

# Hard-driving Cal Tjader closes the joint down

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The 1957 *Fantasy* album featured from left, Vince Guaraldi, Cal Tjader, Al Torre, and Gene Wright.

silken delivery, Noga immediately became his manager and set about pestering major record companies to give the kid a shot. Finally a Columbia Records exec trekked to S.F. to hear him

and was blown away. "Have found phenomenal 19-year-old boy who could go all the way," read his wire. "Send blank contracts."

Mathis had a choice to make. Either head for the '56 Melbourne Olympics tryouts or fly to New York to cut his first album. The rest is (something like) history, as in: "Chances Are," "Misty" and a hugely successful career that continues to this day — one that made Helen Noga fabulously wealthy. Which, after all, had been the original impetus for launching the Blackhawk: the quest for that pot of gold.

## CLOSING NIGHT

A few years ago, Noga's daughter engaged me to write a history of The Blackhawk, promising entree to all sorts of stuff no other writer had seen. I was champing at the bit until I discovered that all trails led to Johnny Mathis; that his discovery had been, so far as the Nogas were concerned, the club's crowning achievement. All that other stuff — Brubeck and Mulligan and Diz-

zy and The MJQ and Billie Holiday — those were mere footnotes.

A possible point of view, certainly, but not mine.

This, I guess, is that history. It ends on The Blackhawk's 1963 closing night. I covered it for Newsweek, and it wasn't easy. Total disorder. I tried interviewing everyone I could corner, but the blues got in the way. Deep sadness — fueled by way too much booze and other intoxicants — permeated. An interviewee would begin to say something, wipe away a tear, trail off. Lots of beginnings without endings on my little cassette recorder.

A parade of local players climbed the stand for one last chorus. Cal Tjader took charge, playing his heart out. The final tune was Charlie Parker's blues

"Now's The Time," taken at an uncharacteristic near-dirge tempo. The musicians were openly weeping.

If you're familiar with "Now's The Time," you know the traditional ending: a decelerating four-note motif with the final note held and held and held ... till it fades away. Tjader pounded that last note with all his might and it hung bell-like in the air for what seemed like minutes, quavering, wavering, quivering, dying, final.

I can still hear it. ■

*John Burks, musician and jazz historian, formerly was managing editor of Rolling Stone and chairman of the S.F. State Department of Journalism, and is current president of the Study Center Board of Directors.*

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PHOTO: MARK HEDIN

Embedded in the sidewalk at Turk and Hyde is this plaque reminding that though the site is now a vacant parking lot, it once was a grungy temple where all could hear the gods of modern jazz at play. The plaque was put up in 2012 by the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District. The club's opening date on the plaque, 1950, is incorrect. Most sources agree it opened in 1949.

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Results of the PROPPR study at San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center Results from the National Institutes of Health funded study known as PROPPR (Pragmatic, Randomized Optimal Platelet and Plasma Ratios) which was conducted at San Francisco General Hospital and multiple sites nationwide, compared the results between the two ratios of blood products given to injured patients with severe trauma and major bleeding. The study showed that early administration of plasma, platelets, and red blood cells in a 1:1:1 ratio versus a 1:1:2 ratio did not result in significant differences in mortality (rate of death) at 24 hours or 30 days after admission to the hospital. However, more patients in the 1:1:1 group stopped bleeding from their injuries, and fewer patients died due to severe loss of blood within the first 24 hours of admission to the hospital. This study was conducted nationally and at San Francisco General Hospital from August 2012 through December 2013. The results were published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) on February 3, 2015. To learn more about the PROPPR trial results, visit the PROPPR website at <http://cetir-tmc.org/research/proppr>.