

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

Richard Barnes Blackbird Society  
Orchestra



Photo by Blackbird Society Orchestra

Sunday, April 15, 2018

2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Haddonfield United Methodist Church

29 Warwick Road

Haddonfield, NJ 08033

Directions at

<http://www.tristatejazz.org/directions-haddonfield.html>

Following last year's sold-out concert in Wallingford, PA, the 12-piece Blackbird Society Orchestra (BSO) returns with a rousing performance of 20s and early 30s hot jazz.

The Blackbird Society Orchestra is Philadelphia's Premier 1920s Hot Jazz / Dance Orchestra dedicated to the preservation of the music of "The Jazz Age," "The Roaring 20s," "The Gatsby Era" ....Flappers, Prohibition, Gangsters, Model As and the invention of an American art form known as "Jazz!" At this return visit to TSJS (in March of 2017, the ensemble appeared at the Community Arts Center in Wallingford in an identical format), the 13-piece core BSO will do an opening set.

Following a short intermission, the 22-person Paul Whiteman tribute band, the largest ever at a TSJS concert, will perform a 7-song set to close out the afternoon in a rare re-creation of the music of legendary bandleader and "King of Jazz" Whiteman, a pioneer in bridging the gap between jazz and the European classical tradition (he commissioned Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue in 1924). For this concert, NYC bandleader and music historian Vince Giordano will join the BSO in a long-awaited return visit to TSJS. Come early; it's sure to be another sell-out!

Working from bandleader Richard Barnes' collection of original vintage stock charts and arrangements, BSO authentically and accurately recreates many classic jazz recordings that once spun on scratchy 78 RPM records on a Victrola when the world was still in black and white! Barnes discovered jazz/blues guitarist and vocalist Leon Redbone in 1992, playing regionally with him for a decade. He also spent five years performing obscure 1920s jazz with the Kim Milliner Band. In 1997, Barnes formed BSO with the intention of preserving 1920s jazz in note-for-note recreations using original stock charts and transcriptions from vintage recordings.

### 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 MAY 2018 CONCERT

On May 20, 2018, our concert will feature Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers in Haddonfield, NJ..



Photo by Jim McGann

World-class British pianist Neville Dickie will rejoin TSJS veterans Joe and Paul Midiri for the 6th straight year in what promises to be one of the most exciting trad jazz, stride, and swing programs of the season. A native of England's County Durham, Dickie is among the most accomplished stride and boogie-woogie pianists on either side of the Atlantic. Performing regularly on BBC Radio, he has made hundreds of appearances as a soloist or with his trio, and can be heard on hundreds of jazz recordings.

The Midiris have made both jazz and classical music the focus of their lives since the mid 1980s, and have recorded with everything from trios to big bands featuring the arrangements of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and the Dorsey Brothers, as well as Paul's original arrangements and compositions. They have performed extensively in the Philadelphia, New York, and Atlantic City areas and have been featured at many festivals across the country. Past Dickie-Midiri TSJS shows have set attendance records.

This concert is one of the most popular Tri-State Jazz concerts. This concert usually brings in an audience of over 200 people. Come early to get a seat!

## CONSERVATORY CLASSIC JAZZ BAND REVIEW

By Bill Hoffman

The Conservatory Classic Jazz Band, based in the Washington, DC area, performed for the second time at Wallingford on March 11. This six-piece unit is led by Dave Robinson on cornet, trumpet, and this time on bass trumpet, which looks like an oversized trumpet but has a deeper sound. The rest of the band: Brian Priebe on trombone; Gary Gregg on clarinet, tenor and soprano sax; Jeff Reynolds on guitar and banjo; Dan Hall on string bass; and Brian Alpert on drums. All have strong credentials, having played with many big jazz names from the past. The band was formed in 2004 by trombonist David Sager and Howard Katzen as the Washington Conservatory Trad Jazz Ensemble. After Sager and Katzen left, the name was shortened and amended to its present form.



Photo by Sandy Catz

The concert opened with "It's Been So Long," a tune recorded around 1936 by Benny Goodman with Helen Ward on the vocal. It's a swingy tune and one I've always liked. "Dallas Blues" followed, played in traditional style, but the tune doesn't have as bluesy a sound as many tunes with Blues in their names. The band then launched into the Harry James theme "Ciribiribin," but it sounded nothing like the way James played it. In New Orleans style, the clarinet was replaced by the soprano, giving the song a totally different feel. I liked it, as I believe the audience also did.

Then it was time to slow the tempo, so we were treated to "Love Is Just Around the Corner," a song Bing Crosby helped make popular in the mid-30s. This was much quieter than the first three numbers, with muted trumpet and a clarinet solo.

But the relative quiet didn't last-the band next played "Cake Walking Babies From Home," again with soprano and a strong performance by the rhythm section. Of course, this is not a waltz tune, but it was played at an enjoyable tempo.

The bass trumpet got its moment on "When I Grow Too Old to Dream," which was never one of my favorites, but this version was very pleasant. The penultimate song in the first set was one probably nobody in the audience knew: "Rough Riders March in Two-Step" written by Kid Ory in 1919. The title was unknown until only a few years ago, and I hope other bands find out about it. It was played, appropriately, in a Dixieland style. The set ended with a hurried re-creation of Ellington's "Stevedore Stomp," as the music had spilled over into intermission. This is not one of Duke's better-known compositions, although a number of trad bands have it in their book. In fact, this was the only number on the program that CCJB had played in its 2014 concert; they gave it a very good rendering.

The second set featured better-known numbers than the first. It began with the standard "Smiles," played in a totally straight-forward way. That was followed by Louis Armstrong's "Back o' Town Blues," during which we heard the afternoon's only vocal, by Dave. Dave admitted at the outset that he doesn't sing like Louis, but did a very credible job. Actually, nobody sounds like Louis, though many have tried, and failed. "Runnin' Wild," "Somebody Loves Me" (featuring bass trumpet, tenor, and string bass), "Jazz Me Blues," "You're Lucky to Me," "Melancholy Blues," "Dark Eyes," and "Milenberg Joys" rounded out the set. On "Melancholy Blues," Dan Hall had an excellent extended solo on bowed bass-very nice. "Dark Eyes" was enhanced by Brian's trombone opening.

The ensemble playing as well as all the solos were tight, reflecting the cohesiveness of a band that plays together on at least a semi-regular basis. Their last performance for Tri-State was in March, 2014, with the same personnel except for drums, and with vocals by Lena Seikaly. Lena was not available for today's show, a fact that probably pleased those of our members who don't care for vocals. I re-read Jim McGann's review of that concert, which I had attended, and found myself in general agreement with his opinions.

## Colin Hancock: Bolden and Beyond by Joe Bebco



Photo by 2E Photography

At age 21, Colin Hancock is making serious waves in the early jazz community. Hancock, now in his junior year at Cornell University, discovered the music of Bix Beiderbecke and the magic of hand-cranked phonographs at an early age. His fascination with old jazz records and the machines on which they were played was no passing childhood fad; his musical and mechanical interests, encouraged by his parents and teachers, persisted and intensified.

He received formal lessons on string bass and trumpet from Dan Torosion, John Moon, and Martin Norgaard, some true veterans of the Austin music scene, but went on to teach himself all the other major band instruments "through hours and hours of trying to get the right note and trying to do what was on these recordings that I really liked." Some of these instruments came easily; others, like the clarinet, were more difficult to master. "It took a very long time," he says, "to be able to sit in with ensembles and get gigs as a clarinetist." From strings to reeds to rhythm instruments, he has become a true multi-instrumentalist.

Hancock's determination to master a band's worth of instruments says a lot about his ability to solve problems most would write off as insurmountable. It was, he says, "out of necessity... I wanted to hear what it would sound like if these ideas I had were played by a group." He told himself, "no one in my age group can do this so I'll do this and be able to put these ideas on a recording." He started making multi-track recordings of himself playing each part on early jazz tunes while he was in the fifth grade.

His parents, in addition to supplying musical instruments, found him antique acoustic recording equipment. By his early teens, he had acquired everything he needed to make original acoustic recordings on wax cylinders. He found a “shaver,” used to scrape a cylinder clean for a second take, being sold as an antique sewing machine.

During his freshman year Hancock was hauling his equipment around town to make cylinder recordings of his friends and of the high school band. His experience multi-tracking allowed him to create cylinders of himself playing each part of jazz recordings. Some of these may be heard on YouTube at SemperPhonographCo, where, along with the many non-cylinder multi-tracks he has created, one may find other notable jazz-related projects.

By high school Hancock had developed a gift for recruiting people to help him realize his musical ideas. He made contact with musicians in his community, including veteran drummer Hal Smith, who urged him to embark on what became known as “The Buddy Bolden Project.” He brought together a band and research team that included Smith, David Sager, serious classmate musicians, and the music director at the school, Mark Kazanoff. After researching early recording techniques they reenacted an imagined lost Buddy Bolden recording session. Some of the cylinders he created during this period are now in the cylinder collection at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Getting young people excited about such an esoteric project took some cajoling at times. He says he used the history to sell it to them. “This is the way they recorded a hundred years ago,” he told them, “and how many people in the world get this opportunity—especially in a setting like this where you’re not at some Edison historic site.” In the end, “they would hear themselves on a cylinder and go wow...this is really cool.”

A native of Buda, Texas, (near Austin), Hancock chose Cornell in Ithaca, New York, because, as an African-American, he “wanted to get out of the bubble of the south...and experience another part of the country.” The cooler climate was also cooler on early jazz, which came as a bit of a culture shock. “The hot jazz community in Austin is pretty

good, it’s very diverse and you get a lot of chances to play and there are some pretty great players. I had the wonderful opportunity to play with some of the best hot jazz musicians in the country on a weekly basis as a senior in high school and to go from that to no one really knowing what pre-swing stuff was was really challenging at first.”

He also found himself facing the same challenges with the Cornell jazz program at first. “I did my audition on cornet and I had to switch to trumpet and I thought that was very symbolic of the whole thing. Having to play these high notes on modern tunes was a very good experience for my playing and my technical ability, but I didn’t feel like I was playing my kind of jazz.”

His ability, at least, was recognized and he was made first trumpet in the Cornell Big Band during his freshman year. He also played with the available small combos, but they didn’t fulfill his needs either. “The moment I realized ‘I have to do something about this’ was when I took a solo on some tune and I was asked to play in a more modern style. It’s not like I disliked more recent styles of jazz, but I just thought ‘that’s not what I’m trying to do, that’s not what got me into this and I’m not trying to become any other trumpet player.’”

So he arranged a meeting with Paul Merrill, the music director of the jazz program, to express his frustration and share his fear that his ability to play the music he loved might suffer for lack of group practice. Trusting the organizational ability that Hancock had already demonstrated the director gave him the space to create an early jazz band at the school along with some leads to area musicians who might lend him support.

Finding like-minded students to join the band was easier than it had been in high school, in part because his fellow musicians shared his interest in the academics of his projects. “The process of learning that style of music required them to listen to the old recordings. So that then to go back and recreate those recordings in the way they were made was a fascinating experience.” At last he had found a new venue to combine his interest in hot jazz with his interest in early recording techniques.

He organized The Original Cornell Syncopators to commemorate an important moment in recording



history—the day in 1917 the Original Dixieland Jass Band set up in a New York studio to cut what are said to be the earliest jazz sides. Hancock scheduled a concert for the anniversary date, then a year away, and began to build interest by sending fliers to bands in cities throughout the region. He reached back out to Hal Smith and David Sager who had aided the Buddy Bolden Project. Smith, he says, “has always been my main mentor in early jazz. The person I trust with everything in the music business.” Hancock works to maintain these relationships; Sager has visited with the Syncopators in Ithaca as recently as last fall.

Hancock added several new mentors to act as “coaches from afar.” While still in high school, he had met and played with Dan Levinson and Janet Klein at an antique phonograph show in California (where he was visiting his friend, collector and historian John Levin), so he contacted both Levinson and Klein for this project. Knowing of Levinson’s Roof Garden Jass Band, which has a focus on the very earliest jazz, Hancock found him uniquely positioned to advise the Cornell Syncopators on tackling ODJB material. Their local “coach” was Joe Salzano, a veteran in the Western New York jazz scene.

The process of preparing for the concert proved to be an education for the new five-member student ensemble and Hancock himself refined his thinking about how to approach playing early jazz. “At first,” he said, “we tried to fake book/real book parts for the Original Dixieland Jass Band music and that just got us nowhere. Then I did a few semi-transcriptions but not completely exact transcriptions because I didn’t want to be a band that read transcriptions down pat. That seemed wrong, that didn’t seem like it was honoring the music for what it was, when in reality a lot of these songs were just memorized by the ODJB. So we had these weird transcription/head sheet things and then we actually started to develop as a group and learn the music.

“The thing that I learned [from that process] was that as soon as you really internalize a song and how it goes, that’s when you are able to become a jazz musician. When you know how a song goes and you can add your own thing to it. When you know it so well you can change it and make it your own instead of just reading what’s on a page. Not

to say that certain arrangements that are written are not jazz, but it marks a difference, and I think that’s what made, even back then, them think of the music they were playing as different from ragtime or different from dance music. What is jazz?...when it’s something that you can interpret.”

The concert was a roaring success. “People began taking us seriously as a group and as a real part of the jazz program and not just some experiment.” The original five members were invited to the San Diego Jazz Fest where they joined Katie Cavera for a set playing the music of the Arcadian Serenaders. Closer to home they began to play wherever they were welcomed—restaurants, formal dances, and even frat houses. “We played in the same room that Louis Armstrong played in with Fletcher Henderson and Coleman Hawkins in 1924 at one of the fraternities...we see ourselves as a real living, breathing example of what this music would have been like back in the day.”

The Cornell Syncopators have a standing gig at a local restaurant lined up this spring. Membership has grown to a full thirteen musicians, credited in various combinations on their new studio release, *Wild Jazz*. The album was recorded on one mic with the band carefully positioned to create the authentic sound of early recordings. Selections moved beyond the ODJB to unearthed obscurities and an Arcadian Serenaders cover to commemorate their San Diego festival debut.

I asked Hancock for advice on building a hot jazz community wherever you may be. He says the two keys are nurturing connections and using local history to your advantage. To encourage local interest he has researched the extensive ties between Cornell and the New York City jazz scene of the 1920s. He has also discovered bands, such as The Cornell Collegians, who were doing back then what the Syncopators are doing now. Knowing history has a way of turning the incurious into boosters of their surroundings. I can easily picture whole generations passing through that frat house unawed that a 1924 Louis Armstrong had played there. After hearing the Original Cornell Syncopators, this generation, anyway, will understand and proudly share the story with new members.

He also recommends reaching out to the living history that can be found in every community if you scratch the surface. The Syncopators have made many connections to people who played with Spiegle Willcox, trombonist of the Jean Goldkette Orchestra, who lived right down the road in Cortland, New York. The other thing, and it should be obvious, is to play out. By playing everything from swing dances to pool halls you create an acceptance of early jazz as part of the local scene and an expectation for it that will draw in more musicians.

Colin Hancock will be building connections in Italy this spring on a semester abroad. But he is coming back to Cornell in March to meet Wynton Marsalis for an afternoon workshop with the rest of the Syncopators. He is eager to show Marsalis what the Syncopators have achieved toward mastering the early 20th century music he loves. “We want to make the right impression,” said Hancock.

After graduation in 2019 Hancock will be off to law school following the venerable tradition of jazz musicians with impressive day jobs. He will continue to play and no doubt there will be opportunities everywhere for a young man who has already shown that he has what it takes to be a leader—in a band and in the community at large. The Original Cornell Syncopators will stay on as a permanent part of the Cornell jazz program, a legacy ensuring future students with an early jazz interest will be taken seriously.

Hancock also has a dream that follows up on all his early experimentation with vintage recording methods. It illustrates his unique approach to problem solving. He has always had trouble sharing the cylinders he produced. “Not a lot of people have a cylinder player”—but, he says, “a lot of people have 78 players and turntables.” He would like to make modern recordings, “sort of like what Rivermont is doing now, but that can actually play on a gramophone and do it acoustically the way they did, that would be very, very neat.”

Making acoustically recorded 78 rpm discs and pressing them on authentic materials is admittedly a steep challenge. Hancock concedes that there are daunting physical and financial obstacles to overcome before the plan is viable, but if ten years from now I find myself cranking up the Victrola to

## FUTURE CONCERTS



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

**June 3, 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

**June 24, 2018 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. Haddonfield, NJ

**July 15, 2018 Tri-State Jazz All-Stars**

Reedman Bob Rawlins again leads a core band of TSJS top artists drawn from local bands. They will be jamming on Dixieland tunes with invited sit-in guests. Wallingford, PA

**August 19, 2018 Cynthia Sayer and her Joyride Band**

Banjo virtuoso and vocalist Cynthia Sayer has been called top 4-string jazz banjoist in the world, leads NYC quintet with banjo, clarinet, trumpet, bass and drums. Haddonfield, NJ

**September 9, 2018 Jon Weber-Solo Piano**

Based in New York, Jon Weber has recorded and toured all over the world. For his TSJS debut, expect an emphasis on stride and other early jazz styles. 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.

hear a new hot band straight off the presses I’ll know that Colin Hancock has done it again.

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

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



# Membership Form

**Basic Dues:**  Individual \$20  Couple \$40

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**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 one year.*

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