



Our Twenty-ninth Season

Our One Hundred Eighty- Third Program  
2007-2008

FOR LIONEL, RED, AND BUNNY:  
THE ED POLCER SEXTET

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

8 p.m. Monday, September 17, 2007  
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH



---

## THE ARTISTS

---

### The Ed Polcer Sextet

As we enter another season of exploring the myriad ways in which the unfolding jazz tradition refreshes itself, we begin with a manifestation of how some of the unique artists from earlier periods continue to inform and inspire those of later generations. To the physically young among us such figures as Red Norvo, Bunny Berigan, and Lionel Hampton are either totally unknown or perhaps might be players from the early days of baseball. It is even harder to convey to youth that during a good part of the last century jazz was not positioned by the public as being somewhere in between the nostalgic and the esoteric but instead had a central role in shaping the tastes of the popular culture. In light of current norms it is interesting to note that a substantial number of the “matinee idols” of the late 1930s and early ‘40s were not singers, singer-songwriters, or other electronically enhanced and manipulated types but rather were imaginative acoustic instrumentalists such as Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and Harry James. And they led ensembles of 15 or more playing extremely sophisticated orchestrations (even the “square” ones!), not in concert venues but in ballrooms! Ah, the mixed blessings of progress.

Lionel, Red, and Bunny all were born late in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus just a century ago, when jazz was in its infancy. Each of these artists is best remembered for the individuality of his improvising, but all were dance band leaders in the years noted above, and their interactions with others in the jazz arena are complex, fascinating, and worth many trips to the library as Ed’s narrative will doubtless reveal. Bunny died at 33, but Red and Lionel lived extremely long and active lives; we were blessed by three appearances on this series by Red Norvo between 1981 and 1985. Red and Lionel, though of very different personalities were nonetheless the first significant vibraphonists in jazz, Red arriving there via the xylophone and Lionel through drums (and two-finger piano!); Bunny’s trumpet treatment of *I Can’t Get Started* (tragically prescient) remains one of the most singularly imitated artifacts from his generation.

Speaking of blessings, Ed Polcer’s groups have also graced our stage three times, but through some perverse act of self-denial on the part of our series his most recent appearance was in 1995. He is a vigorous advocate for the continued vitality of the central language of the so-called Swing Era; he speaks with authority, having played (like Bunny, Lionel, and Red) with Benny Goodman, whose cognomen “the King of Swing” carries some accuracy, unlike many such appellations. Ed was also at the center of the activity emanating from Eddie Condon’s New York nightclub for several years—and to raise expectations even further, he performed at the wedding of Prince Rainer and Grace Kelly! He surrounds himself with performers of compatible proclivities, and our spirits are thusly energized. Ken, Frank, and Joe also have been to UNH before, and we are glad to welcome Dion, John and Judy to our ever increasing fold.

Bunny Berigan, Red Norvo, and Lionel Hampton, born within months of each other, lived highly contrasting lives and probably made their most significant individual contributions to the jazz panorama at very different points in the spectrum of time; such are the mysteries and accidents of alternative paths and opportunities, leading to the variegated richness of the human condition of which jazz expression is such a paradigm.

Welcome to our 29<sup>th</sup> season of pondering such imponderables, as we “pat our feet”!





ED POLCER  
CORNET

KEN PELOWSKI,  
CLARINET & SAXOPHONE  
DION TUCKER, TROMBONE  
JOHN COCUZZI, PIANO & VIBES  
FRANK TATE, BASS  
JOE ASCIONE, DRUMS  
JUDY KURTZ, VOCALIST

---

*Note: The film and discussion series Looking At: Jazz, America's Art Form sponsored by the UNH Library in cooperation with the Seacoast Jazz Society will continue this fall with the final three programs of the six presentations. The dates are Oct. 14, 28, and Nov. 18 at 2pm in Dover's McConnell Center. Bill Ross, Head of Special Collections and Archives is the project coordinator and Paul Verrette is the assisting scholar.*

---

*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*

*Program essays from the entire UNH Traditional Jazz Series now can be accessed on the internet.*

*<http://www.izaak.unh.edu/nhltj>*

---

## 2007-2008 SCHEDULE

---

- September 17: For Lionel, Red, and Bunny: The Ed Polcer Sextet  
•  
October 15: Decades of Songs in Her Heart: Sheila Jordan  
•  
November 19: Youthful Vibrations: Stefon Harris and Blackout  
•  
February 4: Luminous Rays of Pianistic Elegance: Tim Ray  
•  
March 10: Great Scott!: The Multidimensional Mr. Robinson and His Colleagues  
•  
April 14: Rediscovered Jewels: Onyx Club Sextet Led by Wayne Roberts
- 

## OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

---

- October 26: *Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler and Thomas Palance, directing. Strafford Room, Memorial Union Building, UNH.*  
•  
January 22: *Harry Jones Memorial Concert with the Seacoast Big Band, Dave Seiler, directing with special guest, composer/trombonist John Fedchock. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*  
•  
January 30: *Faculty Jazz Sextet. Johnson Theatre, PCAC. Free and open to the public.*  
•  
March 16: *Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn, and his "Real" Clark Terry Quintet, with Stantawn Kendrick, saxophones, Don Friedman, piano, Marcus McLaurine, bass, and Sylvia Cuenca, drums. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.*

♦♦♦♦

*For tickets call (603)862-2290*