

STRATER HOTEL

The Strater Hotel is proud to dedicate Room 108 as a tribute to the renowned ragtime musicians and talented piano performers who have delighted us with their captivating performances over the years. Please enjoy this wonderful selection of biographies.

ROOM 108: THE DIAMOND BELLE PIANO PLAYERS

Lacey Black
Rondalo Cappalupo
“Perfessor” Bill Edwards
Don French
Frank French
Terry Hartzel
Billy Heizer
Molly Kaufmann
Sue Keller
Dick Kroeckel
Darryl Kuntz
Johnny Maddox
Max Morath
Tom O’Boyle
Hoyle Osborne
Al Rose
Jim Rowe
Todd Schroeder
“Cap’n” John Smith
Adam Swanson
Dick Zimmerman



THE HISTORIC STRATER HOTEL PRESENTS

ROOM 108: THE DIAMOND BELLE PIANO PLAYERS

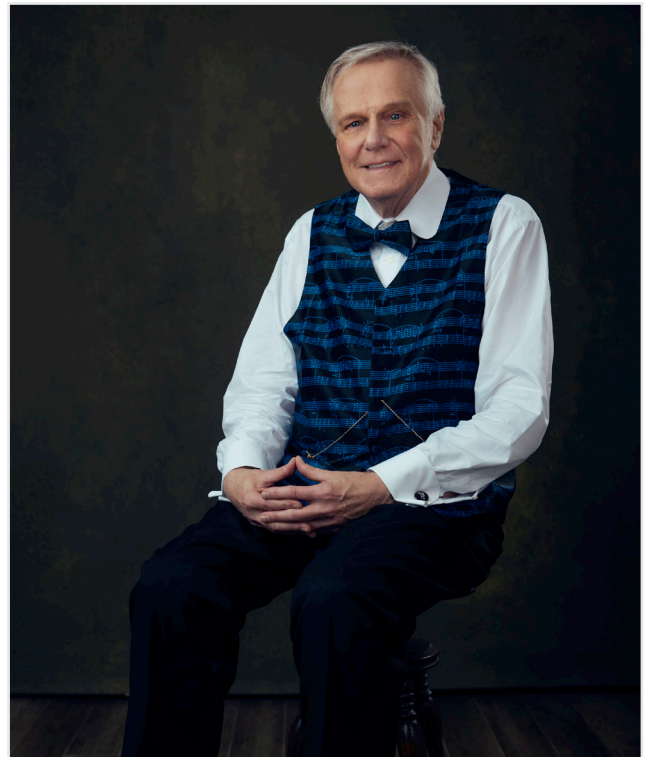
Terry Hartzel

Terry Hartzel is a veteran Diamond Belle Saloon piano player, performing there every year since 1987. He has a broad repertoire that, in addition to ragtime, includes songs from the 1800s, saloon piano, American songbook standards, Broadway musicals, rock, Latin, country piano and boogie.

Terry began traditional piano lessons at age five in his hometown of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Terry's father was an orchestra leader and accordionist who early on taught him how to play ragtime. At age 12, Terry played ragtime on the nationally televised Ted Mack Original Amateur Hour. When he was 18, he began to play piano professionally at hotel piano bars and clubs to pay for his education at Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School.

Upon graduation Terry began his legal career in Washington, D.C., and frequently played piano engagements at "Mr. Smith's" in Georgetown and other venues in the D.C. area. From 1976-1986, Terry played weekly at Il Porto Ristorante, a supper club in Alexandria, Virginia, that featured ragtime piano. The principal pianist at Il Porto was Johnny Maddox (aka "Crazy Otto"), the legendary ragtime player and recording artist. Johnny had a great influence on Terry's ragtime and they became close friends.

In 1987, the Strater booked Terry to play at the Diamond Belle on the recommendation of Dick Kroeckel, a wonderful long-time ragtime pianist at the Belle who had heard him play at Il Porto.



Terry Hartzel



For more information about this and other named rooms, visit strater.com | 970.247.4431

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Molly Kaufmann



Versatile, dynamic, and facile-of-finger, Molly Kaufmann sparkles in front of an audience. Her connection to her listeners, her love of entertaining, and her sense of humor are there front and center. For over 50 years Molly has entertained and performed for audiences in half the USA, Canada, Mexico, and even Australia. She helped open Denver's acclaimed Boettcher Hall (part of Denver's Center for the Performing Arts) as ragtime soloist during "jazz night" in March 1978. She has performed up and down the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers on the

Paddlewheel boats "Mississippi Queen" and "Delta Queen." And for 28 years she was a featured ragtime performer at the Diamond Belle Saloon — part of Durango's lovely Historic Strater Hotel.

Molly's repertoire is extensive and varied; she can play hits from most decades of the 20th century. She is known for her ebullient ragtime style, boogie woogie, and blues (vocals included). Molly can also perform lyric ballads, country and western songs, show tunes, rock, and comedy songs (some of which are her own). Her resume includes work as music director/accompanist for many melodramas and theatre, accompanist for solo instruments, vocalists and choirs, as well as some piano teaching. Molly has written several rags, one of which has been recorded and published.

Seniors all up and down the front range get to hear her on a regular basis. Molly also performs in concerts, festivals, bars, restaurants, and she currently plays in two bands. Her hobbies include gardening, reading, walking, and more gardening.



Molly Kaufmann



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Dick Kroeckel

Richard “Dick” Eugene Kroeckel Jr. (September 6, 1945 – October 11, 2020) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana into a family of piano players. Dick was taught to play piano by his aunt and quickly found his calling in ragtime. He started playing professionally in Evergreen, Colorado and soon became part of the Central City Colorado Summer Fun, playing at the historic Tollgate and Glory Hole Bars.

In the mid-sixties Dick was summoned to play for Uncle Sam. During his time in the Army he worked with entertainment tours in places like Ft. Polk, Louisiana. He also played the church organ for the Army chapels.

After the service he returned to his home once again, this time setting in Georgetown where he was hired as a bartender at the Silver Queen. The owner soon fired the current band and requested for Dick to take over. Dick, once again, was back doing what he did best, telling stories and playing the piano. Dick would remain in Georgetown for the next 5 years.

The ‘70s found Dick playing in the Cherry Creek Inn’s Red Slipper Room in Denver. As Dick’s following grew, so did the request for Dick’s talents. Dick began playing in saloons throughout the mid-west, including touring with the Kaleidoscope Players in Raton, New Mexico.

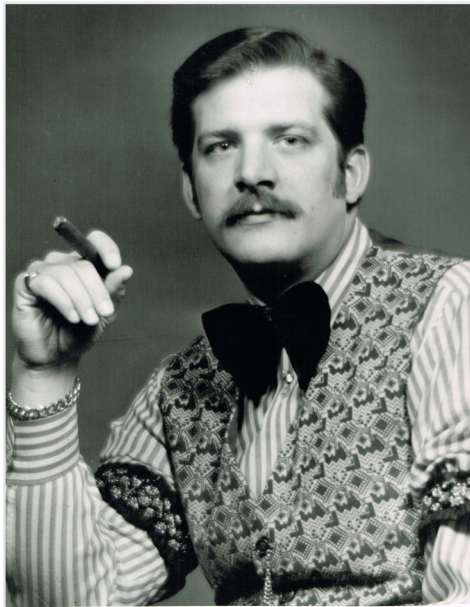
In 1976, Dick was asked to perform in On The Road with Charles Kuralt on the CBS Evening News. That night the entire viewing audience was able to enjoy the ragtime sounds Dick had been blessing Colorado with for more than ten years. Later that year, Dick appeared in Estes Park with the Al Fike Show. As fate would have it, their closing night would deliver the worst flood in Colorado history, the Big Thompson Canyon Flood.

At the same time, Dick built his first orchestrion, a coin operated piano that came complete with a complement of drums, pipes and even a xylophone. For the cost of a coin, you could hear the greatest ragtime hits of all time. Dick also began working on pianos all over the state. One of Dick’s finest pieces of work was for the Governor’s mansion in Denver.

By the 1970s Dick was continuously being asked to make a record so fans could enjoy his piano stylings at

home. Dick recorded his first album Echoes From Lulu White’s Mahogany Hall. Familiar songs on the album were tunes such as “Maple Leaf Rag,” “Wild Cherries,” and “Ragtime Violin.” Dick made several more recordings over the years.

Dick was now performing nightly at the Diamond Belle Saloon in the famous Durango, Colorado Strater Hotel.



Dick Kroeckel

Dick would spend an amazing twenty-three years as the regular performer entertaining the guests with his renditions of “Chattanooga Choo Choo.” Dick would even go so far as to add bellows of smoke from his trademark cigar, and playing not only blindfolded, but with the piano keys covered with a sheet.

During the 80s began a short time when Dick followed another passion of his, the railroad. Dick took a four year “summer” job as a brakeman on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. But soon Dick returned to Central City Colorado in 1987 and found entertaining fun again.

Dick settled in Arvada, Colorado where he had stock piled a large collection of player pianos. Every player piano he had was personally reconstructed by Dick. When not playing, Dick could be found tearing apart and rebuilding a player piano in his basement workshop. Dick continued to tour the country giving concert performances, and at times he was requested to bring his 9ft Steinway player. Dick also amassed a collection of player piano rolls that numbered over 4,000 individual rolls.

After a short stay in Deadwood, South Dakota, Dick made his way back to Central City playing in casinos. Dick once again found himself playing in the same buildings where he played almost thirty years before. The historic Glory Hole and Tollgate Saloons were now casinos but the locals and some of the same customers were happy to see Dick return. Dick was the daily performer at Harvey’s Wagon Wheel Hotel/Casino for eleven years bringing endless enjoyment to the guests with his piano and stories.

Dick never fully retired. Until his passing he worked part time for a local mortuary and was still doing concert tours with the theatre organists Dave Wickerham and Patti Simon.



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Johnny Maddox

John Sheppard Maddox Jr. (August 4, 1927 – November 27, 2018) was born in Gallatin, Tennessee. His interest in the ragtime era was fueled by his great-aunt Zula Cothron. She played with an all-girls' orchestra at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and later played in vaudeville. Maddox studied classical music for nineteen years with Margaret Neal and Prudence Simpson Dresser, who studied in Europe for a short time with Franz Liszt. One of his teachers of popular music, Lela Donoho, accompanied silent movies in his hometown of Gallatin, Tennessee. He played his first public concert when he was five and began his professional career in 1939 playing with a local dance band, the Rhythmasters, led by J. O. "Temp" Templeton.

Around 1946, Maddox started working for his friend Randy Wood at Randy's Record Shop in Gallatin, where Wood founded Dot Records. Maddox's first single, "St. Louis Tickle" with "Crazy Bone Rag" on the flip side (recorded May 19, 1950), sold over 22,000 copies in only a few weeks. He became the first successful artist on Dot, and his instant success helped build Dot into one of the most popular labels of the 1950s. He signed with MCA and began touring nightclubs across the country. In Dallas, Texas, he appeared with Sophie Tucker; in Las Vegas with Billy Eckstine and Elvis Presley; in Miami, Florida, with Eddy Arnold and the Duke of Paducah; and in Detroit, Michigan, with Pat Flowers, Dorothy Donegan, and Lawrence Welk. His first record to sell over a million copies was probably "San Antonio Rose" by Bob Wills. Another one of his most popular early records was "In the Mood," and he performed the song on The Pee Wee King Show in February 1953.

After hearing him playing in 1952, the "Father of the Blues," W. C. Handy, called Maddox "the white boy with the colored fingers." Around the early '50s, a caricature of Maddox was placed in the main dining room of the Hollywood Brown Derby Restaurant next to Paul Whiteman, Rudy Vallee, Hank Williams, and Bill Haley. He is the only ragtime pianist to earn a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, which was included when construction on the Walk of Fame began.

In 1954, Maddox was declared the Number One Jukebox Artist in America by the MOA (Music Operators of America). In January 1955, he recorded "The Crazy Otto Medley," which was composed of Lou Busch's "Ivory Rag," several German folk songs, and Irving Berlin's "Play a Simple Melody." The medley was originally recorded on the Polydor label by German pianist Fritz Schulz-Reichel under the pseudonym "Otto der Schrage." Disc jockey Bill Randle of

WERE in Cleveland, Ohio, suggested to Randy Wood that Maddox record a version of the song and use "The Crazy Otto Medley" as the title. Maddox's record was on the Billboard charts for twenty weeks, peaking at #2 for seven weeks, and became the first million-selling all-piano record, eventually selling more than two million copies. Schulz-Reichel then came to the United States and recorded for Decca under the name "Crazy Otto." The reference to "Crazy Otto" in the Grateful Dead song "Ramble on Rose" is a reference to

Maddox's hit record. Maddox performed on The Jack Paar Show in March 1955 and played "The Crazy Otto Medley" on Milton Berle's Texaco Star Theatre on May 31, 1955. He appeared with two other pianists, Hazel Scott and Joe Looco, on Patti Page's program The Big Record in November 1956. One of his later appearances was on the The Soupy Sales Show.

Maddox continued to record for Dot Records through 1967, by which time he had earned nine gold singles, and his total sales were over eleven million. One of the highlights of his career was performing twice at New York's Stork Club, where he appeared on live television with Teresa Brewer. At the annual Hillbilly Homecoming in Maryville, Tennessee, in 1957, he worked with an up-and-coming young singer named Patsy Cline. Maddox toured fairgrounds across the country in the late 1950s and early '60s with Swenson's Thrillcade, playing on a piano placed on the back of a pickup truck

that was lifted by a hydraulic lift as high as fifteen feet. His longest professional engagement was at the Red Slipper Room in Denver, Colorado's Cherry Creek Inn, where he played for seventeen years. Maddox befriended many more musicians and performers from the ragtime and vaudeville days in his travels, including Glover Compton, Butterbeans and Susie, Candy Candido, Ted Lewis, Gus Van, Glenn Rowell, and Joe Jordan.

Maddox began collecting antique sheet music, 78s, cylinders, piano rolls, photographs and more at a very young age. He sold most of his first collection to Brigham Young University when he moved to Bad Ischl, Austria, around 1970. Tired of life on the road, he attempted to retire from show business. Soon, however, he was back performing in the United States and began a long residency at Il Porto Ristorante in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

He retired in 1992 but was then coaxed to perform at the Historic Strater Hotel's Diamond Belle Saloon in Durango, Colorado, where he played from 1996-2012. He also mentored ragtime pianist Adam Swanson in his later life. He owned one of the largest private collections of popular sheet music in the world, likely totaling near 100,000 pieces. He died on November 27, 2018 at the age of 91.



Johnny Maddox



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Hoyle Osborne



Hoyle Osborne and Billie Heizer perform a duet.



Hoyle Osborne

Hoyle Osborne played ragtime at The Diamond Belle Saloon from 1991 to 2012. He's a multi-faceted entertainer who has played in hotels and country clubs, at music festivals, and on the paddlewheel steamboats Delta Queen and Mississippi Queen. Hoyle can be seen and heard playing piano in the 2011 movie *Cowboys & Aliens*.

Hoyle and his life partner, Jane Voss, have performed all over North America and in England. He also leads the eight-person Village Band, playing his arrangements of ragtime and vintage dance music.

Hoyle has recorded three CDs of piano music — *Live at The Diamond Belle*, *Ragtime Cowboy Joe*, and *Panazon*.

"It is a real treat to hear the tumbling, tinkling keys." – The Daily Times (Farmington, NM)

"... a fine entertainer who knows how to please a crowd." – The Mississippi Rag

"... a masterful stride/ragtime/bar-room pianist." – Southern Rag (U.K.)

"Osborne is not, specifically, a ragtime stylist, nor is he definitively of the blues, folk, jazz or swing persuasion. He's all of them! His playing rings of Zez Confrey or the young George Gershwin."

– San Francisco Examiner

"... a lanky 'goodtime piano man' with ... a set of hands that can force a simple set of upright keys to cough up the grandest of crescendos or tease from the ivories melodies light as spring rain."

– Chico (CA) News & Review



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Adam Swanson

Adam Swanson is one of the world's foremost pianists and historians of vintage American popular music, including ragtime, early jazz, the Great American Songbook, and more. Adam has been a featured performer and lecturer at ragtime and jazz festivals across the United States and abroad, and he is the only four-time winner of the World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest. He made his New York debut in Carnegie Hall at the age of nineteen, where he performed with Michael Feinstein. Adam appeared alongside pianist John Arpin at the Bohem Ragtime and Jazz Festival in the Republic of Hungary, and he has also toured Switzerland and Australia. Adam has accompanied silent films at the prestigious Cinecon Classic Film Festival in Hollywood and performed privately for Oscar-winning Disney/Hollywood composer Richard M. Sherman (Mary Poppins, etc.). At the age of twenty-one, Adam performed a solo concert at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage in Washington, D.C.

Adam holds a bachelor's degree in classical piano and a master's in musicology from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. He has been mentored by other ragtime artists including the

famed Max Morath and legendary 1950s recording artist Johnny Maddox, who was one of Adam's greatest influences. Adam has recorded albums with noted musicians such as former rock star Ian Whitcomb, the Peacherine Ragtime Society Orchestra, and the Bar D Wranglers. In 2025, he was selected as "Artist in Residence" for the Scott Joplin



Adam Swanson



Young Adam playing at the Belle.



Young Adam with legend Johnny Maddox.

International Ragtime Foundation in Sedalia, MO. Adam's recordings have been used on the CBC TV show *Murdoch Mysteries*. He lives in Durango, Colorado, where he frequently performs in the Diamond Belle Saloon at the Historic Strater Hotel. Listen to Adam's livestream virtual concerts on his Facebook page and YouTube channel. Visit Adam online: www.adamswanson.com.



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