

# IAJRC San Antonio 2014 Convention Report

By Shelley Wruk Finke

Another very satisfying IAJRC convention has come and gone, and those who regularly attend can feel well cared-for once again.

Recent years have seen the proceedings kicked up a notch -- or two, or three-- with locales such as New Orleans, Kansas City and, now in our 50th anniversary year, San Antonio, Texas. Hotel venues have been similarly upgraded, with downtown



Convention organizers  
Ian Tiele and Perry  
Huntoon discuss the  
Evening programming

facilities offering countless dinner options and plenty of diversions during one's off hours (taverns and micro breweries usually among them). We're being accommodated on a level some might consider downright luxurious.

Antonio Riverwalk. What may make for a winning hotel for IAJRC folk could well be whether it has hosted a historic recording session. There we hit the jackpot at the Sheraton Gunter, where Robert Johnson recorded his first sessions in late 1936, producing eight sides for the Vocalion label.

IAJRC member attendees, this year a smaller group at 45, enjoyed the traditional series of historical talks and activities prepared and presented with the expertise we've come to expect from a willing, erudite membership. Every convention reminds us how much material there is to be mined -- not only from commonly available resources, but from personal discographies and photographs and privately recorded music and interviews -- making for a refreshed selection of topics each year that continues to amaze and educate.



Searching for a rarity the  
vendor room

Presentations in San Antonio included:

**Sights & Sounds of Bunny Berigan: 1930-1942**, by Michael Zirpolo, presenting personal and professional images and recordings from Berigan's career during the years 1930-1942.

**Let's Dance with Benny Goodman**, by Geoff Wheeler, covering the Goodman band's recordings and engagements leading up to the "Let's Dance" radio program and from there the Benny Goodman Orchestra as we know it.

**A Scrapbook of San Antonio Jazz**, by Dick Raichelson, presenting images of ads, bands, labels and venues in San Antonio between 1927-1940, with particular focus on Troy Floyd and Don Albert.

**Texas Tenors: Part I and II**, from Perry Huntoon, discussing the recordings and careers of Lone Star reed players

Herschel Evans, Buddy Tate, Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb.

**Sippie Wallace: The Texas Nightingale**, from Ron Pikelek, taking us through the life and career of one of Okeh's more prolific artists, who recorded 40 sides between 1923 and 1927 but then changed course in the 1930s becoming a church organist and choir director in Detroit.

**The Life & Times of Billy Strayhorn**, presented by nephew Larry Strayhorn, including firsthand personal reminiscences and insights into the career and creative process of one of jazz's most respected composers.

**Discographical Forum**, an annual presentation moderated by Dick Raichelson, this year including new information on Joe Kennedy and His Orchestra who recorded at the Gunter Hotel in 1935.



Original members Dick Raichelson  
and Gene Miller discuss the  
Association's 50th anniversary

The final presentation of the weekend treated members to a retrospective of the IAJRC's 50 years, presented in photos and commentary by founding members Gene Miller and Dick Raichelson. Gene subtly addressed the subject of the IAJRC's waning membership and struggle to remain relevant, recalling the earliest days of its gatherings. To paraphrase Gene: "We played records and we discussed them. Listening to the music for enjoyment was secondary." This is an important distinction to make for anyone who cares to ponder the purpose and definition of IAJRC. Live entertainment, prize-giving and outside amusement are nice and occasionally completely called for, but none are requirements for an IAJRC meeting to be worthy of planning or attending.

While San Antonio may not boast the same magnetic renown as a jazz city as a New Orleans or Kansas City, its identity as a hub of territory bands, respected soloists and historic ballrooms stirs plenty of interest among knowledgeable jazz historians and discographers. Our people, who are researchers at heart, know how to make the most of their convention time. This is proven year after year.

A large group outing was not planned this year, but a smaller one developed in the form of a historic venue tour. What had been planned as a walking tour of primarily hotel ballrooms became an air-conditioned, multi-vehicle caravan -- civilized,



Convention attendees check out an  
old ballroom on Phil Pospychala's  
excellent San Antonio Jazz Tour

more than pleasant and, for a few of us, surprisingly full of places to see. Thanks to Phil Pospychala and members of his San Antonio family for making it possible and with his unique brand of integrity.

A few opportunities arose to

hear the Jim Cullum Jazz Band in nearby restaurants, satisfying a good handful of members whose cups overflowed with live music. For the rest, after a casual dinner break and possibly a catnap, they found themselves in a dear and familiar place on Thursday evening: settled in their chairs facing Mark Cantor's silver screen. Mark shared a four-hour program of jazz clips covering the years 1929-1985, including instrumental, vocalized performances and dance, and covering genres from traditional to Swing to bop and beyond. (See Mark's complete playlist at the end of this report.) Friday night offered a screening of the Billy Strayhorn documentary *Lush Life*.

Both the general membership and board meetings addressed familiar concerns about declining membership and the future of IAJRC, as well as new issues related to member communication and committee burnout. Among these issues:

--Declining membership and convention attendance continues to concern the board, this primarily due to member deaths, illnesses, relocations and other personal circumstances. The number of attendees this year was down by 24 from the previous year, for a total of 45 patrons in 2014.

--Registrar Lee Goode has asked to step down due to job responsibilities. A possible replacement is in view and being investigated.

--The sitting convention committee will be taking a respite for the 2015 year. Alternative ideas have been proposed and are being considered by the board, including the possibility of combining meetings with another organization, returning to a smaller hotel venue temporarily or taking a year off.

--The IAJRC lending library of books and periodicals has liquidated 60% of its holdings to members over the last several years. The remaining items will be sold in bulk.

--An email newsletter is being developed to serve as an interim form of communication between Journal publications.

Despite the shadows cast by the absence of several of our most active and vocal members within the last year – Duncan Schiedt, Chuck Sweningsen and Doug Norwood have passed away -- our 50th anniversary gathering wrapped up in relaxed fashion with a seemingly flawless banquet dinner. It was accompanied in part by an energetic performance by the Mission City Hot Rhythm Cats and an active and increasingly enjoyable raffle giveaway. Announcements of the annual award recipients followed, as listed:

**Meritorious Service Awards** presented by Gene Miller: Fred Cohen and Tom Hustad

**President's Award** presented by Geoff Wheeler: Herb Young

**Best Article Awards** presented by committee chair Tristan Argenti:

1st place: Dr. David Schroeder for the Joe Lovano article "Bird in our Time"

2nd place: Perry Huntoon for "Stan Kenton Lives On"

3rd place: Dr. David Schroeder for "Produced by Helen Keane"

The San Antonio meeting may have been on a cozier level in terms of size and scope, but the seriousness of our concerns for our future – both near and distant -- remain life-sized. Grateful kudos to the convention committee: chairman Ian Tiele, members Lee Goode and Perry Huntoon, with detailed outside assistance from Marc Kritzer. Putting on a show of any kind is always



**The Mission City Hot Rhythm Cats provided some fine music at Saturday nights Gala Dinner**

a balancing act, combined with a guessing game and topped with nagging budget concerns. These gentlemen have made it happen time and time again. Thanks, guys! Onward to our second half-century, whatever it may hold.

(All the above photographs by Marc Kritzer)

**Mark Cantor's Classic Jazz Film Presentation**

Set #1: A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That

1. Congaroo - The Six Hits, Whitey's Lindy Hopper
2. Up and Atom - Gene Krupa and his Orchestra
3. The Girl From Ipanema - Astrid Gilberto, Stan Getz Quartet
4. Medley - Autumn Leaves (Wynton Kelly), What's New (John Coltrane), Moonlight In Vermont (Stan Getz)
5. Moonglow - Lionel Hampton
6. Things Ain't What They Used To Be - Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Cootie Williams and his Orchestra
7. Eclipse - Don Albert and his Orchestra, featuring Zoot Sims
8. Jive At Five - George Wein Newport Festival All Stars

Set #2: Jazz Vocalists & Jazz Dancers of Note

1. Send Me to the 'Lectric Chair - Dinah Washington
2. Ridin' High - Ella Fitzgerald
3. Lyrics On the Spot - Johnny Mercer, Bobby Troup, Helen O'Connell, Mel Blank
4. Accentuate the Positive - Johnny Mercer & Helen O'Connell
5. Passed 40 Blues - Jimmy Witherspoon, Art Pepper
6. Truckin' - Ina Ray Hutton
7. Boogie Woogie Piggy - Will Mastin Trio, featuring Sammy Davis, Jr.
8. Medley - "Pegleg" Bates

Set #3: Jazz Rarities

1. Low Down Dog - Big Joe Turner, Max Kaminsky, Stuff Smith & others
2. At A Georgia Camp Meeting - Graeme Bell and his Original Jazz Band

3. Love For Sale - Barbara Carroll Trio
4. One O'Clock Jump - D'Artega and his Orchestra
4. I Wish I Were Twins - Coleman Hawkins
5. What the Well Dressed Man in Harlem Will Wear
6. Mountain Greenery - Shorty Rogers and his Orchestra
7. Flying Home - Illinois Jacquet Quartet
8. Confirmation - Cannonball Adderley Sextet

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Set #4: More Jazz Rarities

1. Lover - Jack Teagarden
2. Ridin' High - Les Brown and his Orchestra
3. I'm Gonna Loose Myself 'Way Down in Louieville - Maude Mills, Club Alabam Stompers
4. Giddap Mule - Leonard Ware Trio
5. Rigoletto - Day, Dawn and Dusk
6. Little White Lies + Happy Feet - Noble Sissle and his Orchestra
7. Super Duper - Noble Sissle and his Orchestra
8. Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! - Tex Williams
9. Grandpa's Spells - Armand Hug
10. I Loves You Porgy - Bill Evans
11. Untitled blues - Mary Lou Williams
12. Zonky - Brew Moore Quartet

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Set #5 - Jazz Finale

1. Who's Sorry Now - Bob Crosby Bobcats
2. Boogie Woogie - Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra
3. Muskrat Ramble - Kid Ory Creole Jazz Band
4. Sunset Eyes - Teddy Edwards Sextet
5. Who's Got Rhythm - Gerry Mulligan and Friends



"I'M THE LITTLE TRUMPET CAT. THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY WAS DOUBLE-BOOKED."



**THE MIRACLE MAN OF SWING**

The definitive bio-discography of Bunny Berigan

By Bozy White

A 50 year project by the late IAJRC stalwart and researcher, this limited edition consists of two volumes totaling 1400+ pages and definitively covers every recording session by famed Swing Era trumpeter Bunny Berigan together with biographical details, interviews and rare photos and includes a comprehensive DVD index.

Order postpaid in the U.S. for \$145 from: Perry Huntoon, 1047 Mattande Lane, Naperville IL 60540. Payment by check or via PayPal to account [phuntoon38@gmail.com](mailto:phuntoon38@gmail.com). For Canadian or overseas orders, please inquire as to postage rates.



**2015 Membership Dues renewal forms in center pages**