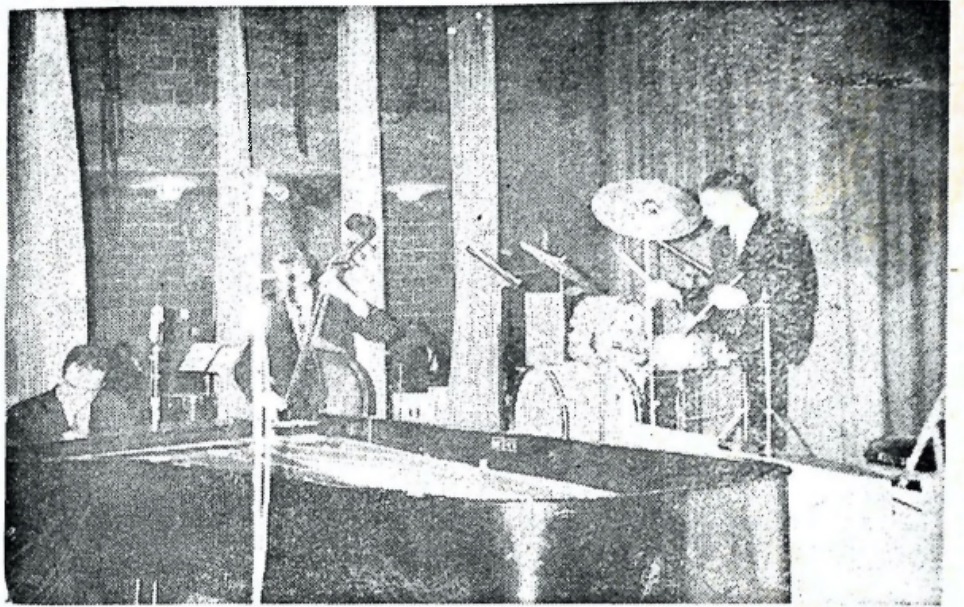


President of the Hartford Jazz Society is Arthur T. Fine, a Hartford businessman and long a student of syncopation (left). It was at his home that the society was born three years ago this month. He's shown with his voluminous photo scrapbook of society events.



Jazz concerts have been regular events in the local group's program. The scene below was during the 1962 annual event at King Philip School. Segment of the concert featured the Ray Cassarino trio. Ray is at the piano.

## Dedication, Education

... and all that

# JAZZ

Local society's devotion to American music gives Hartford leading name in rhythm ranks.

by HERBERT J. STOECKEL

IT WAS A balmy, fragrant midsummer night in 1961, three years ago this July.

"Let's talk things over out on the lawn," suggested the host to his twelve guests.

There were cool drinks. The smokers lighted up. Stars twinkled overhead. Fireflies glowed in the dark. Crickets chirped. It was in this idyllic spot that the Hartford Jazz Society, today known far and wide, although

young in years, had its beginning. A few hours later, as the dozen charter members began to depart, the society had been formally organized.

The host that evening to the pioneer group he had invited to meet at his residence, 9 Wadhams Rd., Bloomfield, was Arthur T. Fine, Hartford businessman, long a postgraduate student after office hours of the higher techniques of American

syncopated music generically termed jazz and which has proven as popular globally as on its native heath. Fine has served as president of HJS, so dubbed initially, since its inception.

THOSE who link genuine 18-carat American jazz with such mushroom domestic effusions as rock 'n' roll and kindred hillbilly and hootenanny "folk music," on investigating, will find that the true savant of jazz either regards them as kance or will have none of them. The far more intellectual approach to jazz by HJS members and unorganized fellow travelers of the same creed is succinctly summed up in the following opening paragraph of the society's by-laws:

"The purpose and aims of the Hartford Jazz Society Inc., are the fostering of a greater interest, understanding and appreciation of modern American music, through educational pro-

jects and the presentation of various programs of all types and descriptions to achieve these purposes and aims."

In line with the foregoing objectives, HJS, swinging into action, staged three concerts during its first or 1961-62 season. The first concert, free to the public and with Hartford Local 400, American Federation of Musicians, loyally co-operating, drew a capacity audience of 800 at the Student Center, Trinity College. Featured were Al Lepak's Orchestra of 16 pieces, the Dave MacKay trio, the Cliff Gunn Septet and the Lenny La-Croix Quartet. The TV "Broadway Open House" star, Fletcher Peck, was master of ceremonies.

The second concert, given in January, 1962, at the Conard High School, West Hartford, whose theme was "The Evolution of Jazz in Music and Dance," featured such Hartford talent as the Randy Weston Trio, with Booker Irvin, alto-sax, and the jazz dancers, Al Mimms and Leon Ames. The third, held in March, 1962, at the King Philip School, West Hartford, brought back Al Lepak's Orchestra, which included Chick Chicetti, Eddie Miller, Bobby Johnson, Al Forte and Bob Foster, plus Ray Cassarino's Trio and Cliff Gunn's Quartet. To meet expenses, there was a moderate admission

Sadao Watanabe, Japan's leading jazz alto saxophone player, as he appeared at the society's annual meeting last year. He is now studying in Boston under a joint sponsorship of the Hartford Jazz Society and Toshiko Akiyoshi (Mrs. Charles Mariano), Japanese jazz pianist.



charge to the latter two concerts.

IN AN ACCOUNT of HJS's early activities, printed in "Down Beat," in reply to specific query made by the magazine, George Malcolm-Smith, Hartford writer and insurance company publicist, HJS's historian and editor of the society's "jazzy" newsletter, "The Swinger," said:

"You ask in the editorial, 'What can be done to help this art form, these artists?' An answer is offered by the Hartford Jazz Society. It might inspire other communities to similar action . . .

"This is important: feature local as well as imported artists. Hartford is fortunate in having a good many and a jazz tradition that produced Horace Silver, Dick Cary, Bruce Martin, Johnny Mehegan, Gigi Gryce and Jack O'Brien.

"Meetings are held the first Sunday of every month and feature guest artists, films and lectures. All meetings which are held in various spots in town, are enlivened by refreshments and, inevitably, jam sessions.

"Members form parties to give patronage to local spots that bring in such talent as Dizzy Gillespie, Cannonball Adderley, Roy Eldridge and Coleman Hawkins. One spot, featuring local jazz groups, has found it advantageous to use the society's name on its radio broadcasts.

"Admittedly, a good deal of work is entailed, but a project of this sort requires the enthusiasm of members, the cooperation of local musicians, and the guarantee of good music, good fun and fellowship."

THE back files of "The Swinger," which breezily record, like the first, the activities of HJS's second (1962-63) and third (1963-64) seasons, reveal a galaxy of names that sparkle in the firmament of jazz. True, not all these notables actually have come to Hartford in person, although vicariously some of them have. For, as the "Down Beat" account states, these stars and their music have been seen and heard via films, documentary and otherwise, shown locally by the society. Again, others have come to Hartford, under HJS auspices, to lecture or participate in panel discussions on various phases of a subject on which they are 100 per cent

(Concluded on Page 12)

# ... And All That Jazz

(Continued from Page 6)

erudite. Similar appearances also have been made here by non-performers, for instance, editors of magazines devoted to jazz and key executives of radio networks, and stations and of record manufacturing companies whose knowledge of jazz and its mechanical projection is likewise vast and encyclopedic. Too, whenever HJS members make "field trips" to New York City or other places where some outstanding jazz artists may be booked, either as singles or with colleagues, just as widely known, the "scouts" so to speak report their impressions at the next meeting. Still again, the latest records by premier exponents of jazz are reviewed and given four-star endorsement and even negative criticism in "The Swinger." Thus, HJS is ever au courant to just about everything that's cooking in Jazzland, both in America and abroad.

BESIDES those already casually mentioned, here are some of the names—just a few, chosen at random—that have enlivened the HJS annals during brief last three years up to the close of the 1963-64 season: Gene Rodgers, Dick Morgan, Junior Mance, the Oliver Jackson Trio, Rial Ogden's Fiercely Enthusiastic Jazz Band (it's real, the name of that combo!) Joe Williams, John Handy, Dan Morgenstern, George Hofer,

the Rev. John G. Gensel, Toshiko and Sadao Watanabe. Morgenstern is editor of "Jazz," and Hofer is a "Down Beat" staffer, the two leading American magazines dedicated to more and better jazz. The Rev. Mr. Gensel, "The Broadway Jazz Pastor," is minister of Manhattan's Lutheran Church of the Advent and noted for his "jazz vespers." Toshiko Akiyoshi, Japan's famed jazz pianist, is Mrs. Charles Mariano. She and her husband, who is also a performer, have been frequent visitors to Hartford and are now the rage of Tokyo, their present habitat. Watanabe, Japan's leading jazz alto sax and flutist soloist, is now studying advanced jazz at the Berkeley School, Boston, on a full scholarship sponsored jointly by Toshiko and HJS. The society's protegee is often in Hartford to see his chums and to talk shop.

All the notables of Jazzland take a keen interest in HJS and wish it well for both idealistic and practical reasons. For the society so far is the most active and successful organization of its kind in the United States. Not only has the Hartford group inspired similar units elsewhere in the nation but the newcomers likewise have modeled themselves closely after their Hartford prototype and its seasonal cultural and social activities.

In fact, as regards member

enthusiasm and full cooperation, prompt and steady attendance at meetings, concerts and social affairs, and brisk committee activity, HJS heads all similar groups that elsewhere dot the land. HJS even tops the New York City group in these respects despite the latter's paramount advantage of being in the metropolis and entertainment Mecca of the Western Hemisphere. In short, Hartford, due to HJS, has been called the jazz capital of America as well as its informational clearing house and sounding board.

PRESENT, besides Art Fine, at the first July, 1961 HJS meeting were Art and Barbara Hurwit, Dave MacKay, Cliff Gunn, Peter Karaghosian, Harry Lichtenbaum, Bill and Betty Rathbun, Dick and Elaine Shlomborg and George Malcolm-Smith. (HJS members in writing about and referring to each other dispense with formal given names, and diminutives are customary).

The society has 150 members, most of whom reside in Hartford County. The present officers are Fine, president; Harold Braithwaite and Sammy Johnson, vice-presidents; Lucy Marsters, corresponding secretary; Anne Ferriera, recording secretary; and George Cohen, treasurer.

HJS for three years now has staged an annual pre-season Connecticut River steamboat excursion from Hartford to Goodspeed's Opera House at East Haddam and return. The

1964 "river ramble," the usual 10-hour cruise, which will usher in the 1964-65 season, is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 13. There are always two jazz bands and talented guests aboard.

In sponsoring such river rambles, HJS is also making Hartford and Connecticut River maritime history, for its outings were the only steamboat excursions to leave Hartford in 1962, the year the first one was staged, and in 1963, and to date it looks as though the 1964 ramble will also be the lone one from Hartford, no other Hartford organization displaying the same enterprise as HJS. Moreover, the group is planning this year to charter a 750-passenger steamer. If so, the steamer, an ocean-going ship, will also add

colorfully to the annals of the "Port of Hartford" since it will be the biggest craft, with the deepest draw, ever to ascend the Connecticut as far as Hartford, the head of river navigation. Historically speaking, the 1964 ramble will also be a salute to Adrian Block, the famous Dutch navigator, who in 1614, or exactly 350 years ago this year 1964, discovered the Connecticut River, sailing upstream as far as Hartford and the Enfield Rapids. In memorializing Block and his notable discovery, the jazz bands aboard will, as usual, play their usual brand of American jazz but, however, now and then interpolating Dutch jazz modifications, the latest from The Hague and Amsterdam.



Among the founders of the jazz group were these devotees, photographed at the Heublein cocktail lounge where a concert was held in 1962. Left to right are: Arthur Hurwit, his wife Barbara, and George Malcolm-Smith, a former vice president of the group and one of its chief publicists.