

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Terry Waldo - Ragtime Pianist



Sunday, January 17, 2016

2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Community Arts Center

414 Plush Mill Road

Wallingford, PA 19086

Directions at <http://www.tristatejazz.org/directions-cac.html>

“Terry Waldo, ragtime pianist nonpareil and eminent scholar of the form, and is a musical director and arranger at the piano. Mr. Waldo is worth the price of a ticket.” THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Terry is considered one of America's premier performers and presenters of Early Jazz, Ragtime, and Stride piano, is known for his virtuoso technique, charming vocals, and disarming wit. Protégé of the legendary Eubie Blake, who called Waldo “an extension of my own musical self,” Terry has appeared with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, where he presented the world premiere of his “Eubie Blake Concerto,” performed and composed for many TV programs and films including The Tonight Show, PBS documentaries

on Storyville and Jack Johnson, and has produced and arranged over 40 albums.

His book, *This Is Ragtime* (See excerpts, page 4), is considered to be the definitive book on ragtime and it along with his 26-part series, of the same title, produced for National Public Radio, fueled the 1970s ragtime revival. Terry has also taught a ragtime course for Swing University at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Waldo has been showcased in several one-man shows: *Eubie and Me*, *The Naked Dance: The Music of Storyville*, *Shake That Thing*, and *1927 Revue*. He has been musical director for a number of shows in New York City, including *Mr. Jelly Lord*, *Heliotrope Bouquet*, and *Ambassador Satch*.

For more information or hear samples, go to www.terrywaldo.com.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=usoHDy9kODA, or

www.youtube.com/watch?v=36776aqLS2Q.

Concert Admissions

\$10 First-time attendees and Members

\$20 General Admission

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Pay at the door

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LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR FEBRUARY 2016 CONCERT

The Bria Skonberg Quintet will play a Tri-States Jazz concert on February 21, 2016 at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.



A powerhouse combination of emerging talent on the New York jazz scene, the Bria Skonberg Quintet brings its unique spin on traditional jazz to TSJS. Bria has been a TSJS favorite since her first appearance with us in 2008. Her quintet ranges stylistically from New Orleans ensemble jazz to the classic American songbook.

Bria Skonberg - Trumpet, Vocals, Leader
Evan Arntzen - Clarinet, Tenor Sax, Vocals
Dalton Ridenhour - Piano
Sean Cronin - Bass
Darrian Douglas - Drums

According to the Wall Street Journal, Skonberg is “poised to be one of the most versatile and imposing musicians of her generation.” This year she earned a Jazz Journalists’ Association nomination for “Up and Coming Jazz Artist of the Year,” and is included in Down Beat magazine’s “Rising Star Critic’s Poll.” Bria was also honored with a NY Bistro Award for “Outstanding Jazz Artist.” Known for a style rooted in classic jazz, she has assembled a unique group from the US and Canada. The Quintet’s second album, *Into Your Own*, follows their 2012 *So Is The Day*, which peaked at #7 on the US National Jazz Charts.

For more information or to hear samples, see her website: <http://www.briaskonberg.com>.

BANU GIBSON BAND NOVEMBER 18 CONCERT

Review by Jim McGann

The Band:

Banu Gibson – Vocals, guitar, banjo
Mike Davis – Trumpet
David Sager – Trombone
Dan Levinson – Reeds
Mark Shane – Piano
Joel Forbes – Bass
Kevin Dorn – Drums



Photo by Paul Macatee

Last year I reviewed Dave Robinson's Conservatory Band, and my biggest criticism was that there were too many vocals and not enough band performances. The same could be said about Banu Gibson and her band, though with Gibson I found a superior vocalist and the concert as a whole an enjoyable affair. Still, when you have musicians the caliber of Dan Levinson, Mark Shane, Kevin Dorn et al, you ache for a no holds barred "killer-diller" with hot soli and swing. While there were instrumentals, none of them seemed to have that definitive moment.



Dan Levinson, Photo by Jim McGann



Mark Shane, Photo by Jim McGann

Yet it was a half-decent concert. Gibson was a vocalist who had a definite idea of what song she was singing; more importantly, she had the correct spirit in which the song was to be sung. There was no Bebop mixed in with Swing, no 1950s lounge

singing when the song called for the blues. Gibson was engaging when describing how Ira Gershwin favored the vernacular of the common man, or the way lyricists Mitchell Parish and Johnny Mercer approached their craft.



Banu Gibson, Photo by Paul Macatee

Gibson was great on all the vocals, but there were a few noteworthy items I would like to mention. First there was the letter perfect performance of "The Man I Love" - Sweets Edison's intro, Lester Young's solo, even Joe Sullivan's accompaniments - were all documented. If you have Billie Holiday's 1939 recording (I think it's on the Brunswick label, maybe Vocalion), play it. Aside from Gibson's vocal, it will sound identical. Second, was the crazy, wordy, double-time verse to "Too Marvelous For Words" - performed twice because Gibson clammed on a few words on the first go-round (could have fooled me!). Finally, not that this was a great vocal performance, but I never thought I would hear Hot Lips Page's "Feelin' High and Happy" anywhere including in tradjazz circles.



Kevin Dorn, Photo by Paul Macatee



Mike Davis, David Sager, Photo by Jim McGann

Instrumentally, as I noted earlier, the opportunities were few and far between. For most of the afternoon, split choruses and trading of fours were the order of the day. Dan Levinson, Mike Davis, Dave Sager, Mark Shane handled the limited roles well, but there were some instances where one

wished for a change of format and allow a soloist to cut loose and swing a few choruses. As it were, the band's shining moments were on Ted Fiorito's "I Never Knew", "I Would Do Anything For You" and the vocal "Dinah." Shane was the only musician to have a feature spot - a nice stride version of "Ain'tcha Glad."

Despite the limited instrumental/vocal heavy format, the concert moved at a good clip, and kept everyone entertained. And that's the bottom line - the audience left satisfied with the performance. Banu Gibson and company got the job done.

THE STRUTTER IS ON THE WEB

The current and back issues of The Strutter are on the Tri-State Jazz Society Web. The Strutter archives cover over three years of back issues and all the bands and soloists who performed during that period are listed there.

Read the back issues at

www.tristatejazz.org/strutter-archives.html

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Tri-State Jazz Society

THIS IS RAGTIME

Excerpts from Terry Waldo's Book

Only ten years ago, when most people thought of Ragtime, the word conjured up images of tinny, out-of-tune pianos and straw hats. It was that corny music from beer halls and pizza parlors, that happy music that people sang along with. Then in the 1970's general audiences discovered Scott Joplin, and Ragtime was suddenly moved from the saloon to the concert hall. Within a few years the gentle, haunting melodies of this black musical genius were introduced first to the classical music devotees of Joshua Rifkin and then to the public at large through the sound track of the very popular film *The Sting*. Here, then, is an amazing phenomenon: The king of Ragtime, Scott Joplin, whose fine composition the "Maple Leaf Rag" had launched what is popularly called the Ragtime era in 1899, is totally forgotten by the general public, then emerges once again some seventy years later with enormous hits on both the classical and popular music charts.

The question may come to mind, What is Ragtime? Is it classical music, as Joplin himself called it, or is it popular music? Or is it something else entirely? It seems to defy precise musical definition. In many minds Ragtime is considered a primitive form of Jazz, in others a type of folk music. Ragtime is in fact all of these things and much more. Its roots extend far back into the last century, encompassing every musical source available in America, and it has influenced in some way almost every type of American music that has evolved since. It is America's first and most unique contribution to musical literature.

Probably the best way to begin is to make a distinction between a rag and Ragtime. A *rag*, strictly speaking, is an instrumental, syncopated march and follows the same formal conventions as a march. *Ragtime*, however, is a much more eclectic term and could be said to apply to almost any music that is syncopated. To *rag* a number is to play it in a syncopated style. So Ragtime encompasses not only the instrumental rags but also such diverse musical forms as the rag song and Dixieland.

Although no one now living seems to know for sure the original meaning of the word *Ragtime*, it seems

to have come from the phrase *ragged time* - tearing time apart. But there are several other possible derivations. For instance, the term *to rag* at one time meant "to tease," and the music does just that - it teases the listener. It's full of surprises - unexpected rhythmic shifts and harmonies. Whatever its origin, however, we know that by the mid-1980's the word was applied to a wide variety of music that had this common element of syncopation.

Syncopation is the continuous superimposition of an irregular rhythm overtop of a regular one. In the piano rags a regular pulse is maintained by the left hand alternating a low bass note with a chord in the midrange. This produces a heavy accent on the first and third beats of the measure. Pitted against this regular meter is a constant series of rhythmic displacements in the right hand. In band or orchestra Ragtime the functions of the left and right hands are taken over by various instruments.

As the Gay Nineties began, the industrial technological revolution and its accompanying urbanization and mass commercialization were forcing drastic changes in American life. Ragtime would become a musical reflection of these changes in two separate ways: as entertainment and as art. It can be said that entertainment serves the function of confirming and reinforcing our prejudices; Ragtime as entertainment did just that. It was full of the zip and optimism of the new age, and at the same time it seemed to justify the strong white-supremacy sentiments of the times. On a second level, as art, and primarily black art, Ragtime reflected the often frustrating reality of Afro-Americans intent upon equality in a new society.

Although probably not the "Originator of Ragtime," as he billed himself, Ben Harney was the first popular entertainer to play it. In 1896 he introduced Ragtime to New York audiences at Tony Pastor's Cafe. Within weeks after Harney's appearance at Pastor's, ragtime became a fad. Performers (mostly white) were playing, dancing, and singing this new music supposedly in the style of the southern Negroes. Bands performed it at concerts; orchestras played rags for dancing; entertainers sang it; it clanked away on the clumsy mechanical nickelodeons that were located everywhere we now see jukeboxes and of course, it

was played on the pianos of respectable homes and the not-so-respectable houses of the tenderloins. However, it was in 1899 that the first Ragtime “chart-buster” appeared - Scott Joplin’s “Maple Leaf Rag.” Although not the first rag - not even Joplin’s first rag - in many respects it can be considered to be the most significant rag ever written. It had a unique distinction of being not only an artistic masterpiece but at the same time a phenomenal commercial success. It was the first piece of instrumental music to sell over a million copies. And so it established Ragtime as a serious form of music with a wide sales potential. It also established Scott Joplin, an Afro-American, as the virtual king of Ragtime composers, a distinction he fully deserved because he remained, throughout his life, the most dedicated champion and serious composer of the idiom.

Joplin and many other black Ragtime artists were in a very difficult position at that time. They were part of an increasingly aware, often highly trained, group of serious musicians facing audiences who harbored the conscious or unconscious demand for their music to reflect their own racial prejudices.

Eubie Blake explained the problem:

Back then we could read and write music, but no one wanted to believe that we could. We’d get all the latest music from all the new shows and memorize the parts. People would come in and ask for a tune, say a Victor Herbert song like “The Merry Widow”...I’d say, “Anybody ever heard of that?” Then after a bit one of us would say, “I think I’ve hear that,” and he’d lean over and pretend he was singing it for the rest of the fellows, and we’d all play it then. Of course we’d learned it from the music. The customer would say something like, “Oh, those colored boys! Aren’t they something; they can’t read a note, but they can play naturally so well!”

We used to take our songs into the publishers and smile and talk in dialect and pretend we didn’t know anything. They’d always have somebody else doing the arranging. They didn’t want to think we could do our own writing.

This symbolic drama between freedom and slavery could be seen in another light, however. By 1896 the fight for freedom over slavery was years past. The rag composers, such as Scott Joplin and Eubie

Blake, might have been the sons of slaves – but they were all born after the Civil War. But the struggle over prejudice and the fight for black identity was becoming increasingly intense. Blacks in America, uprooted from the communal life of the plantation and thrust into often hostile environments in both the South and North, were now fighting the cruelty of loneliness and displacement, which were, in fact, more binding than the chains of slavery that had contained their ancestors. And their music, as an expression of their alienation, was something to which all people caught in the cold, mechanized life of the new industrial age could relate.

It is no accident that many of the best rags can be heard by means of the mechanical piano roll and lose very little. In fact, they often gain depth by the performance. For Ragtime, among other things, is an expression of the mechanical age from which it comes. It is machine music, and its haunting quality often arises from the juxtaposition of the older, lively Negro folk tunes within a hollow, metronomic framework. Even when played live, the rags are supposed to be played meticulously, with machinelike precision. And, like the piano roll, they do not usually end with an upbeat climax, but more often as if someone simply has turned off the power.

Thus, Negro Ragtime might be seen in at least four different lights. First, as joyous and creative dance and entertainment music, it reflected the backgrounds of men raised in the black subculture who now had the opportunity to bring their music to the larger public. Second, as parody, it juxtaposed the inane grin of the minstrel-show “coon” against the underlying misery of a suppressed race. Third, as an expression of triumph, it pitted the old law and order against the new freedom from slavery. And finally, as an expression of the loss of innocence, it placed the old manmade folk music in a new, mechanized context.

Author: Terry Waldo. “*This is Ragtime.*”

Publisher: Jazz at Lincoln Center Library Editions, First Edition, 2009

FUTURE CONCERTS



All Concerts from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

March 20, 2016 Danny Tobias Band, Danny is a TSJS veteran, played trumpet with the Midiri Brothers, Jerry Rife, and others; now leading his own early jazz and swing band, Wallingford, PA.

April 17, 2016 Ivory & Gold® featuring Jeff and Anne Barnhart, Stride pianist and flutist, last time at TSJS was 2011, Haddonfield, NJ.

May 22, 2016 The Al Harrison Dixieland Band, Trumpeter Al Harrison will be returning to TSJS with a sextet. The program will again feature authentic early New Orleans jazz and traditional jazz standards, Wallingford, PA

June 5, 2016 Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers Trio, Neville's coming from England, Joe Midiri is on clarinet, Paul Midiri is on drums - jamming with Neville just like last year. Come early; it's likely to be a sellout. Haddonfield, NJ

June 26, 2016 Annual Jam Session A Tri-State Jazz Society tradition, we bring together top musicians from our favorite bands to jam with sit-ins. The music will be familiar Dixieland tunes. Wallingford, PA

July 24, 2016 Atlantic City Jazz Band, This sextet includes Tri-State Jazz Society board members, Bob Rawlins on reeds and Nancy Rawlins on piano. Haddonfield, NJ

August 21, 2016 Rossano Sportiello, Solo Piano. Wallingford, PA

Wallingford: Concerts are held at the Community Arts Center, 414 Plush Mill Rd; just west of exit 3 of I-495 ("The Blue Route").

Haddonfield: Concerts are held at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Rd., just south of Kings Highway; about a ten minute walk from the PATCO train station.

Detailed directions at www.tristatejazz.org.

OTHER JAZZ CONCERTS

PENNSYLVANIA JAZZ SOCIETY

www.pajazzsociety.org

(610)-625-4640

Dewey Banquet Hall, 502 Durham Street, Hellertown, PA. Concert 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

February 7 Mardi Gras with Atlantic City Jazz Band

NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

www.njjs.org

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January 4 Bucky Pizzarelli

February 15 [Stéphane Séva](#)

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www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html

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All concerts start at 8:00 p.m. Ocean County College campus, Community and Arts Center, College Drive.

January 13 Midiri Brothers

February 17 Aaron Weinstein

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