Our Twenty-ninth Season

Our One Hundred Eighty-Seventh Program
2007-2008

Scott Robinson Doctette:
Bronze Nemesis

Annual Tom Gallant Memorial Scholarship Concert

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

8 p.m. Monday, March 10, 2008
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
As this series moves toward its 30th season the remaining few of us who were present at the creation succumb to nostalgia, especially when coincidences of scheduling generate reflection on the unpredictable results of the passage of time on the destiny both of colleagues and of the traditional art itself. Concerning the latter, Scott Robinson (b. 1959) is the example par excellence of one of the healthiest if still somewhat rarified developments in jazz over recent decades, i.e., the presence of superb artists whose creativity can be realized with conviction across the entire range of jazz styles, from the mature New Orleans idiom to the 21st century avant garde.

Time was when originality in jazz was thought to be possible only in the context of fresh technical, theoretical, or sociological endeavors, thus was tied to the "myth of progress"; successful performers in earlier styles were considered to be "moldy figs" at best or calculating opportunists at worst. But today Scott Robinson is comparable to a classical chamber artist who can become as aesthetically involved in Bach and Beethoven as in Bartok and Schoenberg; he has performed with Ruby Braff, Marty Grosz, Buck Clayton, Lionel Hampton, Paquito D'Rivera, and Anthony Braxton (among a range of others, including the New York City Opera who needed a bass saxophone!), and as a composer he has absorbed the full richness of these multifarious experiences. On this very series he has appeared with the White Heat Swing Orchestra, Vince Giordano's New Orleans Nighthawks, leading a quartet subbing for Scott Hamilton, and with the Frank Wess Octet, and in Portsmouth's Music Hall not long ago he was featured with Maria Schneider's contemporary jazz orchestra; lots of stylistic bases therefore have been touched, every one of them with integrity, enthusiasm, and a true sense of perspective. Moreover, Scott has travelled with his variegated art to 30 nations on 5 continents, made 165 recordings, and performed at Carnegie Hall, the Smithsonian Institution, and for a President.

Our nostalgia cannot help but remind us that Scott was a huge favorite of the late founder of this series, Dorothy Prescott, who passed away 20 years ago at age 66. How could she not have been drawn to a young man barely out of his teens who when praised for the soulful Herschel Evans-like sound of his vintage rendition of Blue and Sentimental replied with non-doctrinaire perspicacity, "Well, man, it's on the horn!"—and who amidst a plethora of exotic items owned a C-melody sax?! And who better to honor the legacy of another whom Dot loved, pianist Tom Gallant having appeared numerous times on this series, leaving us at age 63 just a decade after Dot.

The unwary should be warned that as early as 1984 on an LP appropriately titled Multiple Instruments Scott plays 34 of them, and his imagination has enlarged ever since, often tapping unlikely sources for his musical inspiration. The designation Bronze Nemesis comes from a series of pulp novels from the 1930s and '40s featuring a world-saving hero named Doc Savage. For the original performance of this music in 2001 Scott wrote, "Ever wonder what a person could become if all of their mental and physical potential were fully realized?...Add to that a strong moral character and an intense drive to be of service to humanity, and you would have someone capable of incredible..."
accomplishments. You would have Doc Savage.” In describing that event as “one of the best jazz concerts I have ever attended”, widely experienced New York musician and journalist Loren Schoenberg wrote, “It blended humor, (in large dollops) with instrumental virtuosity, an original point of view, and swing in a fashion that can only be called Robinsonian.” An Ottawa performance generated this comment, “This show had more suspense, creativity, and musicianship in its first few minutes than some have in their entirety.”

If she were with us tonight, Dot Prescott would listen to the performance with critical but open ears, relish the quality of the playing, and ponder the why and wherefore of it for future animated discussion. And the author of the Doc Savage tales certainly would savor that his own vision had inspired the world’s only doctette!

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/nhtj

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