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The American Jazz Institute Newsletter

Spring 2005 • Volume 13

Grachan Moncur III, Dewey Redman and Andrew Cyrille headline CMC Spring concerts; AJI releases Moncur and *Porgy & Bess* CDs

Our seventh season of concerts at Claremont McKenna College will be memorable! AJI is pleased to present the much-anticipated premier of the Grachan Moncur III Evolution Big Band on February 26, followed by peerless saxophonist Dewey Redman on March 3 and acclaimed drummer Andrew Cyrille on April 4.

AJI's deep commitment to record today's great jazz artists in performances of important original compositions and historically significant new arrangements continues with the release of two Capri records: *Exploration* by the Grachan Moncur III Octet and *Porgy & Bess...Redefined!* by the Mark Masters Ensemble. Details in this issue.

Grachan Moncur III Evolution Big Band

The premier performance of Moncur's 12-piece Evolution Big Band featuring Tim Hagans, trumpet, Bennie Maupin, tenor sax, and Peter Erskine, drums

Saturday, February 26, 8:00pm • Admission Free
Pickford Auditorium, CMC campus, Claremont

Trombone master Grachan Moncur III is truly a living legend. He created some of the most brilliant post-bop/free-bop jazz of the early 1960s. Moncur played with Ray Charles as well as the famed Art Farmer-Benny Golson Jazztet. He recorded two highly influential albums as a leader for Blue Note Records: *Evolution* with Jackie McLean and Lee Morgan, and *Some Other Stuff* with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Tony Williams.

The return of Grachan Moncur III has been a very long time coming -- and what a stellar occasion it is! Jazz lore includes many tales of disappearances and triumphant returns. While Moncur never completely left the music scene, he has been out of the limelight for the past two decades. This concert will draw on the rich body of compositional work from his 40-year career. Each member of the ensemble will use the orchestral framework as a means to express their own individuality, creating a brilliant setting where all the singular voices become one, unified by the imposing figure that is Grachan Moncur III -- the renowned musician who brought the trombone into the "new thing" over four decades ago. This will be Moncur's first visit to the West Coast.

"Grachan Moncur III Evolution Big Band" is a presentation of The American Jazz Institute, Claremont McKenna College Oral History Project and the Gould Center for Humanistic Studies.



THE GOALS OF AJI

- To advance and promote jazz music throughout the world.
- To maintain a repertory jazz orchestra to perform new and archival jazz music.
- To educate and expose the public to jazz by live performances and panel discussions.
- To physically house, archive and preserve jazz music: compositions, scores, arrangements, recordings, artwork, photographs, films and other jazz works.
- To seek and attract donations of jazz works with an emphasis on original compositions, scores, arrangements and recordings.
- To make jazz works available for research, study and education.
- To support charitable endeavors that promote and advance jazz music.

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AJI Members are invited to meet-the-musicians reception after concert. See page 7.



Dewey Redman

Andrew Cyrille



An Evening with Dewey Redman

The Dewey Redman Septet featuring Tim Hagans, trumpet, Dave Woodley, trombone, Danny House, alto sax, Cecilia Coleman, piano, Darek Oles, bass, and Joe LaBarbera, drums in a performance of standards and original Redman compositions

**Thursday, March 3, 6:45pm • Admission Free
Cook Athenaeum, CMC campus, Claremont**

Dewey Redman is one of the most adventurous tenor saxophonists of our time. DownBeat magazine calls him “the greatest living tenor saxophonist.”

Born in Texas in 1931, Redman took up the clarinet at 13 but switched to alto sax to play in his high school marching band with buddy Ornette Coleman. After getting a Masters Degree in Education, he moved to San Francisco, taught in public schools -- and freelanced as a tenor saxophonist with the likes of Pharoah Sanders and Wes Montgomery. In 1967, he moved to New York and formed a close musical association with his friend Ornette Coleman that lasted until 1974. During this time, while on tour with Coleman’s avant garde quartet, Redman recorded *Tarik* (1969).

After Coleman, Redman joined Keith Jarrett’s quintet where his versatility brought a unique quality to the group. There were frequent recordings during this period that led to even greater exposure. Albums with Charlie Haden, Carla Bley, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd and Leroy Jenkins were the result. During the mid-1970s, Redman had the opportunity to record several albums as a leader. Two albums for the *impulse!* label, *Ear of the Behearer* (1973) and *Coincide* (1974) are classics. *Musics* (1978) and *Sound Sign* (1978) were recorded for the Galaxy label. His most recent recording, *In London* (1996), finds him in top form.

Dewey Redman is a consummate artist in his prime. His message is clear, masterful and dynamic.

Andrew Cyrille Plays Monk

The Andrew Cyrille Octet featuring Gary Foster, alto sax, Billy Harper, tenor sax, Gary Smulyan, baritone sax, Dave Woodley, trombone, and Ray Drummond, bass in a performance of compositions by Thelonious Monk

**Monday, April 4, 6:45pm • Admission Free
Cook Athenaeum, CMC campus, Claremont**

The New York Times calls Andrew Cyrille “a consummate modern drummer.” AJI is pleased to welcome him to CMC.

Born in Brooklyn in 1939, Cyrille studied with Philly Joe Jones and spent the first half of the 1960s studying in New York at Juilliard and the Hartnett School of Music. At the same time, he was performing with famed jazz artists that included Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins, Illinois Jacquet, Kenny Dorham, Freddie Hubbard, Walt Dickerson and Rashaan Roland Kirk. In 1964, he formed what would prove to be an 11-year association with Cecil Taylor that brought him new acclaim and established him in the vanguard of jazz drumming.

Starting in 1969, Cyrille played in a number of percussion groups with notable drummers including Kenny Clarke and Rashied Ali. He formed his own group Maono in 1975 and has also worked with such top-flight peers as David Murray, Muhal Richard Abrams, Mal Waldron, Horace Tapscott, James Newton and Oliver Lake.

Joining Andrew Cyrille for this special concert is a stellar octet of East Coast and West Coast artists that includes master bassist Ray Drummond, CMC Class of ‘68.

AJI concert venues are located on the campus of Claremont McKenna College in the Southern California community of Claremont, an hour east of Los Angeles just off the 10 or 210 freeways.

Marian Minor Cook Athenaeum

is at 385 East 8th Street. Adjacent street parking.

Pickford Auditorium

is in Bauer Center, South Building, at 500 East 9th Street. Parking lots on north and east sides.

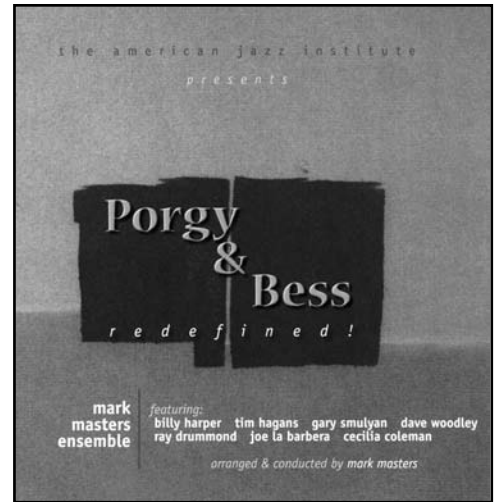
For further information, please call the AJI at 626-795-6413.

“An Evening with Dewey Redman” and “Andrew Cyrille Plays Monk” are presentations of The American Jazz Institute, Claremont McKenna College Oral History Project, Gould Center for Humanistic Studies and the Marian Minor Cook Athenaeum.

AJI & Capri Records present **PORGY & BESS...REDEFINED!**

The Mark Masters Ensemble
 Arranged and Conducted by Mark Masters

Saxophones Billy Harper (tenor), John Riley (tenor & bassoon),
 Don Shelton (tenor, soprano & alto flute),
 Gary Smulyan (baritone)
 Trombones Dave Woodley, Les Benedict
 Trumpets Tim Hagans, Tom Delibero, Louis Fasman, Les Lovitt
 French Horn Stephanie O'Keefe
 Tuba Bill Roper
 Bass Clarinet Bob Carr, Greg Huckins
 Rhythm Cecilia Coleman (piano), Ray Drummond (bass),
 Joe LaBarbera (drums)



From the liner notes by Ed Berger, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University:

Porgy and Bess was Gershwin's longest and most ambitious work as well as his personal favorite. Despite its popularity, however, the folk opera was not without its critics for its often stereotypical depiction of African-American life... Questions of authenticity aside, the rich and varied musical content of the work has attracted jazz artists of all eras and styles. Within a year of its completion in 1935, Billie Holiday had already put her stamp on *Summertime*...

Jazz arrangers have found the epic folk opera's thematic material fertile ground for embellishment and reinvention, among them Ralph Burns, Mundell Lowe, Bill Potts and Bob Haggart. The most celebrated interpretation, of course, came in 1959 when Gil Evans teamed with Miles Davis to produce one of jazz's landmark recordings.

When confronting a work as celebrated as *Porgy and Bess*, an arranger must walk a fine line between creating something new and fresh and preserving the harmonic and melodic essence that made the work so attractive in the first place. Slavish adherence to Gershwin's every compositional nuance may result in yet another pleasant but routine "jazzed-up" interpretation. On the other hand, a total transformation of the work may produce a new creation of great interest, but one which has little or nothing to do with *Porgy and Bess*.

Mark Masters has succeeded admirably in bringing his own concept to these familiar pieces. "I had a vision of a more adventurous approach both harmonically and from the soloists," he explains. "*Porgy and Bess* is intrinsically more interesting to jazz arrangers than many other great shows. It's harmonically stimulating, and there aren't a lot of traditional forms in it. The whole thing unfolds so beautifully that it's just begging to be played on!"

As in previous projects, Masters' "in and out" approach re-casts the music while retaining its substance. He used the original vocal score which has no chord changes, freeing him to some extent harmonically. "I started with no preconceived notions," the arranger says. "I only knew I wanted Tim [Hagans] and Billy [Harper] out front." While giving the soloists great latitude and often "pushing the envelope" in his writing, Masters makes sure that Gershwin's original melodies are never obscured by the setting, noting, "Every tune has a life of its own and you need to be respectful of that and to give the listener something to hang on to." Many of these melodies take on new life, highlighted in performances that often assume the character of miniature suites with varied tempos, moods and distinct orchestral sections.

Masters' efforts are aided immeasurably by an ensemble of superb musicians who not only play the notes but convey the spirit. "In this kind of orchestral setting, everyone has to buy in to your concept," he says. They clearly did just that, both in skillfully interpreting a demanding score and in creating solos that not only stand on their own but are at one with the arrangements.



Billy Harper



Tim Hagans



Gary Smulyan



Ray Drummond

Save a few bucks and order **PORGY & BESS...REDEFINED!** direct from AJI for only \$14
 See our AJI Record Store on page 5

AJI & Capri Records present EXPLORATION

Grachan Moncur III Octet

Arranged and Conducted by Mark Masters

Saxophones Billy Harper (tenor), Gary Bartz (alto), Gary Smulyan (baritone)
Trombones Grachan Moncur III, Dave Woodley
Trumpet Tim Hagans
French Horn John Clark
Rhythm Ray Drummond (bass), Andrew Cyrille (drums)

From the liner notes by Ed Berger, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University:

This recording marks the welcome return of one of the most original and distinctive voices of the early 1960s, a turbulent and exciting time in jazz... While Grachan Moncur III never completely left the musical scene, he certainly has been out of the limelight for the past two decades.

Born in 1937, the trombonist was raised in Newark, NJ, where he still lives. His father, bassist Grachan "Brother" Moncur, and his uncle, saxophonist Al Cooper, were stalwarts of the swing era... In 1958, he joined Ray Charles' orchestra and the next year moved on to the Jazztet of Art Farmer and Benny Golson...

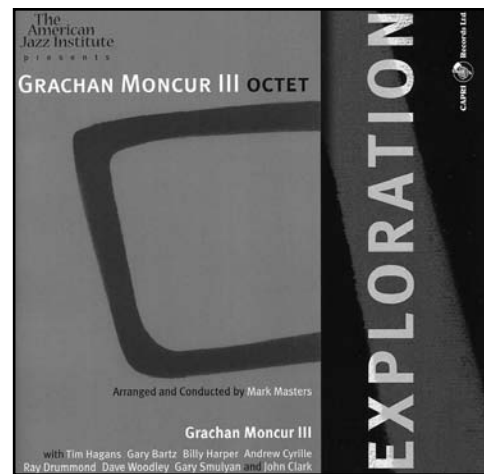
Moncur's playing coalesced during this period. Originally influenced by Bennie Green, Frank Rosolino, Bill Harris and Trummy Young, the trombonist now was inspired primarily by J.J. Johnson. Moncur has always had his own approach to the instrument, however, combining a full, expressive, often plaintive tone with a measured and thoughtful concept of improvisation.

After the Jazztet disbanded in 1962, Moncur freelanced with such upcoming jazz stars as Jackie McLean, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and Bobby Hutcherson, leading to his celebrated Blue Note Records association. Moncur's two classic albums as a leader for the label (*Evolution* and *Some Other Stuff*), as well as his many appearances as a sideman, established him as an upcoming star, both as soloist and composer. ...in the late 1960s he found himself drawn more and more into "free jazz" or "avant-garde" settings, including many collaborations with Archie Shepp. His own albums from this period, *New Africa* (1969, BYG) and *Echoes of Prayer* (1974, JCOA) reflect his awareness of the "new music" as well as his growing spirituality...

Mark Masters, who specializes in bringing to the fore the music of many deserving but overlooked artists, had long admired Moncur's Blue Note oeuvre. Masters contacted the trombonist and the project was born. Moncur was somewhat apprehensive at first. He had recorded only once in the last decade, and it had been 30 years since his last album as a leader. "I was impressed with what I heard of Mark's previous projects," Moncur says, "and I felt blessed that someone thought enough of my music to undertake this. But we had never met in person until the rehearsal the day before the session, and I really didn't know what to expect." His fears were somewhat allayed by the presence of old friends Gary Bartz and Andrew Cyrille. As things got underway, Moncur was buoyed by the enthusiasm of all the players; "they showed such respect for the music and for me personally that it set me at ease." ...

Masters meticulously reconstructed the music from lead sheets and scores he obtained from Moncur. Masters emphasizes that he was in no way attempting a re-creation: "I try to do something completely different from the recordings while retaining the overall structure of the tunes." ...

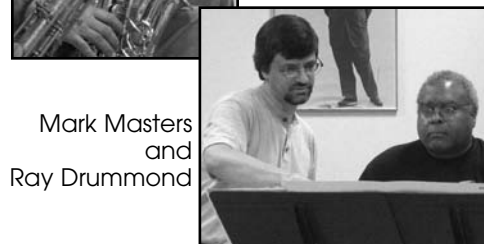
Moncur's compositions have a singular "in" and "out" quality reflecting his own varied musical experiences. ...Moncur's pieces, like those of Thelonious Monk whom he greatly admired, always have interesting twists and turns which make them distinctive yet accessible. "The great thing about his music is its spaciousness," observes Masters. "It may seem deceptively simple, but when you put the melody and changes together, each piece has a life of its own. You can't take a formulaic approach."



Grachan Moncur III



Gary Bartz and
Billy Harper



Mark Masters
and
Ray Drummond

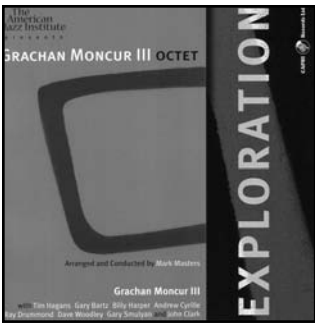


John Clark, Tim Hagans, Grachan Moncur

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See our AJI Record Store on page 5

The AJI Record Store



Exploration: Grachan Moncur III Octet

The preeminent post-bop/free-bop jazz trombonist of the early '60s returns in a brilliant performance of his own compositions arranged by Mark Masters for a stellar octet of Tim Hagans, Gary Bartz, Billy Harper, Andrew Cyrille, Ray Drummond, Dave Woodley, Gary Smulyan and John Clark. One early reviewer says of it: "All in all, this is a fine record. Bristling with intelligence, good humor and swing, Moncur's music stands the test of time ... nice to see him back."

**New from AJI
and Capri Records!**

2 important new AJI recordings! Early reviews on page 7. Order direct and save a few bucks!



Porgy & Bess...Redefined!: The Mark Masters Ensemble

JUST RELEASED! The most famous of all folk operas receives a newly definitive presentation in these adventurous arrangements by Mark Masters, performed by an ensemble of superb musicians featuring Billy Harper, Tim Hagans, Gary Smulyan, Dave Woodley, Ray Drummond, Joe LaBarbera and Cecilia Coleman. In his liner notes, Ed Berger says that "while giving the soloists great latitude and often 'pushing the envelope' in his writing, Masters makes sure that Gershwin's original melodies are never obscured by the setting ... many of these melodies take on new life, highlighted in performances that often assume the character of miniature suites."

One Day with Lee: Lee Konitz with The Mark Masters Ensemble

The elder statesman of the alto in a stellar performance of his own compositions arranged by Mark Masters. Featuring Bill Perkins in a final recording, Gary Foster, Jack Montrose, Dave Woodley, Bob Enevoldsen, Steve Huffsteter, Ron Stout, Cecilia Coleman, Putter Smith and Kendall Kay.

The Clifford Brown Project: The Mark Masters Ensemble featuring Tim Hagans

A critically-acclaimed tribute to the legendary trumpet player, with Brown's solos played by a stellar trumpet quartet supporting the brilliant improvisations of Tim Hagans. Arranged by Mark Masters and Jack Montrose. Also featuring Jack Montrose, Gary Smulyan, Dave Woodley, Cecilia Coleman, Putter Smith and Joe LaBarbera.

The Jimmy Knepper Songbook: Jimmy Knepper with the Mark Masters Jazz Orchestra

The classic recording of a singular voice on the trombone, performing his own compositions arranged for the big band by Mark Masters. Featuring Gary Foster, Johnny Coles and Ralph Penland.

Priestess: Billy Harper with The Mark Masters Jazz Orchestra featuring Jimmy Knepper

An adventurous big band interpretation of Coltrane, Corea, Strayhorn and Billy Harper compositions arranged by Mark Masters.

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<i>Exploration</i>	___ x \$14.00	_____	Total of all CDs	_____
<i>Porgy & Bess...Redefined!</i>	___ x \$14.00	_____	Sales Tax: CA addresses add 8.25%	_____
<i>One Day with Lee</i>	___ x \$14.00	_____	Shipping: Add \$1.50 each CD	_____
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<i>The Jimmy Knepper Songbook</i>	___ x \$14.00	_____		_____
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"One Day with Lee"
Lee Konitz & Mark Masters Ensemble



"The Clifford Brown Project"
Mark Masters Ensemble

The American Jazz Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated solely to the enrichment and enhancement of the appreciation of jazz music. From its humble beginning in New Orleans at the turn of the century, jazz evolved into one of America's enduring world contributions, a "universal language" understood by all.

Continuing in this spirit, AJI seeks to preserve this national treasure as well as expand upon it by spotlighting America's great jazz composers, arrangers and musicians -- both firmly established and newly discovered, and from traditional to avant garde.



"Porgy & Bess... Redefined"
Mark Masters Ensemble



"Exploration"
Grachan Moncur III Octet

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New Renewal Annual membership level: Artistry Circle (\$75) Patron (\$50) Member (\$25)

Artistry Circle members, choose 2 CDs; Patron members, choose 1 CD:

The Clifford Brown Project *One Day with Lee* *Exploration* *Porgy & Bess...Redefined!*

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What the reviewers have to say about ...

“Exploration”

Trombonist and composer Grachan Moncur III made a memorable impact forty years ago with his challenging compositions and austere improvising style. He then maintained a very low profile for decades, teaching, recording only rarely... Now he's made a welcome return to recording with the absolutely stunning CD "Exploration."

In the 1960s, Moncur's trombone style was notable for breaking away from the then-prevalent model of J.J. Johnson. Rather than play bebop acrobatics, Moncur played spare lines characterised by his use of space. He still plays that way... But it's his compositions that make this album so rewarding. Except for the short free improvisation "Excursion," they're all from the 1960s, using strategies such as changing time signatures or multiple themes that were innovative at the time, coupled with striking, declamatory melodies. These performances, arranged in brilliant, even startling fashion by Mark Masters, don't look back. The voicings, riffs and interludes devised by Masters, along with the absence of a chordal instrument, give "Exploration" a sound that looks forward, as Moncur always does.

The arrangements are played with crackling intensity by this sterling octet, and the improvisations follow suit. Suffice it to say that every solo is impressive... Hearty congratulations are due all around, to Moncur, to the sidemen, to Masters, to everyone involved with the project. "Exploration" is a great record.

-- Marc Meyers, allaboutjazz.com

...It's an impressive line-up that features tenorist Billy Harper, Gary Bartz on alto and trumpeter Tim Hagans among the horns, plus the excellent rhythm section of

Ray Drummond and Andrew Cyrille. Masters' empathy with Moncur's breezy, bluesy writing is obvious, and the use of French Horn (John Clark, naturally) and baritone (Gary Smulyan) allows for vibrant, broad strokes of color. Occasional Monk-ish twists or boppish ensemble lines alternate with pushy riffing or graceful parallel harmonies...

But what of the leader? The glories of Moncur's '60s output saw him venerated...as the most vital trombonist in the emergent avant garde. Even then, Moncur was principally a melodic player inspired by J.J. Johnson and steeped in bop language, and that influence still shines through. Economical, funky and lyrical all at once, Moncur doesn't waste a note throughout.

All in all, this is a fine record. Bristling with intelligence, good humor and swing, Moncur's music stands the test of time... Nice to see him back.

-- Peter Marsh, BBC

Mark Masters of The American Jazz Institute arranged these tunes and conducts the octet... He proves himself yet again -- as he did on "One Day With Lee" and "The Clifford Brown Project" -- a master enabler/interpreter. He captures the essence of the musicians in the middle of his projects, with, in this case, arrangements full of coiled intensity and sharp angles and gleaming edges...

Moncur's songs are quirky in a Monk-ish sense, counterpointing harmony versus discord, restraint versus freedom, and the set is packed with searing solos alongside very measured and deliberate turns. "Exploration" makes up a consistently surprising set of sounds...

Grachan Moncur III has been out of the limelight for decades... "Exploration" is a fine and fitting welcome back.

-- Dan McClenaghan, allaboutjazz.com

Fortunately, arranger Mark Masters of The American Jazz Institute, the man responsible for last year's fine collaboration with Lee Konitz, "One Day With Lee," has grabbed Moncur out of the arms of obscurity and created an album that is part homage and part triumphant return. "Exploration" finds Moncur in the context of an octet that sheds new light on some of his best material, culled from his Blue Note sessions as well as his '69 recording "New Africa." The largest ensemble ever to record Moncur's ambitious-yet-accessible material with Moncur's involvement, Masters' arrangements bring out a richness that could heretofore only be imagined.

...Masters' arrangements and the welcome return of Moncur's unique sound bring a new perspective to Moncur's decades-old material, giving them a life and relevance...

-- John Kelman, allaboutjazz.com

“One Day with Lee”

...composer/arranger Mark Masters has provided a treasure trove of old and new Konitz called "One Day with Lee" featuring a prominent supporting cast that includes Gary Foster, Bill Perkins and Jack Montrose in the sax section of an all-star Mark Masters Ensemble.

Masters' CD is a fascinating concept: Konitz contributes new solos over orchestrated versions of his old solos going back to the early '50s. Konitz's unaccompanied alto solo on "All the Things You Are" leads to the 14-piece band playing the altoist's old "Thingin'" ...For "317 East 32nd Street," Masters orchestrates a 1953 line, and after the altoman solos -- before and after Masters' additions -- Foster and Konitz exchange fours. And so the inspired concept goes throughout the album, along with solo bon-bons from trombonist Bob Enevoldsen, bassist Putter Smith, pianist Cecilia Coleman, trombonist Les Benedict and trumpeter Ron Stout.

-- Jazz Times

2 new benefits for AJI members

Following the Grachan Moncur III concert on February 26, AJI members are invited to get acquainted with Moncur, his band and Mark Masters at our first meet-the-musicians reception. The CMC campus location will be announced at the concert.

As an incentive to join AJI or renew your annual membership at the Patron or Artistry Circle levels, we have a very appealing bonus: your choice of AJI's newest CDs. See our membership page.

Your continuing support of our concerts and educational efforts is important, tax deductible and very much appreciated.

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resource for jazz enthusiasts at
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- * Concerts and events schedule
- * Oral histories
- * Photo gallery
- * And, of course - THE MUSIC!

Memorable moments of the Fall '04 concert season at CMC

September: Bob Curnow's L.A. Big Band

Composer, arranger and educator Bob Curnow made the trip from the Pacific Northwest for a special evening in the Marian Minor Cook Athenaeum. Curnow's big band, made up of veteran Los Angeles musicians (including Danny House, Don Shelton, Jerry Pinter, Steve Huffsteter, Dave Woodley, Les Benedict, Randy Drake, Dean Taba and Cecilia Coleman) performed a rich program of Curnow compositions and arrangements.

Several Pat Metheny compositions arranged by Curnow included *It's Just Talk*, *Another Life* and *If I Could*. His arrangement of the Shorty Rogers line, *Just a Few*, breathed new life into the Rogers composition. Highlights of the evening included the moving Danny House feature *If I Could* and Steve Huffsteter's improvisations on Curnow's *Keystone Shuffle*. Bob's composition *Spencer's Here* brought a joyfulness to the capacity audience, while his arrangement of the complex and moving *Riverdance* has become a modern classic.



Bob Curnow conducts his L.A. Big Band. Saxes, L to R: Jerry Pinter, Brian Sanders and Don Shelton.



Steve Huffsteter



Ted Brown and Gary Foster

Ted Brown, Gary Foster, Putter Smith, Larry Koonse and Kendall Kay



Renowned tenor saxophonist Ted Brown made the trip from the East Coast for an acoustic evening of improvised music at Pickford Auditorium, joined by West Coasters Gary Foster (alto saxophone), Putter Smith (bass), Larry Koonse (guitar) and Kendall Kay (drums).

Best known for his association with Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh, Ted Brown's career encompassed those influences and much more. All that was brought to bear in a performance that was nothing less than stunning. Using his own compositions as well as those by Tristano and Konitz in addition to Great American Songbook standards, the quintet was "on" from the downbeat! Foster and Brown were two voices perfectly matched and the rhythm section supported, soloed and interacted with the utmost in taste. Highlights were Brown's songs, *Dig It*, *Smog Eyes* and *Featherbed*.

Our thanks to Ron Teeple and Terry Lewis for the photos in this issue. Designed and edited by Scott Evans.

One thing that students quickly learn to appreciate about the history of jazz is that “there is a lot of it.” Obviously, in a one-semester survey course, a large number of decisions have to be made about what topics will be included and emphasized in the curriculum. As new-to-jazz students begin reading jazz literature and reviewing multimedia collections that present specific points of view on jazz history, students become aware of authors’ interests, biases, selection criteria and, most of all, attempts to influence the opinions and aesthetic tastes of readers and listeners.

Our educational approach in History 109 at Claremont McKenna College is to err on the side of extensive breadth, encouraging students to sample broadly and search out artists and styles that appeal to their individual tastes. We de-emphasize and discourage the notion that a select few jazz contributors are responsible for the whole course of jazz history, or that the vast majority of jazz artists are, somehow, imitators.

Below are a couple of student quotes that demonstrate the personal rewards that students gain from maintaining an open mind, listening intently to anything that they are exposed to for the first time, and exercising their personal right to assert critical thinking.

One of the fundamental things that I took away from this semester was that if nothing else, the great diversity, spontaneity and directions that the music took throughout history added to its magnificence. The art form may have been thematic, but it was definitely not uniform. ...I do not care for much of the free-form and avant-garde jazz that I listened to, yet I appreciate the desire to try something new. The styles may have failed by many people’s standards, but artists taking risks was a paramount component to the diversification of jazz in its history.

-- Dan Gottesfeld

I attended the Gene Lees and Roger Kellaway trio concert with violinist Yue Deng. ...The experience got me thinking about the nature of jazz and its ability to incorporate all instruments in its practice. It is truly amazing that jazz is able to support an incredibly diverse array of instruments. ...all instruments are held in high esteem in the jazz world and the artist is the one that is measured with his playing.

The Henry Grimes concert was a unique experience through and through. It was the first time that I was able to hear truly ‘out’ playing in a first-hand experience. ...what struck me about the playing...was that although the style was very ‘out,’ there seemed to be a great deal of both virtuosity and reason in the playing...the musicians maintained a connection...each artist seemed to be feeding on others’ melodies.

-- Sameer Bajaj

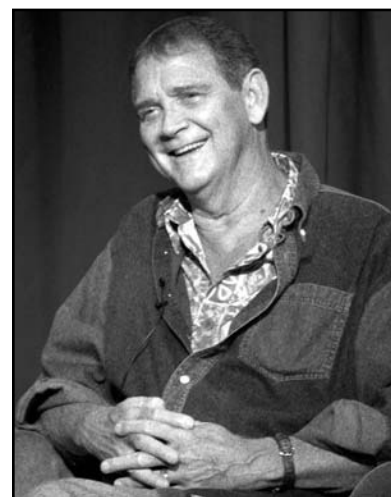
AJI’s Oral History Project adds Bob Curnow and Ted Brown interviews to the archives. Next: The Singers Unlimited

The vocal group known as The Singers Unlimited will reunite at Claremont McKenna College in February for a two-day oral history hosted by noted author and lyricist Gene Lees. This will be the definitive retrospective of their decade-long run as the premier vocal group ever. The Singers Unlimited recorded 15 albums during the decade of the 1970s.

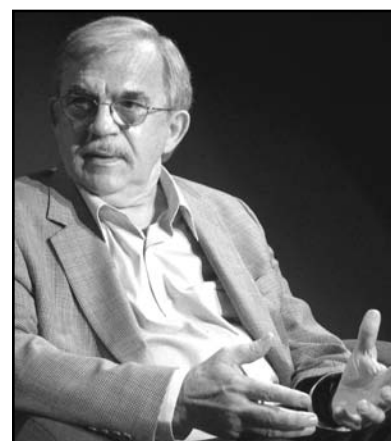
Renowned for their groundbreaking technique of using multitrack recording to broaden their sound and create harmonically dense voicings, the four voices were capable of creating vocal magic. While the voices created the sound, Gene Puerling was the architect of the sound, creating brilliant arrangements for the singers to bring to life. Often referred to as a genius in his field, Puerling’s great gift was knowing when and where to use and change timbres that were so much the hallmark of this magnificent group.

The Singers Unlimited started out singing commercial jingles in Chicago. A recording they self-produced eventually ended up in the hands of pianist Oscar Peterson, who in turn gave the recording to Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer at MPS Records in Germany, and a long and fruitful relationship ensued. Almost a quarter century after their last recording, the group that Gene Lees called “the greatest vocal group ever” remains the epitome of both vocal performance and writing.

AJI’s approach to teaching jazz history ... and the lessons learned



Bob Curnow



Ted Brown



The Singers Unlimited, L to R: Bonnie Herman, Gene Puerling, Len Dresslar and Don Shelton. Photo from the album cover of their 1979 release, “A Capella III.”

John LaPorta

April 1, 1920 - May 12, 2004



John LaPorta -- saxophonist, clarinetist, composer and educator -- at Berklee in the mid '60s.

Photo courtesy of Berklee College of Music

John LaPorta was one of the great unsung heroes of the music.

In his musical life, he experienced the big band era with the Buddy Williams, Bob Chester and Woody Herman orchestras. John was a member of Woody Herman's band at the peak of its popularity, the band that all of Woody's subsequent bands would be compared to -- the First Herd. After leaving Herman's band, John settled in to study with Lennie Tristano. A musical period of John's life that could be described as tumultuous! John was not a personality to be subserviant!

Performing with Tristano, Lee Konitz, Warne Marsh, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Charles Mingus, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, Oscar Pettiford, Buddy Rich and Fats Navarro, among others, gives one the idea that John's musical prowess was formidable. John was at the crossroads of so many important events that he can only be viewed as a major voice in the history of jazz, although this becomes secondary to his career in education.

John earned his Masters Degree in Music Education at the Manhattan School of Music and went on to teach composition and improvisation at the Berklee College of Music in Boston for 35 years. He was a member of the National Stage Band Camps faculty for 25 years, an instructor at the Stan Kenton Music Camps for many years, a founding member of the International Association of Jazz Educators, and the author of 15 music education textbooks. The number of musicians that John influenced while in education is staggering. It is in education that John LaPorta will leave the biggest impression.

It was our great honor to have had John at Claremont McKenna College in the Spring of 2001 for a concert of his music. We are humbled that John chose The American Jazz Institute as the repository of his work. A lifetime of music and educational materials will be preserved for future generations of musicians to use and study.

-- Mark Masters

Mark Masters writes for All About Jazz

*The following article was written by Mark for the All About Jazz website in October 2004.
We would like to share it with you.*

Honor Thy Fathers

Back in 1999, The American Jazz Institute embarked on a journey that has somehow lasted and continues to thrive at a small private college located in Southern California. The jazz program at Claremont McKenna College has three components. The first of which is a series of concerts that brings prominent jazz artists to the campus. Second, these artists -- while they are on campus -- sit with students (and me) to participate in our oral history program which documents their life story and is housed in the research library on campus. And last but not least, the artists spend time with the jazz history class and engage students during a question-and-answer session.

The most remarkable thing to come out of this is the fact that there is now another performance venue for jazz musicians in Southern California and since the concerts are free we are able to program music which would often times not otherwise be available to the public. One of my personal goals, with regard to the program at Claremont, is to continue to seek out and program music and musicians that deserve to be heard regardless of how they say it. Our programming reflects a philosophy that some degree of repertory is necessary and desirable, but we should not lose sight of the fact that it is the individual -- the singular voice -- which makes the whole experience meaningful.

“We are in debt to these artists. To Konitz for his courage to have a sound all his own. To Knepper for having been one of the most identifiable trombonists in jazz. And for Grachan, for being himself these past 40 years and enduring... They’ve left us a gift.”

Over the last several years, we have conceived recording projects that bring these singular voices together with new orchestral treatments of their compositional contributions. *The Jimmy Knepper Songbook* (Focus) featured Knepper himself in a large ensemble playing new orchestrations of his music. *Priestess* (Capri) is a showcase for Billy Harper and his music and *One Day With Lee* (also on Capri) has Konitz blowing on his tunes -- and tunes associated with him -- along with a 14-piece ensemble. A similar project that sheds new light on a jazz master is *The Clifford Brown Project* (Capri), which was recorded in 2002. While Brownie is an icon of the trumpet

and his music obviously is widely recorded, our belief was that the ideal recording to honor his gifts was still in the making. We brought together Tim Hagans (trumpet), Gary Smulyan (baritone sax), Joe LaBarbera (drums) and Jack Montrose (sax) as featured soloists and a trumpet quartet to pay homage to the brilliant compositions that were Brownie’s solos. While assigning the featured roll to Hagans, who mind you is not a Brownie clone, we used the music as a springboard for something new, something unexpected.

A significant problem that musicians face is the difficulty of staying current in the public’s (as well as the jazz journalist’s) eye. Without tangible recorded proof of what a musician is currently playing he can drift from the limelight. One such musician is trombonist and composer Grachan Moncur III. Over the past two decades, Grachan has been teaching as well as doing some playing, though he has not had a record to speak of in many, many years. However, as a player -- and especially composer -- Grachan is a singular voice. Thanks recently to Mosaic Records, his two long-out-of-print Blue Note recordings (*Evolution* and *Some Other Stuff*), as well as his classic ‘60s recordings with Jackie McLean, have been reissued on CD (his French recordings on BYG also have thankfully become currently available). It occurred to us that Grachan’s music deserved to be heard in an orchestral context. He and I spent some time together on the phone during the past year and the result is *Exploration: The Grachan Moncur III Octet*. With his input I wrote orchestrations on seven of his tunes and while his music is both inside and out, it proved to be a timeless framework for the individual’s improvisations.

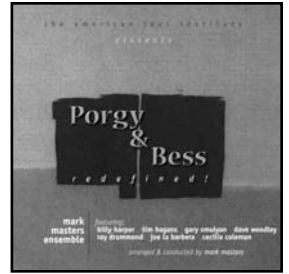
We are in debt to these artists. To Konitz for his courage to have a sound all his own. To Knepper for having been one of the most identifiable trombonists in jazz. And for Grachan, for being himself these past 40 years and enduring. We’ve been touched by these direct descendents of the music. They’ve left us a gift.

Honor thy fathers.

Mark Masters is an inventive and prolific composer/arranger from Southern California. He organized his first ensemble in the early ‘80s, and since the late ‘90s has been a guest lecturer at Claremont McKenna College in California, where he has been involved with their History of Jazz class, overseeing the oral history project and has produced and written for the ongoing series of concerts that has brought such notable artists as Sam Rivers, Mark Turner, Lee Konitz, Ray Drummond, Steve Kuhn, Peter Erskine, John La Porta and Henry Grimes to the college.

AJI goes to college: Spring 2005 concert series at Claremont McKenna College

NEW RELEASE!
Porgy & Bess...Redefined!
The Mark Masters Ensemble



For directions, see page 2



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See page 6

NEW RELEASE!
Exploration

Grachan Moncur III Octet



Grachan Moncur III Evolution Big Band

The preeminent "free jazz" trombonist of the '60s in a performance of his unique compositions. Featuring Tim Hagans and Peter Erskine.

**Saturday February 26,
8:00pm**

An Evening with Dewey Redman

"Our greatest living saxophonist," says DownBeat magazine. Redman appears with a standout septet featuring trumpeter Tim Hagans.

Thursday, March 3, 6:45pm

Andrew Cyrille Plays Monk

"A consummate modern drummer," says the NY Times. Cyrille and his stellar octet perform the music of Thelonious Monk.

Monday, April 4, 6:45pm

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