

T R A D I T I O N A L
Jazz
S E R I E S

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR SEVENTY-FOURTH PROGRAM

JOHNNY MINCE
CLARINET
with the
TOM GALLANT TRIO

SPONSORED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
LIBRARY OF TRADITIONAL JAZZ

8 PM MONDAY
FEBRUARY 4, 1991
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

THE ARTIST

JOHNNY MINCE

One of the more provocative items of nostalgic speculation is the whole question of just how much jazz was really going on in those swing era big bands. After all, by definition and venue they were essentially designed for dancing, and other than certain shared rhythmical properties, that purpose did not necessarily require many of the qualities associated with the jazz language, in particular the basic element of improvisation, as well as the inflections, articulations, and colorations growing from the African-American roots of the idiom. Clearly there is no problem in placing Duke Ellington and Guy Lombardo at the opposite extremes of the spectrum, but many of the groups in between had delightfully mixed identities, varying from band to band, gig to gig, hour to hour, even tune to tune! The unravelling of this is a challenge for those too young to have lived through it — and even for some of us who did — but no person better understands this portion of our history than Johnny Mince.

Johnny was born in rural Chicago Heights, Illinois (not to be confused with its larger neighbor) in 1912. He “learned” the clarinet by playing along with the only recording his family owned, the *William Tell Overture*; reading came later, under combat conditions! He gained professional experience travelling with the Joe Haymes band, eventually reaching New York. The level of his early accomplishments is revealed by the fact that during the brief and fitful mid-'30s tenure of the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, Tommy D. would hire Johnny to replace Jimmy D. during their more-than-occasional spats.

Soon Johnny joined a band formed by Glenn Miller for the British Leader, Ray Noble. During this period, Miller was experimenting with various arranging techniques, and during rehearsal he had Johnny replace a missing trumpet player, performing the high lead over a close saxophone voicing with the melody doubled an octave lower; this was the birth, near-accidental, of the famous “Miller voicing” so characteristic of that later leader's sound!

Johnny came into his own with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra from 1937-41, a group that truly combined all of the factors which brought jazz impulses as close to the popular mainstream as they ever were to get. Critic George Simon writes, “Of all the hundreds of well-known bands, Tommy Dorsey's could do more things better than any other”. During his World War II military service, Johnny toured with Irving Berlin's *This Is The Army* show, and after his discharge went into a lengthy New York studio career, highlighted by 20 years on the Arthur Godfrey radio and television programs. Subsequently he “retired” to Florida, but has continued to travel widely, bringing with old friends the music of his glorious era to new audiences.

T R A D I T I O N A L



JOHNNY MINCE

CLARINET

Pianist Tom Gallant has set the qualitative standards for jazz in his native Seacoast area for several decades, as well as spreading its message with the patient zeal identified more with missionaries than musicians. He is aided in these endeavors by Jim Howe, who views the New England scene from the twin perspectives of bass line and camera, and by Les Harris, Sr., whose gamut of experience runs from Bobby Hackett to Toshiko Akiyoshi, and who seems to have generated an incipient family dynasty of drummers. And when circumstances permit, Dick Creedon adds his Bixian eloquence to Tom's ensemble, having provided the trumpet cantus firmus for many a fine clarinetist to ornament.

Johnny Mince's continued devotion to his art is dramatized by his willingness to fly from Florida to New Hampshire in the middle of winter, have once played in Ted Herbert's (Manchester) store during a blizzard! His life in jazz has been rich, and we are blessed, as is he, that it continues.

***Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements.
Your cooperation is requested.***

THE SERIES

The UNH Traditional Jazz Series began in 1979. 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

THE SCHEDULE

September 10	Milt Hinton & Clark Terry
October 15	Buck Clayton Big Band
November 19	Dick Hyman
February 4	Johnny Mince
March 4	Dave Whitney Quintet
April 1	Howard Alden-Dan Barrett Quintet
May 6	Paramount Jazz Band