



BarbaraBrabecProductions.com

Musicians Who Wrote Memoirs

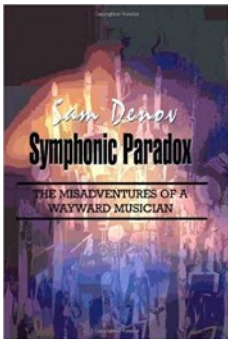
Signed copies found in Harry Brabec's Collection

by Barbara Brabec

MUSIC WAS INDEED Harry's mistress, but he also had a lifelong love affair with books. A quotation by British poet Babington Macaulay that he clipped sums up how he felt about reading:

"I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books than a king who did not love reading."

Until I began to go through Harry's library book by book to decide which ones to sell on the Amazon Marketplace, I had no idea how many signed copies he had in his collection from musicians he knew or had worked with who had written a book about their life. All of these authors are gone now, but their books still linger online for those who may be searching for them.



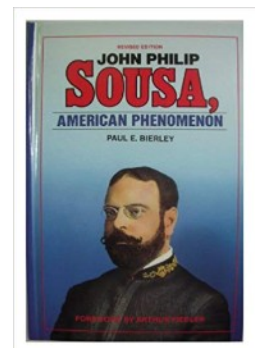
THERE WERE THE obvious ones that I also knew, like Sam Denov, author of [*Symphonic Paradox – The Misadventures of a Wayward Musician*](#) (First Books, 2001), whose inscription was:

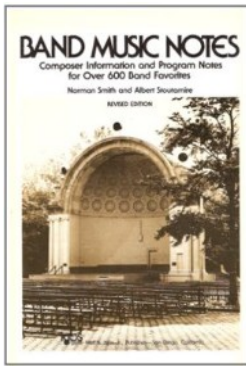
"To Harry Brabec – You made it all possible!"

Sam died in 2015 at the age of 91. He was one of Harry's last visitors when he was home on hospice.

HARRY HAD SEVERAL several autographed copies of Paul Bierley's books, including *John Philip Sousa American Phenomenon* (Integrity Press, 1973) and [*The Works of John Philip Sousa*](#) (Integrity Press, 1984). Paul was recognized as the world's leading authority on John Philip Sousa, and I found him to be an engaging conversationalist. (Most of Paul's books were personally inscribed not only to Harry but also to me since I knew him from tagging along with Harry to the Windjammers Circus band get-togethers.)

Paul died in 2015 at the age of 90.





IN HIS BOOK, [Band Music Notes](#): *Composer Information and Program Notes for Over 600 Band Favorites* (Neil a Kjos Music Co., 1979), Norman Smith wrote:

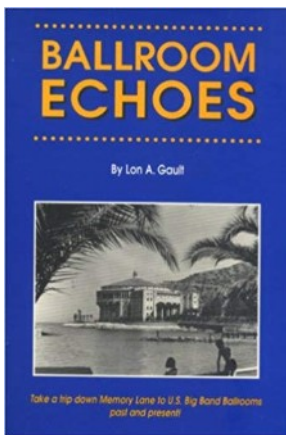
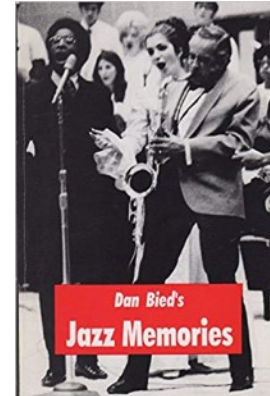
“I hope to see you at many more Windjammer sessions. It has been a pleasure, musically and conversationally.”

Norman, a trumpet player, music teacher, and band director died in 1988.

DAN BIED, AUTHOR OF [Jazz Memories](#) (Craftsman Press, 1994) simply inscribed his book,

“Best wishes to Harry Brabec”

Because he’s gone too (1998), I can only presume that, being about the same age, he and Harry connected personally somewhere along the line. Dan was the author of twelve books, and this one is a warm accounting of his memories of big bands, their singers, and sidemen.



LON A. GAULT, author of [Ballroom Echoes](#) (Colophone, 1989) included this touching inscription in his book:

“For Harry J. Brabec, a stalwart of big band music, may this book remind you of those one-nighters!”

Lon was a history professor who also offered classes about big bands and ballrooms and hosted a weekly program on WDCB in Chicago called “Big Band Ballroom.” I would have loved to talk to him about Harry, but when I tried to find him, I learned he was gone, too, as evidenced by the [Lon A. Gault Memorial Scholarship for Academic Excellence in History](#) that his widow established in 1996.

**As Harry often said in his later years,
“The band is getting smaller.”**

Adapted from Barbara’s biographical memoir, *The Drummer Drives! Everybody Else Rides—The Musical Life and Times of Harry Brabec, Legendary Chicago Symphony Percussionist and Humorist* (2010). Available in print through bookstores and on [Amazon](#); also as a Kindle book. Detailed content information on [Barbara Brabec’s World](#).

Related articles:

- [Big Band/Jazz Books in Harry Brabec's Collection](#), with comments from some of the musicians featured in them.
- [Harry Brabec's Lifelong Love Affair with Books](#). A story of interest to bibliophiles, book collectors.

Copyright © 2010, 2021 by Barbara Brabec

This document originates on Barbara Brabec's World at BarbaraBrabecProductions.com. You may freely share it with others.



BARBARA LAUNCHED BarbaraBrabec.com in 2000 and quickly began to populate it with home-business articles and resources. Over the years she added hundreds of articles on several other topics related in one way or another to the larger topic of LIFE.

Now, LIFE itself is Barbara's focus. Unlike her original website, her new domain launched in 2021 features only her own writing—new content and an archive of timeless and relevant articles in fourteen life-related categories, all updated and reformatted for republication on the all-new "[Barbara Brabec's World](#)." It reflects Barbara's current writing interests, latest books, and professional services.

Visit the [ARTICLES Table of Contents](#) to see article categories of possible interest to you and join her mailing list to receive her email *Brabec Bulletin* posts.

[Back to BOOKS T/C](#)