Our One Hundred Fifty-first Program
2001-2002

Out of the Airwaves &

Into our Hearts:
Marian McPartland

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

8 p.m. Monday, March 4, 2002
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
Marian McPartland

The sounds which by their very nature might immediately suggest jazz expression tend to come from wind (or string) instruments, due to their capacity to alter pitch, timbre, vibrato, etc. Thus the singular voices of individual artists often are intimated by only a few notes—perhaps just one! The piano is impervious to such sonic manipulation, but because of the marvel of its construction, history has blessed its practitioners with the opportunity to alone generate complete musical experiences, assuming that they can manage with two hands the triune intricacies of melody, harmony and rhythm. In the jazz world the result has been a century of stylistic variety and personal imagination which would be a monument to human creativity even if (God forbid) those other instruments did not exist. And most fortunately, much of this legacy has been captured on recordings.

Think for a moment of the range covered among Eubie Blake, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, and Cecil Taylor. Though not impossible, it is difficult to conceptualize any pair of them playing together. Now confront the fact that Marian McPartland has performed with all four—and literally hundreds of others; in connection with her weekly program “Piano Jazz” on National Public Radio she has engaged, inspired, and learned from generations of her fellow pianists in a manner with no precedent, parallel, or possibility of replication.

A native of England, tonight just 16 days shy of her 84th birthday, the young Marian studied classical piano at the famous Guildhall School, but left to tour with a vaudeville troupe. Serving with a USO group during World War II she invaded Normandy shortly after the troops, and while in Belgium met and soon married Chicago cornetist Jimmy McPartland. After the war she formed her own trio which was based in New York’s Hickory House into the 1960s. Both her sensitivity to stylistic diversity and her technical flexibility always have made her a desirable collaborator as well as solo artist, and over 50 recordings have resulted. Moreover, she has written songs recorded by Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, and Sarah Vaughan, composed film scores, authored record reviews, articles, and a book about some of her associates such as Benny Goodman and Mary Lou Williams titled *All In Good Time*, made numerous television appearances (including a recent commercial depicting a long-distance duet with Eric Reed!), and performed at the White House for the Clintons—and at the Supreme Court (!).

“Piano Jazz” has been running since 1978, reaching 250 stations; her guests are not always pianists, or always celebrities. However, these expansive contacts have in truth contributed to her constant growth as an artist, but one who never leaves anything important behind; we
listeners, too, should not forget that her guest Eubie Blake was actually performing publicly before the end of the 19th century, and that her husband, Jimmy, replaced Bix Beiderbecke with the Wolverines in 1924. Marian has stated, "...so on any day I can play in his Dixieland style, but I'm also part Teddy Wilson, part bebop, part Bill Evans. I'd like to be part Wayne Shorter." Wow!

Marian's 80th birthday was celebrated at a black tie event in New York's Town Hall, broadcast on NPR. She is one of the few remaining of those who posed for Art Kane's famous 1959 Esquire photo immortalized in the film "A Great Day In Harlem". More than one critic has postulated that she plays twice as well now as when half her age; (Jimmy maintained that when he first heard her he asked, "Who's the chick rushing the beat?!").

Marian, you are indeed blessed to be what you are, and we are blessed that you are sharing that treasure with us. We thank you from the bottoms of our hearts as you carry your wisdom into another century.

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

2001-2002 SCHEDULE

September 17: Ninth Decade Encounter—Hank Visits Clark
October 22: Benny Golson Marches On
November 19: Plenty of Horn: Byron Stripling
January 28: The Intimate Dimension: Fred Haas Trio
March 4: Out of the Airwaves & Into Our Hearts: Marian McPartland
April 8: Vintage Manhattan: Peter Ecklund

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

November 3: Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler, directing: UNH JAZZ SINGERS, Bill Kempster, directing. Granite State Room, Memorial Union Building, UNH.

January 22: Harry Jones Memorial Concert: Basie alumnus FRANK WESS returns to share his eloquent tenor sax and copious library with the Seacoast Big Band, Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

March 24: Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn with legendary jazz bassist, RAY BROWN and the UNH JAZZ BAND, Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

For tickets call (603)862-2290