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Ben Douglas Kynard
Celebrating
The Life of

Jazz Master
Elder Statesmen
of Jazz

Friday, July 13th, 2012
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

BEN DOUGLAS KYNARD
Sunrise: February 28, 1920
Sunset: July 5, 2012



BC Kynard Trio-BC. Ben and Bobby Stafford



Lionel Hampton Band



Kansas City Jazz Sextet + One-L to R Forrester
 White, Elmer Price, Cleophus Berry, Teddy Stewart,
 Ben Kynard, BC Kynard, Calvin Whitmore, Sr.



A SUITE FOR BEN

Master of Ceremony
Groovy Grant Sheffield Hopkins

INTRODUCTION:

4PM Jam Session

Local Musicians

The Elderstatesmen of Jazz

6PM PROGRAM

PRAYER:

Rev. James Wilkins,
The Elderstatesmen of Jazz Chaplin

PROCESSIONAL:

"When The Saints Go Marching In"

POETRY:

"For Ben Kynard, by Dan Jaffee

TRIBUTES

Family, Friends and Fans

HARMONIC RESOLUTION

Repast

LIFE'S REFLECTIONS

Ben Douglas Kynard was an exceptional musician, entertainer, composer, arranger and bandleader. He was born in Eureka Springs, Arkansas February 28, 1920 from the union of Bennett Douglas Kynard and his mother Amelia.

Ben was presented with his first musical instrument from his brother BC, who also taught him how to read music and play the saxophone. Attending Sumner High school, Ben played in the high school band and there began his love of music and the beginning of historic journey. As a youth Ben played with Lester White a consummate professional at various night clubs in Kansas City, Kansas. At the young age of 17, Ben was merely a youth playing with men much older and experienced. This was a period of learning and growth as a talented youth who wanted to grow and experience more in the area of music. After graduating from Sumner High in 1938, Ben would build on his gift by studying the different styles of jazz music and the art of entertainment from his brother BC. A number of prominent national and local jazz musicians entertained at the Blue Room of the Street Hotel on 18th & Vine Street. Ben admired local greats such as Franz Bruce, Bill Martin and his group, Woody and Herman Walders. At the Sunset Crystal Palace, a couple of times, Ben would go to see Big Joe Turner and Pete Johnson.

Ben was inducted into the US Army at Fort Leavenworth Kansas. He served in the US Army's 357th FARTC (Field Artillery Replacement Training Center), and ASF Band stationed at Fort Sill Oklahoma. Later he was stationed at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. His Army classification was Private, Technician 4th Grade, and Bandsman. In the service, he played both the clarinet and saxophone with the marching band at parades, unit drills for soldiers, and concerts. Ben also played in the jazz band of the officer clubs and at socials. When new recruits arrived he played them in and out of the base. His most

honorable task was to play at the arrival and departure of our fallen soldiers and at funerals for Army officers. He was awarded the American Theatre Ribbon, The Victory Medal for World War II and The Good Conduct Medal. At a 1943 ceremony in Washington DC Ben played for Harry S. Truman. He was honorably discharged from the U.S Army on December 10, 1945.

Ben's brother BC had been invited to audition with the Hampton Band in Tulsa Oklahoma with a friend of his named Arnett Cobb who was the leader of the reed section. BC had recently wed and was then raising a family and told Cobb he could not travel with the band at this time, but referred his brother Ben, who BC knew was more than able to do the job. After a brief audition at the Blue Room of the Street Hotel on 18th & Vine, Ben was immediately hired on the spot by Cobb to play the alto saxophone and travel with the prestigious Lionel Hampton Band. Hamp's band played at all of the top theaters throughout the nation. Theaters in Los Angeles, Hollywood California, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Detroit, New York and Chicago were the prime markets. The Band would also play such famous theaters as the Paramount, the Apollo, Capital, the Howard Theater in Washington and the Millionaire Dollar Theater in Los Angeles. The Hamp Band would travel to these circuits by bus or train as the band members would stay and dine in designated homes. Sometimes, the musicians would stay in hotels or motels if they were lucky. The Hampton Band entourage was quite large and required at least three large Greyhound Buses to transport personnel and equipment. With such a travelling show, a fairly large payroll was needed and band members were always paid on time. The theater shows were often broadcast over the radio for the general public to be aired at selected times. But make no mistake, to be there and to see the Lionel Hampton Band in person was indeed quite a privilege and highly sought after ticket. These major theater shows would feature an opening act(s) for example the Choclateers, Man Tan Moreland, Sammy Davis, Jr., and the Will Masterson Trio. In fact, Sammy Davis, his father and uncle traveled with the band starting in 1948 for a period of

years.

Throughout the years this band or better said institution would employ the likes of Illinois Jacquet, Al Grey, Earl Bostic, Gigi Gryce, Dexter Gordon, Arnett Cobb, Charles Mingus, Clifford Brown, Milt Buckner, Art Farmer, Quincy Jones, Fats Navarro, Clark Terry and Wes Montgomery. Singers included Dinah Washington, Joe Williams, Annie Ross and Betty Carter and our own Ben D. Kynard. Ben was not only a talented musician but also was a gifted composer and arranger. He composed ten or twelve pieces for Hamp. His most popular major composition was a song called "Red Top" which was produced in 1947. That album topped the charts that year. It was so popular that many other artists at the time and later, built variations with lyrics on the them and to this day is still being played by many. The most famous of these adoptions and variations included Gene Ammons (1947), King Pleasure and Betty Carter (1952), Erroll Garner (1955), Lou Rawls (1968), Oscar Peterson & Milt Jackson (1971), Dexter Gordon (1977), The Steve Miller Band (1988), Chuck Brown (1991), Lou Donaldson (1992), and Kansas City's own Kevin Mahogany (1994). Albums produced with the Hampton Band during Ben's tenure were remastered included "Midnight Sun" in which Red Top made its celebrated debut in 1947 on "Lionel Hampton and his orchestra" "Hamp: The Legendary Decca Recordings of Lionel Hampton," "Lionel Hampton Hey Ba-Ba-Re-Bop" "The Lionel Hampton Story" "Hamptons Best Vibes" and "Midnight Sun." Several of Hamp's big hits are continually remastered and always include "Red Top."

After returning to Kansas City, Ben, met a new found love and married Joyce Arnold in 1953, and to this union two children Brett and Carmen were born. Ben's now second love which was jazz continued as he would throughout the years play with several noted Kansas City local bands, and noted musicians at weddings receptions, new years eve parties, elementary schools, social club parties, outside festivals, and especially Kynard family gatherings. Some local musicians Ben played with since

the 1950's included his brother B.C. Kynard, his nephew Charles E. Kynard, Edward Arnold, Jr., (brother in law) Elsie Car, Orestes "Rusty Tucker," Gerald "Scotty" Scott, Claude "Fiddler" Williams, Lester White, Samuel "Baby" Lovett, "Sleepy" Hitchcock, Booker T. Washington, Herman Walder, Samuel Johnson, Sr.; Oliver Todd, Elmer "Hoppy" Hopkins, Arthur Smith, Charles "Crook" Goodwin, Eddie Baker, Cleophus Berry, Peter McShann, Jay McShann, Richard "Sarge" Meyers, Henry Hoard, Sandy Brown, Roy Johnson (Brother of Countess Margaret Johnson) Sam Johnson. Sr., and Jr., Winne Brown, Alfred Bartee, Calvin Whitmore, Fiermon Prymus, Jimmy McConnell, Donald Cox, Eddie Baker, Donald Parson, Toni Oliver, and Wallace Jones, Ronald and Lonnie McFadden, and many, many more. In addition to playing gigs during the week, at night and on the weekends he also worked full time as a carrier for the US Postal Service for 33 years in Kansas City, Kansas. He always took great pride at playing at Christmas time for his fellow workers at their annual Christmas party.

In 1974, Ben was invited by conductor Maurice Perez of the Kansas City Philharmonic to play two major pieces, where he played the baritone saxophone. In that same period he played at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York.

In 1978, Ben appeared in a classic documentary directed by Clint Eastwood filmed at the Mutual Musician's union. In that film which focused on Kansas City Jazz it featured Count Basie, Big Joe Turner, Jay Mc Shann and other local jazz greats whose roots were in Kansas City. Ben played with several of the bands that appeared in the documentary and properly closed this historic impromptu jam session by directing the Band with what he termed a "get away song."

In 1983 during his first year of retirement Ben was honored by being selected with 37 other outstanding jazz musicians becoming the Charter members of the Elder Statesmen of Kansas City Jazz. Also in 1983, Ben then devoted greater time not only for jazz but other

areas of interest. Ben was a strong Christian and he joined Saint Augustine's Episcopal Church in 1964; where he was confirmed with his son and enjoyed serving as an usher for several years and well into his 80's. He was a member of the Brotherhood of Saint Augustine's Men's' Group and enjoyed participating in the Annual Men's Day Fundraiser, the Annual Fish Fry, cutting the lawn and raking leaves during the Spring summer and fall seasons. He loved playing jazz at the first ever annual jazz Mass held at St. Augustine's church in the year 2000, started by Father Thomas Shepherd as well as taking the time to participate and display his talent at talent shows held at the church. Never idle and always respecting the right and duty to vote he worked the third district election polls for several years and became the office supervisor of that location. Ben would also participate in his 1938 graduating class organization of Sumner High School with his classmates and good friends Edwin Byrd and Bernice Todd. Ben's gigs would also involve playing at nursing homes. He enjoyed playing for the residents during the holiday season or upon request. He was particularly fond of Swope Ridge Nursing Home. Ben also took great pride in the appearance of his lawn and home; and would always be working and modifying the interior and exterior. Mowing the lawn was a weekly ritual and this would continue till he was 91.

In 1984 and 1988, Ben received other new loves in his life with the birth of his daughter Carmen's two children Ashley and Jasmine. He enjoyed playing games, entertaining them and just plain having fun with his only grand children. He would live to see each graduate college and one, Jasmine to graduate from Stanford University with a Masters Degree from Columbia University. During this period Ben and Joyce would travel nationally and internationally with his in-laws Lois and John Smith and Bette and William Fopp. Also in 1984, Ben was featured on the cover of a Kansas City Spirit Festival Magazine as the City prepared for a crowd of 300,000 for this city wide event.

Over the years several Mayoral proclamations initiated by the Elder Statesmen of Kansas City Jazz, other city and state officials

resulted in several proclamations presented by Kansas City Mayors' to honor Ben. Mayors Richard Berkley, Mayor Emanuel Cleaver, Mayor Kay Barnes, and Mayor Mark Funkhouser all recognized that he was a living treasure and ambassador of Kansas City Jazz. In this spirit on October 4, 1996, Mayor Emanuel Cleaver proclaimed that date "Ben Kynard Day" in Kansas City, and a tribute was held at the Blue Room in the 18th & Vine Jazz District. Also, he received the Kansas City Jazz Heritage Award presented by Mayor Richard L. Berkeley recognizing Ben's Lifetime Achievement and Preservation of Jazz. In 1998 the City continued to recognize his contribution as the Kansas City Jazz Commission awarded a Lifetime Achievement and Preservation of Jazz award.

For the next ten years Ben enjoyed playing a gig here and there, playing at family gatherings, serving at church and enjoying his family, mowing his lawn, working on his home, and visiting and socializing with friends. When his wife Joyce broke her hip in 2008, he was the primary care giver in the day and evening hours and took great care of her even up and until his last ten months however with additional assistance. With these care giving duties which he loved doing, he spent his down time playing the keyboard, writing music, singing and watching rental movies, football and baseball games.

His last concert would take place at Kingswood Rehabilitation Place in April 2012. He was accompanied by Andrea Pharr who was his rehab specialist and a former Scamps pianist and he sang to a packed house at the facility before he departed to go home.

Ben leaves to cherish his memory: His wife Joyce, a son Brett (Joyce); a daughter Carmen (David); a sister Shiverla Jones; two grandchildren Ashley and Jasmine Jacobs; three nephews: Gary Kynard (Andrea) of Los Angeles; Richard Kynard, New York; and Bradley Kynard of San Francisco; two nieces, Cindy Kynard New York; Kimberly Kynard-White of Jacksonville, Florida; two sister in laws, Lois Smith and Thelma Wright, Nappa California; Joel Jones, Janine Fegans (Dennis); Tracy California and other extended family members.



ASF Band stationed at Fort Sill Oklahoma



Arthur Jackson, Myra Taylor and Ben Kynard



Raymond "Cowboy" Jones, Frank Patterson,
Luqman Hamza, Ben Kynard



Lucky Wesley, Sallie Truitt and Ben Kynard



Brett & Dad Confirmation at St. Augustine Episcopal



Mr. and Mrs. Ben Kynard (Joyce)



And, Family



Acknowledgements

The family of Ben Douglas Kynard wish to thank their many loved ones and friends for all their thoughts, prayers and expressions of sympathy during his illness and at this time of bereavement. A special thanks also goes out to the nursing and homecare staff of Saint Luke's Hospital, Dr. Robert Niehart, Elizabeth and Becca, Dr. Keith Allen, Dr. Thomas, the staff of Kansas City Hospice House, and the staff of Kingswood Rehabilitation Place.

From the Family

For Ben Kynard

When the great jazz man
last sighs,
drifts off into the stream,
the deepest currents of
still waters
give voice to what the
blues still mean.

When all seems lost, dark
waters still, the
blues remind us other-
wise.

Those low notes, those growl
From the heart,
give voice to the soul,
soul never dies.

Dan Jaffe

Marion Watkins
Funeral Director

Watkins
HERITAGE CHAPEL

A Family Tradition Since 1909



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