a great year for the Alliance aspect of the BJA: We partnered with Bromo Arts District, Eubie Blake Cultural Center, and Current Space to present live jazz in June and in September, with Dance Baltimore and Baltimore Center Stage to present Summer Music Moves, with the Little Italy Madonnari Arts Festival for live music celebrating a new mural off Central Avenue, and with Contemporary Arts Inc. on their Trilogy Part II, Sharing Cultures event in Pikesville. Additionally, we partnered with the RJY Chick Webb Council Inc. and the city of Baltimore in a special Exhibition Committee to help plan the design for the expansion and redesign of the Chick Webb Recreation Center.

We also presented our third annual Baltimore Jazz Conference, and were thrilled to include representatives from SoundExchange, Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA), Capitol Hill Jazz, and Music Workers Alliance, plus great discussions with Aaron Hill, Bertrand Überall and Kenny Dalsheimer, Phil Dorsey, Sean Jones, and Warren Wolf. We are grateful to BOPA for sponsoring this event as part of Free Fall Baltimore, and to all the presenters and attendees who made every session a lively and enriching discussion. If you missed it, you can find recordings of all the presentations on our website.

Finally, our member grants program helped to fund Ed Hrybyk's roving outdoor jam session, as well as debut recordings by Irene Jalentí and Rachel Winder. I'm pleased as well to announce that we were awarded a grant for operating support

from the Creative Baltimore Fund, and have secured grants from BOPA and from Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) for our 2022 Baltimore Jazz Fest. More details will be forthcoming on that event, but we look forward to sharing a great Fathers Day of jazz with you on Juneteenth, June 19th, 2022.

As we move into the new year, we continue to look for new ways to grow and to better serve the Baltimore jazz community. We heard some great ideas from participants at our Jazz Conference, and we are excited to have added three new members to our board this year: Sue Carlin, Anna Celenza, and Tre Barr. We also reached the completion of our officers' terms, and as such, we will be ushering in a new administration with the start of the year.

It has been an honor to serve as president of the BJA for the past 6 years, and I like to think that I did well in that time. Certainly we were able to initiate some new programs, and to develop some new partnerships of which I am proud, and while there is always so much more that we could do, I hope that my leadership has kept us growing and serving to our best ability. But all along it has been with a great team of fellow board directors that we have achieved what we could, and I am pleased to know that there are so many willing to take over the leadership.

In particular, I am thrilled to welcome Tyrone Crawley as the new president of the BJA. Tyrone has been an active board member for several years, and an active volunteer before that, and unlike me, is a native Baltimorean with a deep knowledge of many of the people and places that are so important to the scene. While not a musician himself, Tyrone is an avid listener and supporter, and shares, I believe, a vision of the BJA as a resource for jazz performance, creativity, and education throughout the area.

I am also excited to welcome Jean Farnsworth as vice-president. Jean will continue her duties as secretary as well, but she has stepped forward over the past couple of years to help develop new relationships and opportunities, and I look forward to seeing the continuation of this in her role as VP.

Finally, filling the role of treasurer will be . . . me. It's true, even after eight years on the board, six as president, I just can't stop doing whatever possible to help the organization and the Baltimore jazz scene. So I will still be actively involved, especially in funding and management activities. I want to sincerely thank all my fellow board members, and all the BJA members at large, as well as our partners, who have made me feel welcome over the years and made me feel like I could help. As many of you know, I am a part-time musician and full-time lover of jazz, and again, it has been an honor to be a part of the many efforts we have undertaken together. I look forward to continuing this relationship as treasurer, and to seeing you all in person sometime soon!

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 2016 as its president and continues to serve as its treasurer.

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ADMISSION: \$25 General Admission / \$10 Students with ID

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1:00 PM

**The New Generation – Ephraim & Ebban Dorsey
with special guest Carl Grubbs, saxophonist**



2:30 PM

**Amadou Kouyate, Kora Player
Di Andree Dukes, Drums**



4:00 PM

**Joe Falero Band
Latin Jazz**



5:30 PM

JoGo Project – Jazz and Go-Go



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RIP Jazz Pianist Dawoud Said

By Liz Fixsen and Jesse Powers

Dawoud Said, iconic keyboard player and music engineer, passed away at age 54 on October 25, 2021, from complications of heart disease, from which he had suffered for many years. Dawoud was a longtime keyboardist for the Spice band; he also played with Art Sherrod, 4 the Road, and The Rollex band (wedding band). He toured and performed with a myriad of other bands and music notables. Dawoud Said was especially noted for his keyboard skills while performing with Spice at the popular Club 347 Monday night jam sessions, dating back to 2005. After approximately 3 ½ years there, and with the help of Vic Frierson, future lead vocalist in Spice, the jam session was relocated to The Place Lounge for the next 10 years (thanks to owner, Ann Winder). Said covered keyboard along with bassist Jesse L. Powers, Jr., drummer Johnny Jones, and vocalists Debbie Poole and Vic Frierson. Powers recently shared some of his experiences with the man he calls a “brother.”

“Listening to Dawoud
Said’s *India* is like taking in
fragrance-enhanced fresh air.
Soooo sweeeet . . .”

At the beginning of the jam sessions at Club 347, there was some difficulty filling the keyboard position in what would be a trio—an all too familiar scenario among band leaders. On the opening night of the session, Powers scrambled to find a pianist, and lo and behold, it was Dawoud Said who answered the call. The trio—Dawoud, Jesse and Johnny—then performed for the first time as a group. On that opening night, the owner of Club 347, Ron Persaud, who earlier had envisioned a rotation of musicians in the house band,



quickly declared that after what he’d just heard, the house band would be Spice.

The band would go on to become a fixture in the Baltimore music scene, and played throughout the area, including at Bentley’s and Cookers, Sullivan’s, Ram’s Head, the Horseshoe Casino, Corinthian Lounge, Emerald Tavern, and Blackwall Hitch Annapolis, and more.

According to his bio, Said was born in Baltimore and raised in Washington, DC. He began studying classical piano at age seven and continued classical and jazz studies at Duke Ellington School for the Arts. He began playing professionally at around age 15. In 2004, he released a smooth jazz album titled *India* in 2004, with 13 of the 14 tracks being his original compositions. One user review says: “Listening to Dawoud Said’s *India* is like taking in fragrance-enhanced fresh air. Soooo sweeeet. So mesmerizing. . . . From the first take to the last number, the notes flow fluidly like a running stream, like cool breeze.” Said also expanded his musical talents by mastering both the saxophone and bass, playing all three instruments on his 2015 album, *Mainstream*.

His influences included Stevie Wonder, Herbie Hancock, George Duke, Bob James, Jeff Lorber, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Michel Camilo, and Joe Sample. Said

played with groups such as Walter Beasley, Marion Meadows, Angela Bofill, Najee, John Scofield, Kenny Lattimore, Michael Henderson, Joe McBride, MeShell Indegeocello, The Graingers, Stacey Lattisaw, Marcus Johnson, MSP, Spur of the Moment and a host of others.

As Powers recalls, Said didn’t favor reading music, but he had an incredible memory—“if he heard it,” says Powers, “it would be in his head”—be it jazz, pop, R&B, contemporary. “You name it,” says Powers, “he could play it. Powers also mentioned Said’s “superlative” production skills. “He worked on albums for countless musicians. And he always insisted on his way—because he was so good at what he did.”

They had developed a deep trust musically. There was also a “spiritual connection” between the three band members. Dawoud’s health troubles didn’t make things easy; he was plagued with congestive heart disease for many years, and although he made some lifestyle changes in order to combat the condition, he still had recurring episodes.

As a side note, both Said and Powers were accomplished music engineers, but the Spice band never managed their own recording—“life just got in the way,” as Powers put it. Nevertheless, Dawoud Said was an important part of their mission which was that the jam sessions help bring the Baltimore music community together, and for a period of time, it worked. Throughout the years, Powers and Said were brothers on their musical journey.

Jesse L. Powers, Jr. is an electric six-string bass player who leads the band Spice. As a member of the U.S. army, in the 1970s, he played bass with the unit’s big band, and he continued playing with the army for the next 34 years until his retirement. As a musician, he has toured widely throughout the United States and abroad.

baltimorejazz.com



By Gregory L. Lewis

At the intersection of Pennsylvania and Lafayette Avenues in West Baltimore, there stands an ornamental replica of the marquee of the storied Royal Theatre. A short distance away stands the statue by Black sculptor James Earl Reid (1942-2021) of Baltimore's jazz diva Billie Holiday in a full-throated pose, a half-block away from the Royal Theatre's original location. In October of 1937, a returning Holiday, age 22, triumphantly appeared there with the Count Basie Orchestra.

The faux marquee is more than just an historical marker. It is also a community signboard, sometimes announcing events sponsored by the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District, a non-profit group commonly known as B.A.D. (Black Arts District). One of many such official (involving tax breaks and grants) Arts & Entertainment Districts statewide, B.A.D. is dedicated to the promotion of Black cultural expression in its targeted community, under the able leadership of its executive director, Lady Brion Gill. She's a youthful spoken-word artist acclaimed for her slam poetry.

Another member of the B.A.D. Board of Directors is a familiar figure on the local jazz scene: Todd Marcus, an outstanding bass clarinetist in the post-bop tradition and a longtime community resident. During a recent conversation, Marcus extemporized about the atmospherics surrounding B.A.D. and the Pennsylvania Avenue mystique. "Music is still there," said Marcus, "I mentioned the [B.A.D. sponsored] Legacy Festival because you had a bunch of [talented] artists, one is a colleague of mine named Rachel Winder, a saxophonist, flutist and vocalist."

Old-timers often wax nostalgic about club-hopping among such bygone Pennsylvania Avenue musical hot spots as Club Tijuana, Comedy Club, Club Casino, Sphinx Club, Peyton Place, Avenue Cafe, Red Fox and so on. "What's notable about the Black Arts District with events like the recent Legacy Festival is that, I think, there's a mistaken perception that [the music] is all gone," said Marcus. "It's not. It's still there. It's about providing more settings to showcase what is still happening. You've got a venue like the Arch Social Club that has stuck in there all of these years and occasionally hosts events. The Black Arts District is highlighting things

that are happening and putting on events of its own."

Pennsylvania Avenue's cultural roots run deep. The landmark building with Grecian nymphs adorning a decorative arch that has housed the Arch Social Club since 1972 actually opened for business before the First World War. According to *Flickering Treasures: Rediscovering Baltimore's Forgotten Movie Theatres* (2017), veteran *Baltimore Sun* photographer Amy Davis's informative and picture-filled coffee table book, "Frederick W. Schanze built a theatre for vaudeville and moving pictures next door to his popular pharmacy and soda fountain on North Avenue in 1912. The building's most distinctive feature is the two reclining muses on the pediment. The serene Schanze ladies have surveyed Pennsylvania Avenue ever since."

Noting more recent events, Marcus gave a shout-out to Jim Hamlin, owner of nearby The Avenue Bakery and a stalwart supporter of B.A.D. activities. Its website, theavenuebakery.com, explains Hamlin's mission: "to provide unique products freshly baked here in our community. It is also our mission to support the efforts of the 'Royal Theatre & Community Heritage Corporation' to pass the history and legacy of this great community that contributed so much to both our city and our country." Incidentally, the menu specialty, Pop-pay's rolls, gets rave reviews.

**The landmark building with Grecian nymphs
adorning a decorative arch that has housed the
Arch Social Club since 1972 actually opened for
business before the First World War.**

Both The Arch Social Club and The Avenue Bakery were at ground zero in the 2015 Freddie Gray riots. For Marcus, the turmoil inspired his quintet's high-energy "musical portrait of our community," a CD entitled *On These Streets: A Baltimore Story*.

Dialectically, culture both leads and follows social developments—it evolves. How does B.A.D. envision the artistic future of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor? "I don't think that we can realistically expect to see a re-creation of the past," said Marcus. "Jazz is still significant to us, but there are other styles that are the popular music of the times now, and I think that we're going to see new venues come up but . . . there will be different venues, including jazz."

Donations in support of B.A.D. are tax-deductible and welcomed. Visit the website for information about contributing, signing up for email notifications, as well a schedule of activities: blackartsdistrict.org. In addition, you can look for B.A.D. coming attractions posted on the Royal Theatre marquee.

Gregory L. Lewis is a longtime Baltimore attorney whose jazz reflections frequently appear under the Caton Castle's "show review" tab at catoncastle.com and at reflectionsatsoncastle.blogspot.com



HELLO WORLD! The Two Steps To Get Your Music Out There

By Phil Dorsey

Phil Dorsey, of TheBocX.com, gave a talk at the Oct. 16, 2021 jazz conference sponsored by the Baltimore Jazz Alliance. This article is a condensation of that talk:

You got your latest and greatest down, as perfect as you can get it (it can always be better), and yes, recorded! What I would like to share with you is a simple two-step process to sell and potentially get airplay. Just because the steps are simple to follow doesn't mean you don't have to put effort into it. There are two options: (1) you can do all the work and save some money, all the way up to and including final production, or (2) you can work with an agency and pay them to do all the heavy lifting.

What follows are the steps you can take to move your musical career forward.

FIRST STEP:

If you want to get airplay, you need a way for the listening public to buy your music after hearing it, either individual tracks or an entire album. I'm discussing distributing your music electronically, rather than CD or vinyl. Musical web service companies (I have compiled a list) will help you sell your music for a percentage of the retail sale cost. Beware—most of the money made goes to the distributor.

Each of the do-it-yourself companies (for instance Soundcloud, Tunecore, Bandcamp) have an interface to establish an account and a link to your bank or payment service you use, in order to send you any payments due you. The instructions on how to upload your music files and any album images will usually be sequentially laid out to take you from start to finish.

If you use a do-it-yourself general music website, be sure to state in the first sentence of your promo write-up that you are a jazz musician. I often see on these sites, a long bio of the person—but nothing about the type of music they make.

Unless it looks jazzy, I pass on their music. Most legit radio stations get inundated with music nowadays, and they don't spend much time reviewing every submission.

You must correctly tag all the tracks with your name and track name only. Long file names may be helpful to you, but they don't always display correctly in some online interfaces. This is an example of what you want to avoid: (John Doe_Best Album Ever_Track_5_Song Title _Smooth_version5_NoSax_0200AM_102221)!

After you compile the track(s) you want to promote, have at it!

You should test all the music you upload and verify that it downloads correctly, sounds as expected, and has the complete and correct track information. Put your best tracks first! Also get a friend with a different type of phone model than you have and view the website to see if it displays as you want. Upload it to more than one of the retail sites to get maximum sales and exposure.

SECOND STEP:

Now you want to get your music in the hands of radio stations terrestrial and internet. For example, a site like TheBocX.com has listeners in over 70 countries and charges no fees for submissions. There are options from doing it yourself using various sites (Promobuzz, ipluggers, Internet Broadcaster Alliance) for a variety of pricing tiers and services offered. Or paying a music distribution service to do the heavy lifting for you (for instance Groov Marketing, Jazz Promo Services, Scott Thompson Promotion).

Each agency listed offers various prices, stations served, and processes. Of some of the services mentioned, some may specialize in one sub-genre. For example, look at Gorov Music for smooth jazz; Kari-On Productions for straight-ahead jazz, etc. Some artists use more than one agency / service to maximize their exposure. Most agencies work very hard and are very responsive when working with artists, and stations. Ultimately you decide what works best for you.

If you would like a digital copy of my contacts spreadsheet, email me: djphild@thebocx.com. And best of luck in your musical journey!

Phil Dorsey runs TheBocX.com, a 24/7 Streaming Jazzy Music Station, with "danceable Jazzy, funky, soulful, electronic chill-out music." His day job is working in the Social Security Administration.

For information about digital advertising on the BJA website, visit:

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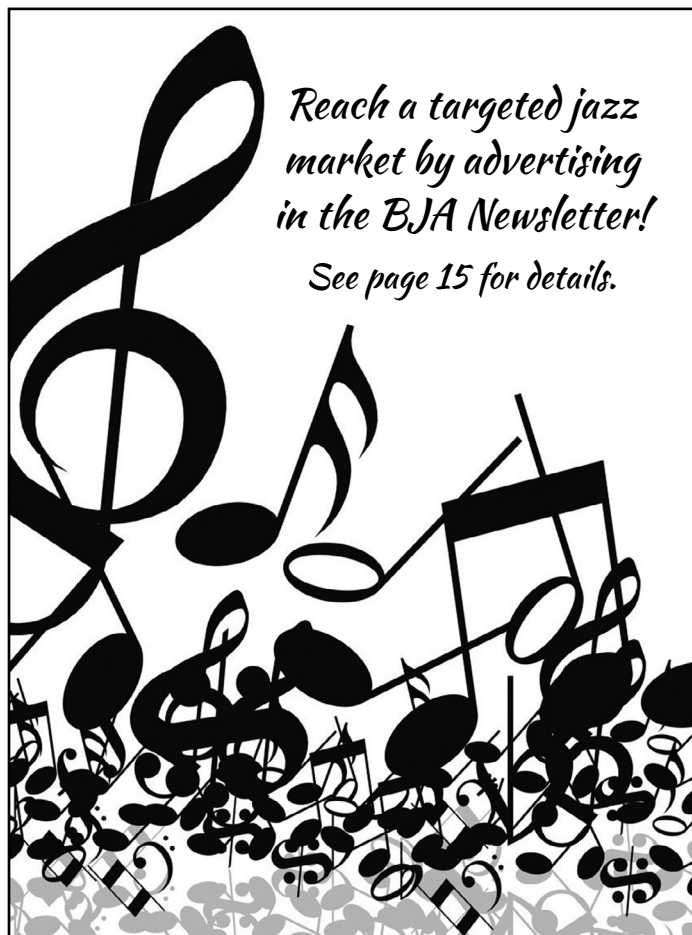


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See page 15 for details.

BJA Member Notes

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Iva Ambush, Tre Barr, Ty Citerman, Rich Dejong, Jocquelyn Down, Kia Higgins, Beverly Johnson, Sean Jones, Danise Jones-Dorsey, Alonzo Joyner, Salima Marriott, Everlon Moulton, Aaron Myers, April Polk, Tina Ruiz, Herb Scott, Lynn Summerall, Laster Wallace, Clarence Ward, Liz Whitted-Dawson

SETH KIBEL

Seth Kibel received was one of 33 winners of the Baltimore County Artists' Relief Grant in the category of Music and Composing.

ALAN BLACKMAN

Alan Blackman was announced First Prize winner in the category of Music and Composing from the Baltimore County Artists' Relief Grant.

WARREN WOLF

Warren Wolf received the second highest number of votes on vibraphone in *DownBeat* magazine's 2021 readers' poll.

News from the Community

- In late October, Brandon Woody and UPENDO performed at Reach for the Stars, Baltimore City's first annual walk to end domestic abuse.
- Former board member Camay Calloway Murphy was profiled in a full-page article in the November 28th *Baltimore Sun*. At 94, she is active in Havre de Grace civic affairs and working on a new book.

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! A number of local venues and businesses offer discounts to BJA members. Our next issue will be distributed at the beginning of January 2022. Visit www.baltimorejazz.com for details. If you have a discount you'd like to offer, Please email us at jazzpalette@gmail.com and let us know what you have to offer.

Like jazz? Like to write?

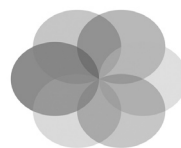
- BJA is always looking for writers for CD reviews, editorials, interviews and more. Our readership reaches a large targeted jazz market and a constantly growing audience, so writing for us guarantees your work will be seen by many human eyeballs.
- Interested writers should contact: lizfixsen@gmail.com



CashForMusic.com

BJA is supported in part by a grant from the Creative Baltimore Fund, a grant program funded by the Mayor's Office and the City of Baltimore.

Thank you!



Mayor Brandon Scott
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*The essentials of jazz are improvisation, invention, swing and instrumental personality.
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BJA has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you for joining! Your membership makes a difference!



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