

North American Saxophone Alliance

March/April 2007

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Dear Members,

The majority of the pages of this issue of the NASA Update are devoted to remembering and celebrating the life of Michael Brecker, fellow saxophonist, who died January 13. I doubt there is a saxophonist who has not been touched by Michael in some way; his influence has been immense. Indeed, when I was coming of age, Michael, half a generation ahead of me, was the meteor of jazz firing through the heavens. You couldn't speak of jazz without referencing Michael Brecker. His influence was as profound in my classical world: his scales rocketed into the altissimo with a facility I could only dream of, and his tone reached into my soul. As long as I have played the saxophone there has been Michael Brecker; as long as I breath and beyond, there will be Michael Brecker. Such is his legacy, and ours, and we can rejoice at his life and devotion to the saxophone. I hope you will, as did I, marvel on what a life can bring to others as you read the reflections of NASA members who have known Michael.

I am pleased to announce and welcome the newest members to join the NASA Executive Committee. Debra Richtmeyer is our new President-elect, Scott Turpen was elected as Treasurer, and David Stambler was re-elected as Secretary. Congratulations, and I look forward to working with all of you, as well as our Past-president Jonathan Helton, and the members of the NASA Board, as we continue to shape NASA. At the same time a heartfelt thank you to Thomas Walsh for his four years of outstanding service as NASA Treasurer. Tom's energy, intelligence, and humor, have made working with the EC a delight.

Scott Turpen's move to Treasurer comes with mixed blessings. Although as Treasurer we shall benefit from Scott's experience, we will also be losing him as editor of the NASA Update, which has, under his stewardship, blossomed. As of this writing we have not found a replacement for Scott.

This brings me to a subject high on my list of priorities, namely the new NASA Web Site. I can tell you that yes, the site does exist, and having explored it, yes, it offers exciting new possibilities for members. While it isn't available for general use yet, we are close to bringing it on line for all NASA members. You may ask, and with good reason, why having a presence on the Internet is so important. In the words of cybercommentator Amanda Gefter, "Everyone can participate. Young people now communicate more through social networking websites than through



Michael Brecker Remembered

PASSINGS: MIKE and ALICE Submitted by Dave Liebman

I write this a few hours after Mike's funeral, Monday Jan 15. It was as you could imagine quite moving and quite sad. He leaves a wife, two teenage children, a sister and brother Randy, who took his greatest solo today when he spoke so honestly about Mike at the funeral. I've known these guys for forty years. One of his last records was with Joe Lovano and myself in Saxophone Summit with his tune as the title track appropriately titled "Gathering of Spirits."

As well his last official gig was with that band at Birdland in March 2004. We were particularly close in the early days. Mike took over my first loft when I moved on and stayed there ten years with the same piano and continuing the same research and practice vibe. He and I were close mainly as a consequence of our love and respect for John Coltrane's music. But more important than the music was the message that Trane left to all of us concerning humility, humanity and honesty. Music after all is in the final analysis just sound without emotion or feeling until the artist possesses the notes so the listener, if they care to and put the effort in, feels something. To move the listener, you have to bring something to the music that is inside you. Michael had plenty inside him and through music, he found a way to let people know what he was thinking and feeling. Besides inspiring so many saxophonists to pursue this deep musical tradition that we all love and respect, he personally helped many people involved in addictive behavior to find and cure themselves. And even at the end, he realized that though he

wanted his disease to stay quiet, by asking for blood donors he was helping to save others, which is exactly what has happened. This is the essence of selflessness.

As Randy said in his eulogy, the passing of Alice Coltrane within the same twenty four hour period is significant on several levels, specifically in relation to Mike because of the Coltrane connection. It was the late Trane period that we (meaning Michael, Steve Grossman, Bob Berg, Randy, myself and others) were hooked on and tried to emulate in the early days. The fact that these two passings occurred during the IAJE convention in NewYork and became common knowledge in the last few hours of the weekend was in some ways fortuitous since such a large part of the community was by circumstance together.

The last person I saw as I was leaving the hotel was Roy Haynes. His final thought to me was exactly that, meaning this is the time for the community to pull together and keep the faith. We will do our best Sergeant Haynes.

REMEMBERING MIKE

Submitted by GunnarMossbald

I have not really lost very many people in my life. I guess I am one of the lucky ones. I remember the sorrow I felt at the passing of my Grandmothers and my Mom, but I knew in my heart that they were better off; that they had gone to their reward. They all had a long and full life. This last weekend, however (Saturday, January 13, 2007 at 10:30am), the world lost, Michael Brecker, a very special person and musician in the prime of his life. It just does not quite make sense to me.

Mike's musical accomplishments are well documented. He had numerous recordings, 11 Grammy awards and many other acknowledgements of his importance to the development of the saxophone and jazz in the last four decades. What many may not know is that he was one of the most caring and giving individuals I have ever met.

In the years from 1982 until this last January, I "hung" with Mike on various occasions. We talked about horns and mouthpieces in Charlottesville, Virginia when he was a guest artist at The University of Virginia. I brought him in as the jazz act in what might be one of first truly integrated (jazz and classical) Regional NASA meetings in 1984. We did several airport and backstage "hangs" together in our travels; and I even took a lesson with him, even though, according to him, he did not teach. (By the way, I can tell you he could teach). He helped me so much! I cannot say that I was one of his close friends, but I sure enjoyed our time together and he sure had an influence on my musical and personal life.

His playing was always superb! He set standards in technical facility on the saxophone, and was a beautiful improviser/musician...beautiful because he spoke musically to people. He did not just play notes, he played music, and he had a lot to say! What many people do not realize though, is Mike was a great human being. He had a humble, giving nature and truly cared about others. Musically and personally, Mike was quick to acknowledge the value of others, and was honest and open about his weaknesses, which he always worked to make one



Remembering Mike (continued)

of his strengths. He gave to others unselfishly, in both his personal and musical life. He quietly donated his time, for years, to a rehab center that helped him through a tough part of his life. Even when he did not want to be public about his disease, his efforts to find a proper match for a bone marrow transplant attracted thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of donors that could not help Mike, but helped and will help others to fight their illnesses. He always gave so much back.

So, I am sure by now most of you know, Mike had been suffering from myelodysplastic syndrome, a blood and bone marrow disease (formerly referred to as pre-leukemia) that was officially diagnosed in May of 2005, and overcame him on January 13, 2007. He fought a good fight. I talked with Randy (Mikes Brother) on the Thursday before his death. I asked how Mike was doing. His response said it all. "Some weeks are good and some are not....This week is not a good week".

It was not a good week for the jazz community attending the International Association for Jazz Education conference in New York City either. The word of Mike's passing got around within hours of his death. A quiet fell over the conference. Everyone had thought Mike was on the mend. We hoped it...we expected it, but God had other plans, and it was significant that God also took Alice Coltrane the wife of one of Mike's most important influences within 24hours prior to his death. Perhaps they needed to go together. I do not know, but the saxophone community, the jazz community and all the other communities Mike was a part of, has suffered a great personal loss.

So what do you say about a guy who was one of the nicest, caring and

personable human beings you have ever met, and on top of everything else was one of the most creative and influential musicians in the history of jazz. I am not sure my limited ability to put words together can express my feelings adequately, but I know we can all thank him for his wonderful contribution to our lives.

Thanks Mike – See you later!

Reflections on Michael Brecker Submitted by Miles Osland

I personally had a wonderful (though too brief) encounter with Michael. A few years back he came to perform a concert on our "Spotlight Jazz" concert series at the University of Kentucky. This was truly one of the most outstanding performances I have ever experienced. Jeff Tain, Calderazzo & John Patitucci! They were leaving the next morning for a tour in Japan, so they used this opportunity to REALLY stretch. Incredible! The best part of the day was the master class that took place before the concert. Mike arrived late, there were problems with the bus, and he hadn't gotten much sleep. He was cranky, to say the least. He really didn't want to be there, I'm sure, but I had a full recital hall (over 300 attendees), and my students had prepared for months for the opportunity to play for their "Sax God". Needless to say, Michael rose to the occasion, and what was supposed to be an hour event turned into a fascinating two and half hour total Brecker experience: he played solo, he played drums with the students and addressed many topics in a Q & A. We literally had to drag him off the Recital Hall stage so he could make his sound check.

I also had the opportunity to get two of Michael's solo transcriptions published in *Downbeat* magazine. One was from his *Grammy* award winning solo on *Impressions* off of the McCoy Tyner recording titled *Infinity*. The second was his a capella intro and melody to his well-known and often emulated *Delta City Blues* from his *Two Blocks From the Edge* CD. The transcription and analysis of this solo can be found (and downloaded) on my website at: <u>http://</u>

www.milesosland.com/articles/ brecker/brecker1.html During his master class at the University of Kentucky, the question of the practicality of the study of transcribed solos was posed to Michael. His answer was that he is aware of the advantage that younger students have with the use of improv and transcription books. He did not have access to the many volumes of transcribed solos that are available today, and he completed all of his transcribing the old fashioned way: with concentrated listening and the destruction of a lot of grooves in the old vinyl LP's. He wants to make sure that students never lose their curiosity and enjoy the magic of listening to improvisation. In his words: The problem is if you rely on the books too much, it seems to me that you're stamping out your own individuality and it makes it harder to erase the information from your subconscious. I'm glad, in a way, that Coltrane didn't explain everything that he did because it left a lot to my imagination. It's nice to have mystery and not have everything presented scientifically. On the other hand, there is a place for it. But if every artist, every painter explained everything he did every step along the way, then to me it sort of loses the magic of the piece.

Michael Brecker – the magic of this iconic saxophonist will live forever in the hearts, mind and ears of many.



Michael Brecker (continued)

Michael Brecker Remembrance Submitted by Tom Walsh

With the passing of Michael Brecker Saturday, January 13, 2007, we lost one of the greatest living saxophonists, a giant of jazz, whose virtuosic feats on the instrument were already the stuff of legend. For those of us who were in school in the 1980s, Michael Brecker was *the* force to be reckoned with on the saxophone. He was the one contemporary player who could not be avoided, and it seemed like virtually every tenor player was imitating him. So numerous were the Brecker wannabes that the term "Brecker-clone" entered the lexicon to denote the legions who approximated his sound. When he finally released his first solo recording in 1987, it seemed impossible that such an influential player had not yet released a solo album.

The memory of the young Michael Brecker lives on in the walls here at Indiana University, where he was a student in 1967 and '68. He took private lessons with David Baker, and, as reported by a long-time Bloomington jazzer, he played with a quintet at the Owl Coffeehouse, located in a downtown church basement. As a sign of things to come, he was also part of Bloomington's first jazz-rock fusion band, Mrs. Seaman's Sound Band (around the same time brother Randy was a member of Blood, Sweat & Tears).

For me, tracks from certain recordings have become etched in my memory from so many listenings: "Spidit" and "I'll Never Stop Loving You" (especially the cadenza) from Hal Galper's *Reach Out!*, Chick Corea's *Three Quartets*, "Pools" on *Steps Ahead*,

"Nothing Personal" on Michael Brecker, "Escher Sketch" on Now You See It. Now You Don't, the album Infinity with McCoy Tyner, "Delta City Blues" on Two Blocks from the Edge; and so many more. And, if hearing Michael Brecker on record is sublime, to have heard him live in a small club was to know the experience of being struck dumb with awe. Hearing his unaccompanied rendition of "Round Midnight" at Indianapolis's Jazz Kitchen a few years back was one of those truly stunning experiences—a rare moment of musical nirvana. Now, with so many Brecker videos on youtube, we can relive his outrageously brilliant live playing and marvel at what is possible on the saxophone.

All of this would be enough to ensure Michael Brecker's legacy. But, as inspiring as his feats on the saxophone are, it has been equally inspiring to see his and his family's response to his diagnosis of myelodysplastic syndrome. Reaching out to the public rather than retreating, they have created another extraordinary legacy in helping extend the lives of others with MDS through the publicity they have brought to the need for bone marrow donors. In this, Michael Brecker has left us with much more to emulate than just his extraordinary playing.



Call for Articles:

The Saxophone Symposium— Submissions for articles in the areas of saxophone history, literature and repertoire, pedagogy, jazz studies and interdisciplinary areas involving saxophone are being accepted. Four copies of the manuscript, double-spaced throughout (including block quotations and notes) with one-inch margins, should be sent to:

Dr. Stacy Maugans Editor, The Saxophone Symposium Center for the Arts Valparaiso University Valparaiso, IN 46383

For further details concerning format of manuscript or any questions concerning submission, please contact Stacy Maugans by email **Stacy.Maugans@valpo.edu** or by phone (219-464-5469).

Reviews of books, music, compact disks, films, pedagogical materials, and works in alternative media pertaining to the saxophone are also encouraged. Reviews of 700-900 words or less should be sent to:

Dr. Frank Bongiorno The University of North Carolina at Wilmington Department of Music 601 South College Road Wilmington, NC 28403-5975 bongiornof@uncw.edu

The Saxophone Symposium Update

The next issue of The Saxophone Symposium will be a 2006-2007 double issue to be published in December 2007.



The NASA 2008 Biennial Conference Set

NASA is Pleased to Announce:

The 2008 Biennial Conference of the North American Saxophone Alliance to be hosted by Dr. Cliff Leaman, and the the University of South Carolina School of Music Columbia, South Carolina

April 16-19, 2008

More details will appear in these pages as they become available or contact the host for more information:

Cliff Leaman School of Music University of South Carolina 813 Assembly St. Columbia, SC 29208 803-576-5893 cleaman@mozart.sc.edu

Ancia Saxophone Quartet Workshop at St. Olaf College, June 10-15, 2007

Individual saxophonists and active quartets are invited to join the Ancia Saxophone Quartet for an inspiring week of music making June 10- 15 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. The Ancia Quartet is one of the Midwest's premiere saxophone quartets, and its members are experienced music educators.

College and high school students, advanced middle level students, and adult players of all ages may apply. Participants will be placed in quartets for coaching, masterclasses and performances. Registration deadline is April 1 (Early Bird Discount deadline is March 1).



Dr. Eugene Rousseau and 2006 Ancia S.Q. Workshop Participants Cameron Behl, Alex Lopez, Kate Esselman and, Pat Callen

Visit the quartet website, <u>www.anciaquartet.com</u>, for more information, or email <u>workshop@anciaquartet.com</u>. Angela Wyatt – Ancia Saxophone Quartet 6

Member Update



Randal Hall announces the release of his new CD Neither Proud Nor Ashamed on the Innova label. It features new music for saxophone and electronics by Christian Lauba, Luciano Berio, Nicolas Scherzinger, Kevin Ernste, Jonathon Kirk, and Randall Hall.

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NASA member **Susan Fancher** will be the saxophone instructor at the Hartwick College Summer Music Festival during July 1-29, 2007 in Oneonta, New York. For more information, visit the Hartwick College Summer Festival website: www.hartwickmusicfestival.org/

The University of Nebraska-

Lincoln is hosting its third annual Chamber Music Institute, June 16-23, 2007. The Institute is designed for superb young artists who love chamber music and who wish to explore careers in chamber music performance. Groups invited to apply include a saxophone quartet who will work with Dr. **Paul Haar**, UNL faculty member. Daily coachings are followed by masterclasses with the Chiara String Quartet (in residence at UNL) and sessions on Entrepreneurship, including many of the business aspects of forming a professional chamber ensemble. Groups also premiere new works by composer participants. Participants must be in college or recent college graduates (undergraduate or master's level or equivalent). International students are welcome. E-mail music2@unl.edu for more information.

Britt Festival's Saxophone Workshop will be June 25-29 in Jacksonville, Oregon. Director **Rhett Bender** will be joined by saxophonists John Bleuel, Jennifer Turpen and Scott Turpen. For more information go to brittfest.org.

NASA Publications

The North American Saxophone Alliance Presents...

The Saxophone Craze

Hear the evolution of concert saxophone performance in early 20thcentury North America! Recordings found in sound archives or private collections are now available to performers, students, and phonograph enthusiasts. Digitally re-mastered by Grammy-winning re-recording engineer Ward Marston, The Saxophone Craze features 21 historical recordings of the era's leading saxophonists: Jean Moeremans, Benne Henton, Brown Brothers Sextet, Rudy Wiedoeft, Duane Sawyer, Wheeler Wadsworth, Clyde Doerr, Bennie Krueger, and the Merle Johnston Quartet.

To order, send check for \$15.00, payable to North American Saxophone Alliance, to:

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Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano

by David Maslanka Commissioned by the North American Saxophone Alliance Commissioning Fund and Private Contributors for the 1989 NASA Young Artist Competition at the National Meeting and Navy Band Symposium \$34.95 per copy:

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Vol. 21, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1996)/Vol. 22 (1997) \$ 12.00 per issue for NASA members \$ 15.00 per issue for non-members

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Latin American Music for Saxophone

Compiled By <u>Roger Greenberg</u> Professor of Saxophone University of Northern Colorado

Roger Greenberg was on sabbatic leave from the University of Northern Colorado during Spring semester, 2002. His project was to research Latin American Music for Saxophone and to create a comprehensive list of this music indexed by country, with composer, dates, titles, instrumentation, and availability, when known.

President's Message

(continued from Page 1)

email....While older adults go online to find information, the younger crowd go online to live." I see the NASA site as more than a source of information (though we will have that, to be sure), I see it as a community. Why wait every two years to get together (don't get me wrong, I do enjoy the biennials) when we can interact at any moment? Done well, this site can become a force in shaping the discourse around the saxophone. What SOTW (Sax on the Web) and the Saxophone Journal do so very well for bringing saxophone enthusiasts together can be harnessed for the professional saxophone community. Whether you are a student or a teacher, this site will become a powerful tool. Here is a short list of some of the ideas we are working to include:

Discussion Forums:

General Info Ideas and comments Ask questions Stolen Instruments Instruments for sale Performance and Pedagogy Teaching - General: Solutions, Questions

Tips:

Fingerings Literature News, Festivals, Master classes, **Events:** An interactive page for member activities (with a link for members to add activities) Streaming Video (conferences, competitions) Podcasts Programs of past Biennials and World Saxophone Congresses Job vacancy listing University assistantship listing Competitions listing An expanded NASA Online Store offering: Past symposiums Individual articles scores books (Teal, Kochnitzky) Recordings

As with any grand vision, we need your help! Albert Schweitzer wrote, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." Want to make a difference? We are looking for people with expertise in streaming video, podcasts, forum moderators, people with writing skills, or in visual media, and, I am certain, expertise in areas we haven't thought of. This is your chance to help serve NASA! Please contact me to discover what you can do to help NASA.

There are three other short items for your attention. The first of these is the upcoming International Saxophone Conference in Beijing. Jonathan Helton is coordinating activities on this front. You will find information on the NASA web site (new or old!) pertaining to this important event. Also, NASA is exploring the possibility of a competition for saxophone quartets. There is at least the possibility that the first of these could be held at the 2008 NASA Biennial in Columbia, South Carolina....but you will have to wait for the final word on this topic! Finally, we published the incorrect dates for the next biennial in the last Update. The correct dates are April 16-19, 2008.

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Steven Stusek, President- NASA

Update Editor's Message

In January 2007 I took over as the NASA Treasurer and because of this new position the March/April 2007 edition of the NASA Update will be my last. It is difficult to believe that it has been over four years since I took over the reigns of the Update in September of 2002. Time moves very quickly. It has been a very rewarding position in that I have been able to meet and work with some fine individuals involved with NASA and I have also grown to know more closely the workings of the organization. During my time as editor I diligently worked to make the publication a valuable tool for the members. I am confident that the new Update editor will continue to develop the publication for the future.

As I move into my new role in the organization, I look forward to working on the continued growth and improvement of the North American Saxophone Alliance. It is imperative that NASA continues to promote the saxophone and the individuals who perform and compose music for it.

J. Scott Turpen Update Editor



North American Saxophone Alliance

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