

E LIVING & ARTS

BOOK REVIEW
ESSAYS IN 'BLACK FOLK COULD FLY'
SOAR E6

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BOOKS & AUTHORS
HUB CITY PRESS



Joshua Parks, photographer for "The Green Book of South Carolina," speaks at the Hub City Press launch of the book July 28. MEG REID/HUB CITY PRESS

Hub City supports Southern writers

Nonprofit publishes award-winning books by diverse authors.

By Amy Bonesteel
 For the AJC

Publishing books that "don't fit into the commercial publishing landscape" might not sound like a successful venture. But for Hub City Press, the 27-year-old regional publisher based in Spartanburg, South Carolina, this strategy has produced award-winning books by a diversity of emerging Southern authors, garnered national attention and created a thriving literary community in this former textile town.

The publishing company is part of the multipronged, nonprofit organization the Hub City Writers Project that publishes, educates, supports and promotes Southern writers and books about the South. And in the process, it may just be redefining Southern literature.

The organization was born at a Spartanburg coffeeshop in 1995 when Betsy Teter, then a columnist and business editor for the Spartanburg Herald, met with poet and Wofford College professor John Lane and fellow journalist Gary Henderson.



Betsy Teter

Inspired by the Federal Writer's Project of the late 1930s, the trio had a mind to publish a collection of essays about the town. They called it the Hub City Writer's Project, a nod to the town's nickname from its formative years as a railroad center. The first book was "Hub City Anthology: Spartanburg Writers & Artists," published in 1996 with an initial press run of 1,000 and a second run soon after.

"Local history was the initial direction," says Teter, the founding managing director who stepped down in 2017 and remains active as a board member emeritus and adviser.

From the start the group saw themselves "as an arts organization, not a business," says Teter, hence the nonprofit status. Among its contributors is the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 2001, the organization presented the first annual

Hub City continued on E8

ENTERTAINMENT MUSIC



keeping jazz alive

Without a dedicated jazz club in town, Atlanta musicians struggle for survival.

By Noah Sheidlower
 noah.sheidlower@ajc.com

Joe Gransden's band takes the stage for its weekly jam session one Wednesday night at Venkman's in Old Fourth Ward. The crowd fills up as musicians improvise over Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington standards. The audience roars after each solo, trumpets wailing and drums keeping the beat, all seamlessly transitioning into the next melodic line. Jamison Chandler, a trumpeter and jazz educator visiting from New York, sits in, just like the old days when he was first learning his craft in Atlanta decades ago.

For many of these musicians, this is one of just a handful of venues left in Atlanta to play jazz for large audiences. Populated with dozens of jazz clubs and venues in the 1950s and 1960s, Atlanta's jazz scene has dwindled in recent years as interest in the musical genre has waned. The few remaining jazz-specific

jazz continued on E10

Top: Venkman's in the Old Fourth Ward is home to Joe Gransden's Jazz Jam every Wednesday. The July 13 jam starts off with Geoffrey Haydon on keyboard (from left), Craig Shaw on upright bass, Gransden on trumpet and Terence Harper on trumpet.

JENNI GIRTMAN FOR THE AJC

Right: The Royal Peacock Club on Auburn Avenue in the 1960s. PHOTO COURTESY OF SKIP MASON ARCHIVES

Far right: Churchill Grounds was the epicenter of live jazz in Atlanta in the early 2000s. AJC 1999



EVENT PREVIEW

Jazz Matters concert series. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Sept. 16. \$30 lawn, \$400 table for 10. The Wren's Nest, 1050 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. 404-474-1211. yesjazzmatters.org
Joe Gransden's Jazz Jam. 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Free. Venkman's, 740 Ralph McGill Blvd. NE, Atlanta. venkmans.com

FOOD & DRINK PICKLE SPICE

The favorite flavor this summer is really kind of a big dill

From pizza to popcorn, pickle seasoning turning up in all kinds of foods.

Christina Morales
 c. 2022 The New York Times

In May, Meg and Maddie Antonelli, a mother-and-daughter duo who review new food products on TikTok, filmed themselves in their car in a Florida grocery store parking lot. Meg held up a container of powdered dill pickle seasoning

from Sam's Club; Maddie, a bag of Goldfish Original crackers.

"Goldfish, if you're seeing this, I think we need to create this flavor," Maddie Antonelli said as her mother bombed the bag with pickle seasoning for a video that would later be posted on their TikTok channel, floridamomof3. After tasting the result, Maddie declared, "This is unreal."

While Pepperidge Farm, the maker of Goldfish, has yet

Pickle continued on E8



Florida TikTokers Maddie Antonelli (left) and Meg Antonelli hold pickle-flavored foods. The popular duo taste-test pickle-flavored products.

ZACK WITTMAN/NEW YORK TIMES

WHAT'S INSIDE

INSPIRE ATLANTA

Nonprofit helps students with reading

About 41,000 students in low-income schools across metro Atlanta have been touched by Everybody Wins! Atlanta, a nonprofit that aims to increase literacy and lifelong learning one book at a time.

Dionne Longworth has watched her son Noah making great strides at school and gives much of the credit to volunteer readers.

"Every person Noah and I have encountered with Everybody Wins! Atlanta over the past four years has played a role in his growth and development," Longworth said. **E4**



TRAVEL

A 'Dirty Dancing' getaway in Virginia

At Mountain Lake Lodge in southwestern Virginia, nobody puts any of the Babys in the corner. **E11**



DINING

Drinks with a splash of history

Where to order eight cocktails that conjure up metro Atlanta's past. **E7**



WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

Readers ask; we answer

A place to donate or recycle VHS tapes, Jubilee kitchen wax, Milani Skin Quench primer. **E12**

LIVING & ARTS

City's jazz scene primed for resuscitation

Jazz

continued from E1

venues closed shortly before and during the pandemic.

Among the audience at Venkman's are Edwin and Janice Williams of Conyers. He's a Berklee College of Music graduate who played upright bass with the John Robertson Trio for decades at Dante's Down the Hatch. She's a former jazz singer. They believe the jazz scene in Atlanta is primed for resuscitation. To that end, Edwin Williams founded the nonprofit Jazz Matters to celebrate the history and promote the future of the genre.

For seven years, Jazz Matters has hosted an outdoor concert series at the Wren's Nest. This year features performances by Barry Richman, Louahn Lowe and Marla Feeny on Friday; Dan Wilson, Marcus Williams and Jennifer Farnsworth perform Sept. 16.

The organization also promotes jazz through community events and outreach programs for seniors. And it mentors up-and-coming artists and educates them on different eras and forms of jazz like the Harlem Renaissance and Afro-Cuban jazz.

"There's a lot of learning that happens with (young artists) just being in the presence of seasoned artists, and also seasoned artists learn from younger artists. That interchange of wisdom, it's all happening over conversations about something they all love," said Janice before the jam session at Venkman's.

The education component of Jazz Matters is just as vital as the concert component because school systems have eliminated music programs, "which was an excellent feeder for jazz," said Janice. "We can't keep the art form alive unless there's some young people in the pipeline coming through."

Chandler echoes that sentiment. Back in the day, he said, "you had older musicians taking you under your wing, like an apprenticeship, and that doesn't really exist today."

Preserving the genre's history also is essential. There was a time when jazz clubs in Atlanta were open into the late hours of the night, and musicians could jam any day of the week, Edwin said. He believes keeping that history alive is the key to making jazz matter more in Atlanta.

Atlanta's rich jazz history

Ticket stubs to a 1947 Duke Ellington and Earl Hines concert and a 1937 show with Ella Fitzgerald and Chick Webb are among the thousands of mementos from Atlanta's jazz past that James Patterson, 86, has collected in his lifetime.

Associate professor of music and director of jazz studies at Clark Atlanta University, Patterson is one of the few remaining jazz greats who still can remember the Atlanta jazz scene from the 1950s and '60s. The jazz flutist studied at Clark with Wayman Carver and, since 1968, has led the university's jazz orchestra, which has played with greats such as Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Heath, James Moody, Wynton Marsalis and Ellis Marsalis.

"Jazz was so connected to Atlanta's growth and the civil rights movement," Patterson said. "The scene was as rich as New York or Chicago."

Among the early jazz greats who got their start in Atlanta was Fletcher Henderson. The pianist, composer and bandleader was one of the most prolific jazz arrangers who helped pioneer big band and swing jazz.

Many of those who shaped the genre trained at Clark College, including pianist Duke Pearson, who recorded with hard bop saxophonist Cannonball Adderley and trumpeter Donald Byrd, and later would influence pianist Herbie Hancock. Pearson composed standards like "Jeannine" and worked with jazz record label Blue Note while collaborating with Atlanta's jazz pioneers.

Musicians played venues such as the Magnolia Ballroom, the Waluhaje and the Top Hat Club, where Cab Calloway and Louis Armstrong performed. When the latter club closed in 1949, it reopened as the Royal Peacock, hosting performances by Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles and James Brown.

The Royal Peacock also



Jazz musician and band leader Joseph Jennings stands next to posters from the Kenyatta Festival of Women in Jazz. Jennings said the Atlanta jazz community helped integrate the city by bringing together white and Black musicians. NATRICE MILLER/NATRICE.MILLER@AJC.COM



Jazz Matters organizers Janice and Edwin Williams are an integral part of Atlanta's jazz culture with their series at the Wren's Nest in August and September. They discussed their projects at Venkman's during a recent Joe Gransden's Jazz Jam. JENNI GIRTMAN FOR THE AJC

served as a meeting place for civil rights leaders, including the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young and Hosea Williams. As did Paschal's La Carrousel, which was the only nightclub in Atlanta that welcomed Black, white and LGBTQ musicians when it opened in 1960.

Saxophonist Joseph Jennings, former director of the Spelman College Jazz Ensemble, said the Atlanta jazz community helped integrate the city by bringing together white and Black musicians. He recalled that when he arrived from Illinois in 1970, some clubs in Buckhead didn't allow a Black musician to perform without a white musician present.

"The clubs broke that down eventually, but that was the way it was," Jennings said.

Musicians of all races, though, played in Underground Atlanta, which, beginning in 1969, became a hot spot for jazz in the city, thanks to clubs like The 12th Gate and Dante's Down the Hatch before it moved to Buckhead in 1981.

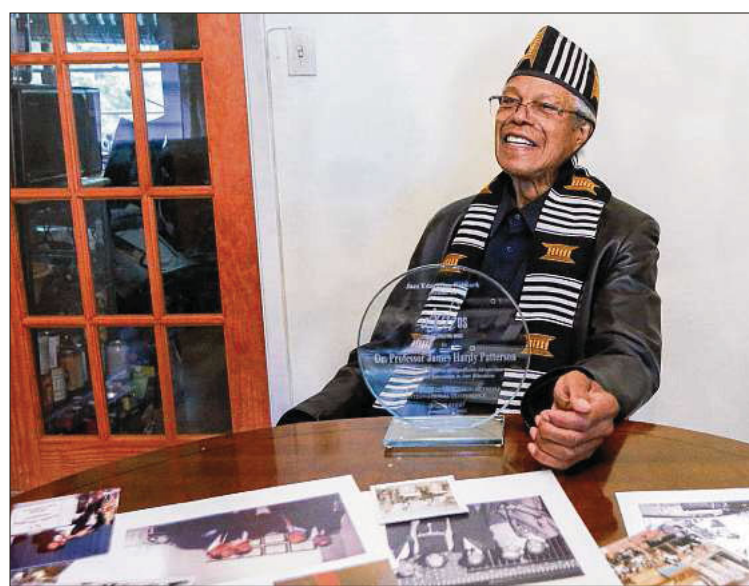
"Dante's, for me, was like a laboratory," said Edwin Williams, who played there for 23 years. "It was a refining station

where you could sharpen yourself up. Six nights a week, five sets a night for that length of time, you got chops, that's all there is to it."

In addition to the clubs, Atlanta has a rich history in jazz festivals. Jennings, who formed the jazz ensemble Life Force with fellow saxophonist Howard Nicholson and taught saxophonist Sherman Irby, helped assemble a festival at Mozley Park in the 1970s. It was a precursor to the Atlanta Jazz Festival, which began in 1978 and continues to this day. Among the artists who have performed are Lionel Hampton, Wynton Marsalis, Nina Simone and Herbie Hancock.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a variety of factors, including rapid construction and changes in musical taste, led many longtime clubs to close, including nearly all of Atlanta's '60s-era jazz clubs.

But then a ray of hope appeared. Churchill Grounds opened in 1997 next to the Fox Theatre, featuring jam sessions led by trumpeter Danny Harper and his wife, vocalist Terry Harper. With its location on Peachtree Street in the heart of Midtown, the club became the



James Patterson poses with a JEN LeJENDs of Jazz Education Award and photos of his career at his home in Atlanta in 2021. Patterson is a longtime jazz musician as well as a historian and a professor at Clark Atlanta University. CHRISTINE TANNOUS/CHRISTINE.TANNOUS@AJC.COM

city's premier jazz spot.

Joe Gransden, the trumpeter, vocalist and big band leader who is one of Atlanta's most prominent contemporary jazz musicians, developed his chops at Churchill Grounds. When the club closed in 2016, the community was shook.

"When that ended, we were all standing around and asking, 'What are we supposed to do? Where were we going to see each other? Where were we going to hang?'" Gransden recalled.

It was a struggle for musicians to find a place to play. Some played jazz with Atlanta's African American Philharmonic Orchestra. Gransden found venues across the metro area to play one night here, one night there.

Cafe 290 in Sandy Springs was still going, but the pandemic finally shut it down.

Things looked grim for jazz in Atlanta.

Atlanta jazz today

Laura Heery, an Atlanta architect, moves to the music of the Wednesday night jazz jam at Venkman's. Her grandfather played stride piano, she said, and she has fond memories of her mother taking her to see guitarist Wes Montgomery at the Atlanta Jazz Festival when she was a child. What she calls "common denominator music" floods her with decades

of memories.

"There's something about the history and the way jazz touches me that affects a lot of us, so when everything's so new, it lets us touch back to a different era," she said.

Gransden said Venkman's has been instrumental in keeping jazz alive in Atlanta. Trumpeter Terence Harper, whose parents were the house band at Churchill Grounds, agrees.

"Venues like this mean the world to the music scene, giving us a place to continue to play and grow as musicians and get a chance to not only hone in on our skills and our craft but also get a chance to meet other musicians and collaborate with other people," Harper said.

And Venkman's isn't alone.

Jazz jams also occur at TEN ATL in East Atlanta Village, Red Light Cafe in Midtown and St. James Live in south Fulton.

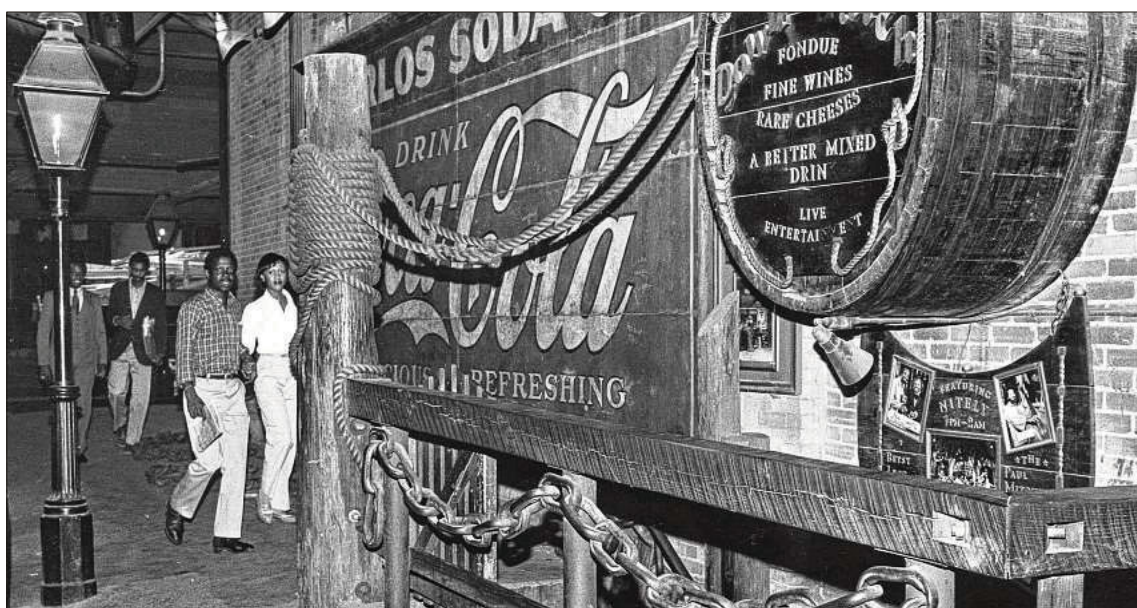
The jazz scene has a long way to go to recover some of its past glory, but Gransden is hopeful. All it takes is a few more clubs opening and a little more programming.

Michael Cruse, an Atlanta-based trumpeter who trained in New York and Chicago, agrees. Cruse teaches at Emory University, does outreach to Atlanta Public Schools and plays with different ensembles across Atlanta.

"We're going to make it happen anyways, no matter what obstacles are set in front of us," he said. "It's really a testament to how focused and driven the scene is about the community. Just because we don't have one place that's the home, it's spread out throughout the city, and it's giving more opportunities to everybody, not just a few people."

It all comes back to Edwin Williams' mission with Jazz Matters to embrace the history of the genre and to share knowledge with the next generation. "The greatest legacy that you can leave behind is the knowledge that you impart on somebody else, and this music will be alive forever because of one's ability to teach," Harper said.

"Hopefully that person becomes an incredible musician and performer but also teaches to preserve the history of the music."



Dante's Down the Hatch restaurant and bar in Underground Atlanta opened in 1970 and was fashioned after an 18th century sailing ship surrounded by a moat filled with live crocodiles. AJC PHOTO ARCHIVES