Our Thirtieth Season

Our One Hundred Ninety-third Program
2008-2009

Bria & Jim's
Borderline Jazz Band

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

8 p.m. Monday, April 13, 2009
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
THE ARTISTS

Bria and Jim's Borderline Jazz Band

At Switzerland's Montreux Jazz Festival in 1976 ten American college big bands were involved in one of its components, some from large and/or prestigious institutions. In that period of dynamic feminism only one of them had a female performer in the trumpet, sax, or trombone sections—believe it or not, UNH, (which had a young lady in each of those sections!) Currently, parents, relatives, and friends attending high school jazz band concerts will witness girls in all of the sections, in combos, and playing featured solos. But somewhere along the line there remains a culture lag; we present a female trumpet player/leader in the front line for the first time in our 30th year and 193rd concert.

History is sometimes intractable or simply ignored; most of us have seen the 1923 photo of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band with Lil Hardin (later Armstrong) at the piano; soon there was Mary Lou Williams, nonagenarian Marian McPartland has twice graced this stage—and Barbara Carroll is still playing a brunch every Sunday in New York in her 85th year! But the piano was considered "ladylike" (which is why some of us non-females were in our youth denigrated as "sissys"!), and most "band" instruments did not meet post-Victorian standards of feminine propriety.

Some few of us in our rummaging through those fascinating episodes of jazz experience which have tended to be excluded from the central historical canon may have encountered Valaida Snow (b. circa 1903), another trumpeter/singer who performed with Earl Hines and Noble Sissle, recorded under her own name, and was known in Europe as "Little Louis"! The present writer faintly remembers the Eldridge-inspired Billie Rogers who played and sang with the Woody Herman orchestra in the early '40s, but completely missed Gillespie disciple Clara Bryant from slightly later. But of course they are not the only victims of critical neglect; the first edition of the copious multi-volume New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (1988) not only omits any reference to Billie and Clara but also to the better known International Sweethearts of Rhythm, which was both female and multicultural. (The second edition made amends!)

Bria Skonberg is a native of Vancouver, British Columbia, and despite her documented and contagious youthfulness has been a public performer for two decades. A recent graduate of Capilano College with a strong interest in introducing jazz in elementary school, much of her professional activity has been on the Pacific coast where she leads several bands, and more recently on the international festival circuit. During her travels in 2007 she encountered the peripatetic former New Englander Jim Fryer, a fortuitous occurrence which generated the Borderline Jazz Band, with all due deference to the immigration establishment. Understandably she identifies Louis Armstrong as her strongest influence, but her abundant curiosity also leads her to a fulsome musical embrace of (among others) Ruby Braff, Clifford Brown, and Clark Terry—(Why not?!).

Four of tonight's participants—truly an all-star ensemble—will be having a sort of reunion in reference to this series; Jim, John, Jeff, and Jimmy have performed here previously, in a myriad of contexts but not all together, and they generously appear on the CD which we developed for Katrina relief. Unfortunately, Jim Fryer's geographical adventures caused him to be marooned in the snows of the Pacific northwest when scheduled here two years ago, so we welcome him with crossed fingers. Tonight's appearance will be Jimmy Mazzy's seventeenth on this series, certainly a record of some sort, with each one reintroducing musical treasures also having suffered from neglect. In addition to his eloquent playing John Clark doubtless could enlighten us about another overlooked lady trumpeter, Leora Henderson, because John wrote his doctoral dissertation at Brandeis on her somewhat less-neglected husband Fletcher. Clearly we are most fortunate to be able to welcome Jeff Barnhart again since two of the bands with which he is now affiliated are based in the United Kingdom! And as always we are happy to meet newcomers Ed Wise and Kevin Dorn for the first time.
This concert is a particularly appropriate one with which to close our season; it includes artists whose
collective interactions in the world of traditional jazz performance are virtually countless, but who are
exploring their individual commitments through a varied array of activities ranging from the scholarly and
educational to the joyous reclamation of the obscure, always finding fresh ways to communicate both the
familiar and its opposite. And most of all, this evening we feature a remarkable young lady who truly
exemplifies the triumph of personal conviction plus that capacity of the best of her generation to find
renewability in our enduring heritage. It must be Easter.

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

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