

The Paul Winter Sextet

Count Me In
1962 & 1963

50th
ANNIVERSARY
ANTHOLOGY





The Paul Winter Sextet

Paul Winter is a child of the big band era. Born in the railroad town of Altoona, Pennsylvania in 1939, he grew up loving the music of Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller and other bands of the Swing Era. At the age of 13, Paul organized his first dance band, a nine-piece group named The Silver Liners, after the theme-song they had chosen: "Look for the Silver Lining."

By the time Paul was in high school in the 1950s he had become enthralled with the Stan Kenton orchestra. During teen summers at the horsemanship school of Culver Military Academy in Indiana, he played sax in their 16-piece dance band, and eventually became its leader.

Paul's love of jazz led him to choose Northwestern University because of its proximity to Chicago, which he sensed, rightly, would be a great city for jazz. During his first month there, in the fall of 1957, he met trumpet-player Dick Whitsell, three years his senior, who would become his mentor and future musical partner in The Paul Winter Sextet. "Whits" had grown up on the far south side of Chicago and knew the jazz scene intimately. And during a year in the Army, prior to entering Northwestern, he had been stationed near Indianapolis where he met and played with notable jazz musicians, including Wes Montgomery and Freddie Hubbard.

Paul soon organized a dance band and began playing for fraternity and sorority dances that were held at hotels in Chicago and country clubs in the northern suburbs. Eventually the group was called The Paul Winter Sextet, and its repertoire gradually evolved from the great standards of the big band era to include more original jazz compositions. At one point the Sextet even featured a vocalist, Ann-Margret Olsson, a Northwestern classmate who later dropped her last name and went on to greater glory in Hollywood.

With Whits as his guide, Paul spent a great deal of time on the south side, checking out the diverse jazz happenings and taking in all the famous jazz groups that came to play the Sutherland Lounge.

Paul and Whits also played in Northwestern's "Jazz Laboratory" big band, and went with them in the spring of 1960 to the Collegiate Jazz Festival at Notre Dame, a three-day competition among college jazz groups from around the country. This was a revelatory experience for both young men. Here was a context where jazz, pure listening jazz, was appreciated and



(l to r) Dick Whitsell, Ann-Margret Olsson, Paul Winter
(Del Prado Hotel, Chicago: November, 1959)

honored; and here were their peers, fervent young musicians from all over. Paul and Whits returned home with a shared mission: to put together a group of the greatest young players in Chicago, and to come back the next year and win the Festival.

The band they envisioned would be a sextet, inspired by two groups they had heard live: the Jazztet of Art Farmer and Benny Golson; and the *Kind of Blue* sextet of Miles Davis, with Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane and Bill Evans. They also loved the sextet albums by tenor-saxist and composer/arranger Jimmy Heath. Paul was clear about the instrumentation he wanted: rhythm section plus three horns – Whits’ trumpet, Paul’s alto, and a baritone sax. (He loved the big bottom sound of baritone since having heard it in the Al Belletto Sextet one time in Milwaukee.) With three horns it’s possible to have a rich ensemble sound, and Paul was intuitively imagining a kind of little “big band,” not a combo of soloists. The bands Paul loved most, large and small, had an organic interweave of ensemble and soloing. Paul came to think of these bands as models of democracy, with equal allegiance to individual expression and to the well-being of the whole.

The first order of business was to find great arrangements. Paul and Whits decided to go right to the top: Jimmy Heath. That June, Paul and Whits drove from Chicago to New York to look for Jimmy. On their first night in New York City they went to the Half Note Club to hear Slide Hampton’s Band, and on a set-break talked with drummer Stu Martin, who told them: “Jimmy Heath’s not in New York; he lives in Philadelphia.” So the next morning they drove to Philly, and somehow found Jimmy, who was living at his mother’s home.

Jimmy was so amazed that these two white kids had come all the way from Chicago to find him that he very generously offered to sell them the seven charts from his recent album for \$10 each. They didn’t have the \$70 but Paul called his dad in Altoona who wired the money by Western Union.

With these charts, Paul and Whits now had the cornerstone of a great “book” for the new sextet. The search for the players for their dream band soon began in earnest, and would continue over the next year or so.

That fall, Whits heard an amazing pianist at a club off Rush Street in downtown Chicago: Warren Bernhardt. Warren had been a child prodigy as a classical pianist, but then fell in love with the playing of Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans, and learned to play brilliantly in the style of both. He was currently a student at the University of Chicago, and expressed interest in playing with the new group.

Through word-of-mouth Whits and Paul heard of a rip-roaring baritone sax player, Les Rout, who lived on the south side and was a student at Loyola University. They got in touch with Les, who said he might be interested.

They knew a superb drummer named Morris Jennings, who highly recommended bassist Scotty Holt, also from the south side.

Although they now had a line-up of players, there was no opportunity yet to bring the new band together. Throughout the fall and winter of 1960/1961, Paul’s “dance band” sextet continued to play gigs, and for a period of time was playing six nights a week at the officers’ clubs at the Great Lakes Naval

Base. He kept trying to work in as many jazz charts as the band could get away with during these dance gigs, but it wasn't time yet to bring in the "all-star jazz players."

One night that winter, Whits came back from a jam session on the west side bubbling over with excitement: "Man, I heard the greatest drummer in Chicago, and he'd be perfect for the sextet. His name is Harold Jones." Whits took Paul to hear him and Paul was knocked out. They spoke to Harold about their vision for the new group. He said he was open to exploring it sometime later but at the time was heavily committed.

In his preface to the 2011 biography, *Harold Jones: The Singer's Drummer*, Paul writes: "Looking back now, I could say that Harold was like the Michael Jordan of young Chicago jazz drummers. I knew that if we could have him on our team, we'd be unbeatable!" And this ultimately proved to be true. But they would have to wait for the opportunity to arise.

By February of 1961, with the approaching April date for the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival in their sights, it was finally time to actualize the new band. Paul thought it would be ideal to practice in a real jazz club. He knew the manager at Birdhouse, a relatively new club on the north side. This manager agreed to let the band rehearse after-hours, between three and six in the morning. By the end of March, the Sextet was sounding pretty good, and they were confident about their upcoming performance at the Notre Dame Festival.

The night before the trip, Whits fell ill, so Paul had to scramble to find a trumpet player. Someone referred him to Eddie Kruger, and Paul was able to reach him. Eddie was a highly regarded player but was working as a postman and hadn't played in a year. Needless to say, his lip wasn't in the best shape, and since he was also sight-reading the charts, the band didn't have its strongest ensemble sound. But the Sextet still placed second in the small group category, and Les Rout, on baritone, won "Best Soloist" award.

The Notre Dame Festival proved to be a good warm-up for the next competition, the Intercollegiate Jazz Festival, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in early May. For this Festival, over 100 groups had sent in tapes, from which five, including the Sextet, were chosen as finalists. Only those five bands were invited to perform at the Festival, which would be a one-night event, featuring 15-minute performances by each band, with a closing set by the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet. Dizzy would be one of the judges, along with legendary producer John Hammond. The winning group would receive a recording contract with Columbia Records and a week's engagement at Birdland in New York.



(l to r) Paul Winter, Morris Jennings, Les Rout, Scotty Holt, Dick Whitsell, Warren Bernhardt
(Backyard of Whitsell family home, Chicago south side: February, 1961)

By this time, Whits had recovered, and drummer Harold Jones finally agreed to join them. The band had time for one rehearsal before driving from Chicago to Washington.

The Sextet was the first group to perform and they felt they played well. Later they learned that Dizzy had leaned over to John Hammond and said: "Man, there couldn't be any band better than this one." As it turned out, Dizzy was right.

Following intermission, it was announced that the Sextet had won and that their pianist, Warren Bernhardt, had been named "Best Musician" in the Festival. Paul recalls the six of them standing on a street corner in Georgetown later that night, feeling very exuberant, when Harold, ever the genial organizer, exhorted them: "Let's have a cheer for Paul Winter!"

After returning to Chicago, since there was no work for the band, the players went their separate ways. Paul kept in touch with everyone, optimistic that some opportunities might arise. The Columbia recording contract was enough to convince Paul to shelve his plans to enter the University of Virginia Law School that fall, and for Warren to postpone graduate school. Neither had ever imagined being professional musicians. Now they thought: "Why don't we try this for a year?"

The Sextet received invitations to play at two festivals that summer. All the players were available except bassist Scotty Holt. Harold suggested that his friend Reggie Willis would be a great replacement, and he was. They played the Evansville Jazz Festival, where they heard Roland Kirk, and Cannonball Adderley's new band with Joe Zawinul; and then the Saugatuck Jazz Festival

in Michigan, where the headliners were the Dave Brubeck Quartet and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. But the most vital thing that happened that summer was the energy Paul and Whits stirred up toward the possibility of the Sextet being sent on a goodwill tour by the State Department.

Sitting around their shared apartment in Chicago that summer with lots of time on their hands, Paul talked with Whits about his long-time dream to play in Russia. Paul knew people there loved jazz, having sent LPs from his collection to an operation called "Jazz Lift," which smuggled jazz albums behind the Iron Curtain. He had received wonderful letters from the recipients of these albums, and was amazed that there seemed to be more enthusiasm for jazz in Russia than in America.

It didn't take much to ignite Whits' fervor and soon the two had hatched a far-fetched plan: they would ask some of their former professors at Northwestern to help them map out itineraries for two long tours – one to the Iron Curtain countries and the other through the Far East. With these tour outlines, they would propose to the State Department that the Sextet, as unofficially the top college jazz group in the U.S., be sent on a goodwill tour, during which they would present seminars and workshops



*(l to r) Dick Whitsell,
Warren Bernhardt, Reggie Willis,
Les Rout, Harold Jones, Paul Winter
(Saugatuck Jazz Festival: July, 1961)*

with students in addition to their concerts at universities in the various countries. Paul and Whits thought that it might also be of interest to the State Department that the Sextet happened to be a perfectly integrated band, with three blacks and three whites, at a time when civil rights was such a burning issue in the U.S.

The State Department sent back a standard form letter requesting an audition tape, which would be reviewed by the cultural exchange department's jazz committee. In August, the Sextet went into a studio in Chicago and recorded half a dozen pieces. Paul sent this tape to the State Department, along with letters of recommendation from Dizzy Gillespie, John Hammond and Dave Brubeck.

In October, Winter received a letter from the State Department saying they were going to send the Sextet on a six-month tour of Latin America. Like having won the Columbia recording contract, this was something beyond their wildest dreams. Not only was it a prospect of a fantastic adventure, but it offered six months of work, with everyone receiving a weekly salary. Paul and Whits knew of no other jazz group with that much work guaranteed.

That November, John Hammond came to Chicago to talk about recording the Sextet's first album. One night, Paul took John to the London House, a renowned jazz supper club where the house band was the Eddie Higgins Trio. Eddie had a wonderful bassist, Richard Evans, who greatly impressed Paul and John. Not only were they thrilled with his playing, but Paul knew that Richard was an accomplished arranger and composer.

John urged Paul to see if Richard would join the Sextet for the State Department tour and to play on the album. Though 28, and considerably more experienced than the college kids of the Sextet, Richard's sense of adventure held sway, and he agreed to join the band. The final member of the dream Sextet was in place. The band now included Paul Winter, Dick Whitsell, Les Raut, Warren Bernhardt, Richard Evans and Harold Jones.

John Hammond returned to Chicago in early December to record the Sextet. During a day and a half in the Columbia studio, they recorded their first album. Titled simply *The Paul Winter Sextet*, it was released only in Brazil, during the tour. It never came out in the United States.

The contract from the State Department called for a manager to accompany the Sextet on the upcoming tour. Paul thought it would be good if this person were an expert on jazz, who could moderate the seminars they'd be doing at the universities in Latin America. Paul called Gene Lees, the editor of *Down Beat* magazine, to ask if he had any ideas. Gene said he'd try to think of someone for them and that he'd call back. The next day Gene called and said: "I'll go."

On the last day in January, 1962, the Sextet and their new manager departed Chicago for New York, for their briefing by the State Department. En route to Haiti the band had a stopover night in Miami, where they encountered their first challenge. When they tried to register at the designated hotel, they were told no blacks were allowed. This infuriated Paul and he took the whole band to the other side of town where they could all stay together. Not a good start for a goodwill tour!

The Latin America Tour

Notes from Paul's Diary

Haiti was an extraordinary experience. It was the first time any jazz group had come to Haiti, and the response was overwhelming. At our first concert in the Rex Theater there were four times as many people as there were seats, and they were wildly demonstrative from the first piece.

In a week there we played 11 concerts and radio shows. At the university concerts, students were hanging from the rafters. We held roundtables with students in the afternoons. The attendance was unprecedented, we were told by one professor. "Usually only a few show up for anything and they never clap, are very cold," he said, "but with you boys they were at home. The interracial chapter of the group and its cooperation changed many opinions among the students."

Our last night in Haiti we were afforded a special tribute. At a club on the mountain they gave a voodoo ceremony for us as a tribute to jazz. They presented voodoo rites that are rarely seen in public: to the accompaniment of ten drummers, a dance troupe did a fantastic ballet that built up to a climax in which the lead dancer bit off the head of a live chicken, held it up like a gourd, and drank its blood.

When we regained our composure, we got our instruments and played a swinging closer – "Night in Tunisia" – with the Haitian drummers sitting in. I doubt if I'll ever again hear anything so exciting. Their rhythms were unbelievable.

Our embassy officials were ecstatic. Never before had any group been able to reach so many people there and gain such response. We left Haiti feeling that we could go right home then with a belief that we had done something worthwhile. In the next 22 weeks we would visit 61 more cities and have the same feeling on leaving every one.

From Haiti we flew to Mexico City, and in the following weeks made our way through Central America: Guatemala, British Honduras, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. We then made a four-month loop around South America, heading down the west coast through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; then coming up the east coast from Argentina to Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, British Guyana and Venezuela. We wound up the tour then in the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Our mission was not to lecture about democracy or to dispense propaganda. The only instructions we were given by the State Department were to be careful of the water and the lettuce, and not to play tennis in La Paz (altitude: 13,000 feet). We were at liberty to be ourselves, play our music, and get to know the students.

Many students came to our concerts suspicious that we had been assembled for propaganda reasons. They'd ask us if we really worked together as an integrated group in the U.S. Another frequent question was: "Who rooms with whom?"



Guadalajara, Mexico

But after we would play, the students would mob us to talk. The music broke down the barriers. Many students had never met a black American before and they were eager to talk to Harold, Richard and Les.

Attendance was overwhelming: out of 160 concerts, 152 were standing-room only. The crowds ranged from a few hundred to one of 15,000 in an open-air theater in Cali, Colombia. Combined audiences of the tour totaled more than a quarter of a million. We played in many settings: concert halls, town squares, bull rings, boxing rings, truck beds and dance halls. During one concert in a village square in Costa Rica a giant sloth joined the audience and listened hanging upside down from a tree.

We were an unknown group, but billed as the "Number One College Jazz Group in the U.S." The students came partly because of the popularity of jazz, but more I think out of curiosity to see their counterparts from the U.S. This curiosity among students is universal, and is one reason why I believe more student groups of all kinds should participate in cultural exchange.

Perhaps the most significant indication of the impact of jazz came from those situations where we did encounter trouble. Before our concert in Guayaquil, Ecuador, we got word the first row of the balcony was filled with leftist students armed with pop bottles to throw at us. So we decided to open the concert with our secret weapon: a Harold Jones drum solo. It was so dynamic that the



Guatemala City, Guatemala

audience was ecstatic, and would likely have assaulted anybody who tried to disrupt the show. We heard only roars of enthusiasm from the balcony.

In Curitiba, Brazil, our concert was stopped by a group of 30 agitators who threw beans, rocks and finally, pieces of brick, until Whits was hit in the face. The crowd then got furious because they wanted to hear jazz, and the leftists were thrown out. Many people came backstage to apologize to us, and after a 45-minute interruption we went back on and finished the concert, ending with a standing ovation from the entire house of 5,000 people.

Brazil was a revelation for us. From the time we entered Porto Alegre in the south, we began hearing recordings of the new Brazilian musical genre that was blossoming, known as "bossa nova." Back in January, the night before we left Chicago, Gene Lees had played us a recording by singer-guitarist João Gilberto, an album entitled "Chega de Saudade." We were enthralled by the rhythmic soulfulness of his singing, and the exquisite beauty of the melodies and harmonic progressions. Here was a quiet music that had the qualities we revered in jazz, but which we were more accustomed to hearing played loud. In Rio de Janeiro we met many of the bossa nova musicians, and Gene Lees stayed behind with Antonio Carlos Jobim to work on English lyrics for his songs, catching up with us a week later in British Guyana. We played in 13 cities of Brazil, following its entire 6,000 mile coastline all the way up to Belem near the Amazon.



With traditional musicians
Villarica, Paraguay



*Leaving Paraguay
(Sextet with manager Gene Lees on left
and two USIA personnel)*

Homecoming

Following their final concert of the tour, the Sextet arrived back in New York in mid-July. To say that their return was a bit of a let-down would be an understatement. They had experienced months of triumphs in Latin America, but it seemed nobody in the U.S. had heard anything about it. The gig at Birdland that had been promised

for winning the Intercollegiate Jazz Festival fell through. There was no work whatsoever for the band. John Hammond sent Whits and Paul over to meet with Joe Glaser, the chief of Associated Booking Corporation, and long-time manager of Louis Armstrong. Joe blew a lot of smoke, and pretended to call Bob Precht, producer of the Ed Sullivan Show, and said loudly: "I want you to put this band on the show!" However, there was a high point later in the conversation when Joe's phone rang and he answered, exclaiming: "Duke Ellington!" It turned out Duke was calling from the road, begging Joe to fill-in some dates in the band's itinerary. Whits and Paul were getting a fast-moving reality-grounding in the business of jazz.

There seemed to be no way to keep the Sextet together. Richard Evans was quickly hired by Ahmad Jamal. Harold returned to Chicago to freelance. And Les Rout went to the University of Minnesota, where he had won a

scholarship to work on his Ph.D. in history. Paul, Whits and Warren decided to stay in New York and make a go of it. Along with Gene Lees, they rented a funky penthouse on the upper west side.

Although most of the country was unaware of the band's triumphant Latin America tour, it turned out there was one place that did know of the Sextet's success: the White House. Paul had written a letter to President Kennedy during the tour, acknowledging the Cultural Exchange Program, telling him how well their tour was going and urging him to encourage the State Department to send out more student music groups. According to White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, the President read the letter and said: "This is very interesting!"

Sometime later, speaking of the Sextet's tour, Press Secretary Salinger said: "The Winter group had a great deal of rapport with the student groups, many of whom are pro-Communists. The Winter tour shows what a group of young people playing a new kind of music can do."

Out of the blue, in August, Paul received a letter from First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy inviting the



East Room, White House: November 19, 1962

Sextet to play at the White House in November. The concert would be part of her series entitled "Concerts for Young People by Young People." So the Sextet now had a booking for one final gig.

Also, the band wasn't finished recording. John Hammond was eager to record the Sextet, which after 160 concerts would be superbly tight, and had a repertoire of over 100 charts. Columbia Records was especially enthused that the Sextet finish the album of bossa nova it had begun in Columbia's Studio in Rio that June. It happened that the Stan Getz/Charlie Byrd album *Jazz Samba*, released in June, had become a tremendous hit, and launched bossa nova in the U.S.

In early September the Sextet reconvened in Columbia's famous "Studio A" and completed the album *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*, also recording a large number of pieces from their concert repertoire, most of them in one take. From these latter tracks would come their third album, *Jazz Premiere Washington*, released in early 1963. Columbia decided to shelve their first album from the previous December in Chicago, and rushed out the bossa nova album, which became a minor hit, selling around 30,000 copies.

Then, two months later, on November 19, the Sextet came together for the last time, at the White House. The East Room was filled with an international audience of children from different embassies in Washington, as well as press. A few weeks earlier, when the concert had been announced, a journalist had realized that this would be the first-ever jazz concert in the White House, so the back of the room was jammed with press.

The event was hosted by Mrs. Kennedy, as the President at the last minute was unable to attend. China had invaded India that morning, so he was busy down the hall, but reportedly could hear the music.

Down Beat magazine reported: "The Sextet members assembled on stage, bowed deeply to Mrs. Kennedy and the audience, and then tore into Jimmy Heath's "Bells and Horns." The large portraits of George and Martha Washington hanging on the wall seemed to frown, Mrs. Kennedy seldom stopped smiling, the children craned their necks to see better, reporters scribbled busily, and one elderly lady left the room."

As the concert ended, Mrs. Kennedy approached the stage and shook hands with Paul, saying softly: "That was wonderful, simply wonderful. We've never had anything like it here before."

The next morning, newspapers across the country carried front-page photos and stories on the concert, with captions like "Jackie Digs Jazz!"



Les Rout, Dick Whitsell, Paul Winter,
Jacqueline Kennedy
(White House: November 19, 1962)

And, as irony would have it, the flood-gates then opened for the Sextet. Booking offers began coming in from all over. But it was too late for the original band. Three of the members were already committed elsewhere. Paul would have to reorganize, and fast. *The Tonight Show* wanted the Sextet three nights later, so Paul called bassist Ron Carter, and baritone saxist Jay Cameron, who was in Paris, and had to fly in for the gig.



*The Tonight Show, New York: November 25, 1962
(l to r) Warren Bernhardt, Ron Carter, Jay Cameron,
Paul Winter, Dick Whitsell, Harold Jones*

A cross-country tour of clubs was booked to begin in December, and with new players Jay Cameron, drummer Ben Riley, and bassist Arthur Harper, joining Paul, Whits and Warren, "Chapter Two" of the Sextet was launched.

They played Connolly's Stardust Room in Boston, the Village Vanguard in New York, three weeks at Chicago's London House, and then on to the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco, and the Band Box in Denver.

In the spring, the Sextet did a small tour of colleges in the west, and by this time Chuck Israels joined them on bass, having recently left the Bill Evans

Trio. John Hammond brought Columbia's team of remote recording engineers to record the band live at the Universities of Kansas City and Colorado, from which came their next album *New Jazz on Campus*.

The Sextet played the Newport Jazz Festival in early July. Harold Jones rejoined them on drums, along with their long-time Chicago friend, bassist Bob Cranshaw, whose band, the MJT+3, had been a major inspiration for the Sextet.



*On Ralph J. Gleason's "Jazz Casual," NET
San Francisco: January, 1963
(l to r) Ben Riley, Dick Whitsell, Arthur Harper,
Paul Winter, Jay Cameron, Warren Bernhardt*

Driving back to New York after the Festival, Whits announced to Paul that he had decided to leave the band at the end of the year and go to medical school, following the path of his father and brother. "I'll never be as good [a trumpeter] as Freddie Hubbard," he said.

Later that month in Detroit, during a gig at a club called The Minor Key, Paul heard two dynamic musicians, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Freddie Waits, and invited them to come to New York and join the Sextet. Along with Warren on piano, Cecil and Freddie made up the rhythm section for the final months of the band.



the concert recording that became Pete's album *We Shall Overcome*. The experience was a revelation for Paul: Pete opened the door for him to a new realm.

Over the summer months and into the fall, Paul gathered songs, and he, Warren and Cecil worked on charts for the album that came to be titled *Jazz Meets the Folk Song*. The Sextet was recording the album in November at the time of President Kennedy's assassination. Numbed by that tragedy, and discouraged by what felt like the end of that optimistic era, Paul knew this was the end of the road for the Sextet. In their final session in early December, they made what would be the band's last recording: "We Shall Overcome." It was like a benediction on a remarkable journey.

Paul had met with John Hammond in early June to discuss ideas for the Sextet's next album. Folk music was now becoming popular, and the idea came up to do jazz interpretations of traditional songs. Paul knew little of North American folk music, and wasn't yet a fan. So John said: "I'm recording Pete Seeger tomorrow night at Carnegie Hall. Why don't you come and sit in the booth with me." This was

Postscript 2012

by Paul Winter

The three-year journey of our Sextet was graced with many blessings. It was an extraordinary time and place in which to be enchanted with jazz. When I came to Chicago in 1957, the south side was a jazz mecca. I recall seeing hand-lettered cardboard signs on telephone poles in the area of 53rd and Cottage Grove: **Pot's On...Jug & String...McKie's** That's all they needed to say to let the neighborhood know there would be swinging music that night by Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt at McKie's Showboat Lounge.

I loved the exuberant and congenial spirit of the black jazz community and immediately felt a resonance. Not once did I feel unwelcome. This was my first experience of any culture outside the predominantly white one I'd known growing up in Altoona.

It was out of this south-side community that our Sextet and its music emerged. We were enthusiastic students of this rich musical tradition, and by the early '60s, the Kennedy era seemed to affirm this expansive spirit we felt from the music. In the nation, there was this growing sense of great possibilities that we came to almost take for granted during those all-too-brief Kennedy years.

The new Peace Corps encouraged my long-time interest in cultural exchange. Before we left on our State Department tour in early '62, I got to meet with Sargent Shriver and propose my idea for a Jazz Corps, which would send jazz musicians all over the world. He was open to exploring it, and asked me to make a survey during our travels in Latin America. I gave him a report when I returned. If I had been more interested in being an administrator than a musician, this project might have gone forward.

When I think about the vast diversity of great and unique musicians who have come forth during the evolution of jazz over the past 120 or so years, I am moved to wonder: what does this say about America? Has there ever been a more fertile garden of musical expression, in any country, throughout history?

And what is the promise, still waiting to be fulfilled, of this amazing saga?

How lucky we in the Sextet were, to have had these adventures, as part of this welcoming music called jazz, with which America has embraced the world.

DISC I: 1962
The Paul Winter Sextet
Notes by Paul Winter

Paul Winter | *alto sax*
Dick Whitsell | *trumpet*
Les Rout | *baritone sax*
Warren Bernhardt | *piano*
Richard Evans | *bass*
Harold Jones | *drums*

1. A Bun Dance

Norman Simmons
(Second Floor Music, BMI)

Chicago pianist/composer Norman Simmons wrote this for the Sextet. His title, a play on words, to me reflects the abundant spirit of this music.

2. Papa Zimbi

Warren Bernhardt
(Between the Sheets Music, BMI)

Warren Bernhardt adapted this Haitian folk song in 5/8 time for one of the movements of his *Suite Port au Prince*. Zimbi is the divinity of the water.

3. Casa Camara

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)

Richard Evans used two rhythms we heard – one from Mexico and another from Colombia called the “merecumbe” – for this

piece that he named after an old colonial mansion where the Sextet stayed during our week in Merida, Yucatan.

4. Them Nasty Hurtin’ Blues

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)

This is one of the first charts Richard wrote for the band. We recorded it during our initial session for Columbia in Chicago, in December, 1961.

5. Você e Eu (Only You and I)

Carlos Lyra, Vinicius de Moraes
(Guanabara Music, BMI)
(arr: Winter, Bernhardt)
Additional percussion: Ray Baretto,
Willie Rodriguez

Carlos Lyra was one of the original composers of the bossa nova era, and I’ve always thought of his body of work as second only to that of Antonio Carlos Jobim. Carlos was one of the first Brazilian musicians we met in Rio during our tour, and he and I stayed in touch. When I returned to Brazil in 1964, I had the privilege of making with him an album of his songs, *The Sound of Ipanema*.

6. Insensatez

(*Foolish One*)

Antonio Carlos Jobim, Vinicius de Moraes
(Corcovado Music, BMI)

(arr: Winter)

Additional percussion: Ray Baretto,
Willie Rodriguez

The chord changes of this poignant Jobim ballad make me think of Chopin.

7. Mystery Blues*

This is an unreleased track from our first session in Chicago in December of 1961. None of us remember it, or have a clue what the title is or who wrote it. We do know it’s a blues, and that we like it.

8. Chega de Saudade

(*No More Blues*)

Antonio Carlos Jobim, Vinicius de Moraes
(Corcovado Music, BMI)

(arr: Winter)

Additional percussion: Ray Baretto,
Willie Rodriguez

Meaning literally “Enough of Longing,” this is one of Jobim’s original classics, and was the title song of João Gilberto’s first album.

9. Routeousness*

Les Rout
(Les Rout Music, BMI)

Baritone saxist Les Rout was beloved by our audiences throughout Latin America. Being the shortest guy in the Sextet, but playing the

biggest horn, and, being black, Les perhaps appeared to be a kind of classic underdog. When he would walk to the front of the stage and cut loose in this gospel-inspired tour de force, people would be ecstatic. It was most often a show-stopper. And then, when he would go to the microphone and talk to them in fluent Spanish, they were thrilled. We came to believe Les could have run for president in just about every country we visited.

10. Count Me In*

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)

All of us in the Sextet shared a love for Basie’s band. Richard wrote this for us, as a tribute to “The Count,” and it became our theme song.

11. Bells and Horns*

Milt Jackson
(MJQ Music, BMI)
(arr: Jimmy Heath)

The heraldic spirit of both the music and the title of this chart made it seem an appropriate opener for our White House concert. You can hear the “bells” in the little waltz-time tag on the end, from the piano.

12. Saudade da Bahia*

(*Longing for Bahia*)
Dorival Caymmi
Edições Euterpe Ltda
(arr: Winter)

This was one of the songs we learned from João Gilberto's album, and we performed it for the first time when we played in Salvador, Bahia, the home of Bahia's great composer Dorival Caymmi, in the Northeast of Brazil.

13. Casa Camara*

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)

14. Pony Express*

Warren Bernhardt
(Between the Sheets Music, BMI)

Warren wrote this jazz waltz for our White House concert, in honor of young Caroline Kennedy and her famous pony, Macaroni.

15. Maria Ninguém*

(*Maria Nobody*)
Carlos Lyra
(Guanabara Music, BMI)
(arr: Bernhardt)

16. Toccata, from Suite Gillespiana*

Lalo Schifrin
(Lalo Schifrin Music)

We had met Dizzy Gillespie's band in May of '61 at the Intercollegiate Jazz Festival, and when they came to the Sutherland Lounge in Chicago that fall Whits and I hung out with them and told them of our upcoming tour in Latin America. Dizzy's pianist, Lalo Schifrin, who is from Argentina, was kind enough to give us this arrangement of the final movement from his *Suite Gillespiana*.

17. Count Me In*

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)

Our theme song also became our swan song. This is the last piece the original Sextet ever played together. And none of us could have imagined then that within a few years, Harold Jones would be the drummer for the Count Basie band.

DISC II: 1963

Paul Winter I *alto and soprano sax*
Dick Whitsell I *trumpet*
Jay Cameron I *baritone sax*
Warren Bernhardt I *piano*
Chuck Israels I *bass*
Ben Riley I *drums*

1. Cupbearers

Tom McIntosh
(Kayak Music, Inc., BMI)
Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

Composer Tom McIntosh, who also played trombone with the Jazztet, wrote numerous charts for the Sextet during 1963. The lyrical melodies of his music reflect the smiling spirit of this kind and gentle man.

2. Ally

Tom McIntosh
(Kayak Music, Inc., BMI)

Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

Tom dedicated this suite to his beloved wife, Allison. Tom and Ally were neighbors of mine on the upper west side of Manhattan, and I was always warmly welcomed in their home.

3. The Sheriff

Gil Mellé
(Cyclades Music, BMI)
Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

Gil Mellé, who was a fine tenor sax player, wrote this for the Sextet.

4. With Malice Toward None

Tom McIntosh
(Kayak Music, Inc., BMI)
Recorded at University of Colorado,
May, 1963

The title for this Tom McIntosh piece comes from Lincoln's Second Inaugural address. This was my first recording on soprano sax.

5. All Members

Jimmy Heath
(Jazz Standard, BMI)
Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

This blues is one of the original charts Jimmy Heath sold to Whits and me when we visited him in Philadelphia in 1960.

6. Marilia

Warren Bernhardt
(Blackwood Music, BMI)
Recorded at University of Colorado,
May, 1963

A beautiful girl we met in Brazil inspired the title of this bossa nova ballad by Warren.

7. Suite Port au Prince*

A. *Invocation to Dambala*
B. *Prayer*
C. *Papa Zimbi*
Warren Bernhardt
(Between the Sheets Music, BMI)
Recorded at University of Colorado,
May, 1963

This recording has been in the Columbia vaults for 49 years. John Hammond likely thought it too long to include in our *New Jazz on Campus* album. Having never heard even the playback of this, I'm thrilled by the lyricism and structure of Warren's composition.

8. New York 19*

John Lewis
(MJQ Music, BMI)
Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

This ballad is from a ballet score by John Lewis. New York 19 was the postal code for the area of Manhattan that included 52nd Street, the great mecca of jazz clubs during the 1940s and '50s.

9. Quem Quizer Encontrar O Amor
(*He Who Wants to Find Love Has to Suffer*)

Carlos Lyra
(Universal Songs, BMI)
Recorded at University of Kansas City,
May, 1963

This song is from Carlos Lyra's score for the film *Couro de Gato* (*Catskin*).

10. The Thumper*

Jimmy Heath
(MJQ Music, BMI)
Recorded at University of Colorado,
May, 1963

This was the title piece for Jimmy Heath's first album, which we loved.

11. Count Me In*

Richard Evans
(Songs of Universal, BMI)
Recorded at University of Colorado,
May, 1963

Once again, our theme song is the concert finale.

The following tracks come from the album *Jazz Meets the Folk Song* (with Cecil McBee, bass, and Freddie Waits, drums).

12. Repeat

Denny Zeitlin
(Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
(arr: Winter)

Denny Zeitlin is an extraordinary pianist who was in the Chicago area at the same time we were. The seed-theme of this piece has a kind of folk quality, which is why we recorded it for the folk song album.

13. Lass from the Low Countrie

Trad., North Carolina
(Living Earth Music, BMI)
(arr: Winter)

This poignant ballad seemed to call for a special instrumentation, that presages my future ensemble, the Paul Winter Consort. Jeremy Steig was a wonderful young flute player whom John Hammond introduced to us, and guitarist Gene Bertoncini had been a heralded player in the Notre Dame Jazz Festivals.

14. Down by the Greenwood Side

Trad., 18th century English
(Living Earth Music, BMI)
(arr: Bernhardt)

15. We Shall Overcome

Public Domain (arr: Cecil McBee)
(Lemac Music Publishing Co., BMI)

Ten days after the assassination of President Kennedy, we came into the studio for our final session. This song turned out to be the last recording the Sextet would ever make. I hear it now as both an elegy for that time, and an anthem for the entire American journey — past, present and future.

***unreleased tracks**

A Song for Whits by Paul Winter

My long collaboration with trumpeter Dick Whitsell is integral to the story of the Sextet. I met Whits soon after arriving at Northwestern University in the fall of 1957. He was like an older brother, and became my mentor and partner in all our jazz adventures over the next six years.

We were a complementary team. Whits was the living spirit of jazz – spontaneous, adventurous and passionate, and without doubt the funniest, most delightfully irreverent person I've ever known. I was more the quiet organizer. He was an ebullient soloist; my experience was more as an ensemble guy. But as different as our personalities were, we had an instinctive musical kinship, and we shared aesthetic enthusiasms in just about every realm of life. Playing in ensemble we became an organism; and in the impeccable elegance of our trumpet/sax unison lines, it was like we were musical Siamese-twins.

It was this synergy that was at the heart of the Sextet, and that enabled it to become a creative crucible. Whits' spirit was the fire. And his sense of humor the leavening. We laughed enough during those years for several lifetimes.

By rights, the band could have been called "The Whitsell-Winter Sextet." But Whits didn't have a grain of self-promotion in him, and by the time we were ready to launch the



jazz sextet, I had already had a dance band under my name for several years, with enough reputation in the Chicago area that we were able to get some gigs.

When Whits retired from music, at the end of '63, the adventure no longer made sense to me. I was in jazz for the band, not to have a career as a player. Ours was a collective endeavor, and I had no wish to continue without him.

Whits was a beloved and unforgettable character to most everyone who knew him, and great Whitsell stories abound whenever any of us get together. I am so grateful that through his soulful and unbridled horn, Whits' wondrous spirit comes alive again.

DEDICATION

To our departed brothers **Whits, Les, Jay and Freddie**

Dick Whitsell was born in Chicago in 1936. Dick grew up on the far south side, and was frequenting jazz clubs during his teens. After a year in the Army, he entered Northwestern University in 1957, where he and Paul met, and became close friends and eventually partners in creating the Sextet. Dick left the Sextet at the end of 1963 and went to Mexico to attend medical school at the University of Guadalajara, where he met his wife, Esther. He passed away in Ojai, California in 1986. He is survived by Esther and three daughters: Marisa, Amanda and Alma.

Les Rout was born in Chicago in 1935. He attended a Chicago parochial school, where a nun spotted him and two other African-American boys with talent. "You kids haven't got a chance here," she told them, and used some of her private resources to pay tuition for the three of them at St. Ignatius, the Jesuit prep school. Les kept in touch with her until his death. He took up sax at 13, and played all over town during his years at prep school and then at Loyola University, where he majored in history. Following his two years with the Sextet, Les got his doctorate in Latin American history, and then taught for 20 years at Michigan State. He published five books, and won two Fulbright Awards and a Ford Foundation research grant. He was the father of two children, Les Rout III and a daughter, Deidre. He died in 1987.

Jay Cameron was born in New York in 1928. His career began in the 1940s in Hollywood with Ike Carpenter's band, then moved to Europe where he played with Rex Stewart, Roy Haynes and various European musicians. He returned to the U.S. in 1956, playing in the bands of Woody Herman, Slide Hampton, Maynard Ferguson, Dizzy Gillespie, Chet Baker and Freddie Hubbard. Jay Cameron's *International Sax Band* was one of the only recording projects he did under his own name. He passed away in San Diego in 2001.

Freddie Waits was born in Jackson, Mississippi in 1940. After graduating from Jackson State University, he worked in rhythm-and-blues groups and accompanied blues singers Memphis Slim and John Lee Hooker. He moved to Detroit in 1962 and became a house drummer for Motown Records, recording with Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, and with Martha and the Vandellas. In the summer of 1963 he joined the Sextet and moved to New York. In subsequent years he became one of the most sought-after drummers in jazz, playing with Sonny Rollins, Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan, and Donald Byrd, among many others. Freddie passed away in New York in 1989. He is survived by his sons Nasheet and Sharif. Nasheet is now a highly respected drummer in the New York jazz scene, carrying forward his father's legacy.

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discogs.com/artist/Richard+Evans+(2)

Cecil McBee
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Harold Jones
haroldjonesdrums.com

Harold's journey is chronicled in a recent biography: *Harold Jones: The Singer's Drummer*, which is available on Amazon.

Chuck Israels
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Loving thanks to "Cricket" Grabill for having introduced me, in 7th grade, to Stan Kenton's band (with "Hot Canary," featuring Maynard Ferguson).

MAN, IT'S JAZZ AT WHITE HOUSE

By United Press International
WASHINGTON.

Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy put an enthusiastic stamp of approval yesterday on the new Latin American dance rhythm—the Bossa Nova—at the hottest jazz concert ever heard at the White House.

Blaring trumpets and the moaning saxophones of the Paul Winter jazz sextet hit a loud, blue note in the sedate, chandeliered East Room.

It was the kind of music that would have thrown a jazz festival into wild stomping and clapping. But the young audience—children of diplomats and government officials—were too polite to abandon all reserve in the hallowed halls of the White House and sat quietly as the combo beat out modern jazz tunes.

The First Lady, hostess at the fifth in her series of concerts for young people, turned out to be a jazz buff. In breathless tones she told saxophonist Winter . . . "Simply wonderful. There has never been anything like it here before."

Talking to the 23-year-old jazz sextet leader from Altoona, Pa., Mrs. Kennedy said, "I think it's so great to see you up there." She wanted to know all about the origin of the Bossa Nova.

He explained that it is a form of jazz first played in Brazil and "evolved from the meeting of African and European cultures."

Mr. Winter said Mrs. Kennedy told him she has an album of his Bossa Nova records which she has been "playing non-stop for two weeks."



Associated Press wirephoto

CASUAL FOR JAZZ CONCERT—First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, with a new hair do and open-throat blouse to fit the informal occasion, as she appeared yesterday at a concert in the East Room of the White House. Mrs. Kennedy sponsored the jazz concert as part of a series of music for young people. In attendance were teen-age sons and daughters of diplomats in Washington.

Mrs. Kennedy's reaction at all times was of complete enjoyment," said Mr. Winter, who is as poised in speaking as he is uninhibited in his saxophone playing.

"We lost all our inhibitions when we got out on that stage," Mr. Winter said. "They were a warm, unpretentious audience."

He also revealed himself as a fan of more modern music. "I love jazz," he said.

The concert lasted an hour

and a half and held the audience, made up of the 10- to 19-year-old children of diplomats and government officials, quietly entranced.

Mr. Winter, whose sextet is made up of college students from the Chicago area, introduced each of the numbers. He explained that his combo took up the Latin American music on a tour of Latin America and the Caribbean under a State Department cultural exchange.