

## HISTORY OF THE JAZZ SOCIETY OF BREVARD

By Alan Simms, Founder and Historian

The history of the Society may be said to have begun about October 1984, when the Historian first conceived the idea of forming a club to promote and perpetuate jazz in Brevard County. Shortly thereafter, on November 11 1984, the Jazz Club of Sarasota sponsored a seminar at Sarasota to assist newly forming clubs and other interested clubs in getting organized. The Historian attended the seminar and it was well worth the time and effort to travel to Sarasota. The seminar was extremely well organized and presented a wealth of material and information to help new or newly forming clubs get organized or to smooth out existing organizations.

On return to Cocoa Beach, it became necessary to face the problem of recruiting members. This took several forms. First, the Historian, as a member of Musicians Local 389 in Orlando, had access to the union directory, which was screened for members residing in Brevard county. Preliminary communications went out to them. The response at that time was rather scanty. Next, our Current Senior Director, Jack Simpson was contacted for discussuion and suggestions, in accordance with his wide experience in promoting jazz, and his numerous contacts in the field of jazz. From this meeting came two positive results-ie-the suggestion to submit a letter to the column known as HELP, then running in a local newspaper, and Jack's promise to pass the word to some of those friends whom he thought might be interested. The letter was submitted and published (It will be found in the accompanying files) and Jack produced several names who indicated their interest. A few more potential members called in as a result of word of mouth. All of the foregoing took place from the conclusion of the November seminar to about April 1, at which time invitations went out to a mailing list of 35-40 people who had exoressed interest, to attend a preliminary meeting on April 9, 1984, at the Kiwanis Hall in Merritt Island. A copy of the announcement is in the files.

In attendance at this first meeting were 20-25 people. A number of things were discussed. First, a name for the club. It was tentatively decided to call it the Cocoa Beach Jazz Club. (This was to be changed later) Some discussion of organization,-ie-By-laws, constitution, officers, elections, etc. It was finally decided that we should hold such matters in abeyance untill we built up membership and got to know each other better, and to just meet and have fun, playing

records, cassettes, video cassettes, and having jam sessions whenever enough musicians attended with their instruments. Also at the this meeting, Dennis Sommers, the Director of the Recreation Center at Indian Harbour beach, offered us the facilities of the Center for monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month. This became our "home" for many months.

The activities of the club during this period at Indian Harbour Beach are reflected in the announcements of meetings in the files. A highlight was the decision to rename the club the JAZZ SOCIETY OF BREVARD.