5-2023

The Peninsula Influence: Monterey's Musical Legacy and its Effects on the Current Music Scene

Reace Niles
California State University, Monterey Bay

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

The Peninsula Influence: Monterey's Musical Legacy and its Effects on the Current Music Scene

By the time I had chosen CSU Monterey Bay as my "dream college," I was already intent on doing the music program after several other burnt out attempts at mismatched majors. It always seemed interesting to me, though, that despite the school having a specific program that catered to my interests and residing in such a musically and culturally rich pocket of America, the scene of today while still very much active and thriving with talent only seems to occupy a small niche of the population. One can't help but wonder if the general population almost "moved on" from the musical history and traditions of the past. Was it always like this and the past was merely romanticized this whole time? While the music community might feel niche to us, if it is able to exist in some form then it is objectively able to influence a decent amount of people in some way or another. My goal with this paper is to find the ways in which that influence manifests artists in the area today. Because of the limited scale of the research being conducted, I am not attempting to make any scientific or declarative statements on that matter, but I am hoping that these anecdotal accounts will be able to provide some insight regardless. Before we get into the artists' accounts, I think it's important that we

recap some major events in Monterey's history, musical or otherwise. In order for us to investigate the scene as it stands today, we need information on how we got there from the events of the past.

One important aspect to consider when looking at Monterey's history, including its current landscape, is its cultural and ethnic background. At the beginning of the 20th century, mere decades after the founding of Seaside, it was an unincorporated suburb neighboring Monterey that was initially proposed as a white middle class tourism destination (McKibben). When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Ford Ord was shortly established in the nearby Presidio in Monterey (McKibben). The base's positioning so close in proximity to the city limits, however, would dampen those middle class tourism destination dreams the founders had in mind for the time being. Monterey continued to generate interest, whereas Seaside for many became "less than desirable" (McKibben).

In the 1930s during the peak of the Great Depression, Monterey and its surrounding counties became a large spot for migrants who would seek work at the local canaries. Most of these migrants then chose to buy their houses in Seaside, where property values were at their lowest (McKibben). After the United States entered World War II near the end of 1941, Ford Ord was expanded to accommodate and train more troops. Many of these troops were of African American and Filipino descent and had mixed race families (McKibben). In 1948, president Harry Truman ordered the desegregation of all military personnel by executive order. This led to a surge in African American soldiers and mixed families in Seaside, effectively doubling the population by

1956 (McKibben). Richard Joyce described Seaside as a “utopia for black people” when he arrived in 1952. Unlike other cities in California or the rest of the nation and especially the American South, he claimed, “everything was open in Seaside for young, enterprising black people. Things weren’t fixed. The city was unincorporated. There was tremendous opportunity for us to create something new” (qtd. in McKibben). Most of the African Americans who migrated to Seaside came from military backgrounds as established before, and many of them were highly educated officers who received their training from black southern colleges. These officers would soon become entrenched in the civil rights movement shortly after returning from overseas to their families. Seaside quickly became a major rallying location for the movement; key figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and Dolores Huerta all made appearances in the area in their efforts to coalition build (McKibben). African American women who were largely married to military personnel were able to engage the community in a way that their husbands could not, as active duty soldiers could not legally participate in local politics at the time (McKibben). By the 1980s, Seaside would also get an immigration boom from Mexico, which led to a larger share of Latinos in the Monterey County population (McKibben).

Talking about the history of these demographics is important in understanding the cultural landscape of Monterey because a significant part of that culture is music. All these populations that migrated to Monterey, their cultural roots and their activism all contributed to the music that would become rooted into the city’s very foundations.

Those roots can still be felt today with Monterey's best known musical event, the Monterey Jazz Festival.

The Monterey Jazz Festival first debuted on October 3rd, 1958 and to this day remains one of the premier jazz festivals in the world. It was pioneered by Ralph Gleason, the first ever syndicated jazz columnist, and Jimmy Lyons, a locally famous disc jockey in San Francisco (Harper, "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.3)" 0:12). Gleason and Lyons both had a passion for jazz and discussed it together frequently after meeting in the late 40s. They both had a desire to create an outdoor event to showcase jazz artists in a different environment than the typical underground smoke-filled clubs of that era ("Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.3)", 0:45). Peter Breinig, the uncle of James Costello who was a friend of Jimmy Lyons, was the person who introduced Lyons to the Monterey area and ultimately was one of the largest influences in determining the location of the festival. Breining says, "I had been talking up the Monterey Peninsula where I'd grown up, and I brought him [Lyons] down here, showed him around, took him down to Big Sur and so forth. He was fascinated with it and so later on he moved down here and got very involved" (qtd. in "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.3)", 1:01).

When creating and planning the festival, both Gleason and Lyons would contribute to the process, however while Lyons became somewhat of a mascot and branding director for the festival, Gleason preferred to operate behind the scenes ("Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.3)", 3:12). Actor, director and

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Monterey resident Clint Eastwood recalls his time attending the first Monterey Jazz Festival saying:

> I wasn't living in Monterey at that particular time, but I heard they were having a big jazz festival. I grew up listening to Jimmy Lyons on the radio in San Francisco and I thought 'well, I'll come down here and see what they've got.' They had good people on the program. It was a lot different than it is now, there was only just the main arena and there were no other clubs, no sessions or you couldn't get things to eat. There were a few items around, but you mainly just went to the main arena and you stayed right there. (qtd. in "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.4)", 1:49)

One unique aspect of the Monterey Jazz Festival that remains true today is its location at the Monterey Fairgrounds, which is in close proximity to the Monterey Airport. As a result, overhead air traffic is guaranteed and has the opportunity to create some unique improvisational moments for any acts on-stage that experience it. Laurel Lyons, wife of Jimmy Lyons recalls a moment during Dave Brubeck's performance at the first festival where some aircraft flew overhead at a critical moment:

> The planes went over when Dave Brubeck was playing and broke 'Into the Wild Blue Yonder,' that just set the whole audience on fire and it sort of set a precedent for interruption and with anything you just do it. You just come to Monterey for the music and you put up with whatever might happen. (qtd. in "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.4)", 3:05)

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

After the success of the first festival, Modern Jazz Quartet pianist John Lewis was brought on as the festival's musical director. He would maintain that position for over twenty years ("Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.5)", 0:19). Because musical festivals were such a new concept at the time, there wasn't a guide or a similar act to follow in terms of organization and infrastructure. As a result, staff was limited to a small handful of people and community members who took on a wide spectrum of responsibilities during the festival's infancy. One of these key staff members, Darlene Chan, became an usher after a loose cigarette got into her hair and caught fire. She appreciated the help of the staff and recalled their interactions as "familial," deciding to join them shortly afterwards. Upon signing onto the position, she quickly rose ranks, soon becoming a "right-hand person" of Jimmy Lyons himself. Chan says:

> In the old days we did it all. I mean there were just a few of us but we didn't know any better. We would do everything, we would put the toilet paper in the toilets, we'd be taking artists and driving them back and forth. There weren't many of us, so we didn't know any better. That was really the beginning of festivals, the concept of festivals period. (qtd. in "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.5)", 4:00)

By the festival's tenth anniversary, it had become the premiere event for Monterey, growing in both scope and popularity. No longer were acts from California and neighboring states exclusively being billed, but now artists from all over the country and even overseas from Europe were being flown in to play at the festival.

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

The festival had already introduced a new segment on Saturday night recognizing blues artists, which is a genre that heavily influenced and remained associated with jazz. Blues made occasional appearances at the festival prior, including the epic historical progressive piece on the history of blues “The Evolution of the Blues Song” by Jon Hendricks. However, it wasn’t until 1964 where it would have an entire session dedicated to recognizing the genre as a whole (“Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.9)”, 6:26). The audience and overall “vibrations” according to several performers and attendees alike were a bit different compared to the typical jazz acts. Blues appealed to a bit of a younger crowd and as such had a lot more energy with active dancing and movement.

On June 3rd, 1975, Ralph Gleason, co-founder of the Monterey Jazz Festival, passed away. By the time of his death, Gleason had been dissatisfied with the direction the Monterey Jazz Festival was going, in his opinion, leaning away from the music and more towards a party atmosphere. Despite their differences, it was reported that Gleason and Lyons remained friends until the end (“Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.11)”, 0:28). Lyons and the rest of the Monterey Jazz Festival family mourned and missed their friend, with festival ambassador Dizzy Gillespie even performing an improvised solo in honor of him for the festival the year of his passing. Darlene Chan reflects on the state of both the Monterey Jazz Festival family as well as the jazz community as a whole during this period of time:

> Basically they were just two strong people who had a difference of where the direction of the festival should go. And I wish they had been able to work together

only because I really love them both. And it was actually I think okay in the end, I think Jimmy missed Ralph. (“Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.11)”, 0:46)

By the 1980s, Lyons’ musical tastes became more conservative & focused on bebop-style jazz, foregoing other types of acts to the dismay of some of the festival’s longtime family members, performers and patrons. The festival continued to have an audience and perform well, but there was a divide beginning to grow between the fans of “traditionalism” and “experimentalism” (“Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.11)”, 7:31). By 1990, Lyons was not only starting to feel burnout after having run the festival for over thirty years, but he was also getting increasingly ill at the age of seventy four. In 1992, the Monterey Jazz Festival board of directors hired Tim Jackson as the general manager of the festival, allowing Lyons to step off. Jimmy Lyons would pass away just a few years later on April 10th, 1994. “Jimmy’s dreams were totally realized. He had this one vision to present the finest music and the finest musicians he could find in the world to the world, and they all loved to come here,” says his wife Laurel Lyons in remembrance (qtd. in “Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.11)”, 10:02).

The Monterey Jazz Festival continues to be held annually in the fall season to this very day, showcasing a combination of jazz legends and new up and coming talent ready to take on the world. It is arguably the biggest music event of the area and a highlight for many of the city’s inhabitants. However, while that’s what Monterey is known for today, there’s another festival that was so impactful to both music and culture,

that is arguably the single most documented musical event of all time besides the original Woodstock. I am, of course, talking about the Monterey Pop Festival.

Today when we think of highly influential classic rock artists, some names that probably come to mind are Janis Joplin, The Who, The Grateful Dead or Jimi Hendrix just to name a few. These artists helped pioneer what at the time was a radically new sound for a generation ready for change away from the status quo (History.com Editors). Electric guitars were becoming more common amongst the western pop music genres of the 1950s and 60s, but the playstyles and sounds were continuously being experimented on to produce sounds that at the time many would consider unorthodox. The roles of vocalists and drummers would also evolve for some of the more aggressive oriented acts. Drummers started taking on a more backseat driver role to emphasize a consistent beat to make it easier for people to dance to, while some vocalists would let their imperfections become a natural part of the aural timbre with screams, croaks and off-key pitches. How did these new sensations take over and become such a dominant force in the music industry? The story for each artist is unique, however for the artists I mentioned recently (Janis Joplin, The Who, The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix), their turning point was the Monterey Pop Festival, an event that would turn them into icons almost overnight with record labels supposedly bidding for contracts with the artists' managers at local bars following each set (Ward).

The Monterey Pop Festival was a three-day concert festival experience that spanned June 16th-18th, 1967 (History.com Editors). The event was led and put together by two individuals: John Philips of the Mamas and the Papas, a well

established pop act of that era; and Lou Adler, a record producer working for Dunhill Records and manager for the Mamas and the Papas at the time (Ward). Adler states that “the subject came up of rock and roll and everybody thinks of it as a fad trend when in fact it should be validated as an art form in the way that jazz is” (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 4:33). In the mid-to-late 60s, California’s Bay Area was the hotbed of the hippie movement and Summer of Love, particularly within San Francisco. A lot of the popular music that was appealing to that scene was not coming locally though, but from Los Angeles in Southern California. Michelle Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas says, “That’s where the record deals were being made, that’s where records were being recorded, the ones that were actually selling” (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 4:09). These were some of the goals of the Monterey Pop Festival: to bring more awareness to some of these local acts and to introduce other kinds of acts to an entirely new audience. This proved to be an ever increasing hurdle for the marketability of the event. While Adler and Philips wanted to expose new local artists to a wider audience, they both came from the Los Angeles pop record background, which was very much looked down upon in the San Francisco music scene at the time. The San Francisco music scene was less interested in directly profiting from music, more often than not giving demos away for free, and looked at the Los Angeles record scene as “selling out” (Himmelsbach-Weinstein 5:27). Adler and Phillips would have to find a way to win over what was currently a hostile audience to their proposal.

After much deliberation it was decided that the proposal to win over the San Francisco audience would be to turn the Festival into a complete charity event. The

downside of this was that with 100% of the proceeds going towards charity, now artists no longer had financial gain as a motivation to perform. These fears would soon be alleviated though as more big artists joined the lineup regardless. Derek Taylor, a press officer for the Monterey Pop Festival, noted in an interview that “The Mamas and the Papas said why don’t you give all the money to charity and we’ll work for nothing. So we said, ‘uh okay.’ So Simon and Garfunkel agreed to work for nothing as well and then everyone followed” (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 6:16). Within weeks following the acquisition of Simon & Garfunkel, artists such as Otis Redding, Ravi Shankar, the Byrds and Jimi Hendrix had signed on to perform (Himmelsbach-Weinstein 6:31). David Crosby of the Byrds mentioned in his own recollection of seeing the billing grow before signing on that “we had never all played together before, and we all thought, god, this will really put their minds through a ringer. Let’s do this” (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 7:01). Michelle Phillips said that “the lineup was in flux to the very last second, I mean nobody knew who was going to show up” (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 7:49). Over the course of the weekend that the festival took place, roughly 200,000 people would show up with most of the attendees arriving from out of town (History.com Editors). Charlie Davis, one of the people at the festival, described the event:

> [W]e didn’t really know what to expect, and walking into it to this day…I just remember it as a swirl of color and noise and humanity and smells, patchouli, and cowbells, buffalo bells, elephant bells, noises I’d never heard before and that was before the music even started. (qtd. in Himmelsbach-Weinstein 8:57)

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

That weekend of June 16th to June 18th, the Monterey Pop Festival would cement itself in history as a pivotal event in the history of both music and American culture, launching and revitalizing the careers of numerous influential artists. To this day, it is arguably one of the most historically significant events in the continuing story of Monterey's music.

What we've covered here so far is a small drop in the musical and cultural history of Monterey within the last century. With this rough documentation of some of the highlights from that time, I want to now take a look at the artists of today and compare it to that history. I had the opportunity to interview four local musicians about their thoughts on the current state of music in Monterey, their history and how they're influenced by the area, be it musically or otherwise. Each of the artists I had the privilege to speak with are still actively involved in the local music community to varying degrees, and all of them continue to perform.

For the first interview, I had the chance to speak with John Nava. Nava is currently a percussionist in the Latin Jazz Collective, a Monterey-based, seven-piece group he founded that specializes in performing a wide range of both original material and covers from jazz originating in or being influenced by Latin American cultures. In 2017, the Latin Jazz Collective played at the Monterey Jazz Festival ("Biography | Latin Jazz Collective").

John Nava has lived in Monterey for most of his life and has been playing music since the age of six. While today he's most known for his work in the Latin Jazz Collective as a percussionist, he also has an expansive history of playing the

saxophone since the age of nine (“John Nava | Latin Jazz Collective”). During my interview with Nava, he recalled an early childhood memory with his father who took both him and his brother throughout the Monterey Bay area to experience local jazz musicians perform to the public, something that would go on to heavily influence his life:

> I remember one time walking there with my father and brother, and we were walking down towards the bottom of Alvarado Street to what used to be a bookstore. My dad stopped us for a second and he tells us “Look, pay attention for a minute.” And we’re watching Joseph Lucido. He says “this is a musician who KNOWS what he’s doing and he has reached the pinnacle of his craft as far as knowledge, skill, interpretation, ability to deliver a song. One day you’re going to be able to meet him.” Fast forward to 2001-2002, I was playing a venue on a Thursday night, a friend of mine, named Anthony King asks me “do me a favor, bring your soprano saxophone and come to Chibo up on Alvarado. When you’re done, I want you to play with this band and I want you to meet a guitar player.” So I packed up when we were done, drove up about five minutes to Alvarado Street and a local singer named Neil Becks was singing that night. I knew his bass player who was Richard Hall, Anthony King was on drums and Joe Lucido was on guitar. I walked in and I was like “oh my god, that’s freakin’ Joe Lucido!” (Nava)

Nava went on to talk about what it was like playing saxophone with his childhood guitar idol, introduced to him by his father. He described his mental state as “a kid in a candy store” being on a stage right next to Lucido. After the show ended, Nava struck up a

conversation with Lucido and formally introduced himself. The two chatted for a bit, and Nava got an open invitation from Lucido to join him every Thursday night he could make it. Naturally, Nava took that offer (Nava). Soon Nava was being invited to more gigs outside of Chibo from Lucido, using a farmers market gig as an example where Lucido requested Nava's percussionist sensibilities. Nava then said that those gigs were the first building blocks into what ultimately became a lifelong friendship: "That developed into a mentorship, a friendship and a brotherhood. I cannot express how important Joseph is to me. Both on a professional level and a personal level he's become a family member" (Nava). Through his friendship with Joseph Lucido, John Nava was introduced to a wider network of artists and musicians in the Monterey area and beyond, even getting to meet and perform with more of his idols in the process. He lists a range of artists that he watched on VHS tapes growing up such as the Chick Corea Elektric Band, Dave Weckl and Tom Scott: "I got to watch all of them, and next thing I know because of Joseph Lucido and his mentorship, guidance and training, I can honestly say I've played with all those guys now" (Nava).

Nava continued to talk about networking and the importance of being a genuine person, which he believes in the music world is even more important than raw talent in the vast majority of scenarios. He says that while the music community is global, it's fairly small compared to other communities, especially in modern jazz. Because of this, notoriety can get out about your character fairly easily if you act up, and an artist won't want to hire you for a project if you have a bad reputation, regardless of how proficient you are at your instrument:. "What matters more than skill, what matters more than

anything else is relationships. For lack of a better term, ‘are you a good hang?’ Would I want to sit there and hang out backstage with you for four hours at a festival to go up and play for one hour?” (Nava). Nava talked about how much it meant to him that his reputation was so positive from all of the artists he’s worked with, emphasizing again that having a large figure in the world be able to not just recommend you, but “trust” you is what makes all the difference in getting gigs. As Nava explains, “People don’t realize that this area has a lot of musicians that we consider local for a lack of a better term, but this is just home. These guys are traveling all over the world, they have a huge fan base worldwide in a niche style of music which is usually jazz or jazz-based. They go anywhere else in the world and they’re revered, they’re admired and people are just dying to get a couple of seconds with them” (Nava).

Nava said he enjoys both, and that studio recordings where you’re hired by another artist is where “the money is at,” but that his personal preference will always be small live venues for the improvisational aspect with the crowd: “I’ve worked in every size venue imaginable I guess. Everywhere from the small dive bar where they don’t care if you spill beer on the floor and there’s peanut shells all over the place, all the way up to stadiums. My favorite type of a venue is a small intimate venue that fits maybe a hundred to a hundred and fifty people, and I can reach out and touch the person in the front row they’re so close. I feel like I’m sitting in my living room playing for my friends” (Nava). Nava also goes on that another advantage of the smaller venues is that there’s less of a time crunch as opposed to larger venues and festival settings where you have

to quickly set up your equipment to play for thirty minutes to an hour and then tear it all down right after because of all the bands that are scheduled to go on afterwards.

Analyzing the information that John Nava gave me, it was apparent that he was heavily influenced by Monterey's local jazz communities, primarily through the networking he did with fellow musicians. Most of the experience he got through playing and networking was done right here in Monterey. Nava was also inspired to play music in the first place both through his family's strong musical background as well as listening to local musicians play. When playing in live settings, he also prefers smaller venues to build a stronger connection with the audience. Everything is connected to an important word that Nava used several times throughout the interview: "relationships." John Nava's outlook on life is building as many positive relationships with people as possible. This is how he met some of his closest friends today, and it's how he has been able to maintain his career with consistent success. A large portion of these relationships were built and continue to be maintained in the Monterey area, and to Nava that is what makes the county so special.

For my next interview I had the opportunity to speak with Maricella "Marcie" Chapa. Chapa has been involved with music since the age of twelve. She is currently a band director at North Monterey County High School and a percussionist in her free time. She has played with a wide variety of mainstream artists such as CeeLo Green, Alicia Keys, Jennifer Lopez and Jay-Z (McKenzie). Chapa is probably most well known though for playing percussion in Beyoncé's all-female backing band, the "Suga Mamas," during her 2007 world tour (McKenzie).

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Chapa moved to Monterey County from Houston, Texas in 2016. Chapa told me that while she was already in a good place in regards to job security and financial stability, she needed a change of scenery and new direction for her life: “I hit a point in my life where I needed more and I’m not talking musically wise. I think it was more on a personal level besides my friends and my family” (Chapa). Chapa had been traveling to Big Sur since 2013 to teach summer camps associated with the Monterey Jazz Festival that were aimed at using music to inspire underprivileged students to follow their “passion and dreams” as Chapa describes. This was her first introduction to the area, as before this point she was really only familiar with California’s major cities: “In all honesty I had no clue what Monterey was, I had no clue what Big Sur was. Because with California you think ‘oh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego.’ You think of that, you don’t think of all the other areas. So when I first came out here I was like ‘wow, this is absolutely beautiful” (Chapa). While Chapa was in the area teaching these camps, she would take time out when she could to explore the surrounding areas and see what was offered. Through becoming more acquainted with the area, discovering new music and meeting new people, she grew to have a fondness for Monterey.

Consistently being asked if she’d ever move out to Monterey, Chapa answered with some form of “if it’s meant to be.” One day, Chapa applied for a teaching position in the area on a whim, not expecting anything to come of it. As fate would have it however, she got the call back to her surprise, and with that she set off to make Monterey her new home: “When you find this gem of an area of students that have talent, your heart just starts pounding. These kids could be offered so much more, and I’m not saying I

was the person for the job, but I saw their need, their want and their desire to get better" (Chapa). Initially Chapa had only intended to stay in the area temporarily for a couple of years. That desire slowly eroded away however as she familiarized herself more with the area and met new people. Getting married and having kids was the final deciding factor that led to Chapa calling Monterey her new home (Chapa).

Chapa started teaching privately in college while attending the University of Houston. She said, "I'd teach privately because I didn't want to go find a bartending job or a waitressing job. I wanted to teach because I had gigs and I knew that bartending or waitressing, which there's nothing wrong with that, would get in the way of gigs at night so I knew I couldn't do that" (Chapa). She would then become a licensed teacher by 1997, starting with teaching middle school kids. She jokes saying "I wouldn't do it now, you couldn't pay me a million dollars to teach middle schoolers, I won't do it to this day" (Chapa). Chapa says that one of the hardest things when adjusting to teaching was waking up early because, since gigs were typically at night, she could usually sleep in pretty much whenever she wanted to. One of the most fulfilling aspects of teaching music according to Chapa though was watching the tangible progression of her students over the course of the program: "Music in itself is a different type of gig, because when you're teaching, you're teaching kids how to play. You don't have to sit there and do study guides and tests and notes. You're seeing progress because you're seeing these kids on a regular basis for four years if you're a high school teacher. To me that's the most amazing thing" (Chapa). She also went on to talk about how important it was for her to emphasize to her students that there were other musical career options

besides playing instruments, whether it be engineering, technology, production or management as a few examples. Chapa laments the lack of a fine arts school in the Monterey area, saying that she herself got into music because she was able to attend one where she lived. She dislikes that only big city populations on average get access to those kinds of resources and that even having something significant like the Monterey Jazz Festival isn't enough to establish a similar accredited learning program locally: "I really wish Monterey County had a fine arts school. There's tons of talented kids but you don't get to see them, unfortunately" (Chapa).

Chapa sees the legacy of Monterey, particularly with the Monterey Jazz Festival, in the talented musicians actively performing in the area and wishes the city recognized and invested into that talent more than they currently do. Chapa as a teacher is trying to play her part in that wish by introducing music to kids who might not have gotten the opportunity otherwise, and to do so in a quality environment.

For my third interview, I spoke with Stu Reynolds. Reynolds is currently the director of the Monterey Jazz Festival Regional All-Star High School Band. He also plays saxophone in the Latin Jazz Collective, the Latin-American-influenced jazz group founded by John Nava whom I chatted with earlier. Reynolds has played the saxophone since 1969 as well as clarinet since 1967, which led to him becoming a multi-instrumentalist award winner and featured soloist in the Chicago area during his high school years ("Stu Reynolds | Latin Jazz Collective"). After moving to Monterey in the late 90s, Reynolds used to teach at California State University, Monterey Bay in the

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Music and Performing Art department as a music studio instructor (“Stu Reynolds | Latin Jazz Collective”).

Reynolds talked about how he got involved in music. A band program was just formed at his junior high school when he entered seventh grade, so he went into the program and chose clarinet as his instrument (Reynolds). A couple years later into high school, Reynolds' band director saw he was learning his instrument quickly and decided to move him onto the saxophone. Reynolds’ father, who was himself a trained wind musician, decided to buy a high quality saxophone for his son: “Fortunately, my dad, who had been a wind musician when he was young, knew to buy me a really good horn. He bought a professional level Selmer alto sax that had been made in Paris. It just revealed things to me that you wouldn’t learn on a student model instrument, and so that kind of propelled me a bit” (Reynolds).

Reynolds then talked about moving to Santa Cruz at the tail end of the 70s. Santa Cruz, being a radically different location from the suburbs of Chicago, introduced Reynolds to all sorts of new cultural elements including music: “In the late 70s I moved to Santa Cruz, and from the midwest to Santa Cruz was just a huge change in my musical world. Santa Cruz is very rich in all kinds of ethnic music so all of a sudden I was exposed to Latin music, to Calypso. I was in a Brazilian group. I did some time in a West African Afro-pop group, and at that point I started to get intrigued by the intersection of this American artform called jazz and all these other cultures, all these other rhythmic approaches to music” (Reynolds). Reynolds had lived for a time in Santa Cruz and so he already had a lot of familiarity with Monterey as an extension. Both he

and his wife were leaning more and more towards moving there, but it was his wife getting a job as a librarian at California State Monterey Bay that “sealed the deal” (Reynolds).

Reynolds told me that he didn’t have an extensive history in touring, but that he loved playing locally and that it has a lot of really tight jazz communities. He looked back on playing jazz during his undergraduate research in Iowa where the scene was significantly smaller and called Monterey “just hopping” in comparison. He did also say, however, that it’s a personal goal to explore larger locations as well, something he thinks can be accomplished with the Latin Jazz Collective (Reynolds).

Reynolds then talked about how much he enjoyed writing music, especially as a part of the Latin Jazz Collective. To him this has been an area that over the years he has begun to focus more and more on. He considered it a personal accomplishment to have composed six of the tracks that appear on the latest Latin Jazz Collective album: “I’m not the best saxophone player in town. There’s always people that are going to play better than me. But when I write a piece of music, I own that. That is my heart and soul on that paper” (Reynolds). Reynolds also told me that he enjoys mixing as well, and that he mixed the last two Latin Jazz Collective albums. The first album they recorded together was done in his in-house studio which was a tight fit for a seven piece group. He described his house as looking like “the Matrix” with all of the cabling and wires stretching down the hallways (Reynolds). Reynolds then talked the seven person lineup for the band, which is the default, but not static. It’s flexible and can be either increased or decreased to fit the situation. He mentioned that the Latin Jazz Collective will be

playing at the Monterey Jazz Festival later this year and will have an extra member with them as a singer and trombonist (Reynolds).

Lastly we talked about Reynolds' role as director of the Monterey Jazz Festival Regional All-Star High School Band. He was offered the position after the previous director had what he believed to be a medical emergency and that he was called from not only having worked with much of the Monterey Jazz Festival staff prior, but because of his tenure at California State Monterey Bay (Reynolds). He mentioned how talented the high school kids that he gets to work with are and that they know a lot more about jazz then he did at their age. He also mentioned that as kids they were naturally naive due to inexperience with gigging and the business side of music (Reynolds). Reynolds says "they're sponges, they're learning all the time, they're absorbing all this stuff, they're growing just exponentially. That's very exciting to watch. The pros are kinda like 'this is the way I play, this is what you get', you know? But those high school kids man they are picking up stuff all the time. It's very cool" (Reynolds).

Stu Reynolds' prime influence when it comes to Monterey, and even the greater Bay Area in general, comes from his introduction to Latin music, particularly Cuban music. Reynolds was already playing and listening to jazz music before he initially moved to Santa Cruz in the 70s. But it was that introduction to all sorts of new ethnic music that fired up his passions and set him down the path he's on today: "Jazz music is pretty intellectual, it's not for everybody. It's very much in the head. Whereas if you go to Cuba or to Brazil, the traditional music is very much in the body, right? So when you put the two together you get this beautiful marriage of head and body" (Reynolds).

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

For my final interview, I had the chance to speak with Kristin Gradwohl. Gradwohl is a local ukulele player who plays in a series of acts, most notably WUWU. Gradwohl's passion for music began after listening and dancing to numerous record collections owned by her parents ("WUWU | Bandcamp").

Gradwohl moved to the area in 2012 with a friend currently living there after traveling all across the United States "pretty much barefoot and on skateboard with my ukulele" (Gradwohl). Soon after, she joined a group of boys fresh from Carmel High School as their singer. This introduced Gradwohl to the Carmel Valley area and a particular favorite spot of hers, Meadows Road. Gradwohl recalled a personal story involving her connection with this location: "I was really shocked one day because I was meditating on the property, not drug induced (laughs), and I looked up at the sky and it was dark. There were beautiful stars out and I heard the mountain breath. I was shocked and then I turned to look and there was an incredible being, just incredible light essence radiating, it felt really powerful. Come to find out the Native Americans, the Chumash, used to go up there. So the history of that over time has been revealed to me" (Gradwohl). I asked Gradwohl to further elaborate on her spiritual connections to the area given the uniqueness of that perspective. She told me that while it wasn't the case for every song, several songs that she had written felt as if they were channeled into her by the environment or "whispered" to her. Gradwohl has had dreams in the past that involved music unfamiliar to her that she would then do her best to recreate after waking up (Gradwohl). She elaborated on the connection: "I recently co-wrote a song about nature and about looking at life just in general as it goes on and finding the

beauty in it. There were a lot of natural elements that were inspiring me at the time that those lyrics just came right out" (Gradwohl).

The conversation shifted towards Gradwohl's instrument of choice, the ukulele. She thought it was a fitting instrument to be drawn towards given the surrounding area of Pacific Grove she currently resides in. When asked to elaborate on her love for ukulele, Gradwohl told me that she gravitated towards it due to her Spanish background as well as her smaller hands which made it easier to play than a guitar: "My hands are actually quite small, they didn't develop fully. My pointer finger is actually taller than my middle finger. I tend to teach children music as well and their hands are about the same size as mine, so I find it funny because then I can help them with learning to use their hands on the instruments and they're like 'wow, your hands are as big as mine' and I'm like 'yeah' (laughs)" (Gradwohl). Gradwohl started out by teaching herself to play music before eventually seeking out other experienced players who were trained and being influenced by them. Her grandparents had a piano in the garage that she would write songs on, not knowing how to read music at that time. After high school, Gradwohl's grandmother gifted her a ukulele, which shortly broke due its age. A friend of hers gave her a soprano ukulele after, which is where she started to fall in love with the instrument. As the years went on, Gradwohl bought more ukuleles, moving down in pitch to tenor and eventually even baritone, saying that she really enjoyed some of the darker tones produced by them: "I realized that I really like the lower toned ukuleles because they're such a different sound. They feel more embodied, almost like a guitar" (Gradwohl).

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

When talking about where she likes to perform her music, Gradwohl said that she finds herself “really full of joy” whenever she has the opportunity to play in nature, giving the example of being surrounded by a grove of trees. When performing for people, she tends to prefer smaller venues, giving Pierce Ranch Vineyards as an example of a venue she likes to play at (Gradwohl). A big thing Gradwohl likes about smaller venues is that, for her, lyrics are an important part of the music she writes and having that smaller venue allows the lyrics to come through clearer to a more involved and attentive audience: “It means a lot to me because it feels like the lyrics a lot of times have come from other places, less self identity and more of a message that is bigger than myself. So I like to be able to share the lyrics and to be able to be heard and seen” (Gradwohl). Gradwohl also mentions that while it isn’t necessarily the most optimal acoustic environment for her music, she has also played ukulele to a series of marriage proposals on the beach that left a large impact on her. She considers it a special privilege to be able to witness a couple in their first moments of engagement, saying “I just love it, I love seeing really special intimate moments I think” (Gradwohl). Gradwohl talks about how much she enjoys performing music for children saying that there’s an “excitement” and “awe” in their expressions when hearing live music. She told me about a recent performance where she and her partner both played music at his school saying that the kids were “attentive” and “respectful.” She elaborated:

> Their mouths were open and they’re just gazing at us like we were some sort of magical creatures. It felt really powerful because they are there absorbing the information, absorbing the vibration. It feels like a really spiritual moment

> because you're almost making a core memory with them. It really becomes a core memory of your own to make an impact on the youth and see them taking it all in. (Gradwohl)

Gradwohl mentions that her partner has a nine-year-old daughter that is also getting into music. She was interested in it because of her dad's guitar playing, so Gradwohl gifted her one of her first ukuleles as a sort of "mini guitar" that she would be able to play (Gradwohl).

Kristin Gradwohl's biggest influence from Monterey is the spiritual connection she inhabits with the very landscape of the area. Gradwohl is someone who has a love of nature and wildlife and attempts to connect with it whenever she can. With Monterey however, that connection is stronger than ever, creating a unique bond with the area that goes deeper than just a general appreciation. She has used this spiritual connection with her new home to empower her music and songwriting on a scale that she believes would not be possible otherwise. This has also influenced the way she connects with other individuals in the area, believing that every person of the city is here for a purpose and has something special to offer, whether they realize it or not.

After going over a few bullet points of Monterey musical highlights and transcribing four case studies worth of information, where do we go now? If there's one thing I learned through the people I spoke with and the writing process of this very paper, it's that everyone has a unique story that deserves to be told. I went into the writing of this paper with somewhat of a frustration that even legendary historical music moments like the Monterey Pop Festival have seemingly been long forgotten in the

area, with little desire to preserve or provide some sort of public remembrance. Not to mention the wonderful music today that's still being produced in the area treated as niche. That frustration is definitely still there to an extent, but with this paper, I successfully did something about that for at least four individuals who now have their stories forever preserved in the CSUMB Digital Commons. More importantly than that though, I ultimately learned something even more important; that while the city of Monterey putting in more effort to recognize its musical communities and history would certainly be nice, even optimal, the fact is that even without it this city still has an incredible tangible influence on its musicians that takes several forms. From the ethnic influences introduced by other cultures, to the people and even the very landscapes of the city itself, music is affected on all fronts. It is alive and well in Monterey, and both the current and future roster of musicians inhabiting the area will continue to use that influence to push boundaries and keep the scene alive. Because unlike us, music is truly eternal.

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Works Cited

"Biography | Latin Jazz Collective." *Latin Jazz Collective*, https://www.latinjazz-collective.com/biography.

Chapa, Maricella. Personal interview. 5 Apr 2023.

Gradwohl, Kristin. Personal interview. 25 Apr 2023.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.1-2)." *Warner Brothers*, 1998, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoJ6Vi7yn6U.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.3)." *Warner Brothers*, 1998, https://youtu.be/qtOU7uzI6J0.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.4)." Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/JU2X7ql2H9Y.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.5)." Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/RazviWWYcPY.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.6)." Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/2N3eUT-GeYc.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.7)." Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/rEGeyD1Id3s.

Harper, William. "Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.8)." Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/rAyyfgjzqmY.

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Harper, William. “Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.9).” Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/Pn2nzN-xHDg.

Harper, William. “Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.10).” Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/HTaivn8IRvU.

Harper, William. “Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.11).” Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/drv6CFUVAe8.

Harper, William. “Monterey Jazz Festival: 40 Legendary Years (Ch.12).” Warner Brothers, 1998, https://youtu.be/oB6bHPhNetk.

Himmelsbach-Weinstein, Eric. “Monterey 40.” *VH1 Rock Docs*, 14 June 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnV34yEby44.

History.com Editors. “The Monterey Pop Festival Reaches Its Climax.” *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 13 Nov. 2009, https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-monterey-pop-festival-reaches-its-climax.

“John Nava | Latin Jazz Collective.” *Latin Jazz Collective*, https://www.latinjazz-collective.com/john-nava.

McKenzie, Kathryn. “Beyoncé and Beyond.” *Voices of Monterey Bay*, 12 June 2019, https://voicesofmontereybay.org/2019/06/12/beyonce-and-beyond.

McKibben, Carol. “Race and Color in a California Coastal Community: The Seaside Story.” *Black Past*, 29 Jul. 2009, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/race-and-color-california-coastal-community-seaside-story/.

Reace Niles
MPA 475
5/20/23

Nava, John. Personal interview. 2 Apr 2023.

Reynolds, Stu. Personal interview. 13 Apr 2023.

“Stu Reynolds | Latin Jazz Collective.” *Latin Jazz Collective*, https://www.latinjazz-collective.com/stu-reynolds.

Ward, Ed. "The Monterey Pop Festival." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 29 Dec 2000, https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Monterey-Pop-Festival-1688427.

“WUWU | Bandcamp.” *Bandcamp*, https://everything.bandcamp.com/.