

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

January/February 2015

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VOLUME XII

ISSUE I

THE BJA NEWSLETTER

WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

Straight Ahead Jazz Workshops at Phaze 10



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN R. LAMKIN II

L to R: Brandon Moultrie, Robert Shahid, Clarence Ward, Christian Hizon, Theljon Allen, John Lamkin II, Amy Shook, Daniel Wallace, Todd Simon, Michael Benjamin

Once every month, distinguished musician, and educator John R. Lamkin II leads his Fourth Thursday Straight Ahead Jazz Workshops with his "Favorites" Jazz Quintet at Phaze 10, featuring a variety of accomplished and renowned Baltimore musicians.

Recently, I had the opportunity to ask Dr. Lamkin some questions about the "Straight Ahead Jazz Workshops," his quintet, and his future plans for jazz at the venue.

– Gail Marten

Q. When did you begin those workshops at Phaze 10?

A. We actually started on the fourth Thursday in July, 2014, and we would have continued through the end of the year except that Thanksgiving and Christmas both fell on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Q. Are you confident that this weekly event will continue through 2015?

A. Yes. The club owner seems to be quite pleased with what we have been doing over the past five months. People have been coming out and supporting us, and the musicians have been coming out to play!!! As of right now, I see us continuing, hopefully through all of 2015.

Q. Many jam sessions and open mics have a sign-up sheet and the leader intermittently calls up a musician or a group of musicians to play. Is this how you run your workshop?

(continued on page 9)

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance (BJA) is a grass-roots organization of jazz aficionados, musicians and venues dedicated to enhancing and promoting jazz in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. New members sharing this passion are always welcome as the BJA continues its efforts to build a stronger and better networked jazz scene. Together we can help this music thrive in the region and reward listeners and musicians alike.

BJA Priorities

- To develop new audiences for jazz
- To strengthen communication within the jazz community
- To improve media relations on behalf of the jazz community
- To bring greater visibility to the entire array of jazz offerings in the Baltimore region
- To provide greater access to performance opportunities for Baltimore-area jazz musicians

Visit www.baltimorejazz.com for information about our accomplishments and future goals.

Baltimore Jazz Alliance

847 North Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Website: www.baltimorejazz.com

Please direct your questions and comments to:
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IAN SIMS and DIVERGENT PATHS Conundrum

By Ali Breckman

Conundrum. What an underused word with so many possible applications today. You could use it to describe the situation a small jazz bar faces when the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) sends it a demand for payment. Or how a lifetime professional feels upon seeing her album uploaded for the Nth time to Spotify despite multiple takedown requests.

Native Virginian Ian Sims, who crossed the Potomac to study saxophone at Johns Hopkins and Peabody (with the inimitable Gary Thomas), has given the word a happier role: the title of a worthily complex tune and the name of his debut album of instrumental jazz.

"Conundrum" is a tight, twisting tune with fun unison stops, glancing snares rebounding from side to side. It also features a display of chops from Sims that periodically takes a few bars to sink in—"Yeah, that was pretty nice." In other words, his solos manage the feat of being at once impressive and unpretentious.

Paul Bollenbock on guitar and Alex Norris on trumpet also take some very nice turns on the title track. Bollenbeck lets loose with strings of precisely dribbled notes on the second track, "Forgotten"; if you love classic jazz guitar tone, this will key you up nicely. Throwaway combinations by drummer E.J. Strickland light up the winding turns of "Forgotten" and drive it through its paces.

Things get minor key on "Tracher-



ous Persona," in a dark, intriguing kind of way—not ballady, but punchy and powerful. It's a highlight worth hearing.

Throughout, the album mix is a really full-sounding balance of warm, articulated upright bass (played by the able Ed Howard), crispy, crunchy and fizzy drums and singing horns and guitar. Some of the tunes' pacing and ensemble interplay is reminiscent of skilled groups like Chick Corea New Trio, in this reviewer's opinion. The rhythm section Sims brought is seriously talented and won't let you down.

If you like modern, clean-sounding, deftly played straight ahead jazz, you won't want to skip this disc.

Conundrum's title track debuted in the Baltimore Jazz Composers' Showcase of 2013, and Sims says the forum pushed him to write the song, which led to the album. This album is a tribute to a talented and devoted sax player making a debut with clutch of strong material, but it's also a chance to note the good work that BJA does.

The CD is available at CDBaby.com.

*Have you been looking for jazz
in all the wrong places?*

**The jazz calendar at www.baltimorejazz.com
is the right place to find live jazz in Baltimore!**

The Redwine Jazz Band at Germano's

By Anna Hoover

The Redwine Jazz Band countered the cold temperatures with cool and hot jazz on Friday, January 9th at Germano's Piattini, a European-style restaurant in Baltimore. Germano's, in Little Italy, offers a varied menu of traditional and creative small plates—i.e., piattini—within an updated, cozy decor. Longtime supporters of live music, owners Cyd and Germano have for seven years featured an old-time cabaret four nights each week for their dinner guests.

The upstairs cabaret room, decorated with Toulouse-Lautrec-inspired vintage art, offers an intimate space that set the tone for this accomplished trio. The band played an eclectic mix of samba, Gypsy jazz, and classic New Orleans jazz. Ben Redwine introduced each tune with a bit of history that frequently became the source of humorous banter among the players. They clearly enjoy playing together and entertaining the audience with their quips, and the audience appreciated the humor. Perhaps the only disappointment of the evening was the less-than-sold-out crowd, which seems to be par for the course at this time of year.

Bandleader and clarinetist Redwine is widely known for his exceptional sound and authentic interpretations. He is a fearless master musician who wowed the audience with his ability to make the transition between different genres and styles. The classically trained Redwine brought a uniquely elegant sound and complex rhythms to the repertoire. The ensemble, unusual in its make-up of guitar, bass, and clarinet, created conversations in which each player was able to express his artistic voice and have his voice affirmed, expounded upon, and challenged.

Tom Mitchell is well known for his studies with European Gypsy guitarists and his long affiliation with Louisiana musicians. Having begun his career playing rock and traditional American folk music, he started playing jazz after having heard swing music while in his teens. It appears that Mitchell was "gypsified," if one believes the lyrics to the tune he wrote describing his aspirations to play jazz guitar in the style of Django Reinhardt. He listened intently to the other musicians, producing an unmatched kinetic drive and swing. Mitchell's strong ties to the cultural and musical heritage of Louisiana were evident during the New Orleans jazz sets. Never settling for stock accompaniment, he played inspired background patterns that supported and challenged his band mates. Mitchell also brought his beautifully resonant voice and bawdy lyrics to the vocal arrangements that were peppered throughout the sets.

Bassist John Previti provided both rhythmic support and melodic accompaniment as well as a dry wit between tunes. Previti began studying oboe but the draw to play rock 'n' roll bass guitar was too great for him to resist. He went on to play



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN REDWINE

From left: Ben Redwine, Tom Mitchell, John Previti

rockabilly for 18 years as the bass player with guitarist Danny Gattton. Using gut strings and no amplification, Previti played soulfully complex and sometimes humorous solos. His technical prowess sets him apart from most other bass players and his solos on every tune were much appreciated by the other players as well as by the audience.

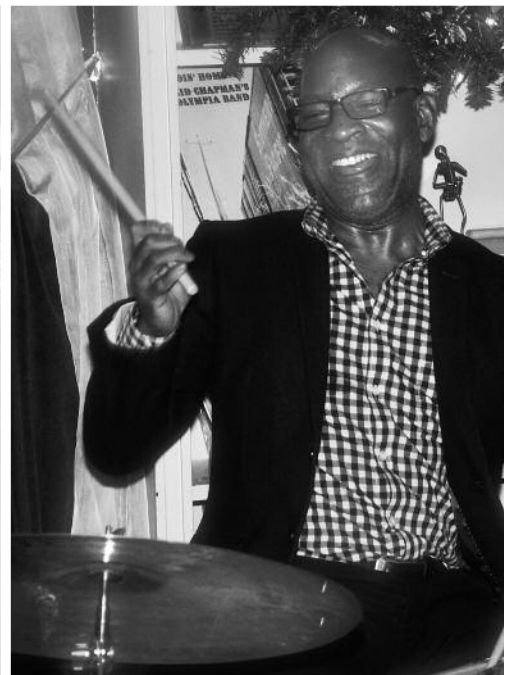
The trio has been playing together for ten years, and it is evident that they have a love and appreciation for their music and great respect for one another's musical expertise. While chamber music is generally associated with the classical arena, the intimate nature of their interactions drew the audience members in, making them feel part of the trio's magical creation. The dynamics were at times bold and other times exquisitely delicate, leaving the audience captivated. Look for the Redwine Jazz Trio in Baltimore, Annapolis, South County, and Washington D.C.



Holiday Concert at Eubie Blake Center



Photos of individual musicians:
GUY RICHARDSON



The Eric Byrd Trio, plus two special guest artists, flutist Delandria Mills and saxophonist Jeff Antoniuk, provided a joyous Holiday Concert at the Eubie Blake Center Saturday, December 13th. The music included selections from The Eric Byrd Trio's CD *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, as well as other holiday favorites. The musicians delivered superb performances to a deeply appreciative audience. The event was presented by the Phillips Agency and the EBCC board of directors. During the intermission BJA board member Liz Fixsen spoke about the goals of BJA and the advantages of membership for musicians and music lovers.

— Gail Marten



The Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society presents...



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More info at: www.baltimorechamberjazz.org
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Person has more than 75 albums under his own name on Prestige, Westbound, Mercury, Savoy, Muse, and is currently with High Note Records. He has recorded with Charles Brown, Charles Earland, Lena Horne, Etta Jones, Lou Rawls, Horace Silver, Dakota Staton, and many others.

BUY TICKETS ONLINE: www.baltimorechamberjazz.org

BJA Members receive a \$2 discount off the general admission price!
Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.

The Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society is a non profit organization and is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

March 8 –Terrell Stafford Quintet

April 12 – Renee Rosnes Quartet with Steve Nelson

May 3 – Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ FIXSEN

BJA's Meet and Greet

By Liz Fixsen

BJA members recently met for an hour-long "Meet-and-Greet" event before the Eric Byrd Holiday Concert at the Eubie Blake Center on December 13th and enjoyed cookies, cheese, and other snacks along with wine and other drinks. Board members, usually preoccupied with BJA business at board meetings, had a chance for friendly socializing with several BJA members and all the musicians performing that night. Although the crowd was small, there was considerable conviviality and good cheer. This was one of a few "Meet-and-Greet" events that the BJA has sponsored in the last few years, and the board hopes to plan more in the future. The idea is to help strengthen our community of jazz enthusiasts by giving members and potential members the chance to get to know one another and share their love of jazz. So keep a look-out for the next event!

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There Is No Theory... Only Sound

By George Colligan
Excerpt from *Jazz Truth*

George Colligan is an American jazz pianist/composer/educator who grew up in Columbia, MD, and now resides in Portland, OR, but also tours and spends much of his time in New York, where he lived for 14 years. His CD *Risky Notion*, with his new group, Theoretical Planets, featuring tenor saxophonists Joe Manis and Nicole Glover, bassist Jon Lakey, and special guest trumpeter Tony Glausi is coming out in late January. Look for it at Origin Records: <http://originarts.com/recordings/recording.php?TitleID=82681>

I'm finding that one of the huge challenges for teaching jazz at the higher levels is as follows: how do you teach the skills, the history and the rules while also getting students to think for themselves and be creative? I find that all of us tend toward one side of the brain or the other. I'm left handed, so they say that I'm most likely more right brained, which is the creative side of the brain. I've always felt that the piano for me was more of a vehicle to find something new rather than a way to play all of the existing repertoire. I try to practice classical pieces, but lately, they just inspire me to write my own music. Yet I find myself stressing skills to many of my students. I have so many students who need to focus on sound, reading, knowing tunes, jazz vocabulary, and rhythm. A lot of these things are pretty concrete. I believe that the skills are needed as a foundation for creativity. However, I acknowledge that it's possible to get bogged down in technique and never learn or love to be truly creative.

Music theory is not music. Theory is how we analyze and understand music. How do we get beyond the rules? Sometimes breaking the rules is not only acceptable; it's essential to making good music.

Read more at George Colligan's blog *Jazz Truth*:
<http://jazztruth.blogspot.com>

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Support for this event is provided by:

The Citizens of Baltimore County, Eddie C. & C. Sylvia Brown Fund,
William G. Baker Memorial Fund, creator of the bakerartistawards.org,
The Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

JAZZ JAM SESSIONS

where the cats congregate
to groove and grow*

* NOTE: As these events may be subject to change, it's always a good idea to CALL AHEAD for CONFIRMATION!

MONDAYS

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Monday night jam sessions hosted by Hot Club of Baltimore, mostly Django Reinhardt music, 1930s-'40s and standards. 22 W. North Avenue. 8-midnight. Call Michael Harris for more information at 443-884-2123.

TUESDAYS

Randallstown CC – Open Jazz Jam Sessions/Book and Poetry Readings every Tuesday at 6-8 pm. Hosted by Derrick Amin. 3505 Resource Drive, Randallstown. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. Sponsored by BJA. 410-887-0698

WEDNESDAYS

Phaze 10 – Jam sessions at Phaze 10 hosted by April Sampe and The Next Level Band. 885 N. Howard Street. 8-midnight. 410-462-2010

49 West Café – FIRST and THIRD Wednesdays. "Starr's Jazz Jam" at 49 West Street, Annapolis. Hosted by John Starr and house band. Musicians and singers very welcome! Delicious and reasonably priced food and drink available! \$10 cover. 7-10 pm. Reservations 410-626-9796

THURSDAYS

The Place Lounge – "Tho' Down Thursdays" jam sessions hosted by Jesse L. Powers, Jr. 315 W. Franklin Street. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 7-10 pm. 410-547-2722

Phaze 10 – First Thursday Straight Ahead Jazz Workshop Jazz Workshop hosted by John R. Lamkin II, 855 N. Howard Street. 7-11 pm. 410-462-2012

If you know of local jam sessions, please share the information with our readers by emailing the details to the editor at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

If any of the jazz jam sessions listed are discontinued please inform the editor at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

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Straight Ahead Jazz Workshops at Phaze 10

(continued from first page)

A. I'm not that organized. Usually the quintet plays the first set. By the time we start the second set, there are usually several musicians in the house and I ask them if they want to play. Usually they say yes and I tell them to come on. I call the tunes and start to play. If a drummer or a bass player or a piano player comes in, I ask my drummer, piano player or bass player if that person can sit in on the next tune and usually it's cool. If I sense a song getting too long or a player playing too long, I'll just come up and cut him off or take the tune out. I just want give anybody who wants to play a chance to play (or sing) and be heard—and work on their stuff before a live audience.

Q. How do you choose the jazz artists who participate with you at these workshops?

A. I start by securing the rhythm section and getting the best players I can find. I have a lot of favorite keyboard players, bass players and drummers who can really play. So I try to find guys who are available, who know the tunes (all of my favorite players know all the tunes), and who like playing with one another; and in this town, almost everybody has, at one time or another, played together. The horn player who shares the front line with me is usually someone who has been regularly coming to the workshops. By showing up month after month (and playing!) he or she is showing me that he/she wants to be part of this music. So I'll give the person a shot. Sometimes I'll invite a player whom I enjoy playing with or someone who I think needs to be heard, or someone whom I want to hear dealing with this music. In the months going forward, hopefully the audiences will get a chance to hear some players they wouldn't expect to hear in a "straight ahead" situation, or some more established players they wouldn't expect to hear, or who they haven't heard for a long time.

Q. Who are some of the artists who have performed with or sat in with you at Phaze 10 over past five months?

A. That's a hard one because once you begin naming names, inevitably you're going to leave someone out—but here goes. In the rhythm section I have had Todd Simon, Greg Hatza, Darius Scott, Bob Butta, Amy Shook, Michael Graham, Gary Richardson, Romeir Mendez, Jesse Moody, Robert Shahid. On the front line with me I have had Craig Alston, Clarence Ward, Daniel Wallace, Troy Atkins, Sam King. Sitting in there have been so many musicians that I know I'm going to leave someone out, but let's see, there has been Lionel Lyles, Brandon Moultrie, Theljon Allen, Mark Kelly, Tony Lunsford, Nick Costa, Rhonda Robinson, Michael Fitzhugh, David Smith and . . . now I'm drawing a blank.

Q. What type of audiences have you been attracting?

A. I tend to attract quite an eclectic yet appreciative audience.

For the most part the people who come out know me and know what to expect. There are others who come out because they know somebody in the band and they want to hear that person play. Some just like live jazz. And there are the musicians who come out because they want to play this music, or they simply want to hear what we are doing.

Q. Why did you choose Phaze 10 for your events?

A. Musicians need a place to play, and as a result look for places to play. When I learned that Phaze 10 was hiring bands, I met with the management and asked for a gig. The manager, Tony Randall (who was a former trombone and guitar player), knew of me and gave me a gig. That was two years ago. The gig went well and I played there a few times after that, inviting musicians to come out and play—and they did. Apparently this impressed the management and I was asked to do something on a regular basis. I jumped at the idea, and the Straight Ahead Jazz Workshop was born. The management was pleased and agreed to let me continue with the Workshop in 2015. I must say Phaze 10 definitely supports live jazz. It is one of the few clubs in Baltimore that has a different band four nights a week, all playing some form of jazz. I'm so glad to be part of it.



The John Lamkin "Favorites" Quintet

Saturday, February 14th 12 to 2 pm

LEXINGTON MARKET

400 West Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD

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John Lamkin II, trumpet and flugelhorn

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bja member news

Congratulations, Todd Marcus

BJA board member Todd Marcus just placed 18th in the Clarinet category in the *DownBeat* Readers Poll.

Congratulations, Dr. John R. Lamkin II

Dr. John R. Lamkin II is one of The Jazz Journalists Association's 2014 Jazz Heroes (advocates, altruists, aiders and abettors of jazz who have had significant impact in their local communities.)

UJE Anniversary

The Unified Jazz Ensemble recently marked their 19th anniversary playing jazz Tuesday nights at 49 West Cafe in Annapolis.

bja member discounts

An die Musik offers 10% discount for BJA members for music purchases at the An die Musik record store.

Chamber Jazz Society of Baltimore offers BJA Members a \$2 discount off the general admission price. Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.

Eubie Live! at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center at 847 N. Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.

Jazzway 6004 offers BJA Members a \$5 discount on performances at their venue.

BJA Sextet + at Joe Squared Pizza Friday, February 6th

8:20 until midnight
jam-session begins
at 10:30 pm

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Did you know that many of the members of the board of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance are professional or semi-professional jazz musicians themselves?

Wouldn't you love to hear them play together? For the first time ever, musician members of the BJA board will donate their talents and play together in a concert and jam session at Joe Squared Pizza on February 6th.

Performers include:

Mark Osteen, saxophone, vocals. For many years, Mark has performed and recorded with his Cold Spring Jazz Quartet throughout Baltimore at clubs such as Meli in Fells Point and Germano's in Little Italy.

Bob Jacobson, saxophone, clarinet. Bob's Sounds Good trio performed weekly for many years at Donna's in Columbia. Bob gives frequent house concerts with Baltimore vocalist Rhonda Robinson and others.

Brad Gunson, vocals, guitar, trombone, drums. Brad's band Gunson Roses has performed regularly in Baltimore, and he leads a variety of other jazz projects in Charm City.

Liz Fixsen, keyboard. Liz's band Moonstruck Jazz has performed numerous private engagements throughout the Baltimore and DC area since 2001.

Ian Rashkin, bass. Ian performs regularly with Jazz Jones at Joe Squared and elsewhere, and he has just started his new band, The Dogs of Jazz.

Wes Crawford, drummer, recording artist, product innovator and teacher. Wes has toured internationally with Jane L. Powell, sharing the stage with music's biggest names.

Guest artists to be announced. The band plans to invite some of Baltimore's stellar jazz performers to sit in throughout the evening. Between sets, the board/band will talk about the mission of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance and about the exciting projects planned for 2015.

Come out, enjoy great pizza and terrific music, and socialize with other BJA members—and bring your friends. All proceeds from the concert will benefit the Baltimore Jazz Alliance and help the organization achieve its goals of promoting jazz in Baltimore.

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BJA has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. Anything pledged above the basic \$25 membership is tax deductible and greatly appreciated!



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January/February 2015

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