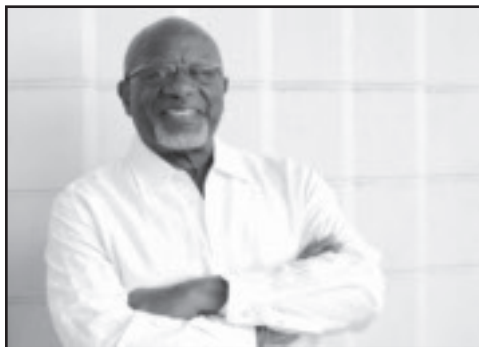


BOB STEWART

TUBA MASTERMIND

BY YVONNE ERVIN



BOB STEWART HAS SPENT A LIFETIME educating young musicians and providing the low notes for dozens of recordings spanning 45 years. But now it's time for the tuba player to shine with a double quartet recording, and a performance and live broadcast at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

The CD, *Connections—Mind the Gap* (Sunnyside) is an aggregation of Stewart's experiences and influences told through the joining of a jazz group and a string ensemble. "It includes all different types of music, but it's all about the tuba," he explains after a recent rehearsal. "It's also about what songs I'm interested in playing: 'Monk's Mood' since I learned about playing bass lines from listening to Monk's left hand; having known Mingus made me want to record his 'Jump Monk,' and Frank Foster was very generous to offer the tuba player a solo when I was in his band. A lot of people bypassed the tuba. The whole album is about the generosity they showed and what helped to shape me."

Stewart was born 69 years ago in South Dakota and grew up in Rhode Island where he started out on trumpet, but he switched to tuba during his junior year in college in Philadelphia when his trumpet chops started giving him trouble. With a music education degree, he moved to NYC in 1968 and started teaching junior high school and subbing on the bandstand for the only other tubist playing jazz gigs: Howard Johnson.

In those early years, Stewart appeared alongside Carla Bley, Taj Mahal, Gil Evans, Charles Mingus and McCoy Tyner. He also performed in Sam Rivers' big band. "It was a great place to learn to play in a jazz setting; it helped me and bari player Hamiet Blueitt and trumpeter Joe Gardner to evolve differently," Stewart recalls. "When Mingus asked if I knew any

other musicians who played like me, I turned him on to Hamiet and Joe."

In 1972, all three were on Mingus' *Let My Children Hear Music*, and on the live recording at Avery Fisher Hall for which Mingus hired Stewart as straw boss. "Mingus told me some of the people to hire; then he let me hire the other people. I was totally honored by his confidence and this CD is the first time I've had the opportunity to honor him."

Stewart retired from public education in 2002: his last position was at the famed LaGuardia High School where he directed the jazz program for ten years. He still teaches a master's level jazz history class at Juilliard. "It's big fun!" he says.

The First Line Band, the jazz part of the double quartet, includes two of Stewart's former Juilliard big band students: trumpeter Randall Haywood and trombonist Nick Finzer. Matt Wilson plays drums and Stewart's long-time musical cohort, Jerome Harris, is on guitar. The PUBLIQuartet comprises Janniana Norpoth, violin; Nick Revel, viola; and Amanda Goekin, cello.

Stewart's son, Curtis, plays violin in both ensembles. Curtis started on violin at age three and played alto saxophone in junior high and high school, but Stewart takes no credit for his son's jazz development. "He went away to school at Eastman and one day he came home and he was smoking already," Stewart recalls. "He blew me away. I said, 'Where did that come from?'"

Curtis describes *Mind the Gap* as a personal shuffle, a mixtape, Stewart says. "If you think about the Mingus song, the Monk song, the Frank Foster composition, the five pieces of the suite called 'In Color' that I commissioned Jessie Montgomery to write for me: it's like the movie 'Six Degrees of Separation.'" That's what *Mind the Gap* is about. The music is a lot closer to each other than to other things but there's still a place where you really need to be accepting of 'What's that got to do with jazz?' or 'Why's that included in here?' There's definitely a gap between "Jump Monk" and "Libertango" or "Fishin' Blues" so the audience is going to have to mind the gap!"

The performance will be different than the recording. "On the CD, the string quartet functions as an interlude but, in the performance, I don't want to make the interludes less than what comes next," Stewart explains. "They're extremely important because they totally set the mood. They're doing a great job with the music and the interpretation. I need that from the musicians since when I'm playing, I don't have a mouth to talk with: I've got that piece of steel on my lips. So, everyone has to have a point of view about how to play those 12 notes and it becomes very personal."

continued on page 45

STEWART... continued from page 23

Bob Stewart's live webcast of *Connections—Mind the Gap* with his First Line Band and the PUBLIQuartet at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola on Sept. 29 will begin with an interview with host Rhonda Hamilton at 7:15 p.m. on jalc.org/live as part of Monday Nights with WBGO

JAZZWOMEN!... continued from page 29

Trumpet Music ... Singer **Judy Niemack** appears at Kitano Sept. 19 ... **Barbara Carroll** sings and plays piano at Birdland Sept. 20 ... Celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Bud Powell with saxophonist **Melissa Aldana** and others at Birdland Sept. 23-27 ... **Antoinette Montague** sings at Kitano Sept. 26 ... **Catherine Russell** sings in an intimate setting at Shanghai Jazz Sept. 28.

Catch release

Can't even begin to list all of the great players on Diva's *A Swingin' Life* (Manchester Craftsmen's Guild), with special guest vocalists **Nancy Wilson** and **Marlena Shaw** ... Pianist/singer **Dena DeRose** has a great band and guests on *We Won't Forget You: An Homage to Shirley Horn* (HighNote) ... Multi-instrumentalist/singer **Kali Z. Fasteau** focuses on keyboards this time out with *Piano Rapture* (Flying Note) ... **Laura Dreyer** shows off her sax and flute chops on *Vida. Arte. Amor.* (Mayimba) ... Auction Project's *Slink* features violinist **Heather Martin Bixler** ... **Alexandra Cook** plays French horn with Steven Richman's Harmonie Ensemble/New York on *Henry Mancini Music for Peter Gunn* (Harmonia Mundi) ... **Kellylee Evans**, **Jackie Richardson** and **Laila Biali** are among the vocalists on *Just Passing Through: The Breithaupt Brothers Songbook Vol. 2* (Alma) ... Singer **Jaime Woods** and guitarist **Emily Elbert** are among the guests on Mario Castro's *Estrella de Mar* (Interrobang) ... Pianist **Yayoi Ikawa** joins Michael Carvin on *Flash Forward* (Motéma).

NJ LISTINGS... continued from page 40

Mike Collins 5tet; 27: Bob Dorough Trio; 28: Bill Charlap Solo; 29: Deer Head Inn Jazz Orch.

DELAWARE WATER GAP: www.cotajazz.org. Sep 5-7: Jazz & Art Fest feat Nancy Reed and Spencer Reed, Evan Gregor & Matt Vashlishan Qrt, Najwa Parkins & After Hours Trio, Bob Dorough & friends, David Liebman Gp & Expansions, Nellie McKay.

Hot House is not responsible for any errors in the listings which may have occurred from late changes or incorrect information supplied to us. Please call the venues or check websites for up to date calendars.

dizzy's club

generations in jazz festival

SEPT 1

michael mwenso and brianna thomas
celebrate 110 years of fats waller

SEPT 2-3

mason brothers quintet

SEPT 4

bria skonberg & her jazz compatriots:
satch plays fats

SEPT 5-7

joe temperley and friends

SEPT 8

the ladybugs jazz band

SEPT 9

peter & will anderson quintet plays the
dorsey brothers

SEPT 10

charles turner

SEPT 11-14

roy haynes fountain of youth band

SEPT 15

michele marino lerman:
the songs of the great hoofers

SEPT 16

donal fox innovations duo:
virtuosos in dialogue

SEPT 17-21

monty alexander: jazz around the west indies

SEPT 22-23

peter bernstein quartet

SEPT 24

sharel cassidy and gary bartz: generations in jazz

SEPT 25-28

the heath brothers

SEPT 29

monday nights with wbgo
bob stewart's double quartet

SEPT 30

javon jackson band

swing by tonight set times
212-258-9595 7:30pm & 9:30pm jazz.org/dizzys

jazz at lincoln center
Broadway at 60th Street, 5th Floor

jazz