

Dan Morgenstern at Cape Cod Community College

Lowell Institute Lecture, September 23, 2002
Tilden Arts Center Main Theater
Cape Cod Community College
West Barnstable, Mass.

Cape Cod Community College, through the generosity of the Lowell Institute of Boston and in association with the Cape Cod Jazz Society's 25th Anniversary, presented an afternoon of New England Jazz history September 22, 2002 in Hyannis. The program featured Dan Morgenstern, jazz historian, author, editor and archivist active in the jazz field since 1958. (Learn about Dan here). As Director of the Institute of Jazz Studies, Morgenstern oversees the largest collection of jazz-related materials anywhere.

Morgenstern spoke extensively on the Jazz history of New England, with recordings, lists of musicians, and personal anecdotes that fascinated this seasoned jazz audience. He named and discussed several notable New England musicians, vocalists, arrangers, and writers. Some weren't born here, but chose to make it their home.

He played musical examples from the likes of the Mal Hallett band (Wang Wang Blues), featuring Toots Mondello on sax and Brad Gowans on trombone. This un-issued quality recording survived in the Edison archives because Edison used diamond-head needles on its 78's.

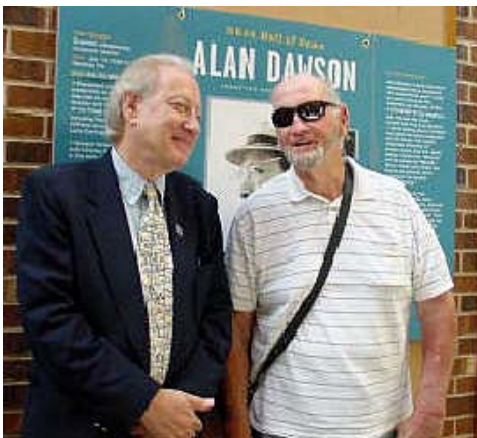
Morgenstern said Brad Gowans was a character. He played every instrument but specialized on the tuba. One instrument he called a "valide" was a combination valve and slide trombone. It still exists, but can't be played today because no one can fix the trigger mechanism that switched it from valve to slide. The remainder of this article comprises excerpts and/or direct quotes from his presentation.

"Boston did not only produce some excellent jazz musicians, Boston was the first place to have a public jazz performance of a racially integrated group," he remarked, "with Leo Riesman, a Boston violinist at the Brunswick Hotel February 19, 1928. There was also a concert at Symphony Hall with black trumpeter Johnny Dunn, who was born in the late 1890s and was the first trumpet soloist to record with W. C. Handy's Band."

It was at the Theatrical Club in Boston that Bunny Berigan first heard Bobby Hackett, and that started his career. Benny Waters taught at the New England Conservatory, and was Harry Carney's teacher.



*Dan Morgenstern
Director of the Institute of
Jazz Studies, Rutgers
University*



Curran was Producer and Road Manager for the Stan Kenton band for ten years. Dan Morgenstern compares notes with New England Jazz Alliance Historian, Leo Curran.

Phil Barbosa played trumpet and was a band leader in New Bedford. Morgenstern played "Vivi", a rare 45 EP from Phil, a souvenir from the Newport Jazz Festival, recorded in the late '50s. Paul Gonsalves sat in with the band, played a marvelous cadenza, yet it is not listed in any discography.

"In Rhode Island, the Newport Jazz Festival was the first to catch on to and establish an outdoor event. Music had never been presented in that environment before. It brought together jazz musicians from everywhere, some that hadn't seen each other in ages, which was a wonderful thing for the music."

Marshall Sterns was a great American Jazz scholar, and in 1935, he was writing a swing column. In Lenox, Massachusetts, Sterns organized a school of jazz, where in 1958-'59 he held events and roundtables discussing jazz and the history of American music.

At The Stable, Herb Pomeroy had his big band on Thursday nights. Jaki Byard played tenor, then at intermission played piano, "sounding first like Garner, then like Waller. He was a phenomenon," Morgenstern commented. Storyville was a great place, it was upstairs; downstairs was Mahogany Hall. There were bands at both. Once Sidney Bechet was downstairs and Art Tatum's Trio was upstairs. Then the two bands would get together. Anybody that heard Sidney and Art together on "Lady Be Good" will never forget it. Buzzy Drootin played there sometimes. He came from Russian at the age of 5. At Eddy Condon's he played with Serge Chaloff and Charlie Parker. Morgenstern said he had recently learned that Charlie's tune "Buzzy" is named after Drootin.

Morgenstern attended Brandeis University in the '50s. On a Saturday in 1954, some Brandeis fans brought Tatum to campus. They found the best piano on campus and tuned it to a 'T'. When they drove Art back to Boston, he thanked them. He said that was the first time he'd ever played a solo in a concert hall by himself. He died less than two years later.

The litany continued: Bunk Johnson and Sidney Bechet got together at the Savoy; Bill Bissonette's Jazz Nocturnes; trumpet players: the unique Ruby Braff, Sylvester Ahola in the '20s and '30s, Phil Napoleon, Chelsea Qualey, Charlie Spivak, Don Fagerquist. Stu Fletcher attended Yale in the early '30s; Herb Pomeroy, Terry Johnson, Leon Merian; Max Kaminsky was from Brockton; Bobby Hackett, Lou Colombo, Dan Strahorn, Dick Sudhalter.

"Bill Dixon was a writer. Joe Gordon died young in a fire in L.A. At age 22, Sonny Berman of New Haven Connecticut died in a swimming accident, (he played Woodchoppers Holiday). Serge Chaloff was one of many who died too young. Dick Twardzik, a truly original pianist, died at 24, a victim of drugs," Morgenstern related.

"Jaki Byard came out of Worcester, Pianist Barbara Carroll was also a jazz singer, Nat Pierce was also a great arranger; Arnold Ross; John Mehegan was an astute scholar and jazz educator, but there was a bet going on amongst the bass players that if anybody could make him swing, he'd be immortalized. Dick Wellstood, an irreplaceable pianist from Connecticut, was also a writer. Chick Corea, Chris Neville, Ray Santisi. One of the greatest piano players is Dave McKenna, out of Woonsocket, Rhode Island."

Singers from the region include Jeanne McKenna, Dave's sister, who didn't pursue a professional career, but inspired Darryl Sharmon; Teddi King from Boston; Dave Lambert, Carol Sloane (Rhode Island), Meredith D'Ambrosio, Rebecca Parris.

"Darryl's father, Sammy Sharmon was a trombone player who invented his own high-note technique called 'squirrel tonguing' and can play higher than a trumpet," he said. "Before WWII he had his own band, an integrated group in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. George Masso was from Cranston, Rhode Island. Ray Conniff was known as an arranger, but he played hot trombone with Berigan. Dick Nash, Wayne Andre, Phil Wilson. Guitarists Hy White, Irving Ashby, Sal Salvador, Joe D'Orio, Gray Sargent plays fine blues."

Running short of time, Morgenstern quickly named many bass players, including Jack Lesberg who is still around at age 82. In 1942, he was in the Cocoanut Grove fire and barely made it out. Edwin Schuller, son of Gunther, though not born here, made a great contribution to music as part of the New England Conservatory. And Harvie S, originally from Massachusetts.

"Drummers: Stan King famous in the 20's and early 30's, was one of the most recorded drummers on the white New York scene. Cliff Leeman came from Portland Maine, he played on Artie Shaw's Begin the Beguine, Charlie Barnet's Cherokee, and Bill Haley's Rock Around The Clock. Nick Fatool, Bobby Donaldson, Jake Hanna, Frankie Capp, Teri Lynn Carrington. Greatest of all times, Roy Haynes, who at 77, is still as astonishing as when he broke in here with Sabby Lewis and Frankie Newton. Joe Morello, master of meter. The late Tony Williams (Hall of Fame) was with Miles Davis. Alan Dawson, marvelous player, is still not recognized as a great drummer, teacher and human being. He also worked with Sabby and Frankie Newton."

Sabby Lewis had many great musicians in his band, as did Eddy Deas in the early 30s, who was not as well known. Many arrangers came from here, including Jerry Gray, John Benson Brooks, Milt Raskin, Don Donaldson. "Band bookers usually don't get mentioned in history, but Cy and Charlie Shribman were a big help to Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw and tried to help Bobby Hackett and also the Casa Loma," he observed. "Bobby did wonderful things all his life. He spent his last years on the Cape."

Morgenstern introduced from the audience his good friend, historian and great photographer, Jack Bradley. Jack was an associate of Louis Armstrong, and manager for Bobby Hackett and also Ruby Braff.

Many jazz photographers came from New England, including Bob Parent, Bert Goldblatt, Lee Tanner. "One man who is not in the books, but who did a lot for jazz both here and in New York is Charlie Bourgeois, an associate of George Wein for many decades." It was Charlie who turned Dan Morgenstern onto George Frazier, one of the most colorful jazz writers.

Dan named recent musicians with roots to this area, including Phil Woods, Charlie Mariano, Dick Johnson, Sammy Margolis, Ruby Braff, Al Drootin, Varty Haroutunian, Joe Gordon, Ted Nash, Scott Hamilton, Mike Hashem. Harry Allen, who went to Rutgers; and Richie Ford, Bob Wilber, and Andy McGhee were Berklee teachers.

Winding down, he showed part of a Denmark video featuring Struttin' With Some Barbecue on an original Goodyear promotional film circa '56-'57 with Bobby Hackett, Urbie Green, Bob Wilber, and Pee Wee Russell. There's a young Dave McKenna on piano, Knobby Totah, bass, and Morey Feld drums.

He concluded with a rare video of Bobby Hackett and others with Duke Ellington on the Bell Telephone Hour, in a 1950s Tribute to Harold Arlen. Johnny Hodges has a lovely solo on Stormy Weather. In his opinion, Hodges embodies a concept in philosophy known as a non-moving mover: always looked like a Buddha. A never recorded-number, Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea, features Cat Anderson, who also worked in the Sabby Lewis band. Louis Bellson was on drums. Neither of these was ever heard again.

Morgenstern's repertoire is fascinating and seemingly inexhaustible. We can't fit in all the anecdotes, and this was only about New England!!



Eliza Alys Young

In the lobby of the Tilden Arts Center Main Theater at Cape Cod Community College, Eliza Alys Young presented a week-long exhibit of selected paintings and photos by her father, David X. Young, a Cape Cod native. During the '50s and '60s he was owner of "The Loft" in New York's Flower district, famous for its late night jam sessions.

<http://www.davidxyoung.net/events/index.html>

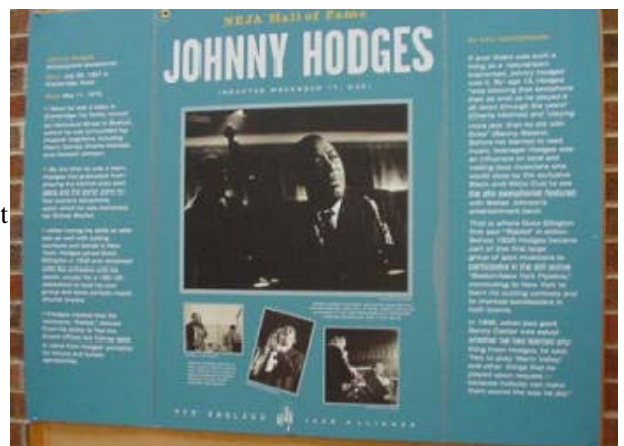


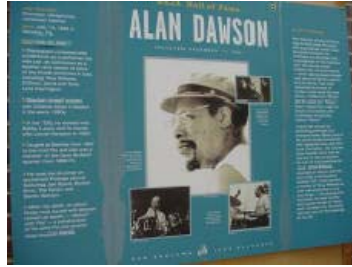
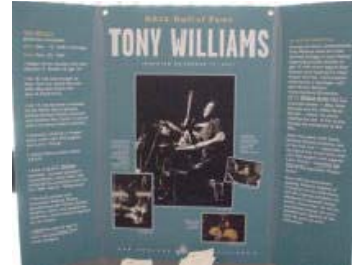
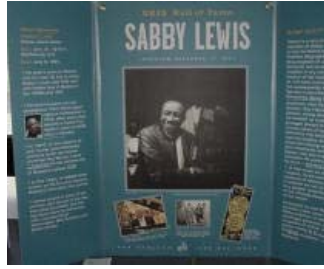
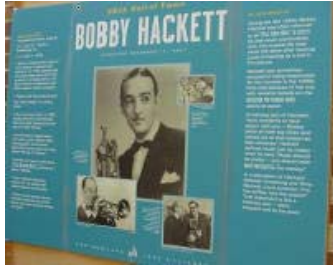
New England Jazz Hall of Fame

Also on display at Cape Cod Community College were the panels of the first ten inductees of the New England Jazz Hall of Fame.

For each Hall of Fame inductee NEJA created an information panel containing a biography, photographs and an appreciation piece. These panels make up the New England Jazz Alliance Traveling Hall of Fame Exhibit

Johnny Hodges was voted #1 by a college of 172 knowledgeable voters. Each voter had a total of 20 votes to distribute in any manner, but with a maximum of 10 votes for any one nominee. Hodges received a total of 295 votes.





NOTE: Interested parties may also get acquainted with the New England Jazz Hall of Fame inductees by contacting the New England Jazz Alliance at info@nejazz.org.

Views at the Tilden Arts Center Main Theater



Mogenstern speaking at Cape Cod Community College for the Cape Cod Jazz Society



Jack Bradley & Ron Gill



Cathy Pierce speaks with Ron Gill



Rose Marie White,
NEJA Assistant Secretary



Bunk Johnson signs
new NEJA members.

Photos and transcript by Marce
September, 2002; updated January 2005



Naked Jazz entertained in the lobby
prior to the lecture.
Bass - Jim Peterson
Bari-sax - Dick Meehan
Guitar - Andy Troyanos
Trumpet - Sid Bearon
Drums - Michael Gross