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AUGUST + SEPTEMBER 2024

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We'd like to thank Kara Smith, Education Programs Manager, American Jazz Museum: "I got a call today about the dates listed for the KCJA/Jamey Aebersold/AJM concerts. "They were listed as August 14th and September 9th were listed instead of the 18th and the 8th. I told her I'd inform JAM!" Thanks Kara!

Our board members include Lynn Abrams, Joe Dimino, Jason Goudeau, Mikole Kaar, Linda McShann, Dan Sturdevant, and Amber Underwood.

Stay hip,
David Basse, President and Editor

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Tribute

Dick Wright and John Baker

by Tom Alexios

This is a tribute and thank you to Dick Wright and John Baker for their contributions to the history of jazz and blues, one reel of vintage film at a time for John and one audio recording at a time for Dick Wright. Each contributed almost 50 years of their lives to their respective collections.

The following story is my own personal emotional opinion on a subject that I have had an inside view on from the beginning of my friendship with Dick Wright, John Baker and Bob DeFlores. All three are collectors of jazz history, in all of its forms, as a lifelong passion for each of them. And I was able to witness the inner workings of the



friendships with Dick, John and Bob, Dick's positive permanent impact as a jazz host for almost 40 years and as professor of Jazz Studies at Kansas University, and the massive jazz record collection he amassed, which he donated to K.U.'s Murphy Hall Archives for

Research Studies.

I met Dick shortly after moving to Lawrence, Kansas. I enjoyed many years of long talks with Dick on jazz history and of getting to sit in on his classes at K.U. Dick was also a huge fan of Clark Terry, whom I introduced him to. On the evening of August 21st, 1979, I went with Dick to KC to the Uptown Theater to see The Count Basie Orchestra

perform. We were also going to meet another friend of Dick's at the concert, Bob DeFlores. I have a framed poster from that concert hanging in my home. Little did I know that my meeting with Bob would turn into a lifelong friendship.

That still lasts till today and hopefully for many more years to come. It was a great concert. Dick set up for the three of us to meet with Count Basie after the concert. Through my friendship with both Dick and Bob, I was introduced to the legendary John Baker. Dick met John through Bob. As my friendship developed with Bob, I got to learn very quickly what an avid vintage film collector/historian/preservationist he was.

His mentor was John Baker. Bob also became a great source for long conversations on jazz and its history, which Bob was restoring one frame at a time from old and, sometimes very rare, vintage film footage. My conversations with Bob still continue on a regular basis on jazz and jazz history and new discoveries.

Now who was John Baker. John was an attorney from Columbus, Ohio. He was not a musician, but he had the soul and reverence of a person who lived and breathed jazz. John was obsessed literally

on saving every scrap, every newsreel, every roll of film on jazz possible. It didn't matter if the film footage was on Duke Ellington or an obscure jazz musician who had not risen to the peak of fame. To John they all played just as large of a role in the story to be saved of jazz history. I learned very early on from my conversations with John how the

Other Local Heroes

This is a short list of just a small sample of fond memories of some of our jazz musicians. It was a privilege getting to interact with them in their personal lives separate from their roles as musicians, and getting to witness first hand some instances of struggles and financial sacrifices they went through for the love of the music.

This is the 40th year of the passing of Count Basie. No one can talk about Kansas City Jazz, without also mentioning Count Basie contributions. And what a great musician and person he was in all aspects of his life.

Next Speedy Huggins, who passed away 25 years ago. He always had a "Happy Energy" when you would see him. He made you smile. There will never be another person like him. He is deeply missed.

Frank Smith is another great local icon who also passed away 25 years ago. What an outstanding pianist and a wonderful human being. The Elder Statesmen named an Award in honor of him. I am personally honored to be one of the recipients of the Frank Smith Award in 2000.

We can't forget Claude "Fiddler" Williams, who also passed away 20 years ago this year. No one can forget Claude's impact on the Kansas City Music scene on so many levels. After Claude's wife passed away, Blanche then became the best thing that could have happened for Claude in the later years of his life. Talking with Claude was like talking to a fascinating man who had a firsthand experience of a long-gone history of Jazz and Blues and the musicians of those times.

Some others to not be forgotten for their contributions to the local jazz and blues music scene:

Sonny Kenner, Eddie Saunders, Luqman Hamza, Ahmad Alaadeen, Jay McShann, Carmell Jones, Eddie Baker, Myra Taylor, Ben Kynard, George Salisbury, and Bettye and Milt Abel along with so many other jazz and blues legends in their own right. They were all local music heroes. ¶

disciplines from being an attorney would shape into a very uniquely focused, methodical collector in the world of collectors.

continued

John Baker was a legend in his own lifetime of being the largest jazz vintage film collector at the time. Bob was not only close friends with John, he also became an advisor to John and a cohort in finding more obscure old film footage here in the United States and in numerous foreign countries. For both John and Bob to amass as large and diverse of a film collection of early jazz would be very difficult today even with the internet, let alone in the times when John and Bob were building their respective vintage film collections - hunting through classified ads, sending letters and waiting for a response back by mail and the long hours making long distance phone calls. And then there were the road trips to follow up on leads, an endless journey which still continues to today for Bob.

Dick and John had a friendship enjoying conversations on jazz and jazz history. Also, beyond the massive jazz film collection that John had, Dick had a massive jazz record collection, and a large collection of opera recordings. As mentioned earlier Dick donated his record collection to University of Kansas in the early 1990s. Dick then started over again building anew, a natural impulse from a seasoned jazz historian and jazz radio show host.

Now that you know a little bit about both Dick Wright and John Baker. I want to pay homage to them. John Baker passed away in September, 1998. And Dick Wright passed away in the Fall of 1999. Basically 25 years ago.

They both deserve to be remembered for their respective major contributions to jazz and all it represents. They both recognized the importance and the need to preserve as much of it as possible, in their own respective ways. I have worked with Bob DeFlores on a regular basis for quite a few years on the collecting and restoration of vintage jazz film footage. I think my old friend Dick would be pleased about what happened to his pride and joy, his radio show.

After a brief period of time after Dick's passing, there were guest hosts until something could be decided on a permanent replacement. That decision was made and the new host was picked. Bob McWilliams, Jazz and Folk Director at KPR, was one of the three people who made that choice. Bob is a graduate of Harvard Law School who, because of his deep connection with and love for jazz, has chosen to be a radio host and professor of jazz studies. He still hosts a jazz show and a folk show on KPR.

The host chosen to replace Dick Wright was David Basse. David has now been hosting the Jazz Scene and Jazz with David Basse radio shows for almost 25 years, and he has grown the audience and the numerous platforms for listeners to find the show. I think Dick would be blown away by what David has built the show into, and about his plans for even more exciting growth potential in the future.

A quote from Bob DeFlores about the positive impact that both Dick and John have left on life, his inspiration to continue his over 70 years of collecting and film restoration in the future and the joy we both get working together on this mutual goal.: "Great job David! Dick's pride and joy could not be in better hands. A great testament to Dick's Legacy." Bob DeFlores was one of the 2024 Recipients of the Woody Herman Award sanctioned by the Woody Herman family to honor and recognize individuals who have made major contributions in their lives to jazz education and jazz history, an award presented by myself with the support of Clarence Smith on April 19th at the Gem Theater.

This is our third year of presenting the Woody Herman Award. The other recipients for the 2024 Woody Herman Award are Chuck Haddix from UMKC and Curt Hanrahan from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Woody's home town. In part two of this story I would like to pay tribute to the major role Dick Wright, John Baker and Bob



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DICK WRIGHT CONTINUED

DeFlores played in the Kansas City Story, and to talk about what needs to be done to save a legacy.

When John Baker decided it was time to sell his vintage jazz film collection, it was Dick Wright who influenced and orchestrated the idea of John's collection being purchased for a discount to Kansas City. The Collection was sold for around \$200,000 about 30 years ago. The collection then became part of the American Jazz Museum, with the sole purpose that it would be preserved, maintained and restored. The Museum would be the repository for the whole collection to be available for permanent access to all of its contents for international historians to study for generations to come, and for music students to not only hear, but also be able to visually see the performance in the context of the period.

To tell John 's whole early history of jazz through his vintage jazz film collection you need all of the pieces of film that John methodically put

together of famous and not so famous jazz musicians to transform his vision into a complete story. Anything that has been lost leaves large unknown blank spots in the collection. I also want to go on record that John's collection was in excellent condition when that collection was purchased for Kansas City. I would not be a very good friend of Dick and John if I didn't fight to protect and preserve their legacies. I am now building my own vintage jazz film collection with the help of Bob DeFlores, who is now in his 70th year of collecting and restoring his own collection of almost 6000 reels of film. I am optimistic that once I am able to have a meeting with the director of the AJM there can be a positive resolution to this issue that will be mutually beneficial to the Museum and to jazz musicians and scholars both locally and worldwide. ¶

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Paganova

Interview/CD Review
by Dr. Wayne Goins

GOINS: Let's talk about the band, Paganova—this group has firmly established itself as one of the mainstays on the KC jazz scene. How did it all get started?

PAGÁN: Well, first of all, the name Paganova is derived from my last name (Pagán) plus nova, which means “new” in Portuguese . . . my new band, in other words. Since a lot of the band's music is Latin-based, i.e. Brazilian, Caribbean, etc. and I am half Puerto Rican myself, it's a good fit. It began as a small or stripped-down version of the Michael Pagán big band; there were 10 or 11 players. Soon though I decided to concentrate on quintet and/or the big band when it came to ensemble creativity. Working with two lead, melodic instruments and a rhythm section—a quintet—seemed more inviting and more realistic to me in terms of finding work. For a couple of jobs early on, saxophonists Mike Herrera and David Chael were available . . . I didn't really start this thing with the intention of having two saxophonists, but when we played together, it really clicked. The energy

was instant and real. The work of David Chael and Mike Herrera speaks for itself. I struck oil. My son Louie Pagán, who has matured over the years into an exceptionally gifted musician, was my first choice for bass. While he excels in alternative rock and edgy forms of progressive, sophisticated metal, he is completely fluent in the jazz idiom on bass, especially his 5-string electric. Now we'd have Chael, Herrera, and Louie, all who would bring an inimitable, signature sound to a group.

A true Kansas City treasure of jazz, Ray DeMarchi was my choice for drums, another undeniably unique addition. Ray and I have collaborated for many years and was the perfect musician to round out this band. And all the guys have been positively receptive and willing to play the originals and arrangements I write for us . . . I'm humbly thankful.

GOINS: Your newest CD, Paganova feels like you're finding new ways to challenge yourself and dive deeper into the wider realm of jazz—is that a fair assessment?



PAGÁN: Well, thank you for such a nice compliment . . . I don't know what to say except that playing with and writing for a group of this caliber puts one in a situation of having to "deliver." Without describing all the possibilities of writing for a group like this, I guess it's just a "do what you have to do" kind of situation, and I've tried to vary things as much as reasonably possible so as to keep listeners not knowing what's going to happen next.

GOINS: "Burn it Forward" is, in my opinion, a really crafty arrangement. Talk a bit about that...

PAGÁN: Burn it Forward is the opening track on the recording. I wanted something that would grab the attention of the listener. What better way to do that than to come out of the gate with up-tempo bebop? And it's a full ensemble effort, which should be the case for an opening track of an album. Everyone gets solo space, so this is, you could say, a "hello, meet Paganova" kind of arrangement.

GOINS: I love the interwoven horn parts from Herrera and Chael's on "Deep In My Soul."

PAGÁN: Besides the horn lines being in harmony at times, there are some echoes (imitation) and handing off of the lead betwixt the players. "Deep in My Soul" begins like a gentle prayer in bossa nova but eventually rocks out.

GOINS: Ray DeMarchi's drumwork really stands out on the minor blues tune, "Guess Whose Blues."



PAGÁN: I can't say enough about Ray DeMarchi's drum work. His feel is so infectious and so natural that one may not realize how technically expert is the stuff he's throwing down. I think that is an important trait of a seasoned, master musician like Ray: we are treated to a beautiful musical message that is so convincingly conveyed that we have stop and say to ourselves "wow, such outstanding technique, but it's all put toward musicality!"

GOINS: On this album the majority of tunes are original compositions, but I noticed you do have two or three tunes that

weren't written by you—tell me about those and why they were included.

PAGÁN: Oh yes, those three tunes that are not my originals were chosen because of how they would fit with the rest of the selections and make the program as a whole. We enjoy playing them and I arranged them especially for the group. There's not time or space here for me to go into the details of that, but they are written by some of my heroes and I'm proud that some of the major highlights of this project can be found in those tracks—check out David Chael's reading of "Where Do We Go from Here?" for example.

GOINS: I really enjoy the way Louie and Ray provide the strong rhythm support for your intense piano solo "Just The Other Day."

PAGÁN: Louie played upright bass on that one and Ray took no prisoners when it came to keeping the groove. I should add there is a com-

panion piece to “Just the Other Day” that I wrote called “Just the Other Night.”

GOINS: Wow, that’s awesome, wish we could have heard that! The album’s closer, “Napoli,” reminds me of a carnival atmosphere...

PAGÁN: I wrote “Napoli” to illustrate the Neopolitan chord for a music theory class. An Italian high-energy samba? Sure, why not! Mike Herrera is such a joyful, hard-core soloist and his playing here is just one more example of how he’s a jazz force to be reckoned with. And Wayne, I love when you call it “carnival music” – that description couldn’t be hipper!

GOINS: Thanks so much for saying that. You have been holding down a steady engagement at Cafe Trio on 4558 on Main Street for quite a while, is that correct?

PAGÁN: Yes, as of June 2024 I’ve been playing solo piano there every Tuesday night for 15 years. The owners and everyone there are incredible . . . I feel blessed to be a part of the Cafe Trio family.

GOINS: I reviewed your first big band CD in this very magazine back in the Fall of 2005—that’s almost twenty years ago! Don’t you think it’s time to follow that one up with another one?

PAGÁN: Dang! Has it been that long?? Well, firm plans are underway for a new big band recording, in August of 2024 and there will be Paganova personnel involved, for sure.

GOINS: Among all the other activities you’re already involved in, I heard you’ve also been busy establishing a reputation at the recently opened VOO Lounge attached to the Marriot Hotel in downtown KC, correct?

PAGÁN: Yes! I’m running an open mic/jam session at the VOO Lounge (1214 Baltimore Ave. KCMO) every Wednesday night 7pm-11pm. Attendance and support have been terrific. I’m confident that it’ll still be going strong by the time readers see this issue of JAM.

GOINS: Final question: Based on the successful career you’ve had with Paganova so far, tell me

where you predict your band is headed—what does the future look like?

PAGÁN: Well, it’s a pretty typical scenario for a band to make its first recording . . . we’re excited that it’s been released on Capri Records, with national physical distribution and a presence on all the major digital platforms. With that, and the reviews that have likely appeared by now, we look forward to more work of a higher profile and we’ll continue to develop new material, which we usually play at the Westport Coffee House on Sunday nights. While I’ve written most of the music for the band, Mike Herrera and Ray DeMarchi have contributed as well, and we play standard things once in while. We’ll often have a guest artist, turning the group into a sextet, and we look forward to more of that. And another recording will come in time, of course.

GOINS: Thanks so much for granting JAM this exclusive interview.

PAGÁN: You know, Wayne, I just want to say one more thing about Paganova before closing: While the instrumental format of 2 saxes and rhythm section, a pillar of the jazz lexicon, may call to mind such seminal works as the Lennie Tristano Quintet featuring Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh, the Cannonball Adderly Quintet in Chicago, or perhaps Tribute to John Coltrane: Live Under the Sky featuring Wayne Shorter and Dave Liebman, Paganova’s front line breaks ground in that its reed men, David Chael and Michael Herrera, switch instruments between tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones throughout the entire recording, as they do in our live shows. It’s a thing! Their work as “sax doublers” is truly exemplary, if not breath-taking. I’m beyond-words honored and thankful to be able work with them, as well as Ray and Louie. ¶

FOLLY

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CHARLES MCPHERSON QUINTET Feat. Terell Stafford

Sunday, February 16, 2025 @ Murry's

Charles McPherson (as), Terell Stafford (tpt), Jeb Patton (p), David Wong
(b), Billy Drummond (dms)



Dr. Carlos & Laura Perez-Mesa Memorial Concert

HILARIO DURÁN CONTUMBAO (QUARTET)

March 20, 2025 @ The Missouri Theatre

Hilario Luis Durán Torres (p), Yoser Rodriguez Vargas (b),
Ahmed Mitchel Ponce (dms), Jorge Luis Torres Paumier (Perc)

NICK FINZER ALL-STAR QUARTET

Sunday, March 30, 2025 @ Murry's

Nick Finzer (tb) Renée Rosnes (p), Rufus Reid (b), Lewis Nash (dms)

Celebrating Pianists James Williams, Mulgrew Miller & Harold Mabern

GEOFFREY KEEZER SPECIAL QUARTET

Sunday, April 27, 2025 @ Murry's [Cap. 250]

Geoffrey Keezer (p), Bill Pierce (ts), Robert Hurst (b), Marvin "Smitty"
Smith (dms)



International Jazz Day Special Event

A Bobby Watson Four-Decade Retrospective

With

COLUMBIA JAZZ ORCHESTRA UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF BOBBY WATSON

April 30, 2025 @ The Missouri Theatre

Mikole Kaar

California Transplant on Kansas City as a Jazztropolis

by Joe Dimino



The beauty of jazz is that it is a wholly subjective art form, yet for one New York-born musician, the objective reality is that Kansas City has the best jazz scene in the world. Mikole Kaar is now another ingredient making the local Kansas City jazz scene as rich as it has ever been.

Mikole reflects on what landed him in the middle of America in a cauldron of Midwest jazz action.

“June 2, 2024 was my one year anniversary in Kansas City. I came here because this is the best jazz town in the United States that I know of,” said Mikole. “I was here for about 2 weeks, staying with Max Groove, a year ago. He showed me what was going on and I couldn’t believe it. So, I put my car on a truck and got on a plane from Palm Springs, California. I came out and decided not to go back.”

His life began at Kings Island Hospital, in New York City, and he was lured into music very early on. At 9 he began playing the clarinet. By 12 he rented a tenor saxophone to play in a local rock band, and when Mikole was 13, that rock band had a song that went into the top 40.

“We opened up for quite a few of our heroes,” continued Mikole. “Gigs like opening for a band that Billy Joel fronted, called ‘The Hassels.’” There were other great opportunities like opening for The Young Rascals and Vanilla Fudge.

Mikole had a cousin in New York that was the President of the Frank Lester Music Company. Getting Dixieland and big band arrangements from him was captivating, and that was the beginning of Kaar’s jazz journey.

“I never thought of myself as a jazz musician back in those days, even though I was listening to Stan Getz and the Big Band stuff. I never thought of being a jazz cat until I turned 18 and went to college.” Mikole said. “At that time, after migrating to California, I met an incredible musician by the name of Ron Robbins. He’s now over there in Orange County, California and literally plays every instrument & sings.”

The first live jazz gig Mikole attended that left a deep impression on him was going with Ron to see

the CTI All-Stars at The Palladium in Hollywood. That bill included Stanley Turrentine, Freddie Hubbard, Hubert Laws, George Benson, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Lenny White.

“The first guy that got me going and interested in jazz was via radio. I was living outside of LA in the high desert of Lancaster County and I would hear Tom Scott play. I thought I should go study with him,” Mikole said. “I went to a big music store called Baxter North, looking for Tom. The guy who owned the store said he didn’t know how to put me in touch with Tom. Instead, he put me in touch with a guy by the name of Don Raffell, who was a Lester Young protege.”

Don began teaching Mikole jazz. That lasted a year. Then he started studying with Los Angeles studio vibraphonist, Charlie Shoemake. Charlie was very knowledgeable, and an excellent teacher. That led to enrolling at Cal State Northridge, hitting the road with a band, and eventually calling California home.

“I learned how to play in LA. I played down in what you would call the ghetto and there were only about seven or eight of us white guys that played. All the other good musicians were black men,” Mikole noted. “I lived down in the Watts area for a while with a guitar player by the name of Ray Brooks. I would play all night with these guys that are like 25 years older than me. That’s where it all started.”

“Jazz today is not about the way it’s changed. It was how it was born. You’ve heard the expression that jazz was born in New Orleans, but I grew up in Kansas City? Jazz wasn’t invented in New York or in New Orleans. It was really invented right here in Kansas City at the Black Musicians Union.” Mikole said. “During that KC heyday of Pendergast & prohibition when everybody else in this country was starving to death, everybody was coming to KC and nobody was starving.”

Mikole’s main influences over his life have been both Michael Brecker and John Coltrane. He took in all he could get and thrived.

continued

“Jazz is the greatest expression that I know of. I've learned to appreciate the visual arts to a pretty good extent. I get it when I see something that came from the soul. The art of playing jazz,” Mikole said. “When four people come together like one, there's nothing like that. It requires a lot to have that happen.”

Of all the towering influences and mentors he has had in his fortunate jazz existence, it was Mr. Vernell Brown, Jr. that taught him the most. Vernell spent 25 years in Kenny Garrett's band. Mikole played with Vernell in Las Vegas about 20 years ago. Of all the tenor saxophone players that were around Vegas, Mikole was the one he wanted in his band. From there, Mikole decided that Palm Springs was for him and tried his hand at studio musician success. This didn't happen, but Vernell was the beacon for him.

“He would call me every day and ask me to sit at the piano. I would say no. Then, one day I walked over to the piano and sat down. He started talking to me about things that Miles Davis told Kenny Garrett . . . things that Miles told Herbie . . . told Wayne Shorter . . . told Ron Carter and he started telling me these things,” Mikole said. “For 16 years, I started learning what he was telling me and now it has become the core of what makes me sound the way I sound.”

In 2024 and on his best days, Mikole believes he is a spiritual manifestation of this music that comes through him. Ultimately, he has found out what he is supposed to be doing in this life. According to him, it will continue until two days after he's dead. Yet, it's Kansas City that sharpened his focus and reignited that jazz fire in him.

“Guys always want to go to Berklee College of Music & to North Texas State, yet I think if I would have known about Kansas City earlier on, I would have come here,” Mikole said. “There have been a few that don't want to see a new guy around being successful & who are jealous or whatever. But for

the most part, these KC musicians here have been honorable & wonderful performers & players.”

That gregarious nature of sharing, nurturing and growth is native to Kansas City. Not something he may see in the grit of New York City and the competitive nature of that scene.

“The musicians in KC love each other. The people that come see live (music) love the musicians. It's incredible. I want to be part of it,” Mikole noted. “I want to be part of doing my best and making whatever I can help make in this town be better and better and better with the jazz music.”

Mikole is yet another musically rich veteran christening KC as a destination. Not a springboard.

“When I came here, everybody said, ‘Oh man, this ain't what it used to be,’” Mikole concluded. “And I'm like, ‘Excuse me, I just came from California. This is 1000 times better than what's going on there. You guys are just missing the ball here.’”

Mikole figured it out. Now, KC crowds will figure it out. This all shall last two days past the day Mikole's jazz legacy is all set in stone.

Everything Mikole:

<https://mikolekaar.com/>

Full Mikole Kaar Neon Jazz Interview Links:

<https://youtu.be/q0WXbnA9ZE0>

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/joe-dimino/episodes/Kansas-City-based-Jazz-Saxophonist--Flutist-Mikole-Kaar-e2l52pj> 🎧



TOM'S WHISKEY

TOM'S TOWN DISTILLERY KEEPS A LEGEND ALIVE

Founded in 2016 by Steve Revare and David Epstein, Tom's Town Distilling Co. is steeped in the rich history of Kansas City and its infamous political boss, Tom Pendergast. Embodying the spirit of those times, Tom's Town brings that defiant and spirited tradition to the present with its award-winning spirits.

Steve and David, whose entrepreneurial journey began with a childhood lemonade stand, later co-founded BlairLake, one of the first digital ad agencies in Kansas City. Despite their backgrounds

outside hospitality and spirits, their entrepreneurial spirit and deep roots in Kansas City have inspired them to innovate and offer a fresh perspective in the spirits industry.

Kansas City's history during prohibition was a unique chapter in U.S. history. Pendergast let the liquor flow, making Kansas City a vibrant and lively destination. Despite its drawbacks and illegal activities, it was known as the 'Paris of the Plains,' where one could enjoy a good time. Pendergast's 'play by

continued on 25



Performance Review

Brian Baggett Trio @ Green Lady Lounge



Guitarist/composer/bandleader Brian Baggett performs at the KC Green Lady Lounge about five nights a week in various groups and configurations. I've seen and heard Baggett there many times before, but wanted to give readers a sense of what it is like to be there before they come out to hear him on their own.

As you may know, the upstairs of the Green Lady Lounge is red. The walls are all painted red, and it's low-lit, as if you're in a club in LA maybe. Electric candles (on the tables, on the walls) illuminate the room. It's chill. It's subterranean. It is its own world. And, especially in the early sets of the night, Baggett and his trio are equally subtle and subdued. They're magical and they're energetic, but it's also almost like we're all underwater.

The band is in suits (or sports jackets and slacks) and ties, and the tunes are all originals, mostly

Baggett's tonight. After one tune, "No Fooling," Baggett says, "It's got a kind of trick ending," in this case a pause after what seems like the last note and then a kick, like an ultra-short coda. Baggett is up front with his jazz-genre electric guitar, which he makes purr; Sam Platt rumbles mallets with small red heads across the toms, then uses bundles and brushes; and Seth Lee plucks at the strings of his big upright bass, one quick fingertip at a time. Platt is tastefully soft all night. He has attack and presence, but grace, ala

former KC staple Todd Strait.

When I get a table, I get as close as I can. I want to feel the music. And there are a number of tables up front. Get close enough, and you can hear a kind of tube-amp-style rumble-hum in your chest, like that first sip of something strong: bourbon, gin.

When Baggett ends another of his tunes, "Mild Winter," he says, "(I'll) probably play that when Taylor Swift comes in," a tune apparently built around the form of Swift's "Cruel Summer." To hear what is current and in the moment, come hear Baggett and crew. Slow for a moment. Relax in the a/c, while outside the sun bakes the sidewalk, while outside the sun is still white-hot.

—Kevin Rabas

Monday 24 June 2024 @ 6:29 pm (KC) :||

your own rules' attitude inspired the founders of Tom's Town Distilling Co.

Pendergast had such a tight grip on every aspect of the town that people called Kansas City "Tom's Town." During their research, Steve and David uncovered their own family connections to the Pendergast era: David's grandfather, a rival bootlegger, was put out of business by Pendergast, while Steve's great-uncle, Maurice Milligan, served as the U.S. attorney who brought Pendergast down on tax evasion charges.

These personal connections further fueled their passion to honor Kansas City's spirited past through their distillery. When Tom's Town Distilling Co. first opened, it introduced three spirits that have remained core offerings ever since.

One was Pendergast's Royal Gold, a blend of two bourbons finished in a ruby port barrel, paying homage to Pendergast's own trademarked bourbon brand of the same name.

The Botanical Gin, crafted to diverge from traditional London Dry gins, bursts with vibrant flavors that are less juniper-forward, emphasizing creativity and a distinctive flavor profile.

The distillery's third spirit was Double Grain Vodka, notable in the U.S. market for its unique blend of rye (sourced from Steve's family farm) and spring wheat.

Tom's Town immediately garnered national recognition for all three spirits, winning gold medals at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. USA Today named Tom's Town the top Craft Vodka Distillery in the country.

Everyone who visits Tom's Town can feel the history that underlies their unique spirits. The tasting room's decor and vibe, offering views of the pot still and production floor, along with the cozy lounges and expansive event space, embody the spirit of Kansas City. Tom's Town's location is a physical reflection of the stories its spirits tell, creating an immersive experience for visitors.

Since its founding, Tom's Town Distilling Co. has continued to push the boundaries of craft



spirits, introducing a range of new offerings that expand on their earliest successes. In addition to their initial spirits, Tom's Town has launched two more gins, each exploring unique botanical profiles and flavors that cater to diverse tastes. They have also introduced a line of ready-to-drink spirits-based cocktails, providing convenience without compromising quality or flavor.

Tom's Town introduced Double Oaked Bourbon, a standout focused on craftsmanship and tradition, expanding its bourbon offerings. Additionally, it has released a Bottled in Bond Straight Rye Whiskey, showcasing its commitment to producing premium spirits that meet rigorous standards of aging and production.

These new additions demonstrate Tom's Town's ongoing commitment to innovation and excellence while staying true to its Kansas City roots and Tom Pendergast's spirited legacy. Discover the vibrant flavors and rich history behind each bottle at Tom's Town Distilling Co., where every sip tells a story of Kansas City's spirited past and innovative spirit-making, waiting to be experienced firsthand in their welcoming tasting room.

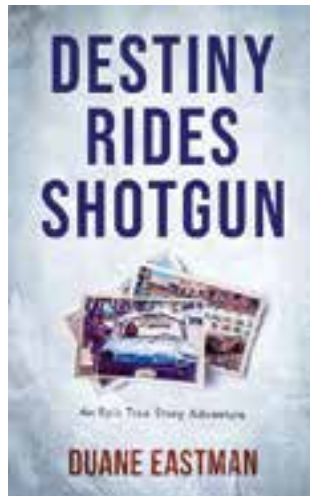
1701 Main Street, Kansas City, MO 64108 *
816-541-2400 * www.toms-town.com :||

Destiny Rides Shotgun

An Epic True Story
Adventure

Duane Eastman

This book, “Destiny Rides Shotgun” written by Kansas City area native, Duane Eastman, tells of the roadtrip of a lifetime. One, serendipitously engineered by a bright young-man, who uses skills learned in the Scouting tradition and real life common sense, quite possibly inherited from his father, who invented and marketed a necessary product that was readily available in all of the big box hardware stores.



Reading this true story gives one a glimpse into the mind of a true free-thinker. A young man on the mission of a lifetime. It may also shed light on how certain baby-boomers used their sex, drug, and rock & roll escapades of the late 1960s and early 1970s to foster the creation of vital businesses. Developed in the 80s and 90s, many of these businesses became not only profitable, but extremely innovative businesses that many of us know and love today.

Readers get the feeling Eastman has done life his way. He has always questioned authority. He refuses to conform to the recognized norms. And, he has used his innate faculties to skim above the rigors of life, thinking deeply about better ways to do the ordinary.

Beginning the chapter, (Interlude One) Eastman offers his take on the difference between two everyday tools we are built to use automatically;

“Intuition isn’t the same as instinct, but we instinctively seem to dismiss intuition. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines intuition as ‘the power or faculty to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference.’ It defines instinct as ‘a largely inheritable and unalterable tendency of an organism to make a complex and specific response to environmental stimuli without involving reason.’ The issue is a human thing,” continues Eastman. “It makes little difference where you were born, what language you speak, or your religion or ethnic origin, intuition is shared by all. Everyone has said or heard someone say phrases like, ‘I should have listened to myself,’ ‘I had a gut feeling,’ ‘I knew better,’ or ‘I had bad vibes about it, or him, or her.’ Usually, we learn this after an outcome that was not what we desired.”

—Duane Eastman, “Destiny Rides Shotgun”

This is not a book about jazz, although music plays a pivotal role in the journey. It’s loud rock music that helps the 3 gentlemen from the States focus, as they travel far and wide gaining answers to the many societal questions during the Vietnam Era.

“Destiny” does teach one of the major aspects of jazz improvisation, allowing oneself to be “in the moment” at all times. This very pleasing summer read can be found on Amazon and should give you some escape from the mundane. “Destiny Rides Shotgun” could get us all out of our well-worn grooves and off on mystical adventures never before thought of.

Editor

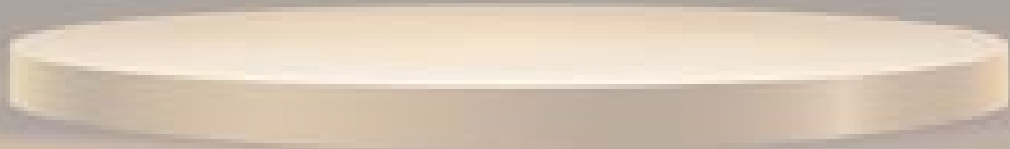
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Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors 2024 JAM Jazz Awards Nominations are NOW OPEN!

The JAM Awards honors your favorite Kansas City jazz musicians. Jazz lovers are invited to nominate their favorite local jazz musicians in a variety of a categories.

This is a people's choice award, so it's a chance to honor your personal favorites! Voting for your favorite jazz artists will begin in September. Winners will be announced at the Jazz Ambassadors annual meeting/party in December. Nominate your favorites today:

www.kcjazzambassadors.org/jamjazzawards



Motown Messenger

I heard him through his grapevine
after a tortured night
when I had no clue
what was going on
in my own life.

I never met Marvin,
but I felt the pulse
of his aching gut.
When all of the havoc
is eating at your soul,
God is not an abstract option,
but to find that pure tone
required the jolt Marvin gave us --
it ripped wombs open
and was healing
when he sang his raw
funky blue message.

While all of the hot noise in
the world scrambled our brains,
the wailing skill in his voice
shook us up, dropped us down,
drove us to follow him
as he bled out his wisdom.

by Stanley E. Banks
(for Marvin Gaye)

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Charlie Parker

2024 SPOTLIGHT CHARLIE PARKER

A Collaborative Citywide Celebration Honoring the Musical Genius & Legacy of Charles "Yardbird" Parker

August 2024

Venues Throughout Greater Kansas City

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