

Quarter Notes

Published by the Gateway City Big Band, Inc.

Dennis Owsley, Editor

Volume XXI, No. 3, May 2015

Gateway City Big Band MISSION STATEMENT

The *Gateway City Big Band, Inc.*, a non-profit corporation, provides advanced jazz education and performance opportunities for participating musicians. Through its performances, it strives to promote public awareness of the “big band” style of music, to encourage and support music education at the secondary school level, and to assist other non-profit groups with fundraising.

Gateway City Big Band Schedule

Consult our website at:

<http://www.gatewaycitybigband.com/>

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Sky Music Lounge (930 Kehrs Mill Road, Suite 201, Ballwin) from 7:30-9:30. \$5 cover charge.

Saturday, June 13, 2015

We've booked our annual concert/dance at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (808 N. Mason Rd., 1/2 mile south of Olive). **Go to saint-tims.org for more info!**

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Join us for a **free** concert in the Chesterfield Amphitheater (631 Veteran's Place Drive) from 6:30-8:30 pm. Concessions are available but you may also bring your own food and drink (no glass bottles please).

Saturday, June 27, 2015

Please join us at the Kirkwood Area Arts Council's "Making Music" concert series from 7:00-9:00 pm at Kirkwood Park (Geyer and Adams Roads) in the Kirkwood Lions Amphitheater. **It's FREE and food is available for purchase.**

President's Message

It's really hard to believe, but this is the **GCBB's** 50th year of existence!

In preparation for our 50th Anniversary we're releasing a new CD. "50 Years & Counting!" will be our ninth recording, our last release being "Swingin' for 40 Years" in 2006. It features many of our current musi-



cians but was the last time Don Clauson, our long-time feature soloist and Stan Kenton alum, recorded with us before retiring from the **GCBB**. It has the perfect combination of musicians and tunes to commemorate our 50 years.

These tracks were recorded during two sessions held at Music Masters studio on The Hill in 2011 and 2012, and engineered by Greg Trampe before his semiretirement. In fact, he moved out of town. Was

(Continued on page 2)

President's Message (cont.)

it something we said, Greg? We want to give Greg a lot of thanks for helping to get this CD out and for 20 years of guidance and friendship. He helped produce our very first CD in 1995!

We have dedicated the recording to our friend Matt Rice, who played trombone on the first session but passed away suddenly before the second session at the young age of 37. You may recall he had a great solo on "Show Me the Way to Go Home" on "Swingin' for 40 Years". We still miss his good humor and bluesy solos.

"50 Years & Counting!" will be available at our June gigs that are listed on the first page of this newsletter. I call your attention to our appearance at Chesterfield Amphitheatre on Thursday, June 25th at 6:30 p.m. This is an exciting new opportunity for us. It's free and a great chance to come out and introduce your friends to the band.

Finally, thanks to all of you who switched your newsletter subscription from U.S. mail to email. Every little bit helps!

We hope to see you soon!

Meet Jacob Johnson

Jacob Johnson is one of the newer members of the **Gateway City Big Band**. He plays tenor sax on the band, but is equally adept on soprano, alto and baritone saxes. He is a 21 year old from Bridgeton, Missouri and is a graduate of Pattonville High School. Jacob is now a Junior in Music Education with jazz studies at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

Jacob commented that he enjoys playing with the Gateway City Big Band because he is interested in big band music. One of his reasons for becoming a band member is that, in contrast to most of the community big bands in the area, the band rehearses weekly. He feels that it is important to preserve big band music the way it is supposed to be played.



The St. Louis Trumpet Sound

The St. Louis trumpet sound is described as a clear, singing tone, with many bent notes reminiscent of the human voice. Many black St. Louis trumpeters were also experts in the use of mutes. St. Louis trumpeter David Hines remarked that a lot of these trumpeters sounded very similar, with that big fat vocal sound common to St. Louis trumpeters. It is interesting to note the evolution of trumpet sound and conception that stretches back from Charles Creath up to Lester Bowie. Judge Nathan Young attributes the sound to a tradition of German brass band music that dates from the 1840s. According to Judge Young, everybody, black and white that wanted to learn to play trumpet up to the turn of the last century had a German teacher.

That German-influenced trumpet sound stretches as far up the Mississippi River to Davenport, Iowa, home of trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke.

(Continued on page 3)

The St. Louis Trumpet Sound (cont.)

The list of these trumpet players in the 1920s includes Charles Creath, Dewey Jackson, Bob Shofner, R. Q. Dickerson, Louis Metcalf, Joe Thomas, Ed Allen, Irving "Mouse" Randolph, Andrew "Big Babe" Webb, Leonard "Ham" Davis, Benny Starks and Oliver Cobb. All but Creath, Jackson, Webb, and Cobb left St. Louis and achieved wider reputations. It is interesting that many of these men went through the Knights of Pythias and Oddfellows bands as young musicians. The brass teacher in both these bands was P.B. Langford, so it is not surprising that these musicians had a similar sound and conception.

Since that time, St. Louis trumpeters Harold "Shorty" Baker, Clark Terry, Miles Davis, Buddy Childers, Floyd LeFlore, Baikida Carroll, Lester Bowie, Russell Gunn and Keyon Harrold have continued that tradition.

Both Hines and Clark Terry think the St. Louis trumpet sound goes back to Charles Creath and to the principal trumpet player of the St. Louis Symphony, Joseph Gustat. Gustat's heritage was Italian, but he changed his name to a German name because at the time, all the jobs were going to Germans. Gustat taught anyone who came to him and didn't discriminate who he sold instruments to from the store he and his brother owned.

It was said that Creath possessed such a powerful sound that when he played, all the women in the audience would fall on their backs with their legs up in the air. Creath led bands on the excursion boats in

St. Louis on the Mississippi until the wooden boats were replaced by stainless steel boats in the late 1930's, moving to Chicago. Wooden boats tended to burn down to the waterline when they caught on fire (and many of them did).

Gustat insisted that his students use a Hime mouthpiece. According to Clark Terry, the Hime mouthpiece is a very thin, very deep mouthpiece. Clark said that most of the trumpeters around town used to hear the sound made by this mouthpiece. If they couldn't get the mouthpiece, they got something as close to it as they possibly could.

In the early days of jazz, St. Louis trumpeters were apparently very territorial and did not treat strangers kindly. Roy Eldridge was stranded in St. Louis in 1926 or 1927. He was working with a pianist at the Grand Central Hotel on Pine Street and ran into the St. Louis trumpet school at jam sessions on Sundays.

Eldridge told this story. "Every Sunday five trumpet players came down and tore me apart. I was about 16 and I was playing smooth. They played with a guttural kind of sound. They were more or less on a Louis Armstrong kick, the way Louis used to play, but more guttural. I was playing what could be called cool then, and I wasn't familiar with that other style. I couldn't understand how they got around to playing like that—the lip vibrato, trills, etc."

*Dennis Owsley, Editor.
Author, City of Gabriels-The jazz History of St. Louis 1895-1973*

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Newsletter



The **Quarter Notes** is the official publication of the *Gateway City Big Band, Inc.*, a non-profit organization. It is published quarterly in November, February, May and August.

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