



MUSICENTRAL

AFM Local 660 August 2008
Founded in 1913—Tuned for the 21st Century



American Federation of Musicians - Local 660

We're Listening to the Live Music

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REMINDER

Sozo—August 24, 2008

AFM 660 "Listen to the Music"

"Your credentials are on the stage with you. You must be prepared before you go on stage, you won't get a second chance."

Byron Stripling

Master Class, JazzPA,
July 26, 2008

Many hands make light work and good music.

Some forty musicians and friends got together at the American Ale House in July for the first AFM 660 "Listen to the Music" event designed to bring musicians and music lovers together in venues where the focus is on listening to live music.

The second event will take place on Sunday afternoon, August 24, at Sozo Institute for the Arts in State College.

The Ale House event was satisfying in many ways. Top flight AFM 660 musicians jammed and played originals, including John Thompson, Tom Wareham, Andrew Jackson, Carl Ector, Adam Kurland, Larry Bish (remember Tahoka Freeway?) and Trace Baker. (Photos on page 3)

They were joined in playing a wide variety of music, from jazz to blues to country to originals by seasoned community musicians such as Christopher Kent and Bill Brickley and creative young originals Nathan and Noah Connolly. Some of these musicians became members of AFM 660 on the spot.

An enthusiastic audience paid \$10 each to benefit the AFM 660's Olin Butt High School Music Education Fund. AFM 660 members got in free and many shared their equipment and brought snacks to share at this "Turn Out, Tune Up and Sit In" event.

Six people, musicians and audience alike, volunteered to serve as road crew before and after the event to help the weary musicians carry their equipment -- Karen Shuckman and Mark Davis (who happen to be former national champion Penn State gymnasts), young musicians Nate and Noah Connolly and their friend Jake Boyer and even one Olivier Mollandin from Paris, France, a big fan of Fifties rock who was signed on by his cousin, yours truly.

Those bringing and sharing equipment included John Thompson (keyboard), Chris Lee (PA, guitar and amp), Andrew Jackson (drums), Bill Brickley and Jacob Hibel (bass and amp) and many more. Bill was particularly helpful in getting my PA on line -- a last-minute substitute for the PA of Chris Byrne who was out sick that day.

What was particularly satisfying was that an idealistic plan had become a shared, enjoyable reality. So plan to join this enjoyable reality when it takes place again on Sunday, August 24 at Sozo. What will be different this time is that we will have a potluck meal first, followed by a brief general meeting to keep members up to date, then an exciting program on "How to Create Venues" by successful impresario Catherine Dupuis and finally, we will jam on the stage at Sozo with their professional PA system.

Bring a musician or music-loving friend August 24th, prepare some tunes to present yourself -- originals or favorite covers -- for an appreciative audience and join in and jam with old and new friends in the local live music community, where many hands make light work and good music.

Keep in touch!

Christopher Lee, President, Email: chris@boalmuseum.com Phone: 814-466-9266



Listen to the Music - August 24 at Sozo

The "Listen to the Music" Sunday afternoon series organized by Local 660 of the American Federation of Music will continue on August 24, 2008 at the Sozo Institute for the Arts, 256 East Beaver Avenue in State College. The afternoon's program includes a covered dish luncheon at 12:30 pm, an **AFM 660 general meeting** and seminar at 1:30 pm and an all-out music jam with the best of the regions jazz, rock, blues and folk musicians on the Sozo stage from 2 to 5 pm. After the luncheon there will be a brief general meeting of Local 660 members and then impresario Catherine Dupuis from New York City will speak for twenty minutes at 1:30 pm on "How to Create Venues."

This all-age, alcohol- and smoke-free "Listen to the Music" event is open to the public -- musicians and music-lovers alike -- and is free for AFM members. The \$10 admission for non-members will go 50-50 to the AFM 660 Olin Butt Fund for High School Music Education and to compensate the professional musicians sharing their time, instruments and equipment with the public at the 2 to 5 pm jam.



AFM Local 660 includes: All of Huntingdon, Snyder, Union, Centre, Mifflin, Juniata, Union, and Montour Counties. All of Northumberland County except Snyderstown, Shamokin, Ralpho, Zerbe, Little Mahony, Jackson, Herndon, Lower Mahanoy, West Cameron, East Cameron, Mount Carmel, Kulpmont, Marion Heights and Coal. Also all of

Jazz PA, the summer jazz celebration in Bellefonte, PA held on July 26th, was enjoyed by many. Local, regional, and national musicians entertained from several stages—two outdoor and one indoor. The day-long and into the night event brought much talent and Jazz music to Central Pennsylvania.

Ms. Catherine Dupuis was event organizer and vocalist. JazzPA is a non-profit corporation which includes a board of directors and was supported by a variety of businesses. Special thanks was noted to AFM members Arthur Goldstein, Rick Hirsch, Don Keat, John Thompson, Tommy Wareham, and Joe Alessandro. Other members of Local 660 were also involved in JazzPA. They were Steve Adams, Mike Bruster, Philip Burlingame, John Kovalchik, Mike Loewen, Derek McDonald, Roger Munnell, and Pete Pepe. Many other locals were also involved in JazzPA.

The stars of the event were guest artists and AFM members Russ Kassoff, Jan Anderson, Dennis Mackrel, Tom Malone, and Byron Stripling. The Russ Kassoff



Trio was highlighted last July in the August 2007 AFM Newsletter. This year's fest spotlighted Tom Malone and Byron Stripling as special guests. Malone and Stripling are members of AFM Local 802. They provided a morning free Master Class and an evening concert at the Garman Theatre. It was unfortunate, given the talent and opportunity, that less than half the auditorium was occupied for the 80-minute Master Class program. Both Malone and Stripling brought their clinic to the stage floor, to be closer to the audience.

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MUSICIANSHIP

Byron Stripling is a trumpet virtuoso. Stripling was educated at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, and the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, MI. Byron was the lead trumpeter and soloist with the Count Basie Orchestra and has played and recorded with such bands as Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, Clark Terry, Louis Bellson, and Buck Clayton. Among other venues, Stripling has played with The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, and was a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra and many others. In addition, Mr. Stripling is also an accomplished actor and singer. Stripling has been described as a "masterful speaker." This writer concurs.

Byron Stripling began by looking out to the audience and commenting on the value and purpose of clinics,

such as this. He said that it was good practice to include a writing tool and paper to take notes for retention purposes, capturing the key points presented for later study or review.

Stripling began his talk by imparting the three keys to successful musicianship. The first, "practice every day." With repetition, he said, one can better develop their musical skills. His second key was "listen." Just listening was just not good enough. He used the term "attentive listening" while he said would tune your listening to three selective parts of music: rhythm, melody, and harmony. The last key is "model the masters." Studying and listening to successful musicians is vital to becoming successful. "You can turn decades into days," Byron said. "Patterning other musicians can help you find your own music style, so will understanding the techniques of the rhythm, the culture surrounding the music. Your goal should be to incorporate and celebrate the differences toward forming your own sound."

Living in a visual society can sometimes defeat an appreciation of music. Stripling used MTV as an example. Asking someone if you like a certain performer after watching the person or group on MTV, most times a response would come from the visual experience of the artist(s) and not their music. Stripling emphasizes, "You can't learn music by watching, you must listen."

Music, he went on to say, should impart an image itself, for instance, "listening to a melody, one could describe it as like butter, rich, lush, or fat." He then sang several measures of the 1934 song by Brooks Bowman, "East of the Sun (and West of the Moon)." This song became a popular staple by many jazz musicians in the 1950s. He then joked that many young men would do better with a date by listening and learning the Standards, which have many classic love phrases.

Byron Stripling cited Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and Louis Armstrong as some of his mentors. Byron played his trumpet to a song made famous by Armstrong. He credited his parents who took him to musical events with famous musicians that inspired him to be a musician. His parents also afforded him music lessons. Stripling said, and as a former music teacher himself, that "the best teachers were those that taught him how to teach himself."

He told young musicians in the audience that the piano is a great instrument for learning harmony and improving one's harmonic scheme. He cautioned them that the bottom line regarding a professional career is that we recognize that people today have many choices in regard to music. He also said that people don't want to waste their time, therefore to be a good performer is always a challenge for a musician. "Your credentials are on the stage with you. You must be prepared before you go on stage, you won't get a second chance." Stripling, when asked, said it took him 20 years before he felt accomplished as a musician.

In regard to the use of technology in music, Stripling said, "Technology is just a tool, it does not make us smarter. He suggests developing a 'practice program' which uses a journal to track growth and accomplishment. The 'practice program' can help you toward a successful musicianship." Byron Stripling closed by telling his audience that like a surgeon or scientist, he is proud to tell people that he is a musician.



PRACTICE AND PERSISTENCE

Tom "Bones" Malone was born in 1947. He is famous for being a member of The Blues Brothers band ("Blues Brothers 2000" movie) and the CBS Orchestra—house band of the Late Show with David Letterman. Malone was born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and is a graduate of North Texas State University. Malone plays the trombone, trumpet, bass trombone, tenor sax, baritone sax, flute, piccolo, and alto flute. His music career includes: 250 arrangements to television's The Late Show; background music to over 3,100 television shows, and recorded over 1,000 records. Tom Malone was the original member of the band when Saturday Night Live started in 1976.

Malone recounted that as a poor farm boy from Mississippi, he took up music with a trombone without individual lessons or any in school. "I learned by listening to Urbie Green records. They were on a 78rpm record, in those days. After listening and practicing, I could play with Urbie Green." Malone's professional career began by being lead trumpeter for Brenda Lee in a club in Jackson, MS. Prior to college graduation, he became a contract musician via The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. After graduation he continued contractor work with many bands including Woody Herman, Duke Pearson, Louie Bellson, Doc Severinson, Frank Zappa, and Blood, Sweat & Tears. Tom spent 15 years with Gil Evans, during which he recorded 7 albums and traveled extensively. Malone joined the CBS Orchestra in 1993. Besides his studio experience, Malone has also been featured in several movies. His most prominent movie work was "Blues Brothers 2000."

Malone spoke about the trombone and the importance of mechanics, the ability to master an instrument and being able to play notes without moving your slide. As most good musicians, he also said practice was very important to not only improving your sound, but also your style.



Tom Malone's ways to succeed include: 1) Play your instrument well—practice-practice-practice. He confided that four hours a day was his average practicing time. (Byron Stripling mentioned a side bar that America's youth, on average, watch five hours of TV per day—that our youth can certainly find time to practice.) 2) Be on time when you play. 3) Sight-read. 4) Play songs by heart. 5) Be nice to everyone. Your personality could get you another job when you least expect it.

Malone was asked several questions on the types of music today and about instruments. He responded by saying, "When it comes to music, nothing is completely new under the sun. All music has a history." Therefore, by listening and studying music, one can develop new ways to express the past and find your own style. When it comes to instruments, he said that the only real instrument that has been improved over the years has been the saxophone. Accessories have been improved. For instance, Malone's practice mute allows him to play normally, but dampens the sound measurably.

When asked about the effects of technology on music, he said it is a reality and he considers technology a positive part of the world. As an arranger, for instance, Malone said that today's electronic tools really help him. He is able to arrange music that was impossible years ago. Tom Malone concluded the clinic by saying that live music will never be supplanted by electronic music.

Article and photos by John R. Vincenti



Some photos from "Listen to the Music"—July 20th



Article and photos by Chris Lee



FYI: Sozo Institute of the Arts will be hosting a farewell party for Greg Johnson, recent-former AFM member, on August 15th-8pm-11pm. Greg Johnson will be performing with his band and friends. There will be no cover charge taken at the door. Greg is pursuing his musical career elsewhere.





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Local 660 August 2008



Spotlight on Jim Langton "Teacher—Musician"



If you asked Jim Langton what music means to him, he will say without pausing, "one step short of being the most important thing in my life." Then Jim will tell you that his family: wife of 53 years, Loretta; and their six children and their families, including 10 grandchildren, are first.

Music, however touched Jim's life while growing up in a small anthracite coal mining community called Forrestville, Cass Township, Schuylkill County, near Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Jim's father, James, was a timberman in the local coal mine. His job was to keep the walls in the mines from falling. Jim's dad was also a musician and he played in the Forrestville Band. He played trumpet but was better known for his baritone horn, which he would play outside on Sundays, his only day off. "Something the neighbors also enjoyed," Jim remembered.

Jim's earliest recollection of playing the piano was when he visited his grandma's house when he was four years old. He said he tinkered with the piano keys and pumped the foot plates to make the player piano make music.

His real connection to the piano came when he started school. "I was fortunate," he said, "Our Cass Township School provided the opportunity to learn piano from a professional musician from the Braun School in Pottsville." The instructor was Florence Stevens, who taught group piano lessons with one piano and five mock-pianos. Langton said that Ms. Stevens taught like a conductor. "She was tough, so much that she would rap you on the fingers if you missed the proper notes. One time I came home with blood on my fingers. My dad was upset and was going to contact the teacher, but my mom (Helen) said that's how Jim will learn." The cost of the lessons at school amounted to ten cents per week, per student. The Braun School charged \$3.50 per half-hour for private lessons in those days.

Jim was able to take lessons during his 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades at school, but during his 4th grade, the school stopped the piano lessons. However, Jim's love of the piano did not stop. He had learned enough of the basics to continue playing, but not at home, since there was no piano. He was able to stay after school, through the kindness of Willie McDonald, the school janitor, who allowed him to use the school's piano.

Langton's dad would take him to Minersville where he would purchase sheet music at 15 cents per copy in 1938. The lady in the store would even play the music, if you wished. A piano in his home was the next musical adventure for Jim. His dad's first cousin, who he called uncle John, gave the family a "big" up-right piano when Jim was in 7th grade. That made practicing his favorite songs a lot easier. "I never had to be told to play in my life," he said.

Being able to afford sheet music became an issue. The cost of sheet music by the time he entered high school had gone up quite a bit, from 35 cents to 65 cents per copy. To help pay for the sheet music, Jim and his buddies would go to the mines and pick up scrap metal that they would find. They would drag it back home and sell it to the "Rag Man." They shared the money, allowing Jim to pay for his sheet music.

During 11th grade, Jim had his first opportunity to play professionally. He was asked to provide music for a new steak and seafood bar in Minersville, PA. The occasion was also 1943 and New Year's Eve. Jim's dad did not drink alcohol and was hesitant, at first, about the invitation, but knew his son was ready to play piano. Jim remembers that he had no contract and played for three hours straight. In those days, bars in Pennsylvania had to close at midnight, but many didn't. This club closed its shutters and let only those in that they knew and he played from 10pm to 1am. Jim remembered that afterwards he was paid ten dollars and was even given a glass of beer. He told his father that he had the beer afterwards, and his dad was glad that it was only one.

An accident at home in 1944 almost ended Jim's future career as a piano player or the ability to enter the armed services. He accidentally cut his left hand on an open can while slipping and falling to the ground. The incident caused nerves to be severed in one finger and partially in another. "The injury, even today, was something I do not think about. I could still play piano, and never considered it a handicap."

Upon graduation in June 1945 Langton was drafted. He entered the Army. Interestingly, the left hand was not considered a problem during his physical exam for enlistment, because he was right-handed. Jim was trained for bridge demolition in the Army Engineers Corps. As the European war concluded in late 1945, Jim was retrained as a radio technician and sent to Heidelberg, Germany. There he was housed in a castle. There was a piano in the castle and Jim was back into music making for him self and fellow troops.

When he returned to the United States after serving his country, he went back to his family and requested a meeting with Florence Stevens. Before the meeting took place, Jim was playing piano at the Necho Allen Hotel in Pottsville. The job afforded him an opportunity to also play for a local radio show. "I tried to join the American Federation of Musicians at that time, but was told there are too many piano players and was refused." The owner of the Necho Allen, who liked Jim's playing ability, heard the story and got Jim his first AFM union card. He has been a member ever since. Jim belonged to several locals including Pottsville, Ridgeway, and State College Local 660.

"I wanted to be a concert pianist," he said. "I felt I needed Florence Stevens' advice." Stevens gave Jim some unexpected advice after their conversation and playing the piano for her. Stevens noticed Jim's left hand, but did not shatter his goal, just alter it. Florence said, "I was too old to be a concert pianist. Concert pianists begin young and have lessons that make them accomplished at a much younger age. She said that I would have a tough time with my left hand, especially if I wanted to play Bach. Florence recommended that I go to college and become music teacher and then play piano in cabarets."

Jim did just that. His music career began with a Bachelor's Degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1951 and later a Master's Degree from Penn State in 1957. Both instances included degrees in education with music as his major.

Loretta Marconi from St. Mary's, Pennsylvania, became Jim's bride in 1955. Jim's career started as music and choral teacher in two K-12 schools in Johnsonburg and Wilcox, Pennsylvania. Later he took a job in Emporium, Pennsylvania, in a 7-12 school as a music teacher. In 1966, Jim received a telephone call from Frank Hege, State College music coordinator, via a recommendation by Jim Dunlop for a job offer in the State College Area School District. Jim accepted and taught music until his retirement in 1987. After Mr. Hege died in 1975, Jim became the district's music coordinator until his retirement.

At State College, Jim was the choral director which included a girls chorus, mixed open choir, a mixed select auditioned choir, and "pops" choral group ("Twin Tones") chosen for ability and best blend of musical voices. The Twin Tones played at many events throughout the Centre County area. Jim also taught music theory and advanced theory, which became an advanced placement pre-college accredited course.

Jim's love of cabaret music did not stop either. Jim Langton played for nearly 25 years at the Autoport in State College, three nights per week in the piano-bar. At 81 years young, Jim still loves piano. He said, "I was told I could play Gershwin, but not Bach. But, I can! Actually I love to play Haydn's sonatas."



Article and photo by John R. Vincenti