

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

Red Hot Ramblers



Sunday, November 5, 2017

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>

Larry Toft - Leader, trombone  
 Adam Hershberger – trumpet  
 Paul Butler – clarinet  
 Evan Cory Levine – guitar, banjo  
 Dan Mosheny – tuba  
 Chad Brown – drums

Larry Toft's Red Hot Ramblers, who last performed for TSJS in Haddonfield in July, 2015 with the identical personnel for this gig, make their Wallingford debut with their infectious Gatsby-era style jazz. Larry Toft is an alumnus of Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music, where he was a pupil of Tyrone Breuninger, former Associate Principal Trombonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as trombonist Luis

Bonilla of NYC's Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. He also plays with the Balkan- and klezmer-influenced West Philadelphia Orchestra, and is in general demand as an all-around trombonist and baritone horn player in the Philadelphia area.

The Red Hot Ramblers are an authentic 1920s jazz ensemble in every way. They exemplify red-hot syncopation, stompin' rhythms, and lyrical melodies associated with the Jazz Age. The repertoire can extend before and after the 1920s from the early years in Jazz, such as New Orleans Dixieland and Ragtime, up to the swing era of the 1930s and 40s and even into the modern Second Line New Orleans parade style. The Red Hot Ramblers have been pleasing audiences in every type of venue, from concert halls to dimly-lit bars to swing dances to outdoor events/weddings.

Welcome them on their return to Tri-State, to recreate their success with us from July 2015.

Hear them perform “Red Hot Mama” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8COWgA1Hcxc>

### Concert Admissions

\$10 First-time attendees and Members

\$20 General Admission

High school/college students with ID and children with paying adult admitted free

*Pay at the door*

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## LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR SECOND NOVEMBER 2017 CONCERT

On November 19, 2017, our concert will feature the Cocuzzi Courtet at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church in Haddonfield, NJ.



Photo by Kristy Cocuzzi

Yes, it's spelled Courtet: a New Orleans reference to the King and his Court. John and Kristy Cocuzzi love New Orleans! It's not wrong - just different. It's still four. Together, the Sacramento, CA-based John and Kristy bring 70 combined years of youthful enthusiasm and experience to the table! Since they joined forces in 2013, they have been all over the United States and beyond, appearing at festivals, house parties, concerts, and cruises together. They are entertaining to watch, a pleasure to hear, and they put a new spin on many of the old familiar melodies we all love.

### Band Personnel:

John Cocuzzi - Piano, Vocals, Leader  
Kristy Reed-Cocuzzi - Vocals, Reeds, Co-leader  
Jack Hegyi - Bass  
Harry Himles - Drums

John Cocuzzi performs with passion and intensity on piano and vocals. With dynamic style and diverse rhythms, John's innovation breathes new life into familiar tunes, from "swingin' and burnin'" jazz and blues to lush and sultry ballads.

Kristy Reed-Cocuzzi has a sultry voice that has thrilled audiences all over for 30 years, and has toured with the Live Lawrence Welk Show throughout the United States and Canada. She is also a member of the "Champagne Music Makers" at the Welk Resort in Branson, Missouri, as well as part of the "Wunnerful Women of Welk" vocal quartet.

## RICHARD DOWLING PIANO CONCERT REVIEW

By Jim McGann



Photo by Jim McGann

Ragtime. The name is synonymous with Scott Joplin, Tom Turpin, Max Morath, Rudi Blesh, cakewalks, two-steps, and fox-trots among other people and terminology. A popular music during the early 20th century, only to be eclipsed (no pun intended) by Jazz as the 1920s beckoned. I thought I knew everything I needed to know about Ragtime until I heard Richard Dowling.

Richard Dowling's performance and descriptions of the works at Sunday's August 20 concert made one embrace the Ragtime genre. It was also welcome that some of the familiar rags took a back seat to give light to other compositions (by Joplin and others) which displayed how exciting, difficult and challenging Ragtime can be.

The first set consisted of compositions by Scott Joplin. Out of the 14 works performed by Dowling, only the "Swipesy Cake Walk" and the music from "The Sting" suite, consisting of Joplin's music from the 1973 movie, were "familiar" to this reviewer and perhaps the audience. Two compositions stood out for me. One, "The Strenuous Life" would be music one would have downloaded into their iPad while exercising or jogging - a very active rag.

## Mr. Jelly Lord: A Tribute to Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers

“The Chrysanthemum,” began delicately, as if aurally depicting a budding blossom, only to give way to a stormy dark section. After Dowling concluded the piece, he said Joplin had written the piece around the time of his wife's death. The beautiful opening reflected the affection Joplin had for his bride on their wedding day; the dark minor section illustrated the tragedy of her loss when she died of pneumonia a few weeks later.

The second set consisted of works by Louis Gottschalk, Zez Confrey and a variety of composers, some of which were born long after Ragtime's heyday. Of Gottschalk's works, “The Last Hope,” a piece used in Civil War funeral processions, eschewed the predictable mournful minor effects of a funeral march, sounding hopeful as if one was entering Heaven's gates. Confrey's “Greenwich Witch” and “Mississippi Shivers” stand out with the latter tune hinting at Gershwin's “Rhapsody In Blue.” Of the modern compositions, Vincent Johnson's “Charleston Claude,” based on Debussy's “Clair de lune,” took the honors.

Other compositions of note...Joplin's “Stoptime Rag,” the title of which defines the music, lots of breaks and (audience induced) foot stomping. “The Cascades,” described by Dowling as being “technically difficult” with water flowing arpeggios and strong left hand punctuations. Two Joplin waltzes, “Binks” and “Harmony Club,” both pretty songs, with the latter owing to Franz Liszt's Lieberstraum.

Attending Richard Dowling's concert was rewarding. The pianist's passionate approach to Ragtime convinced me that there is more to this music than endless interpretations of Joplin's “The Entertainer.”



Photo by Paul Macatee

In this article, we re-visit early 20th century New Orleans to meet the man who claimed to be the inventor of jazz. Jelly Roll Morton was so expert at telling tall tales about himself, his inventions have sometimes been reported as fact. Whatever the myth, Morton's true legacy is the high standard he set for the classic New Orleans jazz band; and his remarkable compositions—a book of complex and highly entertaining tunes that continue to be played and recorded to the present day.



Jelly Roll Morton  
Photo in public domain



Jelly Roll Morton & the Red Hot Peppers  
Photo in public domain

His life was the stuff of legend. Depending on the whims of fate and fortune, Jelly Roll made his living as a pimp, a gambler, a fight promoter, a nightclub manager, a pool shark, a door-to-door patent medicine hawker, a bellhop, a tailor, and even a sharpshooter in a Wild West show. Jelly Roll Morton made hustling a fine art. When Lady Luck happened to smile his way, he sported a diamond gleaming in his front tooth, the finest threads on his back and a crisp thousand dollar bill in his pocket. He carried a pair of pearl-handled pistols to complete his outfit.

Morton billed himself as “the originator of jazz, stomps and blues,” and perhaps there was some truth to it. The recordings he made with his Red Hot Peppers in mid-1920s Chicago were groundbreaking works of genius and deeply influenced the course of New Orleans-style jazz. In this body of work, Jelly Roll Morton proved himself to be a magnificent musician, and a superb bandleader and record producer.

The Red Hot Peppers recordings are a spectacular document of New Orleans jazz. “There's nothing quite like it anywhere else,” says Jim Cullum. “The tunes and arrangements were all originals by Jelly Roll, meticulously created for the sessions. He hand-picked the top musicians on the scene and thoroughly rehearsed each number until he was satisfied. In those early days of the recording

industry, this was very unusual—recording companies didn't give bandleaders the time and money for polished arrangements and paid rehearsals.

Born about 1890 on the Gulf Coast near New Orleans, Jelly Roll Morton's given name was Ferdinand Joseph LaMenthe. Morton said his forbears were in New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase and came to the New World directly from the shores of France. His ancestors, the Péchés and the Monettes, were among the city's genteel "creoles of color" and spoke both French and Spanish, valued education, and attended the French Opera House. Morton identified what he called the "Spanish tinge" in the Tango rhythm in his compositions.

Jelly Roll was christened Ferdinand after the king of Spain but early on dropped LaMenthe in favor of his stepfather's name Mouton, which soon morphed into Morton; he said the name change was for "business reasons." His father—a handsome Creole with a wild streak a mile wide—disappeared from his son's life when Ferdie was a boy. Young Ferdinand was barely 14 years old when his mother died. Along with his two sisters, he went to live with his great-grandmother Mimi Péché. This arrangement didn't go well nor did it last long. On the sly, Jelly Roll had been spending his afternoons developing a reputation as one of the top young piano players in New Orleans' tenderloin district. Grandma Péché didn't think music was a suitable career for any family member, let alone playing piano in Storyville bordellos.

One morning on her way home from Mass, she ran into Jelly Roll wending his way back after a night working as a piano "professor" in a brothel. She saw his fancy clothes and knew in a flash what he'd been up to. For Mimi Péché, musicians were bums and scalawags. She wasn't about to let Jelly Roll live in the same house with his innocent young sisters, and coldly shut him out of the family home. He was 15-years-old and out on the street on his own. For the rest of his life, whether riding high or hard up for cash, without fail Jelly sent money home to his grandmother and the sisters he loved but hardly knew.

Morton wound up spending most of his life on the road. After his grandmother threw him out, he took the train to Biloxi and stayed with his godmother

Eulalie Echo (Hecaud). On the Gulf Coast, Creoles often practiced Catholicism and voodoo with equal fervor, and Eulalie was thought to be a voodoo queen. Jelly said he was frightened to see his godmother hold séances and cast spells. He considered himself a devout Catholic and not a believer in voodoo, but late in life he blamed his poor health on his godmother's witchcraft.

Back on the road, in Mississippi Jelly Roll Morton was arrested for holding up a mail train. It was all a big mistake, or so the story goes, but Jelly did time on a chain gang until he could escape. Between 1910 and 1925, honky tonks and roadhouses were home for Jelly Roll Morton, and he spent most of his time playing piano, shooting pool, gambling and running a string of prostitutes in nightspots from San Francisco to New York City.

The high point in Jelly Roll Morton's musical career came in the 1920s with the recordings he made with the Red Hot Peppers for the Victor label in Chicago. Many tunes on this radio show came from the Red Hot Peppers sessions. Jim Cullum says that Jelly Roll may not have invented jazz as he claimed, but he was "one of the first and one of the best. He comes across not only as a great piano man, but also as a terrific bandleader and composer. Morton had a deep understanding of how ensemble music ought to be played. It's interesting that these Victor recordings have the added fun of sound effects and scripted skits leading into the tunes. It gives them a unique quality of fun, for example the spoken introduction to "Sidewalk Blues.""

Bandleader Cullum goes on to say that Jelly Roll instinctively understood the need for musical dynamics in jazz performance. Morton made this astute remark about a music that was often performed in a raucous style, he said "Jazz music is to be played sweet, soft, plenty rhythm. When you have your plenty rhythm, with plenty swing, it becomes beautiful. To start with, you can't make crescendos and diminuendos when one is playing triple forte. You've got to be able to come down in order to go up. If a glass of water is full, you can't fill it anymore, but if you have a half a glass, you have an opportunity to put more water in it. And jazz music is based on the same principles."

Down on his luck, toward the end of his life in 1938, Morton heard a broadcast of Robert Ripley's radio show Believe It or Not that set him off on a tirade.

On the broadcast, W.C. Handy was credited as the inventor of jazz and blues. Jelly Roll couldn't believe his ears. He wrote a scathing letter to *Down Beat* magazine saying, "It is evidently known beyond contradiction that New Orleans is the cradle of jazz and that I myself happened to be the creator in the year 1902. Speaking of jazz music, any time it is mentioned, musicians hate to give credit, but they will say, 'I heard Jelly Roll play it first.'"

Not long after recording the Red Hot Peppers sides in Chicago, Morton moved to New York where he found his music suddenly out of fashion. His favored ensemble style had given way to star soloists. Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins and Benny Goodman were the hot musicians in town. In 1935 Jelly Roll moved on to Washington D.C. where he ran a seedy little dive. He'd tend bar, seat people and play piano. His smile revealed that the diamond he had worn so proudly in his front tooth was at the local pawnbroker. Five years later in 1940 his godmother, the infamous Eulalie Echo, died in California. Jelly Roll felt he was under her spell as he set off on a wild trip to California to claim her diamonds. Packing everything he owned into his two remaining prized possessions, a Lincoln touring car and a Cadillac he headed west, towing the Cadillac behind the Lincoln. Even before he left town, he was feeling ill, and the trip turned into a nightmare. Caught in snowstorms, trapped on a mountaintop and sliding off the road into a ditch, he abandoned the Cadillac in Idaho. At last he reached Los Angeles, but his health took a turn for the worse, and Morton died on July 10, 1941.

In 1918 Morton published his first tune. He was out in California, living the high life, driving a big car and the money was rolling in. He was playing at the Cadillac Café at the Newport Bar but made most of his folding money from his sidelines of gambling and prostitution. There are a number of stories about how his first published tune "Froggy Moore Rag" got its name. One story has it that Morton lifted the opening chords of the tune from a Cincinnati piano player by the name of Benson "Frog Eye" Moore. Jelly Roll claimed the tune came from his vaudeville days, explaining that he used this piece to accompany a contortionist who performed in a frog costume and billed himself as "Moore, The Frogman."

"Milenberg Joys" refers to a resort area on Lake Pontchartrain near New Orleans, called Milneberg. In 1923 the New Orleans Rhythm Kings recorded the tune with a band including Paul Mares, George Brunies, Jelly Roll Morton, and Leon Rappolo. "Milenberg" was the common New Orleans pronunciation for Milneburg and when the record came out the printed label reflected the common pronunciation rather than the correct place name. Although given credit for the composition, Jelly Roll Morton claimed to have written only the introduction.

Morton wrote "Kansas City Stomp" in 1919. Jelly explained, "The 'Kansas City Stomp' didn't come from Kansas City. I wrote the tune down on the border of Mexico at a little place called Tijuana. The tune was named after a saloon run by a friend of mine by the name of Jack Jones. He asked me to name a tune after his saloon which was named the Kansas City bar, so I named it the 'Kansas City Stomp.'"

"Burnin' The Iceberg" and "Tank Town Bump" were titles Jelly recorded for Victor in New York in 1929. "Tank Town" was one of many nicknames for New Orleans.

"Black Bottom Stomp" is based on one of the legendary 1926 Red Hot Peppers recordings Morton made in Chicago for Victor.

"Sweet Substitute" is Jelly Roll's tribute to his days as a pimp. The "substitute" of the title and lyric is a polite redirection of "prostitute."

"Wild Man Blues" was a 1927 collaboration between Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong that depended heavily on Armstrong's virtuosic improvisation captured on the Victor disc.

"Fingerbuster" is a virtuoso piano solo that Jelly Roll often used to "hustle" other pianists in informal competitions or "cutting contests."

"Winin' Boy Blues" is another paean to Jelly's youthful career as a piano professor in New Orleans Storyville brothels.

This article was reprinted from The Jim Cullum Riverwalk Jazz Collection, Stanford University.

## FUTURE CONCERTS



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

**January 7, 2018 Dave Posmontier's Dixie Kings.** Pianist Dave Posmontier has reformed the old Ed Wise New Orleans Jazz Band without Ed, who lives in New Orleans now. The septet plays some of Ed's authentic arrangements. Wallingford, PA

**February 11, 2018 Sue Keller-Solo Piano.** Ragtime and vintage jazz pianist makes a TSJS debut. She received the Scott Joplin International Ragtime Foundation's 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award. Haddonfield, NJ

**March 11, 2018 Conservatory Classic Jazz Band**  
Dave Robinson returns to TSJS with his DC-based early-jazz sextet to play music of pioneers like Morton, Armstrong, Beiderbecke and Goodman. Wallingford, PA

**April 15, 2018 Richard Barnes Blackbird Society Orchestra**  
Following last year's sold-out concert at Wallingford, the 13-piece Blackbird Society Orchestra returns with a rousing performance of 20s and early 30s hot jazz. Haddonfield, NJ

**May 20, 2018 Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers**  
Neville is coming from England and is on piano, Joe Midiri is on clarinet, Paul Midiri is on drums. It's an annual tradition. Come early; it's usually a full house. Haddonfield, NJ

**June 4, 2018 Danny Tobias and Friends**  
Trumpeter Danny Tobias will return to TSJS with his quintet, featuring Paul Midiri on vibes, Joe Holt on piano, Joe Plowman on bass and Jim Lawlor on drums. 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.

## OTHER JAZZ CONCERTS

### PENNSYLVANIA JAZZ SOCIETY

[www.pajazzsociety.org](http://www.pajazzsociety.org)

(610)-625-4640

Dewey Banquet Hall, 502 Durham Street, Hellertown, PA.

**October 15** "Song of Storyville", a seven-piece combo that features Ragtime, Dixieland, and Standards and the Lehigh University Jazz Repertory Orchestra, a 16 piece Big Band that will concentrate on 40's Swing Music.

**November 12** The Buck and a Quarter Band

### NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

[www.njjs.org](http://www.njjs.org)

(800)-303-NJJS

NJJS also co-sponsors events at the Bickford Theatre and Ocean County College.

#### THE BICKFORD THEATRE

6 Normandy Heights Road  
Morristown, NJ

[www.njjs.org/p/services/bickford.html](http://www.njjs.org/p/services/bickford.html)

Concert 7:30 p.m. (973)-971-3706.

**October 23** Bassist and singer Nicki Parrott is joined by pianist Rossano Sportiello and Eddie Metz, Jr.

**November 13** Dan Levinson

#### OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

Toms River, NJ 08754

[www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html](http://www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html)

(732)-255-0500

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

### CAPE MAY TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY

VFW Post 386, 419 Congress St.,  
Cape May, NJ

[www.capemaytraditionaljazzsociety.com](http://www.capemaytraditionaljazzsociety.com)

**October 15** Midiri Brothers Jazz Band

**November 12** Atlantic City Jazz Band

### POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB

Check out the numerous traditional jazz events sponsored by PRJC at [www.prjc.org](http://www.prjc.org)

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**More Volunteers are listed on our website at:**  
[www.tristatejazz.org/officers.html](http://www.tristatejazz.org/officers.html)

### TSJS CONTACT INFORMATION

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 896, Mount Laurel, NJ.  
08054

**E-mail:** [info@tristatejazz.org](mailto:info@tristatejazz.org)

**Hotline Phone for updated concert information:**  
(856) 720-0232



# Membership Form

**Basic Dues:**  Individual \$20  Couple \$40  
**Sponsor Dues:**  Individual \$50  Couple \$70  
**Patron Dues:**  Individual \$100  Couple \$120  
**Sustainer Dues:**  Individual \$200 or more  Couple \$220 or more

**Amount Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check No.** \_\_\_\_\_

*Members are admitted to all regular concerts at half price. Memberships renewed prior to expiration start at the end of current membership; expired memberships start on receipt of payment. All memberships run for 12 months, expiring on the last day of the 12th month.*

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 Strutter by U.S. Mail (Patrons, Sponsors, Sustainers Only)

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