

The Golden Triangle and Emanon - by Pat Kelly



(known to us as Cory's – Mad Frog)

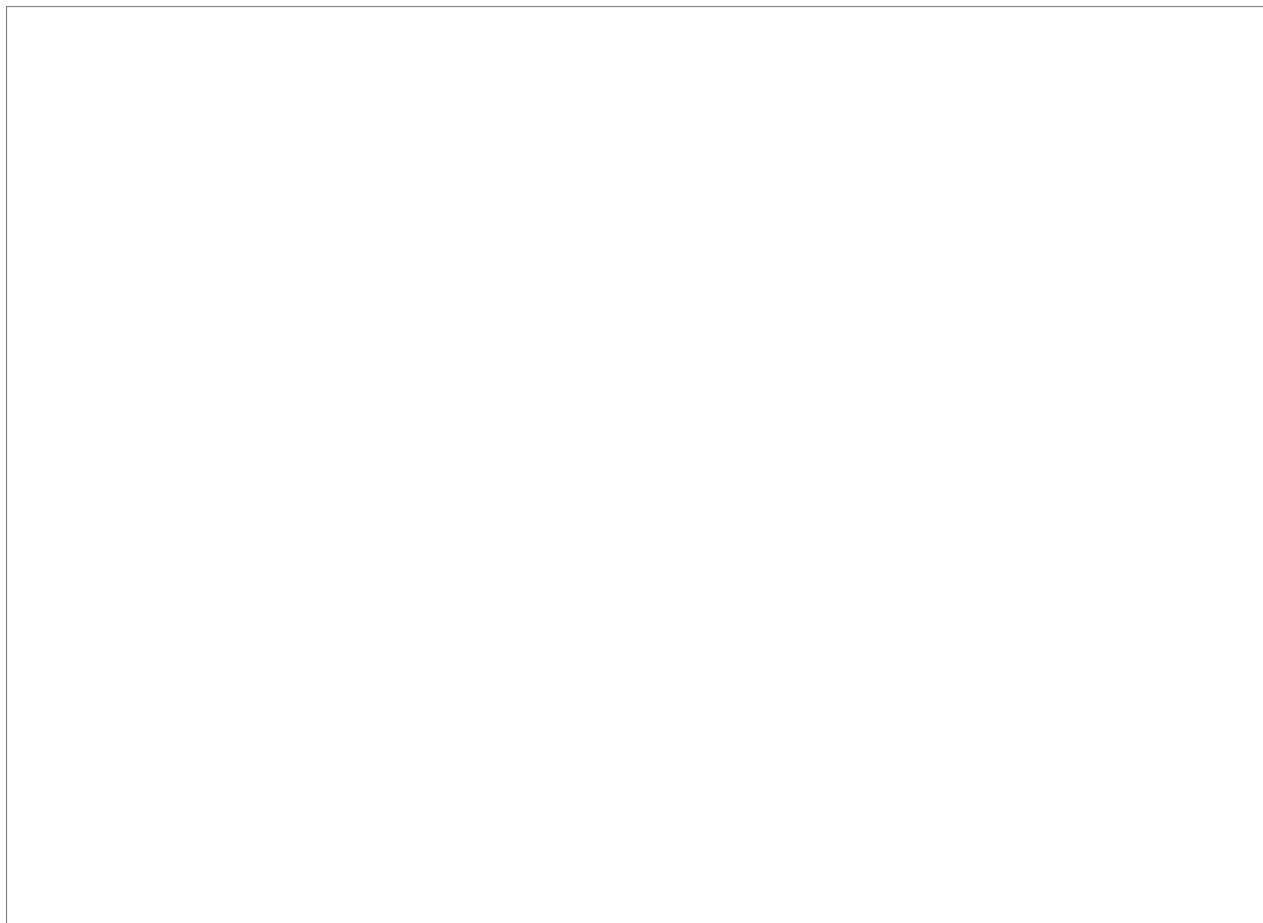
Going to the Golden Triangle Coffee House was one of my first forays into live jazz in Cincinnati. Sometime around my senior year in high school or shortly thereafter (1972-73) I learned of this jazz club that was in Clifton on E. McMillan near Vine. My friend Mark McLaughlin's mom had been there and had a friend named Sherry who was playing drums, I recall. Sherry, I had thought, was married to Andy Robbins who was the doorman/maitre d' of the club, (but I learned later that it was just a relationship and not a marriage). I was from the west side of town and didn't know anyone who played jazz and I was just learning on my own. My friends and I spent seemingly endless hours listening to Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Mingus, Ornette Coleman, Chico Hamilton, Les McCann, McCoy Tyner, Miles Davis, Frank Zappa, Barney Kessell, Jimmy Smith, Booker Ervin, Cecil Taylor, Bill Evans and other music, mostly in Mark's basement pad.

The Golden Triangle was a beautifully exotic place. It was one in a series of clubs run by pianist Ed Moss. By my calculations Ed was probably about 31 or 32 years old at the time. I was 18 or 19. Before this he had a place called Love's Coffee House which I never got to experience. I had also heard of Reality Foods in Mt. Adams. There was a group of people who hung together around Moss that referred to themselves as "the scene" They had been together for a number of years and they staffed the various enterprises. Among them were artists, craftsmen, bakers, musicians and others with various talents.

The Triangle was located in a building that now houses a bar/night club called The Mad Frog. The section that was the Golden Triangle has been gutted to make a dance room, a dingy and nondescript place as compared to the Golden Triangle. When the Triangle existed, in the east portion of the building with its own East McMillan entrance, the bar on the corner was called the Delmar Cafe, an "old man" bar. Later it became Cory's which hosted music, including H. Bomb Ferguson, Pigeat Jarrett and **Jimmy McGary**, for many years (which began during time that I lived in Pensacola, FL between 1983 and 1986).

The decor of the Golden Triangle was rich and appealing, at least to me, with its Persian rugs, stained glass, triangular tables, and Middle Eastern styled wall appliqué. The music room, to

the left as one entered, had a bandstand with a small grand piano on a riser, book shelves that went from floor to a high ceiling, low tables, either on the floor or on platforms, and legless chairs with backs for “on the floor” seating, or the listener just leaned against the wall or pillows on the platforms. There was a small 2-seater booth in the rear. The menus were drawn with beautiful calligraphy and the lighting was always kept low.



The front entrance room, into which one stepped down from the street, had a raised service bar with an espresso machine - the first I had ever experienced - that itself was exotic, to me. The club would feature one gourmet entree per night and always excellent pastries made by staff/scene members. There was a large circular stained glass window with an eye within a triangle high on the back wall facing the entrance door that rolled back to expose a sleeping area. There was a large cast of characters in the scene but I mainly remember Jimmy, John, Art H., Art Q., Chrissy, Caryn, Debbie, Barbara and Andy. Others I didn't know.

The music on the phonograph (yes, that's what was used to play music in the early 70s) was always very great, straight-ahead jazz. Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Ahmad Jamal with Voices, Billie Holiday, and Sonny Rollins immediately come to mind. Jazz was THE thing of this place. Nothing else. No TV, no sports. The staff was into jazz, the “management” was about jazz. If you came into that place you had better have been about jazz or you would have been confronted and hassled about it by someone. This is where I and many of my contemporaries and future longtime friends were baptized into the jazz world. There were many regulars - beatniks and hipsters (the word had a different meaning then) and jazz aficionados - who I recognized and got to know. I recall composing and notating one of my own pieces, "Weird Asparagus" while sitting at a table there.

I often went to the Triangle alone. I was working a full-time day job at the University of Cincinnati Main Campus Library at that time for a couple of years - I didn't go to college full-time until 7 years after high school. Other than work, I pretty much hung out, listened to jazz on records and in live situations, and played with others when I could. I practiced piano a lot at that time, especially since I hadn't begun lessons until age 18, having been self-taught before that. I had previously had no technical training on piano or jazz and I just used my ears. (I had learned to read notes from a couple of years of trumpet lessons in late primary school.)

The live music at the Triangle didn't commence until 10:30 or 11pm. I'd go there on work nights and stay until 1:30am, drive back to Price Hill or wherever I was living at that point, sleep and have intense espresso dreams, and get up to be at work at 8am. I would do this at least 2 or 3 times each week.

The first musicians that I heard there were Ed Moss on piano, **Bud Hunt** on bass, and **Sherry Robbins** on drums. Sherry had long red hair and was an attractive woman but pretty minimal on drums, if my memory serves me. She kept time adequately. Soon I would be more likely to see **Brett Wamsley**, **Ron Enyard**, or **Dee Felice** on the drum kit. **Kenny Poole** would sometimes play guitar. It was also during this time that I first heard the bassist **Lou Lausche**.

Bud Hunt was a longtime Cincinnati area bassist with a connection to the community of Evansville, IN. where he had a keen interest in its local "horticulture and botany". Moss was pretty unapproachable for me but during breaks I would ask Bud the names of tunes that they had played, most of which would all seem strangely familiar to me. I wanted to learn them all. Then on Fridays every other week after I was paid at the library I would go to "Sight In Sound", a big record store at Queen City and Grand in Fairmount, and buy a half dozen or more jazz albums that contained some of the tunes I had heard the previous 2 weeks. At the Triangle, I would sit in the back booth with a cafe au lait and draw music staves on napkins and transcribe licks as the band played. Then I would go home and stare at the ceiling thinking about musical ideas. I took a music theory class at CCM as a non-matriculated student while I worked at the U.C. Library in 1973 or 74. A fringe benefit of university employment was free tuition.