



In Memoriam: Thomas David Pierce

February 9, 1942 - June 13, 2022

A Place for Jazz has lost one of its most beloved members - Tom Pierce, who passed away in June at the age of 80.

A huge supporter of Jazz here in the Capital District, Tom was a long-time member of the Board of Directors and former vice-president of A Place for Jazz.

He was recognized for his outstanding efforts on behalf of jazz as a recipient of a "Jazz Hero" Award in 2014 from the Jazz Journalists Association. (news.jazzjournalists.org/2014/04/2014-jazz-heroes-announced-launching-jazzapril/)

A prolific writer, Tom was a frequent contributor to many outlets. In addition to our "A Place for Jazz Newsletter," Tom's writing was featured in Abanyjazz.com and All About Jazz (allaboutjazz.com/member-tom-pierce), to name just a few. He wrote terrific concert and recording reviews.

In fact, in April of 2015, as part of its Jazz Appreciation Month festivities, the Albany Musicians' Association, Local 14 of the American Federation of Musicians, awarded Tom a Certificate of Recognition for "Excellence Supporting the Jazz Tradition" for his "wonderful work as a writer and reviewer."

Over the years, Tom often shared his love of jazz as a guest on WCDB's "The Saturday Morning Edition of Jazz" radio program, as well as doing fantastic jazz presentations at local public libraries and community centers, bringing a wealth of knowledge and insight into this music we love. He had great taste in all kinds of music - doo wop and Jazz in particular.

Tom was truly one of God's best people. A friend to all who knew him, he had the gift of gab matched by very few, if anyone! And without hesitation he would regularly wax poetic about how happy he was to have relocated here to the Capital District over two decades ago, even though all his friends from NYC told him he was crazy. "Albany?! Why would you want to move to Albany?!!" Those who talked to Tom with any regularity know what we mean!

We are sure he will be listening to our concerts from up in the Big 52nd Street in the Sky. We miss him tremendously and dedicate this 2022 season of A Place for Jazz to his memory.



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Our 2022 Fall Concert Series— still on Fridays at 7:30 p.m. but now at Carl B. Taylor Auditorium at SUNY Schenectady Community College



Steve Davis Sextet (Sep. 9, 2022)

Steve Davis is widely regarded as one of today's leading voices on the trombone. His lyrical, hard-swinging style first gained him broad recognition. He has released 20 albums in addition to appearing on over 100 other recordings with names including Chick Corea, Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver, Cedar Walton and Hank Jones. He previously appeared at A Place for Jazz in 2009 with Eric Alexander's One for All. His latest release with his sextet is "Bluesthetic" on Smoke Sessions Records.

Geoffrey Keezer Trio featuring Gillian Margot (Sep. 23, 2022)

Geoff Keezer was only 17 when he became the last pianist in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (1988-1990), a perfect gig for the talented hard bop musician who fit right in with the tradition of Horace Silver, Bobby Timmons, Cedar Walton, James Williams and Benny Green.

He's been recording in recent years with the exquisite vocalist **Gillian Margot**, whose smoky contralto and personal interpretive talents perfectly match Geoffrey, bassist Hannah Marks and drummer Billy Kilson. This is a magical collaboration.



Joel Ross Quintet (Oct. 7, 2022)

For the past several years, **Joel Ross** has been refining an expression that's true to his sound and his generation. In 2019, the vibraphonist-composer released his anticipated Blue Note debut "KingMaker" to eruptive critical acclaim. He's topped the DownBeat Critics Poll Rising Star category for vibraphone and in 2017, he became one of the youngest artists to receive a coveted Residency Commission from The Jazz Gallery. With the release of "Who Are You?" (Blue Note, 2020), Ross shares the culmination of a year-long exercise in experimenting and risk-taking on and off the bandstand.

Inspired by mentor Stefon Harris' empathetic, whole-self approach to articulation, Ross has adopted an entire ethos dependent on truthful, ongoing communication. Honesty persists throughout his sets. And with each release, he reaffirms a com-

mitment to authentic discourse, particularly among the members of his band Good Vibes: Jeremy Corren, Immanuel Wilkins, Kanoa Mendenhall and Jeremy Dutton.

Bobby Watson Quartet (Oct. 21, 2022)

Saxophonist, composer, arranger and educator **Bobby Watson** grew up in Kansas City, Kansas, and trained formally at the University of Miami, a school with a distinguished and well-respected jazz program. After graduating, he proceeded to earn his "doctorate" – on the bandstand – as musical director of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers.

After completing a four-year-plus Jazz Messengers tenure (1977-1981), he became a much-sought-after musician, working along the way with a potpourri of notables. Later, in association with bassist Curtis Lundy and drummer Victor Lewis, Watson launched the first edition of Horizon, an acoustic quintet modeled in many ways after the Jazz Messengers but one with its own distinct, slightly more modern twist.



The Peg Delaney Big Band (Nov. 4, 2022)

Schenectady-born jazz pianist, educator, arranger and composer **Peg Delaney** has been a part of the capital district music scene since the early '70s. Her love of jazz began when she met her husband, Bill, at SUNY Plattsburgh, where they both received bachelor of arts degrees in music theory and composition. She has three recordings under her name: "The Island Suite," "If I Had You" and "Hotline."

Currently, Peg is involved with accompanying many fine singers, has the piano seat in two local big bands and has been composing for her own 18-piece big band for the upcoming concert.

Making the rounds to hear jazz

Tim Coakley reminisces

Jazz fans have a way of finding the music wherever it's played, whether on their home turf or on the road. Here are a few players I heard and photographed in various places.

The great tenor saxophonist Zoot Sims was playing at the Persian Room in Menands when I got this shot. The pianist is Frank Stagnita. Also on board were bassist Mike Wicks and drummer Larry Jackson.



I caught pianist Count Basie in a smile while his great band was roaring away at The Old Barn in Old Forge.

Cornetist Bobby Hackett and trombonist Vic Dickenson were on stage at the Roosevelt Grill in New York City when I took this shot. Little did I know at the time that I would have a chance to play with each of them.

Buddy Rich was having a blast driving his big band At the Top in Rochester. Smiling at him at his left is trumpeter Mike Price, whom I met after another gig by the band in Utica.



Now on a screen near you!

In our last issue, we promised you a new and improved web site. It's now on line at aplaceforjazz.org. Among the new JAZZ CALENDAR features:

- Your choice of LIST view or MONTH view.
- The ability to search for all gigs with a specific artist.
- You can see what's coming up at a specific venue.

Visit aplaceforjazz.org and give it a try. Drop us a line at info@aplaceforjazz.org and let us know what you think.

A Bit about Bria

Jerry Gordon

Since Tim is doing some reminiscing (see page 3), I thought I would, too. It's April, 2005, and my wife, Maryanne, and I are at the Great Vic Dixieland Jazz Festival in Victoria, BC. Out comes a group called "51st Eight" (say it fast). The leader, who plays trumpet and sings, is a young woman named Bria Skonberg. We were just blown away not only by her fine musicianship on both instruments, but also her amazing stage presence for a girl from Chilliwack, BC, who would be graduating from college the following year. We saw her again the following weekend at another festival across the water in Port Angeles, WA. Needless to say, we've been following her ever since.



Since that time, she moved to NYC, where she's making a splash as an up-and-comer, playing with many big names at many big venues, traveling all over the world and winning awards.

You may have seen her in November, 2014, when she starred at one of our APFJ concerts. Remember when we used to have a youth band at the intermission? (Remember when we used to have an intermission?) Bria's the one who opened her second half by bringing the whole youth band on stage for a few numbers.

Since then, she's acquired a husband and a 22-month-old son, released more CDs and won more awards and toured more of the world.

Fast forward to a few weeks ago, on August 12. Maryanne and I drove to White Feather Farm in Saugerties to see Bria and Elizabeth Goodfellow, her friend from Los Angeles, in a two-woman performance. Bria played the trumpet, the piano, the ukulele and sang; Beth played the marimba, the drums, other percussion and sang. They did some original songs (they are both accomplished composers and arrangers), some very old and obscure tunes, and some Cole Porter and Louis Armstrong. It was a delightful performance for an intimate audience of about 50 people.

We'll see her again on The Jazz Cruise in January. Can't wait ...



APFJ 11/7/2014: Bria and Evan Arntzen. Photo by Rudy Lu



Bria and Beth at White Feather Farm. Photo by Jerry Gordon

Skip Parsons

By Tim Coakley, with much input from Skip's longtime friend and photographer, Cliff LaMere.

Skip Parsons, longtime leader of the Riverboat Jazz Band, passed away this year.

A devout fan of traditional jazz, he and the band had kept that music alive in the Capital District and farther afield for many years.

Skip was born in Albany in 1936. He attended several schools in the area, and began to play clarinet at the age of 9. At 12 he played and led his first dance job, which led to more. In high school he took a fancy to early jazz, and began to also collect some Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong recordings.

In 1956, after several Sunday jam sessions, he formed the Riverboat Six, which was later changed to The Riverboat Jazz Band. The group became quite popular in the Capital District. They went on to the college and nightclub circuit.

After some road tours, they were asked in 1963 & '64 to play aboard the Oslofjord, liner of the Norwegian American Lines. The '60s also brought about concerts with such major players as Cutty Cutshall, Jimmy McPartland, Wild Bill Davison and more. The band was featured on radio and TV.

During the '70s Skip was organizer of the Great Northeastern Jazzfest in Greenville, NY. This was a short-lived event that featured Chris Griffin, Pee Wee Erwin, Bob Wilber, Kenny Davern, Cliff Leeman, Ed Hubble, Dick Wellstood, Major Holley and others.

He began the '80s by bringing the band to the 1980 Winter Olympics. Employed by ABC Sports, the event literally sent the sound of the band around the world. He told the story that when the U.S. Hockey team defeated the Russian team, the organizers urged him to assemble the band to play for the exultant fans.

He began the Lake George Hot Jazz Party in the '80s. This became a three-day annual event that lasted 20 years. Performers included Doc Cheatham, Warren Vache, Ken Peplowski and many more. The event was held aboard the S.S. Lac Du St. Sacramento and at the Roaring Brook Ranch.

Later in the '90s he began to front some smaller groups, including trios and quartets.

His Clarinet Marmalade Trio played aboard the American Canadian Caribbean Cruise Lines.

In 2019, he and the Riverboat Jazz Band were honored by Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan with a plaque proclaiming the day Riverboat Jazz Band Day with a performance at the Albany Riverfront Jazz Festival.

In October 2021, he was one of seven recipients of an Eddy award, presented by the Thomas Edison Music Hall of Fame.

(More pictures and information about Skip's career are available at skip.clifflamere.com/)



George M. "Skip" Parsons
March 11, 1936—April 21, 2022
Photo: Cliff LaMere



Volunteers Needed

Leslie Hyland

A Place for Jazz is an all-volunteer organization and moving to our new venue at SUNY Schenectady has created a need for an increased number of volunteers in varied positions. We all know that volunteering is a wonderfully fulfilling endeavor, in our case made all the more special by our family of jazz aficionados that you will have the opportunity to work with. Honestly, we are a fun and interesting group. Here are the positions available:

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

- Sign up concert-night volunteers prior to each concert from a preexisting list. Collaborate with student volunteers;
- Meet volunteers at the venue prior to each concert and coordinate placement and equipment needs;
- Be available during each concert to trouble-shoot volunteer needs and appropriate changes in tasks;
- Identify need for new volunteers and collaborate with APFJ board to recruit them.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There are several openings on our working board for individuals interested in contributing in a meaningful, collaborative way to the short- and long-term missions of APFJ. We have been meeting via Zoom every 1 to 2 months since the pandemic.

CONCERT VOLUNTEERS

A variety of front-of-the-house tasks, including ticket selling, program distribution, greeting, etc., as needed per concert.

If you would like to join us in keeping jazz vibrantly alive in the Capital Region, please contact Al Brooks, our president, at info@aplaceforjazz.org and let him know which position(s) you're interested in.

We look forward to working with you!

RADIO JAZZ IN THE CAPITAL REGION

WVCR 88.3 FM

The Crossroads of Jazz, Darrin Scott and Ted Moisesides, Saturday 12-2 pm, A mix of the essentials and the contemporary

Jazz2K—the ever evolving state of jazz in the 21st Century, Jay Hunter, midnight Saturday to 2 am Sunday

WAMC 90.3 FM

Tim Coakley, Saturday 11 pm-12 am

Jazz After Hours, Jeff Hanley, Saturday & Sunday 1-5 am

Afro-Pop Worldwide, Sunday 4 pm

Radio Deluxe, John Pizzarelli and Jessica Molaskey, Saturday 2-4 pm

WCDB 90.9 FM

Bill McCann, Saturday 8 am-12 pm

DJ Josh, *Jazz Portal*, Saturday 8-10 pm

Bill Goss, *TGIF Jazz Party*, Friday 4-6 pm

WRPI 91.5 FM

Rich Berkley's *Dusty Corners* heavy with, but not exclusively jazz, Tuesday 8-10 pm

Kevin Roberts, Thursday 8-10 pm, varied theme show

WVPR 94.3 FM (Vermont Public Radio)

Friday Night Jazz 8-11 pm

WQAR 101.3 FM

Smooth jazz and jazzy vocals with Walt Adams, Sunday 10 am - 1 pm

WXGL 93.5 FM

Jazz Night in America with Christian McBride, Saturday, 8-9 pm

The Bridge with Joel Hurd, Saturday, 9-10 pm;

Jazz at the 10 Spot with Guy Berard,

Saturday, 11 pm -12 am



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- ♦ The opportunity (for members with a ticket) to bring two children 16 years old or under for free to any concert where seats are available. Please call to check on reservations
- ♦ Good vibes from knowing you are a part of an organization that:
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Questions? Contact Al Brooks at 518-482-7537 or abrooks@nycap.rr.com

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A Place for Jazz is a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting the best in jazz. In addition to grant funding, revenue is generated through ticket sales and membership contributions. Programs include concerts, student scholarships, public workshops, school-based clinics, a website and general support of Jazz and its musicians. We welcome announcements and comments.

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