Our One Hundred Forty-second Program
2000-2001

The
Frank Wess
Quartet

featuring Sir Roland Hanna

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

8 p.m. Monday, October 2, 2000, Strafford Room
Memorial Union Building, Durham, NH
The Frank Wess Quartet

No, Frank Wess did not invent the saxophone, but his identification with virtually every good thing which that instrumental family contributes to jazz’s expressive beauty and excitement could easily lead one to think so. To much of the world the sax is considered to be solely a jazz instrument, understandably so since unlike most other tools of the trade, its origin predates the advent of jazz by only a few decades, and its earlier usage was largely restricted to the French military band. (Believe it or not, it was invented by a man named Sax, distinguished for his humility!) Jazz of course has always fostered exploration and individuality of voice on all instruments, but this aspect of the idiom may have been most striking with the saxophone because of its multiple sizes and pristine point of departure.

It is by no means a breach of academic objectivity to declare that no saxophonist in the world commands more respect than Frank Wess, as both man and artist of integrity. For starters, this writer/listener recommends attention to the sensitivity of his melodic lines (at any speed!), their sinuous contours and eloquent spaces. Seasoned observers will immediately connect him with the rollicking Count Basie Band from 1953-64 where his “battles” with fellow Frank and tenorman Foster recalled the Lester Young/Hershal Evans duality of an earlier Basie generation. However, his extended artistic history also interacts with such luminaries as Billy Eckstine, Benny Carter, Benny Goodman, Billy Taylor, Woody Herman, Dizzy Gillespie, and the Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra (to name only a handful)! During WWII Frank was solo clarinetist with a U.S. Army Band in Africa (where he also worked with the legendary Josephine Baker). Later he earned a BM degree in flute (an instrument with a more copious heritage than the saxophone!), and as the authoritative New Grove Dictionary of Jazz asserts, “Wess established the flute as an appropriate instrument for jazz.” He performs and records in numerous configurations, including presentation of his own big band charts. Frank has visited New Hampshire often, this being the first time with a quartet of his own choosing; on Wednesday he will join Clark Terry at the Ken Burns/JAZZ celebration in Manchester.

One can think of no more distinguished collaborator for Frank than Sir Roland Hanna. A legend in his own right for the breadth of his musical vision, he studied at both Eastman and Juilliard, and subsequently embarked on a rich range of experiences embracing such disparate entities as the Benny Goodman Orchestra, Charles Mingus’s experimental groups, the Detroit and National Symphonies, the Thad Jones—Mel Lewis Orchestra, the New York Jazz Quartet, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Lincoln Center and Smithsonian Jazz Orchestras. A permanent faculty member at Queens College, he has over 400 compositions to his credit in all genres, combining jazz and classical elements, plus over 50 albums (including a tribute to Eubie Blake on the recent Clark Terry: One on One CD); Grove’s notes that his work “shows a rare grasp of piano history, giving him an eloquence rarely matched by his peers.” And we must state that the honorary appellation before his name is indeed genuine, emanating from a knighthood conferred on him by President Tubman of Liberia in recognition of his humanitarian services to that country.

Brookline, Mass.-born Ray Drummond earned a BA in political science and worked on an MBA at Stanford before committing to a career in music. As a first-call bassist in New York since 1977 the quality of his work has led to consistent performances and over 200 recordings with such artists at Art Farmer, Stan Getz, Milt Jackson, Wynton Marsalis, and countless others. He is also active as an educator, regularly doing workshops and master classes, literally around the world.
Frank Wess
tenor sax & flute

Sir Roland Hanna
piano

Ray Drummond
bass

Tony Jefferson
drums

Tony Jefferson was a Berklee scholarship student in the mid-80s, and placed third in the Thelonious Monk International Drum Competition in 1992. Busy in New York since then, he also has appeared in the Montreux and North Sea Festivals, and is active as a clinician.

Each of tonight’s performers was born in a different decade; isn’t that a healthy sign for the art?!

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

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.

For tickets call (603) 862-2290