Our Twenty-sixth Season

Our One Hundred Sixty-ninth Program
2004-2005

MANHATTAN MAGIC: THE BOB MINTZER QUARTET

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

8 p.m. Monday, February 28, 2005
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
THE ARTISTS

The Bob Mintzer Quartet

With some justification the scholars note that one characteristic of jazz's activity throughout the first half of the 20th century was movement from the "vernacular" to the "cultivated"; the art's indigenous impulses and gestures continuously generated individual and collective creativity resulting provocatively in diversity, diffuseness, and complexity. However, the writer of these notes recalls as a teenager meeting a devoted aficionado only a few years older who insisted that the only authentic jazz was a type of folk music! Certainly, careful scrutiny of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band recordings from 1923 reveals a level of sophistication more cultivated than vernacular, however earthy the expressive content. And the distinguished writer Albert Murray speaks of the true jazz artist's perennial tendency toward "extension, elaboration, and refinement" of his material, an inescapable process as the decades passed.

The fact is that despite its ties with some aspects of the popular culture, its joyful spontaneity, and its visceral impact; jazz has long been serious stuff, and its zealous practitioners, while not losing track of its essential qualities, are inspired to explore and expand the field of play (pun only partially intended!), as well as, in Clark Terry's words, being committed to "passin' on the language". Our guests this evening all are exemplars of the best aspects of this total immersion in the jazz experience and its broader possibilities.

Nonetheless, that extended and elevated world involving grants, large scale compositions, studio recordings, educational ventures, and the full range of challenges which the highest quality of contemporary professionals are expected to meet, does not preclude that sometimes it is necessary to become refueled in an intimate small group, the traditional locus of so much personal expression. Even as the tenor sax emerged as a solo vehicle, the discographies reveal that Bud Freeman and Coleman Hawkins in the '30s and Ben Webster and Lester Young in the '40s recorded alone with rhythm sections, starting a custom now taken almost as a necessity.

Bob Mintzer has visited UNH several times, but always in his identity as a big band composer/arranger and soloist. He studied at the Hartt School of Music, and soon was arranging for Buddy Rich. He has led his own big bands since 1978, and a smaller group, the Yellow Jackets, since '91. Many of his charts have already become classics to those laboring to keep big band music alive and vital. Bob's CD Hommage to Count Basie (2000) has been widely acclaimed.

Phil Markowitz's creative ability has made him the recipient of six grants, including from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Doris Duke Foundation. An Eastman grad, he worked with Chet Baker for several years who described him as "one of the most sensitive, lyrical, and inventive piano players of all time." (Wow!) He recently toured Europe with a Tenor Summit including Joe Lovano and Michael Brecker.

Rufus Reid is one of the most respected of all bassists. Originally a trumpet player, he made the switch as a young adult, studying with members of the Chicago Symphony, and graduating from Northwestern. Long an outstanding educator, he taught principally at William Paterson University in New Jersey for 20 years. Benny Golson has composed a concerto for him, and he has been honored by the International Association of Jazz Educators, and Bass Player magazine.

John Riley, a pupil of Joe Morello, received academic degrees from North Texas State and the Manhattan School of Music, and is recognized as an outstanding student and presenter of the drummer's art. He has published books in that regard, serves on the faculties of three universities, and is an artist in residence at the Amsterdam Conservatory. And he began as a rocker, first encountering jazz on the soundtrack of The Gene Krupa Story!
The totality of performing relationships represented variously by these artists is simply exhaustive, ranging from Don Byas and Stan Getz to Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, from Toots Thielemans and Bill Evans to Louis Bellson and Tito Puente, from Woody Herman and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis to the Vanguard and Carnegie Hall Orchestras—and even to André Previn and soprano Kathleen Battle!

Thus, the vast experience that this quartet brings to the action of “extending, elaborating, and refining” would doubtless warm the venerable Albert Murray’s heart, as it will our own.

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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

2004-2005 SCHEDULE

September 20: Whistlin' Dixie: The Eli Newberger All-Stars
October 25: Ellingtonia Plus: Clark Terry, Jimmy Woode and Shawn Monteiro
November 22: Triple Play: Dick Hyman, Howard Alden, and Jay Leonhart
January 24: Second Annual Tommy Gallant Scholarship Concert:
The Incomparable Bob Wilber Pays Tribute to the Incomparable Johnny Hodges
February 28: Manhattan Magic: The Bob Mintzer Quartet
April 4: Right from the Source: Dave Pietro’s Banda Brazil

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

October 23: Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler, directing; UNH JAZZ SINGERS, William Kempster, directing.
January 18: Harry Jones Memorial Concert: Seacoast Big Band featuring trombonist/composer JAY ASHBY; Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
March 21: Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn and the UNH JAZZ BAND, Dave Seiler, directing, Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

For tickets call (603)862-2290