

Artistry In Monrovia by Ross Barbour

There's a young man in Pasadena, Calif., named Steven Harris. He calls himself a "Jazz Archivist." He is the #1 Kenton biographer. He is amazing. I mean, he knows who was on Stan's band in 1953 or 1977, and who replaced who that year for how long, etc., etc.

Recently he wrote a book called "The KENTON KRONICLES" (400 pages 8-1/2" x 11"). In the back of the book is the complete itinerary of the band from 1940 to 1978. That's a general idea of how deep it goes. But that's just to explain how Steven works. For 12 years now Steven has put on a "Kenton Clan Party." It now fills the ballroom of the Holiday Inn in Monrovia, CA.



Ken and Ross at the Kenton Clan Party two years ago

Steven puts together a 20-piece band of ex-Kenton sidemen. They play arrangements by Pete Rugolo, Bill Holman, etc. Oh, it is wonderful! It is kind of like "Field of Dreams." Maybe you thought these guys were dead, but they are so alive and they are glad to prove it.

This May 19th Pete Rugolo conducted the opening theme, and the goose pimples came. They lasted from 2 to 7 PM. It was bliss! Howard Rumsey was at the front table. Stan's sister was there too. Lennie Niehaus conducted and played two of his earliest arrangements.

Some of the guys in the band you might remember: Bass, Dave Stone - Drums, Peter Erskine - Percussion, Jack Costanzo and Mike Pacheco - Vocalist, Tierney Sutton - Trombones, Jim Amlotte and Kenny Shroyer - Trumpets, Buddy Childers and Steve Huffsteter - Saxophones, Billy Root, Med Flory and Bill Trujillo. Over the years, more than 55 ex-Kenton bandsmen have played at these gatherings.

Why does Steven Harris go to the trouble to make all this happen? To bring Kenton Fans together to re-live the great music and memories of their time.

If you are in the L.A. area next May 18th, stop in and "RE-LIVE" with us. Steven plans to feature one set where the mellophonium section is added to the 20 piece band for what he calls "Mellophonium Magic!"

Don't call him to make plans though; he's busy writing another book. You can write him:

Steven Harris
148 N. Catalina #4
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An Extra Treat at the 2002 Convention

by Gary Festerman (VA)

Those of us who will be attending the 2002 convention are in for an extra treat at the Saturday night concert. Not only will we get to see and hear the Freshmen perform, we will also have the pleasure of being entertained by the Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet who will be opening for the Freshmen.

I have been a big fan of the Uptown group since about mid-1994. I had been separated from Frankenstein's daughter (oops, my ex-wife) for about six months and decided to check out the jazz act that was appearing at the Ice House Cafe in Herndon, VA. They were a trio at the time, but it still took only two or three numbers for them to knock my socks off! The present group of four vocalists - Ginny Carr, Liseanne Lyon, Bob McBride and Roger Reynolds - are very capably backed up by an outstanding rhythm section of Doug Bickle on piano, Peter Revell bass, and Frank Russo on drums.

I caught their performance at the Ice House on Saturday, June 1, and, as usual, they put on a terrific show. The group is tremendously talented and they demonstrated that fact along with their smoothness, professionalism, and their monumental enthusiasm from "I'm Sandman," to open the show to the best rendition I've ever heard of "Moten Swing." Their unique and innovative renditions of (at the risk of repeating myself) "Moten Swing," "New York on Sunday," "Sugar" and "Harlem Nocturne" were particularly good.

The Stan Kenton Story

Bob Watts (NY)

4 CD Set including 92 cuts, all remastered, now available for \$50 including S/H - a must have for Kenton fans. Includes a booklet "The Life Story of Stan Kenton." Great photos of the band and lots of information.

Call: BIG BAND JUMP
1-800-377-0022

DUES NEWS - Sherlock Barnes

Some members who paid their dues in March have not yet received their canceled checks. FFS does not have these missing checks.

Members in AR, FL, IL, MO, PA and WV are so far affected. I am guessing that the dues disappeared in the massive USPS mail backlog at the anthrax decontamination center in Ohio. This is the only conclusion that fits the events.

Two FFS members have renewed for 14 years, many for 4-7 years, and most for 2 or more under the multi-year plan instituted last September.