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PAJA has received word from Stanford Jazz Workshop Development Director Maggie Andrews that "thanks to the generous support of PAJA," scholarships [to this summer's workshop] have been awarded to the following students:

- Luisa Brown, Palo Alto—13-year-old flute player (new student)
- Lauren DiQuattro, San Mateo—14-year-old clarinetist (returning student)
- Marc Bermudez, Menlo Park—15-year-old guitarist (new student)
- Luis Guerrero, Mountain View—17-year-old trombonist (new student)

PAJA's contributions will also help to provide nearly \$35,000 in scholarship aid to 26 students from San Jose, most of whom are from the Alum Rock School District's outstanding jazz program, KIPP Heartwood, and KIPP San Jose Collegiate.

This is PAJA members' dues, contributions, and concert proceeds at work. You, the members, should give yourself a special pat on the back for your part in helping these young musicians work on their jazz chops, under the guidance of some of the biggest names in jazz. From these acorns come the jazz oaks of the future. The Stanford Workshop is not the only jazz education organization we support, but it is our major recipient due to the superlative work they do in affording these learning opportunities to budding young jazz musicians.

Maggie Andrews invites us all to the Jazz Camp Participants Recitals on



Backstage: Renee Rosnes, Bruce Powell, Bill Charlap, and
Karl Robinson
Powell and Robinson were concert sponsors
Photo Jan De Carli

And finally, July 10 at Stanford—the Marcus Shelby Orchestra tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. A very special event that I would recommend to anyone. The orchestra is an amazing collection of local talent, from Mike Olmos and Erik Jekabson in the trumpet section, to Howard Wiley and Sheldon Brown on reeds, and this night Shelby enlisted the vocal support of Kenny Washington, Fay Carol and mezzosoprano Jeannine Anderson. A highlight for me was the playing of Mingus' "Fables of Faubus", which at times sounds like it could have been written by Kurt Weill. And when Kenny sang "We Shall Overcome" and Fay "Precious Lord" you didn't want it to end. Shelby is a Bay Area treasure. His seamless commentary about the various civil rights struggles and tragedies of the 50's and 60's was skillfully linked to each number. His arrangements of traditional spirituals, jazz classics and original pieces made for a hugely satisfying musical and inspirational evening. It's not every week that this 20-piece ensemble can be put together—so if it comes around again, don't miss it.

Ed Fox

KENNETH COBB—JAZZ SUPERFAN!

By Ed Fox

By day, he's a mild-mannered technical manager at NASA Ames, but in the evening, Kenneth Cobb slips into a phone booth, dons a cape, and become JAZZ SUPERFAN. In 2010, Kenneth flew 24 times from Northern California to New York to indulge his Jazz "habit." That was 24 weekend trips including two weeklong stays, racking up 220 gigs at clubs including the Village Vanguard, Dizzy's Coca-Cola, Smoke, Smalls, Kitano, Birdland, Jazz Standard, Blue Note, Jazz Gallery, Fat Cat, Bar Next Door, Lenox Lounge, and Showman's.



Kenneth Cobb

Bruce Powell and I happened to see the list of performances Kenneth attended (he's a dedicated record keeper) and we just had to talk to this guy to find out what this was all about. "Hey," we said, "he's living the life many of us have only dreamed of." We corralled Kenneth for lunch at Don Giovanni's in Mountain View and Kenneth Cobb, Jazz Superfan, was happy to answer our questions, chatting pleasantly with us, two other seat-of-the-pants Jazz fanatics. (He's known Bruce for a few years now from seeing and chatting with him at several Bay Area Jazz gigs.)

Some background: Kenneth, a Detroit native, has an MBA, an M.S. and B.S. in electrical engineering, and a B.S. in engineering science. He has worked for companies like Westinghouse and TRW on the east coast, and for the past ten years at NASA Ames as a government contractor, currently with Dell Services Federal Government, as a Technical Area Manager. He has a very demanding job, and we wanted to know how he could fit everything in. He's not only a Jazz enthusiast, but has many other interests as well.

When did you first get interested in Jazz? Who did you listen to?

Growing up in Detroit, I was into Motown, R&B, and Funk music. As a freshman at the University of Michigan in 1974, I was also into Jazz fusion, with Bob James (CTI), Grover Washington, Crusaders, Roy Ayers, Donald Byrd, Herbie Hancock, Ramsey Lewis, David Sanborn, Weather Report, Return To Forever, and so on, as well as the other CTI label artists (Stanley Turrentine, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, George Benson, Ron Carter, Deodato, Paul Desmond, Kenny Burrell, Hubert Laws, Chet Baker, Bill Evans). But in the late 70's, when I was introduced first to Lee Morgan's "You Go To My Head," then to stuff like "Sweet Clifford", "The Eternal Triangle", "Song For My Father", "Giant Steps", and "You've Changed", I was hooked, and from then on Jazz—bebop, hardbop, mainstream, straight-ahead Jazz—was my music, particularly the stuff emanating from the 1950s. And I do not play any instruments or read music. My quest for more of this swinging, burning, ballad, and bluesy music, and the artists playing it, continued into the 1980s as I tirelessly searched the bins of several new and used record stores in Ann Arbor,

Detroit, Baltimore, WDC, Philadelphia, South Jersey, and NYC. Man, I was definitely on a mission!!!

Who are your all-time favorites?

I have what I call my Big Seven: Armstrong & Ellington, Dizzy & Bird, Miles & Coltrane, and Monk. I can't say enough about Monk's music. Of course, there are so many other favorite artists whose music I enjoy.

Who are your current favorites?

Some of my current favorites (who appear with their groups) are: Roy Haynes, McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton, Houston Person, George Coleman, Lou Donaldson, Heath Brothers, Ahmad Jamal, Louis Hayes, Monty Alexander, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Buster Williams, Pat Martino, The Cookers, Roy Hargrove, Jeremy Pelt, Tom Harrell, Sean Jones, Branford Marsalis, Jerry Bergonzi, Mulgrew Miller, Cyrus Chestnut, Eric Reed, Benny Green, Bill Charlap, Christian McBride, Steve Wilson, Ravi Coltrane, Russell Malone, Joey DeFrancesco, Peter Bernstein, William Ash, Gerald Clayton, Jason Campbell, and One For All, featuring my favorite under-50 tenor sax player Eric Alexander, just to name a few!

Are you a record collector?

Yes, I have about 3,400 record albums.

No CD's?

I have approximately 5,200 of those! I also have to mention that thanks to CD reissues in the early 1990s, I was able to get a hold of many outstanding Blue Note, Capitol/Pacific, Emarcy/Verve/Mercury, Prestige/Riverside, Savoy, Impulse, and Columbia recordings from the 1950s/60s. Japanese import CDs and Mosaic box sets also helped out tremendously. Nowadays, thanks to the independent labels and self-produced CDs, great Jazz music is still accessible.

Your 2010 NYC Jazz odyssey lists attendance at 220 different performances. How many trips did this involve and how do you prepare for a trip?

I flew to JFK or LGA (from San Jose, Oakland, or SFO) for 24 weekend trips, including two weeklong trips. For the weekend trips, I usually leave early Friday morning, arriving in mid-afternoon in New York, and I return in the late A.M. on Sunday or Monday morning. On those Mondays, I make a beeline to work! I'll plan the whole weekend far in advance by checking the schedules of all of the Jazz venues on-line to see who's playing when and where, and when I find a weekend where "all the stars come together" (eight to nine MUST-SEE performances), then I make a detailed schedule for that weekend. I'm interested in catching mostly those people I'm familiar with—but of course I'm familiar with a LOT of musicians. I'm not really into in avant-garde and/or experimental music, however I totally respect it. I want to make my time in the Big Apple count. I see these Jazz performances as a fan, not as a 'critic'. As Jazz bassist Dezron Douglas once told me, "Kenneth, you know what you like!!!" So true.

Was 2010 typical of what you do every year, or was it a splurge...a Guinness Book of Records thing to see how many a commuting Californian could do in New York in a year?

No, it definitely wasn't anything like that. I've been going to New York since 2006 (a weeklong 'pilgrimage' to the Jazz Mecca) because that's the Jazz capital of the world, and that's where I can see so many of the best

players perform. 2010 is my high-water mark for number of trips, but it just kind of evolved, because of my keen interest in and love for Jazz. I've made approximately 64 trips there since 2006. Actually, the frequency of trips has reduced somewhat this year, and that's mainly because, due to the economy (I assume), there are fewer straightahead Jazz bookings at clubs there, along with increased airfares and busier workload at NASA Ames. Clubs are scheduling more non-straightahead Jazz groups or vocalists, and the interest just isn't there as much for me. I've been seeing more gigs locally, especially at Yoshi's - Oakland/S.F., Stanford Jazz Festival, S.F. Jazz, Kuumbwa (in Santa Cruz), Bach Dynamite & Dancing (in Half Moon Bay), or special events like PAJA puts on. (Scott Hamilton is a particular favorite of mine since the early 1980's—a wonderful ballad player, so I really loved that gig.) But these days, even Yoshi's is booking many non-straightahead Jazz groups. I used to go there eight times a month; now it's more like four.

So, all this takes money and time. How do you do it?

I'm what you'd call 'fiscal conservative', aka cheap or frugal! When I travel to New York City, I don't usually spend much money on food, lodging, or transportation. I usually stay at Hostelling International—a kind of no-frills, dorm-like hostel. I usually walk or take the subway (or a cab when running late) from club to club. And I eat at good, inexpensive restaurants or fast-food places. I'm not there for a 5-star restaurant, a luxury hotel, or a chauffeured limousine! Although my job is very demanding, I can handle some business affairs on-line when I'm away from the office. In 2010, my work hours were flexible enough to allow me those long weekends.

OK, we get it. You like Jazz. But do you have other interests, too? If so, how do you fit those in?

Sure, in particular I'm a huge fan of independent films. I also like Black theatre and off-Broadway productions, and I'm a big-time sports fan. Live Jazz is for the most part a nighttime affair, so when I'm in New York, I plan my afternoons almost as carefully: I usually see a movie or two, see a play, or visit a favorite record shop—J&R Music in lower Manhattan, near City Hall, is my particular favorite. NYC is also a great city for walking and sight-seeing. Even though I'm a huge sports fan, I rarely see a sports event live—I see it on the tube. I do have a great social life, but it often takes a back seat to my Jazz focus.

So, that, in brief, is Kenneth Cobb, Jazz Superfan. Kenneth has also helped to promote two fine lunchtime concerts at NASA Ames featuring groups led by Andrew Speight, a good friend of Kenneth's, and including the likes of Jimmy Cobb, Ray Drummond, Eric Alexander, and David Hazeltine. As he traipses around the Jazz biosphere, he gets to know hundreds of people associated with the music. Club managers and staff greet Kenneth when he arrives (they know his favorite drinks: orange, cranberry, and pineapple juices), and they often save him a good seat up front. Musicians and other dedicated fans recognize him and chat him up. Smalls' operator and Jazz pianist Spike Wilner has called him the world's biggest Jazz fan, an honor Kenneth cherishes. It's a great life (if you don't weaken). By the end of our confab with Kenneth, Bruce and I had only one comment: "We are SO jealous!"

See below for a typical Cobb weekend in New York, this one from the Memorial Day weekend, 2011.

Kenneth's Memorial Day Weekend Schedule (2011) in New York City

Friday, May 27

**8:00 – Cedar Walton, Javon Jackson, Peter Washington & Lewis Nash
(Iridium)**

9:30 – Ernestine Anderson Quartet feat. Houston Person (Dizzy's @ JALC)

11:00 – Kenny Barron Quartet (Birdland)

12:45 – Ken Fowser Quintet (Smoke - RM)

Saturday, May 28

**8:00 – Miles Davis Birthday Tribute feat. George Coleman, Eddie
Henderson & Harold Mabern (Smoke)**

10:00 – Joe Locke Quartet (Kitano)

11:30 – Dezron Douglas Power Trio featuring Louis Hayes (Smalls)

1:00 – Ian Hendrickson-Smith Group (Smalls)

Sunday, May 29

8:00 – Stanley Clarke Group (Blue Note)

9:30 – Joe Magnarelli Quartet (Smalls)

11:00 – Roy Hargrove Quintet (Village Vanguard)

Latest Club News:

SOME UPCOMING JAZZ TO BE AWARE OF



The Stanford Shopping Center Summer Jazz Series is well underway. This is the June 30 show featuring trumpeter Erik Jekabson and vocalist