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BIG BAND NEWS

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The first portion of “The Savory Collection,” an incredible treasure trove of about a hundred hours of swing music, is now available to the public, thanks to years of effort by Loren Schoenberg, Executive Director of The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, New York City.

Pioneering sound engineer William Savory (1916-2004) had transcribed the music off the radio as it was being broadcast in the 1930s and ‘40s onto 12” or 16” discs made of raw aluminum or lacquer-coated aluminum. But he was somewhat secretive with the nearly 1,000 recordings, causing them to be cloaked in myth and obscurity.

In 2010, Schoenberg came to an agreement with Savory’s son, Eugene Desavouret, for the Museum to purchase the collection.

Following intensive restoration and digitization of the music by Doug Pomeroy, legal matters concerning its commercial release have been worked out, and the first volume went on sale via iTunes and Apple Music.

Volume 1 includes three selections by Coleman Hawkins and His Orchestra, including a six-minute, May 1940 broadcast rendition of Hawkins' classic *Body and Soul*. Schoenberg calls that "the piece de resistance," while Ben Ratliff, writing in The New York Times, termed it "remarkable." I'm sure that jazz aficionados will be anxious to compare it to Hawkins' shorter 1939 Bluebird recording of the tune.

Also in this initial batch of music from The Savory Collection, Hawkins' band also plays *Basin Street Blues* and their theme, *Lazy Butterfly*, from the same date.

Ella Fitzgerald sings *A-Tisket, A-Tasket* with Chick Webb and a CBS studio orchestra in 1938 as well as (*I've Been*) *Saving Myself for You*.

Fats Waller and His Rhythm are heard circa 1938-39 with *Yacht Club Swing*, *Hold My Hand*, *I Haven't Changed a Thing*, *Summer Souvenirs*, *Who Blew Out the Flame*, *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby*, *Sixty Seconds Got Together*, *I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams*, *Alligator Crawl*, and *Spider and the Fly*.

And what is described as a "jam session" led by Lionel Hampton, there is *Dinah*, *Blues*, *Chinatown My Chinatown*, *Star Dust* (broadcast December 28, 1938, featuring one of the last solos by tenor saxophonist Herschel Evans, who died a few months later), and *Rosetta*.

Schoenberg produced the offering with Ken Druker, and promises that a second volume, with more than an hour's worth of performances by Count Basie and His Orchestra, including Lester Young on tenor sax, and unheard since they were broadcast on the radio more than 75 years ago, will be out shortly.

More installments in the series are planned for 2017.

The Savory Collection held at the Museum also includes performances with Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, John Kirby, Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman, Bobby Hackett, Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, Teddy Wilson, Bunny Berigan, and others.



image of Glenn Miller courtesy of
oldhollywoodincolor.com

MILLER MEMBERS

Congratulations to The Glenn Miller Archive at The University of Colorado-Boulder, whose Facebook group has now grown beyond 2,500 members.

Everyone is made to feel welcome there and has the chance to provide input or ask questions.

Dennis Spragg, Senior Advisor with the Archive, commented, "We greatly appreciate the honor and responsibility entrusted to us to preserve, restore and communicate this rich legacy."



MICHAEL BERKOWITZ AND THAT DRUMMER'S BAND

Like many of us, one of musician Michael Berkowitz's favorite inspirations as a drummer was Gene Krupa.

"Yeah, I think he was the 'daddy' of that," Berkowitz acknowledged during a recent appearance on the podcast "Drummer Nation," hosted by Michael Vosbein. "Nobody looked like that. And I think we all went on to expand our horizon. I love everybody from Gene to Buddy [Rich], but Alvin Stoller is my favorite."

Starting in 2003, Berkowitz re-formed and led the official Gene Krupa Orchestra, sanctioned by the Estate of Krupa's adopted son, Eugene Michael Krupa.

"I did. I did that for a long time and we had a ball," Berkowitz said.

But bookings dwindled down in the last few years, and Berkowitz chose to let his agreement and website lapse.

"I'm no longer dealing with the Estate," he said in the podcast. "I do Gene Krupa tributes these days when I do that. Yeah, the aspect of having that band was great. It brought me in contact with a lot of wonderful people that I met."

Initially, it was a challenge for Berkowitz to have enough authentic music of Krupa's to play.

"People may not be aware that all of Gene's music, in addition to his memorabilia, was lost in a fire in his house," he explained. "So one of the challenges when we put together a 'Gene Krupa' band is actually having music. So I've been able to compile about 60 of the arrangements, vocals and non-vocals."

“Quincy Jones was kind enough to give me scores from an album he had done in 1956 on Verve with Gene called ‘Drummer Man,’ so I had those arrangements to start with, plus other things that I was able to beg, steal, and borrow.”

Berkowitz continues to play Krupa’s music when asked; he continues his career as a drummer with all types of groups, and as a music director and conductor of symphony orchestras.

In my opinion, Berkowitz did a great job as leader of the Krupa band, and their 2007 CD, “Thinking of Gene” on the Sea Breeze label, remains one of my personal favorites, easily one of the very best albums by a “ghost band” in the last 50 years.



BANGING THE DRUM FOR LOUIE BELLSON

Louie Bellson (1924-2009), one of the most famous native sons of Rock Falls, Illinois, may again be celebrated there.

The city has a Bellson drum kit stored in cases, so it wants to create a traveling display and show it off.

“Louie Bellson is a legend, and part of the legend is in boxes - that’s not how he should be honored,” Janell Loos, Director of The Rock Falls Tourism Committee, observed.

Once the plans for a traveling display are completed (the cost for the plans is estimated at \$6,000), the price for the display itself can be considered.

According to writer Pam Eggemeier of Sauk Valley Media, “Some city officials think the drum display could be the catalyst for several other Bellson tributes that hold potential for spurring tourism.”

Alderman Glen Kuhlemier has suggested naming the city’s entire trail system after Bellson.

Other possibilities include a museum, a Bellson Music School, or bringing back the Heritage Days festival that ended with Bellson’s passing.

Meanwhile, Bellson’s wife, Francine [pictured above with him], continues to honor his legacy with the official website louiebellson.info.

HEAR A NAME BAND LIVE

Count Basie Orchestra directed by Scotty Barnhart. Nov 26, Copley Symphony Hall, San Diego, CA; Nov 27, Palm Springs High School, Palm Springs, CA; Nov 28, West Ranch High School Theater, Stevenson Ranch, CA; Nov 29-30, Yoshi's, Oakland, CA.

Glenn Miller Orchestra [USA] directed by Nick Hilscher. Nov 1, Broadway Theatre, Elmsford, NY; Nov 2, The Strand, Lakewood, NJ; Nov 6, Patchogue Theatre, Patchogue, NY; Nov 7-8, Omni Mt Washington Resort, Bretton Woods, NH; Nov 9, Omni Parker House, Boston, MA; Nov 11, The Palace Theatre, Greensburg, PA; Nov 13, Lions Lincoln Theatre, Massillon, OH; Nov 17, The Park Center, Hayward, WI; Nov 19, Weidner Center, Green Bay, WI; Nov 20, Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL; Nov 25, Sagami Women's University, Sagamihara, Kanagawa, Japan; Nov 27, Chunichi Theatre, Nagoya, Aichi, Japan; Nov 29, Billboard Live Osaka, Umeda, Osaka, Japan; [Japan tour continues in December].



image courtesy of
Glenn Miller Productions, Inc.

Glenn Miller Orchestra [UK] directed by Ray McVay. Nov 12, Regent Centre, Christchurch, England; Nov 20, Alban Arena, St. Albans, England; Nov 27, New Victoria Theatre, Woking, England.

Glenn Miller Orchestra [Sweden] directed by Jan Slottenas. Nov 18, Concert Hall, Helsingborg, Sweden; Nov 19, Palladium, Malmoe, Sweden; Nov 20, The Theatre, Halmstad, Sweden.

Glenn Miller Orchestra [Europe] directed by Wil Salden. Nov 2, Rheihausen-Halle, Duisberg; Nov 5, House of Music, Moscow; Nov 6, Concert Hall, St. Petersburg; Nov 8, Opera, Nishnij Nowgorod; Nov 9, Opera, Tscheboksary; Nov 10, Leninski, Uljanowsk; Nov 11, Concert Hall, Penza; Nov 17, Stadthalle, Neuss; Nov 18, Seidenweberhaus, Krefeld; Nov 19, Stadttheater, Euskirchen; Nov 20, Cultuurcentrum Belgica, Dendermonde; Nov 25, Liederhalle—Mozartsaal, Stuttgart; Nov 26, Kurtheater, Baden; Nov 27, Stadthalle, Gersthofen; Nov 28, Stadthalle, Goppingen; Nov 29, Theater, Meiben.