

T R A D I T I O N A L

*Jazz*

S E R I E S

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

OUR ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH PROGRAM

THE  
CLARINET  
FAMILY  
SUMMIT

DICK JOHNSON & JOHN LAPORTA

SPONSORED BY  
THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE  
LIBRARY OF TRADITIONAL JAZZ

8 PM MONDAY  
MAY 5, 1997  
STRAFFORD ROOM  
MEMORIAL UNION BUILDING  
DURHAM, NH

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## THE ARTISTS

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### CLARINET FAMILY SUMMIT - Dick Johnson & John LaPorta

It is in the nature of the jazz idiom that along with the accomplishments of ensembles having stable personnel and renewable formats there are these unique combinations of compatible individuals assembled for a singular time and place, letting the extemporaneous musical chips fall where they may. Audiences are thus the beneficiaries of interactions which, if not necessarily in the "once in a lifetime" category, are at least vibrant examples of the incandescent collective spontaneity that has been fundamental to jazz excitement since the very beginning. And when two of the artists each can draw on more than five decades of broadly based jazz experience on the same instrument, the possibility for a truly memorable event, unprecedented and unpredictable, increases monumentally.

Summits are "in" nowadays, as are concepts of family, so this is a politically correct undertaking. Likewise, there is no question that John and Dick are fully accredited summiters. The "family" designation is more complex, involving a liberal mixture of personal, professional, and Traditional Jazz Series families. The details: Gary is Dick's son; Gray is his son-in-law; Marshall and Gray, despite their relative youth, have been playing together for almost two decades - on this series as early as 1982 and many times subsequently; Tom goes back to the second concert of this series (Dec. 3, 1979), was a colleague of John's at Berklee for several years, and has been a prime force in keeping the northern New England jazz family healthily functional as was recently recognized by none other than Gov. Shaheen; John's and Dick's family relationships comes through their love-child, the clarinet (no, they didn't procreate it, but their playing makes it sound that way!)

Dick Johnson was born in Brockton, Mass. in 1925 (and still lives there), played piano before moving on to clarinet and alto, and studied at the New England Conservatory for two years. He was with Charlie Spivak and Buddy Morrow in the early 50s, then, based back in New England, he worked and recorded with a number of groups, most notably several collaborations with Dave McKenna (another member of our extended family, having given the very first concert in this series); a bit later his own group, the Swing Shift, became highly regarded. He also shares with John contacts with Woody Herman and another member of our extended family, Herb Pomeroy. (We also must proudly note that he recorded with the UNH Jazz Band in 1976!) In 1983 the completeness of Dick's musicianship resulted in the once-controversial and voluble patriarch of the clarinet, the redoubtable Artie Shaw, selecting him to lead his revived orchestra, with its imaginative repertoire so silent since the 1950's, a position he still holds.

John LaPorta is without question one of the most accomplished and respected performer/composer/educators in the entire jazz world. A Philadelphian born in 1920, his full list of "credits" would require a multi-page supplement. Here is a capsulized version: two degrees from Manhattan School of Music; private study with classical composers Ernest Toch and Alexei Haieff, and jazz artist Lennie Tristano; performances under conductors Leopold

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**JOHN LAPORTA - clarinet**

**DICK JOHNSON - clarinet**

**GARY JOHNSON - drums**

**GRAY SARGENT - guitar**

**MARSHALL WOOD - bass**

**TOM GALLANT - piano**

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Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, and Gunther Schuller; recordings with Woody Herman (including Stravinsky's Ebony Concerto), Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Charlie Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Buddy Rich, etc., etc., etc.; 30+ years on the Berklee faculty, and 25+ with the National Stage band Camps (Stan Kenton); author of numerous educational texts. John is second to none in his passionate advocacy of combining traditional musical discipline with creative imagination, always with integrity.

This series has been blessed with an abundance of superb clarinetists of varying persuasions -- for example, Bob Wilber (another Tristano pupil, if of a different orientation), Peanuts Hucko, Kenny Davern, Billy Novick, Jerry Fuller, and Lee Childs (with whom Gary performed here). And by some strange twist of fate (otherwise known as scheduling) the final concerts of our last two seasons featured Ken Peplowski in 1995 and Buddy DeFranco in 1996. Now, two independent giants on the same program; come to think of it, this will be a "once in a lifetime" event.

*Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements. Your cooperation is requested.*

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## THE SERIES

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The UNH Traditional Jazz Series began in 1979. It promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the art through concerts featuring musicians of regional, national, and international prominence. The program represents a unique endeavor to expand interest and honor outstanding talent and achievement.

Musicians wishing to do so are encouraged to offer their recordings for sale or mail order during intermission; a brief announcement may be made. The sponsors have no financial interest in such sales beyond offering a courtesy service to the artists and the public.

Program Notes -- Paul Verrette

Production -- David Seiler

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## THE SCHEDULE

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September 16	Frank Wess Octet with Carol Sloane (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)
October 21	Benny Waters with Howard Alden and the Tom Gallant Trio
December 2 (note change)	Billy Novick's Shades of Swing (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)
February 10	Classic Jazz Epochs: Jelly Roll and W.C. Jim Fryer and Jeff Barnhart
March 10	Tommy Flanagan Trio (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)
April 14	Bucky Pizzarelli Trio
May 5	Clarinet Family Summit John LaPorta and Dick Johnson

(Concerts in Strafford Room of the Memorial Union Building exception noted)