

Jimmy McGary

The Best Jazz You Never Heard

Part 1: Real People Make Real Music

Jimmy McGary The Best Jazz You Never Heard covers the years 1968 to 1988. The film is narrated by Jimmy himself taken from unearthed cassette tapes of radio interviews and Jimmy's own personal, homemade reflections. The family history is told by Jimmy's wife Carol and son Sean.

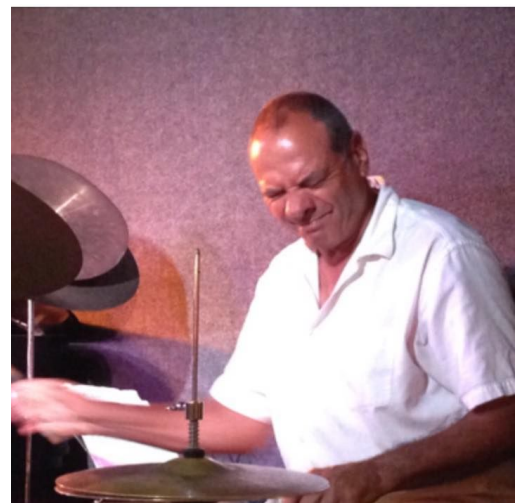


The journey begins in Mt. Adams. The premier “hippie enclave” in 1960’s Cincinnati. Composer, pianist and trumpeter David Mathews sets the scene in a first hand account. Live recordings of the band made in 1969 at *New Dilly’s Pub* and studio tracks taken from the Thrust Records release *Two Tone Poems* bring the era back to life.

Two Tone Poems was originally recorded in 1968 but not released until 1980 under Jimmy McGary’s name alone and is considered a rare and significant document.

David was the longtime leader of The Manhattan Jazz Orchestra and was drafted out of Mt. Adams to serve as James Brown’s music director in the 1970’s. He currently composes, performs, teaches and lives in Japan.

Drummer Chuck Fertal vividly describes arriving on the music scene in Cincinnati in the early 1970’s. After working with Jimmy at age 23 Chuck went on to work with legendary jazz musicians Mal Waldron, Reggie Workman, Chico Freeman and many others. He was interviewed in June 2018 in his home on the Upper West Side in New York City. Chuck currently plays in The New York Free Quartet with pianist Steve Cohn, bassist Larry Roland and saxophonist Michael Moss.



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Part 2: Rollin' With Von Ohlen

The Blue Wisp Jazz club started as hole in the wall in the O'Bryonville neighborhood of Cincinnati and grew into a club with a national reputation. The club thrived from opening its doors in 1977 until finally closing at its third location in downtown Cincinnati in 2014.



Pianist Pat Kelly had the first “house gig” at the Blue Wisp. Pat called Fred Hersch, now thirteen time Grammy nominee, and asked for advice. Hersch told Kelly, “that sounds like a good gig you should call Jimmy McGary.”

Pat then formed the quartet *River* and the Blue Wisp was born. In the film Pat performs a subtle version of Jimmy’s composition *Song For Sean* at his home in Cincinnati on his personal Steinway.

Pat composes for and leads his long time large ensemble *The Psychoacoustic Orchestra* and is one of the most in demand musicians in Cincinnati.

Arriving from Oklahoma in 1980 bassist Lynn Seaton joined the Steve Schmidt trio and the Blue Wisp Big band. Lynn who has played with Count Basie, Woody Herman and Tony Bennett is the long time bass instructor at North Texas University.

Lynn was interviewed during the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Camp in July 2018.





To many Cincinnatians *Jazz = Steve Schmidt*. Steve was a founding member of the Blue Wisp Big Band and his Trio made music with some of the finest musicians ever to play jazz at the Blue Wisp.

Steve was interviewed in Cincinnati's "Over The Rhine" neighborhood in July 2018 and he spoke about being mentored by Jimmy and the deeply generous, kind way Jimmy lived his life. "He was the kind of guy who said, *I love you man.*"

"I am a product of this city" -Steve Schmidt



Steve describes the process of mentorship that produced many of Cincinnati's best jazz musicians.

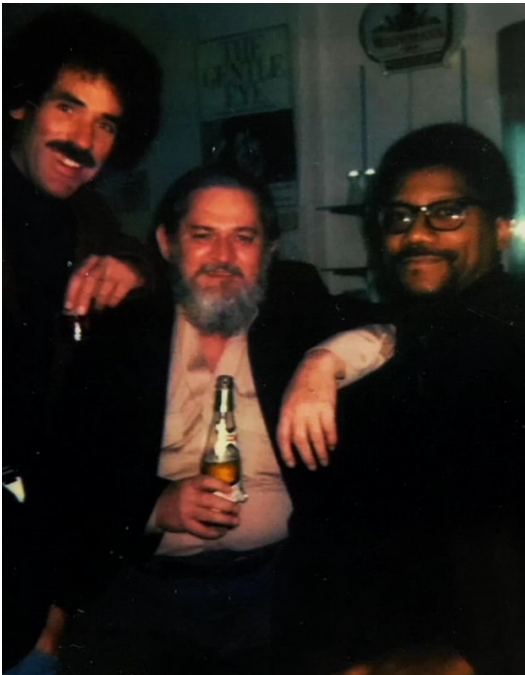
At a young age Steve was leading a trio with the legendary Stan Kenton drummer John Von Ohlen. Always humble, he laughed while saying "everything happened pretty quickly." Steve continues to be one of the most in demand pianists in Cincinnati.

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Part 3: The Most Fun You Can Have

“That was a serious drinkin’ joint” -Wayne Yeager



Jimmy McGary created his greatest working group with organist Wayne Yeager (pictured left) and drummer Bobby Scott (pictured right), during the mid 1980's.

It didn't matter if they were playing the smoke stuffed dive bar *Cory's On The Corner* or coast to coast National Public Radio Broadcasts at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The Jimmy McGary Trio set the standard for “all in”, “every note is your life story” musical commitment and intensity.

Jimmy got top billing but once the music started there was no band leader. The group functioned as one and they connected with each other as well as any group of its kind in jazz history.

Wayne Yeager and Bobby Scott are 2019 Cincinnati Jazz Hall of Fame inductees.



The roster of Cincinnati jazz legends includes the names Ed Moss, Dee Felice, and Cincy Jazz Hall of Fame member Lou Lausche. Add Jimmy McGary and you have *The Cincinnati Jazz Quartet*. They played to packed houses at Ed Moss' *Eminon* club. *Eminon* is "no name" spelled backwards and was located directly across the street from *Cory's* making for the *hippest block* in the Queen City.

Lou was interviewed at his recording studio in Cincinnati June 2018 where he talked about Jimmy's lasting impact and why he is still widely known in Cincinnati. Lou continues to play several nights a week with the best musicians in town.



"It's all about the hang" -Michael Skaggs

Photographer, Northern Kentucky University Professor and Jazz Concert Promoter Michael Skaggs provides a personal take on the Cincinnati jazz community. Michael was a jazz DJ on WVXU and produced many concerts with national artists. He conceived and originated the innovative *Jazzoo* series at the Cincinnati Zoo. Michael also produced the RoHo Loft series which featured Jimmy with Fred Hersch.



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Part 4: It's Just Your Dad

What do you do when your father is a legend in your hometown? If your name is Sean McGary you carve your own path to excellence.

Sean McGary is teacher, entrepreneur and plays searing guitar solos in several of the most popular bands in Cincinnati. He is the owner of The Music Salon in Madeira Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati.



Sean's approach to mentorship and teaching is generous just like his father. He provides the opportunity to "live your music" if you are eight or eighty.

Sean was interviewed at his home in June of 2018 and again at The Music Salon in October 2018 to wrap shooting of the film. He is also featured on guitar.



“He was always searching” -Rick VanMatre

Cincinnati native Rick VanMatre is a saxophonist and composer with an international reputation for artistic virtuosity. As an artist he has performed with orchestras around the world, Mercer Ellington, and in innovative projects with bassist and composer Frank Proto.



Rick was the host of *Jazz Live From The Hyatt* in the 1980's which was broadcast coast to coast on National Public Radio. Clips of his 1987 radio interview with Jimmy are woven into interviews with young saxophone students at the Berklee College of Music in Boston conducted in September 2018.



Rick was interviewed at his home near the University of Cincinnati where he served as director of Jazz Studies for three decades. He and his wife the visual artist, Ann Socha VanMatre, have contributed to advancing the cause of New Work, by example, in Cincinnati and across the globe.

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Coda



“You want to see how his music lives on and gets transferred into the present tense” -Christian Finger

The legacy of any **True Artist** is transferred one generation at a time. This can take many shapes but must be done in person, in the same room with all involved breathing the same air in order to communicate the subtle details of expression. This is what it is to be human. Under the best conditions it is then filtered through the experiences as lived by those lucky enough to have received it.

The New York City based group *Breathe-Live* is a direct result of this film. It features German-Americans Peter Knoll on guitar and Christian Finger on drums joined by soprano saxophonist, and now filmmaker, Christopher Braig. They recorded their first album at Brooklyn Bull Studios in October 2018 including *Song For Sean*.



(Christopher grew up in Cincinnati of course)