Two of a Kind – Francis Albert Sinatra & Edward Chester Babcock

Will Friedwald Presents: Frank Sinatra Sings Jimmy Van Heusen

By Jerry Osterberg

Will Friedwald’s landmark book *Sinatra! The Song is You – A Singer’s Art* was originally published just over twenty years ago. Since that time, other writers have offered their thoughts about Frank Sinatra, including Pete Hamill, James Kaplan (two volumes), and Tom Santopietro, although the demand for more remains insatiable. Friedwald has come along with a revised and expanded edition of his earlier comprehensive work, recognizing Frank Sinatra’s astonishing contribution to American popular music, now based upon the perspective of an additional two-decade period of scholarship.

For the purpose of the APSS meeting on December 8, the author chose to view Sinatra’s music within the prism of his collaboration with a specific composer – James Van Heusen, aka Chester Babcock. Over their many years of association, beginning when Sinatra performed with the Tommy Dorsey Band during the period of 1940-1942, “All This and Heaven Too,” “Imagination,” “Polka Dots and Moonbeams,” and “Shake Down the Stars,” the singer recorded more than eighty of Van Heusen’s tunes.

When Sinatra and Van Heusen met around 1935, the composer was two years older than the twenty-year-old crooner, who was flush with the success of having won first place on Major Bowles Amateur Hour on radio. Performing with *The Hoboken Four*, Sinatra’s late participation had been engineered by his politically power house mother Dolly. Leaving the former trio of singers behind, he performed in every saloon, social club, and hall around Hoboken that would have him. It didn’t hurt that he arrived with his own arrangements, all commissioned and paid for by Dolly.

While Sinatra, bursting with confidence about his future, was making the rounds in New Jersey, he was also visiting the music publishers in New York City, hoping to find a new song to catapult his singing career. Van Heusen was working as a song plunger at Remick Music Publishing, waiting for the chance to publish his own tunes. By 1939, both artists would be well on their way. Sinatra, now singing with the Harry James Band, and Van Heusen, collaborating with lyricist Eddie De Lange, producing his first hit “Darn That Dream,” written for a short-lived Broadway musical *Swingin’ the Dream*.

But the story Will Friedwald wanted to talk about was the almost instant connection between Sinatra and Van Heusen and his influence on the singer: “…Van Heusen not only expressed the Sinatra persona in song, he helped create it….Sinatra didn’t have to write his own songs, because Sammy Cahn and Van Heusen captured his own inner essence more than anything he could have wanted to write himself.” “I Could Have Told You,” the lyrics by Carl Sigman, perfectly reflected Sinatra’s sad state over his breakup with Ava Gardner: “I could have told you she’d hurt you… but you were in love and didn’t want to know.”

Known for his *Clip Joint* presentations, Friedwald

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President’s Message...
Linda Amiel Burns, President

Hello, APPS Members:

I sincerely wish all of you a very happy, healthy, and prosperous 2019, filled with music and song. Our 2018 season began in October, with Alex Leonard’s great program on Harry Warren. In November, we were treated to Amy Asch, KT Sullivan and Mark Nadler sharing a centennial celebration of Alan Jay Lerner. Then, in December, our esteemed journalist/historian/APSS Board Member, Will Friedwald delighted us with his talk and clips of Sinatra and Jimmy Van Heusen.

We have a wonderful 2019 season planned for you and I am very excited to announce that this month we will present the sensational Peter and Will Anderson. I have seen them perform many times at Symphony Space and 59 East 59th Street, and was very excited when they agreed to do one of their marvelous shows for us. Many of our members have a told me that they love the pre-show opening acts, which bring us young singers who love the great songs of the American Songbook. Our opener in January is Mark William, who made a stunning cabaret debut at The Green Room 42 and will be back there on January 25th. You won’t want to miss our meeting on January 12th, featuring Mark William and The Anderson Twins - you will find lots of additional information about the program in this Newsletter.

Our “Member Exchange” Table has been very successful, and many members look forward to finding free treasures of sheet music, books and CD’s. If you have anything to contribute, please bring your donations to the meeting for the Table.

Please continue to spread the word about the American Popular Song Society, bring friends to the meetings, encourage them to join, and be sure to renew your own membership. We will continue to bring you remarkable programs, but we need your support and we are hoping to continue to increase our membership.

Again, a very Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you on January 12th at The Musician’s Hall at Local 802 from 1:00 to 4:00PM.

Best wishes,
Linda

p.s. Due to an increase in expenses, we had to raise the membership dues only 5.00. So a single yearly membership is now 60. and couples are 80. We make every effort to keep these fees low. Of course if you want to join at the Angel, Patron or Benefactor levels, that’s always another option of membership.
THE MARTUCCI SWING ORCHESTRA

Shout, Sister, Shout! The Incredible Boswell Sisters

Don’t Tell Mama, New York City - November 2, 2018

By Joe Lang

When the Boswell Sisters, Connie, Martha and Helvetia (Vet), came onto the scene in New York City in 1931, their unique approach to group harmony singing was recognized as something special. They took the art of group harmonizing to places where none had been before. The influence of the jazz that was ubiquitous in their hometown of New Orleans was evident, and they set a new standard for groups that followed.

Katie Martucci and her Swing Orchestra, featuring the vocals of Martucci, Vanisha Gould and Caroline Kuhn have recently been recreating the style of the Boswells, effectively capturing the Boswell sound. The ten-song program that they presented at Don’t Tell Mama was a satisfying look back at this important group.

The singers were supported by a spirited aggregation comprising Will Greene on alto and tenor saxes, Kai Sandoval on trumpet, Gustavo d’Amico on soprano sax, Chris McCarthy on piano, Jared Engel on bass and Eladio Rojas on drums.

Getting the Boswell sound down pat is not an easy task, but this trio of singers did it superbly. From the opening notes of “Practice What You Preach” to the closing strains of “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter,” they had the audience, one that included Kyla Titus, granddaughter of Vet Boswell, and co-author of The Boswell Legacy, totally engaged and full of enthusiasm for the Boswell music, and the three ladies who were singing it.

Martucci proved to be an informative and charming spokesperson, explaining the challenges of recreating the arrangements conceived by the Boswells. She even spoke about taking a song never recorded by the Boswells, “After You’ve Gone,” and arranging it in their style, something that she accomplished to nice effect.

As they performed familiar songs like “Cheek to Cheek,” “The Object of My Affection,” “St. Louis Blues,” “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” and “Everybody Loves My Baby,” it was apparent how singular the Boswells’ approach was to the material. The only group contemporaneous to the Boswells that had anything resembling their approach was the Rhythm Boys with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, but the Boswells took it to another level of sophistication.

It was also fun hearing the Boswell versions of a couple of pop tunes of the day, “Was That The Human Thing To Do?” and “If I had a Million Dollars.” Unlike the songs mentioned above, they have had little continuing presence other than among the musicians and singers who specialize in the older jazz styles.

As the show concluded, it was apparent that Martucci and her cohorts had dazzled the audience, and that they have only tapped the surface of the rich lode of material available in the Boswell Sisters recordings. Let’s hope that they continue to mine it.
DJANGO REINHARDT: KING OF THE JAZZ GUITAR

By Marilyn Lester

Just as Miles Davis once said of Duke Ellington, that once a year all musicians should put down their instruments and pay him homage, so should guitarists do the same for Django Reinhardt. Reinhardt, a Belgian-born Romani-French jazz guitarist and composer, was one of the first jazz talents to emerge from Europe. His influence on jazz and jazz guitar has assured him his place among the greats, as one of the most enduringly significant musicians of the twentieth century.

What is most astounding about Reinhardt is that he had only two good fingers on his left hand (at the age of 18 he was badly burned in a fire). Yet his playing was fluid and lightning fast, owing to his ability to devise his own technique on the instrument. With no formal training, this musical genius applied his first two workable fingers rapidly up and down the guitar neck. The other two digits of the left hand, permanently curled towards the palm due to damaged tendons, were used on the first two strings of the guitar for chords and octaves. His technique can be seen in the 1938 short film, Jazz Hot. Reinhardt thus created an entirely new style of music in the 1930s and 40s, which came to be known as “gypsy jazz.”

Django Reinhardt was born in 1910 in Belgium, but grew up in a Romani caravan enclave on the outskirts of Paris, living what was then a traditional gypsy lifestyle. He became attracted to music at an early age, demonstrating an aptitude for it at the outset. When he was twelve, he was gifted with a banjo-guitar, which he learned to play by copying the styles of the musicians he watched. He began his musical career almost immediately, playing at age 13 with the accordionist Guerino at a dance hall on the Rue Monge. The teenage Reinhardt began playing with several other musicians and bands, eventually recording for the Ideal Company with accordion players Jean Vaissade, Maurice Alexander and Victor Marceau, and with the singer Maurice Chaumel. Since Reinhardt neither read nor wrote at the time, his name appears as Jiango Renard on the record labels. However, he was already gaining international attention; British bandleader Jack Hylton traveled to France to hear him play, offering him a job, which he ultimately could not take because of the fire.

As he developed musically, Reinhardt listened to and was influenced by the recordings of Eddie Lang, Joe Venuti, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. It was Ellington who was responsible for Reinhardt’s first and only tour in the United States at the close of World War II. The Duke had heard Reinhardt play in Europe before the war, and was impressed. He made his debut with the Ellington Orchestra at the Cleveland Music Hall in the autumn of 1946. He closed out the tour performing in two concerts with Ellington at Carnegie Hall, where he took six curtain calls on the first night. Reinhardt then played an engagement at Café Society Uptown, backed by the resident band, before returning to France in February 1947—never to return to the US again.

In the decade before World War II, however, Reinhardt, with jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli, formed the Quintet of the Hot Club of France in 1934, with Roger Chapat (guitar), Louis Vola (bass) and eventually Django’s brother Joseph (guitar). A small record company called Ultraphone recorded their first efforts, which caused a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic. During the war years, with Grappelli in England, Reinhardt played and recorded (avoiding the fate of many of his gypsy brethren at the hands of the Nazis), substituting Hubert Rostaing’s clarinet for the violin. After the war and the US tour, Reinhardt continued to actively play and record, but found it difficult to adjust to post-war Europe. In 1951 he retired to the small village of Samois sur Seine. In May of 1953 he collapsed suddenly, dying of a massive brain hemorrhage at age 43.

Over his career, Reinhardt composed about 100 songs. He was a master improviser, and rarely (if ever) played a solo the same way twice. Generations of jazz guitarists have been influenced by his work. Festivals in his honor take place globally every year. His name has come to stand with the most rarified of the jazz world as both a technician and creative genius, earning him the bona fide title of true “legend.”
Member News…

If you have any member news, or other items you would like to have considered for this newsletter, please send it by e-mail to the co-editor, Jerry Osterbergg: osterbergg@AOL.com. It will be subject to editing, depending on size and content, and please remember that we try to go to press two weeks before each monthly meeting. We often get very good items that get to us after the newsletter has been printed and mailed.

Linda Amiel Burns, APSS President, is celebrating four decades of The Singing Experience. Several APSS members have taken this workshop, some more than once. For those of us who have, we can assure you that you’ll feel like a pro by the night of the performance. Although many students have never sung in public before, the supportive environment has prepared them well for their debut. Call Linda at 212-315-3500 to sign up. The Singing Experience Cable TV show continues on MNM Time Warner: Channel 56 or RCN: Channel 111. The program broadcasts are every Sunday at 5:00 PM. You can also see your fellow NYSMS members on YouTube at any time.

$15 including tax for five hours with validation@Saint Peter's Reception Desk. www.saintpeters.org/jazz/midtownjazz.htm www.ronnywhyte.com.

Marissa Mulder and Jon Weber are back again...this time at the Beach Café, on January 12 @ 9:30 PM.
The show, A Cup of Kindness, will feature the songs of Leonard Cohen, Johnny Burke, Joni Mitchell, Pink, and Stephen Sondheim. Beach is located at East 70th Street & Second Avenue. For additional information and reservations call 212-988-7299 or write www.thebeachcafe.com.

Congratulations to APSS member Steve Ross for attracting the attention of Alex Traub of The New York Times! The extensive profile and interview appeared on December 13, and can be accessed by clicking on https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/13/nyregion/the-last-of-the-old-school-cabaret-artists.html

Speaking of Steve Ross, he’s just announced his first Master Class sessions for 2019, beginning on Sunday, January 20, and continuing Saturday, January 26, and Sunday, January 27. All classes are held from 1:30 to 4:30 PM at take place at Steve’s residence, 255 West 84th Street, Apt. 12D. The fee is $90 for the three-hour session. For additional information and to reserve, please call Dena Kaufman at 917-848-4797 or write her @ denakaufman7@gmail.com.

Twin Cities singer/pianist/impresario and APSS member Les Block reports that the Johnny Mercer Centennial radio series, created by Les and radio host David Cummings, has been accepted by the Library of Congress as a permanent addition to its Recorded Sound Reference Center. The program was originally broadcast in a series of ten, one-hour segments, on KFAI-FM in 2009. It’s a remarkable collection of interviews for the subject of the lyrics of Johnny Mercer. Among those who Les and David spoke with were Margaret Whiting, Tony Bennett, Kay Starr, Barry Manilow, Nancy Wilson, Monica Mancini, Johnny Mathias, Daryl Sherman, Herb Jeffries, Diahann Carroll, Steve Allen, Andy Williams, Jack Lemmon, Dave Frishberg, and David Allyn. The entire program can be accessed through Google<Johnny Mercer at 100-ksav.org> It is a fascinating bit of history.

Board member Marilyn Lester is now the Executive Director of the new nonprofit American Songbook Association (an outgrowth of the Cabaret Scenes Foundation). The mission is publishing the magazine, bringing the music into the schools and providing quality, low-cost performances to senior citizens, students and all who love songbook music. Please check out www.americansongbookassociation.org

Do you seek an elusive song? If you do, write APSS Board member Sandy Marrone @ smusandy@aol.com or call 856-829-6104. You can also visit Sandy in New Jersey to see thousands and thousands of sheets of music, most of which can be yours very reasonably. She is a marvelous resource and a super-great lady! Having heard from only a few of our members over the past year or so, Sandy wants to remind you that she’s still at it, adding to her collection every day, and always willing to part with sheet music at especially fair prices for us. Sheet music was the reason we were founded thirty plus years ago, after all, and she’s only a phone call or e-mail away. Sandy continues to be willing to offer free appraisals with no expectation of having right of first refusal and can provide unbiased advice as to how and where to sell music. It’s not a secret, pass it on please.

Send Member News to Osterbergg@aol.com no later than the 15th of each month for the next issue.
Did you know every issue of this newsletter is in COLOR online at www.APSSinc.org

January’s Opener
Mark William

Mark is thrilled to share his love of the American popular song with all of us! He recently made his solo nightclub debut at The Green Room 42 with the critically-acclaimed world premiere of Come Croon With Me, and will return for an encore performance on January 25th at 7pm. Tickets are available at www.thegreenroom42.com

Mark was named one of the top ten cabaret acts of 2018 by TheaterPizzazz and Times Square Chronicles. He also headlined the Highline Chamber Ensemble this past New Years Eve at The McKittrick Hotel, home of Sleep No More. Favorite stage credits include Mame, starring Leslie Uggams, Jerry’s Girls, starring Susan Anton and Klea Blackhurst, the China/Singapore tour of My Fair Lady, …Charlie Brown (Linus), and Mary Poppins (Valentine). Mark has performed at other NYC venues including: United Palace, Birdland, and Feinstein’s/54 Below. Thanks always to Preston & Richard Ridge and to the APSS board for this opportunity. For Papa ~ Proverbs 16:3.

JANUARY 12th
THE ANDERSON TWINS
The Anderson Twins are thrilled to join us for a concert. They will be accompanied by Parisian guitarist Felix Lemerle. They will delve into the songbooks of George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Cole Potter, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Hoagy Carmichael, and Jimmy Van Heusen. The American Popular Songbook has provided them with endless imagination and meaningful structure throughout their performing careers. The twins owe a great bit of gratitude to these brilliant composers for their inspiration. Peter Anderson - tenor sax, clarinet; Will Anderson - alto sax, flute, clarinet; Felix Lemerle - guitar.

Mark William opens the program. See below...

2018 - 19 Season
October 13, 2018
Alex Leonard presents Harry Warren

November 10, 2018
Alan Jay Lerner with Amy Asch, KT Sullivan and Mark Nadler

December 8, 2018
Celebrating Frank Sinatra on his birthday with clips and songs

January 12, 2019
The Anderson Twins

February 9, 2019
Barbara Cook show by Shana Farr

March 9, 2019
Ron Fassler

April 13, 2019
Celebrating Jazz Month

May 11, 2019
Songwriter Showcase

June 8, 2019
Richard Skipper Celebrates June 8th in Song