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Al Gallodoro
Two, maybe three years ago I heard through the grapevine that Al Gallodoro was still actively playing and living somewhere in upstate New York. All I knew about Al was that he is highly respected by folks older than me, and Al Gallodoro is a saxophone player who enjoyed the peak of his professional career for many years. It is a music career that began in the late 1920s, and has thrived for over sixty years. Imagine that, sixty years of saxophone and clarinet playing, which in Al’s case can be summarized as irrepressible, scintillating, captivating, and glamorous technical displays of musicianship surpassing even those of the great Rudy Wiedoeft. My curiosity was aroused so I pursued the possibility of interviewing him.

Time went by and I began receiving little bits of information on Al’s whereabouts. Nothing committal mind you, just little hints. I waited. Then one day a gentleman called, leaving a message on our answering machine which said he knew Al Gallodoro and that I should get in touch with the mystery caller. I returned his call but there was a hesitancy in the conversation.

My next move was to contact Paul Mock at the Selmer Company in Elkhart, Indiana to ask for help. He graciously sent some Selmer literature on Al, and suggested I write Frank Reardon in the midwest, who I later learned is a big fan of Al Gallodoro. I wrote Frank and received in the mail a cassette tape talking about his lifelong idol/friend, Al Gallodoro. Frank’s tape was an immense help and stimulated my interest even more.

In the Spring of 1988 Mr. Elio Bastianelli, another longtime admirer of Al, and a true devotee of his music, contacted me. It was at the suggestion of Paul Cohen. Thanks Paul! Elio provided the final impetus as to the whereabouts of Al Gallodoro. He respected Al’s privacy, which meant several letters and phone calls between Mr. Bastianelli and myself before Al’s address and phone number was sent to me. I wrote Al to express my in-
terest in interviewing him for Saxophone Journal. After an appropriate period of time went by I called his home and we talked briefly. At this stage there was a real sense of accomplishment that I had gotten this far, after all, it was my desire to pay tribute to one of the acknowledged greatest saxophone/clarinet players of this century.

More time went by, followed by subsequent phone conversations between AI and myself. Then word got to Arnold Brilhart concerning my efforts and six cassette tapes arrived in the mail from California, all devoted to Al Gallodoro and his music. They were particularly helpful and I shall be forever indebted to Arnold for his thoughtful gesture. In the summer of 1988 Al Gallodoro and I finally settled on a date to meet.

It was a beautiful summer’s day in early August, 1988, when Elio Bastianelli, his lovely wife Erika, and myself waited outside the Holiday Inn in Oneonta, New York for AI to drive up. He arrived in his well-worn 1968 Buick Riviera - the crown of his head barely visible over the top of the dash (AI is about 5’7” tall). We exchanged brief greetings before he parked his car to come inside for breakfast. After breakfast we followed him to his home on Franklin Mountain. We all sat down at AI’s kitchen table and the long-awaited interview with a true living legend among saxophonists had begun.

Alfred Gallodoro’s fabulous career began at age thirteen (1926) in Birmingham, Alabama with the Romeo brother’s band called ‘Romeo and his Julies.’ “We were booked into the Lyric Theatre for one week with big time vaudeville. The Romeo’s father would pick me up at school and I did the three shows everyday for a week. You see, originally my father moved our family from Chicago, where I was born, to New Orleans for a brief stay, and then we moved to Birmingham, Alabama in 1919. My father was offered a job playing clarinet with the Municipal Band in Birmingham, and he also worked in the steel mill, so we moved there and lived there eight years.”

“After my experience with the Romeo brothers, the great banjo player George Evans asked my parent’s permission for me to join his band and go to Florida in 1927. My parents loved that I wanted to play. So, we (the George Evans’ Band) headed for Jacksonville, Florida and played at Hampton Beach, then Gainesville, and finally Pensacola (from June until mid-October). George Evans is still alive and within a few weeks I was hired by Howard Vorhees to play in the then-famous nightclub and casino called The Forest Club. At age fifteen, I went into the Orpheum Theatre in New Orleans as first alto and clarinet in November of 1928. Between ages fifteen and twenty I was working two jobs in New Orleans: vaudeville, and night clubs. So, for about five years (October 1927 to July 3rd, 1933) I did big time vaudeville: Bob Hope’s act back in 1931-32, Milton Berle and Edgar Bergen, and Joan Davis. In those days New Orleans had seven pit orchestras in different theatres: Lowes Theatre, Saenger House, etc… We were the RKO (Radio Keith Orpheum) house orchestra and had two saxes, a violinist who conducted while playing violin, two trumpets, a trombone, piano, bass and drums. They sent the music ahead and they did stage shows combined with a movie - the early talkies. Radio, of course, came in the early 20s. Anyway, we’d rehearse the morning of the show and the first vaudeville show would be at noon. The last show was 9 o’clock that evening. Then I’d go to a night club at 11:30 p.m. to play. Now these were bootleg days. Gangsters used to come in, and you had show girls. They’d drink booze out of a cup! Some guys would give you $100 tips, and this is no baloney - like you see in the movies. But they all loved musicians and never gave us any trouble.”

“After awhile I had to quit the night club job because we worked from eleven until five in the morning. I couldn’t take it. The night club paid $35 a week, and the theatre $85 a week. Those were in the days Coca Cola was a nickel. A pack of gum was a nickel and a frankfurter with sauerkraut was a nickel. When you parked your car it was fifteen cents. People won’t believe this but, in New Orleans we used to fish with shrimp as bait - two pounds for fifteen cents right out of the water!”

With the decline of vaudeville in the mid-1930s, AI’s interests were stimulated to move on to the big
wrote things like I Had To Be You, and I'll See You In My Dreams. So, I went to see Jones and the maitre d' said, 'Well, you can talk to his manager, Arnold Frank.' I really did some talking about who I was, that I'd played this and that, and he said, 'Okay kid, Isham is having a rehearsal at 2 o'clock. Come in, bring your horns, and sit in and play a few notes.' 'That's exactly what I did and he hired me! I was doubting on first alto, clarinet, baritone, and taking solos. At the time Gordon Jenkins was his arranger. Jenkins became famous a few years later as a composer. I remember the beautiful Manhattan Towers he wrote, recorded, and narrated in the late 1940s.'

"Around 1965 I received a phone call from my brother Frank in L.A., and was told to call Clark Dennis, who was in the Whiteman Band as a fine singer (tenor). Clark told me that Jenkins was in his dying days and he had composed a very difficult piece for clarinet. Gordon told Clark that Al Galadoro was the man he wanted to perform it. Gordon died within a few weeks and nothing ever came of it. But to me that was an honor."

"I might as well tell you this, if you want to hear it? Isham didn’t need me and most of the guys didn’t like me. They were fighting for a raise and Jones wouldn’t give them a raise. Then he hires me for $75 a week!"

"While we were in Atlantic City we (Isham Jones’ Band) didn’t work on Monday, but instead went to Camden, New Jersey and recorded for Victor. We recorded two numbers that featured me on clarinet for eight bars (these were the old 78 rpm records): That Dallas Man, and Doing The Uptown Lowdown."

"I stayed with Isham all summer and we toured all of New England after Labor Day."

Following the New England tour Isham Jones’ band settled into the Commodore Hotel in New York City that fall without Al Galadoro’s services. It was a steady six-month job, and because Al was not a member of the New York Musicians Union, Local 802, Isham had to let him go. Al immediately transferred his New Orleans card to Local 802, and waited the mandatory six months for steady work.

"Julian Woodworth was the first band in New York City I worked for, but in those days jobs paid about $12 a night for five-hour jobs. Later it got better. Al Manconi (I’ll never forget his name) told me, ‘There’s a conductor at WINS radio (in those days all radio stations had bands) and why don’t you go audition for him?’ ‘They played classical music, and all kinds of music, with a small orchestra of about seven or eight men. So, I got the job there in the spring of 1934. That was paying $80 a week, even though the scale was $75. The contractor and pianist was Alfredo Antonini, who later became famous as a conductor. I stayed there two and one-half years. At the time I was living on 69th Street, right between Broadway and West End Avenue. When I moved to Sunnydale I think we were paying about $65 a month for a three-room apartment.’"

"For the life of me I can’t understand why I forgot to mention one of the biggest names in show business - Rudy Vallee! I will never forget this. While I was at radio station WINS, in late 1934 or early 1935, someone, who I can’t recall, asked me if I would go to Atlantic City and sit in with Rudy at the Steal Pier. So, I was hired to do Rudy’s weekly radio show called the Fleischman yeast Hour, which was one of the top shows in the 30s. He would feature me every week. I remember playing Jimmy Dorsey's other solo called Beebe. Every week Rudy had the biggest stars on his show such as John Barrymore, Edward G. Robinson, the great pianist of that time, Josep Lhevinne, the very young Freddie Bartholomew (he was about eleven years old), Martha Raye, and Louie Prima."
Paul Whiteman's 1939 Chesterfield Orchestra

Taken on Hamid's Pier in Atlantic City, N.J., on Sunday, April 9th, 1939. A nine-member saxophone section included: (left to right - second row) Harold Feldman, John Weston, Stitz, Fargeson, and Vincent Capone, (left to right - third row) Frank Gallodoro, Artie Drelinger, Sal Franzella, Al Gallodoro, and Frank Simeone

The opportunity for Al Gallodoro to join the great Paul Whiteman band occurred soon thereafter in the spring of 1936. The Whiteman Orchestra sported five saxophones and in less than three years that number increased to nine in Paul Whiteman's 'Chesterfield Cigarette Orchestra' show on CBS, which lasted from January 1938 until the end of 1939.

It should be noted that Whiteman's musical memorabilia, including his large library of more than three-thousand arrangements, were bequeathed to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where they now form the 'Whiteman Collection.'

'I have to say something about that (Whiteman's) band. It was the greatest band that was ever organized. And not because I was in it, but because we played everything, and everybody could play. Whiteman was never considered a jazz band, yet you had the Teagarden brothers in it, and Sal Franzella playing jazz clarinet (who was a second Benny Goodman, with a great ear). Sal Franzella started with the Whiteman band in February 1938. I had joined the band about two years earlier, in 1936, on a job at the Orpheum Theatre in New Orleans. Whiteman also had musicians like Frank Trumbauer on sax (who played jazz C Melody saxophone, and recorded a lot with Bix Beiderbecke), Frank Signorelli on piano (who also played with the Original Memphis Five, Bobby Hackett, and bass saxophonist Adrian Rollini. Signorelli, along with Matty Malneck, co-wrote Stairways To The Stars), and the great jazz tenor player Artie Drelinger who was way ahead of everybody. And of course, we had great swing drummers; Jack Teagarden on trombone, Jack's brother Charlie Teagarden playing jazz trumpet, and the great blind accordionist, who also wrote arrangements for Whiteman, Joe Mooney.'

'I had been at WINS radio playing a lot of solos. Practically everyday I had a solo. So, the tenor man who tipped me off about the Whiteman job must have told 'Pops' (Paul's nickname). Now this was back in the spring of 1936, when the tenorman made an appointment for me to see Whiteman at NBC. He impressed me very much and offered me $225 a week. I said no, I wanted $250. He started to walk away and stopped and said, 'I tell you what, I'll give you $235 to start with.'

'I should mention that I went with Paul Whiteman directly from my job with Rudy Vallee and it was one of the happiest days of my life. It was an honor to be the lead alto player with Paul Whiteman.'

'At the time Whiteman was doing one radio show a week, and he gave me scale for that. It was the Woodbury Soap Hour show with Adolphe Deutsch as musical arranger. Whiteman also did the famous Billy Rose Jumbo show at the Hippodrome on 6th Avenue in New York City. The Hippodrome was a big theatre that was torn down a zillion years ago.'

'The other sax players with Whiteman were Frankie Trumbauer on second alto and C Melody, George Bamford on tenor and flute, Charlie Strickfaden on oboe and baritone and some alto, and Jack Cordaro was the jazz clarinet player, and played tenor and bass clarinet.' In October of 1936, Al's brother, Frank came to New York and played jobs here and there. In 1937 Whiteman decided to have seven, maybe eight saxophones in the band. 'So, I said, 'Pops, my brother Frank is a pro. He won an award while in New Orleans.' Whiteman said, 'I'll take your word for it,' and that is how my brother Frank happened to join the band.'

Al Gallodoro played with Paul Whiteman from the spring of 1936 to 1965, just a couple years before Paul died. Not only did Al make many fine recordings with Whiteman (Rhapsody In Blue, and Strike Up The Band with Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland to name just two) but on countless occasions Gallodoro was the featured soloist with the Whiteman orchestra. He was also featured in Whiteman's 'Sax Soctette' (nine saxophones doubling).

There was a temporary disbanding of the Whiteman orchestra.
Born in Chicago on June 20th, 1913, Alfred Gallodoro is seventy-six years old as of this writing. When talking with him it took me no time at all to realize how incredible his memory is (I should be so lucky at age 41): dates, names, and events that happened fifty years ago were recalled with instant clarity.

Al Gallodoro is clearly one of the chosen few whose musical gifts are those of a 'higher power!' Even at age seventy-six he is a man possessed of his music. And he is a man who has enjoyed the thrill of being the best at what he does. It is a judgement based on the opinions of his peers - perhaps the ultimate goal of a professional musician! One gets the feeling he was not to be denied his rightful place in musical history. A six to eight hour a day practicer in his youth, he paid the necessary dues to maintain his status of, as so aptly put by his lifelong friend Arnold Brillhart - a 'musician's musician!' And at age seventy-six, Al still commits himself to a regular practice routine maintaining an ability and technique on both saxophone and clarinet that players fifty years his junior could envy. But with Al it goes further than that. He is quite possibly one of the most gifted 'natural' saxophone/clarinet players of his time. Times change, to be sure; and styles of music change, to be sure; but for my money, and given the style of music he chose to play, Al Gallodoro may very well represent the finest in his genre of playing in the twentieth century! Arguably, he may very well be the finest saxophone and clarinet player this century has seen, or heard. In the words of the late George M. Bundy (former President of the Selmer Company in a telegram to Paul Whiteman): 'you're right Paul Whiteman, Al Gallodoro's great - out solos Wiedoeft.' Interestingly, in his youth Al's idol was indeed the great Rudy Wiedoeft.

As an active player still today, I was curious as to how Al manages to keep his fabulous technical facility as a 'senior citizen,' and if there were any secrets he might share with us. "everybody has the same problem. I don't care who they are: Phil Woods? Great, they all have the same problem. They must be going crazy saying, 'my God, if I practice this I'm neglecting that!' It's frustrating and getting worse, and worse, and worse. I still say the old fashioned practice exercises are the most difficult. For clarinet I use the four books by Koepech, up to six flats and six sharps in major and minor. They are finger busters that can be played on saxophone. The modern exercises are one to read, but they're actually not that intricate. I have Lennie Niehaus' three books and I love 'em. You know, a lot of musicians won't mention other people's names. They're jealous. I'm not jealous. That man (Lennie Niehaus) is great and he wrote beautiful books. But if you practice too much of Lennie then you're losing out on Labanchi, or whatever. Then, you're losing out on the tunes you play. I must know a thousand tunes and then somebody will say, 'do you know such and such a tune?' Oh my God, do you have to tell me that? This happens all the time.'

Known in his prime as the "Triple Threat" instrumentalist, based on his ability on clarinet, bass clarinet and saxophone, it is perhaps his triple and double tonguing that continues, even to this day, to impress musicians. In 1956, the Selmer Company put out an 'Alfred Gallodoro Saxophone/Clarinet Notebook,' which offered some insights on this technique, and more detailed guidelines for improving one's overall technical prowess. I asked Al if he would share with us the real secret of his double and triple tonguing technique. Al laughed - "I use it here and there." "It's the same as the trumpet, really. I use double tonguing more often than triple tonguing. To double tongue I use the syllables Tu...Ku. Tu...Ku, and when I triple tongue I use Tu...Tu...Ku. The Ku is always done with the back of the throat. It's just practice. I will not teach it! That was told to me, how to do it, by a
man who got me jobs in New Orleans, Howard Vorhees."

Being largely a self-taught player, who was influenced in his formative years by Rudy Wiedoeft and clarinetist Daniel Bonade (Bonade’s first recording of the Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2 with the Philadelphia Orchestra done in the late 20s or early 30s), I asked Al how he developed an awareness, at a very early age, of how the saxophone is supposed to sound, as compared to the clarinet. In those days he didn’t enjoy the luxury of stereo components and limitless recordings to listen to. What strikes me most about Al’s recordings is that his clarinet sounds like a clarinet, and his saxophone sounds like a saxophone - perhaps the most difficult goal for a doubler to achieve. “I suppose I used to listen to my father, who got a good sound on clarinet. I also went to listen to some of the big band concerts he played in, and your ears catch that. I don’t know, maybe it’s just natural talent - you can’t explain these things. You really cannot explain these things. It’s like Bette Davis, what a marvelous actress. Another actress is beautiful but can’t act. They don’t feel the part.”

Al still plays a Selmer Mark VI alto, “picked out at the factory in 1958.” It is gold plated with “Al Gallodoro” neatly engraved on the top rim of the bell. He still has, and likes, the old “Supers” made in 1935 (very low 20,000s). They came after the so-called Cigar Cutter Selmer. For a mouthpiece he uses a Dick Stabile model Woodwind Mouthpiece on alto, which is medium open. “I’ve gone back and forth on clarinet mouthpieces, but on sax I stick to one. I use Vandoren medium hard reeds on alto, medium soft to medium on clarinet, and medium hard on bass clarinet. Did you ever hear of Steve Brodus? Steve Brodus made a reed gauge that was superb. In those days you’d go to a store and a guy would open up a box of reeds; so you’d pick out what you wanted and try some. The idea was this, you’d take a reed; oh, maybe a fourteen then a
ten, and an eight, whatever. Then you’d try those reeds and the ones that hit you first, you had the reed! I’d say nine out of ten reeds were perfect. They were measured just perfect. Like spark plugs. But today they don’t sell reeds that way. They sell a box.’’

We switched our conversation to Al’s NBC years. I was interested in gaining more detailed insights of this experience in his life, and of course, to inquire about the great Arturo Toscanini. “When I was twenty-nine I joined the NBC Symphony, in June of 1942, with Toscanini and Stokowski. They shared the podium every week. That audition was really something. I was really scared. It was the ‘old man’ himself (Toscanini), H. Leopold Stokowski, and Dr. Frank Black; I was right on that stage all alone with my clarinet and bass clarinet. They needed me for bass clarinet, and you know something, I could read cello parts on the bb bass clarinet. A tone up, no problem. So, I’m playing everything a tone up and later they corrected me and said, ‘Al, you did right but in the symphony and opera when you get a bass clarinet part in bass clef and see a C, you play a C. It’s written for your instrument.’ I played a little Wagner, noodled around and played some cadenzas. Within a couple hours they said, ‘the job is yours.’”

The NBC Orchestra rehearsed three times each week, generally in the afternoons. There were no substitute conductors. Of the two, Stokowski was the easier to work for, “but he (Toscanini) never picked on me and I’m glad of that.” “This is a real funny story. At Carnegie Hall we did a benefit concert with the NBC Symphony. So, we’re doing Tristan und Isolde by Richard Wagner and I’m playing the bass clarinet solo. When I got to the note C on bass clarinet I didn’t play the regular C. I played the side C. Toscanini is conducting and to Mischa Mischakoff the concert master he’s doing this, or something, and I’m thinking, ‘oh no, is he complaining?’ He gets off the podium and goes into his room. I said to Mischa, ‘Mischa, I don’t feel good, what did Toscanini say to you?’ He said, ‘Al, that’s the first time he ever heard that passage played in tune!’ May God strike me blind if this isn’t true, and blindness is the worst thing you can bestow on yourself!’”

The American premiere of Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony, on July 17, 1942, was under Toscanini’s baton, and Al Gallodoro played bass clarinet on this history-making occasion. An experience for which he takes great pride. “Months later we did Shostakovich’s Seventh with Stokowski, and when he got to the oboe part, he said, ‘gentlemen, just take your time, I’ll go along with you.’ He made it so much easier, and that’s a difficult solo for the oboe and bass clarinet.”

Al’s tenure with the NBC Symphony lasted from June 1942 to October 1944. The pressure became too much, with five to six day rehearsals, “and I couldn’t take it anymore.” “We used to do what we called the ‘scrub jobs,’ or music to eat by. And that was all live then, not like today. The radio would be on at supper time and there’d be live orchestras - yes indeed! The musicians made the networks. Today they couldn’t care less. When I joined NBC I was making $160 a week. It wasn’t too bad. A recording session was $30 for three hours, I remember that.”

After leaving NBC in 1944 Al did freelance work under the baton of Ray Block. For those who need a reminder, Ray Block was ‘music maestro’ for Jackie Gleason on television in the 1950s. Years later it was Sammy (Shapiro) Spear. “Sammy was also one of the top trumpet players on many dates I played on, including the ‘Manor’ album I put out titled An Alfred Gallodoro Concert.” Other work included clarinet with Alfred Antonini at CBS, the Conte Castille Radio Hour, the Carnation Milk Hour show with Percy Faith, Victor recordings with Arthur Fiedler, The Firestone Hour, Leonard
Bernstein’s famous TV show in the 1950s called ‘Omnibus,’ Victor recordings with Andre Kostelanitz, the Arthur Godfrey Radio show under conductor Archie Bleyer, radio shows and recording with the famed Broadway show conductor Jay Blackton, the Syd Caesar Show, a recording of More Than You Can Stand under the baton of Bernie Green at ABC, performances with the fabled band conductor from Michigan State - Dr. Revelle, and countless other plumb jobs in New York City.

In the spring of 1947, Al landed a steady job at ABC with Paul Whiteman. Paul was now music director at ABC, and through the efforts of Frank Vagnoni, a contractor, Paul talked Al into coming on staff. It proved to be a twenty year association between Al Gallodoro and ABC, which included more television and radio work. The ABC years also brought recording sessions Al’s way, as a backup instrumentalist on the Victor label, Decca, and other labels.

Another association, of which Al is justly proud, was with the Selmer Company from 1953 until 1980. He was their top clinician/artist; a position he jointly shared for many years with the great French saxophonist/teacher, Marcel Mule. ABC was kind enough to allow Al leaves of absence for his many Selmer clinics across America. In the spring 1956 issue of Bandwagon, published by Selmer, Al was featured on the front cover with writings by him titled ‘Saxophone Secrets.’

For historians and fans of Al, there are seven recordings which feature Alfred Gallodoro: (1) his ‘Manor’ double album, (2) the Columbia double album featuring Al on eight saxophone solos and titled ‘Saxophone Contrasts,’ (3) the Johannes Brahms Quintet in B Minor Op. 115 for Clarinet and Strings featuring Al on clarinet with the Stuyvesant String Quartet on International Records - New York, (4) Brahms Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 115, again featuring Al on clarinet with the Stuyvesant String Quartet on a Concert Hall Society long-playing 33 1/3rd rpm recording (The original recording was for International Records, then it was sold to Concert Hall and Al didn’t receive one cent in royalties), (5) ‘For Your Listening Pleasure...Alfred Gallodoro’ on Merri 5901 records, recorded at Los Angeles High School in Burbank, December 20th 1958 featuring the tunes, Carnival of Venice, I Heard You Cried Last Night, Hora Staccato, Romance, Gigue, Stardust, Harlem Nocturne, Caprice, Czardas, Latinata and Gypsy Rondo. It is referred to as his “California album,” (6) an earlier 78 rpm album of Italian music, polkas, waltzes, and mazurkas, recorded in 1945, featuring Al on Armonia records. It included the great John Vicari on mandolin and also has guitar, bass and drums, and finally (7) a Fox Movie Tone album titled ‘Academy Award Favorites’ with Jack Shaindlon conducting.

The two most talked about recordings by Gallodoro fans are the Columbia ‘Saxophone Contrasts’ 45 rpm double record set, and the Manor 78 rpm double LP titled An Alfred Gallodoro Concert. The Saxophone Contrasts record also appeared as an ad on the outside back cover of the September 8, 1954 Downbeat magazine, as a free promotional gift for folks interested in information on the Selmer (Paris) Saxophone. The tunes on the Saxophone Contrasts recording are Summertime, Liza, Hora Staccato, Jalousie, Indian Summer, Old Vienna, Dark Eyes and Czardas. The Manor album, which sports a green and yellow jacket, featured the Concerto for Doubles (written by Ralph Hermann for alto, bass clarinet and clarinet), Fantasie Impromptu (for clarinet), and Oodles Of Noodles (for alto saxophone).

One piece that Al is closely associated with, is Ralph Hermann’s composition Concerto For Doubles (hence, the “Triple Threat” nickname), which was commissioned by Paul Whiteman especially for Al. It was first introduced by Paul Whiteman in a special live concert.
over the American Broadcasting Company Network in September 1947, with the Buffalo Philharmonic, and Al Gallodoro as soloist. The first movement is for alto, the second for bass clarinet, and the final movement features the clarinet. The *Concerto For Doubles*, of course, was eventually released on the ‘Manor’ double album. Manor records was then co-owned by Sam Lerher and Irving Berman. It was Ralph Hermann who talked both Lerher and Berman into doing the recording. The session itself was recorded with a fifty piece orchestra in Carnegie Hall (1948) starting at midnight, and culminating with two takes of *Oodles Of Noodles* at 5:45 a.m. Al’s brother, Frank Gallodoro, played saxophone and clarinet in the orchestra and can be heard in the second movement of the *Concerto* playing some nice passages while Al sustains a note on bass clarinet. Interestingly, each promoter (including Al himself) put up $1,350 to get the album off the ground, totalling $5,400; and while Al only received $230 for his efforts, Ralph Hermann never received any money in royalties!

The ‘Columbia’ recording, recorded in March 1951, first appeared on 78s and later it was issued on both 78 and 45 rpm pressings. Good news for everyone is that Al has recently purchased the original tapes of his ‘Columbia’ recording, and with the help of his twenty-six year old grandson Kevin Wood, they hope to reissue it soon on cassette tape. There will be other music on cassette, specifically from his ‘For Your Listening Pleasure...’ Merri album, plus one bass clarinet solo composed by Ralph Hermann, and other assorted solos performed live on stage.

Today, seventy-six year old Alfred ‘Al’ Gallodoro enjoys semi-retirement in Oneonta, New York. However, you may very well catch his gold-plated saxophone, clarinet or bass clarinet at work performing impressive feats of musicianship at the Autumn Cafe on Main Street, or Dailey’s Tavern on Chestnut Street, the Market Place in Cooperstown, The Alley on Water Street, at Christopher’s off Interstate 88, or at home practicing on Franklin Mountain on those occasional sleepless nights from midnight until two in the morning. What better way to conclude our visit with Al Gallodoro than to hear once again his personal creed: “Well you see, I was born to be an all-around player. I could never be satisfied doing just one thing. I love Buddy DeFranco, Phil Woods, and all those guys, but I can’t play what they play. I play me. I play Gallodoro. I’m just an all-around player from New Orleans night clubs up to the symphony. You name it and I’ve done it. I tell you, my life has been practicing. I enjoy practicing!”

A special thank-you goes to Elio Bastianelli for all his thoughtful help and kindness. It was a direct result of Elio’s respect and appreciation for Al Gallodoro’s great talent, that this interview came about. Thank-you Elio!

David J. Gibson, Editor

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**AL GALLODORO’S EQUIPMENT**

**Saxophone**
Gold-plated Selmer Mark VI Alto and a 1935 Selmer Super Alto. Al plays a Dick Stable mouthpiece with a Bonade ligature. His Ray Hyman neck strap is forty years old.

**Clarinet**
Selmer Series 9 clarinet with gold-plated keys. Al uses an O’Brien crystal mouthpiece with a standard ligature.

**Bass Clarinet**
1935 Selmer bass clarinet with gold-plated keys. Additional keys have been added, like an articulated G-sharp. Al uses an old Penzel Mueller Long Island City mouthpiece that he picked up at Manny’s in New York City, “and I’m sorry I didn’t buy two more.”

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**AL GALLODORO DISCOGRAPHY**

An Alfred Gallodoro Concert
Manor ‘Red Label Series’ double 78 rpm lp set
*Concerto For Doubles, Fantasie Improptu, Oodles Of Noodles*

**Saxophone Contrasts**
Columbia “45 rpm” Set B-271
*Summertime, Liza, Hora Staccato, Jalouseie, Indian Summer, Old Vienna, Dark Eyes, Cardas*

**For Your Listening Pleasure...**
Al Gallodoro
Merri records 5901
*Carnival Of Venice, I Heard You Cried Last Night, Hora Staccato, Romance, Gigue, Stardust, Harlem Nocturne, Cuprice, Cardas, Latinata, Gypsy Rondo*

**Quintet In B Minor Op. 115**
For Clarinet and Strings
Johannes Brahms
International Records - New York
*With The Stuyvesant String Quartet and Alfred Gallodoro on Clarinet*

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For Clarinet and Strings
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