

AmJazzIn™

The American Jazz Institute Newsletter

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Lee Konitz, Jelly Roll Morton tribute and fresh *Porgy & Bess* to highlight 2001-2002 season at Claremont McKenna College

With its musically diverse offerings, the 2001-2002 season at Claremont McKenna College promises to deliver plenty of surprises. New works essential to the growth of jazz as well as fresh arrangements of classic compositions will be performed by world-famed guest soloists and the AJI's repertory ensembles of renowned West Coast jazz artists.

Alto saxophone icon Lee Konitz is scheduled to make a rare West Coast appearance at the Marian Minor Cook Athenaeum in October. Composer and trombone great Jimmy Knepper guests with the AJI Big Band in January, performing his original compositions arranged by AJI Director Mark Masters. In February, stellar tenor saxophonist Billy Harper and trumpeter Bobby Bradford join the AJI Chamber Ensemble for a fresh interpretation of George Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*. In March, this generation's brightest baritone sax star, Gary Smulyan, joins the AJI Chamber Ensemble for a unique performance of new arrangements of compositions by the late Gary McFarland. The 2001-2002 season concludes in April with a special tribute to Jelly Roll Morton, one of the founding fathers of jazz, performed by a brass ensemble featuring Jack Montrose.

The AJI and CMC look forward to your joining us for this promises-to-be memorable third season of outstanding campus concerts. Dates and details will be announced shortly.

Looking ahead to Lee Konitz in October



Lee Konitz has always been a lone wolf. Never the flashiest or most aggressive of saxophonists, over the course of a remarkable recording career that has -- amazingly -- now past the 50-year mark. For Konitz, being a jazz musician means being an improviser and being an improviser means taking risks and searching for new challenges.

When Konitz first came to prominence in the late 1940s he was one of the very few alto players of the period who was able to escape the dominating presence of Charlie Parker and create a completely personal, recognizable sound and style on the instrument. Influenced at first by suave pre-bop saxophonists Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges and

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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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The American Jazz Institute is a tax-exempt non-profit organization pursuant to I.R.C. Section 501(c)(3). Contributions to the AJI are tax deductible.

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Guest artist Ray Drummond.



Above left to right, standing: Ray Drummond, Sherman Ferguson, Cecilia Coleman, Stephanie O'Keefe, Les Benedict, Bill Roper, Mark Masters; **seated:** Brian Williams, Les Lovitt, Jerry Pinter.

Right left to right: Mark Masters, Ray Drummond, Sherman Ferguson, Reed Gratz (CMC instructor, *History of Jazz in the 20th Century*), Dr. Ron Teeple (CMC professor, founder of the school's jazz studies program).

February: Celebrating Mingus

Veteran bassist Ray Drummond joined the AJI Chamber Ensemble to celebrate the unique music of legendary bassist and composer Charles Mingus. A capacity audience was treated to a cross section of Mingus compositions arranged by Mark Masters.

Mingus classics such as *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*, *Orange Was The Color Of Her Dress*, *My Jelly Roll Soul*, *East Coasting* and *Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love* showcased the talents of Jerry Pinter (tenor saxophone), Les Benedict (trombone), Cecilia Coleman (piano), Sherman Ferguson (drums), Brian Williams (baritone sax), Les Lovitt (trumpet), Bill Roper (tuba), Stephanie O'Keefe (French horn) and our guest artist, the fabulous Ray Drummond. Jerry Pinter was especially lyrical on *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*. Ray Drummond provided an intimate view of his vast talents on *Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love*, opening the arrangement with an extended solo before the rhythm section and finally the entire ensemble joined in.

This evening of great music featuring Ray Drummond in the intimate setting of the Marian Minor Cook Athenaeum will long be remembered.



April: Gary Foster and Cecilia Coleman in the classroom

In the first of an innovative series of informal classroom concerts and discussions, alto saxophonist Gary Foster and pianist Cecilia Coleman performed as a duo for Claremont McKenna College's History 109: *History of Jazz in the 20th Century*.

Gary and Cecilia played several standards from the Great American Songbook, including *All The Things You Are*, *What Is This Thing Called Love?* and *Everything Happens To Me*. The two performers spoke of their experiences in the jazz world, with Gary addressing the subject of being both a jazz artist and a musician working extensively in the film world. He can be heard most recently on the soundtrack of *Pearl Harbor*.

Needless to say, the class showed great enthusiasm for these two artists performing so intimately for them. The AJI and CMC look forward to more in-class events during the coming school year.

JUST ANNOUNCED: Special Ellington concert comes to CMC in September

September 29 brings the exciting sounds of **Ellingtonia 2001** to the beautiful Pickford Auditorium at Claremont McKenna College.

Several facets of Ellington's oeuvre will be explored, including classics for his orchestra, a vocal set featuring selections from Ellington's popular songbook, and small band arrangements by Billy Strayhorn. This cross section of timeless music will be performed by an outstanding band made up of the finest Los Angeles-area musicians.

Duke Ellington has been gone since 1974 but his celebrated genius continues to live through performances such as this.

Future Ellington concerts will present his extended works such as *The Queen's Suite*, *The Perfume Suite* and *The New Orleans Suite*.



January: Jack Montrose & his West Coast Friends

Above left to right: Milcho Leviev, Putter Smith, Bill Perkins, Conte Candoli, Jack Montrose, Dave Woodley.

Below: Jack Montrose Quintet featuring Bill Perkins.



The American Jazz Institute at Claremont McKenna College launched its 2001 season on Saturday, January 27, with Jack Montrose in three different settings. The first half of the concert featured Jack's quintet with Bill Perkins (baritone), Milcho Leviev (piano), Putter Smith (bass) and Joe LaBarbera (drums). Jack programmed several pieces from his Atlantic LP including *April's Fool* and *Have You Met Miss Jones?* To see Jack and Bill Perkins together, making music in an association that goes back to the early 1950s, was a sheer delight for the overflow audience at Pickford Auditorium.

As the second half of the evening commenced, trumpeter Conte Candoli was introduced to perform with Jack's sextet. A master on his instrument, "Count" clearly was enjoying the company, particularly Milcho Leviev. At one point in the set, Conte stood up and leaned into the piano to absorb what Milcho was playing! Midway through the second half, trombonist Dave Woodley joined the group to round out the septet. Dave is one of the truly personal voices on the trombone. The septet performed a number of arrangements Jack wrote for Clifford Brown, as well as several new pieces.

Jack, Perk, Count and Dave were in top form, supported by a very special rhythm section. This was small ensemble jazz at its best!

Lee Konitz cont'd from page 1

Lester Young, he developed a demeanor which was thoughtful and reserved, and a tone nearly transparent but with a lithe lyricism and a resilience that suggested shadowy undercurrents of emotion. He appeared in Claude Thornhill's impressionistic big band (which included charts by the budding genius arranger Gil Evans), Stan Kenton's exciting 1952-53 orchestra, Miles Davis' "Birth of the Cool" nonet, Lennie Tristano's intricate combos, and with Gerry Mulligan before moving on to lead his own bands, including the formation of the Lee Konitz Nonet.

His discography is a dazzling assortment of sessions of all sizes, shapes and styles -- from mid-sized ensembles to trios and duos (usually drumless or pianoless) and even one totally unaccompanied saxophone recital. Some of the highlights include a hard blowing date with drum dynamo Elvin Jones, a round-robin series of duos with the likes of tenor saxist Joe Henderson, guitarist Jim Hall and ex-Ellington fiddler Ray Nance, soloing over imaginative scores for string quartet, a five-man saxophone section with Jimmy Giuffre, and breathtaking collaborations with the brilliant French pianist Martial Solal. Konitz recently performed and/or recorded with Charlie Haden, Bob Brookmeyer, Randy Brecker, Paul Bley, Paul Motian, Steve Swallow, and Brad Mehldau.

Deeply interested and committed to jazz education, Konitz strives to teach solo improvisation, something he regards as being even more of a measurable discipline than ensemble playing. Konitz currently tours extensively throughout Europe and Japan and continues to present his music with a mature and creative perspective.

-- Excerpts taken from material written by Art Lange

**AJI goes to college:
Memorable moments of
the 2001 Spring season at
Claremont McKenna College**

*Many thanks to Don Armstrong
for all the concert photos in this issue.*

Below: "Count" Conte Candoli with the Jack Montrose Septet.



March: *Sketches of Spain*: Homage to Gil Evans

A highlight of the Spring season was the performance by the AJI's Big Band and guest soloist Tim Hagans of the Gil Evans masterpiece, *Sketches of Spain*. Tim, a leader in his own right with five albums for Blue Note Records, showed the capacity audience in Pickford Auditorium why he is the brightest talent in this generation's crop of trumpet players. His most recent recording, *Reanimation Live!*, with co-leader Bob Belden's electric band, pushes the boundaries of jazz into what Tim sees as one new direction the music will take.

The first half of the evening featured Tim in a quartet environment with Jerry Pinter (tenor saxophone), Putter Smith (bass) and Joe LaBarbera (drums). The set included Tim's own composition, *No Words*, Miles Davis' *Solar* and the standards *You Don't Know What Love Is* and *On Green Dolphin Street*.

For the second half, the AJI Big Band was augmented by harp, tympani, percussion, French horns and tuba to perform music from the Miles Davis-Gil Evans *Sketches of Spain* classic recording. While giving a nod to Miles, Tim showed that he is a truly unique and original talent. Capable of playing with both fire and restraint, his performance covered a range of emotions that few performers have the ability to convey.

The Gould Center for Humanistic Studies deserves special recognition for their generosity in making the evening possible. In addition to this concert, The Gould Center also supports other jazz events at Claremont McKenna College.



Tim Hagans guests with the AJI Big Band conducted by Mark Masters.



April: An Evening with John LaPorta

John LaPorta is one of the truly legendary figures of jazz. Honored as a performer, writer and master teacher, Mr. LaPorta at 81 years of age has enjoyed a career that encompasses much of the history of the music. During his many years of teaching at the renowned Berkeley School of Music in Boston, he taught many students who went on to significant careers of their own.

John LaPorta was the featured guest with the AJI Big Band in an evening showcasing John's writing prowess and his skill as a performer. Among the highlights were two pieces written for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra which John said were never performed by that band. This was the first time he had heard one of them!

John and Danny House were featured on the LaPorta composition *Flotsam and Jetsam*, a feature for two clarinets. This fascinating work allowed the clarinets to solo and interact over a complex modal structure. Other highlights certainly included John with the rhythm section playing *Lester Leaps In* and *Here's That Rainy Day*. His playing throughout the evening dazzled the audience and well demonstrated why he has been constantly in demand as a performer for so many years. It was a most fitting conclusion to a successful concert season.



Above: John LaPorta and the AJI rhythm section of Putter Smith (bass), Randy Drake (drums) and Milcho Leviev (piano).

Below: LaPorta and Danny House solo and duo on LaPorta's *Flotsam and Jetsam*.

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Above: Jack Montrose Sextet with a front line featuring Jack and his West Coast friends Bill Perkins and Conte Candoli.

Top right: AJI's Mark Masters and Audree Coke Kenton with Tim Hagans, guest soloist with the AJI Big Band for the *Sketches of Spain* concert.

Right: Mark Masters with the legendary John LaPorta, special guest of the AJI Big Band for an evening highlighting John's own compositions.



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