

In Tune

Official Publication of Charlotte County Jazz Society, Inc.

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More Matinee Jazz is coming your way



Since 2018, the Charlotte County Jazz Society has preceded its evening concert series with an afternoon pre-season event at The Grill at 1951 and its predecessor, JD's Bistro.

Now, CCJS is expanding the afternoon offerings to several Matinee Jazz concerts during the season. thanks to the hospitality of owner David Eger and his team at The Grill at 1951, a CCJS Community Partner.

Pianist Bobby van Deusen, who was the inaugural artist back in September 2018, returns for a January 26 solo performance at The Grill at 1951. He is a boogie-woogie, ragtime and stride piano marvel with equally strong classical chops.

In 2019, Bobby won first place in the senior division of the Old-Time Piano Playing World Championship in Oxford, Mississippi. The Philadelphia native has performed with Pete Fountain, Al Hirt and the Barbary Coast Dixieland Band, and on the *Mississippi Queen* steamboat. He lives in Pensacola.



The 2021-22 Matinee Jazz series opened on Wednesday, September 22 with a "Love and Bossa Nova Live" performance by guitarist Nate Najar and Brazilian singer Daniela Soledade." The St. Petersburg-based couple treated the CCJS crowd to the joyous, exotic intimacy of bossa nova and samba.

Soledade, a third-generation member of a Rio de Janeiro family with strong ties to the roots of bossa nova, has a captivating, wide-ranging voice whether singing in her native Portuguese or English. Najar is a guitar artist of great delicacy, whose sound is inspired greatly by the stylings of the late

THE GRILL AT
1951



Photography by Ken Franckling



February & April concerts begin at 7 pm, at the Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage Museum, 900 W. Marion Avenue in Punta Gorda (near Fishermen's Village).

Admission is **FREE** for CCJS members; \$25 for non-members.

Tickets are available as you enter at 6:30 pm on concert night.

Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

All That's Jazz

New band, new venue, lots of smiles

One of the great joys in hearing live jazz is a night when talented players who've never performed together get on stage and find instant chemistry that makes it sound like they've been a working group for years.



Greg Abate

That was the case on Monday, December 13, when hard-bopping saxophonist Greg Abate returned for his sixth Charlotte County Jazz Society performance since 2008. And what a magical night it was, with a new band, a new venue and an enthusiastic audience. Abate was at the top of his game.

The band included Abate, pianist John O'Leary, bassist Doug Mathews and drummer Clyde Connor. Rhode Island-based Abate and Tampa-based O'Leary had never worked with any of the other players on stage. Gainesville-based Connor and Orlando-based Mathews had worked together only a couple of times.

Abate is one of the few modern ambassadors of hard-bop, an intense style of playing that grew out of bebop in the 1950s, following in the musical footsteps of alto saxophonists Phil Woods and Richie Cole. He performed and recorded with both of them over the years.

The leader dedicated this concert to longtime CCJS concert programmer and board member Mike Parmelee, who died last spring. The first set included a new composition, "Blues For Mike."



John O'Leary and Greg Abate

Abate & Co. spent most of the night putting fresh stamps on jazz and Great American Songbook classics, with each player's ideas and energy complementing the leader's rapid-fire twists and turns. None of them, including Abate, may know where a particular tune is headed when it starts, but it always resolves into something interesting and powerful. There were always musician's smiles at the end.

They dug into Jerome Kern's "All The Things You Are," the Ralph Burns-Woody Herman classic "Early Autumn," the Gershwin brothers' "Fascinating Rhythm," Abate switched to flute for his renditions of Matt Dennis' wistful "Angel Eyes," "Afternoon in Paris" (written by late Modern Jazz Quartet pianist John Lewis), and another original, a 6/4 minor blues called "On The Road." The latter was a most appropriate choice. Abate averages about 275 days a year on the road, performing principally at venues across the U.S. and in Europe.

Other gems included Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low" and a crazy-fast take on Charlie Parker's "Steeplechase," which the bebop pioneer based on the chord changes to George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm." Abate is a master of seamlessly dropping in brief melodic snippets of other tunes. This one included a quote from "I Got Rhythm" and, in the spirit of the season, a bit of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

O'Leary made the most of his extended piano features on "Afternoon in Paris" and a teasing, extended introduction to the Gene de Paul and Don Ray standard "Star Eyes" from the 1943 musical "I Dood It." On the latter, he and Abate traded melodic improvisations before the full band joined in.



John O'Leary, Greg Abate, Doug Mathews, Clyde Connor

Late in the evening, Abate's solo introduction on alto sax teased through several holiday melodies - including "Jingle Bells" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" - before evolving into the Bob Haggart classic "What's New?," a tune that Linda Ronstadt turned into a pop hit. They closed things out with the Duke Ellington Orchestra's signature tune "Take the A Train," and a most appropriate encore, "That's All."

Time ran out before Abate could feature any material from his new CD, *Magic Dance: The Music of Kenny Barron* (Whaling City Sound), which spent seven straight weeks at No. 1 on broadcasting's JazzWeek charts.

The concert drew a crowd of about 200 to the Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage Museum in Punta Gorda.

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The joy and legacy of the Duke Ellington songbook

Duke Ellington's impact on jazz seems beyond measure, no matter how you count it. He wrote, co-wrote or took credit for writing more than 1,000 compositions over a 50-year span. According to one family bio, it was more than 3,000 songs.

The numbers really don't matter as much as the imprint Duke left on the music. That's what the Dan Miller-Lew Del Gatto sextet celebrated in their Charlotte County Jazz Society concert appearance on Monday, January 10. They dug into the joy and legacy as they delved into a wide emotional range of material from Ellington and collaborator Billy Strayhorn, plus a few other gems from Duke's band book.



Dan Miller



Lew Del Gatto

In addition to his fiery playing, trumpeter Miller, a walking archive of jazz details, shared many of the back stories behind the 16 favorite tunes the band performed. Co-leader Del Gatto, a 30-year alum of the *NBC Saturday Night Live Band*, was an excellent foil with his to-the-point, but always gorgeous and inventive, tenor sax solos

Their all-star band was rounded out by longtime Big Apple pianist Roy Gerson, trombonist Herb Bruce, bassist Brandon Robertson and drummer Tony Vigilante. Bruce's wife, the fine singer Patricia Dean, better known as a drummer in some performance settings, joined for three tunes. The mood-shifting repertoire included "In a Mellow Tone," "Satin Doll," Strayhorn's 1941 composition "Take the A Train," which soon became the Duke Ellington Orchestra's theme song, and two classic compositions by Ellington trombonist Juan Tizol ("Perdido" and the blazing concert closer "Caravan").

There were many fine moments. The ballad "Mood Indigo" showcased Gerson's inventive keyboard artistry and Bruce's beautiful tone and range on the trombone. Listen close, and you'd swear he's singing the melody through his horn.



Brandon Robertson

Dean was featured on "I'm Beginning to See the Light," which Ellington co-wrote with Johnny Hodges and Harry James. Then she kicked off the first of three fine Ellington songbook medleys. It began with Dean in the spotlight on "I Got it Bad (and That Ain't Good)," then Gerson was featured on "Sophisticated Lady" and Miller closed it out with his solo on Strayhorn's Persian-tinged "Isfahan" from Duke's *Far East Suite*.

Some may be better known, but not better.

The sextet closed things out with two exhilarating arrangements: "Just Squeeze Me" and the aforementioned "Caravan." That Tizol-penned classic showcased Philadelphia-native Vigilante's drum skills. He blends a hard-swinging groove with subtle accents and tasty surprises.



Roy Gerson, Patricia Dean

The second set opened with a romp through Duke's train-themed "Happy Go Lucky Local" that featured a bit of boogie-woogie piano from Gerson. Dean returned for a sultry vocal take on "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me." The evening's second clever medley featured Del Gatto on Strayhorn's ballad "Day Dream," Robertson's riveting arco (bowed) solo bass melody on "In a Sentimental Mood," and Bruce's solo take on "In My Solitude." There may be no finer trombonist in the region, perhaps the land, than this veteran of the Nashville Brass and the Mr. Jack Daniel's Original Silver



Tony Vigilante



Gerson, Dean, Del Gatto, Robertson, Vigilante, Miller, Bruce

The concert was the second CCCJS event at the Military Heritage Museum's Gulf Theater in Punta Gorda because of the closure of the Charlotte County Cultural Center in early November. Miller noted the change. "The acoustics here are amazing," he told the crowd of about 170. "You really struck gold with this new venue." The only amplification used on stage was for vocals, announcements and a some of Bruce's trombone solos – more out of habit than necessity.

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Jim Roberts

This savvy arranger keeps things fresh

Pianist Jim Roberts is the Charlotte County Jazz Society's most frequent visitor as a bandleader. The CCJS concert in Port Charlotte FL on Monday, November 8 marked Roberts' 18th appearance dating to June 1991, when he was the organization's first concert performer.

Roberts moved from New York City to Orlando shortly after his first CCJS gig. Through the years, he has brought trios, quartets, quintets and more. Since 2004, the sextet has been his steady band. He calls it his Saxtet because of its brass-rich front line, which features talented veterans Dan Jordan, Rex Wertz and David MacKenzie.

Drummer Eddie Metz Jr. and bassist Doug Mathews were the band's rhythm aces.

This time out, Roberts had another twist. The band expanded to a four-horn septet, with his wife, tenor saxophonist A.J. Roberts, joining the other reed players on three tunes.

Pianist, composer arranger and educator Roberts never lets his music sound stale or dated on the concert stage. Freshness and vitality abound, even on the staples you've heard at prior appearances.

After Jordan, Wertz and MacKenzie turned in a gorgeous flute choir on Thad Jones classic "A Child is Born," Roberts told the crowd: "I just play piano and sit



Tenor Madness



Jordan, Wertz, MacKenzie

here and listen to these guys." Don't believe him.

While he is blessed with a crystalline, swinging sound at the piano, his strongest asset is the arrangements he writes for the textures of his band.

He gives each of his musicians extended solo space to take the music in new, varied directions. At times, the saxophonists perform beautiful unison horn lines. At others, they play slight variations or team up to add complementary accents behind the soloist.



Eddie Metz Jr.



Doug Mathews

Monday night's program began started with Duke Ellington ("Cottontail") and ended with Count Basie ("Jumpin' at the Woodside"), burners that underscored the rhythm section's joyous groove. While this was Mathews' first CCJS appearance, he and Metz have worked together in other formats for many years. It showed from their chemistry. The wide-ranging repertoire this night also included Kenny Dorham's "Blue Bossa," Jerome Kern's 1933 Great American Songbook classic "Yesterdays," Lalo Schifrin's "Towering Toccata," Miles Davis' "Freddie the Freeloader" and Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man."

The texture changed a lot when MacKenzie played his huge and robust bass sax on one tune in each set: Jimmy Heath's "On the Trail," based on Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite," and later "(Back Home Again in) Indiana." The latter is one of the oldest jazz recordings, dating to 1917.

Other fine moments included Metz's spotlight feature on Sonny Rollins' grooving calypso "St. Thomas, and the four-tenor exploration of Rollins' classic "Tenor Madness" with A.J. Roberts aboard for the first time. She returned at the end of the second set for "Watermelon Man" and "Jumpin' at the Woodside," which has become the band's traditional closer.

The piece de resistance for these ears, was another of Roberts' concert staples. His arrangement of the adagio from Joaquin Rodrigo's "Concerto de Aranjuez," is always stunning. The composition, originally written for guitar, is best known in jazz circles for the Miles Davis-Gil Evans beauty on the flamenco-tinged *Sketches of Spain*, it features Roberts with a solo piano exploration of the exotic melody before shifting into a flute choir with an extended solo by Danny Jordan.

The concert drew a crowd of more than 175 to the Cultural Center of Charlotte County's William H Wakeman III Theater.



Roberts, Jordan, Mathews, Wertz, MacKenzie, Metz, A.J. Roberts

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La Lucha and friends shine in CCJS debut

Nineteen months after the pandemic brought the Charlotte County Jazz Society's 2018-19 concert season to an abrupt and premature end, the nonprofit's evening concerts resumed on Monday, October 11 with a musical treat from La Lucha.



John O'Leary

The Tampa Bay-area trio, consisting of pianist John O'Leary, bassist Alejandro Arenas and drummer Mark Feinman, brought along two guests: the Barcelona-born singer Ona Kirei and tenor saxophonist Trace Zacur. The latter was a last-minute sub for trumpeter James Suggs who was unable to make the gig.

La Lucha covered the musical gamut, putting it's own creative spin on time-tested jazz standards, five original compositions and creative covers of more contemporary material from David Bowie, The Beatles and the English pop-rock band Tears for Fears. Half of the program came from La Lucha's newest CD, *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* (Arbors Jazz, 2020).



Alejandro Arenas, Mark Feinman

Zacur's distinctive, edgy sound on tenor sax complemented La Lucha and helped nudge the music in new directions. The band, which excels on in-the-moment creativity, responded in kind. That was first noticeable on their tribute tune "Blues for Houston Person." Their other tribute tune this evening, Arenas' "Samba Pra Diego," was written for Diego Figueredo. It was a fitting inclusion, as the Brazilian guitarist was the last performer in this concert series in early March of 2018.



John O'Leary, Ona Kirei

La Lucha has a true international flavor with Arenas hailing from Colombia, O'Leary from Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, and Feinman from the Tampa area. The three first met in a jazz program practice room at the University of South Florida 15 years ago and put their trio together a few months later. Kirei, now based in Tampa, added more international flavor to the evening with her vocal creativity.



Trace Zacur

Artistry and emotion were on full display all night long.

The jazz standards included Antonio Carlos Jobim's bossa nova classic "Desafinado," Charles Trenet and Albert Beach's "I Wish You Love," "Gone With the Wind" from the musical "Oklahoma," and "Autumn Nocturne."

Favorite moments:

- The group's contemporary spin on the Stevie Wonder Motown hit "For Once in My Life."
- Their covers of Tears for Fears' "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" and David Bowie's "Space Oddity." Major Tom would have been pleased with the instrumental exploration of the latter's haunting, other-worldly melody.
- Kirei's arrangement of the Hoagy Carmichael standard "Skylark" as a samba. It opened with her humming behind O'Leary's piano introduction. A drum feature for Feinman followed the singer's celebration of the ballad's wistful lyrics.
- The band transformed The Beatles' 91-second tease "Golden Slumbers" from the Fab Four's *Abbey Road* album into a six-minute instrumental and vocal adventure that was arranged by Arenas
- They closed the evening with a burner, combining "Lullaby of the Leaves" and "Lullaby of Birdland" into a fine medley of material with nothing in common except that one word in their titles. In La Lucha's hands, the two songs meshed seamlessly.



Ona Kirei



John O'Leary, Ona Kirei, Trace Zacur, Alejandro Arenas, Mark Feinman

The first concert of the 2020-21 season drew a crowd of about 140 to the Cultural Center of Charlotte County's William H Wakeman III Theater. That was a fine draw, given that it was early in the concert season, and the likelihood that some members are still reticent about indoor events, even if many others are masked.

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JAZZ JAM



OUR JAZZ JAMS : Jams in February, March and April will occur on our traditional 4th Sunday dates. Jams start at 1:00, but you're welcome to come early and enjoy a great lunch before the music begins. Bring your instrument and join in or just come by and enjoy the great music. Admission to the jam is free to CCJS members and \$5 per non-members. Food and beverage selections will be available. For questions, please contact,

Buz Bisbano at 941-623-0619, or Fred Capitelli at 941-743-2157
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Charlotte County Jazz Society is deeply grateful to former members Marjorie Jean Biermann, Helen Langdon, Donatella and Ken Neumann and Roberta Gasparri. Their generous bequests now play a major role in helping fund the outstanding jazz artists brought to our community by CCJS. They have also been instrumental in supporting our commitment to pass on our love of jazz with the awarding of annual scholarships to graduating high school seniors. We invite you to join us in our mission to preserve, promote and present live jazz by including CCJS in your will, trust, retirement account or life insurance policy, or with a donation to CCJS in honor or memory of a fellow jazz lover. For more detailed information, please contact any CCJS officer or director as listed on the last page.

CCJS on the Web!

www.ccjazz.org

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- * Join the jazz society
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Charlotte County Jazz -CCJS

In Tune is published **four** times a year (Oct., Dec., Feb., and April). We welcome pertinent articles, letters and news items space permitting. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the CCJS.

Don't forget to take advantage of our CCJS email list. We try to send out reminders for events by email. Please send your name and email address to Connie at

intunejazz@gmail.com

Membership

questions call Connie 941-661-0626

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**If you no longer have a membership card,
please stop at the Registration Desk for a
replacement before entering the theater.**

All That's Jazz



**2021-2022
Concert Season**



****Concerts on the following dates will be held
at the Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage
Museum, 900 W. Marion Ave. in Punta Gorda.

**February 7 Ed Metz Jr., Nicki Parrott &
Rossano Sportiello**

April 11 Herbicide led by Herb Bruce

** Concert on **March 14** will be held at the
1st Methodist Church in Punta Gorda

**March 14 Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra's
American Swing Experience**

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