Our Twenty-fourth Season

Our One Hundred Fifty-third Program
2002-2003

Remembering Vic:
Phil Wilson & Company

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

8 p.m. Monday, February 3, 2003
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
THE ARTISTS

One of the more intriguing aspects of the human condition is identification of those primary influences—sometimes elusive, indirect, or mysterious—which somehow captured our youthful imaginations and ultimately shaped the direction of our lives. Around fifty years ago a pair of high school buddies from Exeter, NH spirited themselves to Boston in order to experience first hand the unique trombone artistry of Vic Dickenson; Phil Wilson and Tom Gallant were never quite the same again, and as a result neither was the nature of New England-based jazz.

Vic Dickenson was born in 1906, just five years after Louis Armstrong. He grew up in the Midwest, playing with a number of bands, the most significant being Claude Hopkins, Benny Carter, Count Basie, and the Eddie Heywood Sextet (with Doc Cheatham). From the late ‘40s until his death in 1984 he performed mostly in small groups, especially in connection with both Eddie Condon and George Wein, as well as the World’s Greatest Jazz Band; he and Doc gave the fifth program in this series in 1980.

Vic was of a generation where individuality of voice was a sine qua non, not so much in the notes that one played but how one played them in terms of rhythm, articulation, and tone. Vic’s solo style was unmistakable, often imbedded with subtle humor at no cost to musical content. Dan Morgenstern of the Institute of Jazz Studies has written that, “he tells you a story that is personal through and through”, and he makes his “cumbersome” instrument “appear like the embodiment of elegance”.

Phil Wilson’s own accomplishments almost defy documentation: featured soloist and arranger with Woody Herman (nine albums); performances with Louis Armstrong, Doc Severinsen, the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, Frank Sinatra, Buddy Rich, Joe Williams, etc., etc., plus the NORAD band, the Boston Pops, and orchestras in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands; a commission for the Boston Symphony’s Children’s Concerts; Berklee faculty since 1965, following study and teaching at the New England Conservatory; clinics internationally, including Harvard and Yale; numerous recordings; special recognition by the International Trombone Association; and there’s a lot more!

In England’s Jazz Journal International, Steve Voce writes, “Phil Wilson embraces more fields of jazz than anyone I have ever met.---The jazz tradition is constantly in his mind, even when he is pushing forward the frontiers---”. Thus in 1980, four years before Vic’s passing, Phil was able to make an LP with him, a cherished possession for many of us.

For this program Phil has chosen colleagues who share that respect for the tradition and its capacity to inform their playing; it is worth recalling that Vic himself was noted for his comfort with versatile styles! Phil Person was featured recently at the Press Room and appeared on this series with the Artie Shaw Orchestra. Tom Ferrante, one of New England’s most distinguished educators has provided the Boston Pops with many a classy solo. Paul Schmeling heads the piano department at Berklee and along with our virtual family member Marshall Wood performed with Donna Byrne on our opening concert this year. As always, Les Harris, Jr. will demonstrate his praiseworthy flexibility. And since Vic was such a fine accompanist for singers (including Billie Holiday), Phil introduces us to young vocalist Christine Fawson.

Finally, the circle closes as we commit income from this concert to the Tommy Gallant Scholarship Fund. The evening will be rich with memories, generosity of spirit, optimism, and those indefinable qualities which only the living music can supply.
Notes: Phil Wilson will speak at the Rye Public Library on February 11 at 7:30.
Topic: From New Hampshire to the World: A Distinguished Jazzman Reflects on his Odyssey.
Sponsored by the Seacoast Jazz Society and the New Hampshire Humanities Council.

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