TRADITIONAL JAZZ SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR EIGHTY-FIRST PROGRAM

GUITAR SUMMIT:
GRAY SARGENT
AND
HOWARD ALDEN

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

8 PM MONDAY
FEBRUARY 3, 1992
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Although our venue is modest, and even in an election year we pretend to no ventures headed for the cover of *Time* magazine, regular attendees at these concerts can attest that the aesthetically unique is not beyond the limits of our programmatic purview. We humbly suggest that such is the case this evening.

Generically one of the oldest of instruments, the guitar is also one of the most multifaceted in actual role, as well as in susceptibility to disdain. Despite its illustrious history as a classical medium, probably manifested best to 20th-century audiences through the work of Andres Segovia, the acoustic variety is often dismissed as the negligible toy of simplistic folkies; at the other extreme, the barbarous auditory and visual assaults of technologically unrestrained descendants of that innocent implement, seemingly prescriptive for the world of “heavy metal” (if that term is still part of the living language), have led some observers to view it as symbolic of a threat to civilization. Serious jazz listeners are more knowledgeable than most of humankind about the range of salutary experiences possible through the various capabilities of contemporary versions of the instrument, yet it is perhaps rare even for these enlightened souls to see two guitarists together on a stage and not be reminded initially of something less savory.

Of course, jazz guitarists usually appear as members of rhythm sections, or as discrete soloists: like pianists, bassists, and drummers, they seldom have the opportunity to interact with their immediate peers. Thus, tonight’s concert is singular for performers and listeners alike. Individually, Gray and Howard are no strangers to our series, and they exemplify one of the prime interests of its founder, the late Dorothy Prescott, — a new generation developing freshly personal musical insights, while maintaining intimate and resourceful contact with tradition; their appearance together represents the type of specially-conceived event that would have pleased her greatly—and which she might well have devised herself!

Gray works out of Boston, Howard from New York, and the respect with which each is held in the jazz community literally transcends generational gaps, stylistic boundaries, and continents. Their playing contrasts in many particulars of musical choice, but their commonality of taste, technique, sophistication, imagination, and integrity promises a shared result possessing neither precedent nor parallel. (We should note that at a certain point mature artists are embarrassed by continuing references to their youth, that condition being both relative and impermanent; suffice it to say that their combined ages don’t come close to that of either of the protagonists in our last two concerts, Milt Hinton and Doc Cheatham — and perhaps not even to Frank Wess!)

Their task will be made easier by Marshall Wood, who has graced our stage frequently, including sessions with each of our headliners, and by Les Harris, Jr., a newcomer to the series, but well-known to many in our audience through his work with *The Ritz* (among others) and his instructional activities at UNH and Phillips Exeter Academy.

In its political incarnation, summity involves risk, trust, skill, compromise, and creativity. Tonight’s playing field may not be global, but the operative dialectic should be much the same, and the consequences far more satisfying to both the ear and the spirit. Let the meeting be called to order.
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GUITAR SUMMIT

HOWARD ALDEN — Guitar
GRAY SARGENT — Guitar
MARSHALL WOOD — Bass
LES HARRIS, JR. — Drums

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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