



The name says it all...

Just Jazz

May-June 2017

Hi Friends —

This February pop singer [Bruno Mars](#), in an [online interview](#) under the provocative headline, "[Bruno Mars Says Black People Created ALL American Music!](#)" stated, "When you say 'black music,' understand that you are talking about rock, jazz, R&B, reggae, funk, doo-wop, hip-hop, and Motown. Black people created it all. ... So, in my world, black music means everything." A Facebook friend posted the article, which I immediately shared. Why? Because [I fully agree with both Mars' assertion and the only slightly exaggerated headline.](#)

Replies poured in desperately attempting to refute this musicological fact with trivia, superficiality, and irrelevance, and exposing, in many cases, a hidden agenda. [It is fascinating — and enlightening — how a statement like Mars' threatens some white people, who can't accept or won't admit that "their" culture was created for them and given to them by "others."](#) And so I was informed that ragtime innovator Scott Joplin had a German teacher. But was he the co-composer of "The Entertainer" or "Maple Leaf Rag?" I was told, "Coleman Hawkins loved Caruso and other opera singers and credited them with his concept of tone. Bird loved Stravinsky and quoted from the classics on many solos." But what does that prove, other than that these jazz giants had broad musical interests?

Here's a gem: "Without Bach, there might not have ever been blues, jazz and rock and roll as we know it, since he and his peers came up with the tonal-functional system of chords and harmony." Really? [Did Bach use the blues scale or a 12-bar AAB form?](#) Along the same lines, "Mozart used a tri-tone substitution somewhere in the development section of the Symphony in G Minor Op. 40." (I also was instructed that Beethoven used ii-V's.) So what? [Appeals to classical "authorities" mean nothing except that great artists may employ similar techniques in different ways.](#)

Try this: ""The American Songbook? Mostly white people, right. Jewish guys. There would have been no songs for jazz musicians to play if not for Tin Pan Alley." Aside from the fact that jazz musicians have written some pretty fine songs of their own to play, [there would have been no Tin Pan Alley as we know it if not for black music.](#) Irving Berlin's first big hit was "Alexander's Ragtime Band." The opening bars of "Stormy Weather" by Harold Arlen — the composer of "Blues in the Night," incidentally — unmistakably echo Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues." The Gershwin's "The Man I Love," in George's insistent blue notes and Ira's poignant poetry, invokes the artistry of Bessie Smith. Hoagy Carmichael's melodies. Johnny Mercer's lyrics. (This is almost *too easy.*)

Oh, wait — [what about country and western?](#) Check out Jimmie Rodgers, the first country superstar, many of whose songs had the word "blues" in the title and blues as the form. Listen to the jazz-based chart on Tennessee Ernie Ford's crossover hit, "Sixteen Tons." Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues" speaks for itself. So does the "Western Swing" of Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. And in 1962 [a mega-hit LP by Ray Charles](#) dug up the blue roots of country and western music.

Look, I'm not saying that white people can't play jazz (as I also was accused). That would be like saying Russians can't speak French. Jazz is a musical *language*. You can study it, practice it, and become fluent in it. What I *am* saying is that [jazz — and all other forms of so-called "American" music — is essentially African-American in its origin.](#) The bottom line: Just as black history is American history, [black music is American music, and vice versa.](#)

Stay cool, and keep list'nin',
Bob

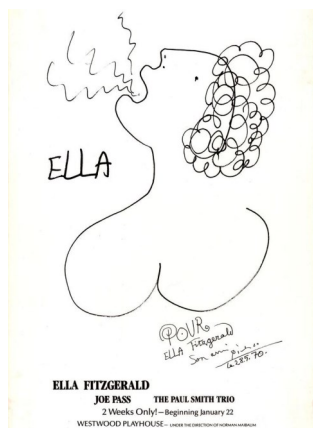
Special Shows and Segments



6/4: Dean Martin's 100th Birthday Anniversary tribute
during The Sinatra Hour, 11:00 a.m. ET

From June through August, during [Hour Three of Just Jazz](#) (noon-1:00), I'll be counting down the **100 Most Frequently Recorded Jazz Standards** as compiled by the excellent website, [jazzstandards.com](#).

- 6/4:** Songs 100-91
- 6/11:** Songs 90-81
- 6/18:** Songs 80-71
- 6/25:** Songs 70-61



2017 marks the **100th birthday anniversary** of the great [Ella Fitzgerald](#). And so, I am celebrating Ella and her music all year long on [Just Jazz featuring The Sinatra Hour](#).

[Just Jazz featuring The Sinatra Hour](#) is heard every Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. Eastern Time (US) over WRNJ 104.7 & 92.7 FM and 1510 AM and streaming worldwide at [tunein.com/radio/WRNJ](#)

Quotes of the Month

Many more aspects of jazz derive directly from African musical-social traditions than has been assumed. ... *Every* musical element — rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, and the basic forms of jazz — is essentially African in background and derivation.
— **Gunther Schuller**

First of all, the music that people call Latin or Spanish is really African. So Black people need to get the credit for that.
— **Carlos Santana**

You leave white people alone in constant isolation for thousands of years, you know what their musical contribution is going to be? *Riverdance*.
— **Greg Proops**

RECOMMENDED INTERNET JAZZ RADIO

[wemu.org](#): Linda Yohn starts your day right with three and a half hours of jazz and blues. Mon.-Fri. 9:00-12:30 ET.

[Late Night Jazz with Rusty Hassan](#): a Hall of Fame jazz broadcaster. Thurs. 10:00-midnight ET wpfwfm.org.

[Café Latino](#): Singer-songwriter [Laura Fernandez](#) features two hours of Latin music. Sat. 4:00-6:00 p.m. ET on Toronto's Jazz FM91.

[The Jazz Club](#): Hosted by bassist-bandleader [Dave Post](#). Wed. 1:00-3:00 p.m. ET wfdu-hd2.

[Good Vibes](#): Gloria Krolak hosts the world's only radio show dedicated to the vibraphone. First Sun. of every month 8:00-10:00 p.m. ET.

[Jazz Spotlight on Sinatra](#): Nancy Barell presents Frank Sinatra's music through the decades, along with jazz instrumentalists and singers performing songs he recorded plus other beloved standards on PureJazzRadio.org (Thurs. 7:00-8:00 p.m. and Tues 11:00 a.m.-noon).

And [every Sunday after Just Jazz](#) stay tuned to WRNJ and wrnjradio.com for [Value This with Brian and Leon](#) at 1:00, followed by [The Tail-Finned Turntable](#) from 2:00 to 3:00 and [Still Rockin'](#) from 3:00 to 4:00, both hosted by "the Golden Gup," Gup Gascoigne.

NEW & RECOMMENDED CDS

[Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre](#): [The Art of Latin Jazz \(Origin\)](#): As musical director of the renowned Spanish Harlem Orchestra, pianist-composer Oscar Hernández is a leading practitioner of the art of Latin jazz in a big band format, earning multiple Grammy awards and nominations for his work. He applies that artistry to his Alma Libre quintet with the same flavor and fire, offering ten original compositions that spotlight his own fine solo work and that of the gifted saxophonist-flutist, Justo Almaro.

[Swingadelic: Mercerville \(Zoho\)](#): The versatile big band, Swingadelic, presents the songs of Johnny Mercer with fun and flare. It's all about the lyrics, so musical director-bassist Dave Post rightly gives center stage to the voices of pianist John Bauers and the delightful Vanessa Perea. Highlights include Perea's deft handling of the seldom-heard second verse of "Too Marvelous for Words," a Louis-and-Keely tribute on "That Old Black Magic," and an appealing merger of the Mancini-Mercer Oscar-winners, "Moon River" and "Days of Wine and Roses" — in all, a most worthy homage to "America's poet."

[Akiko Tsuruga: So Cute, So Bad \(AT\)](#): Yeah, she's *bad*, and that's very good. If you're looking for a funky and swinging good time, this live date by organist Akiko Tsuruga's trio — with Graham Dechter on guitar and Jeff Hamilton on drums — cuts a groove that is deep and solid and everything you want. Who says good jazz can't be fun? In Tsuruga's accomplished hands the venerable and enjoyable organ trio tradition is alive and thriving.

UPCOMING AREA JAZZ EVENTS

Sun., May 21, 3:00: The Royal Bopsters (Amy London, Pete McGuinness, Dylan Pramuk, Holly Ross) "[The Art of Vocalese Singing](#)" \$25 advance / \$30 at the door; Rutherford Hall, 1686 Rt.517, Allamuchy, NJ 908-852-1894 ext. 138 or 908-637-6455

Riverview Jazz Festival

Sat., June 3: guitarist [Mark Whitfield](#), saxophonist [Lakecia Benjamin & Soul Squad](#), [NY Mambo All-Stars](#) & more 3 2nd St., Jersey City, NJ

Sat., June 10: The Snarky Horns, singer [Charanee Wade](#), [International Jazz Quartet](#) featuring drummer [Jimmy Cobb](#), [The Fania Project](#) & more

Riverview Fisk Park (two stages), Jersey City, NJ

Concerts start at noon and are FREE!; [Other free festival events](#) are being held in Jersey City throughout the week

The [New Brunswick Jazz Project](#) — "[bringing great Jazz to Central Jersey](#)" — regularly offers jazz events at numerous venues throughout New Brunswick, NJ. Click [HERE](#) for their monthly schedule.

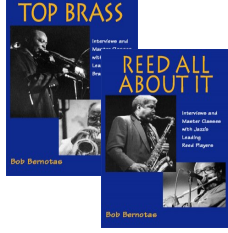
Acclaimed Jazz Books by Bob

Top Brass: Interviews and Master Classes with Jazz's Leading Brass Players

Reed All About It: Interviews and Master Classes with Jazz's Leading Reed Players

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\$20, plus shipping
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Bob Bernotas • host of [Just Jazz featuring The Sinatra Hour](#)

Sundays, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

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