



Our One Hundred Forty-sixth Program
2000-2001

Ray Smith's
Paramount
Jazz Band

Sponsored by the Department of Music and the
New Hampshire Library of Traditional Jazz

**8 p.m. Monday, April 9, 2001, Johnson Theatre
Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH**

THE ARTISTS

To which of the following questions is “Ray Smith” the correct answer? 1)What New England radio personality has presented well over 2000 weekly broadcasts of recorded jazz since 1958? 2)What bandleader for over 20 years played his first gig at age 44? 3)Who was the drummer in Boston’s original Black Eagle Jazz Band? You guessed it; all of them! Ray Smith’s role in the Boston-based portion of the trad jazz world has been indeed unique, as the scope of the questions indicates. Ray’s love for the music has led him on a path from listener to advocate to practitioner to recording artist to nationally acknowledged and respected keeper of the flame.

Ray’s premier loyalties are with the jazz of the 1920s and ‘30s, those first recorded decades of the mature and diverse art form which were captured mainly on 78 rpm shellac discs, thousands (and thousands!) of which are in his personal collection. As a discographical devotee he has consummate knowledge of obscure labels, reissues on LP and CD, and the technological processes which are bringing this music to sonic life once again in our living rooms. All of this is presented with insight, humor, and a marvelous flair for variety on *The Jazz Decades*, every Sunday evening from 7 to 8 on Boston’s WGBH-FM, its home for over a quarter century.

But Ray has not been content to live in the recorded past; he has long been committed to keeping the music a living force. Although he describes himself as “a self-taught two-beat drummer, with no technique but enough style to have recorded 24 albums...” his formation and leadership of the Paramount Jazz Band since 1985 has spread the word to numerous venues and festivals around the nation—to Florida, Colorado, and the west coast from north to south. Further investigation leads one to marvel for at least two reasons at the devotion and selfless effort of all parties involved. First, most of them are professionals in fields other than music—not unusual in itself, but one has to be truly in love to keep one’s chops appropriately functional amid such demands. However, things just might get a bit problematic when the passage of time introduces the intrusion of geography; to wit, Ray is an alleged retiree now residing in South Carolina, likewise Chuck in Arizona. Steve is a computer engineer in Seattle, Gary is an internal medicine specialist in Biloxi, Mississippi, while Jeff is a marine biologist at Woods Hole. Finally, closer to home are Robin, a physicist at MIT, and Jimmy, a full-time musician who probably travels more than anyone else. It is simply a tremendous tribute to their respect for the music and for each other that they make the necessary sacrifices to keep their level of collective accomplishment alive, fresh, and vital. (Maybe there is a message here!)

To some pure traditionalists the PJB may appear to have a somewhat unusual instrumentation—two reeds in the front line and no trombone—but the versatility of the performers allows for the most engaging combinations of three horns in a flexible manner capturing the flavor of early “arranged” jazz as well as the spirit of improvisation, both individual and collective. And their repertoire will strike our ears as being fresh and pristine, despite (or because of) its vintage character; there are more than a few neglected treasures in the 80,000 titles in Ray’s record collection.

Through pure coincidence, the Paramount Jazz Band last performed here just a decade ago (March 6, 1991). At that time, in a rhetorical burst which we are not embarrassed to repeat, we noted the coming of spring and proclaimed, “As we close another season, the Paramount Jazz Band is the ideal catalyst to remind us of the power of the music to transcend the categories in which we so often find ourselves, and move us to relish those things that attest to the continuity of our humanity.”

Could it be an eternal verity?!



TRADITIONAL
Jazz
SERIES

Jeff Hughes

cornet & flugelhorn

Gary Rodberg

clarinet & alto sax

Steve Wright

reeds & cornet

Robin Verdier

piano

Jimmy Mazzy

banjo & vocals

Chuck Stewart

tuba

and

Ray Smith

drums & leader

*Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements.
Please turn off beepers and watch alarms. Your cooperation is requested.*

THE SERIES

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

2000-2001 SCHEDULE

- September 11: Chicago's Best: Bobby Lewis
♦
October 2: The Frank Wess Quartet
♦
October 30: Bob Wilber Presents Fletcher Henderson
♦
January 22: Don Doane's Super Senior Sextet
♦
February 12: Bill Mays at the Steinway
♦
April 9: Ray Smith's Paramount Jazz Band
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OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

- October 28: *Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND, Dave Seiler, directing: UNH JAZZ CHOIR, William Kempster, directing; with special guest artist, Bob Wilber, clarinet. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*
♦
December 14: *Clark Terry's 80th Birthday Celebration, with special guests, including Bob Brookmeyer, trombone; and Roger Kellaway, piano; with a Big Band of UNH Alumni conducted by Dave Seiler; and the Clark Terry Quintet: Don Friedman, piano; Sylvia Cuenca, drums; Marcus McLaurine, bass; and Dave Glasser, sax. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*
♦
January 16: *Harry Jones Memorial Concert, Seacoast Big Band, Dave Seiler, directing; with special guest composer/pianist Bob Florence. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*
♦
Jan 28 – Feb 1: *Guest Residency: Composer, scholar, and conductor of the Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra; David Baker, Distinguished Professor of Music, Indiana University. Contact the UNH Department of Music at (603) 862-2404 for complete residency schedule.*
♦
March 11: *Gala Jazz Concert, Dr. Clark Terry, trumpet and flugelhorn; with special guest woodwind artist, Paquito D'Rivera; and the UNH JAZZ BAND, Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*

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For tickets call (603)862-2290