TRADITIONAL JAZZ SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR SEVENTY-SEVENTH PROGRAM

RAY SMITH’S PARAMOUNT JAZZ BAND

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

8 PM MONDAY
MAY 6, 1991
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
THE ARTISTS

RAY SMITH'S PARAMOUNT JAZZ BAND

For a number of reasons, April 13, 1987, stands out boldly in the institutional memory of the UNH Traditional Jazz Series: 1) it was the date of Concert #50, our golden anniversary, so to speak, 2) for the only time in our history, admission was free, 3) we also celebrated the band-leader's birthday - specifically which one remains privileged information, but he did retire from his daylight endeavors soon thereafter, 4) it marked the first appearance here of the then two-year-old Paramount Jazz Band.

Leader and band are now four years older, and the “retirement” of the former has generated activity in the latter which has taken it from Strafford Room to San Diego, Sticky Wicket to Seattle, Copley Plaza to Colorado, Tanglewood to Tampa; that so much time and travel have not included until now another invitation to UNH reflects, we hope, an abundance of the riches available to us rather than a posture of benign neglect.

Actually, Ray Smith has been one of the most consistent and appreciated supporters of this series since its inception. A veteran of a number of distinguished trad groups, he is an original member of the Advisory Board of the NHLTJ, and can be spotted regularly in our audiences (when the band isn’t working!). More significantly, his copious knowledge and wisdom are conveyed to thousands every Sunday evening at 6:30 via his Jazz Decades program (WGBH-FM), an endeavor itself in its fourth decade.

Ray's unusual qualifications have contributed to the development of a repertoire for his Paramount Jazz Band which writer/musician Tex Wyndham has likened to “the exploration of the contents of old piano benches”. This may represent culture shock to the young, but it does seem to some of us that there was far more qualitative justification for a real “Top 40” in those days of yore when songs were published composites of melody, harmony, and lyrics rather than individual specimens of technologically-realized narcissism. And there is no-one on the planet more capable of articulating this message with vocal authority than another old friend of our series, Jimmy Mazzy.

Stylistically, the PJB combines the organizational possibilities of its variegated instrumental colorations with the improvisational freedom which is essential to the continued freshness of the idiom. Its members embrace a forty-year age span, and come to this body of music with perspectives from many walks of life - television production, medicine, computers, research, high tech - yet they find common sustenance in its richness of invention, sentiment, and humor.

As we close another season, the Paramount Jazz Band is the ideal catalyst to remind us of the power of the music to both transcend the categories in which we so often find ourselves, and move us to relish those things that attest to the continuity of our humanity. Put in less rhetorical terms, spring is a good time to check on the contents of those piano benches.

Thanks, guys.
RAY SMITH’S PARAMOUNT JAZZ BAND

SCOTT PHILBRICK — Cornet
GARY RODBERG — Clarinet,
               Soprano and Alto Sax
STEVE WRIGHT — Reeds and Cornet
ROBIN VERDIER — Piano
CHUCK STEWART — Tuba
JIMMY MAZZY — Banjo and Vocals

and

RAY SMITH — Drums and Leader

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

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