

Silver Lining

Music Manhattan Beach Style

By Karen King Russo

Tradition reigns again. The Hyperion Outfall Serenaders will perform on the Manhattan Beach Pier the evening of the annual Holiday Fireworks Show, Sunday, December 13. Nothing will get you in the Christmas spirit faster. The Dixieland band has been the official band of Manhattan Beach since 1975 when it was so designated by then-Mayor Joan Dontanville.

It all began back in 1969 when trumpeter and cornet player Bob White and clarinet player Sid Pattison got together in the living room, just for fun, the first time with their instruments. The fellows had been friends for some time through their wives, who had both been hostesses for United Airlines, but though they had played in school, both men had spent the last years concentrating on making a living. Pattison was a dentist. White was in sales of industrial electrical control for the Allen Bradley Company in Milwaukee before transferring with the firm to California in 1958.

So they had started out the evening as a lark. The next thing they knew, they had brought in another young fellow from The Allen Bradley Company, Dale Van Scoyk. He played trombone. They were now a group.

Next thing they needed was a name. White had remembered overlooking a structure offshore in El Segundo. It was called a Hyperion outfall. Somehow that name had stuck with him. Unaware that it referred to sewage treatment, they chose it, adding Serenaders at the end. "The only problem was," White said, "people took us for a singing group."

The next breakthrough came in 1972. They met Don Ryckman, who was playing strings at a school function where he was principal. White introduced him to the banjo. Now they had rhythm, which became the driving force behind their sound.

In 1974, Van Scoyk was transferred out of state and Jack Freeman took over on trombone. Soon, his wife Fran joined in on washboard and his brother David on tuba. They had become a full Dixieland band.

No one has ever dropped out, but sadly, there have been some deaths along the way. The first was Jules Rodinsky, former conductor of the Seattle Pops, who shared the stage at times with White on the trumpet.

They were on a gig on Catalina Island when Rodinsky, 90, died right there doing what he loved most. Among some other changes, Rod Norris took over for Syd Pattison on clarinet; Jimmy Green took over banjo for Don Ryckman; and John Norton is now on tuba replacing David Freeman. Louie Pastor is a welcome addition, joining in on drums whenever the venue is large enough to accommodate drums.

What do they play? "Mostly what is designated as traditional jazz, with some ragtime," says White. It originated in New Orleans in the late 1800s, but rapidly spread from Chicago to Kansas up through the 1930s. The most frequently requested song? "When the Saints Come Marching In."

Their favorite venue? Weddings. There is such a variety of music desired and they are always joyful. "One sure surprised us, though," said White. "The whole wedding party, including the parents of both the bride and groom, showed up in medieval costumes. What they wanted with Dixieland music, I don't know, but that is what we played." The group performs for a wide range of events—at 10k runs (Manhattan Beach in October and Redondo Beach in January), where you always hear them out there boosting the runners and walkers. Then there are the Palos Verdes and Los Angeles marathons, openings of markets and mini-malls, Sunday afternoon gigs at jazz clubs, yacht club openings, the Pasadena Doo Dah Parade, and the many parties celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and retirements. When Iowa State College comes west for football, they are the pep band. They even perform annually for a service at the Manhattan Beach Community Church. Significant to me, in May, they played to greet guests as they entered the Neptunian Women's Clubhouse to celebrate the club's 100th anniversary, the oldest service club in Manhattan Beach.

White says he remembers only one bust. They were asked to play at a horse auction in Del Mar. But the fact was, people were concentrating on the horses and considered the musicians an intrusion, sending them packing.

Lucky for us, they have never bent to a schedule—you know, like once a week every week at some club or other. Not that they haven't been asked, but they prefer to remain flexible, available for important civic happenings. That is why we can count on them once again to be there for the fireworks. White says they used to practice every week. Not so much now, but he wishes they did. In fact as I interviewed him for this article, he was grinning ear to ear as he was off to practice for the Christmas show. "How can you have more fun than that?" he asked.

I am sure if you would like more information on the band, or to book it for some important occasion that Bob White would not mind if you contacted him. He is the manager. Call him at (310) 376-2591.

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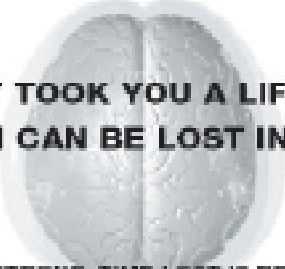
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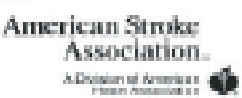




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