THE
Buddy DeFranco QUINTET

Buddy DeFranco - Clarinet
Joe Cohn - Guitar
Ray Santisi - Piano
John Lockwood - Bass
Les Harris, Jr. - Drums

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

8 PM MONDAY
MAY 6, 1996
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION BUILDING
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
THE ARTISTS

BUDDY DEFRANCO

As these words were being written there was a classical woodwind quintet playing on WGBH, and the only instrument common to that ensemble and the one we will hear tonight is the clarinet, a provocative coincidence evoking a bit of ruminative explication; therein hangs a tale or two, and some irony as well.

As is well known, early jazz musicians used instruments which were central to the other idioms to which they were exposed, most prominently military band music and dance music. Particularly in the former the clarinet was at the heart of the ensemble, as is true with its symphonic wind descendants today. Moreover, the clarinet had a sophisticated symphony orchestra role starting in the late 18th century, as well as a rich chamber music identity largely through masterpieces by Mozart and Brahms. (The other wind instruments were somehow limited either mechanically, aesthetically, or imaginatively; jazz in fact liberated them!)

The manifold capacities of the clarinet led in several directions, ranging from the vocally-based blues inflections of a Johnny Dodds through the highly personal lyric sound of a Pee Wee Russell to the sweeping virtuosic detail of a Benny Goodman. Listeners to pre-mid-century jazz can readily recognize the distinctiveness of each of these artists, not to mention the likes of Barney Bigard, and Artie Shaw, and even (yes!) Lester Young. The irony is that as jazz "complexified" during and after the bebop era, including the proliferation of self-indulgent individual explorations, the clarinet, despite its peerless flexibility, fell from grace as a contemporary creative medium; how many uniquely identifiable clarinetists born after 1930 can anyone name?!

Buddy DeFranco (b. 1923) is virtually a class of one in that he was practically the only "name" clarinetist from the swing era who imaginatively absorbed the newer musical dialects into his style and fused everything into a language characterized by universality, contemporaneity, integrity, and taste. The ties with the great dance band era remained strong; his first fame was with Tommy Dorsey from 1944 to '48 (remember Opus #1?!), he was also associated with Charlie Barnet and Gene Krupa, and much later he fronted the Glenn Miller Orchestra (1966 - '74). But the scope of his performing contacts also extended to Count Basie, Art Blakey, Billie Holiday, Terry Gibbs, Oscar Peterson, and Lennie Tristano — all people to be reckoned with in any comprehensive look at the tradition. Buddy appeared as the featured guest at the UNH Jazz Festival almost 20 years ago and is on the UNH Jazz Band's first recording; as the years melt into decades we welcome him again with pride and appreciation.
At Buddy's suggestion, Joe Cohn's sparkling guitar persona joins us for the first time, and he has yet another link with the tradition - he is the son of tenor saxophonist Al Cohn from Woody Herman's famous "Four Brothers" band.

This concert is being dedicated to the memory of Alan Dawson, who was originally scheduled to perform. Ray Santisi and John Lockwood are two of Boston's most respected musicians and Alan's most long term associates, and our own Les Harris, Jr. constantly distinguishes himself as he follows in the path of his father and their joint mentor, Alan Dawson.

As we approach the end of another season of musical celebrations, with all its resonances of the unpredictability of the human condition, perhaps we might ponder one more irony in the ongoing saga of the clarinet; one of the few successful classical solo clarinetists, Richard Stolzman, is now playing jazz in many of his appearances! There must be a lesson in this somewhere - stay tuned!

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 18: 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
A Tribute to Alan Dawson, 1929-1996

Music is one of those mysteries which makes us marvel at the wonder of our humanness. It has a way of keeping its practitioners young, and often at the age when others are wearily foregoing their life's work the musical artist is performing with the vigor, enthusiasm, and creativity indicative of the prime of life. At 66 that's when Alan left us, but we rejoice in having had those decades - denied to some - in which his presence directly enriched and inspired the lives of so many; after all, Mozart and Charlie Parker died at 35.

Alan was an impeccable artist who truly understood the potential of his chosen medium of expression. He described himself as "a musician whose instrument is the drums", a seemingly innocent assertion bursting with pointed understatement; its full realization came not only through his status as a world-class performer but also his stature as an influential teacher. The distinguished jazz scholar Joachim Berendt has insightfully singled out Alan's qualities of "intellect and spirit"; their combined existence in the jazz artist - or any of us - is all too rare.
Alan enhanced the life of the University of New Hampshire community on countless occasions in several venues over almost 20 years; for example, his connection with the Traditional Jazz Series goes back to its second concert (1979, he was featured at the UNH/Clark Terry Jazz Festival, in historical concerts with the Seacoast Big Band, in summer programs (most notably the Select Summer Program for minority high school students), and one of his last actual performances was with Joe Williams at the annual scholarship concert of the Harry W. Jones, Jr., Memorial Education Fund in Portsmouth. Anyone who heard him with the Hank Jones Trio in this room just two years ago was treated to an unparalleled spontaneous mixture of virtuosity, variety, invention, and taste.

At the final concert at this year's UNH/Clark Terry Jazz Festival (on which, like this evening's event, he had been scheduled to perform) we noted that the colleagues, friends, students, and alumni involved in presenting that event collectively demonstrated the positive human qualities of imagination, disciplined achievement, loyalty, joyousness, and love that were all characteristics of Alan Dawson's individual persona. We dedicated that program to his memory, with gratitude and affection, and we do so again tonight.