

T R A D I T I O N A L

jazz

S E R I E S

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

OUR ONE HUNDREDTH AND SEVENTH PROGRAM

BARRY HARRIS,
piano

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

8 PM MONDAY
OCTOBER 16, 1995
JOHNSON THEATRE
PAUL CREATIVE ARTS CENTER

THE ARTISTS

BARRY HARRIS

We often remind the public of the rare existence of the successful solo jazz pianist, resulting from the travails of managing with only two hands the musical responsibilities incumbent upon that role - the manipulation of independent melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements, complicated enough in itself, but further fused into swinging and/or reflective jazz through subtleties of articulation, placement, and expression with the whole process being governed by the lubricious opportunities and risks of improvisation. Few are called, and even fewer are chosen, the most distinguished on this series thus far being Dave McKenna and Dick Hyman.

Barry Harris is a very special exemplar of this challenging idiom, in that his primary personal commitment is to confronting it in a manner that will enhance the possibility of passing on the actualization of the art to subsequent generations, affording expansion of the continuity of the tradition to a wider body of players and thus to audiences as well. Virtuosi are seldom identified with this kind of idealistic prioritization!

Born in Detroit in 1929, like many African-Americans his first musical experiences were connected to the church. His organist mother started giving him lessons at age four, and by high school his direction had shifted toward jazz. As his abilities grew and gigs came his way in an environment where (unlike today) there were lots of club and dance engagements, he had the chance to play with such luminaries as Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Flip Phillips, and Roy Eldridge. Though deeply grounded traditionally he was drawn to the expansion of the language emanating from the then new bebop style of Bud Powell and Charlie Parker; one of his first important jobs was replacing Powell's brother Richie in the Max Roach Quintet following the tragic auto accident which also took trumpeter Clifford Brown. Barry finally settled in New York in 1960 when he joined the late Cannonball Adderley.

Some who recall the late 40's and early 50's will remember it as a period of seeming revolution in jazz when established values were being threatened, but the passage of time has inspired thoughtfully gifted practitioners to absorb the considerable imaginative elements from that era into a richly varied mainstream which provides incomparable aesthetic nurture and enlarges our human vision. Barry's efforts have been seminal in this regard; in 1982 he started the Jazz Cultural Center in Manhattan, a unique combination of school and boozeless nightclub(!); he has developed a systematic methodology for

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students to hear, learn and practice the specific components from which creative improvisations can be built; he has translated this into a 4-hour workshop video; he has even carried his message to the hallowed halls of Harvard(!).

Barry was long associated with the legendary Thelonious Monk and in fact they virtually lived together during Monk's last years, in a house with two grand pianos, under the hospitality of the Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter (famous for being with Charlie Parker when he passed away). Selective movie viewers have already been moved by Barry's duo performance with his friend Tommy Flanagan honoring *their* Thelonious in *Straight No Chaser*.

Barry laments financial cutbacks in the public schools, particularly in the inner cities, where he learned clarinet in the sixth grade and bass in the ninth; ("Whenever they have these fiscal crunches, it's the arts that suffer"; sound familiar?). And he reflects, "I'm mostly a teacher....(but) I'm just the oldest member of the class....Teachers should teach where they came from, not where they are...I just wish everyone could experience the blessing of learning new things all the time."

Would that all teachers have as much to give, artistically and spiritually - and all students have Barry Harris's zeal for learning.

*Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements.
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

THE SCHEDULE

September 8	Ed Polcer's Midtown Jazz
October 16	Barry Harris, piano
November 13	Plunger Summit: Snooky Young, Al Grey, Clark Terry
January 29	New Black Eagle Jazz Band
February 19	Donna Byrne & Dave McKenna
April 8	Harry Allen & Milt Hinton
May 6	Buddy DeFranco Quintet