

MILESTONES

MISSION: To promote the growth, appreciation and performance of Jazz & Blues - great American music art forms - through scholarships, workshops, clinics, weekly jazz jams and community outreach programs.

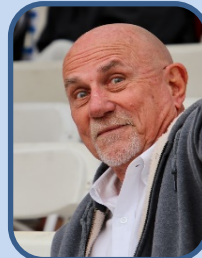
25th Anniversary Edition



Don & Debbie Bestor



"Scatman" Jack



Al Hager



Jimmy Tucci



Kathy & Tom Dixon (see page 9)



Chris Hulka



Rae Tucci



Larry Lee, the Society founder



*Manny Lugo and family
Scholarship sponsors*



Bob Sagnella & Mia Batalini



President's message

Our format may have to change...

When an organization like this one grows a bit so do the demands associated with that growth. Businesses remedy this by hiring more people to handle the new growth but because we are a 501 (C) (3), nonprofit organization, we don't have the funds to hire people and in lieu of that, we add more volunteers when available. However, we have not seen any new volunteers come forward in a long time to help with the snack table, making coffee and keeping the membership up to date.

Also, "manning" the booths when we have events, typing a letter, managing and running the website, sharing the answering of the phones on a 5-day week from 9AM – 5PM, etc... I've only touched the surface as to what our volunteers do, but as you can imagine, this can be a very busy and complex issue.

Now to the point, we desperately need new volunteers to replace and supplement our current staff. Because we did not get volunteers to help us anymore for our events, we were forced to do away with the snack table and the coffee. Do you have some time to donate to this?

Would you like to be a part of a very healthy, vibrant music scene that provides so much to the community? Will you help us keep this alive and well in the tradition that we've worked so hard to produce every time we have a Jam or an event? If so, please call us and give us your name and what help or skills that you would like to share with us, the

Ft Pierce Jazz & Blues Society. 772-460- JAZZ (5299). Thank you very much in advance!!!!

Milestones' 25th Anniversary Edition

Our History.....

In September 1996, Larry Lee together with a group of Jazz and Blues enthusiasts founded the Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society. Twenty-five years later, the Society is still Jazzin' It Up ... thanks to the generosity and support of its membership and corporate sponsors. The entire community on the Treasure Coast has embraced the Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society. Jazz Jams have infused the area with talented local young and seasoned musicians and many well-known guests from all over the country sitting in.


It is all so simple...provide great music performed by great players, always respect and consider the people who support the effort, throw in some funds so as to continue this, and voila!!, you have the ingredients necessary to fulfill our mission.

The mission of the Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society is to promote the growth, appreciation and performance of Jazz and Blues ~ two great American Music Art Forms ~ through annual scholarship awards, educational workshops, clinics and master classes, weekly jazz jams, tri-annual Waterside Blues Festivals, and Jazz Week celebrations and community outreach programs.

The 25th Anniversary is indeed a Milestone, but is that all there is? Absolutely Not! That's where everything begins! We shall continue to work diligently to make things entertaining, fun and interesting at all our upcoming and ongoing events.

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The Society pages



Our farewell concert at Fort Pierce Yacht Club in the Fall 2021. The Yacht Club is our second home; we shall be back there this summer.



Dennis Windowmaker and his gift to the Society, read about Dennis in the Market section on Pg 3



Two talented Ladies performing with a very talented guy. On the left Sabrina Brown at the Botanical Gardens on March 2nd with her husband Fred Haas on the saxophone. On the right Leti Metcalf with Fred Haas at our Regency gig in Vero. The Regency has hired us for the next several months.

The Gardens gig on March 2nd was a “smoking hot” affair, with Fred Haas, Gene Bruno, Mark Green and the rhythm section of Larry Brown, Manny Patino and Hosny Franck. A visual of their work on “All Blues”. Manny and Larry are going to kill me.





Recently I had a chance to witness Al Hager in action. He arranged a clinic at Jensen High School and he brought Don Bestor and Claudio Berardi as part of the team. The kids were thrilled to have our pros work and play with them as was Tom Dougherty, the band director. What talent, the band is tops in the region and is doing well in spite of two years hiatus. Tom mentioned names of couple possible scholarships applicants.

Dave Einhorn, our venerable bassist, had a suggestion. "Eric Allison is available, could we have him as a guest artist?" We listened to Dave and teamed up Eric with our own Fred Haas in the front row on March 5th at the Jazz Market. At a certain level, this business of dueling instruments becomes a royal pairing. Eric suggested "Back at the Chicken Shack" blues by Jimmy Smith. Don Bestor on piano had a nice chunk of it, but sometimes the rhythm section, in this instance, Don, Dave and Claudio get the feeling that we need to "let these boys go". Which they did swapping improvisations for almost 8 minutes (I have the video). There is an almost imperceptible nonverbal communication between seasoned performers on stage, particularly when improvising. I spotted it when Fred and Eric looked at each other at the end of the piece, "Yeah, we did good."



The Society could not exist without dedicated volunteers helping during concerts, events and behind the scenes. Joanne and Ron are couple of those indispensable folks. They can also cut the rug if the tune is right"



Claudio is not only our master drummer, he's also the V P of the Jazz Society and most important our audience outreach ambassador. He loves "working the crowd" during the breaks. But sometimes the crowd works Claudio





By Henry Szmyt

I recently had a chance to spend some time with Dennis Windowmaker, yes that is his name, who exhibits his paintings at the north west corner of the Jazz Market. Dennis is a talented artist with an amazing background. He showed me his latest original which he calls the Rising Star, an appropriate name for his painting at the Jazz Market. Stop by his tent on Saturday and check it out.



Dennis appreciates what the Society is doing for artists and vendors like him and is donating the original to the Jazz Society to be auctioned off on the Society's 25th anniversary celebration Nov 13, 2022.

So, what is so amazing about Dennis's art? Check out his website <https://windowmaker.artstation.com/> and the fascinating various forms of art he creates.

Dennis is one of the new wave of artists who is not only good with pencil and brush but also with stylus and computer tablet. Electronic art has been with us for a while, from Disney, The Flintstones, to Star Trek and James Cameron's blockbuster Avatar. It's becoming difficult to tell what is real and what is computer generated. His mastery of programs like Zbrush and Lightwave can produce 3D visuals like these examples.



You can purchase his work in a digital form, download it to your computer and rotate it with your mouse to any angle.

On his website you will see works in photo realism, surreal, 3D and others. When you step into Dennis’s tent you will see mostly what he created on canvas with a brush, acrylic paint and occasional air brush. Examples are the swordfish hunt above and the two below.

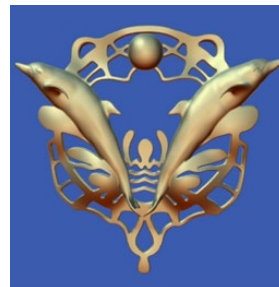


He is donating the original painting, of the Rising Star, the original being an important distinction in the art world. I suppose you could be uncouth, snap a picture of any painting with an iPhone, print it on your Epson, frame it and hang it. There is also a recognized side of the art world making museum quality reproductions and Dennis participates in it reproducing limited quantities of his art. The process is known as giclée and a large format Epson printer capable of doing this on canvas will cost several thousand dollars. Dennis owns one of those. These printers utilize up to 12 colors of ink. The ink is pigment based, not dye based like the one used in your office printer.

The concept of limited reproductions is to allow for more people to enjoy fine art. Obviously, there is only one original Mona Lisa and it hangs, under guard, only in one museum or gallery at a time. Museum quality reproductions allow for wider exposure to art. Since the giclée process produces extremely good copies of the original, the copying runs are strictly controlled. Each copy must show the size of the run and the sequence of the painting in the run (ex. 16/500, 52/500, 250/500). It is not reproduced again. Should the artist or his work become sought after, the original would be the most valuable and the lowest numbered copies after that.

The printer Dennis owns utilizes canvas rolls 44 inches wide and 75 feet long. The canvas and archival inks used produce painting with a lifespan from 100 to 200 years, hence the description as “museum quality”.

Dennis also works for corporate clients creating logos and commercial advertising product design. His latest venture is 3D and jewelry sculpting.



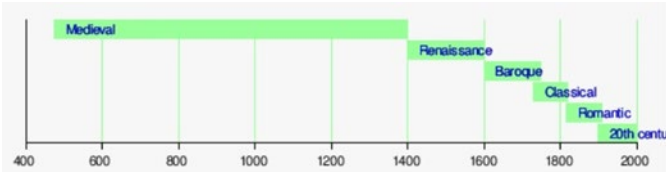


The Future IS Here

By Henry Szynt

Those of us at an advanced age (your scribe approaching eight decades), have a philosophical question looking at the picture above. "I wonder if the genes I inherited will hold out until then?" It's not a morbid reflection. It's a thought that even with a productive and well lived life will spur you on to make the most of the years or decades remaining.

Look at the six recognized periods in the evolution of music. That's about 800 generations of artists and composers leaving their legacies to future generations.



Louis Armstrong is quoted as saying, 'Musicians don't retire, they just stop getting gigs!' Examples abound in history. Johan Sebastian Bach lived in the Baroque era. In 65 years he produced over 1100 pieces of music and sired 20 children. Life well lived. His Well-Tempered Clavier in 12 major and 12 minor keys and Toccata and Fugue in D minor challenge pianists and organists till this day.

In the Classical era, Ludvig van Beethoven starting at age 12 composed 722 works over 45 years, in spite of suffering from deafness in his later years.

The Romantic period produced an astounding number of great composers including, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Mendelson, Verdi, the Strauss family, Schubert, Rachmaninoff and Verdi. Attend a 4th of July

celebration with a symphony orchestra and you are likely to hear Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture from that era.

The 20th century began with Stravinsky, Schoenberg and their forays into 12-tone technique. They reminded musicians that beyond the scales they knew there was the chromatic scale. And who hasn't heard of Gershwin and Bernstein who came in later.

Closer to our times, you might say Jobim, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis. Nope, the experts will list Hans Zimmer, Klaus Badelt, Marco Beltrami and a dozens of others. It will become clear, if I mention the name of John Williams and his theme from Start Wars. These are composers who create music for films. Hans Zimmer is considered number one, having collected a number of awards and scoring over 150 films. Among these are "Gladiator", "Interstellar", "DaVinci Code" and "Dunkirk". Badelt scored "Pirates for the Caribbean" and co-wrote with Zimmer the "Gladiator". Beltrami scored the "Hurt Locker". The movie, "Hurt Locker" is basically about guys going out daily to disarm bombs, mines and booby traps. Next time watching a movie pay attention to the music as it creates the feeling of dread, calm, anticipation, hope, serenity and all human emotion coinciding with what you are seeing on the screen. Way beyond 12 bars or even 32 bars.

But what about those of us who would like to competently deliver those 12 bars, 16 bars, or 32 bars of music. Music is an integral part of human existence. More than 50% of households report that a member of the family is involved with music, 40% report two members or more. Musical abilities are hereditary, so thank you parents if they bestowed those genes on you. If you study the careers of the composers mentioned here, they had those genes and were identified with those genes very early in their lives. However, genes alone don't make you a musician. Even those who blossomed very early were given instructions, practiced a lot and were given more instruction. You do not become musician, performer or a composer just because you wish it. It requires a massive amount of time, commitment, practice and yes, instruction.

Thus, we come to the point I am trying to make. Every generation leaves a footprint for future generations to examine. Looking back on some of those contributions, particularly of strife and conquest we can conclude that humanity would have been better off if they skipped this effort.

But generally, most generations, try to be worthy. The Fort Pierce Blues and Jazz Society certainly makes an effort to be worthy. This is our 25th anniversary, which is a long time for a volunteer 501 (C) (3) organization to exist. Undoubtedly, our core are musical performers from our area and those who winter here to avoid the cold. But we are more than that; we are educators, citizens supporters of arts, volunteers and hundreds of members who support the Society financially. Yes, we schedule and perform at many venues throughout the

year but a major factor in our success is our focus on the future generation, which undoubtedly will take our place. Each year the Society awards ten to fifteen \$1,000 scholarships to young performers ready to enter college with music as a primary or secondary subject. Even in these trying days of Covid and shutdowns the Society awarded five scholarships. This effort has been going on for years, below are some of the recipients and the awards from 2014 when ten scholarships were awarded.



Each recipient is walking away with a check for \$1,000 to further their education. The Society works closely with local educators and musical directors in neighborhood

schools to identify prospective recipients and encourage them try to earn it. Each year the Society identifies in the Spring the time and place for the audition and sets

up a panel to evaluate the performances of the applicants. In 2014 the applicants came from the Lincoln Park Academy, Pine School, Jensen Beach High School, Vero Beach High School and Indian River Charter High School. Indian River Charter High School routinely produces applicants and winners of the scholarships. Dave Mundy, member of the society, educator and a superb bassist has quite a flock of students at that school but we expect nothing less from David.

The award process is quite formal and criteria for winning are formidable. The funds are not restricted to pursuit of music, as long as music is part of the curriculum of further study.

Al Hager who is on the Board of Directors has been heading this effort for fifteen years. Al is an educator and retired band director. Well, not quite retired. He still spends a lot of time in schools, mentoring, running clinics, evaluations and hobnobbing with other band directors. This gives him a pretty good idea who we are likely to see in the auditions. Here are more pictures from the 2014 competition.



The auditions took place at Black Box Theatre and that's Dave Mundy in the background.

One of the most important questions about this enterprise is, "How does the Society manage to do this year after year"? We couldn't without the involvement and donations of some very special people.



The \$1,000 scholarship check is accompanied with commemorative plaque. The one you see above is inscribed as follows:

**STANLEY & SUSAN WINTERS MEMORIAL
MERIT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

**Presented to
NICK LOHSE
2018**



This one is inscribed with:

**ANONYMOUS ANGEL
MERIT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

**Presented to
ZANE CHAPMAN
2018**

Perhaps not enough is said about these individuals and organizations who year after year send those funds to the Society to make the scholarships happen. It is indeed a joyous occasion when they or their representatives are present at the ceremonies to personally award the scholarships to the recipients. The most touching example of dedication to this cause was from Tom Dixon, who described his funding method as follows: "Throughout the year whenever I have overtime in my pay, I set it aside to have enough for the next year's scholarship". Tom has sponsored six scholarships. Such support from community and individuals is a welcome indicator to the Society's Board of Directors and the Scholarship Committee that we are taking care of "the FUTURE".



It is also rewarding to be recognized for our work by other charitable organization, here's a check for \$5,000 presented to the Society by Beerworks Charitable Foundation. They donate to a variety of not-for-profit area organization. For the Society, they recognized our school workshops, clinics, master classes and especially our scholarship program.



We must also acknowledge the people who make this happen. Here presenting the award (l-r) is Don Bestor, the Association President, Mark Green, who for years has been conducting educational jazz camps and Al Hager. Al is the dynamo behind this effort and the Chairman of the Education and Scholarship on the Board.

I mentioned earlier that John Williams wrote the score for the "future" in Star Wars. In my research I came across an interesting tidbit. It seems that Luke Skywalker was a blues player before he became a Jedi Knight.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

JAZZ SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Written by Al Hager, Education and Scholarship Chairman

Saxophonist and pianist, Jack Sheehan graduated from Jensen Beach High School in 2012 and Berklee College of Music in 2016. While at Berklee he received a full scholarship from the woodwind department which paid for his senior year. He now lives in Charlottesville Virginia. In the spring of 2019, he was Artist in Residence at the University of Virginia with John D'Earth, Director of Jazz Performance.

Also, in 2019 he recorded his first album in New York, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. It wasn't available until 2020 because his recording engineer went missing with all the tracks. It was finally released in February, 2021 by Bobby Reed, engineer and saxophonist for Bruce Hornsby.

Jack toured from 2016 through 2018 with the front man of the Youngbloods, Jesse Colin Young. I'm sure you remember, "Come on people now, smile on your brother. Everybody get together try to love one another right now". He still plays extensively and is preparing his second album with all his own material.



He says the creative juices are still flowing. However, he is spending more time working on the business management side of things. Some of his clients are the Dave Matthews Band, Natalie Merchant and John Mayer. Jack credits his early influences as Don Bestor, Marc Rekart and me. I showed him how to put a reed on a saxophone mouthpiece.

Jack's website is <http://www.thejacksheehan.com>



Jack Sheehan, Jeff Coffin, Rashawn Ross & Brandon Lewis at Jefferson Theater Charlottesville, VA - DMB AfterParty 12/14/2019



Whatever You Do — Be Creative

By Larry Brown

Improvisation breathes life into jazz and is foundational to its essence. By its very nature improvisation is spontaneous and unique. An instantaneous composition meant to fill a space. A reflection of the artist doing the improvisation. Creative.

But there is more creativity in jazz than just the soloist's improvisation. There should be varying degrees of creativity in the feel, tempo, texture, the arrangement, the order of soloists, the accompaniment, and even the very tune selection itself.

Let's explore. Feel. Most tunes are played with a swing feel. How about we instead use a Latin feel on a tune which is almost always played as a swing? Or maybe play the tune as a ballad. Changing the feel can change the entire tune in a way that brings a freshness to it. It can inspire new ideas for the soloist. It can be playful. And it tells the audience to listen carefully – we have something new to say.

Tempo is up to the performers as well. Is the tune typically played at about 120bpm (medium tempo). What would it sound like at 180? What if we alter both the feel AND the tempo? Whoa!

Texture. At most points in a tune the drummer, bassist, pianist and at least one horn player are all playing at the same time. If, say during one of the solos, the drums and piano lay out, this dramatically alters the texture. It creates space for the soloist. It's not that uncommon to begin a tune with only the bass and one horn player or vocalist. This allows the ensemble to layer in texture when the drums and piano come in later. Or maybe at the start of one horn's solo the bass and drums lay out leaving the piano to accompany one time through the form?

Using an actual arrangement also adds to the creativity which is presented to the listener. Most tunes have an A-B-A form (the A being the "head" and the B the bridge) and they are presented in fake books as such without a written intro or ending. In a jam session situation, an

intro and an ending are typically improvised. If we add an extended vamp or an interlude into the form this can mimic an arrangement on the spot and give the performers room to interpret the tune. This sounds and feels especially refreshing when the rhythm section plays and extended 8 or 16 bars at the very end of a tune, allowing the horns to wind down organically.

When it comes to the order of soloists what is creative about the horns soloing first, then piano, then bass, then trading 4's with the drums? How about one horn, then piano, then bass, then another horn? And if the horns are soloing over the form, then why can't the drums? Or maybe we trade 8's with the drums. Mix it up. Be creative.

There are easily a thousand tunes in the Great American Songbook (show tunes from Broadway and film, standards, etc.). This doesn't even count the hundreds of tunes written by jazz musicians which are considered jazz standards. With all of this repertoire to choose from there are maybe eighty that are performed regularly. And probably twelve that are systematically taught to young jazz students. Sheesh! Pulling out a jazz tune that few in the ensemble are familiar with can be dangerous, but the Great American Songbook has a treasure trove that the musicians merely need the chord changes to perform if the horn player or vocalist is familiar with the tune.

Granted, everyone is comfortable with the familiar. The audience and the musicians as well. But keeping performances fresh, with some things unanticipated, gives the audience something they deserve. And it breathes life into the soul of the artist.

Jazz = Creativity.

-Larry Brown



"Not bad, fellas. Let's do one more take, with more emphasis on tone, harmony, melody, rhythm, composition, lyrics, musicianship, tempo and originality."

Fort Pierce 2022 JAZZ camp



SUMMER CAMPS
WEEK 1 JUNE 6 – 10
WEEK 2 JUNE 13 – 17
ADVANCED CAMP
JUNE 27 – JULY 1

The 2021 Jazz Camps fell victims to the COVID-19 epidemic, we are hoping for a better outcome in 2022. The Society has been in contact with the faculty and the Black Box in an effort to repeat the successes we had in the past years. Mark Green is ready to lead the Summer Camps and we have a venerable quintet of faculty to put on the Advanced Camp.



Larry Brown on the piano will be again the leader of the faculty for the Advanced Camp. Joining Larry will be Claudio Berardi on drums, Gary Hasse on bass, Gene Bruno on tenor sax and James Suggs on trumpet.



Having participated in several of these I can say that these are pretty “intense weeks”, with curious changes in attitude among the students. When the study material and charts for the Friday night “graduation concert” are handed out Monday morning, the general consensus is, “hell no, we can’t play this by Friday night”. By Wednesday there are murmurs, “we might be playing these by Friday”. By Friday morning the attitude is, “hell yes, we can perform those tonight”. You will not be coddled and handed a hot chocolate when you sign up for one of these camps, but you will surprise yourself by what you CAN DO.

2021 Scholarship winners

2020 and 2021 were a truly wrenching times for society, industry and normalcy in general, but perhaps no segment of our population suffered more than our school population. In spite of our own difficulties the Society was bound and determined to deliver to our deserving students. We could not go into schools, or have much contact with the students, but Al Hager had a list of prospects that he felt we should audition as soon as circumstances allowed. We held the auditions at Black Box and Second St. Bistro and awarded the scholarships on May 25th at the Black Box theater. Check out the bios of this impressive group of kids.



QUINN ALLEN, saxophone, graduated from Indian River Charter High School and will be attending the University of Central Florida. His academic focus has been on mathematics and he graduated as Valedictorian.

JAKE DUNAJEWSKI, trumpet, attends the University of North Florida. He was dual enrolled at Indian River State College and received his AA in 2019. He has performed with the Treasure Coast Youth Symphony and attended the Jazz Society's Summer Jazz Camp.



CHRISTIAN ESTADES, trombone, graduated with a 4.7 GPA from Ft Pierce Central High School and with dual



enrollment, AA from Indian River State College. He performed with the Treasure Coast Youth Symphony and was drum major for the FPCHS marching band. He began his studies at Florida State University this

summer in trombone performance and music education. Presenting the scholarship to Christian is Al Hager, who is looking forward to 2022 roster.

JAYDIN FARRENKOPF, bass, graduated from Lincoln Park Academy with Greatest Honors and was dual enrolled at Indian River State College where she received her AA summer, 2021. She is attending the University of Florida.



ADRIAN SCOTT, guitar, graduated from Indian River Charter High School, was dual enrolled at Indian River State College and will received his AA summer, 2021. He is attending the University of Central Florida.



Editor: Fascinating article reminding us again that this was truly the greatest generation.

victory VERTICALS

DURING WORLD WAR II, STEINWAYS WERE
DELIVERED TO EVERY THEATER OF WAR.

BY BRIAN WISE

Like nearly every other domestic instrument-maker, during World War II Steinway was prohibited from building instruments due to government restrictions on iron, copper, brass, and other raw materials. Steinway's New York factory stayed open with a slim crew constructing tails, wings, and other parts for troop transport gliders. As the war continued, Steinway & Sons was also contracted to make coffins for the National Casket Company, a venture that was both morbid and unprofitable.

Late in 1941, Theodore E. Steinway, the company's fourth president, received a request from the U.S. government's War Production Board for heavy-duty military pianos. Theodore had four sons serving in the military along with several of their cousins, and he recognized music's potential for boosting troop morale. By June 1942, the first prototypes were prepared for government inspection.

By the time the war ended, Steinway had shipped some 5,000 pianos.



Photographs provide some of the clearest (if sometimes idealized) evidence of the G.I. Steinways' application. One image shows the Orchestra of Fleet Hospital 108 in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, assisted by a vertical as it gives one of its twice-weekly concerts for patients. (One of the officers ran a repair shop on the island where the instruments were tuned and maintained.)

Another photo captures Benjamin DeLoache, a baritone who appeared in the U.S. premiere of Berg's *Wozzeck*, singing for soldiers on the battlefield with a vertical at hand. His particular instrument, number W-672, traveled 25,000 miles from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Port Moresby, Papa New Guinea, ending up eleven miles from enemy lines. In the process, DeLoache said later, it "served soldiers, Red Cross workers, hospital patients, Australian shows, and innumerable USO camp shows and concerts."



Design of the Victory Verticals was spearheaded by Paul H. Bilhuber, a Steinway factory manager who was promoted to vice president in 1941. The instruments were thoroughly "tropicalized" — treated with special anti-termite and -insect solution and sealed with water-resistant glue to withstand dampness. With handles under the keyboard and in the back, the 455-pound pianos could be carried by four soldiers.



Inside each transporting crate was a set of tuning tools, instructions, spare parts, and sheet music consisting of light classics, Protestant hymns, sing-along tunes, and boogie-woogie numbers.

Planning documents show the extent to which Steinway officials had to make due with nontraditional materials. Keys were made with coverings of white celluloid (ivory would have peeled off in tropical climates), and soft iron was used instead of copper for

windings on the bass strings (copper being restricted). While each Army piano was painted with “three coats of olive drab lacquer, slightly dulled,” other colors were used for the Navy, Marines, Army Air Corps, and Coast Guard. (There was also discussion of a custom folding chair, though it’s unclear if it was ever produced.)



Some of the G.I. pianos were, in fact, Steinway’s preexisting Regency uprights, retrofitted for military use. New production picked up, however: The War Production Board requested 405 Victory Verticals in 1943, followed eight months later by another order of 800 instruments. In 1944, the U.S. Armed Forces bought 589 pianos (for \$486 each) so that each unit would have four of its own. The New York factory crew was stretched thin. “This delivery schedule may appear slim to you,” cautioned a company memo to the U.S. War Department, “but we must call your attention to the fact that our upright piano department was composed mostly of young men, many of whom are now in the service.”

By the time the war ended, Steinway had shipped some 5,000 instruments, but not all went to the military, writes Richard K. Lieberman in Steinway and Sons, a history of the company: “Roughly half were sold to the United States armed forces, and the balance were bought by approved essential users: ‘religious organizations, educational institutions, hotels and other places of public gatherings.’”

The instruments were not without detractors. One general reportedly asked, “Why are we buying Steinways for our fellows when we don’t purchase Rolls-Royces to ride around the fields?” A Steinway salesman retorted, “Don’t we buy them the best wool socks?”

Production of the G.I. pianos continued through 1946, followed by a postwar production cycle from 1948 to 1953. For all of their famed sturdiness, some of the Verticals did not outlast trying conditions on the front. A 1950 article in *Etude* magazine described the fate of

three G.I. pianos during monsoon season in the Philippines.



“Although 88 noises, not all traditional ones, could be elicited from these pianos,” wrote Elizabeth Randall, “what universally characterized them were their sledgehammer touch, waterlogged tone, stuck keys, missing ivories, squeaky pedals and their scarred, chipped, olive drab exteriors. No offense to the inherent good breeding of these instruments. They had been subject to a few years of tropics and war command treatment.”

Randall adds that with turnover in personnel at Philippines Command, maintenance faltered: “When the depot considered them too far gone to repair, they were salvaged for parts. This practice was without any sense of the value of the workmanship and quality of these instruments.”

There are examples of prominent entertainers and musicians who undoubtedly benefitted from the little G.I. pianos while on USO tours, including Jascha Heifetz, Yehudi Menuhin, and Lily Pons. And Steinway’s instruments continued to serve in other military settings. When the nuclear-powered submarine USS Thomas A. Edison was built in 1961, a Steinway upright was installed in the crew’s mess area at the request of its captain. The instrument remained on board until the sub was decommissioned in 1983. The restored upright today lives in the Navy Historical Center in Washington, D.C.

