

# Denver JAZZ Club NEWS

Volume 62,  
Number 5

May/June 2018

Denver Jazz Club in operation for 62 continuous years

Established 1954

## The Poudre River Irregulars

Sunday, May 20



The Poudre River Irregulars will be playing New Orleans and Dixieland jazz for the DJC in May. Noted for their exuberant energy and sound musicianship, they draw much of their inspiration from Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton, and play a wide variety of traditional jazz, from ragtime through the classics of the twenties and thirties up to early swing. Whatever they play, their music is always upbeat and joyful. Founder Bob Cooke retired in 2010, and the band's current "regular

irregulars" include leader **Len Kellogg**, trombone; **Dave Dale**, bass; **Oscar DeZoto**, drums; **Ray Leake**, piano; **Charlie Smith** and/or **Larry Lagerberg**, trumpet; **Rory Thomas**, banjo; and **Clark Burnside**, clarinet.

Where, when, how much:

- Denver Jazz Club, 1:30–5:00 PM Sunday, May 20
- Westminster Elks Club, 3850 Elk Drive
- Admission is \$8 for members of any jazz club, \$10 for anyone who isn't a jazz club member, free for age 12 and younger.

Amenities:

- Cabaret-style seating, dance floor and cash bar.
- Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars perform

## Neil Bridge Seven + with Karen Lee

Sunday, June 17

**Neil Bridge** is a classic American jazz musician, who has accompanied Mel Tormé, Anita O'Day, Nancy Wilson, Dakota Staton, Johnny Smith, the Mills Brothers, Clark Terry, Sonny Stitt and many more. He was a pianist with the Denver Symphony and has performed with Henry Mancini, Richard Hayman, Steve Allen, Rich Little and Nelson Riddle. This seven piece band consists of **Neil Bridge**, piano; **Ron Bland**, bass; **Larry "LT" Thompson**, drums; **Derek Banach**, trumpet; **Al Hermann**, trombone; **Chuck Schneider**, reeds, and vocalist **Karen Lee**. All the musical arrangements for The Neil Bridge 7+ were written by Neil himself. He has always been well-received at his Denver Jazz Club performances.

Where, when, how much:

- Denver Jazz Club, 1:30–5:00 PM Sunday, June 17
- Westminster Elks Club, 3850 Elk Drive



- Admission is \$8 for members of any jazz club, \$10 for anyone who isn't a jazz club member, free for age 12 and younger.

Amenities:

- Cabaret-style seating, dance floor and cash bar
- Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars perform

## Hot Jazz, Pop Jazz, Hokum and Hilarity – and History

By Ed Danielson

There are a few important historical events that occurred on our club meeting dates in May and June – “important” being a matter of opinion, of course. You won’t find any mention of these occasions in a history book!

On May 20, Jimmy Blythe, a pianist who played in Chicago in the 1920s, was born in Louisville, KY, in 1901. Six years later, Rod Cless – the clarinet player on most of the “Great 16” recordings of Muggsy Spanier and his Ragtimers, including *Relaxin’ at the Touro* – was born in Lenox, IA. Blythe died in 1931, Cless in 1944.



But perhaps most importantly, Milt Gabler was born on May 20, 1911 in New York. Gabler owned the Commodore record store in Manhattan, across the street from the Commodore Hotel. He got the notion,

in 1938, of recording some of his favorite jazz players, and that was the beginning of Commodore Records, the first record label formed strictly to record jazz. (Gabler beat the Blue Note label by about a year.) Its first recording was “Love is Just Around the Corner,” with Bobby Hackett, George Brunies, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman, Jess Stacy, Eddie Condon, Artie Shapiro and George Wettling. The label ended production in 1954, although Decca records reissued some of the recordings using the Commodore name. In the 1960s, Gabler compiled a “best-of” series of the recordings, and they were reissued by the Mainstream record label. Gabler was something of a social activist, recording both black and white musicians (often working together), and he was courageous enough to issue Billie Holiday’s great 1939 record, “Strange Fruit,” a song about a lynching.



Holiday was under contract to Columbia at that time, but the label deemed the song too controversial, fearing rejection by record stores and radio stations in the south; Columbia granted Holiday a one-session release from her contract just so she could record the song for Commodore (the flip side is “Fine and Mellow”), and it became her biggest selling record. Gabler, who died in 2002, was the uncle of comedian/actor Billy Crystal. Crystal recalls going to Yankees games with his uncle, where they sat in Louis Armstrong’s seats!

June 17, 1907, is the birthday of Gene “Honeybear”

Sedric, the clarinet/saxophone player who worked extensively with Fats Waller. A native of St. Louis, Sedric worked in bands on Mississippi riverboats early in his career, later joining Sam Wooding’s band which toured Europe in the late 1920s. When that band broke up, Sedric moved to New York, where he found plenty of gigs. Sedric worked with Waller from 1934 until 1942. His nickname – “Honeybear” – was a nod to the camelhair overcoat that he liked to wear. When Woody Allen wanted to learn to play the clarinet, he called Sedric and asked him to give him some lessons, and Sedric obliged. Gene Sedric died in 1963.



Isn’t jazz fun stuff?

### Denver JAZZ Club NEWS

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# Peter's Place

By Peter Robinson  
Denver Jazz Club Guest Columnist

## ELLINGTON, THE GENIUS

### (1899-1974)

I did think of writing a piece on spring but found that I ran out of titles used by jazz groups after April in Paris and Joy Spring. Therefore, not wishing to take up valuable newsletter space, I abandoned the idea.

I thought of bravely turning my attention to the life of Duke Ellington, a challenge of putting down a sort of potted history of this fascinating man. He started his musical career by establishing a band called The Washingtonians in 1924, showing off his dexterity as a good stride pianist. Within this band were two musicians who became part of the band personnel for many years -- Harry Carney on baritone sax, and drummer Sonny Greer. Carney played in the sax section for 45 years! A clarinetist not to be forgotten is Barney Bigard who joined Ellington in 1927, leaving in 1942.

Duke became renowned for composing tunes to feature a specific soloist and what he called 'tone colour' orchestrations to produce identifying sounds for the whole band. A sweet sounding soloist who added to that sound spent 35 years with the band -- altoist Johnny Hodges. I experienced Carney and Hodges by attending a concert in the late 1960s. Many of the musicians also came 'out front' to deliver their solos including -- Russell Procope (clarinet), Cootie Williams (growling trumpet) and Britt Woodman (trombone). I waited for a suite in the programme and sure enough the *Togo Brava Suite* appeared with its four movements. Much drumming by Sam Woodyard kept up the atmosphere for the soloists. A fantastic evening never to be forgotten! A list of some of Ellington's compositions which are classics of their kind often appear in programmes played by some of the jazz bands today. A short list is at the end of this piece.

In 1944 the orchestra hit a new high when performing at Fargo, North Dakota. Two students fortunately

recorded the event on a portable player. Within the ranks were the veteran tenor player Ben Webster and young bassist Jimmy Blanton who had a sturdy, positive way of propelling the band. A certain lift and feeling came over the band. I believe there is a commercial pressing of this historic occasion.

I became so intrigued by this orchestra and its history that I bought a 10 CD set of excellent recordings produced by KAZ Records in England -- *Duke Ellington the Private Collection*. This gave a marvelous rundown of the band around the 1950s to early 1970. Various soloists came into the band including Clark Terry (trumpet), Shorty Baker (trumpet), Ray Nance (trumpet, violin and vocals) and Paul Gonsalves (tenor sax). Several sessions from dance halls provided good atmosphere. I cannot forget the important composer and pianist who contributed so much to the repertoire of Ellington -- Billy 'Sweet Pea' Strayhorn. He joined the aggregation in 1939 and penned some beautiful numbers that live on today -- *Day Dream, Prelude to a Kiss, Lush Life, Chelsea Bridge* and *Just a Sittin' and a Rockin'* come to mind.

So here goes with a short list from hundreds of well-known tunes composed by the Duke over the years: *Creole Love Call, The Mooche, Mood Indigo, C Jam Blues, Take the A Train, Sophisticated Lady, Cotton Tail, Caravan, I Got it Bad and That Ain't Good, In A Mellow Tone, Perdido, Jeep's Blues* and his opening piece in a concert *Rockin' in Rhythm*. There are three suites that have some great melodies within their parts -- *Black, Brown and Beige, the Far East Suite* and *Such Sweet Thunder* -- the Duke always being able to produce memorable tunes and feature his special soloists.

P.S. A wonderful collection of Whitney Balliett's masterful writings (1954 -2000, St. Martin's Press) is a goldmine of jazz history. In the section 'Seventies,' a piece entitled "R.I.P." about the Duke is well worth reading.



### YOUTH ALL-STARS

*Congratulations to the DJC Youth All-Stars for their outstanding invitational concert at Seton Hall University (New Jersey) on March 20th! Due to a Nor'easter that blew in, we were forced to stay in the NYC area for two additional days. We ended up performing an impromptu concert at New York City's Swing 46 Jazz Club on March 22nd.*



*The All-Stars performing at Seton Hall University's jazz concert – South Orange Performing Arts Center.*

A special thanks to all of you in the Denver Jazz Club for your unending support! THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE KING SOOPERS GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER – THIS PROGRAM CONTINUOUSLY HELPS OUR YOUTH ALL-STARS! You can also mail donations to: Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars, Ed Cannava, Director, 6388 S. Dexter St, Centennial, CO 80121, or go to: <http://youthallstars.denverjazzclub.com/donate/> to make a donation or purchase any of our 8 CD's!

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 4 NEW 2018-19 DENVER JAZZ CLUB YOUTH ALL-STARS:

Ivan Martin, Clarinet, sophomore, Chatfield High School  
 Nathan Bailey, Tenor Sax, sophomore, Chatfield High School  
 Abby Husted, Trumpet, 8th grader, Deer Creek Middle School  
 Thomas Neal, Trombone, sophomore, Douglas County High School

#### CONTINUING ON NEXT YEAR FROM OUR PRESENT BAND:

Ben Husted, Bass, junior, Chatfield High School  
 Antonio Giovanetti, Drums, sophomore, Bear Creek High School

*The DJC Youth All-Stars are still looking for dedicated high school piano and guitar/bass/banjo players, or high school musicians interested in learning how to play banjo.*

*Professional instrument is free for the selected student, and private lessons are provided with some financial aid!*

**THE AUDITION MUSIC AND RECORDING HAVE NOW BEEN POSTED AT:**

<http://bandresourcesunlimited.com/downloads/>.

*Auditions take place Sundays (6:30-9pm), at Denver Percussion (7399 S. Tucson Way, Suite B2, Centennial), until all positions are filled. Some jazz experience is preferred, but not necessary.*

**PLEASE CONTACT ED AT: [ecan11@msn.com](mailto:ecan11@msn.com) TO SCHEDULE AN AUDITION DATE AND TIME.**

OUR EXCITING NEW YORK CITY CONCERT TOUR WILL BE TAKING PLACE FROM JULY 7TH THROUGH 13TH! Performances at Swing 46 Jazz Club, Central Park, Barbes (in Brooklyn with Brain Cloud), Iguana Lounge (with Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks), on the Intrepid Aircraft Carrier, and at the Louis Armstrong Home Museum (In Queens). What a Concert Tour!



World-class talent, intimate venues and beautiful mountain surroundings make the Evergreen Jazz Festival unique.



## 2018 Band Lineup:

- After Midnight, Denver
- Carl Sonny Leyland Trio, Southern California
- Felonius Smith Trio, Boulder, CO
- Gypsy Swing Revue, Denver
- Holland-Coots Jazz Quintet, Dallas & Nashville
  - Ivory&Gold®, Mystic, CT
- Joe Smith and The Spicy Pickles Jazz Band, Denver
- Queen City Jazz Band with Wende Harston, Denver
- Rock Island Roustabouts, All Over USA
- The Brain Cloud, New York City

For Information:  
**303-697-5467**  
*EvergreenJazz.org*



# Local band appearances

## After Midnight

[aftermidnightjazzband.com](http://aftermidnightjazzband.com)

Sunday, June 3	5:00 PM – Warehouse Restaurant and Gallery, 25 W Cimarron St, Colorado Springs
Saturday, June 9	7:00 PM – Caffe Sole, 637R S Broadway, Boulder
Friday, June 29	6:30 PM – Civic Green Park, 9370 Ridgeline Blvd, Highlands Ranch

## Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars

[www.youthallstars.denverjazzclub.com](http://www.youthallstars.denverjazzclub.com)

Saturday, May 12	7:30 PM - Ken Caryl Concert, St. Philip Lutheran, 7531 S. Kendall Blvd, Littleton
Friday, May 18	4:30 PM - Pearl Street Mall, Boulder (near the Wells Fargo Bank)
Saturday, May 19	9:30 PM - Mercury Cafe Jungle Room, 2199 California St, Denver
Saturday, May 26	11:00 AM - Louisville Farmers Market, 824 Front St., Louisville
Friday, June 1	3:00 PM and 6:40 pm - Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason St, Ft. Collins
Saturday, June 9	9:30 PM - Mercury Cafe Jungle Room, 2199 California St, Denver
Tuesday, June 12	7:00 PM - Live radio broadcast, KUVO Jazz, 2900 Welton St, Denver
Thursday, June 21	7:00 PM - Grant Amphitheater at Clement Park, Littleton
Saturday, June 23	4:00 PM - 16th Street Mall - NYC Concert Tour Preview (near Paramount Cafe)
Sunday, June 24	4:00 PM - City Park Jazz, 2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver

## Gypsy Swing Revue

[gypsyswingrevue.com](http://gypsyswingrevue.com)

Every Wednesday	8:00 PM – The Irish Snug, 1201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver
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## Hot Tomatoes Dance Orchestra

[hottomatoes.com](http://hottomatoes.com)

Sunday, May 27	8:00 PM – Sunday Night Swing, Mercury Café, 2199 California, Denver
Sunday, June 16	6:00 PM – 1940s Ball, Boulder Airport, 3327 Airport Rd., Boulder

## Joe Smith and the Spicy Pickles Jazz Band

[joesmithandthespicypickles.com](http://joesmithandthespicypickles.com)

Sunday, May 19	8:00 PM – Avalon Ballroom, 6185 Arapahoe Rd, Boulder
Thursday, May 24	8:30 PM – Mercury Café, 2199 California, Denver
Saturday, June 16	5:00 PM – 1940s Ball, Boulder Airport, 3327 Airport Rd., Boulder

## La Pompe Jazz

[www.lapompejazz.com](http://www.lapompejazz.com)

Wednesday, May 16	7:30 PM – Wednesday Night Hop, 841 Santa Fe Dr., Denver
Sunday, June 3	7:00 PM – Your Mom's House - 608 E. 13th Ave., Denver

## Marti Henry's Jazz Over Easy

Every third Wednesday	6:00 PM – Bent Noodle, 3055 S. Parker Rd.
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## Neil Bridge 7 with Karen Lee

[www.neilbridgemusic.com](http://www.neilbridgemusic.com)

Every third Sunday	6:00 PM – Bull and Bush Pub, 4700 Cherry Creek Dr. South, Glendale
Sunday, May 13	1:00 PM - Pikes Peak Jazz and Swing Society, Olympian Plaza, 975 S. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs
Friday, June 8	7:00 PM - Caffe Sole, 637R S Broadway, Boulder (Neil & Karen Lee, with Wayne Wilkerson, Ron Bland, Todd Reid)
Saturday, June 30	8:00 PM – Avalon Ballroom, 6185 Arapahoe Rd., Boulder

## Poudre River Irregulars

[www.prijb.com](http://www.prijb.com)

Every first Friday	4:00 PM – Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason St., Fort Collins
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## Queen City Jazz Band

[www.queencityjazzband.com](http://www.queencityjazzband.com)

Every second Sunday	8:00 PM – Mercury Cafe, 2199 California, Denver
Saturday, May 5	1:00 PM - Denver Derby Party, Denver Performing Arts Center, 1400 Curtis, Denver
Saturday, May 26	6:00 PM – Patriotic Concert, Crown Hill Cemetery, 7777 West 29th Ave , Wheat Ridge
Sunday, June 24	2:00 PM - El Rancho, 29260 US Hwy 40, Evergreen (Note: May27 the band will be off)

## Summit Hot Seven

Every first Sunday	6:00 PM – Bull and Bush Pub, 4700 Cherry Creek Dr. South, Glendale
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## UCD Claim Jumpers

Every fourth Saturday	9:30 PM – Mercury Café Jungle Room, 2199 California St., Denver.
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## Your Father's Mustache Band

[www.mustacheband.com](http://www.mustacheband.com)

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday	6:00 PM – Bull and Bush Pub, 4700 Cherry Creek Dr. South, Glendale
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# The /rez sez ...

By John Sobott  
Denver Jazz Club President

We want to thank everyone who attended and supported the Ron Cope benefit recently. We presented a scholarship check for \$500 to UC Denver Claim Jumper, Justin Rogers. One of our most important missions as an active traditional jazz club is to support the musical education of young players. With the support of our members we have assisted many young music students over the years and we shall continue to do this as long as we are able. Thank you for your support. One of the fund raising methods we have used for the past several years is the King Soopers Gift Card Reimbursement fund. When

our card holders spend \$5000, we receive a check for \$250. This fund has helped us in our educational efforts and we always need additional folks to use the card. The \$25 purchase price of the card is actually your money to spend for groceries, and every time you shop at King Soopers you add more money to the card for your shopping that day. You can add funds to the card at the check stand with hardly any delay. Those funds help the club in our educational efforts. If you need a gift card call our Treasurer, Dottie Sobott at 303 430-5606 or ask about getting the card at the monthly jam at the Elks Club.

## Sophie Tucker, the Last of the Red Hot Mamas

By Casey Hayes



I just finished reading a book about Sophie Tucker. In 1910 she left her home, husband, and a baby boy, rather abruptly, and vowed never to return home to Hartford, Connecticut, until she was successful. The first job paid \$3.00 a week, and required her to work in blackface. Customs were different from today, and she became known as a

“coon shouter.” Many of her songs were double entendre, or blue.

By 1914 she was booked at the Palace Theater, and, in 1920, was singing for \$7,500 a week. She would only wear a costume twice, once for a matinee and again in the evening. She would then give her dress to other actresses. Although her favorite songs were *After You've Gone* and *Hello My Baby*, she would close her act with the song *Some of These Days*.

*Some of These Days* was written by Shelton Brooks, a

black man, who had happened to hear a couple quarrelling. “Better not walk out on me, man,” the girl had declared. “For some of these days you’re gonna miss me, honey.” Brooks went on to write *Walking the Dog* and *Darktown Strutters Ball*.

Tucker’s personal life, with a son and several marriages, was awkward. She continued to perform until 1965, passing away on February 9, 1966, of lung cancer and kidney failure. During her career she made numerous trips by boat to England with great acceptance. In 1962 she entertained the queen along with Bob Hope.

In 1951 I saw her at the Last Frontier, a venue in Las Vegas. Her act was accompanied by long-time piano player, Ted Shapiro. I considered it to be the equivalent of a lounge show. Afterwards, she would be at the door selling LP records, the proceeds going to charity. One of the songs, *Mr. Siegel, Please Make it Legal*, was about a young expectant girl. Being younger, I preferred Mickey Rooney at the Tropicana.

On a tour of Denver, she did a benefit for Children’s Hospital. She had minor parts in films, but preferred to work the stage and clubs. In winter she could be found at the Fontainebleau or Beachcomber in Miami, at \$7,200 a week. She left an estate of a million dollars.



**Denver Jazz Club News, published every two months by the Denver Jazz Club  
7898 Applewood Lane, Denver CO 80221-3204**

*Denver Jazz Club officers and board members*

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- **Vice President:** Bill Clark (2018), 303-726-4101
- **Secretary:** Paul Chamberlin (2021) 303-237-4619
- **Treasurer:** Dottie Sobott (2018), 303-430-5606
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Kristi Flesher (2018), 303-748-9498

**Board members:**

- Casey Hayes (2018), 303-288-5869
- Walt Hewitt (2018) 303-791-3337
- Ed Cannava (2018), 303-328-7277
- Eric Staffeldt (2018), 303-394-4552

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Musician \$15/year  Family \$30/year

Patron \$80/year (get 2 free jam session passes!)

**Denver Jazz Club Membership Application**

**Denver JAZZ Club  
NEWS**

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**Boulder Friends of Jazz**

(phone 303-449-1888, website [www.boulderfriendsofjazz.org](http://www.boulderfriendsofjazz.org))

**1:00-4:00 PM, first Sunday of every month at the Avalon Ballroom, 6185 Arapahoe Rd, Boulder.**

\$8 for members of any jazz club, \$10 for non-members, \$3 for students, free for musicians who wish to play in jam session.

Sunday, May 6 – **Derek Lucas**

Sunday, June 3 – To be announced

**Northern Colorado Traditional Jazz Society**

(phone 1-970-498-8616, email [tradjazz@fortnet.org](mailto:tradjazz@fortnet.org))

**4:00-7:00 PM, first Friday of every month at Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason St., Fort Collins.**

\$8 for members of Northern Colorado Traditional Jazz Society, \$12 for non-members, \$4 for students, free for ages 18 and younger.

Fridays, March 2 and April 6 –

**Poudre River Irregulars.**

**Pikes Peak Jazz & Swing Society**

(phone 1-719-685-9451, website [www.ppjass.org](http://www.ppjass.org))

**1:00-4:00 PM, second Sunday of every month at the Olympian Event Center, 975 S. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs.**

\$10 for members of any jazz club, \$15 for non-members, \$3.50 for students, free for children age 12 or younger.

Sunday, May 13 – **The Neil Bridge 7 with Karen Lee**

Sunday, June 10 – **Barry Fagin and Friends Quartet**