



Frisko Cricket

Published by the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

FALL 2009

LOCAL IS UNIVERSAL PART II

by William Carter

In the summer of 2006 we editorialized that “All Jazz Is Local – and Universal.” Reminders of that keep popping up in different ways, many involving the fast-evolving technologies of recording and distribution.

Some months ago, SFTJF Board Member Jim Cullum reported that when his band played in Moscow, eager fans stormed the stage afterward anxious for autographs – on copies of the band’s Riverwalk website the fans had previously downloaded from the internet.

Then this July 20, when the SFTJF’s own Staff & Director’s band played one of our infrequent informal blowouts at San Francisco’s

historic Pier 23 (announced on short notice by e-mail to those of you who have provided us with your e-mail addresses), we experienced the

same theme with a new variation.

The diligent, ubiquitous Rae Ann Berry was there two hours early, nabbing a prime table on which to set up her modest looking, but technically good, video-audio recorder. Within a couple of days, most of the session was available worldwide on her YouTube Channel. Before the week was out the session, which included cam-

eo appearances by Pat Yankee, Terry Waldo, Greg Keeling and John Smyth, had been viewed in such faraway places as Sweden, Azerbaijan, and South Africa as well as all over the U.S.



Pier 23, San Francisco, 20 April 2009. Left to right: Jeff Hamilton-Drums, Jim Cullum-Cornet, Scott Anthony-Banjo, Leon Oakley-Cornet, Marty Eggers-Piano, Bill Carter-Clarinet

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The hits continue. You can relive the afternoon at:

<http://www.sftradjazz.org/events.htm>

Or discover Rae Ann's whole collection at:

<http://www.youtube.com/sfraeann>

Despite its staggering reach and popularity, YouTube as a whole still struggles to become profitable -- like so many Silicon Valley fast starters. SFTJF finds some comfort in that.

Driven by necessity, your Foundation's transition to the the digital age is described elsewhere in this issue (see *What's About to Happen*, following this article). Many of you, we know, think of membership as a subscription to the ink and paper edition of the Cricket, and we have thought long and hard of how to accommodate that and still pay the inexorably rising costs of production and distribution. ♪

FROM THE EDITOR WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN...

Even since it's first issue, the Cricket has been laid out and edited by electronic means using a page-layout program of the editors' choice. Once put together, the issues have been "printed" to the Adobe PDF format for transmitting to the our contracted printing house in San Jose, CA.

In the last year or two, the expense of printing and travel to pick up the Cricket orders from the printing house have increased substantially.

Becasue of this, with the next issue of the Cricket we need to make some changes. We will lay out, edit, and create the Cricket the same way as always. But, instead of having it offset printed, we will be sending all mem-

The Frisco Cricket

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San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

ADVERTISE IN THE CRICKET!

In an effort to help defray the costs of maintaining all the varied programs that SFTJF supports, including The Frisco Cricket itself, we're going to begin providing limited advertising space here. We want to be fair to everyone, so there are a few rules we'd like to follow:

- The advertiser should be in a music related (preferably Traditional Jazz related) business (band, club, cruise, radio station, etc.).
- No more than a total of 2 full pages will be used in any single issue of the Cricket, so ads will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.
- We need to be able to maintain the right to accept or reject advertisements at our discretion.

- Please send your ad to:

Cricket Editor

San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

41 Sutter Street, PMB 1870

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- Or (preferably) by email to:
*webmaster@sftradjazz.org or
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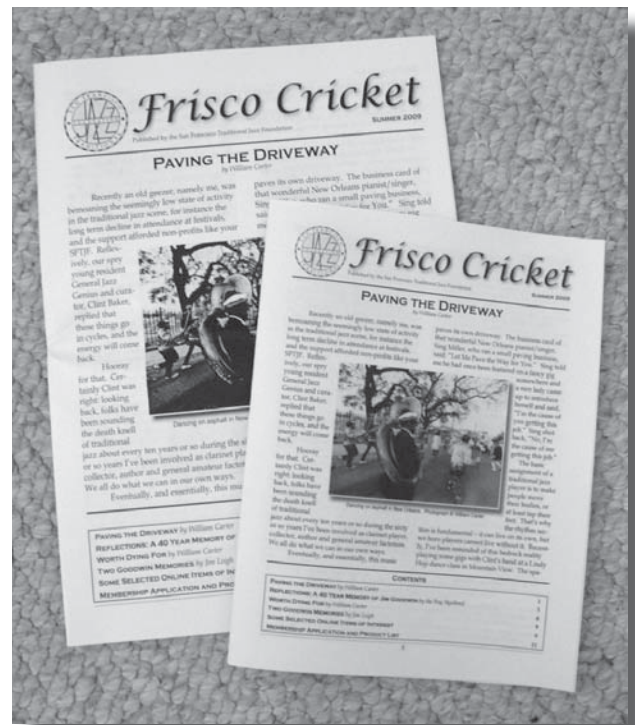
bers who have email addresses on file with us an email with a link to download their own copy in Adobe PDF format. We will include a link to download and install, if necessary, the latest free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader for viewing and printing the issue.

For all you faithful members who do not have email addresses on file, and all others who still want a printed copy for their files, we will print a slightly reduced-size (see photo on the right) version on the Foundation's own color laser printer.

Here are some positive points for these changes:

- We will be able to have a color, rather than strictly black-and-white, publication.
- Publication costs will be dramatically lower.
- We will be able to expand the size of an issue as needed or desired.

Remember, all members without email will automatically still receive a printed copy in the mail. Those of you with email who still want to receive a hard copy, please let us know by sending a note to: sftradjazzofficemgr@comcast.net 🎵



The last issue of the Cricket (behind) with the new smaller (about 25%) format to be "self" printed.

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THE TITAN OF THE TUBA AND ME

by Brian Nalepka



Joe Tarto, circa 1925. Photo by unknown.

I was lucky enough at a very young age to meet the person who provided the template for how I would conduct both my career and personal life. His name was Joe Tarto.

I was already on a path to a career in music through the inspiration of my first tuba teacher, Don Butterfield, but it was Joe who introduced me to the hot jazz of the '20s and '30s. It was his love and respect for these musicians and his personal reminiscences of the era that gave me the desire to follow in his footsteps.

Joe was not only a great jazz player, but was also classically trained on both the bass and tuba. His career spanned from W.W.I. and continued into the '80s. An abbreviated list of the people he worked with includes Thomas Edison, Bix Beiderbecke, Ethel Waters, Paul Lavalle, Joe Venuti, Andre Kostelanetz, Emmett Miller, Bing Crosby, The Boswell Sisters, Paul Whiteman, Rubinoff, and Kate Smith, to name a few.

It's hard for us jazz lovers to imagine today, but Joe heard the Wolverines in their N.Y.C. Cinderella Ballroom debut. He was at Roseland for the now famous "battle of the bands" between Jean Goldkette and Fletcher Henderson. Joe was arranging for Fletcher at the time, who even recorded one of his compositions "Black Horse Stomp". (Brian Rust's Jazz Discography lists Joe playing tuba on the session, which included two other tunes.) He heard Duke Ellington's "Jungle" Band at the Cotton Club (where he went with the Dorsey brothers after a gig. Duke introduced them to the audience and invited them to sit in). Another time, Joe was staying in a London hotel, where he was performing with Vincent Lopez when he heard a group rehearsing in a room down the hall. They sounded good,

so he knocked on the door to see who they were. When it opened there sat the Mound City Blues Blowers, with Eddie Lang playing guitar. This was the first time he met the great guitarist, with whom he would collaborate on many recordings in the future. Vet Boswell once recounted to me how Joe, Eddie and Joe Venuti would go up to the sisters' apartment to work on the arrangements they would be recording that week. Venuti and Lang would make the spaghetti sauce, while Joe would prepare the pasta. Even then, great music went with great food!

Joe played trombone in an army band in France during W.W.I. (He lied about his

To Brian
All the best
Sincerely
Joe Tarto



Joe Tarto and his new Conn tuba-July 1935. It's the horn he used the rest of his life. Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.



Joe Tarto, as a member of the "Band of America", with "Big Joe" and conductor Paul Lavalle. Photo courtesy Gene Allen

age to get in). Shortly upon his return, he added the tuba and bass to his arsenal. A little later he started on the bass sax, but said he went down and sold it the day after he heard Adrian Rollini for the first time. Joe spoke of having coffee every night with Rollini before their respective gigs at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Joe tried to talk him into picking up the bass sax again, but Rollini said he just didn't have it in his heart to play it anymore.

Joe was just starting to gain a reputation around NY when he received a call from vaudeville star Cliff Edwards, known as "Ukulele Ike". Edwards called him at the saloon down the street from where Joe lived in Newark. They had to send a kid to his house to

get him, since his family didn't have a phone. His recording career took off after his million-selling duet with Edwards on "June Night" and he became one of the most in demand players in New York, doing recordings during the day, and gigs at night. The list of musicians he recorded with is extensive and includes Harry Reiser, Red Nichols, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman, Phil Napoleon, Manny Klein, Gene Krupa, Jack Teagarden, Miff Mole, Joe Venuti, Dick McDonough, Carl Kress, and of course, Bix Beiderbecke. (Editor's note: Joe carried a briefcase with him to all his gigs containing an incredible autograph book signed by all the hundreds of great musicians he had played with along

with wonderful photos.)

Joe was good friends with Bix and recorded twice with him for Sam Lanin's "Broadway Bellhops." The sides they did together were "There Ain't No land like Dixieland" and "There's A Cradle in Caroline." Joe said that they also did gigs together around the NYC area. He recalled the last time he saw Bix was at the well-known musicians bar "Plunkett's". (When a bandleader or contractor needed someone for a date, they would often call Plunkett's to see who was available.) He was working on a last minute arrangement and Bix came over to him with Tommy Dorsey. The two of them started kidding Joe, trying to get him to have a "real" drink



Joe Tarto and his Orchestra, Circa 1920, when they played at Roseland Ballroom in Newark, NJ. Notice Joe's bass sax on the floor. Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.

instead of the Coca Cola he was sipping. Joe resisted and the two of them wandered off. Joe never saw Bix again. He always felt that Bix's work and sound on records could not compare with what it was like to hear him live.

Joe was also extremely close to Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. He spoke of times that the three of them would get to a recording session early and head up to the roof of the building. They would take turns dangling each other over the side of the



The Boswell Sisters radio show for Baker's Chocolate. Joe can be seen between Martha and Connie (seated on the piano). Notice Eddie Lang kneeling at front left, holding a Baker's Chocolate bar. Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.



Joe and friends "clown" around at the 1964 Worlds Fair. Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.

building, two guys holding the other fellow's legs. They would also take turns racing around the top ledge. Sometimes it's hard for us to remember that these musicians we idolize were also just fun loving kids. I remember Joe telling me this story and the sheepish expression on his face when his wife, upon hearing it exclaimed "It's a good thing that I didn't know what was going on!"

As radio became more popular Joe got even busier. At the peak of his career he kept a bass in a locker at all three networks and just went from studio to studio by cab, doing shows all day long. Some of them only 15 minutes long. This practice also extended into the early years of television in the late '40s and early '50s, where he played on Milton Berle's and Ed Wynn's shows.

There has always been a lot of interest in the 7-foot-tall tuba that Joe had made by the King company. It was his idea to have a horn the he could keep in a stand and switch quickly between the tuba and bass in the Broadway show "Rain or Shine".



Although Joe was told it was the only horn made that way, he later found out that they made seven such monsters. The horn can be played standing or sitting, by turning a valve that shuts off one of the lead pipes and opens the other. It plays quite well in tune and today has a proud home in the corner of my dining room. Later he played the horn as a feature on tour with Paul Lavalle's "Band of America" and composed a march for the band called "Big Joe the Tuba." I had the honor of playing this a number of times in various concert bands, sitting next to Joe.

When I hear these gems today, I can feel the energy and enthusiasm in every note Joe plays. To me they sound as fresh as the day they were recorded. He was the ultimate professional and not a day goes by when I don't think about him. Joe very rarely had a bad word to say about anyone, and I never heard anyone say a bad word about him. That's certainly something in life we can all strive for! 🎵

Joe with his new horn, the day after he got it. (1928)
Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.



Joe, with "Big Joe", on the dining room table in his Somerville, NJ home. Circa 1975. Photo courtesy Brian Nalepka.

HISTORICAL NOTE

TIME PERIOD: Late 1978 early 1979.

When E. McGoons at 630 Clay St. was torn down and the Rathskeller was chosen as a temporary location for the Turk Murphy Band (which only lasted about 6 months,) the band had no home. I put traditional jam sessions together at the Serenader in Oakland using Jim Leigh on trombone because Turk preached at me for years how he hated jam sessions. He heard about these sessions and came over to the Serenader and sat in front of Jim and stared him into making a lot of mistakes made by the nervousness of the situation.

All of sudden Turk wanted to be involved in these jam sessions, but was mad at me for not inviting him. He then put his own sessions togetherwith Ev at the Serenader. This went on for a while until the Embarcadero E. McGoons came alongand I was out of the Band in 30 days....there were other reasons for my departure but not totally connected with the Serenader. ♪

Leon Oakley.

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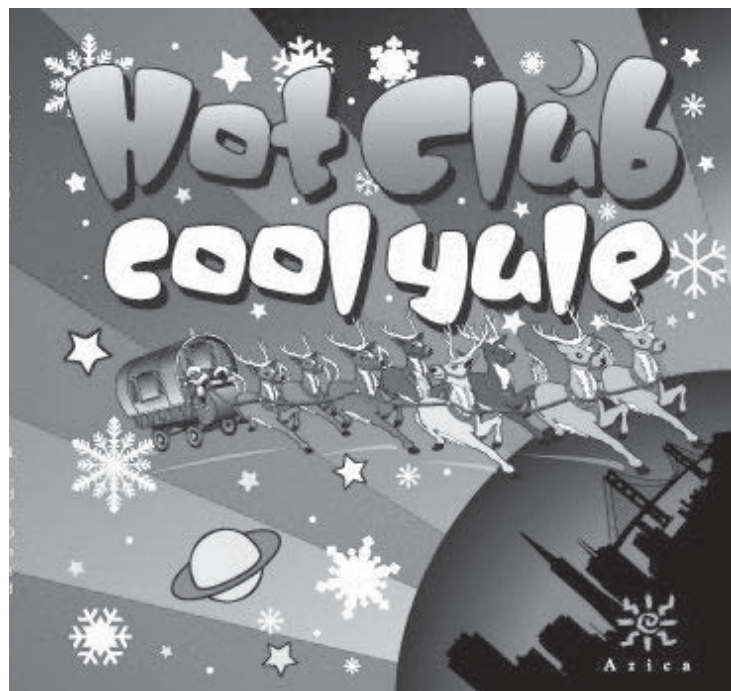
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SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION

Created as a non-profit in 1981, the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation stated, as its primary mission, the archival preservation of thousands of items related to the West Coast Jazz Revival that began in San Francisco about 1939. In 2009 SFTJF completed the transfer of the main body of those materials to the Stanford University's Music Library. Thereupon, your Foundation's Archive was closed; possible donors of jazz materials should now contact Stanford or other public repositories.

SFTJF's wider, ongoing aim is to help foster high-quality traditional jazz, regionally and worldwide. That mission is now carried out primarily via electronic media. The Foundation's main window on the world is our website -- www.sftradjazz.org -- where visitors are invited to become members at \$25 per year.

Benefits of membership include insider information and discounts to special events and products, and a subscription to our lively newsletter, the Cricket, now available electronically. Those wishing to continue receiving the Cricket on paper in the mail should please contact the SFTJF office manager.

Thank you for your generous support over the years. Contributions in categories beyond the basic membership level are tax deductible, and the names of those contributors are published annually (unless a contributor specifies anonymity).

DONATIONS WELCOMED



The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation accepts gifts and grants in many forms, including historical items which shed further light on the history of traditional jazz on the West Coast, such as recordings, music, newspaper clippings, photographs and correspondence. Contributions of materials or funds are tax-deductible under IRS ruling status 501(c)(3).

SF JAZZ ON THE WEB

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation has an ever-expanding web site. The site includes sound files and photos of many San Francisco (and other) jazz figures from the 1930s to the present. Please visit us at www.sftradjazz.org. Join (or rejoin) the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation today to begin taking advantage of reservations to special events, discounts on selected jazz books and recordings, and a year's subscription to *The Frisco Cricket*. If you are already a member, give the gift of Foundation membership to a friend! Use the form at right.

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*Specially priced two-CD set. Members: \$16; non-members: \$20.

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Jazz West 2 , by K.O. Ecklund, published by Donna Ewald <i>The A-to-Z guide to west coast jazz music; a unique source.</i>	\$12	\$15	_____	\$ _____
Preservation Hall , by William Carter <i>Lavish 315 pp. Softbound. Drew national rave reviews. Autographed on request.</i>	\$45	\$60	_____	\$ _____
The Great Jazz Revival , by Pete Clute & Jim Goggin <i>The story of the San Francisco jazz revival</i>	\$10	\$15	_____	\$ _____
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