

# JazzErie Notes



The Monthly Newsletter of JazzErie

August 2007  
Issue No. 150

*13 Years Serving the Jazz Community*

## 15TH ANNUAL ERIE ART MUSEUM BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL

Saturday, August 4 and Sunday, August 5  
Frontier Park - Noon til 10 p.m each day

### SCHEDULE

#### Saturday, August 4 – Blues day

12:00 noon – Family performance,  
featuring the Erie African Dance  
Troupe Sylla Kundla

2:00 PM – Familiar Spirit Band

4:00 PM – Geoff Achison

6:00 PM – Lil' Ed and the Blues  
Imperials

8:00 PM – Junior Brown

#### Sunday, August 5 – Jazz day

12:00 noon – Gem City Jazz Band

2:00 PM – Cats A Bear

4:00 PM – Babik

6:00 PM – Stew Cutler Trio

8:00 PM - Rashied Ali Quintet

This year's concert on the lawn at Frontier Park marks the Erie Art Museum's 15th year of procuring great international and regional talent for the enjoyment of Erie's blues and jazz fans. Featured this year, along with Saturday's sizzling blues by Junior Brown, Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials and others will be a full day of jazz performances on Sunday.



Headliner for this day of jazz (8:00 – 10:00 PM) is the Rashied Ali Quintet.

Ali's bio describes him as "A progenitor and leading exponent of multidirectional rhythms, polytonal

percussion." With a resume that includes creative excursions with such musical free spirits as Don Cherry, Pharoah Sanders, Paul Bley, Archie Shepp and Albert Ayler, who's going to argue? Oh yes, and most especially there was an extended stint with John Coltrane, joining Elvin Jones in a number of seminal concerts and recordings.



*Rashied Ali*

Critic Chris Kelsey describes Ali's contribution: "From the time he joined Coltrane in late 1965 until the saxophonist's death in July, 1967, Ali

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## JAZZERIE MEMBERSHIP

**-Its Time to Renew!!!**

August is the month to renew your JazzErie membership, which will expire on Sept. 1, 2007. You can return the membership form on the back of this Newsletter, along with your check, to the address shown. Or you can get a membership at the JazzErie booth at the Erie Art Museum Blues & Jazz Festival this month. (If you renewed or joined last month, ignore this notice.)

You subscription to News Notes will continue through October, and possibly November, but will end then. You will not be eligible for concert admission discounts after Sept. 1.

This is your annual opportunity to refresh your support of Erie's jazz community. Benefits include:

-Co-sponsorship of many jazz events during the year

-Reduced rates on many JazzErie concerts

-A monthly newsletter with news of upcoming events and concerts, plus in-depth commentary

-Support of local jazz education in schools and community

-A monthly Jazz Discussion Group, an evening of fine recorded music and stimulating conversation

-The knowledge that you are supporting the life and health of this vital music in Erie.

**JOIN NOW.**

**For More Information: [www.jazzerie.com](http://www.jazzerie.com)**

# JAZZ ERIE



JazzErie is a community of music lovers and musicians and, a membership organization dedicated to sharing with children, adults and one another an awareness and love of music, particularly jazz. JazzErie brings together people who want to listen to jazz, learn about it, play it and just live it.

Check out our website at [www.jazzerie.com](http://www.jazzerie.com) for complete information on current and upcoming events.

## 2007-2008 Board of Directors

President..... Dr. Carl Hultman  
 Vice President ..... Ed Goebel  
 Treasurer ..... Liz Scarpelli

### Directors

Joe Curlett	Brian Sheridan
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Steve Eidell	2002-2003
Tom McLaren	2003-2005

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### JazzErie Notes

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#### Send articles to:

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 or **Box 8833, Erie, PA 16505**

helped enable Trane's final, most radical break with convention. The drummer's skittering, high-energy playing fractured the pulse into tiny shards, which he reassembled, mosaic-like, into something quite different. Ali staked out new areas of rhythmic independence and sound exploration."

Ali grew up in Philadelphia, studied with Philly Joe Jones, and is a big admirer of Art Blakey, but has carved his own creative niche in jazz percussion. After Coltrane's death he toured Europe for awhile, then returned to NYC, playing with cutting edge leaders of the era – Jackie McLean, Alice Coltrane, Gary Bartz, Dewey Redman and others. He opened his own loft-jazz club, Ali's Alley, in 1973. He also started a recording enterprise long before this became a trend.

Ali's current Quintet, with whom he has made two CD's: "Judgment Day, Vol. 1" and "Judgment Day, Vol. 2" (CD Baby), may sound more conventional, but listen close. "It might sound like that on the surface," Ali advises, "but underneath you'll hear a lot of stuff that says I'm really an avant-garde player." The group, together now for four years, includes trumpeter Jumaane Smith, tenor saxophonist Lawrence Clark, pianist Greg Murphy and bassist Joris Teepe

\* \* \* \* \*

The day will begin with a family concert by the **Gem City Jazz Band**, followed at 2:00 by that local repository of jazz expertise, **Cats A Bear**, comprised of guitarist/keyboardist Frank Singer, drummer Joe Dorris, bassist Tony Stefanelli, saxophonist Phil Popotnik and percussionist Tito Ronzitti.



*Babik*

At 4:00, you will hear **Babik** (bah-'beek), from Buffalo, a "gypsy swing" quartet, direct musical descendents of Django Reinhardt's Hot Club bands of the 1930's. This acoustic group features Stuart Fuchs on lead guitar, Geoff Perry on violin, Josh Assad on rhythm guitar and Kevin O'Brien on upright bass.

At 6:00, the Festival brings you the **Stew Cutler Trio**. Guitarist/composer/arranger and cross-genre musician Stew Cutler hails from NYC. He left for the open road at age 19, for a gig with blues legend ZZ Hill, and has since moved across a broad musical landscape, including stops with new music pioneers Bobby Previte and Eliot Sharp, bass master Harvey Brooks, and many others. Cutler has recorded with David Sanborn, Marty Erlich, Lester Bowie, Bill Frisell and others. His trio recordings feature sidemen bassist Booker King and drummer Garry Buer.

## JAZZERIE BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

July 10, 2007

The Board welcomes new members Allen Zurcher, John Kytic, Brian Sheridan and reelected members Joe Curlett and Mary Watson.

President Carl Hultman announced a number of TV interviews publicizing the Jazz Walk this week. Al Lubiejewski is working with Erie Times staff on a Spotlight article. Arrangements for the Jazz Walk are nearly complete. John Kytic reported on membership drive plans, including a special mailing. He has met with former membership chair Nancy Eichelsdorfer. Liz Scarpelli gave a favorable financial report. She will prepare a budget next month when Jazz Walk receipts are known. Ed Goebel is seeking volunteers for the JazzErie Booth at the Erie Art Museum Blues & Jazz Festival on August 4 & 5.

New business: A local group is discussing youth jazz events/workshops. John Kytic will serve as JazzErie's representative to this group. Possible additional grant funding for special events was discussed.

### CORRECTION

Two important names were inadvertently omitted from last month's list of JazzErie volunteers: Bob Protzman, a jazz journalist who brings his broad knowledge of jazz and invaluable contacts to JazzErie, and Dr. Ken Gamble, a saxophonist and part of our Gannon contingent. Both serve on JazzErie's Performance Committee.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES



**Dr. Allen Zurcher**

It is with a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm that Jazz Erie introduces a new column in the monthly newsletter. This segment will examine jazz from a historical standpoint by looking at specific styles, such as swing, be-bop and traditional jazz (Dixieland), and discuss their origins and influences. Each discussion will include a brief description of the style, its major contributors and musical examples pertaining to that style. This column will also examine specific historical figures, such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, and John Coltrane, (among others) all of whom had a significant impact on the musical direction of jazz. Each feature about an individual will examine how that individual influenced jazz, and the impact he or she had on subsequent generations of musicians and listeners alike. In addition, each segment will include specific musical references should you, the reader, decide to approach this series of articles from a listening perspective.

The third area of jazz history (and the most controversial) I will address is; what jazz is, or, more importantly, what jazz is not. In these articles I will look at specific artists and styles with an ear towards finding a consistent and logical definition of jazz from a historical standpoint, and whether a specific artist or style of music commonly associated with jazz fits a an accepted definition of the music.. Doubtless many readers will disagree and may become downright angry regarding some of the exclusions. That's perfectly OK with me.

Regardless of your propensities towards music in general and jazz specifically, this series of articles is

designed to encourage discussion and offer insight into the history of jazz, its important figures, and most importantly, the music which many of us have dedicated our lives to exploring and enjoying.

Next month I will examine the 'Big Questions'. What is Jazz? What musical characteristics define jazz? Why may one piece of music be considered jazz, and another not?

If you have comments or questions about this series of articles you may email me at [twofiveone@hotmail.com](mailto:twofiveone@hotmail.com). or mail your comments to JazzErie, PO Box 8833, Erie, PA 16505-0833.

Thanks for reading.

## JAZZERIE DISCUSSION GROUP

June 21, 2007



by Charles Ventrillo

So, we are listening to a Riverside Records compilation playing in the background as we socialize a bit after a month's absence, and I am suddenly struck by a performance by one of the twelve artists represented. What is it that is so conspicuous in this collection of jovial musical bouncing-about? Its pianist Bill Evans. I confess to a special magnetism toward the work of artists who perform with even the most subtle attitude of pathos: Evans, Miles Davis, Lester Young and Tom Harrell surface quickly. Journalist Wells Tower, in the Washington Post Magazine of May 13, 2007 paints a poignant picture, "...Bill Evans, whose playing is so haunted, so gracefully grief-wracked that his live recordings at the Village Vanguard conjure an image of the pianist quietly snugging a noose around his neck to the audience's jolly din of table chatter and chiming glassware."

Now for something completely different. Don Schwab introduces us to the Music Educators' Award winners for best collegiate vocalist and jazz ensemble: Kristin Grassi with the Kutztown U. big band. Kristin professes a desire for the Broadway stage but sings with an intimacy and phrasing to put over a jazz performance. Her accompanists are splendid. They could share the stage with anyone. The album is "Dance You Monster" and we listened to "A Time For Love." Do you need a copy? Contact Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

The 1970's was an interesting time for improvised music as jazz musicians fused their sensibilities with the music of Africa, India, American Folk, French Impressionism and Rock. The swing rhythm of Benny Moten and Kenny Clark was abandoned for the straight, even eighth note rhythm of the aforementioned genres. A small fraction of those to embrace this musical stew were Larry Coryell, Paul Winter, Ralph Towner, Keith Jarrett, Eberhard Weber, Kenny Wheeler and Miles Davis. It was a refreshing breeze which for a while cleared the air of the frantic chasing of the complex chords of the American popular song and bebop. This 1974 recording chosen by Don Swift features the Montreux Band led by pianist Barbara Higbie. She is joined on the composition "Egrets" by Darol Anger, violins; Todd Philips, bass; Mike Marshall, guitar and Andy Narell, steel drums. It's delicate, sensitive and hypnotic.

From the album "J.J. Johnson, The Trombone Master," Columbia Jazz Masterpieces, Bob Gross chooses the piece "Blue Trombone." The trombone has come a long, long way. Contemporary players now routinely play Coltrane inventions which confounded other saxophonists for years. Listening to the J.J. of the fifties, one is newly impressed by a composing improviser, playing the right thing at the right time with editorial reserve and authoritative presence. Oh yes, and he swings like mad. The elusive grail of jazz, "The Groove," was discovered, polished and maintained by Max Roach, Tommy Flanagan and Paul Chambers.

*Continued on pg. 5...*

# The Jazz Line

www.jazzerie.com

## PAPERMOON

455-7766

Live jazz weekdays 7 – 10 pm, Fri. & Sat.  
8:30-11:30 pm, Sun. 5-7 pm

Wed., Aug. 1 **Tri This**  
Fri., Aug. 3 **Tri This**  
Sat., Aug. 4 **Basil Ronzitti Trio**  
Sun., Aug 5 **Jim Madden**

Tue., Aug. 7 **Amy Giles**  
Wed., Aug. 8 **Tri This**  
Thu., Aug. 9 **Nick Piccone**  
Fri., Aug. 10 **Nick Piccone**  
Sat., Aug 11 **Jim Madden Trio**

Tues., Aug. 14 **Amy Giles**  
Wed., Aug. 15 **Tri This**  
Thu., Aug 16 **Nick Piccone**  
Fri., & Sat., Aug. 17 & 18 **Tri This**  
(Beach Party!)

Tue., Aug. 21 **Amy Giles**  
Thu., Aug. 23 **Nick Piccone**  
Fri., Aug. 24 **JD Jazz Jam**  
Sat., Aug 25 **TBA**  
Sun., Aug. 26 **Jim Madden Trio**

Tues., Aug 28 **Amy Giles**  
Thu., Aug. 30 **Nick Piccone**  
Fri., Aug. 31 **Jim Madden Trio**  
Sat., Sept. 1 **Jim Madden Trio**

## COLONY PUB & GRILLE

838-2162

Live jazz every Thursday:

**Colony Club House Band** featuring  
**Gene Leone**

## EAST ERIE TURNERS

452-2546

Music in Fountain Room (restaurant) is  
from 8:30 – 11 pm. Minimal cover.

Wed., Aug. 1 **Duelling Pianos**  
Fri., Aug 3 **Elvis (Jim Moore)**  
Fri., Aug. 17 **Touch of Class, Howard  
Hamme & Stan Bialomizy**  
Fri., Aug. 24 **John Kytic Trio**

## SCOTTY'S JAZZ CLUB

459-3800

Live jazz every Friday and Saturday  
night from 10 PM to 1 AM. \$5 cover.

Fri., Aug. 10 & Sat., Aug. 11 **Tri-This  
with Jon O'Camb**  
Sat., Aug. 25 **Rodger Montgomery  
Blues Band**  
Fri., Aug. 31 **String Theory**  
Sat., Sept. 1 **Torn Curtain**

## AVALON HOTEL, BILLIE'S

459-2220 X231

Live music every Friday & Saturday  
night, 9 PM – 1 AM

## BREWERY at Union Station

454-2200

Live jazz some Thursdays and Saturdays.  
Call for more information.

Sat., Sept. 1 **Dave Callighan Trio**

## DOCKSIDER

454-9700

## GINO'S BISTRO AND JAZZ

454-4466

Jazz Most weekends. 9:30 -1 am. Call  
for more information.

Fri., Aug. 31 **Duke Sherman Blues  
Band**

## AREA EVENTS

### MEADVILLE

**Bosco's Restaurant & Bar** continues to  
offer a Jazz Jam every Tuesday, 8 – 11  
PM. Musicians are encouraged to sit  
in. For more information, contact Dan  
Hallett 814/336-1580.

### CLEVELAND

**Nighttown Restaurant**, 12387 Cedar  
Rd., Cleveland Hts., OH 216/795-0550  
or www.nighttowncleveland.com

Sat., Aug. 18 8 & 10 PM \$20 cover  
**Wallace Roney Sextet**. Trumpeter and  
recording associates Antoine Roney-sax,  
Eric Allen-drums, Rashaan Carter-bass,  
Aruan Ortiz-piano, & Steven Brown-  
turntables(!).

Sat., Aug. 25 8 PM \$10 cover. **Howie  
Smith-David Thomas-Bill Ransom**  
Cleveland all-star organ trio. Surfite for  
the soul.



Thurs., Sept. 6, & Fri., Sept. 7 8 &  
10 PM \$25 cover. **Mose Allison**.  
Legendary vocalist, pianist and  
songwriter, with Dave Morgan-bass &  
Roy King-drums.

Visit website for additional offerings.



Sat., Aug. 4 and Sun., Aug. 5 **Erie Art  
Museum Blues & Jazz Festival**. Fron-  
tier Park, noon to 10 PM, FREE.

Thurs., Aug. 9 **Arts at the Arboretum**.  
7:00 PM, Frontier Park, Arboretum  
Stage. **Jim Madden Trio**.

Fri.-Sat.-Sun., Aug. 17-18-19 **Cel-  
ebrate Erie**. Sat., Aug. 18, 2:30-4:00  
PM. **Carl Hultman and Jazz Friends  
with Barb**.

Weds., Aug 29 **Pennsylvania Soldiers  
and Sailors Home Concert Series**.  
1:00-3:00 PM. **Dixie Doodlers**.

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by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a  
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the Arts, a federal agency.*

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Council of Erie.*



Erie Jazz Notes

# JAMEY AEBERSOLD SUMMER JAZZ WORKSHOP



by Dave Callighan

I attended the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop held from July 1 to July 6 at the University of Louisville, KY. The week began with an audition to determine your placement with a combo at a particular level. Jack Wilkins from Tampa, FL and Greg Fishman from Chicago, IL were my auditioners. A typical daily routine consisted of a theory class in the morning, an ear training session with Jamey followed by a combo rehearsal. Faculty members performed concerts in the evening. I was placed in a combo with pianist David Hazeltine as the instructor. My group consisted of a young pianist from Kenosha, WI, an upright bass player from Dallas, TX, a drummer from NYC, and a guitarist from Austin, TX as the rhythm section. Three other horns were present, a young trumpeter from Miami, FL, another tenor saxophonist from Amityville, NY and a trombonist from Houston, TX.

I was in the intermediate theory class with instructor Dan Haerle, a pianist who has played on many of the Aebersold play alongs. Dan was an excellent teacher who gave good insights into some concepts that I did not understand too well before. David Hazeltine is a superb pianist, currently in NYC, who has performed with many top notch musicians and had an excellent sense of how a combo should gel together. The top groups also had an opportunity to play for a session with faculty members. The horn players in my group played with pianist Hazeltine, bassist Frank

Smith from Indianapolis and drummer Steve Barnes from Los Angeles. An enjoyable experience indeed.

My master class teachers were Jerry Coker on Monday, Eric Alexander on Tuesday, Antonio Hart on Wednesday and Tim Armacost on Thursday. All instructors gave insights on theory and tone production. On Friday, each combo gave their performance. Each group had a ten minute slot. We performed "Strollin'" by Horace Silver which is coincidentally a part of my regular repertoire. All in all, a worthwhile experience. I would highly recommend this workshop to anybody in the community regardless of experience level. Louisville, KY is a 7.5 hour drive from Erie, so it is not so far as to require flying with an expensive instrument.

## Website

Go to [www.velocity.net/~hardbop](http://www.velocity.net/~hardbop) and you will find Dave Callighan's website with soundclips, upcoming performances and contact information

## JAZZ ERIE DISCUSSION GROUP

*Continued from pg. 3 ....*

My first jazz recording purchase, at the age of fourteen, was the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

It was vinyl, red, and spun at 45 rpm's. Paul Desmond's solo on "Stardust" was so perfectly wrought as to be rivaled ninety years earlier only by Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Well, that's what an impressionable adolescent thought. I don't know what was on the other side. I didn't look until the needle came through it. From the album "Jazz Impressions of Japan" we listen to "Tokyo Traffic." Thanks to Jim Metzler for the memory jolt of Brubeck, Desmond, Eugene Wright and Joe Morello.

Pittsburgh, about seventy square miles of real estate where even the natives get lost. Fortunately, these four indigenous wailers found their way to the recording studio to put down some "get down." The album is "Hands On, Gene Ludwig." Gene plays B3 organ and is joined by Eric DeFate on tenor

sax, Ken Karsh on guitar and Tom Wendt at the drum set. All of the players have performed in Erie at some time and Gene, Aubrey Dillon and myself are alumni of then Edinboro State College way back when tuition was ninety dollars per semester and you could take as many credits as you desired. I digress. The music is muscular, robust, no monkeying around kick-bootie. Y'uns will love it. Al Lubiejewski chose the tune "Louie and Jazz," the names of Gene's cats.

Our next meeting, Thursday, August 16, 7:30 PM, Erie Art Museum Annex, 20 East Fifth St. Great recorded jazz, latest music news and stimulating dialogue.

## JAZZERIE THANKS THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

**Gannon University**, 109 University Square.

**MacDonald, Illig, Jones and Britton, Attorneys**, 100 State Street, Suite 700.

**Glenwood Beer**, 2177 W. Grandview Boulevard.

**Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center**, Mercyhurst College.

**Erie Art Museum**, 411 State Street.

**Glass Growers Gallery**, 10 E. 5th Street.

**World of Music**, 1355 W. 26th Street.

**Froess Pianos and Keyboards**, 2558 W. 8th Street.

**Romolo Chocolates**, 1525 W. 8th Street.

**Lynch Music**, Rte. 9 & Rte. 20, Fairview.

**Erie Book Store**, 137 E. 13th Street.

**Raven Sound**, 2617 Peach Street.

**Edinboro University of**

**Pennsylvania**, Edinboro

**Penn State Erie, The Behrend**

**College**, Wesleyville

**Lake Erie Fanfare**, 113 W. 10th Street.

**Coors Beer**

**Scott Enterprises/Ambassador Center**, 8040 Peach Street

**East Erie Turners Club**,

829 Parade Street.

**Mercyhurst College**, 501 E 38th St.

## Young Musicians: CHRIS DEMPSEY



Many readers may have heard trombonist and Erie native Chris Dempsey at the Colony, Scotty's or other Erie venues, but you may not yet be aware of the level of international stardom he has

achieved. Consider the following:

- 2003 – Chris won the National Jazz Trombone Competition, sponsored by the Eastern Trombone Workshop in Washington, D.C.
- 2004 – He led the group “Against The Grain,” winners of the National Jazz Ensemble Competition, Washington, D.C. (JazzIs Magazine has since included an “Against The Grain” track in their May mailing.)

• 2005 and 2006 – He placed second in the International Jazz Trombone Competition, sponsored by the International Trombone Association.

• 2005 and 2006 – Chris won Down Beat awards for Best Jazz Instrumentalist, each time the only trombonist named.

Venues of note? Try:

• Carnegie Hall, where Chris taught a clinic on New Orleans music and participated in a big band educational outreach.

• International Association of Jazz Educators conferences in Long Beach and New York City, where he performed at both.

• Performed at Music Educators' National Conference.

• Performed twice at Dizzy's Club in Lincoln Center.

• Opened for Tony Bennett.

• Locally, performed as the featured guest artist at the 2006 “Kids Have Their Say” concert at Collegiate Academy.

• Chris also taught last year at a feeder school for the La Guardia High School for the Arts in New York City.

And that's just what he has achieved so far...

Professionally, Chris did a ten-week tour with the Artie Shaw band, which he describes as “smokin'.” When the band was reconstituted a few years ago under Shaw's name, Shaw insisted on hiring only the best players, “and they must play bebop.” The band has recently released a new CD, “Stardust and Beyond,” under new leader Dick Johnson (Shaw passed on a couple of years ago.) Chris has also appeared with other notable bands – Slide Hampton, Gene Krupa and the Ryles Jazz Orchestra (Boston).

While studying at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he graduated in 2005 with a degree in Jazz Performance, and played first chair in the Berklee Jazz Band both years he was there, Dempsey played with other greats, including Michel Camilo, Bob Mintzer and Joe Lovano. He is currently attending Manhattan School of Music, one of the country's leading graduate programs in jazz. Chris is working on an MA in Jazz Studies with an emphasis on education. He plays lead trombone in the Manhattan School's jazz band and describes his fellow students as “great musicians. They play with great bands.”

Dempsey's list of teachers under whom he has studied reads like a Who's Who: Joe Lovano, Dave Liebman, Steve Turre (with whom he studied privately), Herb Pomeroy, Phil Wilson and Hal Crook. And others. His self-description? “I'm finally beginning to consider myself as a performing artist. I'm working toward being a teacher at the college level. I've been a performer/artist and I want to continue that, but my main goal now is teaching. Whether I advance the music myself or through someone I'm teaching doesn't really make any difference to me anymore.” He would like to see greater appreciation for the trombone as a key jazz instrument.

Dempsey's own music education began at Wilson Middle School. “I asked Mr. Peterson, the band director (and Sheldon's brother), if I could play sax. He said they already had too many sax players. Trumpet? Too many there, too. How about drums, then? ‘We already have three drummers.’ ‘Well, what can I

play?’ ‘Would you like to try trombone?’

Dempsey studied only classical music til he was 19, when he heard Maynard Ferguson's “Chameleon,” was fascinated, loved it – studied the bass line on guitar and on trombone. “Then I went to Penn State where I won the jazz chair in the second band. Combining the high performance expectations of the band and the new demands of jazz – I practiced four hours a day and immersed myself in jazz. After that, I had no interest, desire or ability for orchestral work.”

Chris' experience at Penn State turned sour and he dropped out, considered turning to English as a focus for study. Then he got a letter from Berklee that they were holding auditions. “Somebody gave them my name.” With his parents' encouragement, Chris auditioned. Berklee called, offered him a full scholarship and he was on his way. The first semester he was already lead trombone in the first band.

I asked Chris where he thought jazz was going and his answer was, like his musical ideas, thoughtful and perceptive. “There's been a neoclassical revolution going on in classical music, including a lot of experimentation in odd meters. This is being picked up by many jazz players.” Chris' tone suggested that while significant, this was possibly somewhat on the order of the flavor of the day. On a deeper level, Chris said, “What I've noticed though is the younger generation of musicians is beginning to combine all these styles of rock, rap and new music and integrate them into the music...much like the cats who came before us did. For example, '70's fusion, out of disco.” He sees free jazz as being “an extreme, always on the edge.”

What do you enjoy most, I wondered? “It depends on who I'm playing for and with. Any kind of music where I can play freely, where I am comfortable with the music, even though I may not have seen it before, and have the freedom to know the rules, and knowingly break them.” (What better definition of the essence of jazz!)

If you have the chance, hear this guy.

*Continued on pg. 7 ....*

I'm not sure there's anyone anywhere who has the kind of facility on trombone, combined with musical (jazz) sensibility and knowledge that Chris Dempsey possesses. He's at the Colony about twice a month, and keep your eyes peeled for other performances. He won't be here long.

Interview by Dick Thompson

## JAZZ-E



by Joe Curlett

When the Erie jazz community thinks of smooth jazz listening and cool soothing beats and sounds, only one experienced disc jockey comes to mind, and that is Mr. J. of Gannon University's radio station 90.5 WERG. Mr. J. has been kickin smooth jazz to the hungry listening audience for over thirty years and has been tuned into jazz himself for over thirty-five years and still going strong. Mr. J. has a keen and profound approach to his musical rotation for his dedicated fans. He strives to expose them to music not as background, or to fall asleep to, but smooth jazz to reflect upon and just grab their attention for a totally engaging experience.

I caught up for this interview with Mr. J. and his lovely wife, Angela, at the Catfish Kitchen restaurant one Friday. She says she only came for the "free lunch" but it was obvious that they are a role model couple who share much in common. In his reserved, easy style Mr. J. expounded on his "take" on jazz and its progression, in addition to his interest in European music that has been imported to our shores and has become a musical staple for in tune listeners. Jazz, for Mr. J., is an instant expression of harmony or music that is played and toyed with creating sounds and beats of a distinct technique. He is partial to the organ and saxophone because his introduction

was to such musicians as James Brown and Lonnie Liston Smith on organ and Stanley Turrentine on saxophone. His orientation to jazz actually began in the 1970's when straight ahead jazz was undergoing some falling away and avant garde and fusion were finding footing. However, the greatest appeal came from interest in the expansive SMOOTH JAZZ by the baby boomers. Though Mr. J. was most impressed and moved by Miles Davis's "Bitches Brew" which literally became his encyclopedia for the genre of jazz as a musical art form, Mr. J. noted such musicians as Jeff Lorber, Weather Report, David Sanborn and Wayne Shorter were pressing their music to the top of the charts and commanding a huge listening audience.

Mr. J.'s expansive musical inclination views smooth jazz as safe, not risqué and a format sound that seems to have an R&B flavor to it, therefore allowing the listener to become exposed to a variety of artists. Its major appeal is that it expands the listening audience and is most and is most effective with the baby boom generation. Mr. J. feels some smooth jazz lacks creativity. In his estimation, smooth jazz is governed by the time period and environment from which it is captured, and sometimes lacks a distinct sound, being most all beats and rhythms. He strives to honor his listening audience with smooth jazz that is distinct and different and is not heard on any other station in the area. His collection embraces over 2,000 albums and CDs, as he respects all types of music and sees it as having many facets from which to successfully blend its distinctive flavor.

His personal point of view: jazz has credibility and is based on a variety of well-rounded listening experiences that transcends any one dimensional art form of jazz music. You can listen to Mr. J.'s show Saturday nights from 8-11 p.m. on Gannon's 90.5 FM Super Soul Saturday program.



## JAZZ ON THE RADIO

**WQLN FM (91.3)**  
**The Source for Jazz**

*Monday thru Thursday*

9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.  
**Jazz Flight - Rob Hoff**

*Friday*

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
**Bob 'n Blues - Al Lubiejewski**  
10:00 p.m. - Midnight  
**Deep Blue - Jason Gibbs**

*Saturday*

8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.  
**Saturday Swing Session**  
**-Bill Garts**  
11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.  
**Lush Life - Aubrey Dillion**

*Sunday*

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
**Riverwalk - (Network)**  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
**"Jazz, Ballads & Blues"**  
**with Al Lubiejewski**  
9:00 p.m. - Midnight  
**"Everything Jazz"**  
**with Bob Protzman**

**CLASSY 100**  
**WXKC-FM (99.9)**

**Sunday**

9:00p.m. - 11:00p.m.  
**Jazz Tracks**

**WRIE-AM (1260)**

**Sunday**

7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m.  
**Big Band Jump**

**WERG-FM (90.5)**

**Gannon University**  
8:00 - 11:00p.m.  
**Dan Jones, "Mr. J"**



# JazzErie Notes

August 2007 Issue No. 150

The Monthly Newsletter of JazzErie

Non Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Erie, PA  
Permit #44



Erie Art Museum  
411 State Street  
Erie, PA 16501

AT DISCOVERY SQUARE



## Join JazzErie

Mail this Membership Application to:  
JazzErie, P.O. Box 8833,  
Erie, PA 16505-0833

Register Me As A: (check one)	Cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65 or older)	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Family (One member is 65 or older)	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Business	\$100

Fill out a Membership Application on-line at  
**www.jazzerie.com**  
You will receive an invoice to pay by mail.

Complete this Membership Application and mail to:  
JazzErie, P.O. Box 8833, Erie, PA 16505-0833

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to be notified by e-mail of an  
upcoming event? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to serve on a JazzErie

Committee in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to receive your newsletter by  
email (Adobe PDF format)? \_\_\_\_\_.