

JIVE TALKIN'

Spring 2020
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2020 Mardi Gras Ball is among most successful of all time

Our biggest annual event of the year wines and dines members and supporters. It also winds up going into the books as among the most financially lucrative Mardi Gras parties we've ever had.

By Eric Marchese

Wowee! This year's Mardi Gras Ball, held on March 8 in the grand ballroom of the Embassy Suites Hotel in Brea, not only hit the century mark in terms of the 100 guests who attended – it also turned out to be one of the most successful of all of FOJ's major annual fundraisers going back to and including the first (in 2002).

The event pulled in high revenues and was roundly praised by everyone in attendance as not only among the best ever but possibly, and probably, the best Friends of Jazz Mardi Gras Ball of all time, including music, dancing, food, silent auction items, and that one elusive intangible – the overall fun factor.

Friends of Jazz board members, who work tirelessly for months to create the event, expected a total of roughly 120 revelers but said they weren't surprised when a handful decided to stay at home in light of the current pandemic, whose effects had just begun to become more widespread.

Nick Batinich, FOJ's chief financial officer, said that "despite this, we were fortunate in being able to hold the ball before the (Coronavirus) shutdown."

(Sure enough, by the following weekend, venues throughout Southern California were closing their doors and major events being cancelled or postponed.)

This factor, Nick reported, didn't even make a dent in the evening, which "raised enough money to make it one of the more successful of the 19 that Friends of Jazz has held."



Nick and Dottie Batinich (right) register joyful surprise as they become this year's Mardi Gras King and Queen.

Photo by Linda Duarte Wolf

See page four for more photos of this year's ball!

Batinich himself and his wife, Dottie, became an integral part of the event early in the evening when they were selected as the year's Mardi Gras King and Queen. Last year's royalty, Jack Miller and Dottie Blietz, enjoyed their final moments basking in the adulation of their subjects before moving out onto the floor to locate this year's new royals.

Miller and Blietz snagged Nick and Dottie Batinich, then brought the couple up in front of the audience. Judging by the looks on their faces, they were caught off guard and pleasantly surprised. The new King and Queen were then crowned, had



their photos taken, and led the traditional New Orleans-style krewe parade. Wayne Mason expertly presided over the evening's many moving parts as the ball's Master of Ceremonies and was the Grand Marshall of the parade.

Providing the live music were the Lemon Street Stompers from Fullerton College, directed by Bruce Babad, and Cal State University Fullerton's Fullerton Jazz Orchestra, directed by Bill Cunliffe. The superb guest vocalists included Johnny Coppola, Gavin Braun and Jamie Shew.

Please see MARDI GRAS BALL, page 4



♪ Quarter Notes ♪

Ever wonder how a major event like Friends of Jazz's Mardi Gras Ball is produced? It takes a village, so to speak, with a dedicated team pitching in, spending months to make it all happen.

At the helm this year was Larry Arthur, with Pam Appleman assisting him. Judi McDuff created the invitations and the program; Judi and Don Dyer, Eric Marchese and Nancy Nehring sold the program's ads. Kitty and Larry Arthur, Pam Appleman, Judy Carlos, Cindy Leone and Colleen Wadsworth coordinated the silent auction; Dottie Batinich, Charlotte Henderson, Cindy Leone and Judy McFadden created the décor.

More credits: to Nick Batinich (music), Joe Henderson and Pat Perkins (parade), Jerry and Linda Wolf (King and Queen), Carole Bruns and Cindy Leone (hospitality), Jeanie Stockwell (wine table), Aaron Alvarez and Eric Marchese (photography), and to Dottie Batinich, Charlotte Henderson, Jean Klinghoffer and Judy McFadden (phone committee). Charlotte Henderson also coordinated the National Charity League of Fullerton, whose mothers and daughters gave us a boost. The evening was coordinated by Nick Batinich, Jim Harlan, Charlotte Henderson, Jean Klinghoffer, Mike Leone and Pat Perkins. ♪

This publication is produced by Friends of Jazz, Inc., an educational, Orange County-based, all-volunteer, non-profit corporation in operation since March, 1999. Please contact us at 714-871-6342 or PO Box 5671, Fullerton CA 92838-0671.

friendsofjazzinc.com

Eric Marchese, Editor. 714-836-1104

So long from 2019's MGB King and Queen



Dottie Blietz and Jack Miller bask in the adulation of Friends of Jazz members, potential members and supporters at the 2020 Mardi Gras Ball on March 8. It was the couple's final time enjoying the limelight before helping Nick and Dottie Batinich on with their royal garb. Throughout the year, Jack and Dottie showed gusto at every FOJ event they attended, from high school jazz band concerts at Florentine's to our various parties, making them notable among Mardi Gras Ball Kings and Queens.

Photo by Eric Marchese

Kids voice their thanks to FOJ

Since its inception, Friends of Jazz has been on a mission to help school-age children realize their dreams of learning and playing music. What began more than 20 years ago as a means of trying to supplement the decreasing levels of arts education in the public school system has blossomed into the efforts of FOJ, through its members, board members and others, to provide musical education to high school and college jazz musicians and, through its fourth-grade recorder program, to those still in elementary school.

On page five of this issue, you'll find just a handful of letters written to Friends of Jazz by some of the thousands of school-age children who have gotten a chance to learn



the basics of music – including sight-reading and improvising – thanks to the efforts of Friends of Jazz. ♪

February high school jazz bands get in under the wire

Since our high school jazz band program was created in 2000, it has provided scholarships to hundreds of high school jazz musicians and also given monetary support for the jazz band programs at many high schools.

All through the 2000s and 2010s, some 15 area high schools have participated. El Dorado, Fullerton, Katella, Irvine, Los Alamitos, Brethren Christian, La Serna, Esperanza, Kennedy, Long Beach Poly, Mission Viejo, Servite, Orange Lutheran, Yorba Linda and Valencia high schools have worked with Friends of Jazz to enrich their jazz band programs and provide needed support to individual students.

This year's program began on February 8 as Esperanza High School's band took the stage at Florentine's under the direction of Brad Davis. At the end of the performance, tenor sax and clarinet player Matthew Sosa received the individual scholarship of \$500.

Mission Viejo was next, performing on February 15 under the direction of Doug Meeuwsen. Chris Nichols was awarded the scholarship for his expert playing of drums and congas.

Valencia High's turn was February 22. For his outstanding playing, lead trumpet player Brady Irey earned the scholarship, and director Pete Perez coaxed fabulous sounds from the band.

At the conclusion of each performance, a check for \$500 was given to the jazz band program at each school in addition to the \$500 given to each student.

In mid-March, El Dorado High, scheduled to perform on March 14, announced it was cancelling. Shortly thereafter, La Serna High, lined up for March 28, did the same.

In the weeks since, all of the public schools have been closed and most public events have either been cancelled or postponed.

Upcoming issues of *Jive Talkin'* will contain updates regarding the remaining performances in the high school jazz band series.

For more information, please send Friends of Jazz's Jim Harlan an email: jim@jim-harlan.com.



Top row: Brady Irey, Valencia's trumpet player extraordinaire, with director Pete Perez; the band's front line of sax players does its thing. Middle row: The Mission Viejo High jazz band; drum and conga player Chris Nichols with director Doug Meeuwsen. Bottom: From Esperanza High, tenor sax and clarinetist Matthew Sosa with director Brad Davis; the band launched this year's series, FOJ's 20th overall, on Saturday, February 8.

Photos by Jim Harlan, Judi McDuff and Eric Marchese

FOJ strikes gold at its successful 2020 Mardi Gras Ball

Continued from page 1

Much younger performers were also on hand: Just prior to dinner, nine fourth-graders from Beechwood Elementary School provided a brief recorder concert. Another huge plus that contributed to the evening's success was how well FOJ did with the auction items. This fact is all the more impressive when one takes into account that this time around there were no big ticket items.

Summing up what most members experienced, longtime member Linda Duarte Wolf called it "the best Mardi Gras ever." Numerous members reported that the food was "the best ever," the musical entertainment unbelievable, and the great music prompted revelers to get out onto the dance floor. These combined to create one of the most enjoyable Friends of Jazz Mardi Gras events of all time.

Joy Shepherd, who was the guest of Dottie Blietz and Jack Miller, singled out the Beechwood schoolkids – "I was impressed with the children" – and the Fullerton College student band's director – "I love Bruce Babad." Joy and husband Shep were the 2013 King and Queen, and she skipped last year's event since Shep had just passed (in November, 2018). "Being there without Shep was hard," she said about this year's ball. "I know that he was proud of me for attending. Memories!" She also expressed the hope "that FOJ continues their good work for the Fullerton schools."

Jim and Donna Harlan called the evening "one of our best Mardi Gras in years. Great food, enjoyable music and most beneficial for FOJ – the silent auction. We were so impressed with the baskets, which were so appealing to our members and generated much profit."

"It was especially neat to see Dottie and Nick Batinich be the King and Queen," Jean Klinghoffer said, "since Nick and my husband (Bill Klinghoffer) were the two who started Friends of Jazz. The ball was wonderful, as usual, and the music by both Fullerton College and CSUF was outstanding."

Also praising the entertainment was Judi McDuff, who singled out Johnny Coppola: "Johnny was just fantastic. When I spoke with him afterwards, he said he loves the ball and had a blast being there."



Photos by Eric Marchese and Jerry Wolf



Student letters prove the success of Friends of Jazz

Though the focus and attention of Friends of Jazz's efforts to "keep music in our schools" is normally on local high school and college-age students, our fourth-grade recorder program focuses on younger kids in the hopes of sparking their interest in music at an earlier age. For their efforts, the more accomplished youngsters are given a platform at our annual Mardi Gras Ball. To date, more than 16,000 fourth-graders have received music books, instruments and lessons through FOJ and its various programs. Over the years, we've received countless letters, many of them handwritten, from schoolchildren who often express their enthusiasm and appreciation through hand-drawn artwork and effusive verbiage. Just a few are shown here.

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Dear Friends of Jazz,

I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to learn how to play the recorder. Thank you for providing us with the books and recorders. We learned so many songs just in a few weeks with our music teacher, Mrs. Hart. Here are a few of my favorite songs: Mary Had a Little Lamb, Old McDonald, Hot Cross Buns, and Ode to Joy. Thank you so much for teaching and providing this program for us.

Haleigh Garabedian

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Dear Friends of Jazz,

I wanted to thank you so much for the free recorders and free music books and for not charging my school money for all of the recorders, music lessons and books.

Sincerely,

Jayten Henderson



Dear Friends of Jazz,

Thank you for giving our class free recorders and free music books. I am so glad you let us have Ms. Hart. She was really nice and a good teacher. I am so thankful for the recorder concert! My favorite song is Hot Cross Buns.

Thank you for all you have done for our class.

Sincerely,

Lucia



Dear Friends of Jazz,

Thank you for everything. I'm thankful for the free books and recorders. Also, for teaching me to read music. Then, I'm thankful for Ms. Hart teaching me new songs and how to play the recorder. Last, I know that everybody is thankful for the concert that everybody can perform.

Sincerely,

Bella

Dear Friends of Jazz,

Thank you for giving us the chance to play music. We love our teacher, Miss Hart. Thank you for the recorders and books. My favorite song was "Be a Cowboy." I cannot wait for our concert. Thank you for this amazing experience.

Sincerely,

Maya

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Dear Mrs. Hart and Friends of Jazz,

Thank you for coming and teaching us how to play the recorder. It is great that Mrs. Hart taught the fourth grade free lessons and the fact that Friends of Jazz also offered additional music books.

Another comment I want to tell you is that Mrs. Hart had spent nine lessons with our class just to teach us the recorder. You must have taken a lot of time and effort to manage a lot of children!

The last topic to share with you is your program. It is so wonderful to inspire people with your musical abilities! And it is also awesome to tell fourth graders like me to join the band next year. Thank you again, Friends of Jazz!

Sincerely,

Israella Kim



FRIENDS OF JAZZ, INC.
Second Decade of Keeping Music in Our Schools
Membership Categories for July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Gold Benefactor (\$2,500+)	All benefits of Benefactor level plus two complimentary tickets to annual FOJ Mardi Gras gala dinner-dance.
Benefactor (\$1,000)	All benefits of Patron level plus two additional complimentary tickets to annual FOJ Sponsors Party (January 2021).
Patron (\$500)	All benefits of Sponsor level plus recognition at a student scholarship presentation.
Sponsor (\$250)	All benefits of Friend level plus two complimentary tickets to annual FOJ Sponsors Party (January 2021).
Friend (\$100)	All benefits of General level plus two complimentary tickets, when available, to a jazz event at CSUF or Fullerton College.
General (\$50)	Invitation to Friends of Jazz events plus recognition in FOJ newsletter.
Student (\$20)	Invitation to Friends of Jazz events plus recognition in FOJ newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP FOR JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

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E-mail address _____

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Payment Method _____ Check _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ AMEX

Card No. _____ Expiration Date: _____ (mm/yy)

V-Code (3 digits on back of card) _____ [AMEX: Use 4-digits from front of card]

Name on Card _____

Cardholder acknowledges receipt of goods and/or services in the amount of the total shown hereon and agrees to perform the obligations set forth in the cardholder's agreement with issuer.

KEEPING MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS: OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

_____ Yes, I'd like to help with fundraisers, scholarship awards, mailings! Please contact me.

For more information, call Jean Klinghoffer, 714-871-6342, or Barbara Fischer, 714-526-5667.

Website: friendsofjazzinc.com

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Why now is the best time to join Friends of Jazz

Membership is the life blood of any non-profit like FOJ. It's what keeps us going. Here are a few of the reasons you should renew yours – or become a new member for the first time.

Many of you joined Friends of Jazz in the past – perhaps during our first few years. And your support helped to fuel FOJ's growth as we developed a viable system of creating special events and raising funds through those events, then distributing those funds to college, high school and fourth-grade students whose interest in jazz could easily evaporate without financial support.

That process is our way of realizing our longtime mission: to help "keep music in our schools," many of which have struggled to provide music education in the face of ongoing budget cuts.

Membership in Friends of Jazz is the vital life's blood that keeps us going. Unfortunately, we've seen too many instances of someone becoming a "friend of jazz" for a brief time, then allowing their membership to lapse.

We could sure use you back. The reasons on our side are probably pretty obvious, but let's take a moment to look at what members get for their support – what they derive from participating.

First off is the pride you can take in being part of the community more than just in name only. Every time you see, hear or read about a success story – a youngster who went on to accomplish more in the world of music, whether as



The annual Friends of Jazz Members Party is among FOJ's most popular events, giving members a chance to socialize.
Photo by Judi McDuff

a performer, educator or recording artist – you realize that your membership funds became part of the DNA of that person's music career.


Don't forget, too, how many of those students are your own kids or grandkids, or those of your friends.

Next off is the opportunity FOJ's events provide, year in and year out, for you to mix, mingle and socialize with like-minded people – individuals who, like yourself, have succeeded in a wide variety of professions and whose lives have been as interesting as yours. What better way to share each other's lives than by having an enjoyable visit at our annual Members Party, Sponsors Party, Mardi Gras Ball, or All That Jazz Party?

Providing a boost to the cultural arts in Fullerton and nearby cities is yet another benefit of being a Friends of Jazz member. You do that every time you attend a

student performance at Fullerton College or Cal State Fullerton, or one of our Saturday afternoon high school jazz band concerts at Florentine's, or take a seat in the outdoor amphitheater at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center for the annual summer jazz series.

In each issue of the newsletter, we list the names of every new member as well as those who were away temporarily but who have rejoined. We also take photos of members at our events, then publish these in the newsletter and post them at our website. Even the most modest among us will admit it's always nice to see your name in print or your photo on a page or screen.

Finally, Friends of Jazz members seem to have more fun than just about any other organization can provide. If you were once a member and let that membership expire, think back to all the fun you've had at our events in the past. Then take a moment to fill out the form on the page facing this one and mail it back. 

Welcome to those coming on board for the first time

Friends of Jazz welcomes our newest members:

John Bachelor
Dylan Chen
Sandra and Henry Gilbert
Matt and Tara Irey
Ryan Kupsh

These high school students just became members in February:

Jordan Feng
Jordan Klemmetsen
Bryson Mackey

We've got one member who just renewed, and we welcome him back:

Dave Robbins

Friends of Jazz, Inc.

Now In Our 21st Year!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: We usually use this space to list upcoming events that are of interest to our readers – but most such events have been cancelled or postponed. So, until further notice, we'll keep reporting on important topics while awaiting the reopening of the many local venues which normally hold various events.




Friends of Jazz

Phone: 714/680-6684
Fax: 714/680-0743

News & Notes

Long before the recent phenomenon of avoiding crowds through social distancing, jazz fans could enjoy great jazz performances at home on their computers through Jazz on the Tube.

This extensive site not only has a different live stream event every day; it's also got podcasts, a jazz video vault and a mind-boggling quantity of information plus links to jazz clubs the world over. To start enjoying this jazz treasure trove, just go to the site's home page, jazzonthetube.com. 

AROUND TOWN



In the absence of live musical performance events, some of your favorite jazz musicians have jumped in to fill the void. One of these is Dave Ross, the bandleader and bass player for The Jazz Salon. Until now, the group performed on Thursday nights at the Los Angeles Athletic Club, live-streaming its concerts. In place of that, on Thursday nights the group is now streaming "The Best of the Jazz Salon Concerts" to its website, thejazzsalon.com. During its first few weeks, the site has featured such great jazz vocalists as Mary Stallings, Barbara Morrison, Denise Thimes, Maria Howell and Teka, and such world-class jazz artists as Rickey Woodard, Tamir Hendelman, Nolan Shaheed, Roy McCurdy, David Arnay, Mahesh Balasooriya and Mark Massey. While there's no charge to view their performances, patrons are encouraged to make an online donation. The requested amount is a minimum donation of \$10 per streamed concert, and all donations go to the artists and to cover the costs of making the music. On the site, Dave Ross notes that fans can not only chip in each time they watch, but also to donate directly to the artists – yet he leaves that up to you: "Donate if you can," he says, "but if you cannot afford the \$10, please watch the video anyway, guilt free. That's what the artists would want."

FOJ's own Debbi Ebert has been busy creating and streaming virtual performances on YouTube. Go to the link www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJrjzrx0JWw&feature=youtu.be to watch Debbi's "Cocktail Hour at The Gem" (yep, that's Debbi's husband, Richard Abraham, on the piano). Debbi will also be performing at the Palm Springs Women's Jazz Festival later in May, accessible here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjd4uu_yzt8 (where you can also see performances from past festivals). Debbi has also invited everyone to visit her website, www.debbiebert.com, to download music from her CD "Takin' a Chance." As with most of our talented jazz musician friends, Debbi continues to create and produce new material even in spite of the curtailment of live events: "I will be releasing new tunes in the near future," she says, "so stay tuned." 