



The Bridge

www.auburnknightsalumni.org



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association
MAY 2017

From the Prez!

Greetings & War Eagle!

So gang, it's my last letter to you all as President of the AKA and I must address an issue that has bothered me for quite some time. It's an egregious situation that has been allowed to fester in our organization for way too long. I draw your attention to our



noble trademark...a gleaming Knights helmet and lustrous shield depicting both our name "AKO" and passion "JAZZ". But then, there it is...as bold as a drummer's rim shot...the abomination that purportedly epitomizes our swinging essence...the notation foundation of decades of great swinging AKO bands...**a dotted eighth-sixteenth note!** A dotted eighth-sixteenth note? Yes, inscribed smack-dab in the middle of our on our preeminent logo for all the word to digest...**a dotted eighth-sixteenth note!**

A dotted eighth-sixteenth note? How can that be? Why,

it would never occur to such savvy arrangers as Bob Richardson, Marion Evans, J.H. Owen, Jim Mahaffey, Bob Greenhaw, Johnnie Vinson, Tommy Goff, Cecil Wilder, Ryan Chapman, Dale Quillen, Joe Watson, Jay Hatch, et al, to pen such a heinous rhythm while depicting resplendent swinging eight note phrases. They would sooner abandon all use of the ii-V7 change as to propagate this misrepresentation characterized by that contemptible "eighth-note-wanna-be" pattern. (Editorial Note: This diatribe against the dotted eighth-sixteenth note is not germane to its acceptance in that most peculiar form of jazz commonly called "fusion" or "jazz-funk." See Sir Fritz for further comment.)

A dotted eighth-sixteenth note? I offer, for your consideration, the following: Green, Edwards, Greenhaw, Bell, Ard, Hammett, Evans, Yelverton, Armour, Atkins, Chapman, Norton, Conner, Taylor, Thomas, Higgins, Pierce, Stough, Golson, Noojin, Lee, Graves, Michelson, Banton, Lyle, and Wright...surely, you can add many more. You might ask what they have in common. A jazz soloist virtuosity that unconditionally precluded the possibility of the aforementioned non-swinging meter, that's what! Friends, I assure you: there are no L7 weenies in this bunch! And while I'm deliberating this abnormality, can you honestly envisage such transcendent timekeepers as Sonny, Tony, Jim, Jeff, Charlie, Doug, David (more than one), Tim, Teel, Sam (among others) ever allowing even one of their synchronized appendages to propagate such a dastardly un-cool cadence? NAY, I say!!!

The 86th Anniversary AKAA Reunion Auburn Marriott - Opelika Conference Center July 5-8, 2017

As of this issue of The Bridge, there are plenty of rooms remaining for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. **However, please keep in mind that the cutoff date for our AKA room block is Wednesday, June 7th.** After that, any remaining rooms will be at substantially higher rates, not only at the Marriott, but at most other hotels in the area.

To wait anymore—Reserve your room by calling Marriott Reservations directly at (800) 593-6456 or (334) 741-9292.

A dotted eighth & sixteenth note? What can we do? First, don't panic. Be assured, your AKA officers, board of directors and appointees, in conjunction with the AKO board and current AKO members, are working night and day to provide us all with a dotted eighth-sixteenth note free reunion. Decade era band leaders Richard Garrett, J.H. Owen, Sonny Harris, Steve Means, Fritz Siler, and Wade Johnson are burning the proverbial mid-night oil on a quest for the perfect set list that puts to rest any possibility of this passé pattern. Our reunion guru, John Norton, has assured me he has irrefutable evidence (in the form of recordings of previous reunions) that all participants in the 2017 AKA reunion will be out of harm's way. So, stand easy, valiant Lords and Ladies of the AKA, our July gathering will be safe and secure for all your family and friends. Be unafraid to make that commitment...arrange your hotel reservations, pack your bags, and wipe the dust off your axe. You are in for a fun-filled week-end of top-notch jazz and exceptional comradery.

In closing, I suppose our logo abnormality requires additional analysis and deliberation. To facilitate said discourse, the President's suite will be offered as a gathering place each night during the reunion to appropriate ways to rectify this dilemma. All AKA members/associates are invited to participate and partake....bring your own!!

Please, join us this July as we "honor our past, celebrate the present, and plan for the future of the AKO and the Auburn Knights Alumni Association."

Long Live The Knights!

Woody Leonard, AKA President

2017 Reunion Highlights

Friday Mixer

One of the great new reunion traditions is the Friday afternoon “mixer” after the dress rehearsals conclude at 4 pm. This is a once-a-year opportunity for AK alums and current band members to mix and mingle and enjoy a couple of beverages. And, for you who just can’t get enough playing time, it’s another chance to jazz it up in front of a captive audience!

Silent Auction

Many thanks to Jennie St. John for agreeing to take charge of the Silent Auction Room this year! Jennie will still need some assistance, however, so if you are available to help for an hour or two on Friday and Saturday, contact John Norton for more information. In addition, we’re always seeking auction items from our Auburn Knights family, especially original artwork and handmade crafts.

Jazz Brunch

We’re pleased to have Ike Bell, who leads the Alabama State University Jazz Band, help kick off the “Breezy Jazz Jam” as VP Richard Garrett likes to call it! Ike will be on piano, but we need to add a bass player, drummer, guitar player, vocalist, and at least a couple of horns to get things going. Associate Members, this is your chance to shine, as the “regulars” are usually still wrapping up the General Membership meeting when the music needs to start at 11 am. If you want to get in on the fun this year, let John Norton know.

Matinee Band

The leader of the very first Matinee Band in 2014, Fritz Siler, returns to front this year’s group. We’re pulling out all the stops to promote this free event, as well as the Jazz Brunch, to the local community, and we fully expect the attendance to be the best ever for both. Please let Fritz know if you would like to be in the “starting lineup.”

2017 AKAAs Reunion Schedule

	Thursday, July 6		Friday, July 7	Saturday, July 8
	Registration 1 – 4:30 pm (Ballroom Foyer)		Registration 10 am – 3 pm 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm	Complimentary Continental Breakfast 7-9 am in Lobby Saturday & Sunday Registration 10 – 11 am
8:30 am	Food and Beverage Options <i>Lakeview Room</i> Breakfast: 6:30 – 11:00 am daily Lunch: 11:00 am – 2:00 pm daily Dinner: 6:00 – 9:00 pm daily Patio Bar: 11:00 am – 11:30 pm daily		30s/40s Dress Rehearsal 8:30 – 10 am (Ballroom)	AKAA Board Meeting 8:30 – 10:00 am (Theatre)
9:00			50s Dress Rehearsal 10:00 – 11:30 am (Ballroom)	General Membership Meeting 10 – 11 am (Theater)
9:30			60s Dress Rehearsal 11:30 am – 1:30 pm (Ballroom)	Jazz Brunch 11:00 am – 2 pm (Pool area)
10:00			70s/80s Dress Rehearsal 1:00 – 2:30 pm (Ballroom)	
10:30			90s/2000s Dress Rehearsal 2:30 – 4:00 pm (Ballroom)	
11:00			AKO/AKAA Mixer 4:00 – 5:30 pm (Ballroom Foyer)	Matinee Band 2:00 – 3:30 pm (Ballroom)
11:30				
Noon	30s/40s Rehearsal Noon – 2:00 pm (Ballroom)			
12:30 pm	50s Rehearsal 2:30 – 4:30 pm (Ballroom)		Patio Bar Menu available in Lakeview Room from 6:00 – 7:30 pm	Patio Bar Menu available in Lakeview Room from 6:00 – 7:30 pm
1:00				
1:30	70s/80s Rehearsal 5:00 – 7:00 pm (Ballroom)		30s/40s Concert “The Swing Years”	70s/80s Concert “Jazz Rocks”
2:00			50s Concert “The Big Bands Live On”	90s/2000s Concert “Swing Makes a Comeback”
2:30	90s/2000s Rehearsal 7:30 – 9:30 pm (Ballroom)		60s Concert “The Big Bands Rock On”	AKO Concert “Still Swinging after 87 years”
3:00				
3:30			Patio Bar Menu available in Lakeview Room until 11:30 pm	Patio Bar Menu available in Lakeview Room until 11:30 pm
4:00				
4:30				
5:00				
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6:00				
6:30				
7:00				
7:30				
8:00				
8:30				
9:00				
9:30				
10:00				
10:30				
11:00				
11:30				

Era Band Leaders

Era	Leader(s)	Phone	E-mail
30s/40s	Richard Garrett	(334) 322-9300	PIALLC@msn.com
50s	Jay Owen Sonny Harris	(908) 510-3910 (205) 823-4165	bebopbuf@mindspring.com sondrum.harris@gmail.com
60s	Steve Means	(251) 504-6004	aunknights@hotmail.com
70s/80s	Fritz Siler	(404) 421-8674	dogsiler@hotmail.com
90s/ 2000s	Wade Johnson	(334) 332-9156	wade.johnson@gmail.com

Auburn Knights Photos

Do you have old photos of Auburn Knights jobs, rehearsals, trips, reunions, etc.? If so, the AKAA Archives needs copies! Flip through your old photo albums (does anyone use those anymore?), open up those dusty boxes under your bed or in the attic and send us your images, especially photos from the 80s, 90s and newer. We are organizing and digitizing the AKAA Archives and want to add all available pictures from the past. Send them digitally to Becky Cain at becky56@bellsouth.net or contact her about sending in other formats. We need your memories for the Archives!

If you desire to purchase CDs and/or DVDs from the 2017 reunion, they're available online from Procat Audio Video. Go to "www.procatav.com," in your browser, search for "Auburn Knights," and you'll find a host of recordings available, including earlier reunions.

Knights in the News

Auburn's own Jonathan Smith, AKO 1981-83, continues his stellar Broadway career as Music Director for *A Bronx Tale The Musical*, which just opened last December at the Longacre Theatre. Jon previously was Music Director and wrote original songs and created dance and vocal arrangements for the hit musical *Swing!*, which garnered multiple Tony and Grammy nominations. Jon followed that up with a gig as Associate Musical Supervisor for *Jersey Boys*, which concluded a record-breaking 11-year run on Broadway this past January.

2016 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion - July 5-8, 2017

~ Registration Form ~

NAME _____ STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ E-MAIL _____

PHONE # _____ CATEGORY: ☐ MEMBER ☐ ASSOCIATE ☐ VISITOR

Event or Item	How Many?	Cost	Total
2017-2018 Dues (Members & Associates)	_____	\$20.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:30 PM, Friday	_____	\$10.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:30 PM, Saturday	_____	\$10.00	_____
Saturday Jazz Brunch, 11:00 AM			
Pulled Pork or Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Bread & Drink	_____	\$9.00	_____
Hamburger, Chips & Drink	_____	\$8.00	_____
Hotdog, Chips & Drink	_____	\$5.00	_____
AKAA Contributions to (<i>all contributions are Tax Deductible</i>)			
AKAA Scholarship Fund			_____
AKAA Operating Fund			_____
Total Amount Enclosed			_____

Please make checks payable to "Auburn Knights Alumni Association," then send this form and payment to:
Wade Johnson, AKAA Treasurer | 1650 S. Fox Run Pkwy, Apt. 413 | Opelika, AL 36801

Potential Revision to AKAAs Bylaws

At their winter meeting in February 2017, the AKAAs Board of Directors discussed revising the AKAAs Bylaws to open Board Member positions to Associate Members—AKAAs members who were never “officially” on the band. The rationale for this revision was driven by:

- Influenced by Knights alums, musicians from around the country who were not Auburn Knights alums have found a home at the annual AKAAs reunion and have become Associate Members.
- Some of those Associate Members have ably demonstrated their long-term commitment to the AKAAs and to the continuation of the Auburn Knights Orchestra.
- In the corporate world, it’s common to bring in Board members from outside the organization to provide an outside perspective. After all, the Board is focused upon the success of the organization.

The AKAAs Board is likewise focused upon the long-term success of the our organization. To that end, subject to General Membership approval, the AKAAs Bylaws would be revised to read (changes in **Red**):

ARTICLE II. Members

Section 1. Regular Members. The corporation shall have one class of regular membership made up of such of those persons who are alumni of the Auburn Knights Orchestra and who have paid annual dues to the corporation established by the Board of Directors for the current fiscal year of the corporation.

Section 2. Associate Members and Honorary Members. Persons who do not meet the regular membership requirements but who desire to have a close affiliation with the corporation may become associate members upon payment of dues required of regular members. Such persons shall have all the rights, privileges, and obligations of the Association but, **unless excepted by the Board of Directors**, will not have the right to vote and to hold office. **On occasion, the Board of Directors, by majority vote, may grant Associate Members who have demonstrated a proven commitment to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association the right to vote and hold office. However, the number of Associate Members elected to the Board of Directors shall not exceed one third of the Board’s voting membership.**

If you have any thoughts or questions regarding this potential revision to the Bylaws, please be prepared to discuss them at the General Membership meeting on Saturday, July 8th.

Gordon Goodwin Stirs the Pot with His Post-Grammy Awards Comments

On February 13, 2017, Grammy-Award winning arranger and big band leader Gordon Goodwin created a bit of controversy with his comments on his Facebook page following the Grammy Awards telecast the night before. It’s obvious he was less than thrilled with the performances on the show as he stated the following:

When discussing the problem of American pop music the base issue is not the performers. Many of them are talented and capable. But the industry has adapted a musical language that is striking in its banality. I believe that this is largely due to a shocking lack of chromaticism in the music. Not to get overly pedantic about it, but simply put, these composers and performers use only the white keys on the piano. Their melodies and the chords they choose are based solely on the diatonic scale of whatever key they have chosen. This is akin to the elimination of adjectives in the written language. It's the difference between the sentence "I was mad." and the sentence "I was shaking with violent and uncontrolled anger!" One wonders if they ever wonder what those black keys on the piano are even there for? I was at the Grammy Awards last night and kept track, and it wasn't until Bruno Mars' song(s) that you had any chromatic intervals in the music. For me, this is why so much of American pop music is uninteresting. Chromaticism adds nuance to music. It adds tension and ambiguity. The proper balance between diatonicism and chromaticism is the key to music with balance and appeal. If you take a song or a composition with those elements, and then add the emotion of the performers we heard last night, then you have something! But today's pop musicians never really learned how to incorporate this language in their work. Singers are unable to navigate chromatic intervals with their voices.

This is not to say you cannot have effective music without chromaticism. But composing should be a series of deliberate choices. Choices informed by your training AND your intuition. Many of today's performers rely on the latter and have neglected focusing on the former.

I am less qualified to comment on the lyrical content of some of the material we heard last night, but I doubt it's a stretch to say that the lyrics to much of today's pop music suffer from a similar lack of nuance and content.

The line I am trying to walk here is a subtle one, because I believe that people should create the kind of music that sounds good to them. But underlying that statement is the assumption that artists take responsibility to learn as much as possible about their craft, and to keep learning, keep growing. American popular music has ignored the lessons of the past for decades now, and the coarseness and simple-mindedness of the music seems to be reflected in our culture as a whole. So, those of us that believe otherwise have a responsibility to fight for quality, To fight for excellence.

Continued on Page 5



WANTED: Great Gigs for an Awesome Big Band!

The South's greatest active big band is available for your special event. To book the Auburn Knights Orchestra, contact Jayson Perry at (256) 945-0079 or by email at "jep0021@auburn.edu."

Gordon Goodwin, Continued from Page 4

Emily Langerholc, a South Florida middle school music teacher who blogs under the name, *The Rebel Teacher*, took exception to Goodwin's opinion. Her counter argument:

Mr. Gordon Goodwin wrote a long post about how a lack of chromaticism contributes to the sonic shallowness of today's popular music, as evidenced by last night's Grammy Awards. In some ways, he is correct. There is a lot of corporately pushed pop that has been stripped of a good deal of harmonic language & melodic complexity, but that's not to say that all is lost in terms of complexity and nuance in popular music. Songs written in the golden age of pop songwriting, which in my opinion was the 1970s, written by David Bowie, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Carol King, Karen Carpenter, and Pete Townsend, among many others, were often more harmonically complex than many hit songs today.

But for what hit songs today may lack in chord complexity, many make up for in changes in modality, timbre, and rhythmic complexity. Modes other than basic Ionian have come to make up a larger portion of Billboard Hot 100 singles, with an overall increase in Aeolian mode hits (including award-winners like Adele's "Rolling in the Deep", Gotye's "Somebody That I Used to Know", and Daft Punk's "Get Lucky"), Dorian mode smashes (more award-winners, such as Mark Ronson & Bruno Mars's "Uptown Funk" and Pharrell Williams's "Happy"), and even Mixolydian mode anthems (Lorde's "Royals," 2014 Grammy winner for Record of the Year). And regarding non-diatonic chords, although it was not a recent hit, a modern smash that comes to mind is Outkast's "Hey Ya!", which makes great use of changing meter and a repeated non-diatonic chord, although on the surface the song seems repetitive.

Additionally, for the most part, what popular music scholars tend to discuss lately is timbre, and the possibilities of the sound studies field...Goodwin is right in that Bruno Mars is one of the more interesting pop stars from a traditional compositional standpoint, but for many scholars, his compositional style is more backward-looking than many more minimalism-inspired artists (including The Weeknd) or genre-blurring artists (like Chance the Rapper).

To quote Tori Amos, who knows her darned chromaticism, regarding genre, "There's good stuff everywhere and there's crap everywhere."

There is an easy resolution to this issue and that is the annual AKA reunion July 5-8, 2017. Regardless of modality, timbre, and rhythmic complexity, the music will be superb. See you there!



Auburn Knights Alumni Association
c/o Peter Blaise, Newsletter Editor
1195 Muirfield Way
Niceville, FL 32578

**The 2017 AKA Reunion
July 5-8, 2017**

**The Auburn Knights Alumni Association
2016-2017 Board of Directors**

OFFICERS

Woody Leonard, President | (229) 387-4967 | wleonard54@yahoo.com
Richard Garrett, Vice President & Publicity | (334) 322-9300 | PIALLC@msn.com
Peter Blaise, Secretary & Newsletter Editor | (850) 897-3728 | blaisepete@gmail.com
Wade Johnson, Treasurer | (334) 332-9156 | wade.johnson@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

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2015 - 2018 Nat Michelson | David Spencer | Steve Means | Neal Brumbeloe | Jerry Phillips
2016 - 2019 Norm Boldin | Neil Sasser | Jennie St. John | Joe Watson | Milton Welch

APPOINTMENTS

Bob Jemian, Music Librarian | (334) 246-1227 | bob.jemian@gmail.com
Jeff Jones, Webmaster | (757) 748-7872 | jpjones7@uga.edu
Becky Cain, Historian | (404) 985-0849 | becky56@bellsouth.net
John Norton, Reunion Coordinator | (334) 887-9883 | john.norton72@gmail.com
Fritz Siler, Archives & Scholarships | (770) 978-1287 | dogsiler@hotmail.com

CURRENT BAND

BUSINESS MANAGER Jayson Perry | (256) 945-0079 | jep0021@auburn.edu