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8th Annual Jazz Festival: Memoirs of a First-Time Festival Volunteer

By Paul Tincknell

March 16, 2006 – I'm walking through the door of the Alliance Medical Center in Healdsburg for my first meeting after volunteering for the Healdsburg Jazz Festival. There are many people seated around the tables in the room. A few minutes after I enter in comes Jessica Felix, artistic director of the Healdsburg Jazz Festival. Her obvious glee over a new volunteer is genuine. The meeting immediately dispatches the notion I had of only ushering a couple of shows. No, there is work to do. It is clear that all hands present are needed, including mine.

This meeting is also the first glimpse of the finalized lineup for the 2006 Healdsburg Jazz Festival. The freshly printed festival program is passed around for all to drool over. And drool we do – McCoy Tyner, Charlie Haden Quartet West, Mark Murphy, Louie Bellson, The Heath Brothers. Those five acts alone account for such an amazingly broad swath of jazz styles and history as to be almost a précis for a college course on jazz. Add in Marc Cary, Bruce Forman, Billy Hart, John Heard, Julian Lage, Shea Breaux Wells, Rebecca Mauleon, Stephanie Ozer, Mad and Eddie Duran ... and you added extra credit with the best regional and area jazz musicians working today.

If you even *like* music – much less have a thing for jazz – this was NOT the festival to skip. Man, we were likely to see music history have a few pages written right here in humble Healdsburg, and I had just stepped right into it. So began one of the most fun jobs I've had in a long, long while.

April 20 – Alliance Medical Center again, 11 days before the Festival starts. A buzz is making the full room hum. How can something so seamless on the outside be so complicated? But conversations over umbrellas, tickets, chairs, water, parking, merchandise, credit card processing, staffing, media, PR, lodging, transportation, venues, sound equipment ... go on and on.



Photo: George Wells

June 1 – Festival Gala with Louie Bellson

Mary Furth Center – The Festival kicks off with Louie Bellson and the Musicians' Warehouse Big Band at the new Mary Furth Center. The hall is decked out beautifully. Bidding on the live and silent auctions raises over \$20,000 for the jazz education programs! After dinner the Musicians' Warehouse Big Band takes to the stage for an intro warm-up, but breaths are held as the elderly Louie sits down at his kit. Yet as his hand first strikes the high hat it is with the same zip

and precision he was renowned for during his days with the Duke. The lights are flicked off, a spot hits the mirror ball and people pour onto the dance floor – it is 1949 all over again. The evening peaks when the students of the Healdsburg High School Jazz Band crowd on to the stage for the chance of a lifetime to play along with the pros and Mr. Bellson. "Gala" is too small of a word for the evening.

Continued

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Jimmy DeMartini Jessica Felix Circe Sher Pat Templin

Give a Song to their Hearts—a HJF Membership

This holiday season the choice is easy for those jazz lovers on your gift list – give a membership in the Healdsburg Jazz Festival to your friends and family. Membership is a way for jazz aficionados to support the art form of their hearts, preserving our cultural heritage, and providing opportunities for new and regional musicians to perform professionally – as well as all the stars we invite year after year! Membership dollars support the annual Healdsburg Jazz Festival and the organization’s ongoing jazz education programs for area children. Jazz fans know there is no higher calling than nurturing and supporting live jazz... so give them a gift that can be appreciated all year! See the Membership page (on the back of this newsletter) for Member levels and benefits, and a form for joining today. You can also sign up online.

June 2–3 – Barndiva Concerts

Barndiva Restaurant – The next two nights have the Bruce Forman Quartet on Friday and the Marc Cary Focus Trio on Saturday – both sold out. Though I couldn’t be there I hear through the grapevine major kudos for both nights.

June 4 – Jazz Night at the Movies

Raven Theater – I join the happy crowd this warm evening entering the darkened theater. Soon shorts of Duke Ellington, Louie Bellson, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, and more flicker across the silver screen... *some never before seen by the public*. Some of the clips are grainy, some are laughable, and all are wondrous. Mr. Cantor chats with us like he is showing old family movies.

June 6 – Rebecca Mauleon Sextet

Healdsburg Plaza – Tacuma King’s percussion and dance students are the opening act for a free concert in the Healdsburg. I set up chairs for the kids, help unload percussion, and corral kids as they show up. On cue the kids in procession march to their seats and drum. Afterwards the Rebecca Mauleon Sextet fire up the afternoon with spicy Latin jazz that just cooks. The plaza is practically standing room only, and an area in front of the stage is filled with dancers. Throughout, people are enjoying picnics and wine on the grass.



Photo: George Wells

June 8 – Shea Breaux Wells

Flying Goat Coffee – I’m ushering for Shea Breaux Wells. After everyone is seated, Noam Lemish (piano), David Ewell (bass), and Alex Aspinall (drums) gently start as a trio playing a lilting piece that is almost Evans-esque. Shea comes in on the second number, joined by trumpeter Bill Ortiz, her voice clear, true, and with a timeless husky nuance that adds a nostalgic overtone. Her choice of songs ranges from modern non-jazz to jazz classics. Healdsburg is blessed to have the up-and-coming songstress live here.

June 9 – Heath Brothers Tribute to Percy Heath

Raven Theater – Family obligations intervened tonight so I had to skip going to the Heath Brothers *sigh*. Reports (*of which we have Glen Alpert’s – see below*) rave about the night.

AN EVENING OF BROTHERLY JAZZ

by Glen Alpert

The Heath Brothers, one of the royal families of jazz, came to the Healdsburg Jazz Festival for the first time in 2001. They made beautiful music and personally charmed all who came in contact with them. This year two of the brothers, Jimmy and “Tootie”, returned with the band to celebrate the life of Percy Heath. Their beloved elder brother, best known for anchoring the bass chair in the Modern Jazz Quartet for 4 decades, died last year.

A special treat before the Heath Brothers concert on Friday, June 9th, was the premiere “Brotherly Jazz”. Director Jesse Block captured on film the Heaths and their remarkable



Photo: George Wells

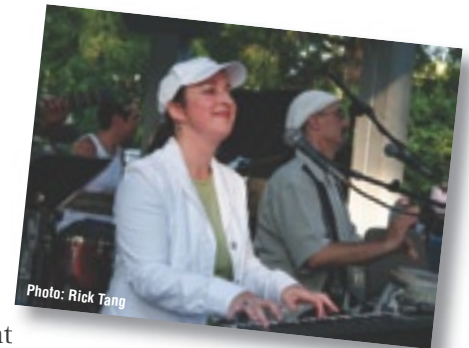


Photo: Rick Tang

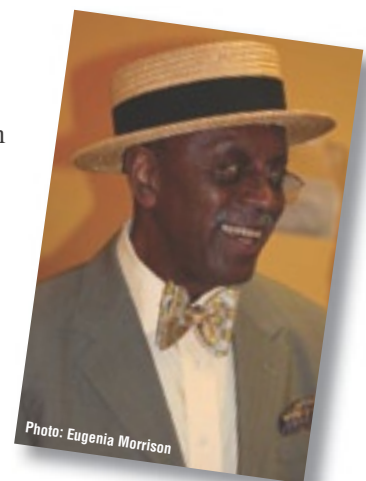


Photo: Eugenia Morrison

Continued

THE SUNDAY JAZZ SERIES



Dave Ellis Quartet

SUNDAY, NOV 19TH 7 TO 9 PM

Dave Ellis
saxophones

Art Khu
piano

Aaron Germain
bass

Al Marshall
drums

“A fixture on the San Francisco Bay-area jazz scene, Dave Ellis is a polished player, whose sound and style, as Orin Keepnews notes, brings to mind a number of saxmen, past and present. It is this seamless combination of older (re: swing and be-bop) and contemporary (post-bop and a touch of avant) styles that makes Dave Ellis so appealing.”

Post Gazette, Philadelphia

“Dave Ellis may have blown outside the jazz mainstream during his stints with Charlie Hunter and various Grateful Dead offspring, but on his own – and particularly on “*State of Mind*”, his third solo CD and his second with veteran heavyweight producer Orrin Keepnews – the Berkeley saxophonist displays sure footing in the straight-ahead tradition.”

SF Bay Guardian

Lobby of the Hotel Healdsburg | 25 Matheson Street | 707/431-2800
Two sets, starting at 7pm | One drink minimum per set

Festival Members wine coupons will be accepted at this show

Kenny Washington Quartet

SUNDAY, JAN 21ST 7 TO 9 PM



If you have never heard this New Orleans native sing before, get ready for a jaw dropping experience. Kenny is a jazz vocalist virtuoso, emulating the classic styles of Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughn and infusing colors of Stevie Wonder, Al Green and Donny Hathaway. Kenny’s free playful approach, with over a four-octave range is awe inspiring. His tone on ballads is so liquid; his scat is rapid-fire, passionate, melodious and inventive that it invariably leaves his audience in a state of great emotional arousal.

“Onstage, Kenny Washington is the Superman of the Bay Area jazz scene, a vocalist with an exuberantly supple tenor that glides effortlessly into the stratosphere. Capable of astounding improvisational flights with an emotional intensity that’s bracing.”

ANDREW GILBERT, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Lobby of the Hotel Healdsburg | 25 Matheson Street | 707/431-2800
Two sets, starting at 7pm | One drink minimum per set

Festival Members wine coupons will be accepted at this show

breadth and depth in music. It was particularly poignant to see the funny, intelligent, and sweet Percy Heath.

The true celebration was in the musical performance. Certainly inspired by love for Percy, the band played a tremendous set of modern bop-oriented jazz. Jeb Patton, pianist with the band since 1998, and Joe Sanders on bass were each excellent in support and solo. Tootie Heath is one of the finest drummers alive. However, to me, the revelation was Jimmy Heath, soon to turn eighty years old. His sound and dexterity on tenor sax was breathtaking. He combined the vitality of youth with the wisdom of a master. Percy must have been smiling in jazz heaven.

June 10 – Mark Murphy

Quivira Winery – 20 years ago, when I tended bar at a small jazz club in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Mark Murphy performed some weekends that packed



Photo: George Wells

the place to standing room only. How fitting that here I was again working for Mr. Murphy. I had expected the intimacy of the small club to be missing, but Mark connects with a style that is very personal; each performance is one-of-a-kind, never repeated. His scat is like Sinatra channeling Coltrane; vocal turns and phrases surprise yet swing. Hearing Mark among the vineyards in sunny Dry Creek Valley is truly memorable.

June 10 – Charlie Haden Quartet West

Raven Theater – Tonight, one of the most mercurial legends of jazz takes to the stage: Charlie Haden. The bass player has been the unassuming anchor for almost every noted jazz musician recording today. Ornette Coleman, Hank Jones, Keith Jarrett, Paul Motian, Dewey Redman, Carla Bley, Pat Metheny... from free jazz to spirituals, this double bassist has added more than most to the modern lexicon of today's jazz.

Onstage, the Quartet West – Alan Broadbent on piano, Ernie Watts on saxophone, Charlie Haden on bass, and local favorite and legend Billy Hart on drums - is the epitome of seamless post-bop jazz infused with lush, thematic movements. The music is elegant in a way like a jazz “chamber orchestra”. In between pieces, Mr. Haden modestly notes the songs, introduces his companions, and self-effacingly receives a standing ovation.

Continued



Photo: George Wells

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June 11 – McCoy Tyner Trio and Billy Hart Trio with Julian Lage & Santi Debriano

Rodney Strong Vineyards – The finale of the 2006 Festival: McCoy Tyner. It is a gorgeous summer day in wine country. The lawn at Rodney Strong Vineyards is filled with blankets and lawn chairs, with people pulling out light picnics. The opening act is again Festival favorite Billy Hart with local hero Julian Lage on guitar plus Santi Debriano on bass. The trio plays pieces that adorn the dazzling afternoon, from intricate interpretations of standards to original compositions from each band member.

The man who defined post-bop jazz piano alongside Coltrane takes to the stage. When McCoy Tyner puts his fingers to the piano keys the sound is magnificent. There is a classical-music overtone to McCoy's playing that is positively graceful, but his lightness of touch makes it dance. In piece after piece his explorations in the past are now the touchstones of the music played today. We are witnessing something truly special, right here in small town Healdsburg. The music, the wine, the beautiful day, the music... it is all so perfect as to be almost dreamlike.

I will be here again next year as volunteer, working hard to bring more extraordinary music for us all to enjoy to our little town out here in wine country. And if you see a Festival volunteer form, give it some thought. Hard work, yes. But fun, yes. Great music – YES!



Photo: Rick Tang



Photo: Rick Tang

HJF instead of IRS

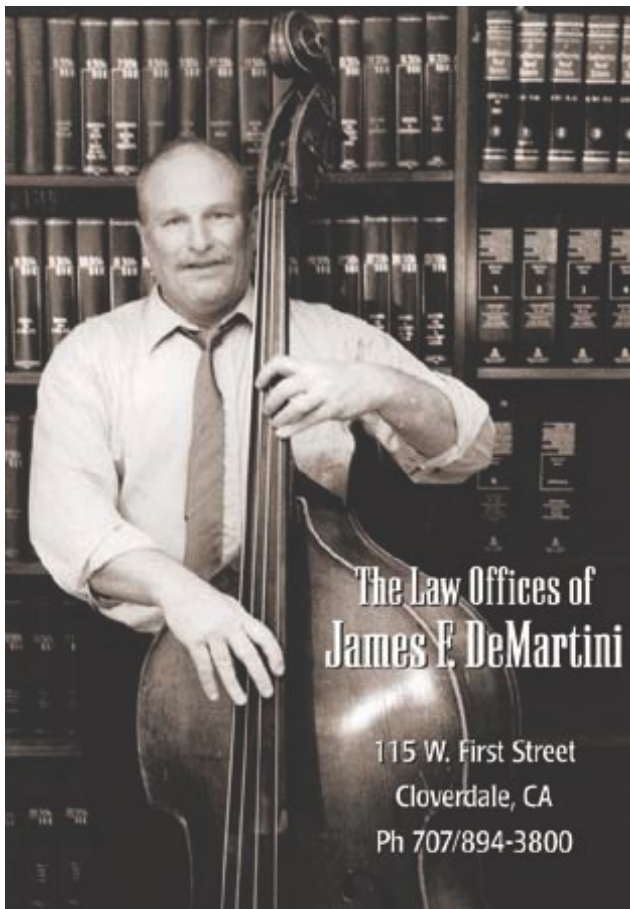
YEAR-END DONATIONS - Our generous sponsors provide the much of the funding for the annual Healdsburg Jazz Festival, but year-end charitable contributions by individuals can help us a great deal. The Healdsburg Jazz Festival needs steady funding to continue to bring in the high quality of jazz artists for each year's concerts, and maintain our jazz education programs. Year-end charitable donations often help us make ends meet and put on a world-class Festival. If you are considering your options for charitable donations this year's end, please consider us. Your generosity helps nurture and support America's music, jazz, right here in our community. The Healdsburg Jazz Festival, Inc., is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

Bookkeeper Needed !

We are looking for a volunteer
bookkeeper to manage our books.

Please contact us if you or someone
you know might be interested.

707 433-4633 or
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Miles In The Sky

MILEAGE DONATIONS - One of the biggest ticket items we have financially is bringing musicians from all over the country to come perform in Healdsburg. Your frequent flyer miles can help us out – donate them to the Festival! If you have a minimum of 25,000 miles and would like to use them by helping us bring in the musicians please contact us. Those miles can help us go the distance!

E-Jazz

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL - If all you are reading from the Healdsburg Jazz Festival is this newsletter you are missing out on a wealth of updates and news from us. Visit www.healdsburgjazzfestival.org to see upcoming events, read about the artists, and join our email list. Many times the first announcement of an upcoming event is sent to our email list. Sign up and tell your friends to join too!

Wear Your Memories – 2006 Festival T-Shirts Available



We have a few 2006 Festival T-shirts and tanks still available; in fact we ordered more to accommodate demand. T-shirts: \$20.00 each, Mens' sizes only. No discounts. Tanks: \$15.00 each/\$10.00 each for HJF members, both Mens' and Womens' sizes available. We also have some T-shirts in Childrens' sizes at \$10.00 each. Shipping extra.

We don't have all sizes for every type of shirt, so give us a call for availability or to place an order at 707-433-4633. You can also order t-shirts and more HJF merchandise at www.healdsburgjazzfestival.org

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- 3 coupons for wine or non-alcoholic beverage at the Sunday Jazz Series and select Festival events. (one coupon per event; Event sponsor wine only)
- Merchant discounts (see list below)

\$50 per year

- 5 drink coupons total for the Sunday Jazz Series and select Festival events (see limits above)
- Merchant discounts (see list below)

\$100 per year

- 5 drink coupons total for the Sunday Jazz Series and select Festival events (see limits above)
- Early entry to all paid Jazz Festival events
- Free jazz CD

\$500 per year

- Includes all of the above, plus:
- 5 additional drink coupons (10 coupons total)
 - A second free jazz CD

\$1000 per year

- Includes all of the above, plus:
- Reserved seating at all paid indoor events
 - Invitations to special events related to the Festival
 - Personal introductions to musicians

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ART AND ALL THAT JAZZ

119 Plaza Street, Healdsburg

- 10% off sterling silver jewelry designs by Jessica Felix
- 10% off jazz CDs

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Jessica Felix: Artistic Director

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The Sunday Jazz Series continues!

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November 19th, 7pm
Hotel Healdsburg Lobby

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New Jazzed Up Website. Check it out!

The great new look was created by David Howard of Everywhere Media (www.everywhere.com). Stay informed! Sign up for email updates on the festival and other jazz events right on the home page, www.healdsburgjazzfestival.org

The Grapevine Rag

Paul Tincknell & Glen Alpert *Contributing Writers*
Graphite Studio, 707 433-7585 *Graphic Design*
Healdsburg Printing, Healdsburg *Printing*

Festival Partners & Members

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Paul & Jennifer Tincknell
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\$500 PER YEAR - RENEWING

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