

In Tune

Official Publication of Charlotte County Jazz Society, Inc.

Volume 30, Issue 1

February - March 2020

BIG NAMES COMING WITH LOTS OF GREAT JAZZ

February 10, 2020
**The Roy Gerson
Swingtet**



Roy Gerson brings an eight-piece group for the February concert. Gerson, a New York transplant who now resides in Naples has played some of the top clubs in Manhattan as a band leader including the Village Gate, the Blue Note and Tavern on the Green. He performed in over a dozen movies including *The Cotton Club*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, *The Mirror has Two Faces* and *The Associate*.

March 9, 2020
Brazilian guitarist
**Diego Figueiredo
& Trio**



Diego Figueiredo is a Brazilian guitarist and Grammy nominee. He is one of the rising stars of the international jazz scene. At age 39 he has released 26 CD's, 3 DVD's and performed in 60 countries. He is the winner of international competitions twice winning awards at the Montreux Jazz Festival cementing his reputation as one of the most talented guitarists in artists in the US and Brazil including names familiar to US jazz fans including Ken Poplowski, Dick Hyman, Larry Coryell and Wycliff Gordan.

Concerts begin at 7 pm, at the William H Wakeman III Theater
Cultural Center of Charlotte County, 2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Admission is **FREE** for CCJS members; \$20 for non-members.

Tickets are available at the box office starting at 6:30 pm on concert night or in advance through the box office at (941) 625-4175 X 221. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

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JAZZ AT THE LIBRARY

On Wednesday **March 25th** the annual concert at the Mid County Regional Library will take place at 6 p.m. This free event is co-sponsored by the Charlotte County Library System and the Charlotte County Jazz Society. The 70 minute concert will be held in the large meeting room at the library located at 2050 Forest Nelson Blvd., Port Charlotte.

Appearing will be Chris Brown (vocals), Chuck Parr (drums), Herb Bruce (trombone), Mike Parmelee (saxophone), Matt Bokulic (piano) and Vince Evans (bass). The series has been annual event since 2006 and has featured dozens of musicians from around Southwest Florida.



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The big-band legacy is alive and well in hands like these



Craig Christman

Saxophonist Craig Christman brought his Stardust Memories Big Band to Port Charlotte on Monday, December 9, for a concert that scored well on every measuring chart. His mission with this five-year-old band from Collier County is to keep alive the legacy of America's classic large bands.

Performing for the Charlotte County Jazz Society, he did so in clever ways that also honored some of the second-generation outfits that emerged from the Swing Era's heyday. As a result, the CCJS audience was transported to big-band heaven for a few hours.



In this two-set, 23-song performance, the 18-piece Stardust Memories band performed vintage material from the likes of Benny Goodman, Harry James, Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw, as well as some Duke Ellington and Count Basie material. There was also a dollop of Stan Kenton, Quincy Jones and Doc Severinsen's NBC Tonight Show Band. The band also played two Buddy Rich band charts of classic material (Duke Ellington's "In a Mellow Tone" and Cole Porter's "Love For Sale").



Walt Andrus

Nelson Riddle's arrangements also figured prominently as singer Walt Andrus performed seven Frank Sinatra classic hits. Andrus, who moved to Southwest Florida several years ago, was a member of The Pied Pipers vocal group before trombonist Buddy Morrow hired him to sing with the Morrow-led Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. An-

drus worked with the orchestra for 15 years starting in 1988. He is blessed with an uncanny mid-career Sinatra sound when Ol' Blue Eyes was at his prime.

The high-octane Christman band roared through Glenn Miller's "In The Mood," "A String of Pearls," "American Patrol" and "Sing, Sing, Sing," as well as a Miller arrangement of W.C. Handy's St. Louis Blues." The delicacy of Stan Kenton's arrangement of "Here's That Rainy Day" showcased the band's subtler side.



Terry Myers

Christman shifted to piccolo for his solos on Quincy Jones' "Soul Bossa Nova," more familiar to many as the movie theme from *Austin Powers*. John Keevil added a fine piano solo here.

The band closed the first set with "Sing, Sing, Sing," the highlight of Goodman's renowned 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. Drummer Paul Gavin, who was swinging hard all night, was up to the challenge on this Gene Krupa hallmark. It opened the second set with another burner, "Theme from Police Squad!," the short-lived TV show that inspired *The Naked Gun* movies.

Andrus reprised "Night and Day," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Pennies From Heaven," (which Sinatra recorded with the Count Basie Orchestra), "The Song Is You," "That's Life," "My Way" (another Keevil highlight) and the night's encore, "New York, New York."



Tom Weaver, Paul Gavin, Terry Myers



The Starlight Memories Big Band

Christman turned in the evening's most poignant moment with his solos on a Dave Wolpe arrangement of the Johnny Mandel-Johnny Mercer classic ballad "Emily." He said it is a favorite tune - because it is his daughter's name.

There was another Tommy Dorsey Band connection at work. Saxophonist Terry Myers, a regular performer at CCJS concerts through the years, is the current leader of that band. He was in the spotlight on several fine solos.

An audience estimated at more than 330 turned out for the CCJS concert at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County's William H. Wakeman III Theater.

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The International Trio's return visit swings mightily

Drummer Eddie Metz Jr.'s trio with Italian pianist Rossano Sportiello and Australian bassist-singer Nicki Parrott sure knows how to swing its music. It did so on Monday, January 13 with creativity, poignancy, a bit of humor – and a program that honored the players' great influencers.

This was the band's fourth visit to the Charlotte County Jazz Society's concert stage in nine seasons. It was clear from the first notes that their sound and simpatico have



Rossano Sportiello

reached new heights – and the audience responded in kind. This is a band of equal partners. Their concert programming has evolved over the years to a point where they have combined their formidable musical talents in ways that appeal to their listeners.

Sportiello's keyboard command and sprightly Stride-influenced style set the tone for the night as the band opened with Earl Hines' "A Monday Date," then dug into a stunning version of Erroll Garner's "Misty" that showcased Parrott's melodic bass artistry on her mid-tune solo. The segment ended with their teasing take on Stride master Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose."

The next segment underscored Parrott's vocals. This being the centennial year of Peggy Lee's birth, she opened with the Lee hit "It's a Good Day," then performed the Nat King Cole hit "L-O-V-E" and Ella Fitzgerald's 1936 hit "Mr. Paganini." She also performed Lee's classic "Fever" later in the concert.

The first set concluded with material associated with Count Basie. The bandleader hired 20-year-old Metz, who was still in school at William Paterson University, to go on the road for six months as the band's drummer in the early 1980s. What a way to boost a career. The trio performed "Shiny Stockings" and "Shoe Shine Boy" with the drummer's power and subtleties on full display.

Sportiello paid additional tribute to Garner, as well as George Shearing ("She"), Oscar Peterson and Chopin in the second set. After the pianist dug into Garner's "I Can't Get Started," Metz shook his head and said, "If you closed your eyes, you'd swear Erroll Garner was playing here tonight." Sportiello's treatment of Peterson's classic ballad "You Look Good to Me" honored the composer but was imbued with his own touches. Later, he reimagined the classical "Waltz in C Sharp Minor" as a meeting of the minds between composer Chopin and Fats Waller. It was a stunning display of his piano mastery.

In a poignant change of pace, Parrott performed one more modern song in honor of the firefighters, animal rescue personnel and others helping combat Australia's horrific bush fires. She chose "Rainbow Connection," which Kermit the Frog sang in 1979's *The Muppet Movie*. Later, she honored guitarist and inventor Les Paul, with whom she played for 10 years at Iridium in New York. The two-song tribute included "Young at Heart" (with a few lyrical twists) and "How High the Moon," which was a 1951 mega-hit for Paul and his wife, singer Mary Ford.

Florida-based Metz, whose roots are in Michigan, completed his Basie tribute with a clever solo performance of "Cute" from the Count's repertoire. He played this version of the Neal Hefti tune out in front of his drum set, using brushes on a cardboard box held between his legs. He reached back a few times to hit the bass drum or a cymbal for added effect. The trio closed things out with "St. Louis Blues," with the audience standing in masse and clapping along on this exhilarating evening. Early in the concert, Parrott thanked the audience for turning out in such strong numbers "on a Tuesday night." She returned three days earlier from as Australian holiday visit. Parrott was jet-lagged, but you couldn't tell in her playing. Reminded that it was Monday, she quipped, "It's Tuesday in Australia."

The Port Charlotte concert opened a week-long Florida tour by the trio. It drew a crowd of more than 380 people to the Cultural Center of Char-



Eddie Metz Jr.



Nicki Parrott



The International Trio

Reprinted with permission from writer-photographer Ken Franckling's Jazz Notes blog.

A CCJS matinee at The Grill at 1951



Roy Gerson

Pianist Roy Gerson, a native New Yorker who moved to Naples a couple of years ago, gave the Charlotte County Jazz Society a taste of his keyboard mastery on Tuesday, January 21 at The Grill at 1951. More than 100 people filled the Grill for the event.

The Port Charlotte restaurant, formerly JD's Bistro & Grille, changed ownership at the end of 2019. Its new owner, Dave

Eger, has committed to continuing the CCJS community partnership that began with JD's in 2018.



Gerson has chops galore, with a lot of Stride and boogie-woogie on display as he dug into Great American Songbook classics, primarily its 1940s and '50s chapters. He was supported for the afternoon by his wife, the soulful singer Corrine Manning, and versatile bassist Don Mopsick, a 19-year veteran of the Jim Cullum Classic Jazz Band.

The event was a preview in a way for Gerson's February 10 CCJS concert appearance. He will appear that night with his eight-member Swingtet. He assembled the band to re-create the 1940s Manhattan supper club atmosphere when you could hear top jazz musicians play a wide variety of swing, Latin and pop music for dining, listening and dancing.



Don Mopsick & Corrine Manning



Gerson, Mopsick & Manning



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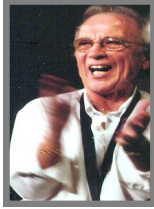
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- November 11** **JOHNNY VARRO & HIS SWING SEVEN**
- December 9** **CRAIG CHRISTMAN with the STARDUST MEMORIES BIG BAND**
- January 13** **EDDIE METZ & the INTERNATIONAL TRIO**
- February 10** **The ROY GERSON SWINGTET**
- March 9** **DIEGO FIGUEIREDO & TRIO**
- April 13** **DOUBLE CONCERT**
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