



# MUSICENTRAL

August 2007

Founded in 1913—Tuned for the 21st Century



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## Message from the President

### SHARPS & FLATS—3rd Annual Jazz Festival missed by the masses but lauded for its venues and talent

The August issue of **MusicCentral** is dedicated to the 3rd Annual Jazz Festival held July 19th through July 21st. Though the overall attendance, particularly at the State Theatre was disappointingly low, in my opinion, those who attended were exceptionally delighted. Each evening, the music was captivating, and just superb!

Why such a poor turnout? After speaking with a number of attendees at the nightly events, many discussed possible reasons. For one, it was the week after the Central Pennsylvania Arts Festival and People's Choice Festival. Besides the many musical events, most attendee's pockets may have been lightened by the festivities. The tickets for the State Theatre were very reasonable, discounts were also available and the Central Parklet activities were free. The event was well publicized, given their operational budget. Ned Corman, from Local 66 in Rochester, NY arrived to hear his friend Marvin Stamm. Some folks felt that State College area are spoiled by "big-name" attractions and don't realize the other music opportunities that abound. Some other folks commented on America's love of canned music. "An IPOD nation," as one person put it has had a profound effect on the willingness to take time to listen to live music. A few commented that it is summer after all and that family vacations are in full swing. One music enthusiast felt that most parents do not support music appreciation and that such an event would be considered a "waste of money." Another person commented on the fact that there was a jazz camp at Penn State but the camp organizers had their own separate agenda—unfortunate for attendees. AFM members Bills Mays, Russ Kassoff, Marvin Stamm, Alison Horn, and Martin Wind would have been a wonderful opportunity for an educational interaction and experience. Fortunately, Dennis Mackrel AFM Local 1000, part of the Russ Kassoff Trio did attend a Jazz camp session on Friday.



Productions such as the 2007 State College Jazz Festival take a lot of time, money, and coordination. The producer and organizer of the Festival is Catherine Dupuis. Catherine is a State College native and graduate of State College High School who resides in New York City and is a member of Actor's Equity Association. Catherine has worked very hard over the past three years to make the Jazz Festival a reality. This year's addition of the State Theatre gives the Festival not only a new venue but a wonderful auditorium that provides for wonderful music listening. Pictured at the left are (left to right, Catherine Dupuis, AFM Local 660 Board member Don Keat II, and Dr. Patricia Best, Superintendent, State College Area School District.

The State College Area School District Library Endowment Fund was benefited by the Outdoor Events at the Central Parklet through the sale of hats, T-shirts, and contributions during the three-day event.

The American Federation of Musicians was very evident at this event. Nearly 60 percent of the players were from various locals from New York City, New York State, Pennsylvania, and Local 660. Members Joe and Helen Alessandro, Andrew Jackson, Don Keat, John Kovalchik, and John Thompson (MPF Coordinator) were recognized with special thanks in the Jazz Festival program.

So without further ado, we salute our members, the producer and organizers, volunteers, and performers of the 2007 State College Jazz Festival!

John R. Vincenti

Information for this issue comes from the 2007 State College Jazz Festival brochure, Russ Kassoff and Bill Mays websites, and interviews during event. 2007 Jazz Festival photographs were taken by John R. Vincenti, all rights reserved.

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Music

Ah, music.  
A magic  
beyond all  
we do here.

- J.K. Rowling,

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's  
Stone, 1997



## It started at the Central Parklet

This year's theme for the 3rd Annual Jazz Festival was "Celebrating the Jazz Piano." On July 19th at 5p.m. the State College Parklet kicked off the Jazz Festival with "The Friends Band," under the direction of AFM Local 660 Don Keat II and the "Russ Kassoff Trio."

The "Friends" big band emanated from the "Dance Band," founded by Gene Borza and Chuck Ryan back in 1972. This year's band included AFM 660 members Joe Alessandro, Bill Holl, Marty Gillespie, and Don Keat on sax, Mike Loewen and Roger Munnell on trombone. AFM member Russ Kassoff and his trio included Bob Insko on bass Local 630 from the Pittsburgh area and Dennis Mackrel Local 1000 on drums from Woodstock, NY.

Other venues at the Central Parklet included: At 6:30p.m. "Mike Bodolosky Sextet" performed along with Bob Insko on bass. Mike is a member in good standing from Local 41 in Johnstown.

Mike Bodolosky performed throughout the Jazz Festival with other groups including the State College Area High School Jazz Band. newest member of Local 660, Andy Colwell played trombone on Friday, at 5p.m. At 6:30p.m. The Valley Jazz Orchestra performed. AFM 660 members included Rick Hirsch and Marty Gillespie on tenor sax; Scott Sheehan, trumpet from Local 41, Johnstown; Mike Loewen on bass, Local 660 and Aaron Kimmel on the drums, Local 41, Johnstown.

On Saturday, John Kovalchik, leader and tuba player with Roger Munnell on trombone with the Tarnished Six. Later in the day AFM 660 Mike Loewen performs with another group. Finally, Hirschtet" lead by Rick Hirsch, saxophone completes the AFM members performing that day.



## State Theatre Evening Shows...Celebrating Jazz Piano

The State Theatre is a local landmark that will celebrate its 70th year next year. However, the State Theatre is by no means an old auditorium. On December 15, 2006, the theatre was re-opened after a massive remodeling program. Acoustically delightful with new seats and other accommodations. It can seat 571 people. The new State Theatre can offer many different types of presentations, performances and exhibitions, including educational workshops. AFM Local 660 says well done!

Dennis Mackrel influenced by Count Basie



Martin Wind music scholar in US and Germany



Mike Bodolosky  
Johnstown Local

Mays and Kassoff say "Thanks"



Rob Nairn, bass  
Dan Armstrong, drums

Rick Hirsch and Don Keat chat



Rising star Bill Test and the  
Master, Russ Kassoff

Ned Corman and Marvin Stamm



Bill Mays  
Jazz Improvisationalist



Soundman & Other Staff



## Bill Mays and the Inventions Trio

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**Bill Mays**, 802 AFM since 1984, resides in Shohola, Pennsylvania, between Port Jervis, PA and the New York border. Bill has deep roots in Jazz, gospel, pop, and classical music. His career has spanned nearly 40 years as a pianist, composer and arranger. Bill has worked with many fine artists including Ron Carter, Al Cohn, Buddy DeFranco, Benny Golson, Freddie Hubbard, Al Jarreau, Barry Manilow, Shelly Manne, Red Mitchell, Gerry Mulligan, Art Pepper, Bud Shank, Frank Sinatra, Sonny Stitt, Toots Thielemans, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Sarah Vaughan, Phil Woods and Frank Zappa.

Mays is respected for his compositional and arranging talents, Bill has written saxophone quartets, suites for flute and piano, double bass and piano, music for the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, *Aureole* chamber ensemble, the Woody Herman Band and incidental music for TV and film. For a more personal background, go on-line to a recent interview, June 25, 2007, with Blaise Lantana KJZZ, NPR News at <http://kjzz.org/music/interviews/2007/billmaysview>.

**Marvin Stamm**, 802 AFM since 1967, resides in North Salem, NY, has a distinguished career as a "technical performer with keen original skills." According to his biography, he was attending North Texas State University when Stan Kenton discovered him and upon graduation, he joined Kenton's orchestra as his Jazz trumpet soloist. He later toured with Woody Herman. He performed with many big names in music including Lena Horne, Quincy Jones, Bill Evans, Frank Sinatra and the Benny Goodman Sextet, to name just a few. When at home, Marvin performs with the Westchester Jazz Orchestra, a big band made up of the "Who's Who" in the New York area. In 2000 he teamed with Bill Mays and recorded several CDs. Marvin respects the influence and guidance from his former teachers. For that he is actively involved in Jazz education for youth.

**Alisa Horn**, 47 AFM since 2006, resides in Beverly Hills, California. Alisa is originally from Memphis, Tennessee. She has studied and graduated from Northwestern University (M.M.) and also the University of Michigan (B.M.) working with accomplished faculty at both institutions. She has won several competitions and recorded music including the TV series, *Gray's Anatomy*. Her most recent work has been with Oakville Chamber Orchestra of Ontario, Canada performing Miaskovsky's Cello Concerto. Alisa is currently working as a free-lance artist in Los Angeles.

Resources: <http://www.billmays.net> — <http://www.marvinstamm.com/index.html>

### Recipe for piano extraordinaire

Two exceptional pianists

Two eight foot grand pianos

Two men who know each other well, but have never played together

Stir for approximately two hours and 10 minutes

Add excited people in the audience who will tend to clap spontaneously

Add excited people in the audience who tend to shout or hoot after interludes

Finally, add comfortable seats, air-conditioning, mood lighting, and good acoustics

No baking or refrigeration necessary, the end-product is a great night filled with the end delight of great jazz piano music by **Bill Mays and Russ Kasso**



## The Russ Kasso Trio

**Russ Kasso**, 802 AFM since 1970, resides in Monroe, NY, is an accomplished Jazz pianist, conductor, composer, orchestra leader, and arranger, whose varied talents are much valued and on display in the music world. He is a graduate in performance from the Crane School of Music, SUNY, Potsdam. Kasso is one of the most highly regarded musicians in New York and was praised by the *New York Times* in 2004 as possessing a "precision and enthusiasm that is riveting."

Kasso has extensive experience with well-known musicians. He toured as pianist to Frank Sinatra from '80-'91, served as pianist/

accompanist for Liza Minnelli from '82-'01 and Minnelli's music director and conductor for the acclaimed *Minnelli on Minnelli* national tour ('00). Russ was pianist for The Ultimate Event Tour ('88-'89), televised nationally on PBS and featuring Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin, and Minnelli. Currently, he performs as conductor/pianist to Rita Moreno (2005 sold-out 4 week + 3 week run at San Francisco's *Plush Room*), Debbie Gravitte (*Big Band Broadway* with the Russ Kasso Big Band and many "in concert" appearances). Russ also an interesting NPR interview that be heard on the Internet at

<http://www.npr.org/programs/pianojazz/previousguests/spring2007/kasso.html>

**Martin Wind**, 802 AFM since 1998, resides in Teaneck, NJ, was born in Flensburg, Germany. He started playing the contrabass at 17 and studied at the Conservatory in Cologne before moving to New York. He received his M.A. in Jazz Performance and Composition from New York University. He also earned a diploma at Musikhochschule Koln, Germany. Wind has won many awards and has made recordings. Currently he is an adjunct faculty member of the Jazz Department at New York University besides playing with several groups, including the Russ Kasso Trio.

**Dennis Mackrel**, 1000 AFM since 1981, resides in Woodstock, NY. Interesting to note that Local 1000 is the Federation's only non-geographic local, representing traveling musicians in both the US and Canada. Dennis has been playing the drums since he was two. He became a professional at the age of ten performing in the Anchorage Community Theatre. An alumni of University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Dennis has received many awards, grants and honors. Dennis considers his years with The Count Basie Orchestra on the recommendation of Joe Williams as a highlight of his musical career. He stayed with the band until Mr. Basie's death. Dennis is a seasoned musician and clinician and travels extensively performing for many ensembles throughout the country. Many of compositions and arrangements have been played world wide.



Resources: [www.russkasso.com](http://www.russkasso.com) — [www.martinwind.com](http://www.martinwind.com) — [www.dennismackrelmusic.com](http://www.dennismackrelmusic.com)



American Federation of Musicians Local 660  
Central Pennsylvania Musicians Association  
Chartered October 29, 1913  
Tuned for the 21st Century

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Next Board Meeting August 8, 2007



### 660's own psychologist—Donald B. Keat II

**Don Keat** has been a member of AFM since 1976 with talent in saxophone, clarinet and flute, though his instrument preference is the baritone sax. Don is an ideal person to highlight this month because of his inexhaustible energy and assistance in the 2007 State College Jazz Festival. Don and his wife Marilyn have recently become grandparents again, CONGRATULATIONS. As **MusicCentral** was going to press, the Keats headed for Pittsburgh and other places, and were unable to be interviewed. Information for this article has come from Penn State and AFM colleagues—Joe Alessandro, Marty Gillespie, and John Kovalchik. We thank them for their time.

As noted in the President's **Sharps and Flats**, Don was the leader and responsible person for getting "The Friends Band" together for the kickoff of the Jazz Festival at State College's Central Parklet on Thursday, July 19th. Don and Marilyn (who has been a strong supporter of her husband's music), attended each of the Festival's evening concerts at the State Theatre. Don has also been an activist in AFM affairs, he currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Local 660.

Dr. Donald B. Keat II, (Don's moniker outside of his musical life), is Professor Emeritus, Education and Counseling Psychology in the College of Education at Penn State. Born and raised in Easton, PA, Don was an All-State level saxophone player in high school, and also a good basketball player averaging 25 points per game. Keat's educational background includes a bachelors degree from Lafayette College, a masters from Columbia University in Educational Psychology and a doctorate from Temple University in Counseling Psychology. Don's research interests included a multimodal approach to counseling of children. Besides the AFM, Don's professional membership includes the American Counseling Adolescents, American School Counselors Association, American Psychological Association, Central Pennsylvania, and the Psychological Association, North Atlantic Regional. Resource: <[http://www.ed.psu.edu/cecprsfac\\_bios/keat\\_d.asp](http://www.ed.psu.edu/cecprsfac_bios/keat_d.asp)>

Don's friends noted that his love of music was as strong as his devotion to educational psychology. "Don composes music that is unique and clearly his own style, said Joe Alessandro, "and I consider him one of the best baritone sax players around." During Don's career he also played with the USO and toured many military bases. Locally he was involved in several bands. One was a sax quintet that played Glenn Miller and Phil Woods arrangements. (Woods was also from Easton, PA). Later another band was formed called "Jazz Innate," an octet that made some mighty fine music also specializing in Phil Woods. In fact, Phil provided Don some of his personal compositions. During the 1980s with the Lewistown Dance Band, Don played with several notable musicians including Charley Ventura and Bobby Hackett.

As a band director and leader, Don's "wry wit" has been duly noted, earning him a reputation as the "David Letterman" of band announcers. Today, Don is a member of The Friends of Jazz in Harrisburg, PA, and as he is also willing to make jazz some alive by supporting the State College Jazz Festival for the past three years.

**We salute our Psychologist Musician Don Keat!**



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The last night of the 2007 State College Jazz Festival included an 11 p.m. show that offered musicians in the audience an opportunity to jam with The Russ Kasoff Trio.

Two noteworthy partakers were Bill Test, 18 year old graduate of State College High School who has been recognized as a rising star as a Jazz pianist and AFM 660's Rick Hirsch (<http://www.jazzupyourparty.com>) on the saxophone, who played at least three numbers with the Trio. It was marvelous music and fun, a spontaneous experience which should remind every aspiring musician in the audience to practice, practice, and practice!



AFM Local 660 service territory: All of Centre, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, and Snyder Counties. Northumberland County except Snyderstown, Shamokin, Ralpho, Zerbe, Little Mahanoy, Jackson, Herndon, Lower Mahanoy, West Cameron, East Cameron, Mount Carmel, Kulpmont, Marion Heights and Coal, Columbia County except Centralia.

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