

The American Rag

America's Only Traditional Jazz and Ragtime Newspaper

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On The Festival Trail

JAZZ BASH BY THE BAY

Dixieland Monterey's 30th Anniversary

MONTEREY, CA — If you missed the **2010 Jazz Bash by the Bay**, my words will not be sufficient to describe the excitement and pride that was evident throughout this fabulous weekend — my 21st since I first attended in 1989 — despite the fact that I'm writing this with a piece of Dutch dark chocolate in my mouth to sweeten my thought processes. From the Board members, to the fabulous volunteers, to the large crowds of jazz fans filling most of the venues to near capacity, to the musicians and bands — all were definitely in the mood to celebrate, enjoy the weekend, and perform high spirited Traditional Jazz.

And who would argue with the selection of **Jeff Barnhart** as **Musician of the Year**, which needs no seconds to put forth such a distinguished recognition. Throughout the 17 sets Jeff played over the weekend under the banners of Titan Hot Seven, Barnhart-Midiri Quartet, Ivory & Gold, Pianorama, and We3 his presence and brilliant musicianship was fully available for all to see and hear. We should all be grateful to have such a complete artist, musician, vocalist, fun-loving raconteur, and second fiddle to his wife Anne <smile> as part of the festival circuit throughout the U.S. and the world to play to our amazement and for our enjoyment. BRAVO!

For openers, the Titan Hot Seven caused the curtain to rise in the primary De Anza room venue promptly at 11:30am on Friday, March 5 and didn't come down that day in that room until twelve hours later with another T.H.S. set to end the day. Between those hours the Jazz Bash by the Bay wisely featured seven of their top bands — Tom Rigney & Flambeau, the International Sextet led by Hal Smith, the Vaché-Cocuzzi Quintet, the Midiri Brothers Sextet, Blue Street Jazz Band, and High Sierra Jazz Band.

While all this was going on, seven other venues were featuring eleven other bands including BED, Sweet Thursday Jazz Band, Taking Stock with Jackson, Big Mama Sue Quartet, Yve Evans & Company, Big Tiny Little Trio, Jam Cab, Golden Gate Rhythm Machine, Ivory & Gold, We3, and last but not least Mission Gold Jazz Band.

Speaking of **Mission Gold Jazz Band**, they were the winners of the Dixieland Monterey version of the Major Bowes Original Amateur Hour in a contest between three bands (the fourth failed to show) whereby the chosen winner would be given the opportunity to be invited to play at this year's D.M. festival. The Mission Gold band proved to be very professional and no amateurs, and well they should in as much as their leader John Soulis has kept his band's name going for over 30 years. The two trumpet/cornet plus clarinet and trombone front line backed by the tuba, banjo, drums and piano rhythm section proved very versatile and worthy of their having won this honor. Announcing the tunes was the well-known leader, organizer, and voice of the famous JazzSea Jammers, Dick Williams. To the great credit of the D.M. Board, Mission Gold was paid to play just like all the other bands — professionals all!

On a note of sadness, the Big Tiny Little Trio played without its namesake, Big Tiny Little, who had died a few days before the festival began. Sacramento based pianist Jim Martinez played in Tiny's place.

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For Cathie and me our final set before returning to our home office was at 9:30am Sunday morning to hear the fabulous **Barnhart-Midiri Quartet**. This group was first featured in February at the Central Illinois Jazz Festival and after Monterey will be featured in Mammoth Lakes and Pismo Beach, Calif., and will undoubtedly grow in demand and popularity at other festivals. On top of the combined musical performing talents of two Barnhart's plus two Midiri's, the brilliant Paul Midiri (plays vibes and is one minute older than Joe) did all the complex arrangements for the group playing piano, flute, clarinet/sax, drums/vibes. Listening to this foursome early on this particular Sunday morning was a pleasant alternative for about 150 fans who opted not to hear the popular gospel sets offered in three other venues.

Congratulations to Dixieland Monterey for giving us another unique and unforgettable **Jazz Bash by the Bay**.

Don Jones

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