Our Twenty-fourth Season

Our One Hundred Fifty-fifth Program
2002-2003

Family Values:
The Heath Brothers

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

8 p.m. Monday, November 25, 2002
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
The gift of music is one of the mysteries of the human condition in the first place, and when it manifests itself in certain families, sometimes over generations as with the Bachs, it adds considerably to the “nature vs. nurture” debate. Of course, all too frequently family musical activity emphasizes singing and dancing by children, and whatever entertainment value may be forthcoming from an extension of that fanciful world into an adulthood bounded by the McGuire Sisters and the several Jacksons does not reach the pure musicianship of the Jones of Detroit, the Marsalis of New Orleans, or the Heaths of Philadelphia. Most precious of all, however, is a case of three brothers, all beyond so-called “retirement age” following highly distinguished individual careers, being able and willing to perform together, communicating to an audience the fruits of “150 years of experience among us, and 900 recordings”, to quote Jimmy.

Jimmy himself (b. 1926) is no stranger to us, having been a featured guest at the Clark Terry/UNH Jazz Festival on several occasions. A professional at sixteen, he has been at the center of the action ever since his stint with Dizzy Gillespie’s auspicious big band (1949-51), shifting from alto to tenor and broadening his activity into arranging and composing (we have experienced many of those great charts!), and ultimately to education. From 1987 to 1998 he taught at Queens College, and has served on the board of trustees of the Thelonious Monk Institute. He has received numerous commissions and awards, most recently the Jazz Master Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1998, Bill Cosby hosted “A Tribute to Jimmy Heath” at Lincoln Center to establish the Jimmy Heath Chair at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College.

Percy (b. 1923), the oldest of the group, switched from violin to bass in 1946 after service in the Air Force during World War II; (think about that, budding bassists!) Although his list of performing peers is varied and extensive, he is best known for his decades of devoted work with that paradigm of swingingly creative sophistication, the Modern Jazz Quartet, with Milt Jackson, John Lewis, and Connie Kay (1951 – 1995, with a hiatus from ‘75 to ’81). He, too, has been recognized by the NEA, as well as by the government of France, and has an Honorary Doctorate from Berklee; among many other unique accomplishments he has performed at both the Nixon and Clinton White Houses!

Tootie (b. 1935) is thus the baby of the trio, and his career is truly multifaceted. His copious performing credits crisscross the generations; for example his first recording was with John Coltrane (1957), and he completed the MJQ’s engagements after the death of Connie Kay (1994). Moreover, he is further identified as a songwriter, producer, arranger, singer, poet, author, and actor (!) He serves on the faculty of the Stanford University Summer Jazz Workshop, has taught at the California Institute of the Arts, and has developed imaginative music appreciation programs for several urban public schools.

The brothers first recorded together in the late 1950s, but were formally designated as the Heath Brothers (with pianist Sidney Cowell) in 1975. The relationship was interrupted when the MJQ hiatus ended in 1981, but the group was revived when Percy became available in 1997. Current pianist Jeb Patton studied at Duke and later under Jimmy and Sir Roland Hanna at Queens – and once participated in a performance of Ellington’s “Black, Brown, and Beige” in Greece!
In some hands jazz has become the music of self-indulgence and individual excess, no matter how technically impressive and emotionally compelling. In other cases it continues to flourish as the music of, if you will pardon the expression, family values, where each member has a role which is respected and encouraged by his peers, and the successful result depends on the collective interplay of the group – and perhaps more than a little on love for the music and its genesis, and for each other. As Jimmy says, “We’re lucky enough that all of us are still here.” Witness, rejoice, and give thanks.

**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 through the imaginative vision and generous commitment of the late Dorothy C. Prescott. 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

2002-2003 SCHEDULE

September 23: The Quintessence: Donna, Bucky, & Scott
October 21: The Rarest of Pairs: Toots Thielemans & Kenny Werner
November 25: Family Values: The Brothers Heath
February 3: Remembering Vic: Phil Wilson & Company
March 3: Pellucid Piano: Bill Charlap
April 21: Forever Fresh: The Back Bay Ramblers

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

October 19: Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler, directing; UNH JAZZ SINGERS, William Kempster, directing. Granite State Room, Memorial Union Building, UNH.

January 21: Harry Jones Memorial Concert: Seacoast Big Band featuring composer/saxophonist BOB MINTZER; Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

February 28: Dave Seiler Quintet: David Seiler, clarinet; David Newsam, guitar; John Hunter, bass; Ed Saindon, vibes; Les Harris Jr., drums. "A Tribute to Benny Goodman, Charlie Christian and Others". Johnson Theatre, PCAC.

March 24: Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn with a distinguished guest and the UNH JAZZ BAND, Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

For tickets call (603)862-2290