

JazzErie

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



ED GOEBEL

I have now completed my first year as President of JazzErie, and I have been re-elected for a second. I am pleased to report that due to the hard work of members of JazzErie's Board of Directors and other volunteers, especially those on the Performance Committee, JazzErie is a vibrant and successful community of jazz music lovers. JazzErie continues to bring an awareness and love of jazz to children and adults of all ages and all walks of life in the Greater Erie Area.

Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers who produce and promote JazzErie's concerts and the generous grants from the **Arts Council of Erie** and the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**, JazzErie remains fiscally sound at this point. I want to especially thank **Liz Scarpelli** who has been JazzErie's Treasurer for a number of years. Liz uses her accounting skills to provide JazzErie with monthly, accurate financial reports, and she collects and accounts for the money JazzErie receives from each concert, often with the help of **Mary Watson**.

While no one can predict how a recession like the one we are now experiencing will affect a volunteer organization like JazzErie, JazzErie believes it has the financial resources and support it needs to continue to provide the Greater Erie Area with outstanding jazz concerts.

Support Live Jazz

However, make no mistake, unless we have the faithful attendance of our JazzErie members, as well as their friends and other Erie jazz fans, at our concerts, we cannot continue with our current level of success. And that goes as well for the jazz concerts and events put on by other Erie Area organizations, restaurants and clubs.

When many of JazzErie's program years have reached Spring, JazzErie has not had any major concerts to present. That is not true for 2009. As indicated below, JazzErie has partnered with several local individuals and organizations to bring outstanding concerts to Erie during April and May.

Dave Brubeck Quartet – May 31, 2009

JazzErie partnered with **Nick Scott, Sr.** and **Scott Enterprises**, the primary sponsors, to bring one of jazz's icons, Dave Brubeck and his outstanding Dave Brubeck Quartet, to Erie. Because of the cost of this concert, it could not have been possible without the additional support of the **Erie Community Foundation** and **Mercyhurst College**, whose **Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center** will host the concert, as well as the support of several other sponsors. I would be remiss if I did not note the work of **Tony Stefanelli** in determining the availability of Dave Brubeck for this concert.

Harry Jacobsen Ensemble - April 17, 2009

The Performance Committee, led by **Dr. Ken Gamble**, asked for innovative programs from Erie Area musicians. Bassist **Harry Jacobsen**, who teaches music at Fredonia State University and plays jazz in Erie (as well as playing in the Erie Philharmonic Orchestra), answered. At the **Mercyhurst Walker Recital Hall**, we'll all have the opportunity to get to understand and listen to the history of the bass in jazz music performed by Dr. Jacobsen and the other wonderful musicians in his ensemble, **Carl Alanakian** on drums, **Howard Hamme** on the piano, **Allen Zurcher** on saxophone, and **Chris Dempsey** on trombone. This is a one of a kind, don't miss concert.

Mike Vax Big Band - April 28, 2009

JazzErie's Education Committee, led by **Chuck Lute** and **John Marszalek**, normally arranges an intense Spring Workshop for the JazzErie All Star High School Jazz Band and other high school musicians in the Erie Area, often with the assistance of out-of-town musicians. This year they outdid themselves by bringing in the Mike Vax Big Band which includes many alumni of the Stan Kenton Orchestra. More significantly, it also includes **Liz Sesler Beckman**, an alumna of Collegiate Academy where the concert will be performed. What a thrill it is to show Erie's many budding musicians how someone who

once sat in their seats at school has become a successful jazz musician. Our thanks go out to **Bill and Cecily Sesler** and to the **Erie School District** whose support helped make this concert happen.

Grade School Jazz Program

Dr. Allen Zurcher, who teaches music at both Gannon University and Mercyhurst College, and **Dr. Scott Meier**, who also teaches music at Mercyhurst College, have teamed up to develop an introduction to jazz especially geared toward grade school children. They have already presented it to second graders at Jefferson Elementary School and to middle school students at Wilson Middle School. Our thanks go out to them for using their many talents to introduce a whole new generation to the wonders of jazz.

If you know of any grade school or middle school classes that would welcome this program, please contact Al Zurcher at 864-4640. JazzErie is attempting to obtain funding to continue and expand this program.

JazzErie Speakers Bureau

JazzErie's Vice President **Ted Ely** has teamed with **Al Zurcher** and will be working with others who are knowledgeable regarding jazz music to make presentations concerning jazz for local civic groups. The first presentation was made to the Presque Isle Rotary Club. If you know of a group who would like such a presentation, please call Ted Ely directly at 218-0861.

Publicity and Newsletter

For quite some time, JazzErie has struggled with the question of how we get our publicity out for the various concerts. **Paul Bates** has stepped up and delivered superbly in this area. He worked with **Sue Gray** to have our tickets and posters delivered to each sales outlet for our concerts, with **Brian Sheridan** to have TV publicity for our Christmas Concert, with **Ted Ely and Mercyhurst College** for the publicity blitz for the Robin McKelle Concert. Paul is also working with **Scott Enterprises** regarding the publicity for the Dave Brubeck Concert.

Al Lubiejewski has done a yeoman's job in writing articles for the Showcase concerning our concerts. In addition, Al has continued hosting his five hours per week of blues and jazz on WQLN.

And it is hard to say enough about the fine job that **Dick Thompson** is doing in producing and editing the JazzErie Notes each month. The Notes has become the go-to-resource for Erie Area jazz events. **Frank Singer** has been there when we have needed him to edit **jazzerie.com** to include all the latest JazzErie concerts and jazz happenings in the Erie Area.

Performance Committee

The Performance Committee for the past year was chaired by **Ken Gamble** and included **Dave Blaetz, Rob Hoff, Sheldon Peterson, Bob Protzman, Tony Stefanelli, and Al Wehan**. They continued to do the superb job we've all come to expect by scheduling and producing concerts in Erie featuring world class jazz musicians. **Al Zurcher** will take over the Chairmanship during the coming year, and I'm sure we can count on the same quality of musicians for our concerts.

As many of you know, **Rob Hoff** also produces two hours of modern jazz and world music four evenings per week on **WQLN**. **Bob Protzman** is now dedicating his extensive knowledge of jazz to a three hour program Friday afternoons on **WMCE**, Erie's new all jazz station sponsored by Mercyhurst College.

Jazz & Blues Walk

JazzErie's past president **Carl Hultman** hasn't slowed down much regarding Erie jazz since he left office. These last two years he has chaired the **Jazz & Blues Walk Committee**, which includes **Mary Watson, Sheldon Peterson and Liz Scarpelli**. The Jazz and Blues Walk is essential for raising funds necessary to pay for the concerts that are the hallmark of JazzErie. The Walk is also one of the jazz events that many Erieites look forward to each year.

Carl Hultman is also once again organizing the **Summer Long Jazz Festival** that features jazz programming during one day on most weekends during the summer and is a draw of jazz lovers from our Tri-State area

Jazz Curmudgeon

Every jazz society needs a jazz curmudgeon: one who steadfastly demands that jazz be promoted, played and taught, and thus preserved the way it was for Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Dave Brubeck, etc. JazzErie's self-proclaimed jazz curmudgeon is **Charles Ventrello**. Lest I open old wounds, I won't bring up examples of how Charles practiced curmudgeonliness in the past. But these days his practice is limited to playing some of the sweetest tenor sax you can hope to hear and chairing the JazzErie Discussion Group on the third Thursday of each month at the Erie Art Museum Annex. If you like to play, listen to and enjoy jazz recordings, be there or be square.

When you have as many hard working and enthusiastic jazz lovers as we have listed above, the job of being president of JazzErie becomes relatively easy and quite satisfying. I extend my thanks to all of them.

Ed Goebel