

# BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

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

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### SAXOPHONIST LIONEL LYLES

#### A Musical Journey

By Aaron Hill and Liz Fixsen

Born in Boulder, Colorado, Lionel Lyles moved with his family to Baltimore when he was two years old.

Other than his mother (who recorded a gospel album with her church choir) Lyles was the first one in his family who took music seriously. His main entrée to music was at Winans Elementary School, where he took a class called Exploratory Music (an introduction to instrumental music). In the fifth grade he joined the school band, where the only instruments offered were clarinet, violin and trumpet. Although his first preference was clarinet, his mother nixed that choice, although she was okay with trombone or saxophone. Lyles opted for saxophone and has never regretted the choice.

While a student at Randallstown High School, participating in a Baltimore County high school band showcase held at Towson University, Lyles heard the Morgan State University Band perform. He was captivated and went on to attend Morgan, where he majored in saxophone. In addition to playing in the jazz band and woodwind ensemble there, he also played trombone in marching band and concert band; even after Morgan, he continued playing trombone from time to time. Lyles recalls how one day, the Morgan band director Melvin Miles (who has retired after nearly 50 years of teaching at Morgan) sat him down and said, "You can't be married to two women; you gotta choose—sax or trombone." "It was a no-brainer for me," says Lyles, and he chose saxophone. In addition to tenor, Lyles plays alto, soprano

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PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK MORELAND

### THURSDAY JAZZ NIGHTS

#### Werner's Diner and Pub

By Sue Carlin

Werner's Diner and Pub opened up earlier this year downtown at 231 E. Redwood Street, replacing the original Werner's, which dated back to 1950. The restaurant sat vacant due to the COVID-19 pandemic until a commercial real estate firm bought the building. It was then sold to Ray Crum, owner of Pete's Grille in Waverly.

When he first saw the place, Crum was impressed by its "quirkiness." "I liked everything about it. It's very Baltimore," Crum said, as Karen Glenn Hood reports in her blog on the website open.maryland.gov. "It reminds me of when I was a kid." The grand re-opening in late January was attended by about 100 people, including city leaders and Mike Gill, Maryland's Secretary of Commerce.

Soon after opening, Crum instituted a Jazz Night, on Thursdays 5 to 8 pm. Bass clarinetist and composer Todd Marcus performed with his quartet on the inaugural Thursday Jazz Night on July 21st. A very enthusiastic and impressed crowd of downtown neighbors showed up and enjoyed the music. Since then, Marcus has curated a line-up

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE CARLIN

Music lovers enjoying Thursday Jazz Nights at Werner's

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.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE CARLIN

## THURSDAY JAZZ NIGHTS

### Werner's Diner and Pub

(continued from front page)

of different bands of area jazz artists every Thursday, and so far, audiences have enjoyed the music of the Carl Grubbs Quartet, the Robert Gilliam Quartet, the Andrea Brachfeld Quartet, the Brent Birkhead Quartet and the Russell Kirk Quartet. Sets are generally 5 to 6:15 pm and 6:45 to 8 pm.

In her description of the venue, Hood writes, "Iconic red neon signs hang prominently on the wall. Photos from movies and TV shows dot the walls. The familiar Art Deco interior—all maple wood and chrome—shine to a high gleam." There is a cozy, retro feel to the place that creates an intimacy between the bands and the diners as listeners.

Since opening, Werner's has added an outside deck with umbrella tables and strings of beautiful lights, contributing to the charm of the 200 block of E. Redwood Street. The restaurant also boasts a full bar and a take-out window. American and Greek menu favorites are available for purchase on various food delivery apps, and Werner's offers a terrific Happy Hour specially priced menu Mondays from 3 to 6 pm and Tuesdays through Saturdays from 3 to 7 pm.

All jazz lovers in the area are encouraged to stop by Werner's not only to enjoy seeing your favorite area musicians, but also to enjoy what this historic diner and charming block of downtown Baltimore has to offer! Be sure to check the Baltimore Jazz Alliance calendar for the latest news and updates.

Sue Carlin is a member of the BJA board and a dedicated fan of jazz. She can be seen out at area clubs at least once a week and often makes trips to Philadelphia and New York City to hear her favorite artists perform. Professionally, Carlin is an executive assistant at Wexford Science and Technology, a firm that works with partners to help create "vibrant knowledge communities" built on principles like discovery and inclusion. Through her love of the music and the people who make it, and her networking know-how, she has helped forge many fruitful connections within the Baltimore jazz community.

## SAXOPHONIST LIONEL LYLES

### A Musical Journey

(continued from front page)

and baritone saxophones.

Asked how playing trombone has affected his saxophone playing, Lyles explains that the trombone opened up the world for him in terms of harmony, tone, and register; tenor sax and trombone are in the same register, and when both are played in an ensemble, they have to learn how to co-exist in the same space.

Lyles graduated from Morgan in 2002 with a degree in music education. During that time, he was performing with the group that became the Lionel Lyles Quintet (LLQ). He then taught in Baltimore City Schools for a year, at private school for a year, and two more years in Prince George's County schools—all while still performing in public. He'd get up early in the morning to teach, and then often go out and play a gig until late at night. Around 2005-06, he decided to devote himself to performing full-time. This was a leap of faith, without the prospect of a steady income; becoming a full-time musician meant continual hustling. In 2006 his quintet recorded its first studio project, *The Lionel Lyles Quintet: The September Sessions*, which was dedicated to the city of Baltimore.

During this time, Lyles began to realize that he needed to further his formal jazz education, and in 2008, he enrolled at North Carolina Central University (NCCU), in a master's program in music and jazz studies/saxophone performance. While there, he studied with several iconic jazz figures, including Joey Calderazzo, Antonio Parker, Delfeayo Marsalis, Jimmy Heath, Roy Hargrove, Vincent Gardner, Wynton Marsalis and Branford Marsalis.

When he began studying with Branford Marsalis, Lyles tried hard not to be starstruck. He described the first encounter: "When Branford walked in the room, he's like 'Hey, what's up?' and I'm like, 'Oh, wow!'" While Marsalis could be laid-back and friendly, he was also a very tough teacher. Lyles recalls one particularly memorable experience in a lesson with Marsalis. Because he had taken six years off between leaving Morgan and starting at N.C. Central, he wasn't quite yet in the swing of things. Marsalis gave him an exercise to do. And when it turned out that Lyles had neglected to do it, Marsalis "lit him up," saying, "You're not gonna waste my time, man! Go 'shed!'" But immediately after that tongue-lashing, Marsalis immediately pivoted to become the friendly, encouraging teacher again.

Lyles talked about the first tune on his 2006 album, *The Night Life*, which was inspired by the beauty of the nighttime cityscape in downtown Baltimore. The melody just came to



PHOTO COURTESY MIKE GENTRY

him, he says, and the next day, he started writing it out. The personnel included Brandon Moultrie (alto), Freddie Dunn (trumpet), Todd Simon (piano), Percy White (bass), and Theus Jones (drums). Lyles lived in Miami a while after recording the album, doing some cruise ship work. Returning to Baltimore in 2015, he "attacked" Washington, DC and was there "every day." He says he was "on fire, musically" and wanted nothing more than just to be playing.

In 2014 the band was able to finally record its long-awaited sophomore studio project, entitled *The Lionel Lyles Quintet: At the Precipice*. A third album, released in 2019, is called *The Lionel Lyles Quintet: Simplistically Complex*. Both albums are available at [www.LLQmusic.com](http://www.LLQmusic.com).

Lyles won several awards given by the *Washington City Paper*—in 2015 a JAZZY award for best jazz tenor—in 2016, Best New Jazz Tenor player and Best Performing Artist across all genres.

A biographical sketch for a 2021 concert at An die Musik reads: "Lionel has always believed that the personal journey for knowledge is an important one, in and out of music; more so, in every walk of life. It is by the acquisition of information that true power and love is achieved. The power of music lies within humanity as a whole and is one of the most beautiful ways to bring us all together—through the music." He ends with an acronym: P.E.A.C.E. (Positive Energy Activates Constant Elevation.) Lyles says that when he heard that acronym, it "changed [his] life" and he tries to live by it every day. Positive energy begins within a person—and is perhaps stronger than we recognize.

This article is written by Liz Fixsen and based on a live interview with Lionel Lyles conducted by Aaron Hill on the Clubhouse app on September 30, 2022. Liz Fixsen is a member of the board of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance. Aaron Hill is a jazz pianist well-known in the Baltimore jazz community.

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## IN THE VALLEY

### Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra

By Jackie Oldham

Todd Marcus is a widely acclaimed Egyptian-American musician, composer, and arranger, raised in New Jersey but long based in Baltimore. As a composer and arranger, he is self-taught. But as a self-taught musician myself, I know that he has music in his blood—and this, along with his early musical training, is credential enough for his amazing composing and arranging skills.

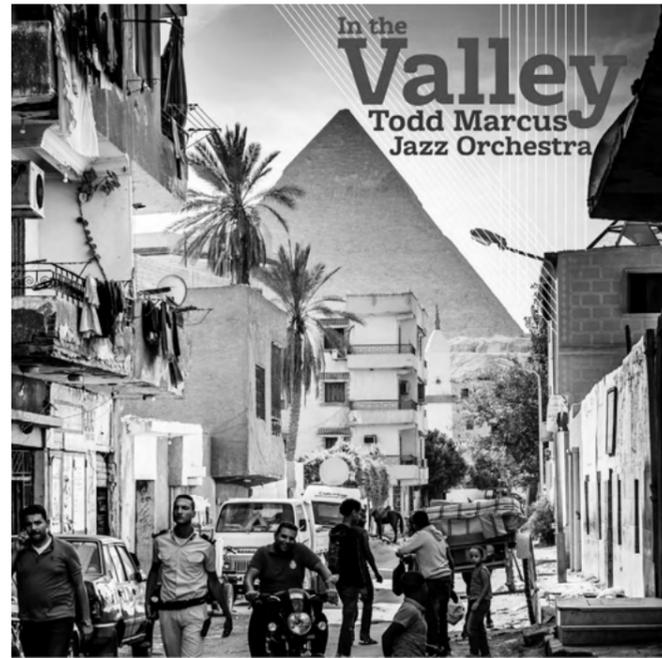
Marcus leads numerous ensembles, from duet and trio to quartet, quintet, and orchestra. In recent years, he has incorporated his Egyptian heritage into his compositions, creating an exotic yet familiar musical language. His ultimate goal for his music is to heal and uplift the human spirit and bring people together. As if that weren't enough, Marcus also heals and uplifts the community he lives in with the non-profit organization Intersection of Change, which addresses poverty-related issues in Baltimore.

I listened to this album "blind," twice—to experience it for myself, and to respond to it as a music lover, without preconceptions or expectations. My first listen was in late August, at 8:30 pm, after a busy day. Seated at my tablet, I found myself jotting down quick notes about the moods and possible meanings of each track. My second listen was on the afternoon of September 14, as background while I did household chores. The feelings I got from my first listen were largely confirmed, but with a greater sense of hope and joy.

After these blind listens, I looked at the album cover and read the liner notes. I was thrilled that my instincts about the album are close to what Marcus intended. The album consists of six tracks: 1: "Horus Intro," 2: "Horus," 3: "The Hive," 4: "Cairo Street Ride," 5: "Final Days," and 6: "In the Valley." On all the tracks, Marcus thematically sets the scene, explores the scene with evocative improvisations, and resets the opening scene.

The orchestral sound of this album is established from the haunting opening notes of "Horus Intro," a piano solo of an upward minor scale, forming the motif of the whole album: G—E-flat—B—C—G-flat—G—A-flat. Referring to the following track --"Horus" -- Marcus explains that "this composition evokes the sounds of classical Middle Eastern music by using sounds modeled after maqams (Middle Eastern scales)," then informs us that Horus is "the ancient Egyptian deity . . . who has the head of a falcon and body of a man" . . . and is currently the logo of Egypt Airlines.

In "The Hive," I heard echoes of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee," but also echoes of Jonny Quest, the 1960s sci-fi/adventure cartoon, whose theme was written by Hoyt Curtin. In that era, television theme songs were more sophisticated than the shows they introduced. Intrigue,



#### ALBUM REVIEW

danger, film noir, jungles, and spies are the images I conjured up while listening. As Marcus notes, "[it is] meant to evoke the feel of modern-day Cairo and its frenetic intensity between the people, traffic (that has no lanes or traffic lights), buildings, and boats on the Nile. . . . Just like a beehive brimming with tons of activity, Cairo has an inner system that is beautiful and amazing."

It is a spirited and spiritual journey through life—  
filled with darkness and light,  
fear, hope, and love, and play.

"Cairo Street Ride" is a bouncy, urban tune that adroitly captures "the streets and chaotic traffic in Cairo today." As I listened, I could feel the stops and starts of the car avoiding obstacles, the engine revving up when traffic cleared, and the cacophony of blaring car horns.

"Final Days" has a mournful, tolling-bells vibe. I felt I was nearing the end of the *physical* trip "In the Valley," saying goodbye to a place of mystery and longing, with questions unanswered, the past and present colliding, a life-altering reckoning. The true depth of emotion in this piece goes far beyond a physical trip. It is, in fact, a dirge for Marcus's father and his New Jersey home, written in the winter of 2016-2017.

The beginning of the final piece, "In the Valley," carries over the mourning theme of "Final Days," but quickly reclaims the hope, beauty, and joy of the journey, much like the passage from Psalms (50:3): "Weeping may endure for a night, / But joy cometh in the morning."

*In the Valley* is not just a musical travelogue of Egypt, or of its ancient and modern history. It is a spirited and spiritual journey through life—filled with darkness and light, fear, hope, and love, and play. In addition, Marcus notes, "[it] also gives a nod to typical music soundtracks commonly used under documentaries about ancient Egypt that strive for a sense of grandeur reflecting the ancient sites." While it is definitely a jazz aficionado's album, it is also an accessible music lover's album.

Jackie Oldham is a Baltimore native who writes essays, poetry, memoirs, and short stories on many topics in her blog, <https://www.baltimoreblackwoman.com>. She has done readings at various Baltimore venues and on radio shows. Her essays have appeared as editorials and letters in the *Baltimore Sun*. She retired from a career as a copy editor, trainer, and team leader for the former Waverly Press and its successors. She is also a musician who loves all kinds of music, including jazz.



Find the **BALTIMORE JAZZ JAMS** at  
[www.baltimorejazz.com/jazz-jams](http://www.baltimorejazz.com/jazz-jams)

## Brandon Woody's Upendo Gives A Stirring Concert



By Jackie Oldham

Sponsored by the Baltimore Jazz Alliance, No Pix After Dark, and Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street as part of its Second Saturdays concert series (June through September), the outdoor show at The Lot, 4500 Harford Road, on August 13th by trumpeter Brandon Woody's band Upendo was a respite to a community hard hit by a severe thunderstorm the prior weekend.

Brandon Woody, a native of East Baltimore, is a 2016 graduate of Baltimore School for the Arts. He is an alumnus of Peabody Preparatory's Tuned-In program and the Brubeck Institute in California, and has studied under saxophonist Craig Alston. With his dazzling talent, he has streaked like a comet across the jazz scene in Baltimore and beyond. Upendo, which means "love" in Swahili, plays in a style that

blends genres, and includes jazz improvisation, hip-hop, and gospel melodies—what Woody calls Black music. The band has played at all major Baltimore venues and has been reviewed in *B'more Arts* and *Capitol Bop*. He was profiled by the late Mitch Mirkin in the Spring 2019 issue of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance newsletter.

As the concert began, the crowd settled into their lawn chairs and onto staked-out blankets on the sawdust-covered open seating area in front of the stage, while noshing on burgers and hotdogs and sipping craft beers, canned wines or soft drinks provided by Zeke's Café, a favorite gathering space for the community. This concert featured all originals by Woody. The first two songs set a relaxed mood, featuring piano and drum playing a slow 4/4 time, before Woody joined in with staccato trumpet in counterpoint. Changing gears, the band shifted to more upbeat tunes with a beat suggesting reggae and go-go, with spectacular solos and call-and-response riffs by saxophonist Robert Gilliam, trumpeter Theljon Allen, and Woody himself, anchored by the steady rhythm section—Troy Long (keyboard), Charlie Powell (guitar), Will Hazel (bass) and Quincy Phillips (drums).

After a solid hour of performing, the band took a break, during which Woody was feted with a birthday cake from local bakery Bramble Baking Co., as the crowd sang him "Happy Birthday." The following set continued the energy begun earlier, causing one sweet little girl to get up in front of the stage and dance with pure joy, until her father scooped her up and carried her aside. I told her father, "She wasn't bothering nobody! She was keeping the beat and enjoying herself!" When I left around 8:30 pm, the music was still growing and so was the crowd!



## BJA Turns Twenty!

By Ian Rashkin  
Treasurer and  
Past President

In 2003 a small group of jazz practitioners and enthusiasts joined together to see how they could help the Baltimore jazz scene better publicize and promote the amazing talent

found in the area. Twenty years on, many of the faces have changed, the goals and accomplishments have evolved, and the scope of the BJA's efforts has grown to include education, presentation, information, and direct investment in our jazz community. But our fundamental reason for being remains the same—we want to help the Baltimore jazz scene thrive in every way that we can.

Over the years we have started this newsletter, launched a website and calendar of jazz events, presented special concerts, released three recordings, sponsored a Youth Jazz Congress and vocal workshop, developed programs for jazz education and outreach, launched a jazz festival and a conference, and much more. Along the way we've developed partnerships and friendships, and advised agencies, organizations, and individuals in how to find great jazz for booking and listening.

As we enter our twentieth year, we continue to build on our vision. In April we'll present our fourth annual Baltimore Jazz Conference, along with some other very special programming. In June, we'll continue to bring you the Baltimore Jazz Fest, and continue to revive our pre-pandemic tradition of BJA member nights, joining together to listen together to some of Baltimore's best live jazz. On top of these, we'll continue to inform, advise, and promote in every way we can, and we'll continue seeking new ways to support our community.

But even as we look forward, we want to celebrate some of the amazing work we've done over the past twenty years. To that end we'll be highlighting some of our past programs in a variety of ways over the coming year. We can't share the details just yet, but watch your email for upcoming announcements on some of the great events we have in store for you.

As an organization, and as a jazz community, it's been an incredibly creative and fruitful couple of decades, and we are excited to keep building our momentum, and to keep our jazz scene growing ever stronger—and we want your help! If you share our passion for our jazz community, we'd love for you to get involved. We can always use volun-

teers—for writing, web development, calendar management, outreach, event planning, fundraising, and much more—and we also welcome new applicants to serve on our board of directors. It's a great chance to make a difference, helping to shape the BJA's support for member projects, and development of our own projects, from Jazz for Kids to Jazz Fest.

If you don't have time to be involved at that level, we can always use your financial support, through your continued membership, donations, and matching funds with your employers. But we also welcome your ideas. You can contact us any time, but also note that our upcoming Jazz Conference will include an all-members meeting where you'll have a chance to share your thoughts—critical or otherwise—with the current leadership, and, we promise, we want to hear from you!

Once again, BJA is thrilled to have had your support for the last twenty years, and we look eagerly forward to the coming year and decade grooving together in Baltimore's amazing jazz community!

Though Ian has returned to his native Los Angeles, he still holds a great love for the amazing musicians, presenters, and audiences of the Baltimore jazz scene, and remains actively involved in planning and executing BJA's mission. He currently performs with the Beach Cities Symphony Orchestra and the Rhythm Roosters jazz and blues band.

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Terry Koger



Skip Grasso



Aaron Hill



Eddie Hrybyk



Kwamé Kenyatta-Bey

## BJA MEMBER NOTES

By Liz Fixsen

Alto saxophonist **TERRY KOGER** was the recipient of the 2022 Annie Awards for Performing Arts. The Annie Awards are presented by the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County. Koger was recognized for his excellence as a teacher at Music and Arts in Hanover. Koger, native of Trenton, New Jersey, graduated from Morgan State University with a degree in music education and completed additional studies at Peabody Conservatory and Columbia College in Chicago. He has taught saxophone, clarinet, oboe and bassoon in the Baltimore/Washington area for over 30 years. He also teaches beginning improvisation. He leads his jazz quintet and works as a sideman with many area musicians.

<https://www.acaac.org/2022-annie-award-winners>

Guitarist **SKIP GRASSO** was awarded a 2022 Pathways to Jazz grant. Since 2014, Pathways To Jazz has been awarding talented musicians' grants to create and record albums with the objectives of supporting musicians, documenting and providing wider exposure to jazz, and helping musicians develop audiences through the creation and distribution of recorded works. Pathways to Jazz is a donor-advised fund of the Boulder County Arts Alliance. Grasso will be using the grant to record, produce, and promote a CD of original music.

<https://pathwaystojazz.com/musicians.php>

Pianist and renaissance man **AARON HILL** has two new projects. One is 5M, a five-part self-care formula. Hill, a certified meditation and mindfulness teacher, teaches students how to use Music, Movement, Meditation, Mindfulness, and Mantras to decrease stress, anxiety, grief, depression, improve sleep, and increase a sense of peace. He is available for workshops at churches, spiritual centers, and corporate environments.

Learn more or sign up at <https://www.5mselfcare.com/>

Hill has also self-published his autobiography, titled *G.E.M.S.*, about his journey to find his gifts and talents, educate himself in and out of school, and learn mindfulness for success. The book leads children in a fun, musically inspired

way to teach them that they are Gifted, Educated, Mindful, and Successful—G.E.M.S. The book includes a digital song, putting the words to a hip-hop/soul rhythm and rhyme.

Learn more or purchase a copy at:

<https://aaronhillsworld.com/product/813159>

**EDDIE HRYBYK**, upright and electric bassist, composer, arranger and educator, was named a 2022 Jazz Hero by the Jazz Journalists Association to recognize his Charm City Porch Concerts and Baltimore Pop-Up Jam Sessions, both free outdoor events that helped to keep jazz alive during the COVID lockdowns—and continue to provide playing opportunities and entertainment for Baltimore's jazz community. Hrybyk's initiative has been recognized by the Kennedy Center, Maryland State Arts Council, Baltimore Office of the Promotion of the Arts, Baltimore Jazz Alliance, Fox45, WJZ-13, WEAA 88.9FM, WMAR-2, *Baltimore Magazine*, WYPR 88.1FM and *Baltimore Fishbowl*, as well as by the people making up his audiences.

<https://www.jjazzawards.org/2022-jazz-hero-ed-hrybyk/>

BJA board member **KWAMÉ KENYATTA-BEY** was elected to the Baltimore City Board of Education. He teaches at Patterson High School.

Liz Fixsen is a long-time jazz fan and a regular presence in the Baltimore jazz scene. She plays jazz piano and also performs occasionally as a jazz vocalist. She edits and writes for the BJA newsletter.



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# The Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival

By Paulina Phillips

Despite a wealth of talented jazz musicians and proven audience, Maryland's capital hasn't hosted a jazz festival since 1996—until now! Once a jazz and rhythm & blues stronghold, the Annapolis area boasted concerts at resorts such as Carr's and Sparrow's beaches; the King of France Tavern in the Maryland Inn was a nationally prominent venue; and St. John's College was home to the Annapolis Jazz Festival. Iconic guitarist Charlie Byrd served as artistic director of that popular event. When he retired, event sponsors (a committee of the Annapolis Symphony) felt they could not continue.

In 2020, Harvey Lewis Stein of H.L.S. Enterprises in Eastport decided to reinstitute a festival dedicated to jazz and appointed me as executive director. As co-founder of Maryland Summer Jazz and director of Jazz Beyond Borders, I had been a volunteer at the earlier jazz festival and was sorry to see it disbanded. Meetings with Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley and cultural leaders showed that the return of an Annapolis jazz festival would be welcome. But before a non-profit was formed or funding provided, the pandemic struck. All activity came to a halt.

One year later, without an office, staff or financial backing, I decided to pursue the dream, aided by fellow Anne Arundel County resident Theresa Sise, whom I had met while volunteering for BJA. An advisory board was formed, an artistic director consulted, and the festival took shape under the umbrella of non-profit organization U Empower of Maryland. The mission: to create the Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival with the goal of matching cultural diversity with artistic excellence to serve a broad audience. With venues lined up and funding sources identified, grant writing began in earnest.

In November, 2022 the festival was launched. Annapolis reclaimed much of its musical heritage in two weekends of events for adults and families from November 4th to the 15th. Some offerings were ticketed, but most were free. Inaugural year



PHOTO COURTESY OF AJRF

The Juanito Pascual Trio performed flamenco jazz, pop & rock at Eastport United Methodist Church

events were held at four sites in Eastport, the "Left Bank" of Annapolis, featuring world class international and regional artists.

Opening night kicked off with Hot Club of Baltimore led by acclaimed guitarist and composer Michael Joseph Harris. Presented at the historic Black social club Peerless Rens, his program took listeners back to vintage Paris in 1939 when Django Reinhardt met Duke Ellington for the first time. The next morning, historian and author Vince Leggett lectured about Black-owned resorts in greater Annapolis that brought international entertainers to the area in the years of segregation. Highlights of the second weekend included a New Orleans concert featuring Renée Collins Georges at Eastport United Methodist Church, a klezmer concert led by guitarist Kris Belgica at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and a performance by the internationally known Juanito Pascual Trio. Festival organizers were delighted to see BJA President Tyrone Crawley in the audience.

Advisory board members contributed long hours. Besides Theresa and myself, they included Ruby Singleton Blakeney, Michael Buckley, Jefferson Holland, Todd Powell, Richard Rausch, Ella Sztuk and Mark and Teri Wade. The Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival gratefully acknowledges support from Annapolis Art in Public Places Commission, Anne Arundel County Public Library & Foundation, Arts Council of AAC, Maryland State Arts Council, Visit Annapolis & AAC and Visit Maryland. Venues and presenting partners Alkebulan and Jazz Beyond Borders were important contributors and Gail Marten at Jazz Palette created the website in record time. To learn more, visit: <https://www.annapolisjazzandrootsfestival.com>

Paula "Paulina" Phillips is a lifelong arts administrator and writer. She has produced festivals and performance series as well as cultural segments for radio and television. Phillips has written hundreds of arts and lifestyle articles published in magazines, newspapers and newsletters.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AJRF

A crowd gathered at Annapolis Neck Library for Vince Leggett's lecture on "Historic Beach Venues of Greater Annapolis."

## PEABODY 2022-23 CONCERT SEASON



Peabody's **FREE** in-person and online performance season continues this spring with programs from classical to contemporary, from jazz to dance.

Find your favorites at [peabody.jhu.edu/events](https://peabody.jhu.edu/events).

### Peabody Jazz Combos

March 3 • 7:30 PM  
March 4 • 7:30 PM  
Off Campus TBD, Baltimore

### Peabody Jazz Ensemble

March 9 • 7:30 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall

### New Orleans Jazz Ensemble

April 13 • 7:30 PM  
Miriam A. Friedberg Concert Hall

### Friday Noon:30 | Jazz

April 21 • 12:30 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall

### Peabody Jazz Ensemble

April 22 • 7:30 PM  
Miriam A. Friedberg Concert Hall

### Peabody Super Sax Ensemble

April 25 • 7:30 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall

### Warren Wolf, vibraphone Alex Brown, piano

*Sylvia Adalman Faculty Recital Series*  
May 1 • 7:30 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall

### Peabody Jazz Combos

May 5 • 7:30 PM  
May 7 • 3:00 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall

### Pan-American Jazz Ensemble

May 10 • 7:30 PM  
Joe Byrd Hall





PHOTO CREDIT: THE VINYL FACTORY

## Don't Bogart That Joint

By Gregory L. Lewis

Now that Maryland voters have legalized recreational marijuana, it seems propitious to take a look back at the historical pot prohibition and its impact on the jazz community.

While the smoke-filled rooms of nightclubs in twentieth-century cities like New Orleans, Chicago and New York shaped the contours of jazz, America's only indigenous art form, the furtive backroom smoke of cannabis became a disconcerting presence.

Although Thomas Edison patented the phonograph in 1878, its commercial viability awaited a popular music that was to arrive a generation later, courtesy of rhythmic innovations such as the ragtime of Scott Joplin (1868-1917) and the blues of W.C. Handy (1873-1958). Out of this primordial mix of African beats and European scales emerged a Prometheus—Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong, who metaphorically stole a heavenly trumpet from the music gods and gave it to men. Jazz was born.

Marijuana use became a common, if hidden, part of this jazz milieu. The general public might never have known that Satchmo and other high-profile jazz musicians smoked cannabis if it had not been for Armstrong's very public trial. In *Louis: The Louis Armstrong Story, 1900-1971* (1971), Max Jones and John Chilton give a cultural context for Armstrong's 1931 arrest and conviction for marijuana possession: “Tea, muggles, reefers, and a dozen more names for marijuana were common parlance among jazz musicians and friends who were ‘vipers.’ This word has a period ring today, but was much used (as was the tea) in some jazz circles during the 30s.”

Moreover, Satchmo made an unrepentant confession to his biographers: “We did call ourselves Vipers, which could have been anybody from all walks of life that smoked and respected gage. That was our cute little name for marijuana, and it was a misdemeanor in those days. Much different from the pressure and charges the law lays on a guy who smokes pot—a later name for the same thing.”

Bluntly speaking, prejudices animate the law. With the moral crusade apparatus attending the noisy, failed attempt at alcohol prohibition already set up, a shift from demon rum to demon pot took place. Two events signaled the change: *Reefer Madness*, Hollywood's 1936 anti-marijuana propaganda film, and the ascendancy of Harry Anslinger, a J. Edgar Hoover look-alike who masterminded the formation of the old Federal Bureau of Narcotics. He led that agency's anti-pot inquisition for decades.

“Since the early 1930s,” Martin Torgoff's *Bop Apocalypse: Jazz, Race, the Beats & Drugs* (2016) informs us, “Anslinger has directed the Narcotics Bureau to keep a file on jazz musicians that would come to be known as the ‘Marijuana and Musicians’ file.” Torgoff continues, “Anslinger considered it his personal mission to go after musicians, dreaming of a large-scale national roundup of ‘teahound’ jazz musicians that would result in stiff prison sentences and a windfall of publicity.” Torgoff continues, “In addition to Louis Armstrong, the file came to include the likes of Les Brown, Thelonious Monk, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Dorsey, Lionel Hampton, Billie Holiday and many others.”

Surely, Anslinger must have noticed Mezz Mezzrow (1899-1972), a curious figure in jazz history. He played a Dixieland-style clarinet and collaborated with the meteoric cornet sensation Bix Beiderbecke (1903-1931), as well as with other Chicago devotees of the seminal New Orleans Rhythm Kings.

In his autobiography, *Really the Blues* (1946), Mezzrow reveals the camouflage whereby he deflected prying eyes because he was also a notorious Harlem cannabis merchant. He spoke in a mysterious hipster patois, a slang that referred to the likes of Mezzrow as “gray”: that is, a white guy who



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identifies as black.

As with many subcultures, the use of marijuana engendered its own lexicon of slang. Imagine Anslinger, the priggish “knocker,” attempting to make sense of Mezzrow's following biographical passage:

Second Cat: *Hey Mezzie, lay some of that hard-cuttin' mess on me. I'm short a deuce of blips but I'll straighten you later.*

Me: *Righteous gizz, you're a poor boy but a good boy—now don't come up crummy.*

Second Cat: *Never no crummy, chummy. I'm gonna lay a drape under the trey of knockers for Tenth Street and I'll be on the scene wearing the green.*

Translation:

Second Cat: *Hello Mezz, give me some of that marijuana that makes all the others look silly. I'm short ten cents but I'll pay you later.*

Me: *O.K., gizzard, you're poor but you're honest—now don't disappoint me. [Gizzard has a subtle overtone here: a gizzard is stuffed, and “stuff” means jive or kidding in hip*

talk, so the implication is: don't kid me, make sure that you pay me.]

Second Cat: *I never lie, friend. I'm going to bring a suit to the pawnshop to raise ten dollars, and I'll show up with some money.*

By legalizing recreational marijuana—a sea change—Maryland voters have defanged the officious Harry Anslingers among us. The permissive pot vote emphatically affirmed philosopher David Hume's skeptical moral maxim: “Is” does not imply “ought.” That is, just because marijuana WAS illegal, it didn't follow that it SHOULD be illegal. A new social experiment begins. Will legalized pot have a positive impact on a disjointed, so to speak, 21st century jazz scene? High hopes abound.

Gregory L. Lewis is a longtime Baltimore attorney whose jazz reflections frequently appear under the Caton Castle's “show review” tab at [catoncastle.com](http://catoncastle.com) and he blogs at [reflectionscatoncastle.blogspot.com](http://reflectionscatoncastle.blogspot.com).

“I apprehended the structure of certain pieces of jazz and classical music in a new manner under the influence of marijuana, and these apprehensions have remained valid in years of normal consciousness.”

– Allen Ginsberg

## PHOTOGRAPHER EFRAIN RIBEIRO

# Documenting Baltimore's Jazz Artists History and Future

By Sue Carlin

I MET WITH EFRAIN RIBEIRO virtually this past week and was greatly impressed with his dedication to photographing and documenting the Baltimore-area jazz artists and scene. If you are a jazz musician or fan, you have probably seen Ribeiro with his camera at the various jazz venues around town.

Ribeiro first became interested in photography in the late 1960s while in high school when he saw the family photography of his uncle in Lima, Peru. He started out shooting 35mm black-and-white and color slides and 16mm film. Two of the venues where he started photographing jazz concerts were the Left Bank Jazz Society and DC Space in Washington. While attending Johns Hopkins, majoring in English, and participating in creative writing and filmmaking, Ribeiro became immersed in avant-garde jazz artists of the day, such as Ornette Coleman, Art Ensemble of Chicago and Julius Hemphill. He managed to combine his jazz interests and photography whenever possible and has continued to take many photographs through his international travel during his forty-five-year career working in global market research.

Ribeiro elaborated on some of the differences between shooting with a 35mm film camera and shooting with a digital camera. With film, costs are much higher (one must purchase film) and the post-processing in the darkroom can be cumbersome. With a digital format, he can take many more shots and experiment with framing and composition without raising his costs. He has developed his own techniques for shooting in low light and also enjoys experimenting with infrared photography. With his experience, he can utilize his own customized pre-sets and templates to apply to his photographs and achieve a unique look. He explains that, as a photographer, you want to look at everything that you shoot as soon as possible so you can understand the setting and apply any alterations to improve your images. This is something that he can now do regularly, since he has retired. Digital photography also provides the unique opportunities to review your output with the many excellent tools available, such as Lightroom, Nik 2, and Photoshop.

Ribeiro has a flexible approach to documenting concerts and enjoys adapting his techniques to the various venues where he works. He adjusts for the challenging and irregular lighting of each setting and determines how much mobility he will have without disturbing the performance or the audience. His experience is evident in his vivid photographs.

I asked Ribeiro which events he enjoys the most, and he mentioned most of the venues in the area, but gave a special shout-out to the The Session, a Monday night jazz jam at R House hosted by Clarence Ward III and Rufus Roundtree. Musicians from all over the Baltimore/DC area show up for



PHOTO COURTESY OF EFRAIN RIBEIRO

Efrain Ribeiro setting up a shot at the Monday night jazz jam hosted by Clarence Ward III and Rufus Roundtree at R House .

The Session and provide an opportunity for Ribeiro's uniquely expressive photographs. Ribeiro mentioned that he really likes photographing Ward, whose dynamic personality is always on display. I also asked if there is a venue in the area he has yet to visit, and he mentioned the Caton Castle and Werner's Diner and Pub.

Other artists Ribeiro photographs regularly are Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey: he has taken over a thousand photos of the Dorseys and makes them available to the siblings. His intent is to help musicians highlight their unique and special talents and thereby promote the jazz music he loves, and in turn document the contemporary history of Baltimore's jazz musicians.

We talked about what it was like during the past couple years with the COVID pandemic. Ribeiro attended four to five concerts a week in the pre-pandemic days, and once the pandemic shut down live indoor concerts, he started participating in the livestream concerts at An die Musik, where he has been photographing both local and international talent. Starved for live jazz, he has attended Eddie Hrybyk's park pop-up jam sessions from the beginning. He estimates that he has photographed about 40-50 of those events. He also contributed some of the photographic images for Todd Marcus's latest album, *In the Valley*, and for the Baltimore Jazz Collective's studio sessions.

Efrain Ribeiro is showing his appreciation for Baltimore jazz musicians with open ears and eyes. He is giving back to the community by providing photography services to area artists at no cost and expanding Baltimore's jazz scene to the world with his photography.

Enjoy some of Ribeiro's work seen in this article in this BmoreArt article. <https://bmoreart.com/2022/07/efrain-ribeiros-jazz-photography.html>



IMAGE COURTESY OF KRIS FUNN

## Baltimore Playlist

By Anna Celenza

This month, I reached out to a few jazz fans and practitioners in the greater Baltimore region and posed a simple question: When you hear the words "Baltimore jazz," what tune and/or performance comes to mind first? The answers were varied. Some respondents reached back into the city's music history for an answer. Others chose music that might serve as a soundtrack for the Baltimore they know. Still others latched onto the question as the opportunity to give a shout-out to a favorite local musician. Below are a few of the answers I received. I've expanded each response with some extra details about its connection to Baltimore's jazz scene, both past and present. For those of you who would like to listen to the music, you can access the playlist on the BJA website.

Henry Wong, proprietor of An die Musik, said: "I always think of Nina Simone's "Baltimore" when I am asked by others about jazz in the city. I am sure it is a silly answer, but it's the first thing that comes to mind."

"Baltimore" isn't a silly answer; it's a great song! Composed by Randy Newman in 1977, "Baltimore" speaks to the city's problems, both then and now. Simone recorded the tune with a funky reggae/strings accompaniment in 1978, and ever since, it has served as a testament to the city's struggles. Simone never lived in Baltimore, but the song captured a mood felt across the country. As Simone declares: "Oh, Baltimore, ain't it hard just to live."

Hannah Mayer, a junior in the jazz program at Peabody Conservatory, responded without hesitation: "To Wisdom the Prize" by Larry Willis. The Nat Adderley Quintet (with Willis on piano) was the first to record the tune, in 1982, at Keystone Korner, when it was based in San Francisco. But the preferable recording, and the one included on our playlist, was recorded by Willis's own quintet in 1990. Willis eventually became connected to Baltimore. Late in life, he moved to the

city, where he continued to inspire musicians young and old. Warren Wolf, a member of the jazz faculty at Peabody, once reflected, in *DownBeat* magazine, on Willis's impact: "Mentorship is the best thing that describes him," said Wolf. "He was all about playing with the younger generation and giving them a chance to succeed in this music. In Baltimore, there's a lot of young musicians who need guidance. To have a legend like Larry living in the heart of the city was such a huge, positive thing. You could learn a lot just being around someone like him."

Cyrus Mackey, another Peabody student and leader of the group Kenyatta, responded to my query via text message: "I think of 'Moanin',' particularly Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers playing it. The city has something of a rustic undertone. I'm always reminded of the soulful subtleties. The city just reminds me of the blues. That story that it tells." Back in the 1970s and '80s, "Moanin'" could be heard almost annually, when the Left Bank Jazz Society hosted Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers at the Famous Ballroom, a music hall in downtown Baltimore.

Tyrone Crawley, president of BJA, named Eddie Harris and Les McCann's performance of the protest song, "Compared to What," as the central tune in his Baltimore soundtrack. Like Art Blakey, McCann and Harris performed regularly at the Famous Ballroom. When the song was composed by Gene McDaniels, it was intended as a rant against the Vietnam War and President Lyndon Johnson. Listening to the performance by Harris and McCann reveals that the music is as relevant today as it was in 1969.

Sue Carlin, another member of the BJA board, tapped into Baltimore's current jazz scene. She responded to my query with a shout-out for Kris Funn, an extraordinary hometown talent who has made his mark on contemporary jazz as a bass player, band leader, composer and Peabody faculty member. "Gemini," from Funn's concept album *Cornerstore*, rounds out our Baltimore playlist. As Funn explains, *Cornerstore* tells "the story of a kid growing up in the '80s in West Baltimore set to the backdrop of sibling rivalry, a father's passion for music, a mother's guidance and a quest for finding oneself." It's a story of the city told by someone who really knows it.

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.

If you have a tune you would like us to add to our Baltimore Playlist, reach out to Anna Celenza [annacelenza@mac.com](mailto:annacelenza@mac.com). Let's keep the music playing!

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- **Eubie Live!** at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center at 847 N. Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.
- **Keystone Korner Baltimore** offers \$5 on all tickets to BJA members, for tickets bought at the door (no online discount).

## Community News

Kudos to pianist Alan Blackman, recipient of a 2022 grant from the MAP Fund for *Once Upon a Prairie*, a multimedia exploration of the loss and renewal of the American grasslands told through projected images and a musical fusion of Americana and jazz.

<https://mapfund.org/grantees2022/>

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