

**SEASON OPENER** 

# SPYRO GYRA



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# From Nik Walker



# New President of the Jazz Club

uring the intermission of the 1st night of our annual Jazz Festival, I very proudly announced to the audience that I was officially named as President of the JCS. After all the applause subsided, I said to myself, "this is going to be good". It's going to be good because I had a sense that the attendees were really into the music, the atmosphere, and the whole scene. And, they are looking to the Jazz Club to do an even better job this year.

The Jazz Club of Sarasota is one of the foundational cultural pillars in the Sarasota area. I feel honored to lead a healthy organization that has prospered and grown over the last 43 years.

The JCS has matured since its humble beginnings in Hal Davis's den to being recognized as one of the best live music



Jazz Festivals in the United States. We have expanded our presence through mutual promotional agreements with iazz festivals in Colorado, New York and Canada to name a few.

Appropriately, we are beginning our new year. The JCS calendar runs from September 1st through August 31st. During those twelve months be prepared to come out and enjoy jazz performances by nationally known greats, local favorites, and even some excellent amateur jammers. We will make jazz available to you in various venues around the city. We play jazz on Friday afternoons and Monday nights. We play inside and outside. We even drive you to the jazz during the much-loved and very popular Jazz Trolley Pub Crawl. There's the Jazz Cabaret at Florida Studio Theatre – the perfect place to enjoy a jazz performance. Why, we even get nautical when we do .... Jazz on the Water.

2023-24 will be a great year and you can help make it so. Your membership will help fund events, provide scholarships for students, and help keep the culture alive. One can even sponsor an artist during the annual Jazz Club of Sarasota Jazz Festival. Just some of the ways you can support the efforts of the Jazz Club of Sarasota.

Visit www.jazzclubsarasota.org to see the great offerings around town. Sign up on our mailing list to get advance notice of who's coming to Sarasota.

Yessir! With the dedicated JCS staff, excellent local talent, and first-rate venues, "This is going to be good".

Very truly yours,

Nik, President

# **Joyce Rosenthal**

Devoted Volunteer to the Jazz Club Passed Peacefully in Newport, RI



The Jazz Club of Sarasota lost a family member and a special friend, Joyce Rosenthal. She was a lifetime member of the Jazz Club, a former member of the Jazz Club Board of Directors and a dedicated volunteer for the Club. Joyce passed away recently in Newport, RI, where she spends the summer months. She was a volunteer for a number of organizations both here in Sarasota and in Newport. Joyce had a passion for the arts and especially both classical and jazz music. She was a frequent attendee at the Newport Jazz Festival. Our heartfelt sympathies to her family and many friends, both here in Sarasota and in Newport. Rest in peace, Joyce, you will be missed.

#### ARTIST SERIES CONCERTS

Season 28 | Stars Ascending







#### **NEXUS Chamber Music** October 1 • 4:00 pm • First Presbyterian Church Back by popular demand!

This Chicago-based chamber music collective creates engaging classical music experiences for a broad audience. Co-founder Alexander Hersh is joined by Marlboro Music Festival alums Stephanie Zyzak and Evren Ozel in a program of piano trios by Haydn, Brahms, and Ravel.

#### Ilya Yakushev, piano October 10 • 7:30 pm • Historic Asolo Theater



Winner of the 2005 World Piano Competition, Yakushev has astounded audiences at Carnegie Hall and with major orchestras across three continents. He will be joined by a string quartet, including Daniel Jordan, concertmaster of Sarasota Orchestra, for Shostakovich's Piano Quintet and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition."

#### "Caesar!" and the Markov Family November 18 • 4:00 pm • Church of the Palms



The celebrated "first family of violin" - Albert, Marina, and Alexander Markov - begin this concert with beloved violin duo and trios. After intermission. Alexander presents his own rock and roll oratorio, "Caesar!" This dramatic musical journey includes Key Chorale, the Booker High School VPA Choir, a rhythm section, organ, and orchestral musicians. A special event not to be missed!

Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota offers a diverse range of 26 concerts featuring emerging and accomplished classical, chamber, jazz, and pops artists from around the globe.

Full concert schedule/tickets:

#### ArtistSeriesConcerts.org

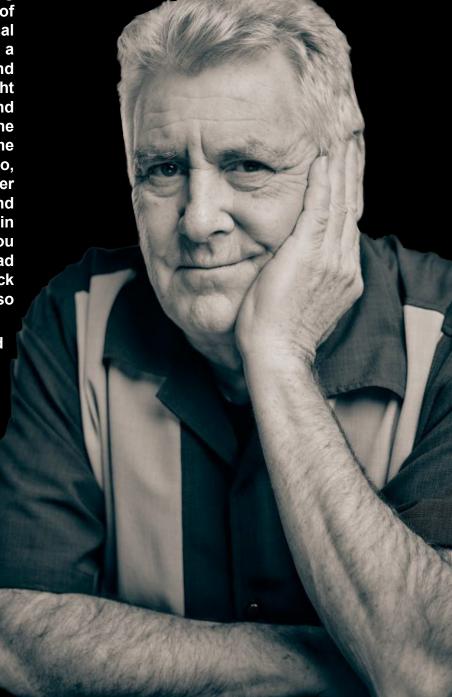




# SPYRO GYRA

ans of the band are familiar with the group's rise to international prominence from humble beginnings in Buffalo, New York. That's when a few area working musicians arranged for a weekly gig of playing less commercial music in a local club on everyone's night off. So humble a beginning, there was no name for the band so they were only known as "Tuesday Night Jazz Jam". Soon the word got around and the core group was joined by many of the city's musicians to come and have some fun. And customers started showing up, too, prompting the club owner to press leader and saxophonist Jay Beckenstein for a band name for the club's new sign. Beckenstein offered up this late night, tipsy answer, "You can call it 'spirogyra'", an algae that he had studied once. The next week, he came back and there it was, misspelling and all, and so it began in 1974.

Fast forward to the band having logged over 10,000 shows on six continents, having released 35 albums garnering platinum and gold records along the way and here they are, once again looking forward. Speaking of the band's return to live audiences after the pandemic hiatus, Beckenstein admits, "It's been a long time since we played. We'll do some fan favorites but we're a bunch of wanderers by nature. We have a relatively short attention span as a band and we always will want to be doing our favorites too. That's all I know right now. But it will be happy. We will be happy."



Prompted to capsulize this musical family, guitarist Julio Fernandez is "Mr. Esprit", the guy who brings spirit to the band, the guy who imbues just about every note he plays with pure emotion. When he plays, I really feel it." Bassist Scott Ambush is "an amazing musician and technician. He is the person in the band who is always encouraging us to push the envelope." Drummer Lionel Cordew "is the engine that always works. Lionel is the backbone of the band as we all rely on him providing us rock solid structure for us to play on. Chris Fischer is the guy that who just joined the band and we were lucky to find him. He's so talented and we look forward to his contributions."

2019 provided the latest release from the band, Vinyl Tap, a collection of mostly Classic Rock covers, the promotion of which was cut short by the COVID health crisis. "I see Vinyl Tap as being a bit of a one off," Beckenstein observed. "I'm very proud of Vinyl Tap. I think we did a really nice job on interpretations. Everybody played great but as I said I think it's a one off. It was really great fun doing other peoples' material but that ultimately is not how I identify Spyro Gyra. Ultimately, we're a band that writes its own material." Beckenstein further describes their approach, "First of all, it's instrumental. That covers

a lot of ground right there. The music has elements of Jazz, rhythm and blues, Latin music and world music. It's instrumental, it's improvisational, there's a lot of teamwork in the band and the music is really honest and coming from us and what we want to say. Jazz is a chain of generations, where one generation goes to the next generation and goes to the next generation. That's really all a Jazz musician can aspire to be a link in that chain of the Jazz tradition and that people after him used that as a link for their link. We came along imbuing Jazz with other musical styles, one of the first but not the first. But it wasn't that new. Dizzy Gillespie had done Latin music and Brazilian music was being done by Stan Getz. The idea of getting away from traditional mainstream Jazz by combining it with other things was already alive and well. I believe we were very much in the tradition."

With respect to the long term future for a band with a 50th anniversary not too far off, Beckenstein allows, "As long as I can perform at a high-level, I would never think of retiring. But I can't tell you what it would be like if I was to have to continue as a lesser version of myself. Thankfully, that hasn't happened yet. So all I am thinking about right now is that I can't wait to see the people again."

# Don't miss out! Become a Jazz Club Member today!

The Jazz Club of Sarasota has over 1,000 Members and is Growing!

#### **MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE:**

- Up to \$500+ savings in reduced TICKETS
- Weekly Eblasts of Jazz Events
- Issues of "Sarasota Jazz Sounds" Magazine
- Member Support from JCS Office
- Opportunities to serve on committees to plan, promote and manage events
- Free Luxury Bus Transportation to and from The Jazz Cruise

Become a Member and save 20% on Spyro Gyra tickets plus be a part of this special, active community. Help make Jazz an even more vital part of life in Sarasota.

#### Lifetime \$1000

One time payment
No annual renewal
One discounted ticket
for most events
Jazz at Two Free

#### Individual \$75

Annual renewal
12 full months
One discounted ticket
for most events
Jazz at Two 25% disc

#### Musician \$40

Annual renewal
12 full months
Working musicians
One discounted ticket
for most events
Jazz at Two 25% disc

#### Couples \$130

Annual renewal
12 full months
Two discounted tickets
for most events
Two people in same
household
Jazz at Two 25% disc

#### Student \$15

Annual renewal
12 full months
For HS or College
students up to 22 yrs
One discounted ticket
for most events
Jazz at Two Free



## Jazz Club announces 2023-24 Schedule for



Jazz at Two features many of the best jazz artists in the area performing various types of jazz straight ahead, contemporary, big band, jazzy blues, Dixieland, Latin jazz (bossa nova/Samba) and cabaret style. Enjoy the best jazz on Florida's West Coast with some returning favorites along with some exciting newcomers to entertain you throughout the season.

Tickets are sold at the door with a portion of every admission allocated to The Club's Scholarship Fund.

October 27	Kevin Celebi Sextet	February 16	Danny Sinoff Trio
November 10	Robby Rose Retro	February 23	Tom Carabasi Quintet
December 01	Eddie Tobin and Friends	March 01	Scotty Wright and Friends
December 15	Sarasota Jazz Project	March 08	Pete BarenBregge Quintet
December 29	Scholarship Concert	March 15	Anne/Mark Burnell Music
January 05	Trace Zacur Quartet	April 05	Luca Stine Quartet
January 12	Synia Carroll and Friends	April 12	Mark Moultrup Music
January 19	Skip Conkling Dixie Mix	April 19	Fred Johnson Quartet
January 26	Kitt Moran with Mike Moran Trio	April 26	James Suggs and Friends
February 02	Paul Gormley Quartet	May 03	Rodney Rojas Jazz Ensemble
February 09	TBA		



# Inner Circle (\$2000+)

George & Janet Allgair Arbors Records - Rachel Domber Anonymous Karen Bokulic Les & Karen Bunch Beth Cotner Harold & Evelyn Davis Foundation

Diane Foxman Guitarfetish.com Walter Jolley Melonie Favorite & Conrad Kenley Paulenne Kirschenbaum Michael Lazaroff. The Jazz Cruise Metropics Radio, Wendy & Carlos

Pagån Elizabeth Moore Sarasota County Tourist Development David & Lynn Smith Family Philanthropic Fund Seacoast Bank

# Close Friends (\$1000 to \$1999)

Sandra & Neil P DeFeo Judy & Eric Mower John Coughlin Friends of Nancy & Jerry Roucher Gold Coast Banjo Society

Gulf Coast Community Foundation Jazz at Two - Scholarship Fund Judy Jones Kauffman Thompson, PLLC Ed & Synia Linehan

Nancy Roucher Seidman Family Foundation Lenore Walsh Vern Weitz

# Friends (Under \$1000)

Kristine Bundant Perette & William Cannady Robert Catineau Helen & Fred Coleman Kay Davis Louise Janssen Fletcher Karen & Ed Gartner Alfred Gilman Bettina & Henry Heiman Robert Hammond

Beverly & Dick Brinson

Joy of Jazz - Scholarship Fund Paul Kaufman Gerald Kilanoski Ed Kinder Andrea Kreithan **Brad & Carol LoRicco** Gene McGowan Allison & Clifford Menezes Mary Meunier Robert D Mitchell David & Gwen Murphy Kerstin & Frank Nicholson

Joan Nye Susan L Robinson Rominiecki Family L & R Rosenbluth Fund Joyce Rosenthal Barbara, Katie & Ron Sternowski John Tolle Jane Verleep **David Walrath** Gisela Weinland

Donations received from September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023

# Scholarship News

or more than three decades The Jazz Club of Sarasota has been awarding financial support to deserving students studying jazz music. Students apply from Sarasota and surrounding counties. The 2023 Scholarship Award Winners were celebrated in a special concert on Sunday, July 30th at Fogartyville Media & Arts Center.

Photos from the July 30,2023 Concert courtesy of Carol LoRicco

## **Special Named Awards**

The Matt Bokulic Scholarship commemorates a true icon of the Tampa Bay music scene. Matt was born in Springfield, MA and attended Berklee School of Music and the University of South Florida. He moved to Tampa in 1995. He soon became an area favorite pianist, composer, and educator. He taught piano for more than 20 years at the *Players School of Music*, recorded with many luminaries and wrote three books about music theory. Through the generosity of the Bokulic family, The Matt Bokulic Scholarship is an annual award.

The Blake Bennett Scholarship was established by the scholarship committee last year after Blake tragically died in a traffic accident just five months after graduation. He was an accomplished trumpet player who had received scholarships from the Jazz Club for all four years of undergraduate work at Florida State University. His plans included graduate work at FSU. The Jazz Club Scholarship Committee has decided to continue to award deserving students this distinguished scholarship in Blake's memory.

The David W. Smith Scholarship is an award celebrating the life of orthopedic surgeon Dave Smith. An avid music fan and trumpet player himself, Dr. Smith was an enthusiastic supporter of The Jazz Club of Sarasota for many years. In fact, it was at a Jazz Club concert that Dave succumbed to his illnesses during the performance. We will miss Dave and we are grateful to his wife, Lynn Smith for her generosity and desire to support the next generation of Jazz in memory of her music-loving husband.

The Robert H Weitz Scholarship is a new scholarship in memory of Bob Weitz, past chairman of the Jazz Club scholarship committee. For over 14 years, Bob spent many happy hours attending musical events at high schools across the SW Florida as he searched for students showing exceptional talent. He encouraged them to focus their interest on jazz and he recommended that they apply to the Jazz Club for scholarships. So grew the tradition of supporting young talent. A dear friend and champion for the kids, we proudly make this an annual scholarship in Bob's memory.

(See details on the 2023 scholarship winners on next 2 pages.)



Matt Bokulic Award



## I'M Ben Dunham

I am a junior at the University of Miami Frost School of Music. After studying several instruments, I was drawn to the vibraphone due to the way it could be used melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically. Plus, "it sounded really cool." My goal is to combine careers in composition and performance as a jazz vibraphonist.



I am a sophomore music major at State College of Florida. As a trumpeter, I have known since middle school that I would pursue music. I currently play with several groups in and out of school and aspire to a career in jazz performance.





## I'M Cole Wheeler

I am a freshman at the University of Central Florida in the Jazz Studies Program. I play the drumset and percussion. My goal is to build a career around playing, teaching, and otherwise interacting with music.

# Blake Bennett Award



# 2023 Scholarship Recipients

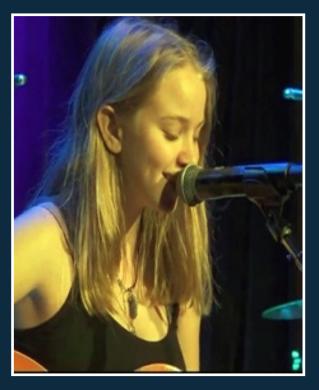
## I'M Alex Malkovich

I play the guitar and tenor saxophone. I am a student at St. Petersburg College as well as teaching and performing. I was inspired to travel by one of my teachers, and I hope to have my own band and be a touring musician.

# Anika Archipov

I am a guitarist and vocalist., I have established myself as a songwriter and recording artist. I am a freshman at Berklee College of music, studying composition. I am planning to continue my career as a singer-songwriter and jazz guitarist in Boston.





## I'M Colin Leonard

I am a multi-instrumentalist, primarily playing the saxophone, flute, and clarinet. A junior at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, I am majoring in Jazz Performance with a minor in Environmental Studies. I plan a professional career in music, combining teaching, composing, and performing. I hope to promote environmental conservation through my music.



By Ed Linehan

In March of this year Robert Walker, better known as Nik, was unanimously approved as the eleventh president of the Jazz Club of Sarasota. Born and raised in New Orleans, LA, Nik and his wife Dr. Pamela Greer, MD, retired from Seattle, WA in April of 2018 and relocated to Sarasota.

Upon arrival local friends who knew of Nik's passion for Jazz encouraged him to join the Jazz Club. Nik's enthusiasm for the music and his willingness to get involved led to his joining the Board in the fall of 2021.

Ed: I understand that you were born and raised in New Orleans. To a jazz fan like me from Connecticut, that sounds pretty special. Tell me about it.

Nik: Okay. Well, for one thing, in the part of town I grew up in, there was music all the time coming from either the tavern that was on the corner or someone's house or cars as they drove by. And it was the good old stuff, early days of rock and roll and Chuck Berry. All kinds of music. But it was listening to that as well as the Dixieland Jazz which we kind of separated into Black jazz and White jazz. But music was just in the culture, everywhere you went. High school marching bands are a big thing down in New Orleans as opposed to the rest of the country. And it's just something that the whole city always gravitates to, music.

#### Ed: Did you play an instrument?

Nik: Yes, I did. I actually played the "orphan" instrument in school. And what I mean by that is if your parents, your family, couldn't afford a horn for you or a drum, or whatever, the schools always had the instruments that the kids did not want to play, like the trombone. That's what I played. All the kids either wanted to play trumpet, sax, or drums because those are the cool instruments. Nobody wanted to play trombone or tuba or bass drums. So the schools provided those and all you had to do was learn how to play them. And all the



way from sixth grade through high school, I played a trombone. I don't play anymore. I was in the marching band first year in college and after that I just gave it up. I didn't have the bug anymore.

Ed: What's your earliest memory of when you really had a sense that there was this music called jazz and that it was something... When was that, and when did you start to own it? When did you start to appreciate it?

Nik: Okay. In my household there was this, we had a record player of course, and there were a couple of songs and 45s, remember those?

Yeah. They were played over and over and I'm talking about when I'm like seven, eight years old, and one of them was, who was it? I think it was Hank Crawford, Don't Get Around Much Anymore. And also it would be like Count Basie, the Count Basie Orchestra, Duke Ellington, those types of things that would happen.

One very strong memory I have though is a jazz radio show in New Orleans called Toby's Tower. I used to listen to it late at night. I'd lay in bed with a little earphone.

I heard Ahmad Jamal live at the Pershing. That is to me a seminal recording. And it is just amazing music, and particularly, his version of *Poinciana*. About halfway through it, you find yourself saying, "Wait a minute. That's him and the drummer and the bass guy, and they're putting out all these notes, all this music, all this great stuff." It's still my all time favorite jazz song.

to after high school. I know from your bio that you went to Duke University to major in civil engineering. Why did you make that choice?

Nik: The decision primarily was based on the fact that there was no foreign language requirement in that curriculum. I'd gone to high school where I had two years of Latin and three years of French. I was frankly tired of foreign languages, and so that was the major function there. Totally wrong, I know.

While at Duke I got involved with the Louisiana Superdome Project back in New Orleans. There was lots of work and they were looking for engineers. "They" being at the time Westinghouse and then Xerox. They needed people who could A, understand what the process was, and B, lead a members at the time. The rest is history! team. That was the mid-seventies.

A year after the "completion" of the Superdome we were still tweaking the project. A group from Seattle came down to visit the facility. They were building the Kingdome and they wanted to see how we did things. About a month later I got a phone call with a job offer.

So that was the pattern. You go to a building, you help work it, you put it together, and you hang around a year or two correcting and changing whatever was needed.

Ed: The scale of your work was enormous. I can see you were not only involved in the construction, but got very much involved with the operation of those and other facilities.

Nik: Yes, exactly. My time involved with operations was probably several years more than construction, especially at the Seattle Convention Center. Other positions included a stadium project for the Seattle Seahawks and the Seattle Young Women's Christian Association, where we built or rehabbed over a thousand income qualified housing units by the time I retired.

Ed: Was that when you and your wife moved to Sarasota?

Nik: Yes, I had done some work on a hotel in Marco Island in 1987. After some exploring of the coastline, I was very impressed with southwest Florida.

My wife Pam belongs to several organizations, and they all have a contingent here in Sarasota. And there's several people that we know from Seattle and elsewhere. Sarasota also has a cadre of well-todo Black folks involved in the arts and all manner of things. All of this made Sarasota a very desirable place for our retirement.

Ed: Those are vivid memories. Let's move ahead a bit Ed: When did you first learn about the Jazz Club of Sarasota?

> Nik: It had to be 2021. We attended the Sarasota Film Festival, and there was a movie entitled Bolden, about the life and times of Buddy Bolden. He is credited with being one of the first people to do improvisations. He never played the same thing twice. By the way, he was in New Orleans back in the 1890s and early 1900s. He is credited as the Father Of Jazz, even before somebody gave Louis Armstrong a \$2 trumpet.

> We were discussing the film with some good friends. I confirmed that I liked music in general and had a passion for Jazz. Next thing I know my name was given to Nancy Roucher who was recruiting new Board

> Ed: Two years later the Board selects you as the next President. All your management experience is a real plus for the Jazz Club as it looks to the future. What do you intend to focus on during your presidency?

> Nik: The organization, in my opinion, will have to grow some, in terms of membership. And you know that also. And we also need to increase revenues. These things need to grow and need to change if we're going to grow as an organization.

> I see the Jazz Club right now in the middle of a bridge. We're trying to cross over this river or canyon. We are all standing together as a Board and as a membership in the middle of this bridge. On one side of the bridge are the founders and other people who got us to this point, who love what we do. And on the other side of the bridge are the challenges and obstacles that we need to overcome in order to grow.

> I see my presidency as rallying all our current supporters to meet those challenges and to engage younger music fans to appreciate what John Coltrane and other jazz artists do. That's how I see the situation right now. It's not impossible or anything, but it's how we will prosper in the coming years.

> Ed: I have no doubt that you'll make great progress in getting us to the other side of the bridge and bringing together those various forces that you were just describing. Thank you Nik for what you have already done and for all that I know you will accomplish in the years to come.



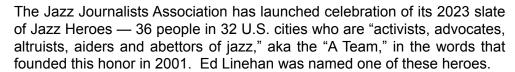
# **ED LINEHAN**

Former President of The Jazz Club of Sarasota

Elected by the

**Jazz Journalists Association** 

as a 2023 JAZZ HERO



The class of 2023 comprises career-long professors at major educational institutions and independent mentors providing lessons and sometimes instruments in underserved neighborhoods, pre-K to adult; curators, presenters, entrepreneurs, service and support organization administrators, preservationists and story-telling chroniclers who go all-out in support of jazz for the benefit of their communities.





# **Terell Stafford, Music Director**

**Grace Kelly Quartet** 

Valerie Gillespie Ladies of Jazz

**Houston Person Quintet** 

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