

# 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.*



The following is an article that appeared in February, 2015 Focus publication, produced quarterly by Ft Pierce Main Street. This was written by my very good friend and English scholar, Wendy Dwyer. Give it a read as I think this one is appropriate considering the challenges our children are currently experiencing. Don Bestor

## The Power of Music! By Wendy Dwyer

According to one of the largest organizations for young people and social change, children who study music reap some serious benefits. At Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society, we know this and see it every day, but in case you wondered why music education is so important and why we work so hard to ensure that students continue to have opportunities to learn to play instruments, study and perform, here are a few reasons why: Did you know that...

...Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school, and pursue further education.

...Secondary students who participated in a music group at school reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs).

...Schools with music programs have an estimated 90.2% graduation rate and 93.9% attendance rate compared to schools without music education, which average 72.9% graduation and 84.9% attendance.

.... Regardless of socioeconomic status or school district, students who participate in high-quality music programs score 22% better on English and 20% better on math standardized exams.

...Children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons.

...Children with learning disabilities or dyslexia who tend to lose focus with more noise benefit greatly from music lessons.

...Much like expert technical skills, mastery in arts and humanities is closely correlated to high earnings.

... Young children who take music lessons show different brain development and improved memory over the course of a year, compared to children who do not receive musical training.

...A 2004 Stanford University study showed that mastering a musical instrument improves the way the human brain processes parts of spoken language. (Source: DoSomething.org)

Even if we didn't have all this statistical information to back it up, we all know how good music makes us feel about ourselves and our surroundings. All of us volunteers involved with the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society believe in the power of music and the importance of passing along a legacy of music to students. That's why we work all year long to raise funds for scholarships to help ensure that there are always plenty of terrific opportunities for music here on the Treasure Coast. And just think, that's just some of what we do!

It's also why we share our time and talent with students throughout St. Lucie, Martin, and Indian River County providing master classes in music and performance and why we invite student musicians to perform with us every Tuesday evening at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre in historic downtown Fort Pierce, and every other Wednesday evening at the Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens. We believe in the power of music, and we want to make sure we pass that magic along to the next generation through scholarship, opportunities, and education. There are lots of investments with a much lower return, but we believe in the power of music and the incredible return it gives in the form of education, building teamwork and cooperation, creating and celebrating joy, and creating a legacy of love that will be passed on generation to generation for as long as we are. Won't you join us in supporting the power of music? To learn more about Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society, please visit [www.jazzsociety.org](http://www.jazzsociety.org), or call 772-460-JAZZ.

# The Society pages

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Our President had a chance on March 19 to “zoom” with Fort Pierce Mayor Linda Hudson. The occasion was the Mayor’s monthly “Coffee with Mayor” meeting. Since “zooming” is still the only method to reach wider constituents. The event was hosted by and from the Main Street Fort Pierce facility. The Jazz Society was the meeting sponsor and Don had a chance to lay out our plans and schedules coming out of the Covid doldrums. It was good to see and hear the positive synergy that exists between the City and the Jazz Society. The host, Main Street Fort Pierce organization utilized the Jazz Society performers extensively at various downtown locations during the recent holiday season to “spice up” folk’s shopping experience.



### NEWS FLASH

Georgie McDaniel has been in contact with the management of the 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Bistro. We had a meeting with Jeff Groth, the Bistro’s owner and the Society will begin performing there the last Thursday of each month, starting April 29<sup>th</sup>.

## In Memoriam – Len Bentley 1929 – 2020



Len was an all-around talented and sought-after musician with a thorough knowledge of “the great American songbook” and a trombonist who could make any band sound like they’re playing in the Latin Quarter during Mardi Gras. He grew up in California, served in the Army as a bandsman and taught youngsters as a band director.

Len performed in Hawaii for about a decade but eventually settled in Florida and started a Dixieland band. He met Mark Green and the two swapped talents in each other’s bands. When Mark’s “Rowdy Roosters” began getting regular bookings, Len became an integral part of the band and one of the featured performers on Mark’s “Tribute to Satchmo” CD. He was a fun guy, a great musician and a friend who will be missed.

### In this issue

- Pg 1 Presidents Message
- Pg 2 Society page
- Pg 3 It’s the ladies , gents
- Pg 4 Jazz Market
- Pg 5 Dixieland Jazz
- Pg 7 Larry Brown’s corner
- Pg 8 What is a Black Box
- Pg 15 Meet our stars
- Pg 16 Back page

# It's the Ladies, gents

In this issue we feature the ladies who appear at our events and we appreciate their talents



*Sabrina Brown*



*Robin Lance*



*Pat Dyer*



*Leti Metcalfe*



*Debbie Bestor*



*Mia Batalini*

Sabrina hails all the way from Vermont and the Society welcomes her to Florida.  
Robin and her blues band did a great job at the Botanical Gardens recently.  
We appreciate Pat's talents and the fact that she travels from Miami to be with the "boys".  
Leti is a "regular" with FDO and the ensemble. Latin rhythms are her specialty.  
Debbie treats the audience to both jazz and Broadway and also manages the Jazz Market. Thanks Debbie.  
Mia is a Society veteran and a force behind its success; we love her British accent when she emcees the events.



The Jazz Crafts and Arts market is thriving again. After a tenuous Covid start and persistent rains, the crowds are back and tents are up. It cannot be overstated how important the market is to the vendors and the artists. This is their downtown storefront without the glass and the rent. As a result, we have talented vendors who have been with us for years. One of them is George Hewitt. George is a wood sculptor and has been exhibiting at the market for 15 years.



George has a fascinating story; he has been an arborist for 40 years and had plenty of work after various hurricanes and was in Homestead when Andrew hit. About 20 years ago he decided to carve the wood instead of just cutting it. Incidentally, all the sculptures you see are done in old wood that has been down for a while and is nice and stable. His experience as an arborist lets him spot perfect wood, sometimes on people's property and happy to get rid of it. He uses a chain saw, die grinder and palm sander for his carvings. Four coats of spar polyurethane are applied to the finished sculptures. His new carving is shown below. The ferocious bulldog in the upper right corner is also his creation.



The Jazz Market owes its success in great measure thanks to the efforts of Debbie Bestor, the Market Manager. She is there bright and early every Saturday doing the things that need to be done and making sure the Market runs smoothly. Occasionally Jazz Society volunteers drop by like Leti and Davena.

# DIXIELAND JAZZ

By Mark Green



If you heard the Mardi Gras concert at the Black Box on February 16, you were treated to Dixieland Jazz by Mark Green and the Rowdy Roosters. This is a group that was started by Mark in South Florida in 1990 and prompted this fun, toe tapping, great American music at concerts and street fairs ever since.

This music wasn't originally called Dixieland, but was just known as Jazz. It had its origins in a form of music known as "Ragtime." This was the predominant style of American popular music from about 1899 to 1917. It evolved from honky-tonk pianists performing along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. It is said that it started as a mix of popular marches, such as those written by John Phillip Sousa and the usage of African-American rhythms. Its main trait is its syncopated or "ragged" rhythms. This musical style was largely forgotten in our country until 1975, when the hit movie "The Sting" featured the music of Scott Joplin and his tune "The Entertainer."

There were no records until around 1917. One of the first bands to record jazz was known as "The Original Jass Band" (note the spelling of j-a-s-s). Their first hit is the opener for Mark's shows. It's entitled "Jazz Me Blues." While back in the day, the melody sounded "ragged" and syncopated to people's ears, the concept of "swinging it" didn't catch on till a few years later. In 1927, Bix Beiderbecke had a hit with his updated swing feel of "Jazz Me Blues".

Then came Louis Armstrong, also known as Satchmo who took the world by the storm in the early 1920's, putting the spotlight on the individual performer through his virtuoso solos and infectious sense of humor. The duration of his popularity was unparalleled, as he had hits from the 20's through the 60's. He actually knocked the Beatles out of the number one spot in the Hit Parade with his recording of Hello Dolly in 1964.

Louis always celebrated his roots, growing up in New Orleans and recorded tunes which reflected his love of the South. Hence, the music from the "land of Dixie" became known as Dixieland Jazz. Nowadays people refer to this music as "trad" jazz or, traditional jazz.



*Editor's Note: If you venture to New Orleans, don't miss a Preservation Hall concert in the French Quarter. They have over fifty musicians keeping up the music 360 day a year.*

Mark and his group known as "The Rowdy Roosters" were invited to help inaugurate the opening of the downtown Stuart music gazebo in 1990.



Today, the members have changed several times, but the instrumentation remains the same. A front line of horns in the "trad" or Dixieland band, always features trumpet, clarinet and trombone. Basically speaking, the trumpet's job is to state the melody, the clarinet either

improvises around the melody, or plays harmonies underneath the trumpet, and the trombone plays “tailgate” bass parts.

The term “tailgate” refers to the style of trombone slide work. This originated back in the day when bands would travel to a new town, and in order to advertise an upcoming performance they would travel around this town playing the music from the back of a pickup truck. So that the trombonist’s slide wouldn’t hit the back of the head of the other musicians, they would place him by the “tailgate” of the truck.

For several years, the trombonist in the Rowdy Roosters was Len Bentley. He was much beloved and an authentic New Orleans style “tailgate” trombonist. He also played a well-worn and dented Euphonium horn from the 1800’s. When people would ask what kind of horn it was, he would answer – “The Singing Cuspidor.” His talents could be heard on Mark’s CD, “A Tribute to Satchmo”. Len passed away recently and you are invited to read about him in this Newsletter.

Conrad Zulauf has now stepped in on the trombone and hit the ground running. Bill Shine plays the clarinet as good as Pete Fountain, and Jim Van Voorheis plays honky-tonk piano and left-hand bass. Max Duhalde plays great Dixieland drums and if you ask him, he’ll tell you he learned by listening to the great Red Hawley, performing with the famous group, “The Dukes of Dixieland.”



Another great musician featured on my CD was banjoist Billy Mure. Billy was a well-regarded musician from New York who appeared on Arthur Godfrey’s radio show for over 20 years. In fact, he performed on the banjo given to him by Godfrey when Godfrey retired. Billy had his

own Dixieland band for years known as “The Top Hats.” I enjoyed performing with that band for seven years in the Sebastian restaurant “Squid Lips.” The banjo helps add a sense of authenticity to this music and was considered a standard instrument in Dixieland ensembles for years. Good luck finding a musician these days that can play Dixieland banjo.

Billy was 90 years old when he played on my album in 2006. He performed regularly up to a few months before he passed away at 97! When anyone would ask him about the secret of his longevity, he would smile and give one word answer, “Music.” And anyone who witnessed Billy’s musical performances will remember his infectious smile. I will add that anyone listening to his toe-tapping music leaves with a smile. That is what I consider to be the hallmark of the form of music known as “Dixieland Jazz”.



*The Rowdy Roosters Mardi Gras performance at the Black Box. Note the two newest members of the band, Rowdy the Rooster, stage right and Conrad Zulauf on trombone, stage left.*





## *My Time on Stage with Dizzy Gillespie*

It was 1974 and I had just turned twenty years old. I was playing a small jazz club on the south side of Chicago (cannot for the life of me remember the name) and I was only in town

for one night. The club manager came up to us between tunes and said Dizzy Gillespie had just come in. Apparently, he liked the band because we were then told he wanted to join us on stage for a couple tunes. Collectively we decided this would be o.k. More about that later.

The first time I had met Dizzy was in 1971 at a small jazz club in Southeast Washington, DC. called the Zanzibar Lounge. Like the club in Chicago, it was the quintessential jazz club: small, dark and dirty, stereotypically smokey and funky. His band was playing a four-night set there. A musician friend I had come with knew Dizzy and said we could hang out with him for a bit.

In high school I became enamored with be-bop, Charlie Parker and stories about the early 50's scene on midtown Manhattan's 52nd Street with clubs like Birdland (named for Charlie Parker), the 3 Deuces and the Famous Door. You could walk into one and see Bird and Diz playing with their quintet, then walk across the street and see Miles Davis. Leave there and walk up the block and see Thelonious Monk, Billie Holiday or Art Tatum playing. WHAT?! Holy cow! That time actually existed.

Credited as a pioneer of be-bop, Dizzy is also known for his oddly shaped trumpet and the way his cheeks billowed out when he played. In 1953 he threw a party for his wife Lorraine at Snookie's, another club in Manhattan. His trumpet's bell got bent upward in an accident when some dancers who were performing on the stage fell into it. It turned out that he liked the sound so much he had a special trumpet made with a 45 degree raised bell, which then became his trademark.

As for his cheeks and neck billowing out while playing his trumpet, Dizzy once said that a scientist had studied his face and called them "Gillespie's Pouches". The more technical term for why his neck bulges like a bullfrog's is laryngocele. A laryngocele is a benign condition where a person has an empty sac alongside his larynx. The air sac can share air

with the gases flowing past the voice box and expand when pressure in the mouth/throat increase. Gillespie was either endowed with or forcefully created - from continuous and rigorous use - two of them, resulting in that classic visage accompanying his playing.

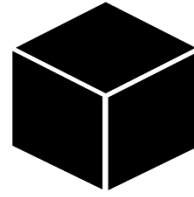


When I first met Diz I was dying to ask him to tell some stories about Charlie Parker but I resisted. I didn't want him to get sad thinking back on the tragedy that was Bird's early passing. So we just talked about some random stuff, I don't even remember what. But I had always wondered what Diz might remember about Bird that no one else even knew. It was either an opportunity wasted or some well-placed discretion on my part. Who knows which?

Fast forward three years to Chicago. We were in town to play the one night at the tiny jazz club, then at a large jazz festival the next afternoon at the McCormick Center downtown. Diz must've been in town for that. Anyhow, he joined us on stage for two or three tunes. I only remember playing "St. Thomas" with him. When I got back to my "room" (a super cheap dormitory-style hostel) very late that night I couldn't believe what I had just experienced. Dizzy Gillespie had performed with me in a small Chicago jazz club. 1974.

Peace...

# What is a black box?



This Black Box is in Denver Colorado. If you attend an event there you will feel the music, courtesy of eight 21" Orthon 5,000 Watt subwoofer speakers housed in folded

horn cabinets and that's just to cover frequencies from 30 to 100 Hz. They have a long list of other speakers and equipment on that stage.





Before we proceed with the question at hand, your “scribe” has a more philosophical inquiry, “what is art?” My take on art is that it is what makes us whole as a sentient species. Even under the direst circumstances of pure survival, there was art.



All manners of art flourished once man freed more time away from survival including, sculptures,



paintings,



and architecture.



*The Notre-Dame fire caused grave damage. However, the world community has pledged to restore it to its former glory, as shown above.*

Although it seems that most art is visual men have found ways to find artistic applications for all our senses. Sense of smell? How about cultivating of fragrant plants, or creating perfumes. Sense of taste? Gourmet cooking and pursuit of that fifth ultimate taste, the umami. The human motion? We are way beyond walking, running or gathering. Consider dancing ballet, competitive ballroom jive, sporting events and Olympic competition. Sense of hearing? Now there’s a jackpot!

Beyond basic communication there is poetry to be heard, theatrical performances to comprehend, singers and choruses to hear, rhythm to experience and musical instruments to play and enjoy. Man started early making these



and continued.



All art requires unique skills, talent or a genetic disposition. Playing musical instruments, requires the senses of hearing, seeing (reading charts) and physical manipulation. Yours truly is particularly taken with the skills of organists.

Utilizing all four limbs to command and manipulate five manuals, a 32 note pedal board and upwards of 20,000 pipes. And yes, occasionally singing Gregorian chants when needed.

*(Full disclosure: If the reader detects a bit of "prejudice", the writer is an organist.)*



I have to admit, watching our Claudio Berardi utilize all four limbs at our gigs leaves me in awe. I'll have to ask him if he can do Gregorian chants.



So, if you are an artist with this boundless talent and energy, what do you do? If you are a sculptor, you find marble, granite, wood, ice or a sand and you sculpt. If you are a painter, you find that cave wall, a canvas, a plaster wall, or an electronic billboard and you paint. If you are a dancer, you find a partner, join a troupe find a stage and dance. If you are an actor, you learn a script, find a stage and act. If you are a singer or a musician, you learn the music, find a stage and make music.

Pictured below are two magnificent examples of sculpture and painting. Crazy Horse Memorial in South Dakota and Hall of Mirrors in Palace of Versailles in Paris



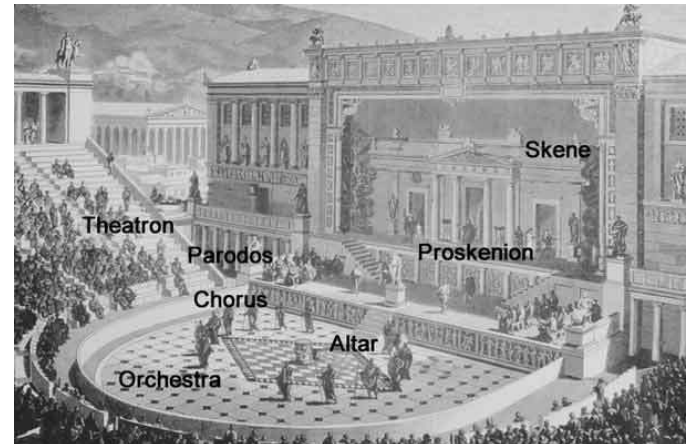
Note that outside of sculpturing and painting the other artistic genres call for a common requirement. That common requirement is the need for a stage and the Greeks evolved the concept of stage still utilized today.



The Greek classical period (6th to 4th century BC) was a magnificent time of intellectual flourish developing all manners of science and culture, including philosophy, music, drama, rhetoric and even a new regime called

democracy. It is not exaggerating to say that this period changed the history of the world.

By that period the Greek society was sufficiently organized with plenty of leisure and productive time to develop concepts still true today. Their approach to theater was no different.



Check the Greek theater from over two millennia ago and the way it was constructed.

**Theatron** (sound familiar) – the semicircular seating area for the audience carved into a hill. Some theatrons could accommodate upwards of 20,000 people.

**Skene and proscaenium** – an area (scene) where the actors would perform and the stage surroundings, below a modern interpretation of the proscenium style theater.



The **orchestra** (pit) and **chorus**, The Greeks utilized these but for a slightly different reason. Greek plays were written for and performed by one, to three actors. Below the scene in the orchestra area was a chorus with up to fifty performers. The chorus consisted of actors, singers, dancers and musicians. What they did was scripted into the play. Besides the dancing, singing, or playing musical instruments, the chorus often “spoke” parts of the play

to the audience and interacted with the actor(s). The Greeks had a keen understanding of acoustics, which can be heard even today in the theaters that survived. However, in the 20,000 people theatron's (without those 21" 5,000 Watt speakers) a chorus of fifty performers speaking in unison would deliver the necessary volume to carry into the upper seats.

Ever wonder about these images associated with theater? Some sad, some happy and all manner in between?

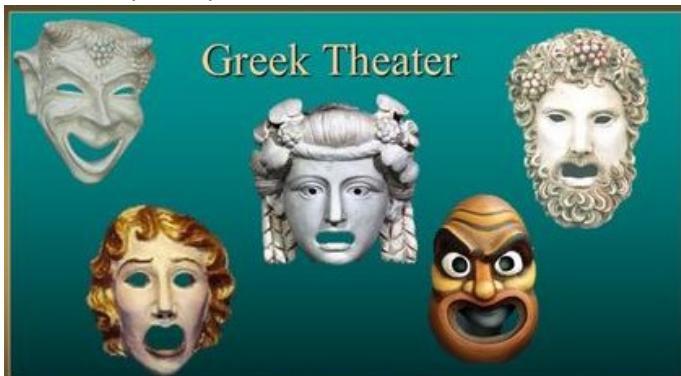


Another Greek invention. All performers in Greek theaters were men (as was most of the audience). Also, the same actors and the same chorus members

portrayed multiple characters, hence the need for only one to three actors on the "skene". So, how did the Greeks do it? The actors portrayed different characters by wearing different mask and different garments associated with that role.



All characters from slaves to kings and women were part of the plays. This required many costumes and mask to be worn during the performance. Since women were played by men those costumes were "enhanced" for more true portrayal.



Since the performers needed to change the costumes and masks during the play, they would do it "behind the skene" and now you know where that term originated.

Greek theater was highly evolved and played a big role in the Greek society's life, probably as much as theater, movies and television do in modern times. Three types of plays were written: tragedy, comedy and satyr (satire). In Greek mythology satyrs we lustful drunken woodland gods always looking for "action".



Therefore, Greek satires' "subject matter" would be of the kind Ron White, or Richard Pryor might perform. Performances would often start at sunrise and end at sunset. After a long day of dramas and tragedies, audiences could be on edge, or even depressed. Therefore, a bawdy satire was typically the closing performance for the day. Are you wondering about the wide-open mouth in the Greek theatrical masks? For practical reason, so the singing or spoken word would not be muted by the mask.

There was a keen competition between the writers of the plays. In their times they had their Oscars and Emmy's recognizing the best writers and performers. Their fame and some of their work survived millennia and is known today. The best actors, musicians and chorus performers were also highly appreciated.

OK, enough about Greeks, how about modern times? The classic proscenium style theater is still the dominant performing space, we have two of them in our area, the Sunrise Theatre in Fort Pierce



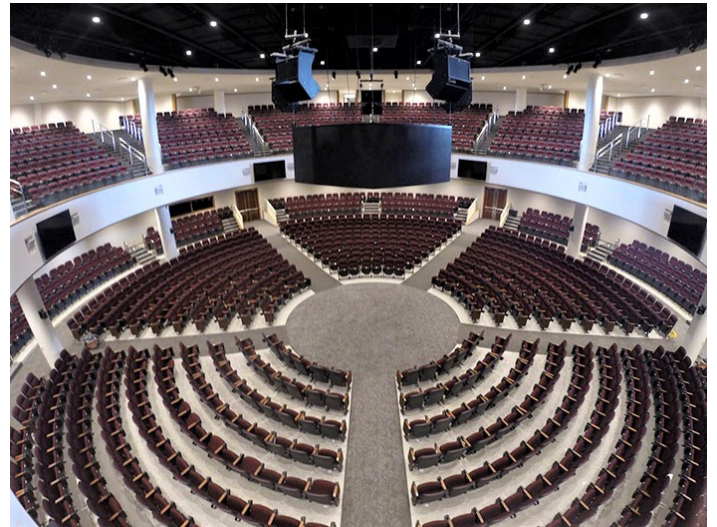
and the Lyric Theater in Stuart.



Here are three different types of stages:  
The thrust stage.



The theater in the round. Actors traverse through the audience to get to it. This one with capacity of 2,000.



Arena stage. There are many other stage types.



The fundamental challenge for theater owners of facilities like these is, “can I find artists that will bring an audience to fill all those seats”? The reverse is also true for the artist, “if I got a gig in one of those could I bring the audience to fill those seats?” Sadly, for majority of artists the reality is that they could not.

So, what is an artist with a smaller following to do? He finds a BLACK BOX! Below is a technical and historical explanation what a Black Box is.

*A black box theater is a flexible performance space with a simple, unadorned design. These theaters became popular in the 1960s, inspired by the practice spaces used by major theater companies and university drama programs.*

*Today, black box theaters can be found all over the world, putting on a range of performances from highly experimental theater to Shakespeare classics. This type of theater lends itself particularly well to productions with limited sets and technical requirements, which emphasize a more intimate, acting-focused experience.*

Yes, we have one in Fort Pierce and it's part of the Sunrise Theater complex.



It has been home for the Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society's big band and combo players for 10 years.



Such a symbiotic relationship between a large theater and a Black Box theater is not unusual but rare and we are fortunate that it's right here in Fort Pierce on 2nd St.

I had a chance to meet with Anne Satterlee, the Marketing Director for the Sunrise Theater. Anne was most gracious in sharing information about the theaters' history and operations, I got a tour of the facility and its amenities. Other than the Jazz Society utilizing the Black Box the theater is still in a "holding pattern" but hopefully will be presenting the national acts which are booked. We all hope that things will change soon. We are fortunate to be in Florida which has been in the forefront for opening businesses and Florida in general. I hope this article illustrates how the arts play a vital role in human endeavors and our constitutional right to pursue happiness.

# Time to meet our stars



*Editor's note: I think it's high time to acknowledge the hard working and incredibly talented individuals that make the Fort Pierce Blues and Jazz Society such a successful enterprise. Gene's annual snowbird arrival is always a cause for celebration, back slapping and warm words. From the day he arrives he is hard at work at Society events. Gene served on the faculty for several Advanced Jazz Camps and will be sharing his wisdom and knowledge again in 2021. Gene continues to have a fascinating career. Check the well-known artists he performed with before he even finished high school.*



## Gene Bruno

Gene graduated from the High School of Performing Arts, in NYC where he majored in Music. (*Editor: Check the pedigree of that school on Wikipedia*). He started playing trumpet at the age of 8 and by 9 he felt bold enough to serenade his girlfriend outside her windows. It worked since they just celebrated their 59th anniversary. Gene transitioned to saxophone at the age of 12. Three months into his new instrument he got his first professional gig which meant that "officially" he was 16 years old to be able to work it. His teacher recognized his talent and suggested that his parents enroll him in the above-mentioned High School. There Gene studied with Joseph Allard who taught at Julliard and mentored many great saxophone players. Gene had a scholarship to Julliard but family difficulties interfered with that.

The High School of Performing Arts was on twin tracks; half the time was spent on general subjects and half on musical education. That left the weekends. On Fridays Gene boarded the Port Authority Short Line Bus to work at the well-known Concord Hotel in upstate NY and returned Sunday night. It's worth mentioning that in the 50's and 60's the Concord was the epitome of style, class and size among the many entertainment places in the Catskill region. Its Cordillion Room could seat 1,500, Imperial Room could

seat 3,000. It had 1,500 guest rooms, offered golf, skiing and a tropical indoor pool. It attracted all the big names in the entertainment industry.

Gene was part of the Morty Beck Show Band and remembers performing with Bobby Darin, Tony Bennett, Vic Damone, Harry Belafonte, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, Rosemary Clooney, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Leslie Uggams and others. The hotels also featured comedians like Don Rickles, Joan Rivers, Milton Berle, Woody Allen and George Burns. There were other opportunities at the Concorde. When Gene was not playing with the Show Band, he worked with a Latin Band. If there was time left in the day, he joined the jazz band in the lounge. This was a pretty busy life for a 15-year-old.

Upon graduation Gene was "invited" to do two years with the US Army, then chose a second career as a fire fighter. He continued to work with the top NY agents and musical circuits and since being a 24-7 firefighter led to some serious negotiations with his firefighter brothers about who is going to work which shift so that Gene could work a show, a wedding or Bar Mitzvah. Averaging 140 jobs per year required lots of negotiations.

An interesting tidbit from Gene's days as a 12-year-old. He used to sneak into Birdland Nightclub on 52nd St, Broadway. Actually, teenagers could get in for a mere \$1.50, where they could sip Coca-Cola and enjoy the likes of Stan Kenton, Cannonball Adlebery, Buddy Rich and Maynard Ferguson. Gene treasures his possession of the autographs of famous artists he collected at Birdland.



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