

Intermezzo

Ifm
chicago federation of musicians
local 10-208 afm

Annual Meeting:
Tuesday, September 8th, 2009 @1:00 pm

Membership Meeting:
Tuesday, October 13th, 2009 @1:00 pm

September 2009
Vol. 69 No. 8



Wage Scale Changes See Page 14



From the President



GARY MATTS

First Monday in September

September Song (Cole, Sinatra, others), *September* (Earth, Wind and Fire), *See You In September* (The Happenings), *September of My Years* (Sinatra), are just a smattering of popular songs that paint a picture of the month. School starting, summer ending, leaves turning, apple picking, time to put away the shorts, sandals and white pants and get out the sweaters and jackets. All these things are synonymous with September. The event that typically starts the month is Labor Day. It is the day that ends summer as sure as Memorial Day began it, the last great American cookout day of the year, at least for those of us in the northern climes.

What do we know about Labor Day? Yes, it is the traditional end of summer and the holiday on which we recognize the contributions of unions and workers in our society. Labor Day became a federal holiday on June 28th, 1894 by act of Congress. All fifty states in the United States celebrate the Labor Day as a state holiday.

How Labor Day came to be the day on which we celebrate the value and dignity of work in our society is another story. During the late 1800's as a result of the industrial revolution the average American laborer worked 12 hour days, seven days a week to earn a basic living wage. Unions, with their message of better working conditions, fair wages, worker protections and a better standard of living for laborers, became more prominent. In New York City, on Tuesday September 5, 1882, ten thousand workers marched from city hall to Union Square in the first-ever Labor Day parade. The marchers took an unpaid day off to honor the workers of America, as well as publicize issues they had with employers. Workers in more states began to hold parades, but Congress did not legalize the holiday until 1894, twelve years later.

On May 11, 1894, workers at the Chicago Pullman Palace Car Company went on strike protesting wage reductions and the firing of union representatives. They requested support from their union leader Eugene V. Debs. As a result, the American Railroad Union called for a boycott of all Pullman railway cars on June 26, 1894. Within a few days, with the support of fifty thousand rail workers, railroad traffic out of Chicago ground to a halt. President Grover Cleveland sent troops to Chicago on July 4. After riots and violent demonstrations, the action by the government brought about the end of the boycott and strike. Debs and three other union officials were sent to jail for disobeying an injunction. The strike and its aftermath served to focus attention on worker's rights issues and Congress declared, on June 28, 1894, that the first Monday in September would be a holiday for workers, known as Labor Day.

Enjoy this historic holiday and remember why and how it came to be.

Sources: AFL-CIO.org, DOL.gov, History.com, Wikipedia.org

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Perspective



By Jack Zimmerman

Mahlerpalooza

I'm writing this in the MRU of a local hospital. MRU stands for Mahler Recovery Unit. I'm here for the long haul – six weeks of Rossini overtures, early Haydn symphonies and Scott Joplin piano rags.

In August, I went on a Mahler bender, binged on the Ninth symphony. The paramedics found me wandering the Lakefront. The Simon Rattle/Berlin Phil Ninth was playing on my iPod.

Didn't know my own name. That's what Mahler does – screws you up real bad, and then drop kicks you right in the stomach. I've been here before – been a recovering Mahlerian for many years. First bout was in 1966 when I came across the Sir John Barbirolli recording of the Ninth – didn't come out of the basement for a week. Just kept listening to it and pondering my mortality. I was 21 at the time. My last relapse was in 2005. Since then I had been on the straight and narrow, stayed away from Mahler completely – lots of early music – Heinrich Schutz, Monteverdi and lute pieces by John Dowland.

On one occasion, I went to a friend's house where Bruckner was playing. My wife panicked – she thought I'd go off on a Mahler tear. "C'mon," I told her, "aside from using big orchestras, Bruckner and Mahler have nothing in common. Mahler was married to the hottest woman in Europe, and Bruckner died a virgin. Besides, Bruckner used Wagnerian tubas. Mahler would never sink that low."

Outwardly, I appeared to be an average music lover – somebody who enjoys standard symphonic programming – a Haydn Symphony, followed by the Beethoven Emperor Concerto and then, after intermission, the Sibelius Second Symphony. Oh, I'd applaud enthusiastically after each selection. But deep down all I wanted to hear was a big, honking orchestra playing a big, honking Mahler symphony.

If it would stop there, things would be fine, but for people like me there is no such thing as just one Mahler symphony. Before long, I'd lock myself in my condo with the Solti/CSO box set, Sennheiser headphones and a case of Schlitz – Ray Milland in "Lost Weekend" but with a better soundtrack.

That's why I had been sticking to Delius and Saint-Saens. But the events of the summer were my undoing. Ravinia programmed Mahler: the CSO with Conlon playing Das Lied von der Erde and the Ninth Symphony. The Grant Park Symphony Orchestra did the Ninth, too. In fact, the Grant Parkers played it twice – on a Friday and a Saturday night. How was I supposed to stay away? I caught both performances. I even skipped out of work all day on Thursday to sit through six hours of Grant Park Mahler rehearsal.

All that Mahler in live performance – no wonder the paramedics brought me to the MRU. There are others here in the unit with me. I can't name names. We sign a confidentiality agreement when we're brought in. The others here come from all walks of life. Mahler addiction respects no boundaries – rich, poor, the highly educated or just plain working-class folks – the MRU has them all.

It's not easy being here. No WFMT, and they took all the Mahler off my iPod – had four versions of the Ninth on that thing. But rules are rules and when you hit bottom like I did, you've got to get with the program.

This morning the guy in the room next door kept humming Das Knaben Wunderhorn. The male nurses rushed him downstairs to MD (Mahler Deprogramming). Things are bleak down there. They piped in Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday."

Cruel? You bet. But sometimes drastic measures are called for. "He's damn lucky he didn't get 'Sleigh Ride,'" a male nurse told me.

Once I get out of here, it's good-bye to Gus Mahler. I'll be sticking with the French – Milhaud, Poulenc, Ibert... No heroics there. No talking to God, no themes of abandonment, despair and redemption – just lots of cute melodies.

Somebody, get me a drink.



New and Returning Members

By Leo Murphy



Welcome to the new members of the Chicago Federation of Musicians! A few are returning members, some are transferring from other locals and others are new our Union. They have different talents, perform in different genres and work in various venues, but they all share a love of music and a desire to pursue their love as a profession. They have made a decision to join us as professionals in our Union, working toward our shared goals. If you meet them on a job, whether on a bandstand, in a pit, or on stage, introduce yourself and get to know them.

Richard Carsey Acct# 56383 (Piano/Synthesizer) is transferring from Local 8 in Milwaukee.
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Milwaukee, WI 53207
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rlcarsey@aol.com



Hank Horton Acct# 56382 (Bass Guitar/Bass Violin/Vocalist) is a native of Michigan. After graduating from Big Rapids High School, he attended Central Michigan University where he received a Bachelor of Music degree in String Bass Performance. He then received

his Master of Music degree in String Bass Performance from Michigan State University. His instructors include Dr. Ernest Lloyd and Virginia Bodman. He currently performs with Dennis De Young's band and played on the recording of "100 Years From Now" which has reached double platinum and for the video "The Music of Styx" which went triple platinum.
4008 N. Central Park Ave.
Chicago, IL 60618
773-230-3698
hank@hankhorton.com



Renee Keller Acct# 56333 (Percussion/Piano/Timpani) is transferring from Local 380 in Binghamton, NY. After growing up in Rochester, NY she graduated summe cum laude with a Bachelor of Music degree in Percussion Performance from the University

of Michigan. Her Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance is from Temple University. She has been a Doctoral Student at Rutgers University and is now at Northwestern University. Her instructors include Alan Abel, Chris Deviney, She-e Wu, Michael Udow and Local 10-208 member James Ross. She is an extra with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. She has also performed with the Lancaster Symphony, the Binghamton Philharmonic, the National Repertory Orchestra, the National Orchestra Institute, the Aspen Music Festival and the Music Academy of the West. She is an experienced music teacher.

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WELCOME!



Rachel Levin Acct# 56389 (Trombone/Euphonium) is a native of Chicago. After graduating from Stevenson High School, she attended Oberlin Conservatory graduating with a double major in Trombone Performance and Jazz Trombone. She has moved back to Chicago

and attends De Paul University where she is working on another degree. Her instructors include James DeSano and Local 10-208 members Charles Vernon and Tim Coffman. She is a past Walgreen's Concerto Competition winner and performed with Midwest Young Artists. She has also performed with the Sammy DeLeon y su Orchestre, and the Jazz Heritage Orchestra with guest artist Clark Terry. She is an experienced private instructor.

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Mark McKenzie Acct# 56302 (Guitar/Banjo/Bass Guitar/Harmonica) is from the Chicago area. A graduate of Elk Grove High School, he attended the University of Illinois, Circle Campus, graduating with a degree in Computer Science. His instructors include Joe Rumaro

and Local 10-208 members Frank Dawson and Steve Suvada. He currently leads the McKenzie Duo (Flute and Guitar) and also serves as composer and arranger for the group. He has performed with the Wellington Boots, the Final Edition and the Jazz Consortium. He is an experienced private teacher.

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Jeffery Morrow Acct# 55937 (Keyboards) is a returning member.

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Matthew Piatt Acct# 56387 (Piano) is transferring from Local 6, San Francisco, CA. He has been working with the San Francisco Opera and has accepted a position with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Assistant Chorus Master. His hometown is Victoria, KS and after high school

he attended the University of Houston graduating summa cum laude with his Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance. His Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano is from the University of Michigan. His instructors include Robert Moeling, Timothy Hester, and Martin Katz. Besides working with the San Francisco Opera, he has also worked with the Berkeley (CA) Symphony.

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Jamison Podojil Acct# 56384 (Drums/Percussion) is a native of the Chicago area. After high school at Downers Grove South, he attended the University of Kentucky graduating with his Bachelor of Music degree in Performance. His instructors include James Campbell

and Local 10-208 members Rich Trelease and Jeff Stitely. He has been touring with musical productions for the last 10 years. He is an experienced private instructor and served as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

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Continued on Page 7

**MUSICIANS WORK BEST
WHEN WE SAY...**
UNION YES  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS



Who, Where, When...



By Ruth Marion Tobias



“THE ATTIC, 2004....”

The above title for liner notes on a double disc CD compiled by the late **NED DOLL** is evidence of a busy iconic musical career of the 1930s and 40s. He continues, “In my attic I discovered a cornucopia of musical memories: transcriptions of radio shows.... pictures of the groups, lounges, supper clubs and fairs where we performed, salaries paid, arrangements we used, and oh, so many memories.”

Bassist (George) Ned Doll and his brother, **BUD**, began as the Doll Bros. in 1936, a harmonica duet on WLS Home Talent shows ... “Soon it was ‘Ned and Bud Doll and the Melody Rangers’. Bud on electric guitar and vocals, me on bass, trumpet and vocals – we were finally professionals (at \$3 a job). We grew beyond the recognition as ‘and others’ to being identified by name. 1940: WJJD Suppertime Frolics with **KARL** and **HARDY TAYLOR** and **DOC HOPKINS** (\$10 bucks each, per week) on WCFL, **SI PERKINS** and his Hill Billhillies following **LES PAUL** and his trio. Then a season with **WHITEY FORD**, ‘The Duke of Paducah’, the winter of 1940 at radio station KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa... hundreds of 15-minute programs, personal appearances and the Melody Rangers continued to grow”.

“1941; World War II with the American Air Force and the 315th Troop Carrier Group in England. Soon thereafter, I was transferred to a GI entertainment unit, the ‘Skyblazers’, playing for troops in England, France, and Belgium where

entertainers **BEBE DANIELS**, **BEN LYONS** (of old movies) and a very young **DORIS DAY** joined us. Bud Doll and **ABNER TAGGE** (accordionist), meanwhile, worked with a USO group in the Aleutian Islands.” Peacetime brought them together again and the group became the Dollodions.

Ned eventually moved to California and became an interior designer. His wife lauded his artistic work. Since the late ‘60s they have lived in San Jose. Ned passed away in March of 2009 and would have been 93 in June. Bud preceded him in death three years ago. The team had musical adventures and successes unrivaled by many. Another good musician story.

DID YOU KNOW?

Saxophonist **GREG FISHMAN** was back in Chicago from Arizona for a few weeks and played a number of gigs, notably Jazz Showcase, with **PAULINHO GARCIA** as the other half of “Two for Brazil”. **Paulinho**, the clinician, who has given workshops and concerts at many universities (Northwestern, Wisconsin at Milwaukee, Cornell and Hope College) went to Russia this summer to teach at the Moscow College of Improvised Music. He also coaches a Brazilian combo at Roosevelt University and teaches Brazilian guitar and vocals at Old Town School of Folk Music. As such, he recently appeared on Channel 7’s TV show “Chicagoing” hosted by **BILL CAMPBELL**...

Our union’s honorary member **HARRY PORTERFIELD**, 81 with “45 years of experience in Chicago TV news” as reporter, host and anchor has been rehired by WBBM-Channel 2. Along with co-anchoring the 11a.m. newscast with **ROSEANNE TELLEZ**, he continues his show, “Someone You Should Know”, award-winning interviews with Chicagoans...

More dreams have come true for trumpeter **ORBERT DAVIS** as he brought to the University of Illinois at Chicago its first jazz day camp for students in grades 5 through 12. Davis directs the program taught by a faculty of noted local musicians...

DIETER KOBER has published his Chicago Chamber Orchestra schedule for 2009-2010 Season. It begins September 6 at 3 pm, at the Chicago Cultural Center; schedule highlights include: January 10, with Kober conducting a stellar quartet comprised of **CHARLES PIKLAR**, violin; **AMY PIKLAR**, viola; **CAROL HONIGBERG**, piano; and **SUSAN NIGRO**, contrabassoon.

On May 2, the featured violinist is **STEPHEN BOE** who will reprise his performance at Fourth Presbyterian Church on May 9, 2 pm. Kober conducts both performances...

ART HOYLE received a hearty welcome from the Hyde Park Jazz Society in early August when he “trumpeted” jazz (isn’t that a silly pun) at the society’s new digs, Room 43 at 1043 East 43rd Street. Performing with him were **PAT MALLINGER**, sax;

BRAD WILLIAMS, piano; **DANNY SHAPER**, bass; **ROBERT SHY**, drums and vocalist **FRIEDA LEE**. The tributes that evening were to **EDDIE de HAAS**, bassist; **WALLACE BURTON**, saxophonist; and **ALMARIE WAGNER**, community leader “whose husband founded the society and returned jazz to the neighborhood.” Pianist **JOHN WRIGHT** joined in the tributes. With his trumpet, Hoyle has been a featured soloist with **SARAH VAUGHN**, **ELLA**, **TONY BENNETT**, **LENA HORNE**, **PEGGY LEE**, **QUINCY JONES** and **GENE AMMONS**. Of course there are many more names, but we have limited space, you see. Art’s long career and his devotion to Chicago is a tribute in itself. He currently performs with the Chicago Jazz Orchestra and the Chicago Jazz Ensemble.

PAYBACK TIME

For any of you who were financially nicked by Livent Productions when the organization was rife in Chicago, let it be known that honchos **GARTH DRABINSKY** and **MYRON GOTTLIEB**, co-founders, have been sentenced to prison for seven and six years, respectively, for fraud.

TRIBUTE

Drummer **GEORGE PALES** reminds us of another drummer, **LOUIE BELLSON**, the renowned musician whose greatness adds distinction to Illinois. Born in Rock Falls, Illinois in 1924, his bio is extensive and colorful.

His gentleness and gentlemanliness permeates his entire 65-year career as a superb performer with a sense of obligation to pay forward his own success conducting drum and band clinics at high schools, colleges and music stores.



Louis Bellson

His loyalty to Chicago (where he studied with and idolized **ROY KNAPP**) was evident in the musicians he hired to back him when he performed. Louie Bellson died in February 2009, at age 84.



Continued from Page 5

Rebecca Wilcox Acct# 56381 (Violin/Viola) is originally from Berkeley, CA. Her Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance is from Oberlin Conservatory. She performs with the New Millennium Orchestra and is the Principal Violist with the Northbrook Symphony Orchestra. She is an experienced private instructor and is teaching in the La Grange area. 4157 N. Clarendon Ave., Apt. 910 Chicago, IL 60613 510-996-8747 weccabilcox@gmail.com



Juli A. Wood Acct# 56386 (Saxophone/Clarinet/Flute/Vocalist) grew up in the area around Milwaukee, WI. After high school, she attended the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Saxophone Performance. While at

the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee she performed with the university orchestra as a concerto competition winner. She then continued her studies at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music in Jazz Improvisation. She has performed with many ensembles including SHE, the Prohibition Orchestra and she leads the Juli Wood Quartet where she plays Tenor, Alto and sings. Her instructors include Jack Snavely and Dave Hazeltine. She has taught privately for more than 10 years at various music stores.

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COME TO THE FAIR
JEANS AND STRAW HATS
ARE OPTIONAL

LIFE MEMBER PARTY
Members of the Union for 50, 60, 70 and 75 years will be honored.

 **Date:** Friday, October 9th, 2009
Time: 12:00 Noon
Place: Union Headquarters
656 W. Randolph St., Suite 2W 

Featuring the music of
Special Consensus Bluegrass

Please RSVP by
September 25th, 2009
Call 312-782-0063, ext. 136

Any photos or memorabilia
you care to bring with you
will add to the festivities!

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**2010-2011 MEMBERSHIP BOOK
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If you wish to make any changes in your directory listing, please fill out the application below and return it to:
Chicago Federation of Musicians
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Name _____ Account Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Principal Instrument _____ Professional Name _____

If there are no changes in your present status,

YOU DO NOT NEED TO FILL OUT THIS FORM.

Deadline: October 9, 2009

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ATTENTION: PRIVATE TEACHERS

If you would like to be listed as a private teacher in the 2010-2011 Membership Directory, please fill out this application and return it to:

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Deadline: October 9, 2009

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**BAND AND ORCHESTRA LISTING
2010-2011 MEMBERSHIP BOOK**

Members may have no more than two (2) free listings under the Band and Orchestra category. Additional listings are \$20.00 each.

Name of Group _____

Name of Group _____

Name of Group _____

Name of Group _____

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Return this form to Spencer Aloisio, Secretary/Treasurer
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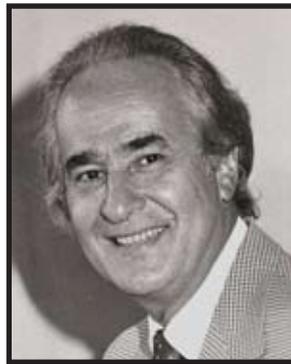
Obituaries

Harold “Hal” Dessent 1916 - 2009 Former CFM President

Harold “Hal” Dessent, who performed as a musician with such stars as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Jack Benny, and who later was elected President of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, passed away on August 14, 2009. He was 92.

Born in Chicago on Dec. 24, 1916 to Mary and Sam Dessent, and raised on the city’s northwest side, “Hal” was diagnosed with rheumatic fever as a young boy. Told by a doctor to get a saxophone to build up his lungs, his mother bought a used sax. It was a decision that altered his life.

Soon learning that he had “perfect pitch,” he started playing sax, flute, clarinet and piccolo in bands as a teenager. He often told the story that since it was the middle of the depression and his family had little money, his mother wrapped his lunch for the last day of Schurz High School in a road map. It was also the Al Capone gangster era. Hal’s father, a Chicago police detective, often warned Hal “to get paid up front in cash” since the police would be raiding the club where he was working later that evening! He played in several local dance bands, and in ‘territory bands’ that travelled throughout the Midwest.



While performing with the Louis Panico Orchestra in 1939, Dessent met his future wife, Joyce, a former child star of acting and dancing fame (“Little Joyce Bennett” was her stage name), who was the band’s singer. Before knowing each other, they had both performed in separate musical acts at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1934. They were married for fifty-nine years, until Joyce passed away in 1999.

In 1940, Dessent was hired to play in the ‘house band’ at the Chicago Theater. During this era, the top stars of the day would perform their acts at the theater while promoting upcoming movies, radio shows, or records. In addition to Sinatra, Martin, and Benny, Dessent was in the band that backed Louis Armstrong, Liberace, Sid Caesar, and Ella Fitzgerald, among dozens of other great entertainers.

In the early 1950’s, as these ‘live show’ theaters were turning into full-time movie houses, Dessent was hired to play in the ‘house band’ at the popular downtown nightclub, the “Chez Parea”. At the “Chez”, Dessent performed with Nat King Cole, Danny Thomas, Mel Torme, Martin and Lewis, Rosemary Clooney, and many other top stars.

With television becoming more popular in the late 1950’s, Dessent began performing on thousands of TV and radio commercials as part of the burgeoning “jingle” business in Chicago. He became the “first-call” woodwind player on commercials for hundreds of

Obituaries

May they rest in peace

Last	First	Instrument	Died	Born	Elected
Dessent	Harold (Hal)	Woodwinds	08/14/09	12/24/09	10/08/36
Janas	Raymond	Accordion	06/03/09	10/25/19	02/01/40
Leavin	Benne	Guitar	08/01/09	10/22/11	09/07/34
Sherman	Michael	Piano	07/09/09	07/24/17	05/18/39
Thompson	Earma G.	Piano	07/14/09	03/25/23	12/02/50

products, including Budweiser (with the Clydesdales prancing through a winter scene), Chevrolet, Norelco (with Santa sliding along a snow bank), and McDonalds, and was even heard playing the “Oscar Meyer Wiener Whistle” for their hot dog ads. Dessent remained an active member of the Chicago jingle scene throughout the 1960’s and 70’s.

During his career, Dessent continued to perform in top Chicago dance bands, played in the pit at the Blackstone Theatre, and also taught private music lessons in several suburban schools, including New Trier High School.

In 1977, after over forty years of performing, Dessent was elected Vice President of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, and in 1983 was voted in as President. He also won election for the International Executive Board of the American Federation of Musicians. During his term as President, he bestowed honorary membership in the Musicians Union upon several prominent Chicagoans, including Irv Kupcnet, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, and Harry Porterfield.

In 1986, Dessent retired to La Jolla, California with his wife Joyce. He is survived by his three sons and their wives, Michael and Katy; Terry and Kathy; and Patrick and Karen (who are also CFM members and music teachers). He is also survived by seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held in California.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that the next time you host an event needing music, consider using live instrumental music – Hal would’ve liked that.

Earma Thompson

1923 - 2009

Jazz pianist was Chicago classic

Musical Career spanned more than half-century

Chicago pianist Earma Thompson never really had a chance to become famous. Emerging as a professional in the early 1940s, when few female instrumentalists attained stardom in the male-dominated world of jazz, she focused instead on honing her craft and raising her family. But in a career spanning more than half a century; most of it spent on the South Side – she stood as a significant figure in the

city’s musical culture. “She was rare in this field, a really historical figure,” said Barry Dolins, deputy director of the Mayor’s Office of Special Events, which produces the city’s music festivals. “She was there practically at the founding of modern jazz piano in Chicago, her and Lil Hardin,” said Dolins, referring to a more celebrated pianist. Hardin was married to Louis Armstrong and was pivotal to his success in Chicago in the 1920s.



Mrs. Thompson, 86, died of heart failure Tuesday, July 14, in South Shore Hospital, said her son, Terrance. Mrs. Thompson “was a great jazz player and a great blues player,” said Dolins’ brother Steven, who recorded Thompson’s late in life CDs “Madam Queen” (2007) and “Just in Time” (2004) on The Sirens Records. “Her playing was ‘in the gutter,’” said Steven Dolins, citing the down-home earthiness of Mrs. Thompson’s work, but yet she had a way of playing beautiful chords.” In a Tribune interview in 1999, Mrs. Thompson said: “I started playing jazz late, even though I studied piano early on, but my father was a minister, and my parents didn’t go for that jazz.” “But I was lucky enough to go to DuSable High School, where they had Capt. Walter Dyett teaching everyone, like Johnny Hartman, Gene Ammons, Dorothy Donegan - all the stars went to DuSable. “But I still never planned to play jazz for a living or anything. In fact, my mother said to me, ‘Take typing.’”

Mrs. Thompson graduated from DuSable in 1939 and was determined to build on what she had learned musically there and in church. She studied classical piano at Herzl Junior College on the West Side and at the Chicago College of Music in the Loop. After marrying jazz drummer and dancer Marshall Thompson, she started to develop a jazz career, working with no less than singers Joe Williams and Billie Holiday at the Cotton Club on the South Side. Holiday asked Mrs. Thompson to go on tour with her, but the pianist declined, citing her family commitments and the objections of her husband. “He knew what goes on out on the road, especially against women,” her son said. “Women had a hard time. It would be different if Dad could have been her manager – you needed certain kinds of protection out there.”



Yet what Mrs. Thompson missed in fame she won in the affection Chicago audiences held for her.

“Like Holiday, Thompson is able to make the most popular tunes sound personal, without bringing too much attention to herself,” Aaron Cohen wrote in a Tribune review in 1995, noting the characteristically self-effacing nature of Mrs. Thompson’s work.

In addition to her son, Mrs. Thompson is survived by a nephew, Marshall Thompson, and a great granddaughter.

Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune

Albert Leet 1918 - 2009 **Played Banjo as Buddy Lee**

Albert Leet, known to generations of jazz fans as Buddy Lee, came to Chicago in 1960 with his wife and his banjo.

He spent the next four decades amazing fans with lightning-fast playing on his four-string instrument.

“He played thousands of gigs, all over Chicago,” said longtime friend and collaborator Tim Steward, a trombonist. “There isn’t a musician 60 years or older who didn’t play with or hear him play at one point or another.”



Mr. Leet, 91, died Saturday, August 8th, of diabetes complications in a Streamwood health-care center.

He moved to Chicago in 1960 to join Bob Scobey’s Frisco Jazz Band after playing in a combo for U.S. troops during World War II and then living and playing in Denver, where he met his wife, Della.

When he arrived in Chicago, banjo players weren’t staples of local jazz bands – especially not playing the style he played, Steward said.

“Buddy started playing more lead, which was unusual for the banjo,” Steward said. “He became a featured player, rather than just playing rhythm in the background.”

In doing so, Mr. Leet helped reveal new possibilities for his chosen instrument and attract up-and-comers to it.

“I never dreamed I’d play banjo for a living or at all before hearing his style,” said Ann Steward, Tim’s wife. She now makes her living as a banjo player and bandleader of Banjo Buddies Dixieland Band of Carol Stream.

She traces her unexpected career choice to hearing Mr. Leet play on a Bob Scobey record on her parents’ record player.

“He played a tune, ‘Bye Bye Blues,’ that I could not believe how fast he played,” she said. “It’s a very percussive style that fills a band.”

Mr. Leet played gigs until he was 85, Tim Steward said, before his diabetes rendered him progressively more disabled. He maintained a trademark sense of humor throughout his life, even after losing a foot and being unable to walk.

“He’d always tell the same jokes,” many of them off-color, Steward said. “He loved to make people laugh.”

He is survived by a brother, Frank.

Mr. Leet chose not to have a service. He will be buried next to his wife in Clay Center, Kansas.

Dan Simmons, Chicago Tribune

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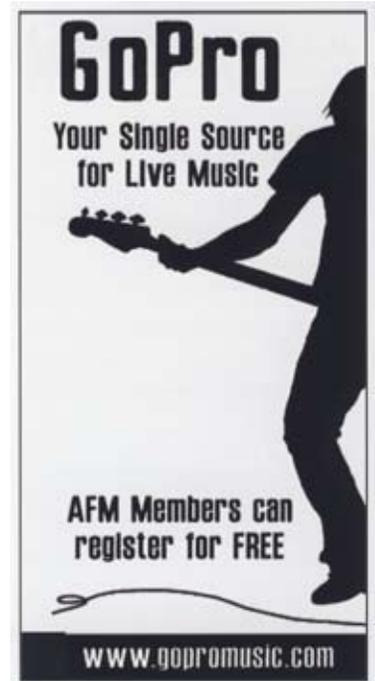
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The *Intermezzo* is published 10 times per year. May-June and November-December are combined issues.

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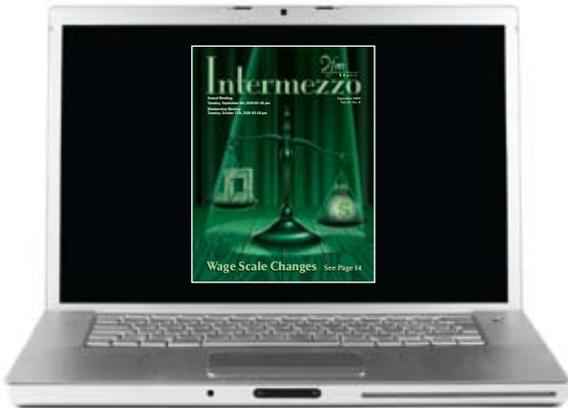
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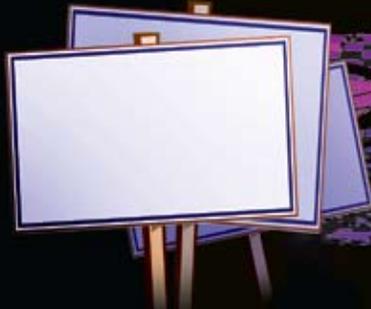
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CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN MUSICIANS CLUB

Regular meeting fourth Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m. at VFW Post # 3868, 8844 West Ogden, Brookfield, IL 60513
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GERMAN AMERICAN MUSICIANS CLUB

Third Monday of the month. Regular meeting, Mirabell Restaurant, 3454 W. Addison, Chicago, IL, 8 p.m. Send all communications to Mr. Zenon Grodecki, 5024 N. Moody, Chicago, IL 60630 (773) 774-2753

SOCIETY OF ITALIAN AMERICAN MUSICIANS SOCIAL CLUB

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WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS CLUB

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