

FROM THE CHAIR

So many accolades come to mind when reflecting on Herb Wong who at age 88 left us on Easter Sunday—after a lifetime of commitment to jazz. Here are a few of my memories and recollections.

For me, this walking encyclopedia of stories and insights about jazz, was first and foremost a teacher who loved to stimulate everyone, be it a child or an adult. I first knew him as Dr. Herbert H. Wong, Principal of Washington Elementary School in Berkeley. I worked for a book publisher, and Herb had recently published some children's books on science in association with Matt Vessel of San Jose State. My awareness of jazz was fairly dormant and I knew nothing of his KJAZ world. Rather, we talked about education and the Environmental Schoolyard that he had created (with landscape architect Robin Moore) at Washington, a K-3 school affiliated as a laboratory school with the University of California.

Herb had a great sensitivity to children and had observed that most kids were bored and had nothing to do at recess. He tore up the macadam at one end of the so-called play area and built an environmental section where students could experience a different kind of learning. This of course was controversial to some, but not to the kids. They loved it. This kind of innovation was typical of Herb's whole approach to life. Every concert he later produced for PAJA was designed to be a unique, one-time experience you wouldn't hear anywhere else.

Time passed and Herb moved to Menlo Park where he established Palo Alto Records and Blackhawk Records. We kept in touch. Soon he started teaching again, only now it was just about jazz. So I signed on.

Many of you experienced his unique style via one of the various courses he directed for the Adult School of the Palo Alto Unified School District. For more than 26 years, he created 76 separate, one-time-only courses on various aspects or personalities of the music. Imagine the time and energy that entailed. Other teachers would give the same course 76 times since, after all, they'd have a different audience each time. Not Herb, though. His approach was an outgrowth of his jazz experience where each performance is different, even if the song is the same—a one-time-only experience. The theme of his courses was familiar, but the connection changed from Ella Fitzgerald to his personal favorite Woody Herman to Stan Getz to...



Herb Wong

Carmen McRae, his final course.

The Palo Alto Jazz Alliance, established in 1992, was a direct outgrowth of the Adult School courses. He founded this jazz nonprofit group in association with Henry Page, then the Adult School principal and a fellow jazz lover, along with several students in the course. The PAJA mission, from the beginning, has been to provide live concerts, under Herb's artistic direction, to raise funds in support of jazz education. I think we have had good success over the years in fulfilling our mission.

PAJA is now faced with big change, and a big challenge. Your Board is committed to carry on the PAJA mission, feeling that we still have an important role to play in the community; we intend to continue to provide singular opportunities to hear LIVE jazz, and to maintain our commitment to jazz education. We welcome all ideas and suggestions in the months to come.

I think about Herb in so many ways. What a unique person. He loved to talk about his experiences with jazz personalities, not as a braggart; he just loved to share his experiences and entice everyone into the medium he so loved. Such a joy to have known him.

With deepest sympathy to Marilyn and the Wong family.

C. Stuart Brewster
Chair, Palo Alto Jazz Alliance

VUCKOVICH/GUARALDI

HERB'S LAST CONCERT A TRIUMPH

Larry Vuckovich and Herb Wong were friends and mutual admirers of long standing. So it was entirely fitting that the last concert Herb Wong would ever arrange for PAJA was this special collaboration between Herb and Larry, and it turned out to be truly a milestone—a musical memory that those in the packed house at Tateuchi Hall at the Community School of Music & Arts in Mountain View won't easily forget. Pianist Larry Vuckovich prepared a personal and well-planned program to celebrate the music of his former teacher, Vince Guaraldi, and the last-minute addition of percussionist Daniel Ray, aka Big Black, to the festivities was icing on the cake.

After Larry paid a heartfelt tribute to Herb, he then started the program with a solo rendition of "Serenade in Blue," a piece Herb had especially requested. Then a Nat Cole-like trio of Larry, bassist Seward McCain and guitarist Josh Workman swung into a couple of numbers, most notably Strayhorn's "A Flower is a Lovesome Thing." We could have listened to this trio all night. But then the group was supplemented by local heroes Noel Jewkes, Akira Tana and John Santos, along with the imposing presence of Big Black--and that was the format for pretty much the rest of the evening. As Herb Wong would say, it was a gas. One audience member, an 86-year old piano teacher was so delighted, she claimed that she'd be switching from classical to jazz!

Vince's popular hit "Cast Your Fate To The Wind" was played, along with just one number from his affiliation with the Charlie Brown TV series—the haunting waltz, "Christmas Time."

Big Black is considered by many as the world's best hand drummer, and he moved the crowd on several numbers, especially "Night In Tunisia." One popular piece was a tune that Vince played with the Cal Tjader group—a number dedicated to then Giants first baseman Orlando Cepeda, called "Viva Cepeda." The concert ended with Larry's "Boogaloo Blues" so that we were able to boogaloo off, all the way home.

There was so much to remember about this evening—Larry's personal reminiscences of Vince Guaraldi, the recordings of Guaraldi from Larry's personal collection, the quality of the musicianship—Larry, Jewkes, Workman, Santos, McCain, Tana—all superb. And of course Big Black's pulsating beat. Truly a night to remember, and as Larry pointed out, Herb was really there in spirit. He set up this grand offering with Larry, and we know he wouldn't miss it./Ed Fox



Big Black



Larry Vuckovich



Seward McCain



Noel Jewkes

PHOTOS BY ANDY NOZAKA



John Santos

JAZZ ON THE HILL—JUNE 7TH

KCSM Jazz 91's annual bash at the College of San Mateo will be held on Saturday, June 7th, this year. The free day-long celebration will have two stages—the main stage in front of the library steps (with seating along the fountain, or on the grass with your picnic and blanket) and a “youth” stage in the 400-seat Little Theater nearby. If you don't bring food—not to worry. There will be plenty of food trucks on hand. There will also be local artisans displaying their handiwork. More than 5000 revelers are expected, so it's a good idea to get there early (11ish?) to get a good spot on the lawn and in the parking lot.

The headliners this year are vocalist **Kenny Washington**, singing with the **Mike Galisatus Big Band**, pianist **Larry Vuckovich** and his group **Crosswinds** (formerly The Blue Balkan Ensemble), and the popular local group **Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers**. Singers **Barbara Dane** and **Kellye Gray** are sure to provide crowd-pleasing sets, as will pianist **Mizuki Roberson** and the **Wayne Wallace All-Stars**. That's going to be full day of incredible music.

At the Youth Stage, you can see some exciting up-and-coming ensembles, most notably the Northgate High School Jazz Band which was so magnificent at last year's Hill (they just won a major award at the Monterey Jazz Festival's jazz competition). Also appearing will be the San Jose Jazz HS All-Stars Combo, the Latin Jazz Youth Ensemble, and the Oaktown Jazz Workshops.

Kenny Washington kicks off the main stage at 11, so you do want to get there early. Things continue until about 6pm. For the complete schedule, www.jazzonthehill.org/2014artists.php.

ON SWEETS EDISON

“Sitting in for the first time with Sweets Edison was a graduate course in the Basie approach—Sweets took things in a less-is-more direction, with bursts of notes followed by prolonged defined rests. . . Bucky [Pizzarelli] embraces the Sweets Edison mind-set, often muttering under his breath, ‘Lots of notes, lots of notes’ when the must-be-getting-paid-by-the-notes guys are taking solos.” From *World On A String: A Musical Memoir*, by John Pizzarelli and Joseph Cosgriff.

LOCAL JAZZ SUMMER SERIES

Jazz on the Plazz in Los Gatos has a remarkable lineup this year, starting off June 25 with Halie Loren, and continuing until August 27. Some outstanding gigs are Kim Nalley on July 2, Diego Figueiredo and Ken Pelpowski on July 9, and Ramsey Lewis on July 23. The series is held at the Los Gatos Town Plaza (Main and Santa Cruz), Wednesday evenings. The performances are free, but if you really want to hear the artists, buying a seat

is recommended, otherwise you'll be awash in suburban socializing. www.jazzontheplazz.com

Jazz at Filoli has one of their best series ever—starting with Jamie Davis and a big band conducted by Fred Berry on June 15 and ending with Pete Escovedo on August 24. Karrin Allyson appears on July 13, Bob Dorough on July 27, and Dick Hyman and Mike Lipskin on August 10. This is not a free series, so check the web site for tickets and pricing. Sunday afternoon outdoor concerts (under umbrellas). Bring your own picnic goodies. On the beautiful Filoli Estate. www.filoli.org/jazz/.

Sunnyvale Downtown Jazz and Beyond. Murphy St., Sunnyvale. July 5-August 23. Wally Schnalle on July 5, Tony Lindsay on July 19, Kristen Strom Quintet on August 2. www.sunnyvaledown.com/jazz--beyond.html.

No information at this writing on SF Jazz's Summerfest at Stanford Shopping Center or Redwood City's Jazz on Main.

STANFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL— 35 CONCERTS

The peerless Stanford festival kicks off June 20 with a SJW Member Listening Party featuring Kenny Barron and Sonny Buxton. From then to August 9, it will be fabulous jazz offerings with the likes of Arturo Sandoval, Jack DeJohnette, Chick Corea, Taylor Eigsti and Julian Lage, the Yellowjackets, John Pizzarelli, Kenny Burrell, and many more. Tickets go on sale to the general public May 19. Visit www.stanfordjazz.org or call 650/725-2787.

MONTEREY ANNOUNCES MONSTER LINEUP

Herbie Hancock, Christian McBride, Charles Lloyd, Billy Childs, Jason Moran, Brian Blade and Cecile McLorin Salvant are a few of the headliners that will appear at the 57th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival. The dates for the 3-day affair are September 19-21, 2014, and arena and grounds packages go on sale May 12, with single day tickets available starting June 26. Drummer Eric Harland will be the 2014 artist-in-residence; he will perform with the Charles Lloyd Quartet, his own group Voyager and as a soloist with the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. One highlight promises to be a duet with Lloyd and pianist Gerald Clayton. The festival will showcase 500 musicians, almost 100 performances and events on 8 stages and more, for 30 hours of live music over two days and three nights. www.montereyjazzfestival.org.

SOME COMMENTS WE'VE RECEIVED ABOUT HERB

"Herb Wong was a champion, a lover of jazz and all the people who played it. He insured that artists—whether established or emerging—were connected, and he provided special opportunities for all to grow, share and perform. As a journalist, promoter and fan, he was an inspiration to all around him and the world is a much better place because of his caring commitment to the art form. But most of all, he was a warm, gentle and loving man who enriched our lives immeasurably. . . I will miss him." **Bruce Forman**

"Herb was a living history of jazz. . . his writing was so exquisite, so sharp. It wasn't just the music he captured, it was a sense of the times." **Paul Fingerote**

"That wry grin was his way of letting you know that he dug what you were offering, musically or conversationally. This I understood from our first meeting when I was with Woody's band in '77. Herb was a true Jazzer. He embraced the music, the musicians and all things in the jazz community. He helped nurture talent, he wrote encouraging words to help promote those in need, he gladly shared his wisdom, he honored and adored the history that made this music what it is. Music has lost a dear friend, but has certainly gained from his immense amount of knowledge, passion and caring." **Jeff Hamilton**

"I will miss Herb's support and love of the arts. He was a great guy and I enjoyed working with him on several occasions. I was in the midst of proposing to PAJA a concert with my 'Remembering Chet Baker Band' prior to his death. Herb would have loved the music." **Frank Tusa**

"There is, ever was, and ever will be one Herb Wong. I am not sure if I would be a professional musician right now if it wasn't for this man. I was so fortunate to know Dr. Wong from a very early age, and he was crazy enough to believe in me as a kid, and gave me so many opportunities to perform, grow, and meet other great musicians. His contributions to the music world through his producing, vision, eloquence, education, and his loving attitude will always be remembered. I have always referred to him as Jazz Royalty, and I will always have the deepest respect for Herb, and will appreciate him always. We had some amazing conversations through the years, and I've never known anyone who had so many interesting stories, and so much information. I'll miss everything about him dearly, but maybe most of all the way he would introduce bands on the stage—absolutely one of a kind. Herb lives on through all the thousands of musicians, listeners, and people that he touched, and his spirit is alive in every note." **Taylor Eigsti**

PAJA INFORMAL MUSICIANS GROUP?

Member Rich Shah of Los Altos is interested in getting together with other PAJA members who are musicians to play together from time to time. This would be purely a recreational, social thing, just to "keep our minds and hearts young," says Rich. Maybe once a month, playing standards from Real Book, or whatever. Anyone interested should e-mail Rich at rich_shah@yahoo.com.

ON BIRD

"[Charlie] Parker's ability to create meaningful, even beautiful, music at tempos hitherto unknown—he was a speed demon—has not been equaled to this day. Yes, there are players who can execute at such tempos, but not with musical and emotional content. Nor can anyone create at the opposite end as he could, applying an inexhaustible

imagination at slow tempos to such favorite subjects as 'Embraceable You.'" Dan Morgenstern, in "The Speed Demon," in *Wall Street Journal*, October 19-20, 2013.

HERB WONG MEMORIAL SERVICE MAY 13

The Memorial service for PAJA co-founder Dr. Herb Wong will be held on Tuesday, May 13th, at 2pm, at Menlo Presbyterian Church, 950 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park.

Herb's wife Marilyn is appreciative of all the outpouring of love for Herb and the love and support you have sent her. The family suggests that in lieu of flowers donations may be made in Herb's memory to the Palo Alto Jazz Alliance.

THE JAZZ PERISCOPE

Selected gigs for May and June

YOSHI'S SAN FRANCISCO

5/6, 13, 20, 27, 6/3, 10, 17, 24
5/11
5/16-17
5/21-22
6/11
6/21

www.yoshis.com/sanfrancisco

Tommie Igoe Big Band
Rachelle Ferrell
Cassandra Wilson
Jane Monheit
Noel Jewkes (lounge)
Michael O'Neill (lounge)

YOSHI'S OAKLAND www.yoshis.com/oakland

5/9-10
5/11
5/15
5/17-18
5/30, 31, 6/1
6/14-15
6/24

Rachelle Ferrell
Ann Hampton Callaway
Cassandra Wilson
Allen Toussaint
Arturo Sandoval
Ginger Baker
Ambrose Akinmusire

SF JAZZ CENTER

5/8-11
5/18
5/21
5/22-25
6/6

www.sfjazz.org/center

The Bad Plus
Herbie Hancock, plus
Fats Waller Birthday, with Dan Hicks & Hot Licks
Miguel Zenon Quartet
Jason Moran, with Charles Lloyd

BACH'S DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY, EL GRANADA

www.bachddsoc.org

5/4
5/11
6/8

Ed Reed Quartet
Melissa Morgan Quartet
Jeff Sanford's Cartoonjazz Band

KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER, SANTA CRUZ

www.kuumbwajazz.org

5/5
5/13
5/17
5/19

David Grisman, 7pm
Cassandra Wilson, 7pm
Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn, Rio Theatre, 8pm
Jane Monheit, 7pm

SAN JOSE JAZZ

5/9
5/14
5/23
5/28

www.sanjosejazz.org

Clint Baker N.Orleans Swing Band, 7-9pm San Pedro Sq. Mkt.
David Miller Trio, with vocalist Rebecca DuMaine Fairmont lounge, 8-10:30pm
Vocalist Jessica Johnson, 7-9pm, San Pedro Sq. Mkt.
Ren Geisick, 8-10:30pm, Fairmont lounge

JAZZ ON THE HILL

KCSM's annual daylong festival—June 7, Sat., Free
With Kenny Washington, Larry Vuckovich, Lavay Smith
College of San Mateo

CAFÉ STRITCH

5/16-17

374 S. First St., San Jose 408/280-6161 Wed-Sun
For calendar: www.cafestritch.com
Peppe Merolla Organ Quintet

BLACKBIRD TAVERN

5/15
5/24
5/20

200 S. First St., San Jose
Ren Geisick, Nina Simone tribute 8pm
Rick Vandivier, Hristo Vitchev, Mason Razavi 7:30pm \$10/15
Big Band Night, with Nineteen Jazz Orch. 8pm

BROADWAY GRILL

5/11

1400 Broadway, Burlingame 650/343-9333
Michael O'Neil/Kenny Washington 5-9pm



Halie Loren at Jazz on the Plazz
June 25

MY YEARS WITH HERB

Herb became known to me when I was a high school student and heard him broadcasting on KJAZ and immediately became a fan of his intelligent music selection and his enthusiastic willingness to share his broad knowledge of jazz. In those days his frequent partner on air was the equally exuberant, effusive Bob Houlihan. They both had remarkable, witty, wondrous stories to share about the music and their own experiences.

Nearly 30 years later I attended the weekly summer jazz events Herb produced and hosted in Palo Alto, first at Eureka (?) Square and then at the Stanford Shopping Center. He was willing to talk to a curious stranger like me, and handouts informed attendees about the Jazz History course Herb was teaching at Palo Alto Adult School. I enrolled for my first class in Fall 1994 and regret I didn't make time to do it even earlier. After I started, I never stopped. In the class I learned of local live events and of the existence of the Palo Alto Jazz Alliance. In December 1994 I attended a concert by the Palo Alto High Jazz Band (and possibly the Gunn unit too) with featured guest artist David Sanchez. That was the night I joined PAJA. As PAJA was preparing to present its concert in October 1995 featuring the incredible saxophonist Don Menza and pianist Walter Norris, Herb invited me to fill a vacancy as his assistant. The position had no title at that time, but after a few concerts, with characteristic appreciation and humility, Herb created the title Event Chair for me. He often thanked me profusely for my help with the detail work as I continued in that capacity through his final concert for PAJA on April 26, Larry Vuckovich's "Tribute to Vince Guaraldi", and I always told him that it was way too much fun to stop.

Attending Herb's many classes and working with him on the concerts have given me the opportunity to better know Herb and his beautiful wife Marilyn and their two lovely daughters Kira and Kamberly. It always has been clear that Herb's love for jazz (only one of his many keen interests) was consuming, but I have seen what a gracious, caring person Herb Wong was and learned how broad all of his interests were. Finding a single word to describe anything, much less a complex person like Herb, is next to impossible. I have found a word that I believe fits Herb well, "generous." He was such a caring, loving person, so willing to share with others his delight with jazz and the musicians who create it, and to support those musicians fortunate to be within his orbit. His spirit will endure in the minds and hearts of all of us who benefitted from his generosity.

~ Harvey Mittler

Palo Alto
Jazz
Alliance

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P.O. Box 60397 • Palo Alto, CA 94306

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City, State, Zip _____

New subscriber Renewal This is a change of address

Annual dues, \$35 for individuals \$ _____

Annual dues, \$50 family (two persons) _____

Additional contribution to support jazz education _____

Total enclosed \$ _____