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Edited by Jim Torok and Dick Parker

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 to those who choose Jazz Notes by email. Readers are encouraged to submit news items and articles to torok001@umn.edu.

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JIM FIELD: A PORTRAIT

By Nancy Hite

Jim Field has the largest Dixieland jazz band in the state, maybe in the country. The Mouldy Figs are well known to all jazz fans in the Twin Cities. I recently had a chance to sit down with Field, founder of the group, to learn about the past and present of this unique group of musicians.

Field started taking drum lessons when he was about 6 years old. In the early 1950s, a couple of years before he was in junior high school in Western Springs, Ill., a Chicago suburb, he began practicing with a junior high band that needed a drummer. The band performed some Dixieland tunes at a variety show at the school and he played his first public drum solo, which was met with huge audience applause. According to Jim, "I was hooked."

His early career included contact with later jazz greats. Clarinetist Kim Cusack (the Salty Dogs) was in that same junior high band, the 12th Street Regulars, and Jim's mother's cousin was a jazz clarinetist who worked with Jack Teagarden while Jim listened in. Jim performed with a Baptist orchestra through his church, using the noted "Billy Sunday's Successful Songs" as the playbook.

Throughout junior high Jim had his own dance band, playing for school dances, as well as continuing with the regular school band. Around 1957 his family moved to Park Ridge, Ill. He joined the football team, where he met Buzz Podewell, the jazz banjoist who became Jim's lifelong friend, and who later married jazz vocalist Banu Gibson and relocated to New Orleans.

Where did the name Mouldy Figs come from?

Writer Studs Terkel was visiting Buzz's home while Jim's band was practicing there one day. Walking through, he kidded the teenage musicians: "You guys are a bunch of moldy figs." Jim soon learned that the term was a derogatory nickname applied by musicians of the swing era (notably Benny Goodman's band) to old, uncool Dixieland tunes and the musicians who played them. Field instantly decided, "That's it!" — the name for his band. And he adopted the British spelling "to add some class."

That was 48 years ago.

Jim's original Mouldy Figs stayed together through high school, getting gigs in spite of the skyrocketing popularity of rock-and-roll. Field then went to George Williams College in Chicago, also known as the YMCA School.

During his college years, the banjo sing-along craze developed. Field acquired a striated Stradivarius, taught himself to play it and soon was performing at jazz clubs in Chicago, including Your Father's Mustache and the Old Town Pump, and was a pickup washboard player at the Red Garter. Following college, he worked at the YMCA in Rockford, Ill., and then in Minneapolis, where he moved with his wife and two young children in 1970. One of the first local jazz musicians he met was Jim Torok, who hired him to play with the Pig's Eye Jass Band at Jimmy's on the Levee in St. Paul.

By 1972 he was playing regularly at Fiorito's in downtown St. Paul with Bruce Leland, whose band had the unlikely moniker of "The Small But Symphonic Stationary Marching Band". When Leland left town in 1973, Jim started the Twin Cities version of the Mouldy Figs, who played at Fiorito's on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights for seven years. The original Twin Cities members of the Mouldy Figs will be familiar to many local long-time jazz fans: Red Wolfe, Steve Blons, Dave McCurdy, Don Bridenbecker, Jim Torok, Dr. Henry Blackburn, Jim TenBensel, Bill Evans, Gene Paulson and Bruce Allard. The concept of the Mouldy Figs was unique because it featured rotating personnel. It was set up to include lots of different players, and fans never knew who they might see performing together on a given night.



Jim Field, left, with Bill Gordon and Dave McCurdy in the early 1980s.

The next regular Mouldy Figs gig was at the Bungalow, over on the river border with

Wisconsin, starting around 1981. For about eight years the Figs played every Sunday there, drawing huge crowds for the afternoon.

Today's Mouldy Figs include close to 40 musicians. Jim says the requirements to be a Mouldy Fig are being "talented enough to play on the spot, play tunes in several different keys, and love traditional jazz." Jim says that while nobody would travel around the world to hear the Mouldy Figs as musicians, their ideal is to spread fun and love through music. His goal is to make people happy and express his own happiness through music, and he says that's a stronger motivation than being a purist about traditional jazz. As Jim says, and fans know, a Mouldy Figs gig is always exciting because it is extemporaneous — you never know what will happen!



Many of the Mouldy Figs at the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the band in 2003.

Jim Field is known for organizing and playing benefit concerts honoring other musicians and/or people in need — examples of the "love and fun" through music that are Jim's ideals. The biggest of those so far was for banjo player Fern Dale, who needed assistance with mounting medical bills in 1995. She died in February 1996. The most recent such occasion was a tribute to local musician Buzz Peterson, a longtime Fig, shortly before he died last year. The Figs also performed at several benefits in recent months for New Orleans hurricane relief.

Many Figs fans may not know that Jim Field has also had a distinguished professional career outside of music. His current position is executive director of a statewide consortium of independent/private schools called the Minnesota Independent School Forum. Its goal is to enhance private education in Minnesota by raising money for scholarships and education programs. Jim also represents private education to the State Department of Education and represents Minnesota in the National Council for Private Education. Earlier in his career he was Associate Dean of the Minneapolis Community College, where he started the College for Working Adults.

In addition to his professional career and running the Mouldy Figs, Jim has been involved in international charitable work. About 11 years ago, through the St. Paul Rotary Club, Jim started a relationship with a Rotary Club in Guyana, South America. He has provided leadership for eight projects, including installing a well system in an Indian village, stocking four libraries, filling a

gymnasium with sports equipment, and early this year delivering two semi-truck loads of hospital equipment and supplies. He has made five trips to the small country. The kids there started calling him "Uncle Jim in the Jungle" after he delivered 500 backpacks loaded with school supplies.

The Figs are Jim Field's living legacy, a concept symbolized lately through the handing down of noted band members' Mouldy Figs jackets. Banjoist Debbie Schreyer, who's gaining a national reputation, recently accepted the jacket that had been worn by Fern Dale, a nationally known banjo player who was a Mouldy Fig in the twilight of her career. Multi-instrumentalist Russ Peterson accepted the jacket that trumpeter-trombonist Buzz Peterson (a relative only in musical pursuits) wore for years.



Buzz Peterson's widow, Bette, presented his jacket to Russ Peterson at the Mainstreet Bar & Grill in Hopkins in January.

Traditional jazz is a uniquely American art form. Many people are concerned that it will die out; some say it already did die once and made a comeback. Jim is doing his part to keep it alive by introducing kids to the music through "Riverboat Music" performances at area public and private schools. He has put together a quartet that has played for nearly 10,000 students, using music to teach about the rivers' role in bringing settlers to this part of the country.

Jim's message to his fellow musicians is to "prepare for the next trad jazz revival and make it a big one!" His enthusiastic leadership has made a huge difference in the local jazz scene. The Figs are currently performing every Sunday, alternating between the Main Street Bar and Grill in Hopkins (March 5 and 19, April 2 and 30) and at the Big City Tavern in Roseville (March 12 and 26, April 9 and 23). To find out more about the band's schedule, bookings and recordings, go to <http://www.mouldyfigs.com/> on the Web.

EVENTS

◆ Club Underground Jazz lineup for March

Under the Spring Street Tavern, 355 NE. Monroe St., Minneapolis. (612) 627 9123.

Jazz is featured every Sunday from 4 to 7:30 pm. \$5 cover

Mar. 5: Minnesota Dixie (Kerry Ashmore on banjo, Ralph Faville on trumpet, Joy Judge on trombone, Ted Schreyer on tuba and Fred Richardson on clarinet)

March 12: The Pig's Eye Jass Band. A true Twin Cities fixture affixing itself for the second time at the Club!

March 19: The South Side Aces are back.

March 26: The Silver Derby Syncopators will bring their Traditional Jazz back for all to syncopate with.

◆ Jazz at Mitch's

1305 W. 7th St. (at Victoria), St. Paul. (651) 228-1408

The Southside Aces appear every second Tuesday of the month, 7-10 pm. No cover charge.

Bill Evans' New Orleans Jazz Band appears every last Tuesday of the month 7-10 pm. No cover charge.

◆ Jazz at the Roseville VFW

1145 Woodhill Dr., north of the intersection of County Rd C and Lexington. (651) 483-5313

The Godfrey Daniel Jazz Band, every third Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m. No cover charge.

◆ Alicia Wiley at the Varsity Theater

Pianist and vocalist **Alicia Wiley** will appear in concert at the Varsity Theater, 1308 SE. 4th St. in Minneapolis on Friday, March 10, at 9:15 p.m. Alicia's CD won a Minnesota Music Award.

Opening for Alicia is nationally acclaimed singer-songwriter **SYLVIE LEWIS**. In addition to the critical praise that surrounded her 2005 debut CD "Tangos & Tantrums," Lewis' recent media attention includes a listing in *Word Magazine's* "Top 10 Records of 2005" and a song feature on ABC's hit series "Grey's Anatomy." Tickets \$6 (18 years and older). Alicia's band members include bassist JEFF BAILEY (*Moveable Feast, Keri Noble*); drummer BRANDON COMMODORE (*R Factor*); and guitarist JON HERCHERT (*Mango Jam, Divorcee*). Call the Varsity Theater Box Office at (612) 604-0222. For more information visit <http://www.varsitytheater.org>

◆ CD Release Party for The John Raymond Project

EP release March 25, 11:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m., at the Dakota Jazz Club, 1010 Nicollet Av. Minneapolis. \$3 cover. (612) 332.1010. <http://www.dakotacooks.com>

Trumpeter Raymond and his group, The John Raymond Project: Matt Rongstad on saxophones, Steven. T. Hobert on piano, Kevin Rowe on bass and Josh Vaughn on drums.

The group comes highly recommended. One endorsement: "When we go out to our favorite restaurant, we all tend to order the same dish. It's good; but we rarely take a chance on something new. The same pattern holds true with music. Next time you're out listening to live music, take a chance on the JRP. You'll like what you hear; and you may never order that old dish again."--*Kelly Rossum, nationally known trumpet player and educator*

Contact John Raymond, (612) 599.6574 or raymonjl@uwec.edu

CD Preview: Bruce Allard: *Bits and Pieces*

by Jim Torok



The violin has been a part of jazz since the earliest days. W.C. Handy insisted on having a violin in his orchestra, and Joe Venuti played jazz violin with Bix Beiderbecke in the Paul Whiteman orchestra and in small groups with guitarist Eddie Lang.

Bruce Allard has always been a favorite of mine on the violin. He is now putting out his first CD, a collection of his favorite performances over the past 22 years with various groups.

Selections are "Snowy Morning Blues," "Merry Widow," "Kiss to Build a Dream on," "Echoes of Spring," "Quien Sera," "A Child is Born," "Halsa Dem Der Hema," "Drunken Norwegian Shriners Marching String Ensemble," "Round Midnight," "Saint Thomas," "Soon It's Gonna Rain," "Mysterious Blues," "America the Beautiful" and "Chopsticks."

Although Bruce also plays trumpet and cornet, this CD is almost all violin. My favorite is James P. Johnson's *Snowy Morning Blues*, with Butch Thompson. They play the piece at the brisk tempo favored by the composer rather than the very slow tempo chosen by Ruby Braff and Dick Hyman. *Echoes of Spring* is another delight. Even though many of the tunes are not usually considered jazz pieces, Allard turns them into jazz, improvising even in 3/4 time, inserting Latin rhythms, etc. Bruce displays an unusual sense of humor. He says he awoke at 2 a.m. with a vision of Norwegian Shriners staggering down the street, fezzes bobbing, playing drone notes on their open G and D strings. *Chopsticks* also turns out to be a humorous delight. It is punctuated by a gentle triangle as if played by a child. At the end of the piece the triangle is replaced with a single stroke of a huge gong.

The CD is not yet available in stores. Bruce Allard can be reached at (952)-926-4097, or at 4324 W. 44th St. St. Louis Park MN 55424.

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Launches Peer-to-Peer Jazz Education Program in Five Twin Cities Public Schools and Presents Two Public Concerts at the Dakota

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, in collaboration with the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education and the Children's Music and Arts Foundation, will introduce "Peer-to-Peer" jazz education programs in five Twin Cities public schools, March 6-10. These "informances" will be presented by six exceptionally gifted jazz students from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, along with saxophone recording artist Bobby Watson and vocalist Lisa Henry. Each visit will include a concert for the student bodies followed by a jazz workshop for each school's jazz band with the L.A. students playing alongside and sharing ideas with their Minneapolis/St. Paul peers.

"As young people are so influenced by kids their own age, who better to expose them to this great American art form than those of their own generation?" asked Thelonious Monk, Jr., the Monk Institute's chairman. "And with Bobby Watson and Lisa Henry — two of the most exciting jazz performers on the scene today — in the mix, it's truly an extraordinary opportunity for everyone concerned: students, teachers, musicians, non-musicians, everybody."

Besides playing jazz at a level that belies their years, the L.A. students will talk with their Twin Cities peers about what jazz is, why it's important to America, and how a jazz ensemble represents a perfect democracy. The week will conclude with two performances open to the public on March 10 and 11 at the Dakota Jazz Club and Restaurant. Audiences are invited to enjoy an evening of music with jazz's future "young lions" alongside the world-renowned Watson and Henry.

Schools:

Harding Senior High, St. Paul; Central Senior High, St. Paul; St. Francis High School, St. Francis, Minn.; Patrick Henry Senior High, Minneapolis. and Thomas Jefferson High School, Bloomington

Concerts:

Friday, March 10 and Saturday, March 11, at 7 and 9 p.m. both evenings.

Tickets are \$10. For more information visit www.dakotacooks.com or call the Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant, (612) 332-1010.

The school "informances" are a component of the Monk Institute's Jazz in America outreach initiative which includes the National Jazz Curriculum website (<http://www.jazzinamerica.org/>). This internet-based curriculum is available to all 5th, 8th, and 11th grade public school students in the United States. Designed to be a regular part of each grade's social studies or American history classes, it is the first jazz curriculum to use state-of-the-art Internet technology offered free of charge on a national basis.

About the Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education

The Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education, (also called the J-Train) is a nonprofit organization sponsored by the Dakota and dedicated to bringing jazz and education together. Originated in 1997 by Dakota co-owners Richard Erickson and Lowell Pickett, and the late Jane Matteson, a lover and patron of jazz, the Dakota Foundation provides free concert performances by young musicians at the Dakota on designated Saturday and Sunday afternoons to encourage an understanding, appreciation, and enthusiasm for jazz among young audiences and blooming musicians. Other programs include seminars ("jazz dialogues") given by eminent jazz artists, an annual jazz piano competition (co-sponsored with the St. Paul based Schubert Club), jazz camp scholarships, outreach programs

presented in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools, and the presentation of the annual Jane Award to an individual who has had a significant impact on the lives of young musicians.

About the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz (www.monkinstitute.org) is a nonprofit educational organization established in memory of Thelonious Monk, the legendary jazz pianist and composer. Monk was a mentor to many younger musicians in the jazz community. The Institute follows his example by bringing together the greatest living jazz artists to teach and inspire young people. It offers the most promising young musicians college level training by America's jazz masters and presents public school-based jazz-education programs worldwide. Helping to fill the tremendous void in arts education left by severe budget cuts in public school funding, the Institute's education programs are free to the public and use jazz as the medium to encourage imaginative thinking, creativity, a positive self-image, and respect for one's own and others' cultural heritage.

About the Children's Music and Arts Foundation

The Children's Music and Arts Foundation (CMAF) is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation established in April 2004 and headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The mission of CMAF is to provide scholarships, grants, and funding to enable education and training for aspiring musicians, performance and creative artists especially those who lack opportunities or financial means. In the face of declining federal, state, and local funding for the arts, CMAF will help develop children's/young adult's musical and artistic abilities, build awareness and self esteem, and provide opportunities for achievement and growth.

Bassist Avishai Cohen and the “Heartbeat of Israel” March 1

by Andrea Canter

"A jazz visionary of global proportions..." –Down Beat Magazine

A founding member of Chick Corea's Origin band and an acclaimed composer, bassist Avishai Cohen and his trio will perform at 7 p.m. March 1 at the Adath Jeshurun Temple, 10500 Hillside Lane West, Minnetonka, as part of the Heartbeat of Israel Cultural Arts Series.

Tickets are \$20 (\$15 for students and seniors). Presented by the Israel Program Center of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, the Heartbeat of Israel series features concerts by top Israeli artists.

Born and raised in Israel, Avishai Cohen was influenced early by the bass legend Jaco Pastorius. After two years of study at the Music & Arts High School in Jerusalem, he enlisted in the Israeli Army. Following his tour of duty, he moved to New York City where he studied at the New School and Mannes School of Music and played with fellow student Brad Mehldau and joined a Latin band. His opportunities in New York included work with Ravi Coltrane, Wynton Marsalis, Joshua Redman, Paquito D'Rivera, Roy Hargrove, Leon Parker, and Danilo Perez before he was “discovered” by Chick Corea in the mid 90s. Cohen played with Corea's Origin and later with Corea's New Trio until 2003. His work is known for its global influences, particularly the fusing of Latin and Middle Eastern folk melodies with modern jazz. He has released six recordings as a leader including the recent *At Home* (Razdaz Records).

To purchase tickets, contact the Israel Program Center at 952-381-3551, itai@sabesjcc

Jazz Piano Competition 2006

The Dakota Foundation for Jazz Education and The Schubert Club present the Second Annual Jazz Piano Competition for students from ages 15 to 18. This competition rewards excellence among students of America's great indigenous art form with three scholarships to further their education. -On Sunday, May 21, 2006, three finalists will compete in front of a panel of judges and a live audience at the Dakota Jazz Club and Restaurant. At stake will be three memorial scholarships totaling \$2,000, named in honor of David Paulus, Marie Froelich and Jane Matteson. A selected finalist will also perform at the Dakota Jazz Club and at a Schubert Club Courtroom Concert later in the year. Competitors are asked to submit an audio tape or CD containing three jazz tunes of their choosing. For a rule sheet and complete application information please see The Schubert Club web site: <http://www.schubert.org>.

All application materials must be received by noon on Monday, April 17. Finalists will be notified by May 1st. -The performance competition and award ceremony will be held on Sunday, May 21, 2005, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Dakota Jazz Club - 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. For further information please contact The Schubert Club, 651-292-3267, or rklein@schubert.org.

◆ Later at the Dakota:

Friday and Saturday Nights, 11:30 pm to 2:00 am March Calendar

Friday March 3: **Hothouse** featuring Paul Harper; Standards, originals, you know, Jazz.

Saturday March 4 **The Bryan Nichols Trio**; One of the most exciting pianists on the scene.

Friday March 10: **Jim Anton_s Surprise**; You never know with Jim and his bass, but it will always be cool.

Saturday March 11: **Pat Moriarty/Ellen Lease Quintet** w/Kelly Rossum (trumpet), Chris Bates (bass), Dave Stanoch (drums)

Friday March 17: **Jim Anton_s St. Patrick_s Day Band**; Celebrate with Irish/free/world music. Raga meets the jig.

Saturday March 18: **Bryan Nichols Presents**; More from this amazing pianist.

Friday March 24: **The Vehicle** w/Steve Hobart (piano); Part of a new talent weekend. This is part of the future.

Friday March 31 **Blue Chi** Pete Whitman (sax), Dean McGraw (guitar), Jay Eptstein (drums) Funky, freewheeling.