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RUFUS REID

**Legendary Bassist Looks
Back on Storied Career
& Big Break in KC**

Outdoor Summer Festivals are Back

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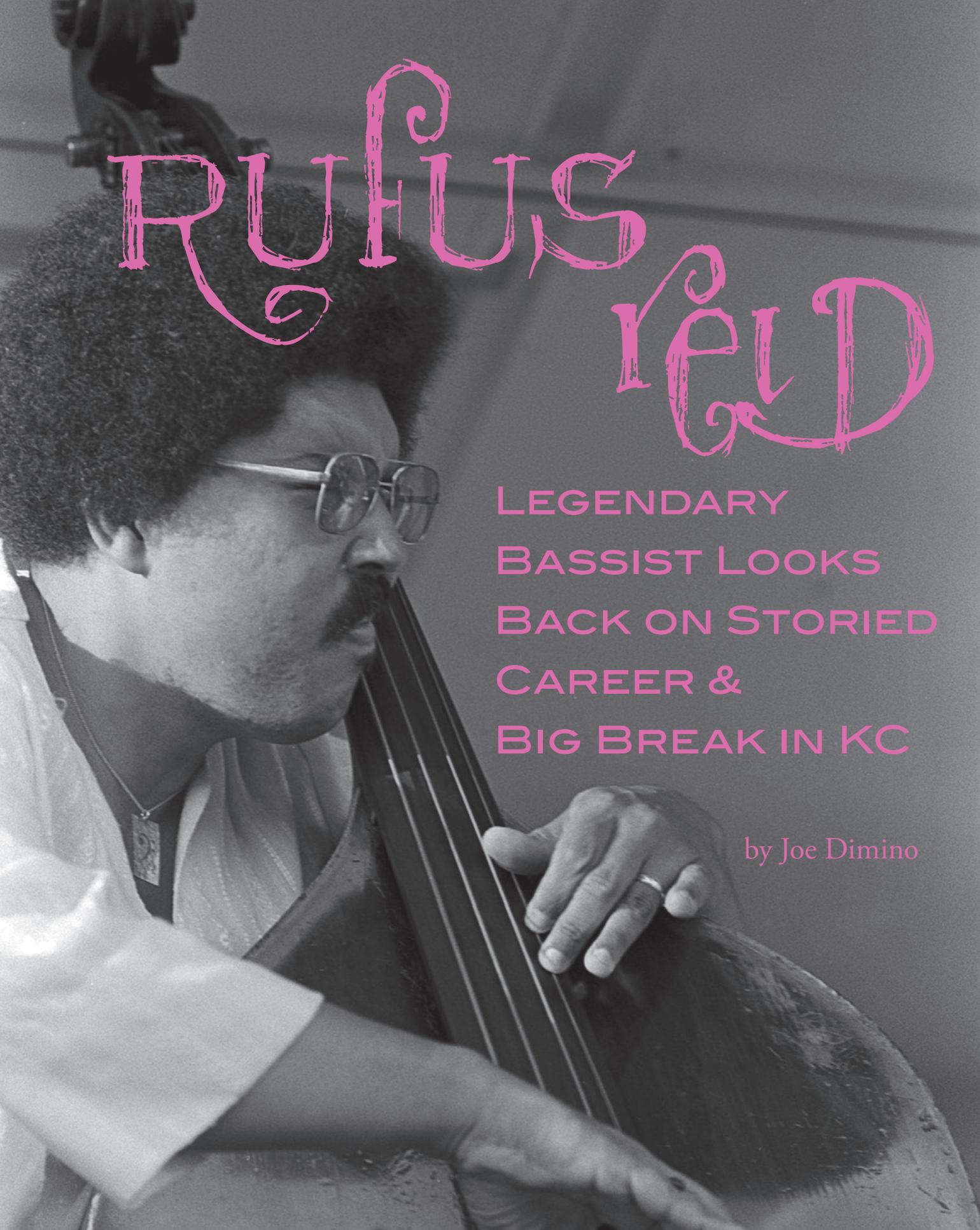
6:45PM - DAVID BASSE GROUP

8:45PM - ERNEST JAMES ZYDECO

JUNE | 08 | 3:00^{PM} - 9:30^{PM}

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A black and white photograph of Rufus Reid, a legendary bassist, playing a double bass. He is wearing glasses and a necklace, and is looking intently at the instrument. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

RUFUS REID

LEGENDARY
BASSIST LOOKS
BACK ON STORIED
CAREER &
BIG BREAK IN KC

by Joe Dimino

On Thursday, March 7, 2024, Wharton Arts Music School, in Berkley Heights, NJ honored award-winning jazz bassist, educator, and composer Rufus Reid with its Lifetime Achievement Award at its Annual Gala.

An active presence in the jazz world since the 1970s, Reid has recorded over 500 albums and can be heard on recordings with Dexter Gordon, Andrew Hill, The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet, Kenny Barron, Stan Getz, J.J. Johnson, Lee Konitz, and Jack DeJohnette, among others.

His reputation as an educator is equal to that of his musical achievements. Reid's book, *The Evolving Bassist* (Myriad Limited, 1974), remains the industry standard for double bass methodology. Reid and Dr. Martin Krivin created the Jazz Studies and Performance Bachelor of Music Program at William Paterson University, a program offering the first professional academically accredited Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies in the tri-state area.

Reid received the prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and the MacDowell Colony Grant. His 2014 release, *Quiet Pride – The Elizabeth Catlett Project*, received two Grammy Nominations for Best Large Jazz Ensemble and Best Instrumental Composition.

The prestigious Wharton Arts Lifetime Achievement Award distinguishes individuals who, during their lifetime, have made creative contributions of outstanding artistic significance to the performing arts and represent a beacon of inspiration to Wharton Arts' students. Previous Wharton Arts Lifetime Achievement honorees were Jamie Bernstein, John Debney, Paul Shaffer, and Angel Blue.



Dexter Gordon

Joe Dimino, of Neon Jazz interviewed Rufus Reid.

How does getting this lifetime achievement award feel?

CONTINUED

(Editor note: photos in this article, by Mary Rickle-Peltiere were taken at the legendary Concerts in the Parks, Sunday evenings at 7pm, free and open to the public, sponsored by Kansas City Parks and Recreation, throughout the summers in the 1970s and 1980s, as you can see in the photo, taken in 1978, it was very hot, and the band is the Dexter Gordon Quartet, with George Cables at the piano, Eddie Gladden at the drums, and Rufus Reid at the bass. Described as Dexter's favorite touring band in "Sophisticated Giant: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon," by Maxine Gordon)

RUFUS REID CONTINUED

To be honest with you, I am somewhat surprised. I really don't think about receiving recognition like this. At the same time, it's quite an honor. It proves that every time I talk to the students, you don't know who's listening to you. Obviously I have been observed to have this wonderful organization to give me this honor.

It's wonderful. I am at that age now where I'm going to have to own up to it. I guess my career has been kind of 50/50 as a player and as a teacher. Being in education, I like to see the light go on when I'm talking to young people that really want

it. I don't have a lot of patience for people who don't really want the information. Overall, people have been so kind to me over the years. They have taught me and given me just a pat on the back to say, 'keep it up.' Coming from the right person, that's all I need.

After all of these years of playing with legends & luminaries on stages all over the world, what do you like to teach the students?

I think it's very important that they notice I still have the passion that I had even as a young, burning, go-to musician. I may have it more than

continued

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JUNE 22, 2024

when I was younger! I wish that upon them. That they maintain that passion that has gotten them



Eddie Gladden

up to this point in their lives. There are so many things that we personally can't control. The individual has to have the goal that this is what they want. It's something they want and it gets the juices flowing in their bodies. I call it the hunger and satisfaction of being involved in this music we call jazz. Particularly in our society.

To have the music in their lives, they are able to contribute to other forms of discipline like no other person. You have the ability to conform or lead. You get the chance to see the big picture. It has been proven that those who play and understand music bring much more to the table, to companies.

With that being said, kudos to an organization like Wharton Arts. They are reaching out and working beyond the schools. When I was in high school in Sacramento, California, my family couldn't afford for me to have private lessons. The schools had teachers come to us twice a week to work and study. They gave everything to us. I kept up with all of those teachers that I had in junior high and high

school until they passed. They followed my career. They were very proud of me as I was of them. Then I realized how much they gave me. In retrospect, sometimes you don't know what you are being given in the moment when you are young. I have been blessed. The school system in Sacramento in the late 50's and early 60's was actually pretty good.

You are igniting a lot of fires in the youth of today. Who was that player for you in your life that inspired?

When I was in high school, there were a couple of classmates. To me, they were stars. I used to play the trumpet and I wasn't really good at it, but I was given skills. There was one guy named Bob Steam who was a saxophonist that also played clarinet who ended up playing bassoon. When he got out of high school, he went right to Julliard. He was the star of the school. I thought, "wow!"

Then there was another friend of mine that is still playing now, who is a drummer named Glen Latiano. Long ago, he went on the road with a piano player, and we thought that was stellar. He was working and traveling all over the world. He had just gotten out of high school. He has become one of the stalwart musicians in San Francisco, even today. He talks about what we were given in high school. Those two were really inspirational.

As a professional, it was Eddie Harris. He was the guy. He was my first boss, and he taught us so much! He taught us about business, integrity, and work ethic. He used to tell us two things—just be on time and be ready to play. It's pretty simple. Back then it wasn't so simple for a lot of people. He taught us how to record, to play the blues, play ballads, play funk, play avante garde, and such. He taught us everything! Essentially he taught us to not be afraid of music. You can't put it down, if you can't play it! There's a lot in there.

After all of these decades of playing, what are you most grateful for?

That I have the ability to play, think and be curious about music. I have been composing a lot in the last 25 years. Like never before. It's like another career. I love the process. I have been very, very fortunate to play, record, and perform these new pieces of music, that in some instances have become classics. I said, "how did they do that?"

I had been intrigued about it for years: Then I got involved with the BMI Composers Workshop. They taught me what to write for, they told me to write music that I like. It took me about a year to understand what I liked. That I didn't have to appease anybody. That was really difficult.

For the average lay person, we live very prescribed lives. In fact, that's what kind of keeps everything together. When I met Eddie Harris, he did things different. When everyone went one way, he went another! It was amazing. People we know like Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie Parker, they were going opposite of the norm. That's why they became who they are. It's amazing.

You were recently on an album by Chis Rottmayer, what other projects are you involved with these days?

I just got back from London. I was there for a week at the Guildhall School of Music performing with my big band. Scott Stroman, who brought me over there, wanted to record. We recorded an album that will be coming out sometime next year. Then I will move on to New Orleans to do a workshop I do every year. There is a group on tour there and I will be joining them for the weekend.

At this moment, I need to be working and writing instead of talking to you right now. I am very blessed, now that my compositions are resonating with people. I wrote a premier of a string orchestra piece last August, and they loved it. So, I have been commissioned to do another piece for this August. It's a super amount of pressure, but, it's very exciting and daunting at the same time. The students of Wharton will be playing one of my pieces at The Gala.



Rufus Reid

I'm happy. I'm busy and it's very exciting. To consider the alternative, to not have anything to do, I can't say that. I'm very pleased.

We unearthed some photos of you at a jazz festival in Kansas City, what memories do you have?

When I (first) came to Kansas City, it was a jazz festival and I met Thad Jones when he was there. I knew about the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, but he was there by himself and I was able to meet and play with him. It was a lot of fun. We were assigned to play, and after we played together, he came up to me and said I needed to be in New York. I was living in Chicago at the time, and told him I wanted to go. Chicago was very good to me.

CONTINUED

I finished my schooling there, at Northwestern. We had so much fun. After the show, he said we should go get some ribs.



Dexter Gordon and George Cables

My first really big gig in New York was with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and it was thrilling. I played with them for about 3 years before they split, and Thad went to Europe. I haven't spent a lot of time in Kansas City, but I'm good friends with Bobby Watson. He would keep me up to date with what was going on.

Final thoughts on this prestigious award?

It just confirms that you never know who is listening to you. If you just do what you do, you can make a difference. It's one thing with my career, but with the students, I love seeing the effect. For instance, I met John Patitucci when he was 15. He didn't even know he was going to be the John Patitucci that we know. I mean, I never thought about me being Rufus Reid right now. John and I are still very close. He's a lovely person. The kids that are hungry, have a glow that you can't unsee. He's proof that he had that glow. He was able to sustain and maintain. He became who he is, as a personality on his instrument and as a human. That's thrilling! It's an incredible payback.

Everything Rufus:

<https://rufusreid.com/>

Full Rufus Reid Neon Jazz Interview Links:

https://youtu.be/9lm3_Rzvc44

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/joe-dimino/episodes/Legendary-Jazz-Bassist-Educator-Composer-Rufus-Reid-on-the-2024-Wharton-Arts-Gala-Lifetime-Achievement-Award-e2gk6o6>

Joe, the Uncle of My Youth

He was smooth, dipping with
that Vine Street swing.
He tried to teach me that
Jitterbug thing.
He told me not to be a
a sloppy drunk --
just sip a little for the Funk.
He advised me not to run after
girls just for their cookies
because a girl's cookies
will get you in trouble.
Joe was the Uncle we wanted to
talk like, walk like, and be easy like.
When I was a young man,
Joe was a street superstar
jamming with his golden horn.
In my memories
when a cool breeze blows,
I'll say there's that wild comet —
my Uncle Joe.

Stanley E. Banks

April is Jazz Month

by Tom Alexios

Tom Alexios has been a longtime supporter of the Jazz Ambassadors. He prefers to work behind the scenes and now lives quietly on Lake Alaadeen in rural Douglas County, Kansas. But there was a time when Tom was “on the scene.”

Tom grew up in Connecticut. He went to live briefly in New York City, which is how he met trumpeter and jazz-nice-guy, Clark Terry. In fact, Tom’s interest in jazz all started with meeting Clark Terry. And then, in rapid succession, through his escapades with Clark, he met Duke Ellington, actually spending some quality time with Duke, a couple of times.

Those experiences and the ones that evolved from that chance meeting, changed Tom’s life. Clark was always a very open-hearted guy. He took a liking to Tom, and then Tom had the chance, through him, to hangout and meet great jazz musicians, such as Duke and others.

This jazz lifestyle began in the early 1970’s. His relationship with Clark endured until Clark’s

passing in 2015. Those first meetings with Duke were in 1972. This was only a couple of years before Duke passed away. In 1973, Clark introduced Tom to Barrie Lee Hall Jr, who had recently joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Barrie was just 24 at the time. Barrie and Tom also had a long continuing friendship that ended with Barrie’s passing in January of 2011.

Back in the mid 1970s, Tom told Clark that he was moving to Lawrence, Kansas. Clark then was kind enough to put him in touch with pianist Jay McShann and trombonist and orchestra leader, Eddie Baker. The Kansas City Public Library’s website, kchistory.org puts it this way, “His (Eddie Baker’s) longtime advocacy for a Kansas City, ‘Jazz Hall of Fame’ preceded the American Jazz Museum at 18th and Vine streets.” This was a very solid introduction to the Kansas City jazz scene of the day.

Tom continued to travel back and forth to see family and friends on the east coast. He kept



Duke Ellington, courtesy LaBudde Archives at UMKC

VK 1-10

in touch with Clark. Which led Tom to begin to travel to the west coast, after being introduced to guitarist Kenny Burrell. The Ralph J Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA <https://bunchecenterdev.pre.ss.ucla.edu/kenny-burrell-biography/> says, “Beginning in 1978, Kenny Burrell came to UCLA as a visiting professor and taught ‘Ellingtonia,’ through the Center for African American Studies and the institution’s esteemed Music Department. His course on the legendary Duke Ellington was the first regularly taught college course on Ellington in the United States and worldwide.”

Kenny had very early close ties to Ellington and other great musicians of the early days of jazz. Kenny taught the ‘history’ of Duke Ellington. He also created various student bands that performed Ellington’s music. Kenny was an avid user of original charts given to him by Barrie Lee Hall and Tom Alexios.

This long jazz journey and friendship with Clark Terry, continued to blossom when Clark introduced Tom to Jack Maher, then owner of Downbeat Magazine. Jack gave Tom the position of Director of Special Projects. This gave him the unique opportunity to create student jazz studies programs and clinics at various high schools and colleges that worked in conjunction with & overlapped with the Ellington Programs that Tom, Barrie, and Kenny Burrell had already set in motion.

Clark also introduced Tom to pianist and jazz empresario George Wein, the Creator of the Newport Jazz Festival and later the Newport Folk Festival. Through that friendship, said Tom, “I was able to get free passes from George to numerous Jazz and Folk Festivals. Later George became a huge power-house in the development large Jazz festivals here and abroad, one of which, was the JVC Jazz Festival in NYC.

From 1994 to 2006, George Wein had given Tom a budget to continue his work done for Downbeat Magazine, and with, yet again, generous financial support from the Ellington Family. After speaking with George about it, Tom took it upon himself to pick three student jazz bands, from various schools to be used as opening acts for the various headlining acts, over the yearly 10 day JVC Jazz Festivals.

These “Special Performances” included sets at Carnegie Hall, the Symphony Space, Birdland, Bryant Park, and other prestigious venues around New York City.

In 1999, Tom had the great privilege to invite 3 jazz groups, 1 from Milwaukee, and 2 Kansas City schools’ student jazz big bands to perform at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. The bands would be performing in honor of the 100th anniversary of Duke Ellington’s birth.

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington grew up in Washington DC. His mother was a seamstress and his father had worked at the White House. Duke grew up in a privileged home. In 1999, vocalist Kevin Mahogany was invited to sing as a part of a Special Performance of Duke Ellington’s Sacred Concert.

Through Downbeat Magazine, the Director of Special Projects was able to bring saxophonist Ahmad Alaadeen as a chaperone for the students, and to share this special experience with them on the historic trip.

The school’s students got to meet with Dr. David Baker, the distinguished professor from Indiana University, and, as the Conductor of the Smithsonian Jazz Master Works Orchestra, Dr. Baker was invited to share a jazz workshop and friendly pep talk with the students about the importance of what they were experiencing.

Kansas City’s then U.S. Congresswoman,

Representative Karen McCarthy, also joined the KC group for all of the events. She secured a V.I.P. tour of the White House for the Kansas City based students and the entire group.

In a recent quote from John Hasse Curator Emeritus of American Music at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History said, “Duke Ellington stands in my studied judgment as the greatest all-around American musician, composer, orchestra-arranger, bandleader-conductor, accompanist, piano soloist and musical thinker.” Hasse continued, “His recordings have stood the test of time for a century, and will undoubtedly continue to do so for centuries to come.”

This historic opportunity all came about because of Tom’s continuing relationship with trumpeter, Clark Terry.

These students from these 2 Kansas City area schools, and students from The Milwaukee School of the Arts under the Direction of Cliff Gribble, came to Washington D.C. to perform at the Smithsonian, in part because of years of work on Tom’s part, with Barrie Lee Hall Jr, the Ellington family, with Clark Terry and as part of his role with Jack Maher of Downbeat, and the benevolence of master jazz impresario George Wein.

As Cliff Gribble, of the Milwaukee School of the Arts said, “It was an unbelievable experience for the students and me to perform at the Smithsonian.” He continued, “My students, past and present, still have fond memories of the behind the scenes tour of the vast part of the Duke Ellington Archives not on display.” Clarence Smith, then Director of the Paseo Academy Big Band said, “I fondly remember first performing at the Smithsonian for Duke Ellington’s 100th Birthday in 1999.” And Clarence continued, “The following year we were invited back to the Capitol and performed at the Kennedy Center for their Tribute to Mary Lou Williams. Those two invites through Tom Alexios, are at the top of my most proud accomplishments. Our big band then included sax-



Clark Terry, courtesy LaBudde Archives at UMKC

ophonist Logan Richardson and pianists Harrold O’Neal and Ryan Howard, among many other exceptional students.”

As a sensational finish to the Honoring of Duke’s 100th Birthday, was an invitation from the Smithsonian for the students to go to attend a concert at the National Cathedral, on a hill overlooking Washington DC. The event was a Special performance by Kevin Mahogany of Duke Ellington’s Sacred Charts.

Tom left Downbeat in 2006, about two years after Jack passed away, realizing that the position was not as much fun with Jack gone. The relationships are what has always been important to Tom.

Tom continues his work with the Ellington Family now and into the future.

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Barrie Lee Hall Jr was one of only two musicians who performed with Duke Ellington, his son Mercer Ellington, and Duke's Grandson, Paul Ellington.

Shortly after the 100th Birthday Tribute, Barrie and Tom directly collaborated on the release of early Ellington Charts, which Barrie transcribed from music kept in the Archives of the Smithsonian. Ellington, in his lifetime wrote over 100,000 sheets of music.

In the collection, there are over a dozen variations alone on, "Take the A Train," a collaboration with pianist, Billy Strayhorn. Duke's genius kept him always making changes and tweaking the music for various bands and performances. Never satisfied with his body of work, Duke's writing will be studied by musicians and historians for years to come.

The charts that Barrie re-capitulated were then made available to all the "School Jazz Study Programs," here and abroad. Tom also used the Ellington charts with Barrie's help, in a partnership with the United Nations, UNESCO Cultural World exchange with countries around the world.

With help from Barrie and a generous \$13,000 donation from the Ellington Family in 2010, Tom brought together 2 of the last living musicians, who played in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. This concert, held at Kansas City's Gem Theater, included performances by Barrie Lee Hall Jr and Clark Terry. The pair agreed to participate in a panel discussions on the impact of Duke's contribution to jazz. Others participating in the panel were Dan Morgenstern, of Rutgers University, and saxophonist Ahmad Alaadeen. There was a big band performance of a few of the charts following the panel discussion.

Shortly following the April 2010 event at the Gem Theater, Alaadeen passed away in August of

the same year, and Barrie Lee Hall Jr passed away the following January.

Since there are many who have contributed mightily to America's most significant art form, jazz, it's essential to acknowledge and, at the same time, let these fantastic musicians know how much the public appreciates their work, while they are still with us," Said Tom Alexios, "look forward to my continuing to work with Clarence Smith and the many others that carry the flame."

As Edward Ellington, musician and grandson of Duke Ellington, says of Tom's life-long work, "I whole heartily continue to support our families' collaboration with Tom's efforts in Jazz Education and Jazz History."

And now, here we are today, celebrating what would have been Duke's 125th Birthday, and the 50th year since Duke's passing, and the 25th Anniversary of the student performance at the 100th Birthday tribute at the Smithsonian.

We are now in the third year of presenting the National Duke Ellington Awards, created with the ongoing support of the Ellington family. Our recipients include, Wynton Marsalis, who runs the Ellington Program at Lincoln Center, Kenny Burrell for developing the Jazz Program at UCLA, Logan Richardson, and Norman Simmons. This year, Charles Williams and Stan Kessler have been added to the list for their major contributions to Jazz Education and Jazz History.

"In closing it has been quite a Journey for myself and it is not over yet." Said Tom Alexios, and Clarence Smith added, "The Ellington Award, being associated with Tom Alexios and the Duke Ellington Family has allowed me to help recognize deserved national and local musicians." ¶

KCJA BOARD MEMBER PIANIST, AND VOCALIST, DAN STURDEVANT

Dan Sturdevant joined the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors board 3 years ago at the request of then President, Mark Edelman.

Practicing law since 1975, Dan brings his perception of business needs to the Jazz Ambassadors Board. Besides practicing law, Dan is a pianist and vocalist, performing over 100 dates each year. His favorite song to perform at the moment is the Gamble & Huff composition, originally recorded by Herold Melvin and the Blue Notes, “If You Don’t Know Me By Now.”

Dan has contributed liberally to recent KCJA Board decisions, such as having a major voice in the recent re-starting of the printed-version of this Jazz Ambassadors magazine. (supporting finances have proven successful), the recent improvements to the Jazz Ambassadors website www.kcjazzambassadors.org (check it out) and so much more.

There is plenty more to do, as our membership has slumped. Surprisingly, the KCJA began to re-ignite during the pandemic, leading to ‘Gig Grants,’ ‘Jazz Awards,’ and our ‘Jazz Futures’ educational program. There’s plenty of interest and jazz in the Kansas City area.

Dan recalls a favorite (jazz) moment. After being featured regularly from 1974-1978 inside Gate A at the Kansas City Chiefs’ Arrowhead Club, then Chiefs’ General Manager, Jack Steadman, approached Dan’s trio “3 Men,” and said,



Dan Sturdevant

“you guys are good, but we need to add a lady singer.”

So, that gig was done and Dan thinks females run the world..

Global One

Urban Farming's Jazz in The Garden Series Ushers in Exciting New Outlet for Kansas City Jazz

by Alexej Savreux

“Well, it’s a love story. It’s love, and it’s family.” said co-founder Anthony Nealy of the origins of Global One Urban Farming, one of the metro’s largest urban farms, a 1.5 acre spread nestled away on Cypress Avenue in Kansas City, Missouri. Nealy and his wife, Star Nealy relocated to Kansas City from Detroit’s westside in 2005 seeking work.

Nealy and Star co-founded Global One Urban Farming in 2010. “We started our home garden in 2010 and gave our neighbors free vegetables,” said Star, “then, [it] expanded to three gardens.” Global One now regularly brings in volunteers from various backgrounds and purposes from across

the metro and area universities to learn about conservation and how to produce thousands of pounds of vegetables to distribute free to residents in USDA Defined Food Insecurity communities here in Kansas City. “We were advised by our accountant to register as a nonprofit to continue.” Said Anthony, “Global One Urban Farming was established in 2016, to give us 5013c charitable status. We are now one of the largest community gardens in Kansas City, with 1.5 acres and a commercial greenhouse.”

The organization also teaches residents and area high school students how to produce vegeta-



Mr & Mrs Anthony Nealy

bles from seed, how to harvest, and they educate them in the greenhouse process. Now Global One has partnered with the city of Kansas City, Missouri, and its Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund. The couple's high-yield organic gardening, growth as a non-profit, and healthy foods and demonstrate how organic foods and the community can nourish each other.

It's a logical outgrowth of this community-building that Global One has started showcasing musical pillars of what makes Kansas City, Kansas City, as both a fundraising activity as well as a concerted effort to bring together a multiplicity

of strata from the community to embrace central components of Kansas City culture (e.g., jazz, music, and BBQ) for the joy of it all, and

to raise awareness about their non-profit's objectives. NTDF helped sponsor the Jazz in the Garden event. The most recent iteration of this cultural program has taken on the form of a series; one of these events took place Saturday, April 6th, dubbed the "Kansas City Jazz in the Garden," series, replete with a stellar outdoor concert by the well-known and veritable musical gem The James Ward Band.

continued

At the April 6th event, Global One presented a dedication plaque honoring the community and media service and life of the late Lisa Lopez-Galvan, accepted by her husband, Mike Galvan. It was a thoughtful, moving ceremony that resonated profoundly with all in attendance.

This iteration of the James Ward Band included the masterful musician himself, bassist, and bandleader James Ward on electric bass with clean and fuzz phases pulsating the physics of slick sound, and near-Olympian-caliber riffing funneling both a lead and a groovy, percussive backbone to the band and the repertoire, his son, Jaylen Ward, a masterful young drummer, and a student in audio engineering played the drums.

Meanwhile, UMKC Conservatory vibraphonist prodigy Isaiah Petrie was the go-to on the vibraphone; their inspired menagerie of syncretic melodies lit up the farm that afternoon, radiating outwards the jazz fusion into the beautiful acres of garden grandeur. Nicolette Paige Davis of KK-FI's Soul Child and the Missouri Department of Conservation made appearances at the event. This jazz event garnered solid local attendance and attention from as far away as Leawood and the tri-county area.

The James Ward Band's iteration at Jazz in the Garden hit the mark spot on. The trio was ably embodying and synthesizing a series of dexter-

ously noodled proficient sets. Switching gears and finessing divergent tempos, eras, and structures replete with solos done the righteous way, by democratizing sound, in a kind of musical tandem between a variety of ephemeral soundscapes.

This resulted in some of the finest live jazz Kansas City currently has to offer. And keeping with Nealy's near and dear history and mantra, one of the most magnificent aspects of the event lay within the symbiosis between the James Ward Band and their audience; just like nature's best food nourishes the body. This was an exquisitely well-cultivated midwestern culture to nourish the mind.

Jazz this good jazz can nourish the soul. Nealy noted that Global One will have several future Jazz in the Garden events. The next one will be a Juneteenth Celebration on June 8th from 3–7 p.m., with gates opening at 2 p.m. Tickets will cost \$20, and more shows and more of what makes Kansas City so unique and beautiful are promised to follow. Global One has put out a call for local musicians and jazz artists for future events and shows.

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Global One Garden events - Juneteenth Celebration on June 8th at 2 p.m. Tickets will cost \$20

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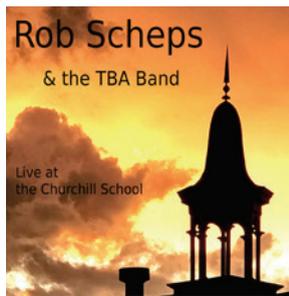
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Rob Scheps Churchill Two

(2024)

Rob Scheps, who has deep ties to KC, has a new album coming out, “Churchill Two.” Scheps was recently in KC with one of his long-running bands with Roger Wilder (pi-



ano) and Bob Bowman (bass) on April 19 at The Blue Room, what Scheps called “our old band.” Saturday (April 20) he played The Majestic, and Sunday (April 21) he played Westport Coffee House. Scheps said, “I love KC. I’m there twice a year...I’ve been coming to Kansas City for 22 years.”

The new album was recorded during the early stages of the pandemic. Scheps said, “We’ve been in a limbo space (because of covid), (20)21 or ’22. I made the band drive 300 miles across the state...no pets, no spouses. We rehearse for two days...,” then record.

The single, “Capricorn Curiosity Shop,” drops first. Bandleader, saxophonist and flautist, composer Scheps said, “I’m a Capricorn. I’m not going to say it’s about me. It starts...vague pop-tinge jazz...then (like) a salsa band from the Bronx...we overdubbed guiro...I tried to get a feeling from one of the latin bands from my

hometown, New York City...You could kind of say each part of the song is a partitioned room with something different in it...The third section sounds more like an ECM, a storm brewing...(then) the section with the funk guitar (Luke McKern)...our wild card...As a composer, I have the rare advantage of using Luke on guitar or percussion in very different styles.”

Scheps said, “I’m so organized in the studio (that) we finished 2 CDs on Labor Day weekend,” “Churchill”--and “Churchill Two,” which Scheps called “equally strong.”

Scheps said we “might do Capricorn as a teaser...But it’s been sequenced for months...I’m eager to have it out into the world...Kind of like (if) you had a baby, but didn’t let anyone look at for 10 months.”

Among the other tunes on the album, Scheps said, “There is a dedication to John Abercrombie on there. He was one of my closest friends... (And) the closing piece...is ‘What the World Needs Now is John Lewis.’ ...I’d even subtitle the tune ‘Good Trouble,’” after the late great American activist, civil rights leader, and politician.

Scheps said Bandcamp is “the best place to get the album.” Get it. Enjoy what Scheps is up to now. ¶

—Kevin Rabas

Veteran Lee's Summit Musician & Educator

Shawn Harrel

Reflects on Gigs & 1st Annual Jazz Festival

by Joe Dimino

The thought of bringing a community jazz band to the Lee's Summit community commenced in the lobby of Margaritaville in Osage Beach, MO during a State Music Conference in pre-pandemic times circa 2019. Lee's Summit veteran educator and musician Shawn Harrel was spit balling an idea that would become a dream come true.

"We talked to Miro about trombone and in that lobby, we saw the band come together. I am a piano player and a good friend of mine, and a former student is a bassist. Another friend Brandon Johnson is a drummer. Bob Harvey is a KC Jazz Orchestra player," Shawn noted. "At that point, the group came together, scheduled the first rehearsal on the calendar and later rehearsed once a month."

With a pandemic gone and nearly five years later, the band was playing regular gigs at The Bridge Space and Club 1909 in downtown Lee's

Summit. Building on the momentum, the 1st Annual Jazz Lee's Summit Festival is scheduled for June 22, 2024, on the grounds of The Bridge Space.

"We are excited about the upcoming jazz festival. In February of 2024, we began playing on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Club 1909 and became the resident house band, which is a dream come true," Shawn noted.

As a 20-year digital media technology veteran, Shawn has a wide array of experiences in education, audio/video production, instrumental music, composition & arranging, and public radio. Shawn credits his education to the band directors he had growing up such as Brenda Kueck, a middle school educator, and Raytown South Jazz Band.

When Shawn did his undergraduate work in college, he almost did not do jazz. He was a pianist that did an audition in high school at the



Shawn Harrel

urging of a music teacher. From there, he went onto Missouri State University and became a drum major. Then, he got a master's in jazz arrangement and composition from The University of North Texas.

"I was a teaching assistant to Dan Hurley, who passed away recently. He was one of the great jazz educators. Shawn went on to say that I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but Dan taught me how to be a jazz educator. So, I came back home and started at Lee's Summit West in 2004 when it opened."

"Jazz was growing in Raytown at a little hole in the wall called Medlin's. Some thirty years ago I saw the likes of Doug Talley, Paul Smith, Steve Linnard and Bud Haley. I was not old enough to be in there, but Bud would pretend to be my dad so I could get in. I learned so much when I saw Paul playing piano. In high school, some of us went down to the Eureka Springs Jazz Festival

to see Chick Corea and John Pattituci. To this day, I can still close my eyes and remember being there. It was magical."

Shawn is still honing his skills with other educators and lording over a new crop of students that are keeping the jazz genre alive in the streets of a bustling Lee Summit in much the same fash-

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LEE'S SUMMIT CONTINUED

ion as a young Pat Metheny did prior to becoming a jazz star.

"Clubs like 1909 gigs are full of good, sold out crowds. We feel the energy and as core educators, we teach and get to dust off our horns," Shawn said. "Speaking of the home of Pat Metheny, he got his start in a group like ours. He took his guitar out when he was a teenager. He sat in and cut his teeth.

"I will not do this forever. I want to keep this going. Like the Village Vanguard band with Mel Lewis/Thad Jones. We are getting a foothold," Shawn said.

All this arduous work, playing gigs and keeping the jazz torch alive has all culminated in the 1st Annual Lee's Summit Jazz Festival this Summer.

"This is going to be a lot of fun. The owner of the Bridge Space, Ben Rao, was all for it. He wanted to know when to start and how to fund it. Shawn noted. There is a stellar cast of local acts performing in the jazz fest like Back Alley Brass, Christopher Burnett, Amber Underwood, Eboni Fondren, Sons of Brazil and a host of student groups. The jazz fest will also include art spaces and food trucks.

Tickets are selling and word is spreading and it is going to be a lot of fun, Shawn said.

More on the 1st Annual Lee's Summit Jazz Festival:

<https://www.bridgespace.us/jazz>

All Things Shawn:

<https://www.shawnharrel.com/>

Full Shawn Harrel Interview Links:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/joe-dimino/episodes/Lees-Summit--MO-based-Jazz-Musician-and-Educator-Shawn-Harrel-e2i26r0>

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Mark Edelman

JAZZ HERO



Armed with degrees from Washington University, the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the University of Missouri-Columbia, in the performing arts, journalism, and law, in 1976 bassist and songwriter Mark Edelman founded Theater League, a not-for-profit communi-

ty-based performing arts organization to present the best of Broadway musicals on tour to Kansas City audiences and beyond. His endeavor became so successful that Edelman, who for fun had recorded some self-described “Jewish themed parody rock songs,” didn’t get to professionally practicing his specialties. Rather, he’s used Theater League as a platform from which to affect cultural preservation as well as ignite broad changes in KC.

To begin, Mark tucked his own 99-seat Quality Hill Playhouse into the first floor of a downtown parking garage, the first step towards instigating the renovation and construction of many of the city’s theater. Further, he officed Theater League in Municipal Auditorium, keeping this classic but decaying structure alive during downtown’s lean years by presenting musicals and jazz events in it. The Auditorium had been constructed between 1931 and 1935, while Charlie “Yardbird” Parker and Count Basie were building their careers locally; the massive hall hosted the great Louis Jordan’s historic sold out 1941 concerts and the city’s long-time indoor jazz festival. Considering the many renovations

continued on page 28

Announcing the KCJA Jazz Giants John Booth Legacy Fund

Big Band leaders from Jim Lower back to Jay McShann recognized and respected trumpeter John Booth. John was a part of the fabric of Kansas City jazz for the past 5 decades.

John Booth began taking trumpet lessons in Sedalia elementary school and his first teacher was Harry Trotman. After graduating high school John attended Central Missouri Methodist University.

JOHN BOOTH *Legacy Fund*

He then joined the Army's Fifth Army Band, and followed that by graduating in music education from the University of Northern Colorado. After teaching for just 2 brief years, John "retired" from teaching. After that he took a few years off, without playing the trumpet at all.

Moving to Kansas City there were stints with the Johnson County Jazz Band, the Jimmy McConnell Jazz Orchestra, Eddie Baker's Big Band, the JR McWilliams Big Band, and a lot of blowing at practically every jam session that he could find.

John was a ubiquitous presence on the city's jazz scene. Always polite, low-key and acutely aware of all of the swinging music playing around him. Trumpeter Al Pearson was a close friend. John Booth passed away on April 23rd, surrounded by a loving family.

John's wife Karen has asked the Ambassa-

dors to start a fund in her husband's name to help the many older musicians in need in our community. You are invited to donate to that fund at our website, www.kcjazzambassadors.org. Saxophonist, Brad Gregory will host a jazz memorial & jam session from 2pm – 5pm on May 26th at the Sylvester Powell Jr. Community Center in Mission, Kansas, and musicians are asked to bring their instruments.

When one Googles the name Queen Bey these days Beyonce comes up. But, as KCUR's Steve Kraske knows Queen Bey was an artist and jazz educator with a long career in film, theater,



and music. The New York Times recognized Queen Bey as one of the best-known jazz artists from Kansas City, along with Charlie Parker and Count Basie.

Her wide repertoire of jazz and blues standards, innovative and often unknown songs are

FINAL CHORDS CONTINUED

drawn from her first-hand experience working with the legends of jazz and blues. Queen's style, "a natural and understated approach to the material make for a solid crowd pleaser" according to Variety magazine.

Vocalist, Millie Edwards remembers Queen as a singer who was as "personable as she was fun." And "When she took the stage, she grabbed the audience and they went along for the ride, and absolutely loved it."

In 1999 filmmaker, Kevin Willmott cast Queen Bey in a leading role in his film about his hometown of Junction City, Kansas, Ninth Street.

Queen Bey was the first jazz artist to receive the coveted Governor's Arts Award, and Queen Bey has served as Kansas City's Ambassador of Jazz, performing around the world promoting jazz and blues music on behalf of the United States and jazz organizations.

Her television debut was an NBC mini-series, Matter of Justice, co-starring Patty Duke and Martin Sheen. Her film debut was in the movie Ninth Street with Martin Sheen and Isaac Hayes.

Editor

∥

MARK EDELMAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

Edelman's events required the city to address, they may have saved this historic complex from the wrecking ball.

In addition, Mark produced and directed "12th Street Jump," a syndicated public radio "jazz, blues and comedy jam." Launched by KCUR-FM, KC's NPR affiliate, the show grew to be heard weekly on public radio stations nationwide, recorded live with guests such as Joe Sample, Bob James and Christian McBride for audiences attending for free at the Mutual Musicians Foundation.

And Edelman has served as President of the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors, for which he established new programs: "Gig Grants," handed out to hundreds of out-of-work musicians during the pandemic; "Jazz Futures," monthly showcases for area college jazz studies students, and the "JAM Awards" honoring the city's favorite local jazz musicians, drawing larger crowds each year. As current KCJA president, I assure you these projects continue, with impact.

Mark Edelman and his family have done so much for entertainment in Kansas City and with Broadway tours across the U.S. and Can-

ada that sometimes he seems intimidating. His mind works fast, and he does not suffer fools. However, once he decides to help someone or create something that will bring the community together, he does it. Once the good deed is done, he very seldom sticks around to be thanked for his benevolence. That's how real heroes often are.

Kansas City has not had a jazz festival for at least 5 years, on June 8th, 2024, the Parkville Jazz and Blues Festival will be revived, as the Juneteenth Jazz and Blues Festival a day-long free event situated on a picturesque bend of the Missouri River. Mark, who moved to Washington D.C. in late 2023 but maintains his KC connections, hopes to attend but is awaiting doctor's ok to travel. The Jazz Ambassadors will be there, and a Theater League board member will accept the Jazz Hero certificate in his stead, if necessary. The day promises all of the elements Jazz Hero Mark Edelman would ask of a solid local jazz festival, and being there is a great way to honor him, as well as enjoy yourself!

David Basse

drummer, vocalist, radio show host

∥

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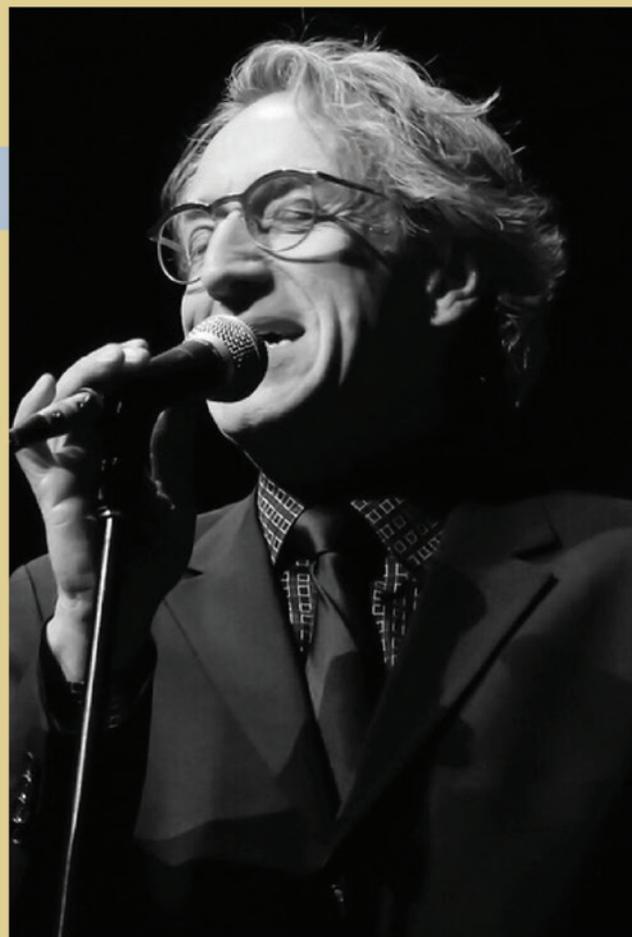
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