Our Thirtieth Season

Our One Hundred Ninety-First Program
2008-2009

Bob's Big Band Binge:
Bob Wilber

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

8 p.m. Monday, November 10, 2008
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
THE ARTISTS

Bob Wilber

If you trek to the UNH Library (which is, as a matter of pure geography, only a few yards to your left as you sit in the Johnson Theatre), find your way to the Special Collections area, and enter the Dorothy Prescott Traditional Jazz room, you will see on the wall to the right of the door a sketch dating from circa 1949 of several musicians well known only to us aging (or aged) aficionados—trumpeter Henry Goodwin, trombonist Jimmy Archey, pianist Dick Wellstood, bassist Pops Foster, and drummer Tommy Benford. They frame in the center an enlarged figure of a clarinetist, clearly the star of the group as well as its youngest, along with pianist Wellstood only recently having attained what was then voting age. Said sketch was the property of Mrs. Prescott herself, a souvenir of her earliest exposure to live jazz in Boston’s legendary Savoy, the young Mr. Wilber being one of her first aesthetic loves. (And she also owned homemade acetate recordings from that venue’s nightly radio broadcasts, executed by her then future husband!) Thus Bob Wilber was a spiritual part of this series even before it was conceived. (Just a modicum of speculative metaphysics!)

Just a few months ago Bob Wilber passed his 80th temporal marker, and the quality, exuberance, and freshness of his playing certainly can be described as ageless. The writer of these notes often recalls an evening in Boston’s Symphony Hall in 1997 where in a tribute to Bob’s mentor Sidney Bechet called The Wizard at 100 Wynton Marsalis augmented his Lincoln Center ensemble with Bob himself and introduced him with a glowing description of how just hearing Bob warming up backstage was an inspiration to everyone else on the program.

Being born in 1928, Bob is of a musical generation which in large part tended to succumb to the blandishment of seeming newness and innovation, to the neglect of some of the well-established jazz values developed in the first few decades of the art. Bob was one of the insightful ones who perceived the enduring qualities which not only deserved to be preserved but which could generate fresh creativity, notwithstanding the virtues of subsequent developments. This was sometimes a lonely path, but it was varied, eventful, and ultimately blessed with the recognition and respect that best come through the workings of time and reflection.

Certainly among the highlights of his career are his study and residence with Sidney Bechet; his work in reviving the music of Jelly Roll Morton, et al., some years ago with Dick Hyman, followed more recently by similarly intended programs with Wynton Marsalis; the famous Soprano Summit recordings with the late Kenny Davern; the Grammy Award winning soundtrack for the movie Cotton Club; the recreation of the epochal 1938 Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall concert on its 50th anniversary; —and playing all of the major classical clarinet literature as well!

Bob has performed on this series at least a half-dozen times, often with a variety of small groups but also in larger formats presenting the music of Fletcher Henderson and Johnny Hodges. His most recent appearance was at Clark Terry’s 85th birthday celebration, which like tonight necessitated a flight from England, his present residence with his dear wife, singer Pug Horton.

Over its 30-plus years the Seacoast Big Band has itself achieved iconic status in the region as a vital medium for sustaining the ongoing heritage of the idiom, and Dave Seiler has called upon its members and guests regularly to enhance the quality of our lives.

We offer Bob Wilber somewhat belated greetings for his 80th birthday, and hopes for many happy returns of the day, —and to UNH. Perhaps his mentor Bechet’s tune “Spreading Joy” describes him best of all!
BOB WILBER & THE SEACOAST BIG BAND
DAVE SEILER, DIRECTOR

Sax
CHARLIE JENNISON
GINA ROBINS
MARC LAFORCE
SEAN POTTER
ANTHONY DIBARTOLOMEO

TRUMPET
BILL KAROW
MARK SELESNICK
GERALD TAUBE
JIM CLARK

TROMBONE
CHRIS OBERHOLTZER
JIM ROBINS
STEVE THAYER
ERNIE MILLS

RHYTHM SECTION
JIM BUTKA, PIANO
JOHN HUNTER, BASS
LES HARRIS, JR., DRUMS

AND VOCALIST PUG HORTON

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.izaaak.unh.edu/nhltj

2008-2009 SCHEDULE

September 22:  So Much More to Say: The New Black Eagle Jazz Band
October 13:     Four Brothers Redux: Harry Allen's Four Others
November 10:   Bob's Big Band Binge: Bob Wilber
February 2:     Depth of Emotion: Ed Saindon and Dave Liebman
March 2:        Where the Guitar Now Is At: Russell Malone Quartet
April 13:       Bria and Jim's Borderline Jazz Band

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

October 24:    Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler, directing. Strafford Room, Memorial Union Building, UNH.
January 20:    Harry Jones Memorial Concert with the Seacoast Big Band, Dave Seiler, directing. A program of Harry's favorite music by Count Basie, Woody Herman and Maynard Ferguson. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
January 28:    Faculty Jazz Ensemble. Johnson Theatre, PCAC. Free and open to the public.
March 15:      Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn, and guest artists. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

For tickets call (603)862-2290
Bob Wilber Compositions and Arrangements

Bufadora Blow-up
Dancing on a Rainbow
Early Morning Blues
Clarion Song
We’ll All Go Ridin’ On a Rainbow
In a Melancholy Mood
The Big Pearl
Tango Royale
M’dina
Movin’ ‘n Groovin’

INTERMISSION

Benny Goodman Heritage

Let’s Dance
King Porter Stomp
Down South Campmeeting
It’s Been So Long
My Old Flame
Why Don’t You Do Right
One O’Clock Jump

Duke Ellington Heritage

Take the ‘A’ Train
Snibor
Just a Sittin’ and a Rockin’
Perdido
I’m Checkin’ Out Goodbye
Star-Crossed Lovers
Cottontail