



## Sierra Jazz Society Newsletter Volume I - Issue 2 Spring 2007

**"Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire."** — Gustav Mahler

### Alumni Party and Jam Session

7:30 to 9:00 pm Tuesday, March 20th  
Summer Thyme's Café  
421 Colfax Avenue, Grass Valley

Bring your instruments (vocalists bring a tune or two), and you'll be backed up by Bill Douglass on bass, John Girton on guitar, and Ty Smith on drums. What an opportunity to make music with pros!

Alumni get in free: guests admission is \$7.00.  
Tickets required. Summer Thyme's has beverages for sale, plus lush desserts by their new pastry chef.

Contact Julia for information and tickets:  
julia@sierrajazzsociety.com or call (530)273-0568.

### Junior Jazz Camp this Month

There are still some spots available for Junior Jazz Camp. It is on Sunday, March 18, 1-4 p.m. for musicians ages 8-12 to explore pre-jazz improvisation. For more information go to the Sierra Jazz Society website: [www.sierrajazzsociety.com](http://www.sierrajazzsociety.com).

Contact Julia to register:  
julia@sierrajazzsociety.com or call (530)273-0568.

### Jazz Camp in Easy Payments

Folks are already signing up for the 2007 season. You can reserve your spot now with a down payment of \$75 and do the rest in four more monthly payments of \$75. To set up such a plan, contact Julia: [julia@sierrajazzsociety.com](mailto:julia@sierrajazzsociety.com) or call (530)273-0568.

### Jazz Camp Scholarships

Did you know that each year individuals, businesses, and organizations have provided full or partial scholarships to Jazz Camp?

There are talented, interested children that would love to be able to attend Jazz Camp but can't because of finances. A scholarship to Jazz Camp is a genuine way to support continuing education in jazz music and help promote the great jazz tradition.

For more information about donating a scholarship or receiving a scholarship, contact Julia Glasse: [julia@sierrajazzsociety.com](mailto:julia@sierrajazzsociety.com) or call (530)273-0568.

### Jazz Study Tool

Bob Claire, a Jazz Camp sax teacher, has written *Jazz Sketch Pad*, a workbook with play-along CD that is considered a valuable tool for jazz players. Bill Douglass and Nora Nausbaum use it and recommend it highly. Jazz Education Journal calls it a "one-of-a-kind marvel", and Jazz Times says it's "a necessary buy".

You can get this great resource now at [www.wholorestmusic.com](http://www.wholorestmusic.com) or at Jazz Camp in July.

### Student's Corner

Jazz Camp alumni Emily Seferovich and Nick Crockett will soon be featured on NCTV with Herr Direktor Bill Douglass. Emily on soprano and alto saxes and Nick on drums will join Bill on bass for pretty neat playing by local jazzfolk on our local TV station. Look for this segment at the end of April.

**From the newsletter editors to students:** We'd like to hear from you for this newsletter. Tell us what you've been doing, what you want to do, ask questions ... we look forward to hearing your comments. [bill@sierrajazzsociety.com](mailto:bill@sierrajazzsociety.com)

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## Faculty Corner



Each newsletter will feature ideas from faculty members about practicing, listening to, and playing jazz. This time we present saxophone teacher Bob Claire's ideas gleaned from many years of playing and teaching.

### On Learning How To Learn

One of the most important things for music students to learn is how to use practice time effectively. A half-hour well spent can be worth an hour or more spent in a less focused manner. I'm talking about working on written music, like the head of a jazz tune or a classical piece. In my experience the #1 time-waster is trying to play too fast. It does no good to stumble through a piece at high speed. You don't learn much that way.

When you have a new piece to learn, start at a moderate tempo and try to read through the piece with the idea of discovering which parts give you trouble. Once you have done this, go back to work on those sections. Find a tempo--no matter how slow!--at which you can play a short passage.

If it's the notes that are giving you trouble, play them slowly one by one, then speed up gradually until they become easier. Sometimes it will be a particular two or three notes that are the problem in a small section--perhaps a difficult interval, or a sharp or flat note that you missed.

If the rhythm is causing a problem, stop and figure out exactly where the beats fall and mark in vertical lines above those notes, so you can see which exact notes are on the beats.

Continue to work this way, solving small problems, joining phrases together to gradually make longer and longer sections. When you stumble, slow down. After you find the tempo at which you can play a section, pick up the tempo slightly. When you next have trouble, slow down again. Always find the quickest tempo at which you can play cleanly before moving on. A metronome can be handy to keep track of tempo variations more exactly.

These ideas may seem obvious to some, but many students do not proceed in a logical manner. They lose valuable practice time by continuing to play straight through a piece, making the same mistakes over and over. This practice method is not just for students--most pros I know work in pretty much this way. It may not feel like fun at first, but spend your time on what you don't know, and what you do know will grow faster.



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