

I had been playing banjo at the Cajun Restaurant on 16th Street and Eighth Avenue on Tuesday nights with Stan King's dixieland jam sessions. One Tuesday in May of 1999 the proprietors, Herb and Arlene, asked if I would put a group together for Wednesday nights. That's when Wild Reeds and Wicked Rhythm was born.

I've always liked the sound of saxophone lead with clarinet fills and harmony. In the great Jimmy Noone band it was Jimmy on clarinet, Bud Scott on banjo (later replaced by my old friend Junie Cobb), Earl "Fatha" Hines on piano and the great Joe Poston on alto saxophone. An entertainer at the Nest (later the Apex Club) whose name was Johnny Wells took up the drums with the group. Similarly we added Mr. Spoons (Joe Jones) to Wild Reeds. Some time later Joe moved out of town and was not replaced.

The incomparable Scott Robinson plays C-Melody saxophone with us and Orange Kellin is on clarinet. Filling the "Fatha" Hines chair is my favorite pianist Conal Fowkes, who also adds vocals during the "Conal Fowkes Show." Rounding out Wild Reeds and Wicked Rhythm is the fine bassist Debbie Kennedy. Debbie also sings on occasion.

The repertoire is pulled from everything, including original songs played much of the night. I love composers, being one myself, so anything goes. Remember everything before today is old.

As in the Noone group our emphasis is on swing. Strong melodic wild reeds propelled by wicked rhythm!