

## SPRING 2025 INSIDE THIS EDITION

BJA's New Board Member, Charmaine Michelle	2
About Town	6
Bringing Jazz To The Next Generation	8
Baltimore Jazz Conference	8
Susan Alcorn Lobato, Pedal Steel Guitar Virtuoso	10
Eubie Blake Cultural Center to Launch New Media Lab	13
Jazz Jam Sessions	14
BJA Members, Community News, Member News	14
BJA Membership Form	15

## BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

VOL. 15, NO. 1, SPRING 2025

# ABOUT TOWN

## Greg Hatza's Jazz ORGANization at Keystone Korner

By Michael Friedman



L to R: Brian Kookken, Peter Fraize, Greg Hatza, Robert Shahid

The art of the organ jazz quartet was on display at its best at Keystone Korner on January 23rd, and no one sat still in their seat. The music of the Greg Hatza ORGANization had drive and

soul. The rhythms were infectious.

The group was the traditional ensemble of Hammond organ (Greg Hatza), electric guitar (Brian Kookken), tenor saxophone (Peter Fraize) and drums Robert Shahid).

The group was reminiscent of Jimmy Smith (the best of the best in my view), Joey DeFrancesco (who influenced Mr. Hatza), and many other organ jazz quartets, which have a long history going back to the 1940s when they were enormously popular.

Given the performance this night, it's no wonder why. These guys were great. Together. The organ driving the group ahead. The deep tenor capturing the depths of the music. The guitar swooping. And the drum sustaining it all. Always right there.

The evening began with "Baltimore Strut" (which may be viewed at youtube.com) It then slowed down a little but still with a driving beat. Onto some popular music—"Since I Fell For You" followed by "I Can't Help It." Then onto some powerful rhythm and blues with a screaming sax, driving organ and swinging guitar. And Robert Shahid again there, supporting the sound.

For a time, the music slowed to a plaintive blues—"Whiskey Drinking Woman"—which was new to me, but told a familiar story of a woman and a man in the kind of relationship that makes the blues necessary.

For me the peak of the evening was "Stagger Lee," a song that goes back to my teenage years, as it did for the woman sitting next to me at the bar. We sang parts of it together and rocked in our seats. What a night!

Michael Friedman is a retired social worker and social advocate who is also a semi-professional jazz pianist and photographer; his photographs of jazz artists are on permanent display at Keystone Korner in Baltimore. He writes occasionally for the Baltimore Jazz Alliance newsletter. [www.michaelbfriedman.com](http://www.michaelbfriedman.com)