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Edited by Dick Parker and Jim Torok

About Coda

Coda is the e-mail supplement to the Twin Cities Jazz Society *JazzNotes*. *Coda*, emailed by the first of each month, contains items too new or lengthy for the printed version of *JazzNotes*, and is available free to all TCJS members who give us their email address. Readers are encouraged to submit CD reviews, news items and articles to torok001@umn.edu. Please e-mail *Coda* as an attachment to friends who might be interested in joining the Twin Cities Jazz Society. They can send an e-mail to tcjsnews@usinternet.com or call (763) 862-5694.

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BOOK REVIEW

Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life

By Wynton Marsalis, with Geoffrey C. Ward

Reviewed by Jim Torok

Wynton Marsalis, right, is a unique and extremely important figure in jazz. He first gained fame as the top classical trumpet virtuoso in the world, recording virtually every important classical piece with top symphony orchestras. It was a surprise when he decided to devote himself to jazz. Unlike almost any other jazz musician, he feels that all jazz styles, from the oldest to the newest, deserve to be played, just as classical musicians feel that the music of the oldest composers deserve to be played as well as that of contemporary composers. Therefore he plays jazz from all periods, with great skill and respect. He is now the artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.



This book is especially interesting and important. Marsalis tells how he was trained to play jazz, and the lessons he learned along the way. He tells why improvisation is a more truthful means of composing than written arrangements. He explains what makes a jazz performance good, and what makes it trivial.

The writing in is especially good, and a joy to read. I have quoted extensively from the book, and put the author's writing in quotation marks.

“Now That’s Jazz” — an excerpt



Danny Barker

“In the early 70s...when the scent of revolution still rode the wind, the last thing anyone hip was thinking about was handkerchief-head, Uncle Tommin’ shufflin’ and grinning-for-tourists Dixieland music. Just the name alone made you hate it. ... So when my father said he was taking me and my brother Branford to play in a band for kids led by Danny Barker, the legendary banjo and guitar player, all we could envision was cartoon music or some type of old-school obsequiousness. What was a banjo, anyway? Something they played for Fredrick Douglass?

Actually, Danny Barker had played banjo and guitar with everybody from Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet, and Jelly Roll Morton to James P. Johnson and Cab Calloway, but we didn’t know who any of those people were. We were living in Kenner,

Louisiana, at the time. Branford was nine. I was eight. It took my father

about half an hour to drive us to New Orleans, to the empty lot where Mr. Barker’s Fairview Baptist Church Brass Band was rehearsing.

There we met an old man whom I presumed to be Mr. Barker. He was a colorful character, full of fire and stories well told. He loved New Orleans music and he loved kids. **That day he taught us us the most profound lesson about playing jazz—and about the possibility of a life of self-expression and mutual respect—that I’ve ever encountered.”**

He started with the drums: ‘The bass drum and the cymbal are the key to the whole thing. We play in four. One, two, three, four. The bass drum plays on one and three and the cymbal on two and four. It’s like they answer each other. So when the bass drum goes bummp, you answer with the cymbal—chhh.’

1	2	3	4
bummp	chhh,	bummp	chhh
1	2	3	4
bummp	chhh,	bah-bummp	bummp
			chhh

‘Now on that second fourth beat, the cymbal and the bass drum agree with each other.... And when you hit them two at the same time, now, that’s jazz.’

‘You see,’ he explained, ‘you gotta bounce around with your parts and you gotta skip the rhythm, just like you’re dancing.’

Then he went to the tuba. ‘Now, the tuba, that’s the biggest instrument out here. You play big notes and leave space. Big things move slow.’ He sang some tuba lines. ‘You are related to the bass drum. The two of y’all are down there, so you got to stay with each other. Y’all are the floor—the foundation if the beat.’

The tuba started playing. Mr. Barker said, ‘You got to play with feeling. And when you play with feeling, on the bottom, you bounce.’ So he started bouncing. Then the tuba and the drums started playing around. And he said, ‘You gotta mix it up *and* you gotta play together!’ Then after they made some low, grumbling noise, he said ‘Now, that’s jazz.’

Then he turned to the trombone. ‘What do you have that nobody else has?’

‘The slide,’ the boy said.

‘That’s right. In jazz, you always hold up the thing that makes you different from other people. Be proud of being you. You play a low instrument. The lower you go, the slower the rhythms get. So I want you to play this kind of part.’ And he sang the part. ‘Every now and then, rrrhhhhrrraawwmmmp, I want you to slide up up, *rip* up, to a note. Tear it up.’ The tuba, drums, and trombone started playing together and sounded terrible. But Mr Barker said, ‘That’s jazz music!’

‘Then he addressed the trumpet players. He said, ‘Now, the trumpet is the lead instrument. You got to be strong. You play the melody’. So he taught us a melody, ‘Li’l Liza Jane.’ We started playing. And after we’d played the melody and inflicted a few painful injuries, he said, ‘Play the notes with personality. Shake ‘em! Play around with ‘em. And play with rhythm. You’ve got to bounce too.’ Everything he wanted us to do he sang first. So we played the song with everyone else, and it sounded like noise. Yeah, it definitely sounded terrible, but it seemed like it might eventually be some kind of fun.

Then he went to the clarinet player. ‘Now, you see all these keys you got. You can play fast, play high, higher than a trumpet; you can play fast skips and trills and such. That makes you different from these trumpet players. Is want y’all to do those things every now and then. Play the same melody as the trumpet but up one octave.’ The clarinet players squeaked and squawked. Mr. Barker listened. Then he said, ‘Everything you do, you got to do with personality. Scoop and bend and slide those notes.’ They tried to do that.

Mr. Barker said, ‘That’s jazz! Now, let’s hear clarinets and trumpets on the melody. But when y’all play together, you got to talk to one another. The clarinet has to fill when the trumpet leaves space, and the trumpet has to leave that space.’ So we tried to play together. The clarinet has to fill when the trumpet leaves space, and the trumpet has to leave that space.’ So we tried to play together. The clarinet played the melody up an octave, adding some fast notes but still squeaking and squawking. Terrible. Then Mr. Barker said, ‘Let’s put it all together, ‘Little Liza Jane.’” It was the most cacophonous. Disjointed thing you ever heard in your life.

‘Gentlemen,’ he enthusiastically concluded, ‘now, that’s jazz.’

If you look at the New Orleans jazz scene today, a lot of the best musiscians—Lucien Barbarin (trombone), Shannon Powell (drums) Michael White (clarinet) and many others, all played with Danny Barker’s Fairview Brass Band. And he was telling us something too: You are creative, whoever you are. Respect your own creativity and respect the creativity and creative space of other people.”

Discovering the joy of swinging

The modern jazz that Wynton's father played was very different from the music that was popular with the general population. The rhythm and blues that the people loved to sing and dance to was very much more popular than what Wynton's father played.

Marsalis discovered R&B (Rhythm and Blues) at the age of four or five in the front room of a tiny wood-frame house in Little Farms, Louisiana. "I remember it was dark in there, lit only by soft colored lights, and a lot of grownups, men and women were snapping their fingers on two and four and grooving to an R&B song. Some sang the words, but they were *all* dancing up a healthy sweat. I didn't know what was going on back then, but I could tell it was something good—so good I wasn't supposed to be around it."

Well, actually, no one could miss it. R&B was always on the radio: "Baby this" and "Baby that"... everybody knew those songs and everybody loved them.

"Now, jazz was different. That's what my father played: modern jazz. No one danced to it, ever. That had something to do with rhythm. The backbeat of R&B was steady and unchanging. The rhythms my daddy and his friends played were ever changing and many, a torrent of ideas that came together and felt good. I later came to know it as swing."

"The first jazz gigs I remember going to with my older brother Branford were like recitals. Only a handful of older people turned up... I noticed that very few black people seemed to like this kind of music. As a matter of fact, so few people understood it, I wondered why my father and his friends bothered to play it at all."

"Because jazz musicians improvise under the pressure of time, what's inside comes out pure. It's like being pressed to answer a question before you have a chance to get your lie straight. The first thought is usually the truth."

"Jazz allows the musician to instantly communicate exactly how he or she experiences life as it is felt, and the instant honesty of that revelation shocks listeners into sharing and experiencing that feeling, too."

"I learned that jazz has the power to help anyone willing to engage it. Some people think music communicates only when it accompanies lyrics — that's why pop music almost always has words. But as in all art, whether we encounter a great play or poem or painting, artists can carry us to a common place: When they cry, we cry; when they are excited, we become excited. And jazz music, because it is mostly wordless, allows musicians to express deeper, more varied, and ever changing states of being. It can provide musicians and listeners alike with a sense of self, a concept of romance, a more comfortable physicality, a deeper understanding of other human beings. It is an endless road of discovery leading to more maturity and acceptance of personal responsibility, a greater respect for cultures around the world, an invigorating playfulness, an excitement about change, and an appetite for the unpredictable. It gives you a historical perspective, a spiritual acceptance of necessary opposites, and an undying optimism born of the blues—and a pile of good listening." The most popular music of my youth thrilled people with illusion, sentimentality, and showmanship. Music was just one of the tools we employed to create excitement. "The jazzman's objective, however, was solely

musical: Through his improvisation, he wanted to take people deep into his actual feelings and his world.”

“Ironically, I was in the same position Bix Beiderbecke found himself in when he first heard jazz music as a teenager in Davenport, Iowa, in 1917. Most of the people around him thought jazz was some kind of hokum, a gimmicky fad. But through intense listening, Bix could hear past all that ignorance and racism and learn to hear the differences among black groups, white hokum groups and white groups like the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, who could really play. Bix set out to become an artist himself, even though pursuing those objectives would drive him farther and farther away from the world in which he grew up.

Speaking the language of jazz

When bass players started using electric amplifiers to defend themselves against loud drummers, one of the most fundamental checks and balances in jazz was altered. The softest instrument became one of the loudest—if not the loudest—and was set free to wreak havoc. And it does.

Most popular music today is vamp-based. The bass and drums repeat the same two-or four bar phrases for the duration of the song. This repetitive groove is infectious and easy for the dancers to follow.

With jazz the bass moves around and grooves, and the swingin interaction of bass and drums leads dancers into a dynamic relationship with one another and with the music. Because Americans didn’t hold on to swing as the national dance, youngsters took to the simpler, mindlessly repetitive, booty-shaking grooves we still love today. Since the advent of the Twist, fewer and fewer people have experienced the romantic interplay of swinging, Lindy Hop couple dancing.

Everybody’s music: the blues

“I’ve always played some form of the blues. You couldn’t help it if you lived in New Orleans. One of the first songs I learned at eight years old was a blues, Joe Avery’s ‘Second Line’ [Now known as Joe Avery’s Blues]. In high school I played with a funk band, and even after a night of big-afro-platform-show-backbeat, we would still play ‘Second Line’.” But the actual depth of expression of the blues was not there. We never heard anybody play who made us consider it. Or if we did, our tastes were so shaped by the popular music we played, danced to and listened to, we wouldn’t have recognized it.

“When I first got to New York the older musicians had no respect for what I played. Virtuosity? Yes. Substance? No. One night Ray Brown and Milt Jackson called me up on the bandstand. I was eighteen or so and playing all fast. So what do you think they put on me? Slow, slow blues. I mean *slow*. What could I do? I went into super-fast runs, hit some high notes, repeated one thing over and over again, circular breathed, exhausted the whole lexicon of things we did in my generation to get applause. Most of the people in the club that night knew what jazz was supposed to sound like, so I didn’t get the type of house I was accustomed to getting. Still I hoped my playing didn’t sound as sad as I knew it was. All hope of that was shattered when Milt asked me, ‘You notice the difference between how it sounded before you came up there and after you came up

there?’ I said, ‘Yeah, I heard that.’ ‘You know what the difference was?’ ‘What?’ ‘You wasn’t up there!’ ”

The message is that how fast a performer can twiddle his fingers is not important – the amount of feeling and expression one can play with is important.

What it takes — and how it feels to play

“Success in music, as in a lot of fields, depends on your willingness to address deficiencies in your talent. Even Charlie Parker had to practice a lot.”

“A lot of young musicians suffer from almost total ignorance of American music and dance. Some of it can be attributed to bad education, but much of it is apathy. You may have no musical vocabulary. You may never have played with anybody or heard people play, or you may be off in the middle of nowhere, where no one is even thinking about listening, let alone playing. But even there you can find recordings; they’re always accessible. Anyone with access to a computer can get them...if you’re hungry enough, you can access knowledge of culture, art, self.”

The great coming together

“Jazz was created by people who were freed from slavery, people who were the very least of society...

And there are the direct modern assaults on *what are thought to be* the brown skinned elements of the music by those who denigrate the blues and hold that swing—the rhythm that defines jazz—is archaic, regardless of how it’s played. This forwards the notion that we’ve innovated ourselves into European art music or some poorly played mélange of Latin-Indian-African music.”

“Another obsession born of racism is the endless search for the answer to an essentially pointless question: Who does this music belong to? To try to answer it you have to engage in the futility of deciding which color of person plays it best. Well, if Louis



Wynton Marsalis playing with a New Orleans brass band and second line.

Armstrong was the best and he

was dark-skinned, then jazz must be the province of the dark-skinned Negro. Are there some... white skinned musicians—Bix Beiderbecke for example—who are better than the next dark-skinned trumpet player in line? Who is the dark skinned soprano

saxophone player who plays better than the light-skinned Creole Sidney Bechet? Nobody. What percentage of black blood do you have to have to qualify? What about Django Reinhardt? He's a gypsy from Belgium."

Lessons from the masters

"The notion that you must obliterate the fundamentals of an art to have an important and powerful contemporary identity is almost impossible to fight. There are generations of academics dedicated to this misconception, and they're not just going to go away. There are too many students left to ruin... The stuff that people still call *avant-garde* was worked out in Germany in the early part of the twentieth century. It came to jazz fifty years later, and now – more than fifty years after that – it's still less modern than the music King Oliver's band was playing in the 1920s.

Jelly Roll Morton and Sidney Bechet were the two great traveling missionaries for New Orleans music. But Morton was the first to write down New Orleans polyphony—the clarinet, trumpet and trombone lines, all playing different melodies at once.

That thing with no name

"I've never understood why many consider creativity to be the mysterious province of some small, specialized group of people. Whenever I teach improvisation to young kids who are too shy to just go for whatever they can, I explain, 'It's so easy. Just make up stuff. Yes, play anything that comes to mind, fingers or lips. Louder! Wilder! That's it. You're improvising.' After they produce a symphony of painful but free-spirited notes, I add, 'I told you it was easy. It's only hard if you want to sound good.'"

The next step is to study the music itself, to learn from it. "The writer Leonard Feather once asked Monk, 'What about something new?'. Monk answered, 'Let somebody else come up with something new. What about something good?' "

HOLIDAY MUSIC EVENTS

Century Jazz Ensemble will swing on Dec. 14

The Century Jazz Ensemble will celebrate the holidays in concert Sunday, **Dec.14**. The performance will be a big band special feature, "Charts of the Season." The music will highlight some great holiday tunes from Kenton, Ellington, Kubis as well as some of the Ensemble's band members. Twin Cities vocalist Debbie O'Keefe will join the group on some classics including "White Christmas" and a new arrangement of "Jingle Bells" by John Clayton. Also on the concert program will be the CC Septet, winding their way through a Tim Lackas arrangement of "Little Drummer Boy." The 3 p.m. concert is free (as usual) and a reception will follow the performance. Century College is at 3300 Century Avenue North, White Bear Lake. FFI call Larry Neumann at (651) 747-4033 or email larry.neumann@century.edu.
— *News Release*

'A JazzMN Holiday' features Connie Evingson

Connie Evingson joins the JazzMN Big Band in a special presentation "A JazzMN Holiday" on Saturday, **December 20**, at Hopkins High School.

This performance, billed as "a holiday concert like no other," spans a wide range of styles and repertoire. Highlights include Duke Ellington, Wayne Bergeron and Connie Evingson arrangements of selections from the "Nutcracker Suite," Diana Krall's swinging version of "Jingle Bells," Gordon Goodwin's "Yo Tannenbaum," and a Tom Kubis arrangement of "O Holy Night" featuring an exhilarating Maynard Ferguson-type lead trumpet solo. In addition, the program will include works from the renowned Airmen of Note and arrangements from local composers Dean Sorenson and Wade Clark. Evingson, a Twin Cities favorite vocalist, will perform a number of selections from her CD "The Secret of Christmas."



JazzMN is offering a special price on this concert to a party of four for \$81. Tickets are available at TicketWorks (www.ticketworks.com, 651-209-6689).

"A JazzMN Holiday" will take place in the Hopkins High School Performing Arts Center, 2400 Lindberg Drive, Minnetonka. The performance begins at 7:30 pm.

For more information, contact JazzMN at www.jazzmn.org (612-242-4791).

— *News Release*

Russ Peterson's Big Band lights Yule log at Old Log

Russ Peterson's Big Band will be "Swinging All the Way" when it celebrates the holidays with a concert at the Old Log Theater on Monday, **Dec. 15**. The program will start at 8 p.m.

The band, increased to 20 outstanding musicians for this concert, will feature Christmas music made popular by other big bands. Great bands like Glenn Miller, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Les Brown and others had their own special arrangements of the holiday songs that have become favorites over the years. The concert will also feature two of the area's top vocalists, Patty Peterson and Bob Glenn.

This is a holiday concert the whole family will enjoy. Tickets are \$22, with discounts for groups of 15 or more. A holiday dinner is available prior to the performance.

For complete information and reservations, call the Old Log Theater at 952-474-5951.

— *News Release*

Toot your own horn at Tuba Christmas

Euphonium, baritone, tuba and sousaphone players are invited to join the ensemble for the 2008 edition of Tuba Christmas, a Twin Cities tradition that usually attracts about 100 low-brass players.

This year's concert will be Sunday, **Dec. 14**, at Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St., St. Paul. Registration is at 2 p.m., rehearsal at 2:30 and the performance at 4:00 in the sanctuary.

Registration is \$5; music books, Tuba Christmas hat and scarf are available for \$15 each. Bring your own stand if needed, and decorate your horn if you wish.

Parking is free. For maps to the church and parking see www.cpestpaul.org/directions.html. For further information call Carol Jensen at (612) 788-3516 or e-mail cmj01a@msn.com.

— *News Release*

Eartha Kitt cancels Minneapolis concerts

Singer Eartha Kitt, whose purring rendition of "Santa Baby" became an enduring holiday hit in 1953, has canceled her **Dec. 12 and 13** concerts at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis. Diahann Carroll has stepped in to sing with the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by Mischa Santora. The reason Kitt canceled was not immediately available. She'll be 82 in January and has had some health problems in recent years but hasn't slowed down much.

The orchestra will play Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" and Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" in the first half of the program, then Carroll will sing Christmas tunes and other numbers. Tickets are \$22 to \$53. Concerts start at 8 p.m., and the Orchestra Hall website (http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org/season/event_detail.cfm?id_event=8090030) includes a traffic and parking advisory: Evening Holidazzle parades on the Nicollet Mall mean that concertgoers should allow extra time. For tickets, go online or call 612-371-5656.

— *Dick Parker*

Tickets all gone for 'Crosby and the Andrews Sisters'

"Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters' Swing Revue" on **Dec. 21** is sold out. The "Jazz From J to Z" concert featuring Arne Fogel, Kathy Mueller, Aimee Fischer And Lisa Pallen is co-sponsored by the Bloomington Center for the Arts and the Twin Cities Jazz Society.

Butch Thompson to record Christmas radio show at the Dakota, follow up with annual hometown concert

Jazz pianist Butch Thompson will record the 2008 Christmas edition of his radio show "Jazz Originals" on Sunday, **December 7th**, at the Dakota Jazz Club, 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis.

A specially assembled quartet with Thompson at the piano will play a short warmup set at 6 pm, then the one-hour live recording is set for 7 pm, followed by an extremely informal set — probably featuring Santa himself — to wrap things up by 9:30 pm.

Tickets are \$10 at the door, \$5 for members of KBEM radio. For more information, email Butch at buttel@mac.com.

The show recorded that evening will air on Jazz88 radio (88.5 FM) on Sunday, December 21st at 6 pm and repeat on Thursday, December 25th — Christmas Day — at 8 pm. These are the regular slots — Sunday and Thursday nights — that the show, now in its 16th year, is carried every week on Jazz88.

"Jazz Originals" focuses on the first generation of jazz musicians — Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, and many other early giants who were there when the music was born.

‘Home For Christmas’ Dec. 14

Thompson will play his annual "Home for Christmas" benefit concert at 4 pm on Sunday, **December 14th**, in his hometown, Marine-on-St. Croix, Minn., in the historic Village Hall, site of Thompson's first public performance at age 11. The concert combines traditional holiday music and Thompson's well-known New Orleans piano style, from a bluesy "Silent Night" to the stomping "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Santa Claus has been signed for his annual appearance, with the usual loose arrangement — his contract contains the phrase "sometime between 3 and 4:30 pm" — and will assist with the door prize drawing and conduct the traditional sing-along finale.

Tickets are available in person at the Marine General Store, or if there's still time (call and ask), send a check made out to Marine Restoration Society and a self addressed, stamped envelope to Marine Restoration Society, P. O. Box 274, Marine, MN 55047. The price is \$22. For more information, phone 651-433-2049.

The town of Marine is on the St. Croix River, 10 miles north of Stillwater on Minnesota Highway 95.

— *News release*

Maud Hixson makes her New York debut

Minnesota's own Maud Hixson, a former TCJS board member, made her New York City debut on December 2 at the Duplex, the oldest cabaret in Greenwich Village.

She'll be there again on Tuesday, December 9. In case you're in the Big Apple, the Duplex (www.theduplex.com) is at 61 Christopher Street (at 7th Avenue), phone 212-255-5438. Show starts at 7 p.m.; cover charge is \$15.

"Mickey and Maud: Maud Hixson Sings the Music of Michael (Mickey) Leonard" is the first one-person show devoted to Michael Leonard ("I'm All Smiles," "Why Did I Choose You?"). It's directed by Erv Raible, with musical direction and arrangements by Tex Arnold and vocal advising by Laurel Massé and Shirley Callaway.

And Mickey Leonard himself has made this comment about Maud, as quoted on www.maudhixson.com:

"If Maud Hixson were a dish (which, by the way, she is) the recipe would go like this: Start with a generous portion of Doris Day, fold in some Peggy Lee, add a dollop of Blossom Dearie and top off with a pinch of Nancy LaMott. Listen attentively, serve immediately."

Her appearances were made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

— News releases



Photo: Brooks Peterson

Dakota Combo Performs With Irvin Mayfield at the Dakota on December 6th

By Andrea Canter

What if we had the opportunity to hear the next Charlie Parker and Miles Davis before they graduated from high school? They may not mature into such legendary figures, but the student artists of the new edition of the Dakota Combo are surely on their way to careers as exciting and committed musicians. On Saturday, December 6th, the septet will perform on the stage of the Dakota Jazz Club with trumpet star Irvin Mayfield. Mayfield and the Combo will also present an open clinic and jam session for area students on the morning of the 6th, also at the Dakota.

The Dakota Combo Project

Under the leadership of local trumpet virtuoso/composer/educator Kelly Rossum, The Dakota Combo held its first auditions in fall 2006 as a joint project of the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education and the MacPhail Center for Music, where Rossum directs the jazz program. Graduates of the first two seasons have gone on to study at such prestigious college programs as the Brubeck Institute, Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory and more. Notes Rossum, the Combo program “provides the loftiest goal and final challenge to the state’s top high school jazz musicians. Plus, it inspires all student jazz musicians to pursue their own goals in music.”

Throughout the school year, the Combo musicians participate in biweekly rehearsals with Rossum at MacPhail, where one emphasis is professionalism. “One of my primary goals is to bridge the gap between a student ensemble and a professional ensemble,” says Rossum. “There are different requirements and expectations assigned to each type of group. I try to overlay the professional requirements upon the student group and create a positive working environment for them as young musicians. I hold them accountable to professional standards, yet remain flexible enough to allow them to learn from their mistakes and grow as individuals.”

In addition to rehearsal, clinic and performance with Mayfield, the 2008-09 septet will perform at the annual Minnesota Music Educators Association conference in February, tour area schools, perform in the final Jazz Thursdays concert at MacPhail in May, and at the Twin Cities Jazz Festival in June.



The Dakota Jazz Combo for 2008-09

Photo: Andrea Canter

Meet the Combo

Eighteen student musicians auditioned for the Combo in September, playing with a rhythm section and judged by some of the area's most acclaimed jazz artists. Of the selection process, Rossum noted that he had anticipated a relatively small pool as only those with considerable experience were encouraged to audition. "There were many students who have the passion, but just do not have the skill set (yet) for participation," he noted. "Among those who did audition, the talent pool was spectacular." Rossum was also impressed with another group who were designated as alternates this year. "There were another six to eight students at the same high level as those chosen for the group, a fantastic reflection of the talent pool here in Minnesota. As the program continues to mature, I believe the number of extremely talented students who audition will continue to grow."

The 2008-09 Dakota Combo features returning seniors Jake Baldwin, trumpet (Minnetonka H.S.) and Cory Grindberg, bass (Minneapolis South H.S.); and new members, seniors Ryan Freitas, saxophones (Willmar H.S.), Tony Pistilli, tenor saxophone (Providence Academy, Wayzata); Carson King-Fournier, trombone (Apple Valley H.S.); Joe Strachan, piano (Northfield H.S.); and junior Cameron LeCrone, drums (Minnetonka H.S.). Each has his own sources of inspiration and plans for the future.

Jake Baldwin started trumpet in sixth grade, he says, "because it was between that and choir, and if you've ever heard me sing, well, be glad I play trumpet." Hearing Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra pulled him into jazz, while Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk are other sources of inspiration. Jake notes that he wanted to continue the Combo experience for a second year because "I wanted something that would push my limits as a musician and develop my strengths in improvising....I want to be able not only play the music but to have some kind of a personal connection with it."

Between the jazz recordings he heard at home and music at his family's church, multi-saxman **Ryan Freitas** was surrounded by music growing up. His interest in jazz grew after participating in the All-State Jazz Band two years ago. His sources of inspiration are as varied as his saxophones, from John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins and Michael Brecker to more out players like Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman and such nonjazz artists as Marvin Gaye and Cold Play. Ryan regards the Dakota Combo as "an incredible opportunity to play with the best kids in Minnesota. I am so honored to be a part of it... and playing with Irvin Mayfield will be pretty cool, too."

At 13, **Tony Pistilli** quit activities like Boy Scouts and Tae Kwan Do and began spending his free time practicing his saxophone. His first big influence was Sonny Rollins, and he also draws inspiration from local saxophonist Michael Lewis of Happy Apple and Fat Kid Wednesdays, "both because of his killing music, and because he seems like an average guy who is making it in the music world." He counts among his favorite recordings Rollins' *Tenor Madness*, Coltrane's *One Down, One Up*, and the Shostakovich String Quartets. The Dakota Combo will give Tony more playing opportunities, and a chance "to learn from the rest of the Combo so I can improve my own playing."

Carson King-Fournier "hated the trombone until 7th grade where I started to get some solos in jazz band...I thought this was sweet, and I loved trombone ever since." For

Carson, however, jazz is a sideline to his primary interest in classical music. Among jazz trombonists, Carson cites J. J. Johnson, Kai Winding, Conrad Herwig, Steve Turre, and Bart Van Lier, and more broadly likes Miles Davis, Marcus Miller, Stan Getz, Tito Puente, Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, and Joe Zawinul. Carson was an alternate for the Dakota Combo last year, and auditioned “because of the reputation it has in the jazz community... I hope that it will beef up my improvisational skills so I can take some more to college [and] get a greater understanding of jazz as a genre of music.”

Pianist **Joe Strachan** first studied classical music, switching to jazz in eighth grade. Joe cites as historic influences Ornette Coleman, Wayne Shorter, Charles Mingus, and Keith Jarrett, while more contemporary sources of inspiration include Adam Linz, Bryan Nichols, Michael Lewis, Chris Morrissey, JT Bates, Craig Taborn and Tim Berne. All-time favorite recordings include *Please Refrain From Fronting* (Happy Apple), *Set One* (Fat Kid Wednesdays), and *The Shape of Jazz to Come* (Ornette Coleman). A finalist in the 2008 Jazz Piano Scholarship Competition sponsored by the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education and Schubert Club, Joe regards the Dakota Combo as an “opportunity to perform original music in a professional type setting...I hope to learn more about jazz arranging and to strengthen my skills as a combo player.”

Bassist **Cory Grindberg** started guitar lessons in 5th grade and bass the following year. His interest in jazz was fueled by his lack of interest in classical music: “Basically the real music that challenged me was jazz and classical. I wasn't interested in classical, so I went to jazz,” he explains. Among his sources of inspiration, Cory cites Charles Mingus, Les Claypool and Jaco Pastorius. Returning for a second year with Dakota Combo, Cory notes that “I auditioned for the Dakota Combo because I wanted an opportunity to play with some of the best jazz musicians in the metro area. I think playing with such players will improve my overall playing and listening ability.”

Junior **Cameron LeCrone** has been playing drums since he was six or seven, when his dad, also a drummer, first set up a drum kit in the basement. “My older brother Geoff, who was a member of the Dakota Combo last year [on guitar], really inspired me to get serious about my playing.” Other sources of inspiration include “anything with Art Blakey, Tony Williams, Frankie Dunlop or Brian Blade.” Cameron first saw the Dakota Combo perform two years ago “and I got an even better perspective of it when my older brother was a member last year. Small group jazz is my favorite style to play... I feel blessed to have this opportunity to play with such talented musicians, and I hope to grow as a musician through this experience. It's pretty cool when the drummer is treated as a member of the group rather than the guy in the back.”

Irvin Mayfield, Guest Artist

From a city rich in its heritage of jazz in general and jazz trumpet in particular, New Orleans native Irvin Mayfield has managed to attain a favorite son reputation despite his mere 30 years. A protégé of Wynton Marsalis and cofounder of the popular Los Hombres Caliente, more recently Mayfield has served his city and state as cultural ambassador, a responsibility he has taken even farther in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. His own father one of Katrina's victims, Mayfield has promoted his musical message of rebirth at venues worldwide, including in this past winter with his big band at Minnesota Orchestra Hall and Quintet at the Dakota Jazz Club. In September, Mayfield was named the first Artistic Director of Jazz for the Minnesota Orchestra, and will curate a five-concert series at

Orchestra Hall in 2009. As part of his tenure in the Twin Cities, Mayfield will also work with the jazz ensemble at St. Paul Central High School and direct a student jazz clinic and festival in spring 2009.

December 6th Performance and Clinic

The Dakota Combo performance with Irvin Mayfield will take place on Saturday night, December 6, from 8-11 pm on the stage of the Dakota Jazz Club. Tickets are \$12 and reservations are highly recommended for what is sure to be a sold-out show. On Saturday morning (10:30 am – Noon), Mayfield will direct a free, public student jazz clinic at the Dakota. All student musicians are welcome (as well as any observers) – bring your instruments!

The Dakota Jazz Club is located at 1010 Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis; www.dakotacooks.com. For further information about the Dakota Combo, visit www.dakotacomborg.org. The Dakota Combo is funded through donations to the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education; please visit www.dfje.org for information about the Foundation and to make a donation.

Gigs

Lee Engele

December 6th, Dakota County Steakhouse — 7:00 - 11:00 PM. 14201 Nicollet Avenue S., Burnsville - Free. With Phil Aaron - piano, Graydon Peterson - bass, Doug Haining - sax, and Nathan Norman - drums.

December 13th, Sage Wine Bar — 7:00 - 10:00 PM. Hwy 110 & Dodd Road, Mendota Heights - No Cover. With Joel Shapira on guitar and Larry McDonough on piano.

December 17th, Fireside Pizza — 7:00 - 9:00 PM. 6736 Penn Avenue South, Richfield - No Cover. Sitting in for Charmin! Appearing with Denny Malmberg on the keys.

December 19th, Jensen's Supper Club — 6:30 to 10:30 PM. 3840 Sibley Memorial Highway, Eagan - No Cover. Appearing with the Ed Thorpe Trio.

December 27th, Club Saratoga, Duluth, Minn. — 3:00 to 7:00 PM. 331 Canal Park, - No Cover. With Paul Ierino - piano, Mike Johnson - bass, Jeff Peabody - drums. Fun club in fabulous Canal Park on Lake Superior!

ALSO: Check out the Jazz Vocalists of MN Showcase at The Sage Wine Bar on December 20th, 7 to 10 PM

Maud Hixson

December 13th and 14th, Heights Theater — 2 p.m. matinee, "The Merriest." Holiday jazz selections with pianist Rick Carlson and a showing of the 1954 film "White

Christmas," starring Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney. 3951 Central Ave. NE., Columbia Heights. Tickets \$10. (763) 788-9079

December 12th & 26th, Cue at the Guthrie Theater — 8:00 pm to midnight. With Rick Carlson, piano; Steve Pikal, bass, and Nathan Norman, drums. 806 S. 2nd St. in Minneapolis (612) 225-6499. www.cueatguthrie.com.

December 19th, The University Club, St. Paul — 8:00pm- midnight. Dickens' London Christmas and Fezziwig Ball, with the Mouldy Figs. 420 Summit Ave., (651) 222-1751; www.universityclubofstpaul.com.

December 20th, Ingredients Café — 8:00 to 11:00pm. With Reynold Philipsek, guitar. 4725 Hwy. 61 in White Bear Lake, (651) 426-6611; www.ingredientscafe.com

December 31st: Fourth Annual New Year's Eve Show at the Times — To usher in 2009, Maud and pianist Rick Carlson are back with "Let's Start The New Year Right — With Irving Berlin," celebrating the author of "White Christmas" and so many other classic popular songs. The Times Bar & Café, 201 E. Hennepin, Minneapolis. This is a 5 p.m. dinner show, so make reservations! 612-617-8098, www.timesbarandcafe.com.

Charmin Michelle

Sun / 7th - Cinema Ballroom / 7-10p / with the Jerry O'Hagan Orchestra
\$12 (\$8 for students) / free dance lessons begin at 6:15p / 1560 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul / 651-699-5910 www.cinemaballroom.com

Mon / 8th – Fireside Pizza / 7-9p / with Denny Malmberg / 6736 Penn Ave S., Richfield / 612-869-4040

Fri / 12th – White Horse Tavern / 7-11p / with the Twin Cities Jazz Imports
809 West St. Germain, St Cloud, MN / 320- 257-7775

Sat / 13th – Capri Theater / 7p / *"A Copacetic Christmas Carol"* / with the Twin Cities Seven
2027 West Broadway / 651-209-6799 / www.thecapritheatre.org

Sun / 14th - Capri Theater / 3p / *"A Copacetic Christmas Carol"* / with the Twin Cities Seven

Mon / 15th , Wed/ 17th & Mon / 22nd – Jax Café / *"Holiday with Strings"* / with Cliff Brunzell and the Golden Strings
\$75.00 per person / \$20 deposit per person is required at the time of reservation
Cocktails at 6:30 / Dinner 6:45-8:30p / Performance at 9p / 1928 University Ave NE., Minneapolis / 612-789-7297 www.jaxcafe.com

Fri / 19th – Crave / 8:30-11:30p / with the Charmin Michelle Trio: Rick Carlson – piano, Matt Senjem – bass, Nathan Norman – drums
3520 Galleria , Edina / 952- 697-6000 www.cravemn.com

Sun / 21st – Kozy's / 11a-2p / with Denny Malmberg / 3220 Galleria in Edina / 952-224-5866 www.kozyssteakandseafood.com

Sun / 21st - Cinema Ballroom / 7-10p / with the Jerry O'Hagan Orchestra
\$12 (\$8 for students) / free dance lessons begin at 6:15p / 1560 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul /
651-699-5910 www.cinemaballroom.com

Sat / 27th – CUE / 8p-12a / "Cue Jazz Experience" / The Charmin Michelle Quintet
Rick Carlson - piano, Steve Pikal - bass, Doug Haining – sax, Nathan Norman – drums
Guthrie Theater, 818 S 2nd St., Minneapolis / 612-225-6499

Sun / 28th – Kozy's / 11a-2p / with Denny Malmberg / 3220 Galleria in Edina / 952-224-
5866 www.kozyssteakandseafood.com

Sun / 28th – Cinema Ballroom / 7-10p / with the Jerry O'Hagan Orchestra
\$12 (\$8 for students) / Free dance lessons begin at 6:15p / 1560 St. Clair Ave., St. Paul /
651-699-5910 www.cinemaballroom.com

Mon / 29th – Fireside Pizza / 7-9p / with Denny Malmberg / 6736 Penn Ave. S.,
Richfield / 612-869-4040

Wed / 31st / Jax Café / with the Twin Cities Seven – *NEW YEAR'S EVE!* / Call for time
and ticket price / 1928 University Ave NE / 612-789-7297 / www.jaxcafe.com

Dean Magraw

With John Williams (accordion, concertina, flutes)

December 12, 8 p.m. — Oak Center General Store, Lake City, Minn. For directions and
reservations (highly recommended), please contact the Oak Center General Store at (507)
753 2080. www.oakcentergeneralstore.com .

December 13, 8 p.m. —Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis (612)
338-2674, www.thecedar.org

Mouldy Figs

Sundays Dec. 7 & 21 — **Mainstreet Bar & Grill**, 814 Mainstreet, Hopkins 4:00 to 7:00
p.m.

Sundays Dec. 14 & 28 — **Shamrocks Irish Nook** 995 W. 7th St. (7h and Randolph), St.
Paul, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Christine Rosholt

December 10 — **Minnesota Music Cafe — Chick Singer Night (CNC)**

499 Payne Avenue St. Paul 651-776-4699 8:00 pm \$5.00 cover

<http://www.chicksingernight.com/CSNminneapolis.html>

4 or 5 singers with CNC house band

December 17 — **CD Release: Lipstick - Live at the Dakota**

Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant, 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. \$5.00 cover,

7:00 pm to 11:00 pm <http://dakotacooks.com> . With Tanner Taylor - piano, Graydon

Peterson - bass, Jay Epstein - drums, Dave Karr - sax & flute

December 18 — Minneapolis Institute of Arts , 2400 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis. With Peter Provost - vocals, Paul Ieirno - piano Mike Johnson - bass, Jeff Peabody - drums

The St. Peter Street Stompers Jazz Band

December 12 — The Little Wagon Restaurant and Bar, 420 south 4th street downtown Minneapolis, 7:00 till 10:00 PM. New Orleans music led by Chuck DeVore.

Larry Coryell

**December 6,
Artists' Quarter**
— 8 pm & 10:30 pm, \$25. 408 St. Peter Street, St. Paul. Larry Coryell, one of the most influential guitarists in jazz and jazz/rock fusion, is making his Artists' Quarter debut. Coryell, center, will be



joined by drumming great Alphonse Mouzon, left (of Weather Report, McCoy Tyner, Coryell's The Eleventh House and other fame) and Joe Bagg, right, on B-3 organ.

Reservations are recommended: 651-292-1359; <http://www.artistsquarter.com>