

jazz threads

A New Look at a Historic Tapestry

Jazz Threads commemorates the history, celebrates the present, and builds the future of the vibrant American art form of jazz on a local level. Long committed to bringing artists into deeper contact with the diverse constituencies of Champaign-Urbana, Krannert Center convened a broad spectrum of community artists to consider a jazz-based artist residency project that would touch the community in a significant way. From that first meeting in January 2002, we began to refurbish a tapestry created years ago. It depicts a love affair with jazz; it looks at the environment that allowed the art form to grow through the mid-20th century; and it celebrates our area's treasure trove of professional jazz artists. As we gaze at this tapestry, we'll consider the promising future we can provide for our community by making connections through jazz.

by de

Avant-Garde: A controversial style that led to free jazz, for its "freedom" from conventional forms.

Be-bop (or Bop): The first modern jazz style. Its emphasis was on complex harmonic improvisation.

Blues: The song form central to jazz (and other African American music) that emerged in the late 19th century from a mix of African American folk music and European harmonic structures.

Call-and-response: The alternation of a musical phrase with a reply. Historically, it can be traced back to African American spirituals.

Cool Jazz: A small-group jazz style that emerged in the late 1940s with "West Coast Jazz".

Dixieland: A general label that usually refers to the version of (pre-1930s) Chicago jazz played by white musicians.

Jazz threads

Look at African Tapestry

... commemorates the history, celebrates the future of the vibrant American art form of jazz. We are committed to bringing artists into deeper relationships with the constituencies of Champaign-Urbana, and to providing a broad spectrum of community artists with a significant way. From that first meeting in 1986, we began to refurbish a tapestry created years ago. This love affair with jazz, it looks at the environment of the art form to grow through the mid-20th century. We hope our area's treasure trove of professional jazz musicians can provide for our community by making connections.



by definition...

Avant-Garde: A controversial style that emerged in the 1960s. Also referred to as free jazz, for its "freedom" from conventional rhythm, harmony, and/or melody.

Be-bop (or Bop): The first modern jazz style, evolved in the 1940s. The emphasis was on complex harmonic improvisation and technical virtuosity.

Blues: The song form central to jazz (and, eventually, rock 'n' roll) developed in the late 19th century from a mix of African field hollers and Christian hymns.

Call-and-response: The alternation of a solo statement with an ensemble reply. Historically, it can be traced back to Africa and to British church services.

Cool Jazz: A small-group jazz style that originated in the 1950s, often identified with "West Coast Jazz".

Dixieland: A general label that usually refers to early New Orleans style jazz or to the version of (pre-1930s) Chicago jazz played by white musicians.

Ron Bridge

saxophonist and educator
Born 1947 in Champaign, Illinois
Education: Western Illinois University

Granddad Raymond Scott—who played drums—had a CU-based band known as the Footwarmers. Ron's mother, father, and brother all played in the band at one time or another. The band always filled with music. Ron also credits his father, Cecil Zamora, as a catalyst for all groups that he has led in Urbana starting in about 1957.

During his 18 years in New York, Ron played with Max Roach, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver, and many others. He was also a recording musician and spent three years as an arranger and director for *Lena Horne—The Lady and the Tramp*. Ron returned to CU in 1989 and is a member of the U of I School of Music.

Kenny Davis

bass player, composer, arranger
Born 1961 in Chicago, Illinois
Education: Northeastern Illinois University

Kenny Davis cut his teeth on music by listening to Earth Wind & Fire, Brothers Johnson, and The Temptations. He didn't "discover" jazz until college, but quickly immersed himself in the tradition by hitting the Chicago scene hard and sitting in with groups led by saxophonists Von Freeman, Ari Brown, and Fred Anderson. When he moved to New York in 1986, Kenny Davis started out by taking gigs his roommate, Lonnie Plaxico, couldn't fit into his own schedule, before hooking up with Out of the Blue.



Cecil Bridgewater

trumpeter, arranger, composer, educator
Born 1942 in Urbana, Illinois
Education: University of Illinois

His grandfather played trumpet, his dad played trumpet, his mom played piano and sang, his uncle played the bass and was a bandleader. Cecil also lived across the street from the American Veterans Association which hosted nights of jazz; during the years he wasn't old enough to get inside, he'd either listen from his bedroom window or join other young people sitting out on the curb to catch the music.

Cecil Bridgewater is one of the hardest-working jazz musicians on the scene. His sensitive trumpet and flugelhorn playing and magnificent compositions have graced the performances and recordings of jazz giants like drummer Max Roach, pianist Horace Silver, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, and many others. Cecil Bridgewater formed the Bridgewater Brothers Band with his saxophone-playing brother Ron in 1969; while that band no longer exists, he and Ron continue to collaborate whenever possible.

Clark Terry

trumpeter, flugelhorn player, scat singer, and bandleader
Born 1920 in St. Louis, Missouri
Education: Watching and listening to other musicians, the University of Ellington (that is, he lived it!)

As a child, Terry made a trumpet from a hose, using a kerosene funnel as a mouthpiece. Terry acquired his own instrument when neighbors bought him a trumpet for \$12.50 from a local pawnshop.

Terry has performed with the most brilliant and influential musicians of jazz and has taken part in many seminal recordings of our time. His own groups include quartets, quintets, Clark Terry's Big B-A-D Band, and Clark Terry's Spacemen. Terry was inducted into the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Hall of Fame in 1991. His star on the St. Louis Walk of Fame can be found at 6623 Delmar.

Terry has been involved in jazz education since the 1960s. In 1994, he launched a four-year jazz degree program at the Clark Terry International Institute of Jazz Studies at Teikyo Westmar University in LeMars, Iowa. New York's jazz education unit, Jazzmobile, grew out of the Harlem Youth Band started by Clark Terry.

Ron Bridgewater

saxophonist and educator
Born 1947 in Champaign, Illinois
Education: Western Illinois University

Granddad Raymond Scott—who played drums—had a CU-based band known as Footwarmers. Ron's mother, father, and Uncle played the band at one time or another. Then Cecil played the trumpet. So the Bridgewater house was always filled with music. Ron also credits Zamora as a catalyst for all groups that he led in Urbana starting in about 1957.

During his 18 years in New York, Ron played with Max Roach, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver, among many others. He was also a regular musician and spent three years as assistant director for Lena Horne—The Lady and the Tramp. Ron returned to CU in 1989 and is a tenured member of the U of I School of Music.

Kenny Davis

bass player, composer, arranger
Born 1961 in Chicago, Illinois
Education: Northeastern Illinois University

Kenny Davis cut his teeth on music by listening to Earth Wind & Fire, Brothers Johnson, and The Temptations. He didn't "discover" jazz until college, but quickly immersed himself in the tradition by hitting the Chicago scene hard and sitting in with groups led by saxophonists Ron Freeman, Art Brown, and Fred Anderson. Art Brown and Kenny Davis started out by taking gigs for two years in 1985. Kenny Davis couldn't fit into his own schedule before hooking up with Out of the Blue.

Cecil Bridgewater

trumpeter, arranger, composer, educator
Born 1942 in Urbana, Illinois
Education: University of Illinois

His grandfather played cornet, his dad played trumpet, his mom played piano and sang, and his uncle played the bass and was a bandleader. Cecil also lived across the street from the American Veterans Association which hosted nights of jazz. During the years he wasn't out enough to get music, he'd sit there behind the bedroom window or go over to young people sitting out on the curb to catch the music.

Cecil Bridgewater is one of the hardest-working jazz musicians in the world. His sensitive trumpet and lightning-moving and magnificent compositions are a testament to the performance and recordings of jazz greats like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Miles Davis. Cecil has played with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band, and many others. Cecil Bridgewater formed the Bridgewater Brothers Band with his saxophone-playing brother Ron in 1988. While that band no longer exists, he and Ron continue to collaborate whenever possible.

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Education: Northeastern Illinois University

Kenny Davis cut his teeth on music by listening to Earth Wind & Fire, Brothers Johnson, and The Temptations. He didn't "discover" jazz until college, but quickly immersed himself in the tradition by hitting the Chicago scene hard and sitting in with groups led by saxophonists Von Freeman, Ari Brown, and Fred Anderson. When he moved to New York in 1986, Kenny Davis started out by taking gigs his roommate, Lonnie Plaxico, couldn't fit into his own schedule, before hooking up with Out of the Blue.

Terry

trumpeter, saxophone player, and bandleader
Born 1942 in Chicago, Illinois
Education: University of Illinois

While a trumpet player, Cecil Bridgewater and bandleader Terry Plaxico were instrumental in the development of the Chicago jazz scene. Terry Plaxico was instrumental in the development of the Chicago jazz scene. Terry Plaxico was instrumental in the development of the Chicago jazz scene.

Ron Bridgewater

saxophonist and educator
Born 1947 in Champaign, Illinois
Education: Western Illinois University, University of Illinois

Granddad Raymond Scott—who played saxophone and drums—had a CU-based band known as Mack Scott and His Footwarmers. Ron's mother, father, and Uncle Pete all played in the band at one time or another. Then of course older brother Cecil played the trumpet. So the Bridgewater household was always filled with music. Ron also credits jazz saxophonist Tony Zamora as a catalyst for all groups that existed in Champaign-Urbana starting in about 1957.

During his 18 years in New York, Ron played and recorded with Max Roach, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver, and Cab Calloway, among many others. He was also a regular Broadway musician and spent three years as assistant musical director for *Lena Horne—The Lady and Her Music*. Ron returned to CU in 1989 and is a tenured faculty member of the U of I School of Music.

Kenny Davis

bass player, composer, arranger
Born 1961 in Chicago, Illinois
Education: Northeastern Illinois University

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Fusion: A mix of...

Hard Bop: A type of the "cool jazz" of...

Modal Jazz: Musicians from the...

Ragtime: Technical structure from...

Scat: A vocal style using nonsense...

Swing: (noun) 1930s. (verb) A...

Syncopation: the primary rhythmic...

Jazz

"American original"

Bridgewater

educator

His dad played trumpet, his mom played the bass and was a bandleader. Cecil got from the American Veterans Association during the years he wasn't old enough to get from his bedroom window or join other kids on the curb to catch the music.

Cecil Bridgewater is one of the hardest-working jazz musicians on the scene. His sensitive trumpet and trombone playing and magnificent compositions have graced the performances of jazz giants like drummer Elvin Jones, pianist Horace Silver, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, and many others. Cecil Bridgewater formed the Bridgewater Brothers Band with his saxophone-playing brother Ron in 1969; while that band no longer exists, he and Ron continue to collaborate whenever possible.

Legacy of Ellington (that is, he lived it!)

as a mouthpiece. Terry acquired his own local pawnshop.

of jazz and has taken part in many seminal projects: Clark Terry's Big B-A-D Band, and Clark Terry's induction into the Jazz Hall of Fame in 1991. His star on

he launched a four-year jazz degree program at Southern Illinois University in LeMars, Iowa. New York's first jazz school was started by Clark Terry.



During early meetings, it was determined that an ideal artist/ambassador for Jazz Threads would be Cecil Bridgewater.

Born and raised in Champaign-Urbana, Cecil now lives in the jazz mecca of the world, New York City, where he is recognized as a successful jazz trumpeter, music educator, arranger, and composer. During three visits to his hometown, Cecil and his special guests will move through our community teaching, speaking, and inspiring people with jazz. Each week of Cecil's residence will culminate with a concert at Krannert Center.



Throughout the year, special events for novice jazz listeners will blend with mentoring activities for young musicians, playing opportunities for musicians of all levels, and unique listening events in traditional and non-traditional venues all around the community.

The final celebration of Jazz Threads will be at a Jazz Homecoming in the historic Virginia Theatre on May 2, 2004, when Cecil will make his fourth appearance of the year along with many other musicians who have touched the Champaign-Urbana community through jazz.



As Champaign-Urbana recaptures the thrill of its jazz heyday and celebrates the accomplishments of its musicians, we hope to educate and inspire a new generation of jazz lovers and players. Please join us in this grand journey.

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Syncopation: the primary rhyth

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Fusion: A mix of different musical styles, especially jazz and rock or jazz and R&B.

Hard Bop: A 1950s style that emerged as a reaction by East Coast musicians to the "cool jazz" of the West Coast.

Modal Jazz: A style based on "modes" instead of chord changes that freed musicians from the conventional harmonic progressions.

Ragtime: Technically complex European style of piano music that took its formal structure from marches and combined them with African rhythmic undertones.

Scat: A vocal style in which the singer essentially becomes an instrumentalist by using nonsense syllables instead of words.

Swing: (noun) Dance-oriented big band music that became popular during the 1930s. (verb) A feeling of rhythmic bounce and drive.

Syncopation: Different rhythmic groupings played simultaneously against the primary rhythmic pulse.

**Jazz is often called
"America's only
original art form".**

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is a spokesperson for the organization Ja
which endeavors to educate young people
s of drugs and the cultural significance of

Dee Dee Bridgewater

jazz singer, actress, producer, UN ambassador
Born 1950 in Memphis, Tennessee

U of I jazz band director John Garvey heard Dee Dee Garrett sing at a competition of university bands and enticed her to Urbana. She sang with the U of I Jazz Band—and Cecil Bridgewater, fresh back from a tour of duty in the US Army, played trumpet in the band, the very same band that toured to the USSR in 1969. The two musicians married in 1970, and they have a daughter, Tulani. Though no longer married, the two continue to collaborate musically, with Cecil writing many of the arrangements that Dee Dee records and performs.

In October 1999, Dee Dee began serving as an ambassador to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), appealing for international solidarity to finance global grassroots projects in the battle against world hunger.

After capturing the hearts of jazz lovers in Champaign-Urbana, Dee Dee Bridgewater moved onto the world stage where she now reigns supreme as the consummate female jazz singer.



During early meetings, it was
ambassador for Jazz Threads
Born and raised in Champaign,
the jazz mecca of the world,
is recognized as a successful
educator, arranger, and
to his hometown, Cecil
move through our community
inspiring people with jazz
dance will culminate with a

Throughout the year, special
listeners will blend with
musicians, playing on
levels, and unique live
non-traditional venues.

The final celebration
Jazz Homecoming in
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Mulgrew Miller

pianist and composer

Born 1955 in Greenwood, Mississippi

Education: Memphis State University

From the time Mulgrew was six, he immediately started picking out tunes by ear on the piano. Formal training started at eight, and within a few years he was playing in church and going out on gigs with his older brother. He was interested in just about every kind of music—blues, country and western, gospel, R&B, classical—until a life-changing encounter with the artistry of jazz pianist Oscar Peterson.

One of the most recorded pianists on the jazz scene today, Mulgrew Miller's professional career started at age 20 when Mercer Ellington invited him to join the Duke Ellington Orchestra. He went on to play with two more well-known mentoring bandleaders—Betty Carter and Art Blakey—and then spent eight years with drummer Tony Williams' Quintet. Throughout the 1990s, Miller's priority became his own ensembles and his own music. He's a standout for his power, lyricism, and imagination and he's a distinguished member of the "most respected by his peers" group of jazz friends and admirers.



Carl Allen

drummer, composer, producer, and educator

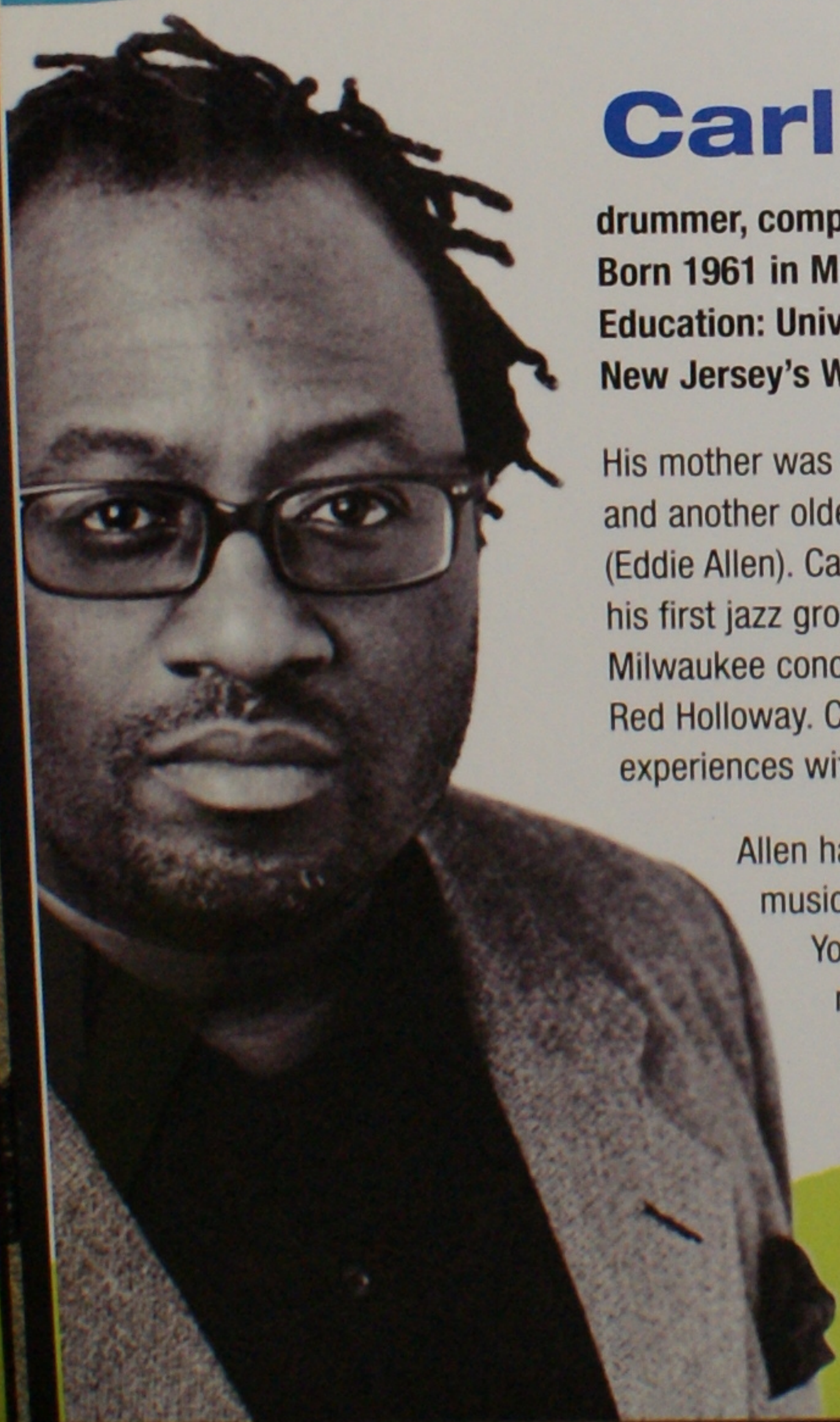
Born 1961 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Education: University of Wisconsin-Green Bay;
New Jersey's William Patterson College**

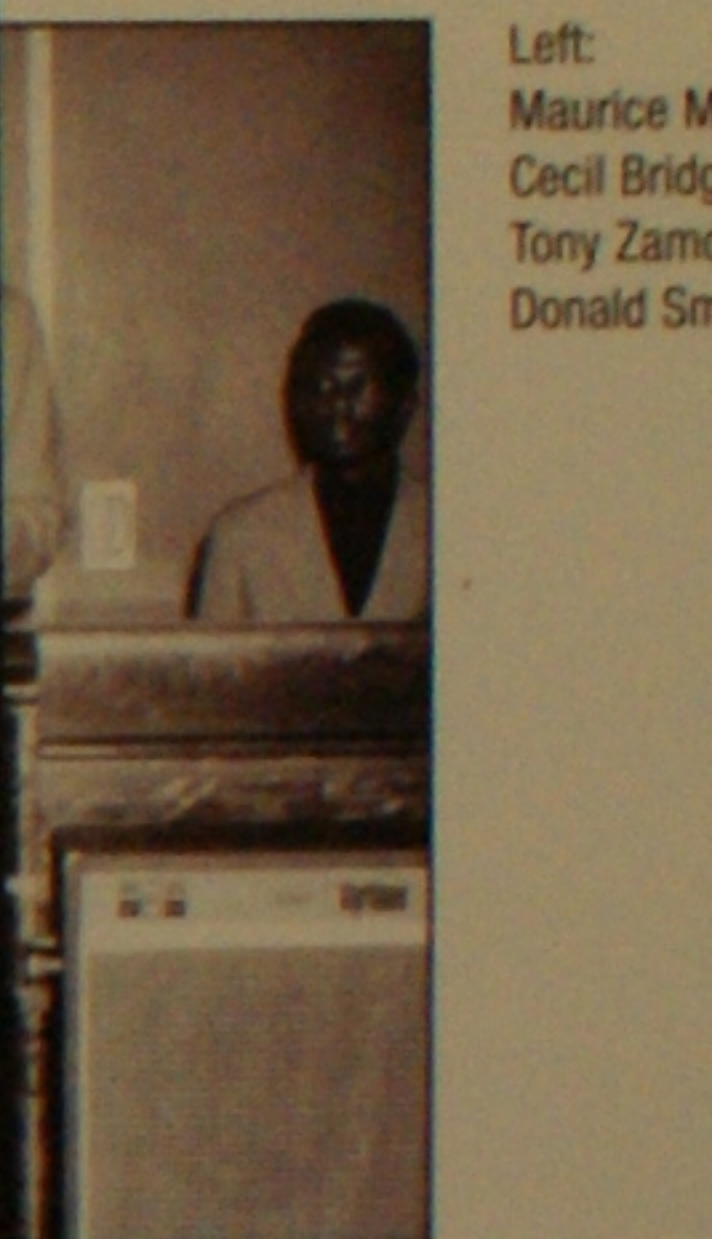
His mother was a gospel singer, one older brother played drums, and another older brother is a well-known jazz trumpet player (Eddie Allen). Carl took up drums when he was 10 and organized his first jazz group when he was 14. At 16 he was hired for a Milwaukee concert by the great saxophonists Sonny Stitt and Red Holloway. Carl played that gig, the first of many memorable experiences with musical heroes.

Allen has played and recorded with many of the great jazz musicians and remains active as a bandleader (the New York All-Star Band and the Carl Allen Quintet). Some of his most rewarding work today includes opening doors for young, talented artists through his production company, Big Apple Productions, founded in 1988.

Carl Allen is a spokesperson for the organization Jazz against Drugs, which endeavors to educate young people about the dangers of drugs and the cultural significance of jazz.



- 1932** The word "swing" is first used in jazz title.
- 1935** Electric guitar is invented.
- 1938** Benny Goodman sells out Carnegie Hall, signifying jazz's popularity with white audiences.
- 1939** WWII begins in Europe.
- 1940** The U.S. enters WWII.
- 1944** Jazz reaches Los Angeles; Miles Davis at Juilliard.
- 1945** The U.S. bombs Hiroshima and Nagasaki; WWII ends.
- 1945** Be-bop gains popularity.
- 1945** Jackie Robinson becomes the first African-American in major league baseball.
- 1947** Afro-Cuban jazz is introduced in New York.
- 1949** Miles Davis releases *Birth of Cool*, beginning a decade-long era of "cool" jazz.
- 1954** School segregation is declared unconstitutional.
- 1954** Newport Jazz Festival is organized.
- 1959** Davis ends "cool" era with *Kind of Blue*, a pioneering modal jazz album.
- 1963** President John F. Kennedy is assassinated; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addresses the March on Washington.
- 1964** The Civil Rights bill is passed.
- 1964** Coltrane releases *A Love Supreme*.
- 1965** Malcolm X is assassinated.
- 1968** Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated.
- 1983** Wynton Marsalis wins a jazz and classical Grammy Award in the same year.
- 1987** Classic jazz recordings re-released on CD, signaling a resurgence in jazz popularity.



Left:
Maurice M
Cecil Bridg
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um, Cecil Bridgewater, Maurice McK
Reunion, Illini Union in 1998)

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Top Right:
Mack Scott
and His Footwarmers
(circa 1916)

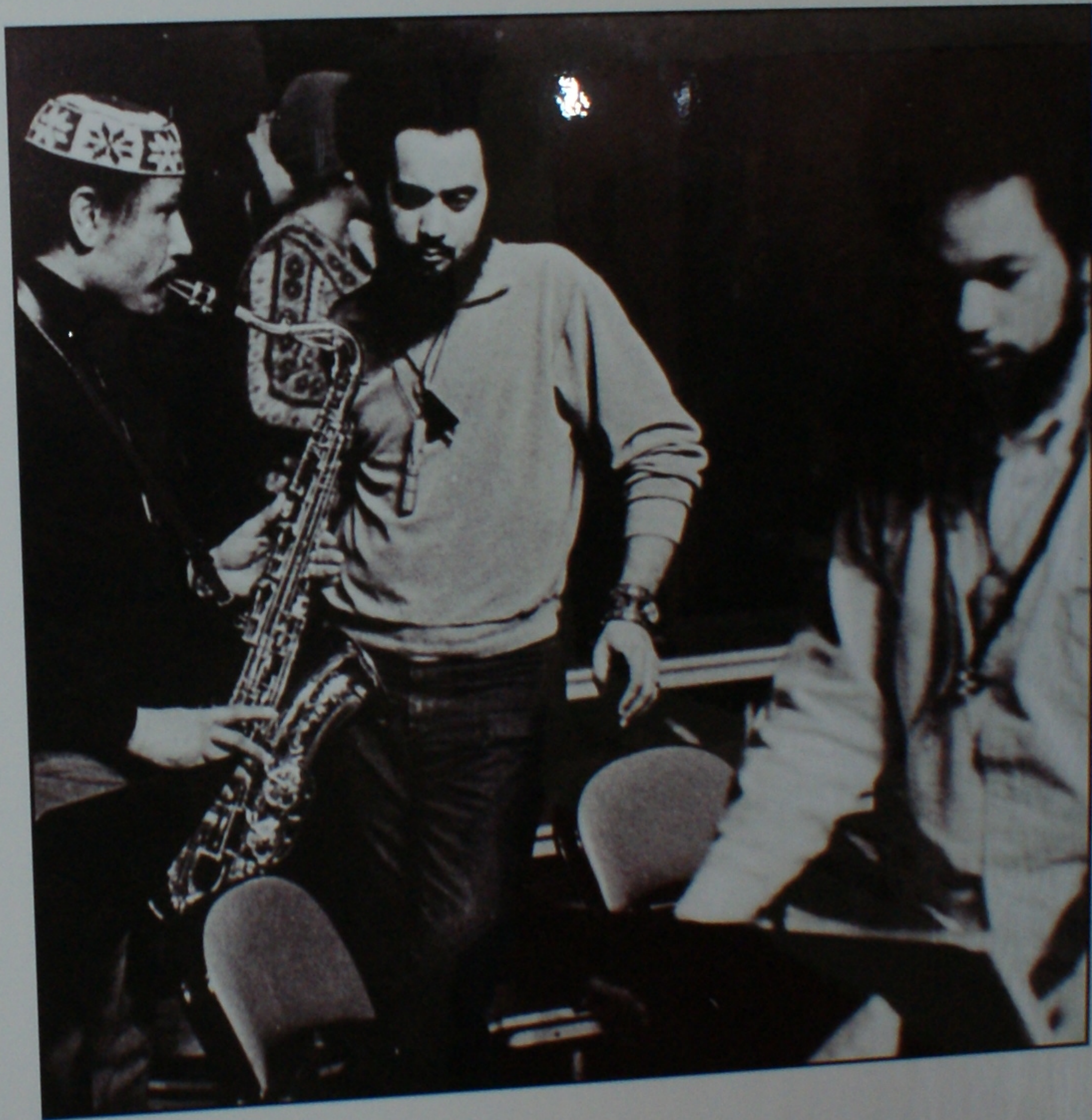


Above Left:
Pete Bridgewater Quintet

Above Right:
Professor John Garvey (center)
started the University of Illinois
Jazz Band in 1960; by the
end of the decade, it had
an international reputation

Above: (pictured left to right)
Vincent Johnson, Ron Bridgewater,
Donald Smith

Right:
Tony Zamora, Cecil Bridgewater,
Ron Bridgewater



One of CU's flourishing jazz
decades was the 1960s, with
the U of I Jazz Band under
John Garvey and ensembles
led by Pete Bridgewater, Count
Demon, and Tony Zamora

Pictures courtesy of Mrs. Doris Hoskins,
Mrs. Erma Bridgewater, and Mr. Tony Zamora



Left:
 Maurice McKinley
 Cecil Bridgewater
 Tony Zamora
 Donald Smith



Above:
 Donald Smith, Armand Beaudoin, Tony Zamora, Bryant Tatum, Cecil Bridgewater, Maurice McKinley,
 Ron Bridgewater (African-American Cultural Center Alumni Reunion, Illini Union in 1998)



Krannert Center

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 1931 RCA demo

Jazz Threads Underwriter



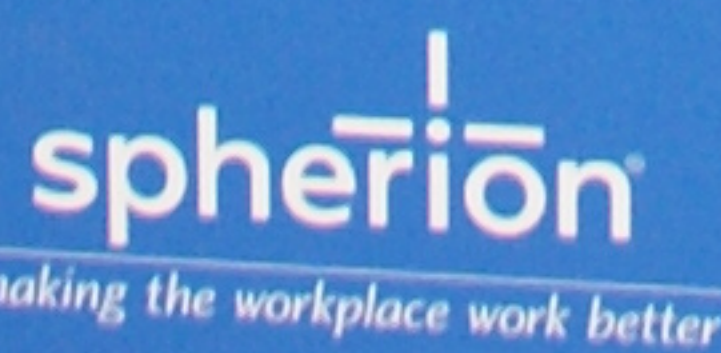
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Jazz Threads is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts; and by the Heartland Arts Fund, a program of Arts Midwest funded by the National Endowment for the Arts with additional contributions from General Mills Foundation, Land O'Lakes Foundation, Sprint Corporation, and the Illinois Arts Council.

Jazz Timeline

- 1619** Slavery begins in America.
- 1865** Slavery is abolished.
- 1892** First known ragtime composition.
- 1901** American Federation of Musicians tries to curb ragtime's popularity.
- 1903** The Wright Brothers take their first flight.
- 1904** New Orleans musicians begin fusing blues and ragtime.
- 1910** NAACP is founded.
- 1913** The word "jazz" appears in print.
- 1914** WWI begins in Europe.
- 1920** Prohibition begins and women gain the right to vote.
- 1922** Several popular jazz musicians make first recordings.
- 1922** First network radio broadcast.
- 1924** Debut of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.
- 1925** The "Charleston" becomes popular.
- 1927** Duke Ellington begins residency at the Cotton Club, Harlem, New York.
- 1927** First "talkie" film, *The Jazz Singer*, is released.
- 1929** Wall Street Market crash.
- 1929** Fats Waller is required to play behind a screen in mixed-race recording session.
- 1931** RCA demonstrates the first record album.

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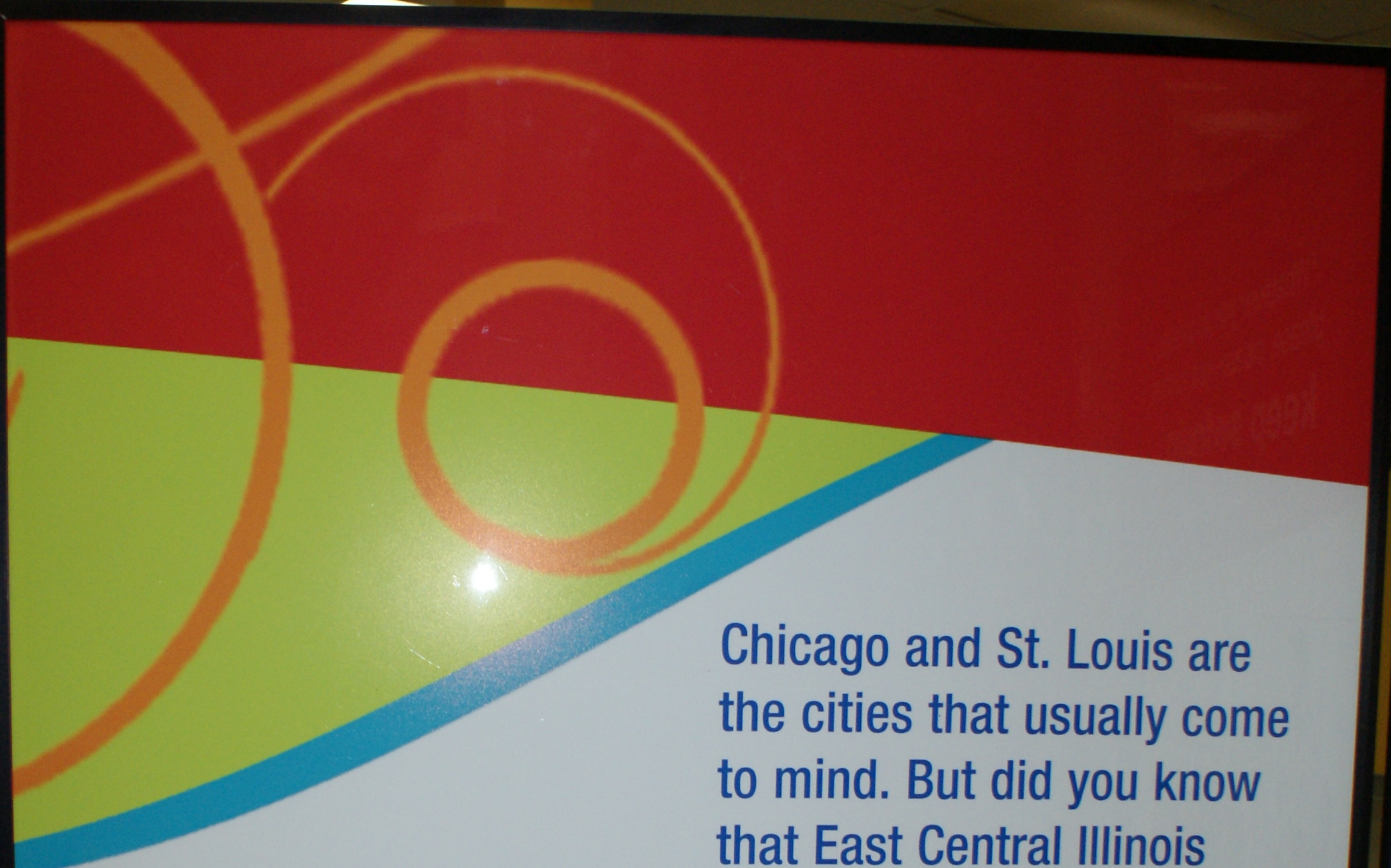
dgewater

Tony Zamora,



Left:
LaMonte Parsons
Court Denson
(William Evans)
Cecil Bridgewater
Dee Dee Garrett
Tony Zamora
Milton Knox

... by the ...
...
...



Chicago and St. Louis are the cities that usually come to mind. But did you know that East Central Illinois has a strong jazz history?

When people think of **jazz** in the Midwest....



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Shouting Ground Technologies
Larry Neal
Anonymous
Supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, and by the Illinois State Board of Art, the National Endowment for the Arts with additional contributions from the State of Illinois, the State Corporation, and the Illinois Arts Council.

“Whatever you do please,
please, please—yes, please
keep swingin’.

—*Carl Allen*



Left:
Maurice McKinley, Cecil Bridgewater

Below:
Ron Dewar, Maurice Davis, Tony Zamora,
Glen Kronkite, Donald Smith



Left:
LaMonte Parsons
Count Demon
(William Evans)
Cecil Bridgewater
Dee Dee Garrett
Tony Zamora
Milton Knox

jazz threads

Featuring Cecil Bridgewater

Community engagement through jazz with masterclasses,
jam sessions, and lecture/demonstrations

September 22-27

December 1-6

March 1-7

May 2

Concerts at Krannert Center

Saturday, September 27, 7:30pm

With special guests

Carl Allen, drums

Ron Bridgewater, saxophone

Kenny Davis, bass

Mulgrew Miller, piano

Saturday, December 6, 7:30pm

With special guests

Dee Dee Bridgewater, vocals

UI Concert Jazz Band

Saturday, March 6, 10am

Java and Jazz

Coffee and bagels on sale at 9am

Sunday, March 7, 7:30pm

With special guest

Clark Terry, trumpet

'Music today can't compare to the big band. I like for young people to hear that type of band. Music today just gets wilder and wilder. I'm just glad I was born at the right time, before everything got so wild.'

Unforgettable, that's what she is

By PAT KUCHEFSKI

DANVILLE — She runs her fingers over the ivories with the ease of a youngster, the music pure jazz.

"Satin Doll," "Misty" and "Unforgettable." Ageless songs, from when "music was music," says Cleo Napier as she sings and plays, adding her own style to the Nat King Cole standard. It is she who is unforgettable.

A lot of years have passed since Napier came home to Danville to take care of her ailing mother, but you can't tell it by listening to her play.

For some three decades, Chicago was her "headquarters," the South Side piano bars and nightclubs her place of business.

"I came back in the early '60s to take care of my mother. She needed constant care. Then she passed, and I got stuck. I got older, and I got stuck."

Napier was stuck playing jazz at The Hour Glass, Holiday Inn and Club Lamplighter. Only the Lamplighter still exists, but it's no longer the supper club of days gone by.

"Then times changed, and jazz and piano bars were out," she said. A look of sadness crosses her vibrant face.

Napier's life had come full circle as she took on the role of minister of music for the Allen Chapel African Episcopal Church. She had gotten her start there as a child.

"I played for the church until I was old enough to head to Chicago to establish myself," she said. She was "probably around 18" when she left.

"I wanted to go on the concert stage, but they weren't accepting blacks. So I went to jazz."

After taking lessons at the Chicago Conservatory of Music, Napier also took up the organ and studied at Lyon and Heath, a music store, just as the Hammond organ was coming out.

"I went wild over the Jimmy Smith style," Napier recalls of the jazz organist.

Napier's heyday was the big-band era. As she honed her talent in small clubs, she jammed with the likes of Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Gene Krupa.

"They all played the big hotels uptown," Napier said. "They'd get off at midnight, and they'd come south and jam to the wee hours of the morning. It was wonderful."

While blacks played the big hotels, they were not allowed to sleep or eat there, she said.

"They couldn't even go to the bathroom," she said.

"Among the musicians themselves, there wasn't any prejudice. We learned



from each other. It's just the people on the outside didn't want the Negro in the hotel.

"The white musician learned to put the soul in (the music), not just the notes — to put a little of themselves in the music." The black man has always had soul, always had to fight for every morsel of bread, but they've never lost soul," she said.

"I'll never know why there was that prejudice. With musicians, it didn't matter. We've always been integrated."

Soon "the greats," as Napier calls them, started moving to California. "That was a little too far for me. I didn't want to be THAT far from home."

She recalls that many musicians started in Chicago in those days: "Chicago was the stomping grounds. It didn't make you or break you."

In California, there were recording studios and agents, and musicians could make more money, she added.

"But the agents owned your soul. After you signed, it was like you were a slave. They made more than the musicians made," Napier said.

"It was a hard time coming up for the black

musicians — just like the athletes," she said. "If (a musician) got any recognition, you better believe they worked hard to get it."

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In Danville, Napier organized a men's chorus in the 1980s and continues to conduct the choir, but love of that big-band music has not waned over the years.

"Music today can't compare to the big band," she emphasizes. "I like for young people to hear that type of band. Music today just gets wilder and wilder."

"I'm just glad I was born at the right time, before everything got so wild."

And just when was that?
"Well, everybody knows I'm in my 80s. They just don't know how many 80s," she said with a twinkle in her eye.



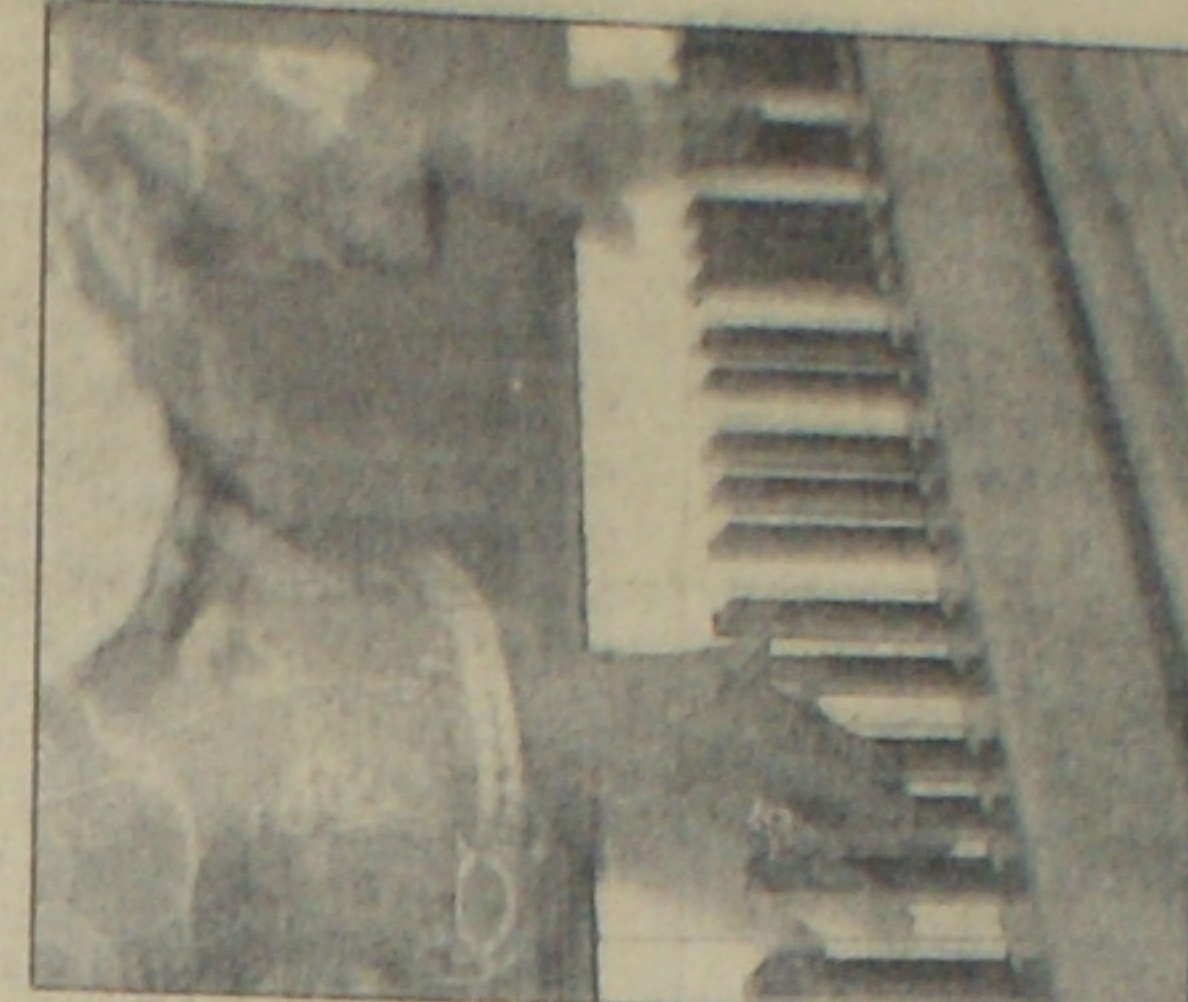
Above left, Cleo Napier during her performing days in Chicago. Above right, Napier today in Danville. Top, Napier's hands still dance across the piano keys. (News-Gazette photos at right by Rick Danzl)

'Music today can't compare to the big band. I like for young people to hear that type of band. Music today just gets wilder and wilder. I'm just glad I was born at the right time, before everything got so wild.'

Unforgettable, that's what she is

By PAT KUCHEFSKI

DANVILLE — She runs her fingers over the ivories with the ease of a youngster, the music pure jazz. "Satin Doll," "Misty" and "Unforgettable." "These songs, from when 'music was music,'" says Cleo Napier as she sings about her own style to the Nat King Cole standard. It is she who is the one who has passed since Napier came home to Danville to take care of her mother, but you can't tell it by listening to her play.



from each other. It's just the people on the outside didn't want the Negro in the hotel. "The white musician learned to put the soul in (the music), not just the notes — to put a little of themselves in the music." The black man has always had soul, always had to fight for every morsel of bread, but they've never lost soul," she said. "I'll never know why there was that prejudice. With musicians, it didn't matter. We've always been integrated."

"I played for the church until I was old enough to head to Chicago to establish myself," she said. She was "probably around 18" when she left. "I wanted to go on the concert stage, but they weren't accepting blacks. So I went to jazz." After taking lessons at the Chicago Conservatory of Music, Napier also took up the organ and studied at Lyon and Heath, a music store, just as the Hammond organ was coming out.



Above left, Cleo Napier during her performing days in Chicago. Above right, Napier today in Danville. Top, Napier's hands still dance across the piano keys. (News-Gazette photos at right by Rick Danzl)

"I went wild over the Jimmy Smith style," Napier recalls of the jazz organist. Napier's heyday was the big-band era. As she honed her talent in small clubs, she jammed with the likes of Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Gene Krupa. "They all played the big hotels uptown," Napier said. "They'd get off at midnight, and they'd come south and jam to the wee hours of the morning. It was wonderful." While blacks played the big hotels, they were not allowed to sleep or eat there, she said. "They couldn't even go to the bathroom," she said. "Among the musicians themselves, there wasn't any prejudice. We learned

Soon "the greats," as Napier calls them, started moving to California. "That was a little too far for me. I didn't want to be THAT far from home." She recalls that many musicians started in Chicago in those days: "Chicago was the stomping grounds. It didn't make you or break you." In California, there were recording studios and agents, and musicians could make more money, she added. "But the agents owned your soul. After you signed, it was like you were a slave. They made more than the musicians made," Napier said. "It was a hard time coming up for the black musicians — just like the athletes," she said. "If (a musician) got any recognition, you better believe they worked hard to get it."



Napier had her own trio with Johnny Long on trumpet and Charlie Norris on guitar; they played the 308 Club and Squares. Later, Long would acknowledge her talent in Dempsey Travis' "An Autobiography of Black Jazz." Other Danville musicians stopped by from time to time. "Bobby Short would come around to where I was playing and sit in," she said. "He grew up with my nephew. He was part of the family." In Danville, Napier organized a men's chorus in the 1980s and continues to conduct the choir, but love of that big-band music has not waned over the years. "Music today can't compare to the big band," she emphasizes. "I like for young people to hear that type of band. Music today just gets wilder and wilder. I'm just glad I was born at the right time, before everything got so wild." "I'm just glad I was that? And just when was that? "Well, everybody knows I'm in my 80s. They just don't know how many 80s," she said with a twinkle in her eye.

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By KIRBY PRINGLE

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INNEAPOLIS — Jack McDuff has gone from one set of twin cities to another and back again.

On March 16 he will be back where he started — in Champaign-Urbana — for the Sixth Annual All-Star Jazz and Blues Blowout set for 1:30 to 9 p.m. at the new Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 1001 Killarney St., U.

McDuff, a well-known and highly respected jazz and blues organist who now lives in Minneapolis-St. Paul, began his musical career in his native Champaign.

"We had an old pump organ in our house. I think that's where it all ties in. I couldn't play boogie-woogie at our house because my parents were pretty strict, religious people. I had to go next door to the neighbor's house, Ernie Hite's, in order to play boogie-woogie," said McDuff, who was born Eugene McDuffy on Sept. 17, 1926.

McDuff taught himself how to boogie-woogie.

"My dad would have killed me if I'd asked him for \$2 to take piano lessons. I taught myself how to read music, how to write it, how to orchestrate and arrange," McDuff said.

He actually started his musical career on the upright bass. After a stint in the U.S. Army — he joined at age 17 — McDuff ended up in Chicago playing bass and piano with various jazz groups at clubs on the city's south side.

He switched to the organ when a club owner asked him if he could play the instrument.

"When you have an organ you can cut out the bass player. He just wanted to save a salary," McDuff said.

His mind had already been made up to switch to the organ after seeing the legendary jazz drummer Max Roach and his quintet, which included the great trumpet player Clifford Brown, in the early to mid-'50s.

"I saw them in Chicago. They were playing so fast — every tempo. They were playing eight to 10 chords each," McDuff said. He was overwhelmed. "Right then and there I decided to quit playing the bass."

McDuff has made his mark on jazz with the mighty Hammond B-3 organ and its trademark sound. He started his first group in the early '50s and another in 1959 — crisscrossing the world on tour in the years since.

The first record under his own name came in 1959 on the Prestige label. All totaled, McDuff has churned out an amazing number of records — more than 80 on a variety

of labels, including Prestige, Blue Note, Verve, Muse, Atlantic, Cadet/Chess and Concord.

His newest record, "That's the Way I Feel About It," will be released soon on the Concord label, as have all his most recent efforts. Last year's "It's About Time," was a collaboration with another Hammond B-3 heavyweight, John DeFrancesco. DeFrancesco admitted in an issue of Downbeat to naming some 50 McDuff albums and said he had been a major musical influence.

McDuff has worked with some of the greats in jazz and blues: Sonny Stitt, Ella Jones, Roland Kirk, Gene

Ammons, Joe Williams and Kenny Burrell, to name a few.

Perhaps more impressive, though, are the musicians that McDuff has hired to play in his bands over the years. The roster includes guitarists George Benson, Pat Martino and Mark Whitfield and saxophonists Red Holloway, Joe Henderson and Joe Lovano.

"I've been extremely lucky to get good musicians over the years. I just hear 'em. (Jazz guitarist) Joe Pass once asked me if I had a guitar school. If a guy can play fast, if he can do that, I can show him what to play," McDuff said.

McDuff doesn't tour as much as he used to, keeping most of his tour dates confined to weekends.

He's an early riser and works on songs at his home studio until he has to take his wife to work.

"Even though I'm 70, you'd be surprised how busy I stay," McDuff said. "This life is perfect."

Also playing at the jazz and blues blowout will be: The Blues Deacons, H. the 8th Letter, Candy Foster and Shades of Blue, Confluence, and Eddie Snow and the Snowflakes.

Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door.

They can be purchased at Record

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THE NEWS-GAZETTE

Jazz blues organist McDuff to be back in his native C-U



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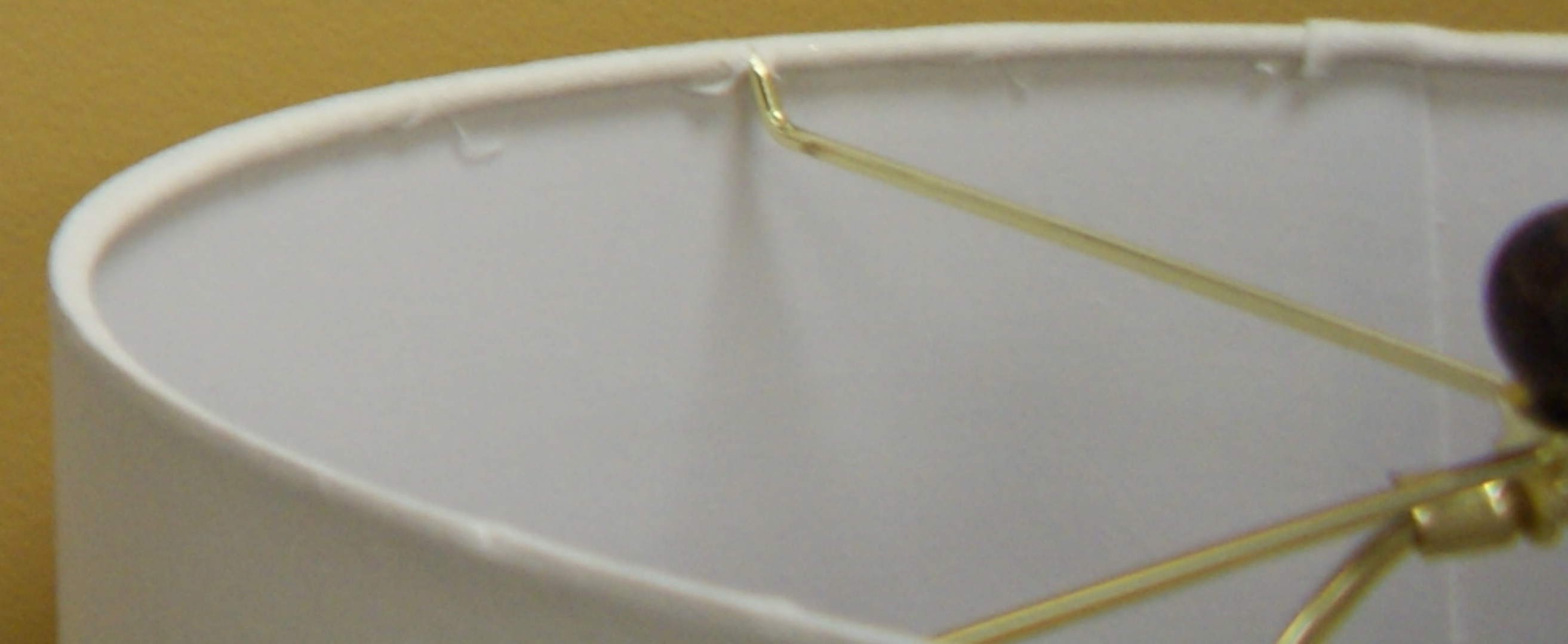
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