Jersey Jazz
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Jazzfest 2012 Brings it All Together

Jersey Jazz **coverage begins on page 30.**

Eddie Monteiro shared his musical universe, playing and singing at New Jersey Jazz Society's 2012 Jazzfest at the College of St. Elizabeth in Morristown. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

Jazzfest 2012

Violinist Jonathan Russell sits in with Emily Asher's Garden Party: Mike Davis, trumpet; Jared Engel, banjo; Rob Adkins, bass; Emily Asher, trombone. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

Paul Meyers, guitar; Vanderlei Pereira, drums; Holli Ross, vocalist; and Eddie Monteiro swayed with a Brazilian beat. Photo by Tony Mottola.

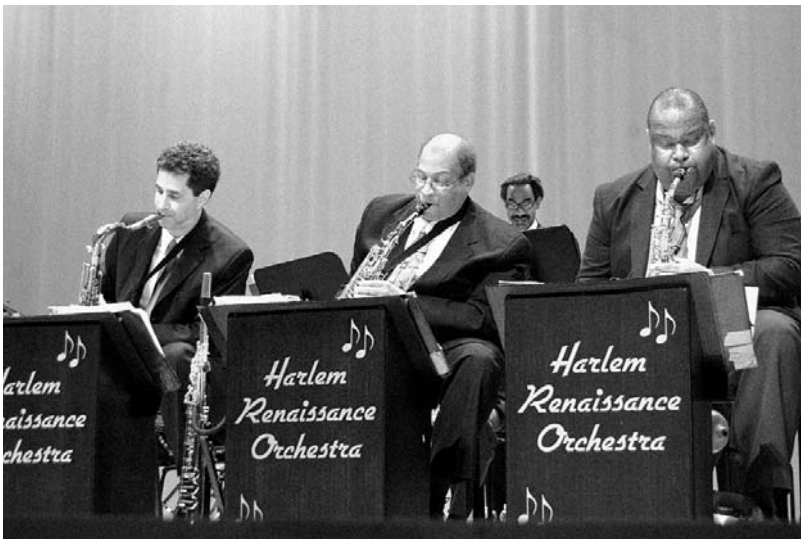
Neal Pawley, trombone and Paul Carlon, tenor sax, from Swingadelic. Photo by Tony Mottola.

Jazzfest 2012 at St. Elizabeth in Morristown on June 16 was the prime place and the perfect moment to experience unwaveringly top-drawer music, enough to fill a whole day of summer ease. Nature supplied a flawlessly sunny and breezy day to enjoy a comfortable, casual day with food, drink and friends. Extra shopping ops added even more leisurely good fun. We couldn't have asked for a better combination of elements.

The powerfully elegant Harlem Renaissance Orchestra came out swinging in Dolan Hall, addressing our big band cravings right at the start. A lushly layered "Take the A Train" energetically made its way uptown. Plaintive muted trumpets introduced Ellington's "What Am I Here For," soon overtaken by growling bass and sax notes. Guest vocalist Donna Cumberbatch was a wonderful discovery. Her milky voice, mellow and smooth, gently protested "Don't Blame Me" and unhurriedly shaped the lyrics on "Speak Low" in a cha cha rhythm. A powerhouse boogie woogie impressed as a big man with a small sax set up a groove and the trumpets pulled the whole arrangement higher into the stratosphere.

Wandering outdoors during generous half-hour breaks between sets, we found Emily Asher's Garden Party, in an all-new, and equally popular configuration,

top: John Bauers is the main voice of Swingadelic. Photo by Lynn Redmile. above: Swingadelic's Carlos Francis channels Armstrong. Photo by Tony Mottola.



The sax section of the Harlem Renaissance Orchestra. Photo by Tony Mottola.

Donna Cumberbatch swung mightily with the HRO. Photo by Tony Mottola.

Jon Burr. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

Lynn Stein and Howard Alden performed with Jon Burr and Jonathan Russell. Photo by Tony Mottola.

a welcome way to meet the new young jazz players emerging on the scene. Emily sang "Sugar," dedicated to the dessert table and her dentist. Trumpeter Mike Davis sang on "Darktown Strutters Ball," and violinist Jonathan Russell sat in on some numbers before and after his sets with the Jon Burr Trio. We enjoyed plump frankfurters and chips under the shade of a tent.

In the Octagon Theatre, we travelled to exotic Brazil with accordionist Eddie Monteiro, guitarist Paul Meyers and drummer Vanderlei Pereira. Eddie makes the most of his vocals and his keys with great skill and feeling, pulling out an astonishing range of sounds and effects. "Triste," sung in Portuguese, had a sweeping, rocking rhythm and an organ-like quality. Paul Meyers's guitar work is clean and fully expressed; every note rings like a bell. Vocalist Holli Ross guested in this set, and had wonderful exchanges with Eddie's high notes on Jobim's "Agua de Beber." Monteiro states,"I've always said I don't like playing alone. This is like playing in a sandbox…I never know what will happen!"

Swingadelic, back in the big Dolan auditorium, set up a rollicking groove with John Bauers playing the piano and singing his heart out on Louis Jordan's "Let the Good Times Roll" — just the start of their tribute to the "Three Louies," Jordan, Prima and Armstrong. Trumpeter Carlos Francis provided a sparkling solo on "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans." Young vocalist Vanessa Perea went over big, duetting with Bauers on the

continued on page 32

Jazzfest

NJJS President Frank Mulvaney presented an award of appreciation to Bill Boyle, President of Boyle Hotels. Photo by Tony Mottola.

Tony DeSare, right, supported by Steve Doyle, bass and Ed Decker, guitar. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

JAZZFEST

continued from page 31

Ella Fitzgerald/Louis Armstrong classic "A Fine Romance."

Bauers recounted a tale: His dad had met Armstrong once at a party in Kansas City. A few years later he went to the Copacabana in NY to hear him play. After a few too many drinks, he started to believe he had a close personal relationship with Armstrong, and started hollering for him to play "La Vie En Rose." Armstrong ignored him. Bauers's dad kept hollering. The maitre d' tried to intervene but the hollering continued: "PLAY La Vie En Rose!" Finally a couple of bouncers surrounded him to escort him out. As they moved him toward the door, Armstrong began playing "La Vie En Rose." Vanessa sang this one in beautiful French. Neal Pawley grabbed the spotlight with a raucous trombone solo and bad-boy vocals on Louis Prima's "Five Months, Two Weeks, Two Days." And the big finale was a hoot with all horns stepping out for a high octane jam on "When The Saints Go Marching In."

We caught the second set of Jon Burr's Trio in the Octagon Theatre. "Minor Swing" set the mood for this tribute to jazz violin great Stephane Grappelli. Bassist Burr was a member of Grappelli's band, and he's worn a flowered shirt that he used to wear in that group — Grappelli preferred florals. "I Love Paris" was a peppy romp; the unhurried energy of Jonathan Russell on violin and Howard Alden on guitar delighted, as did their well-placed solo excursions. Singer Lynn Stein joined the trio for some Cole Porter standards. She has been collaborating with Jon Burr for the last couple of years; they have a CD in the works. Their original tune "Gone in the Way of a Dream" was a winner. And throughout, Burr's tasty playing, musicality and humor underpinned all.

We took time out between every set to peruse the outdoor vendors. There were many more this year, and more time to try on, inquire, double back for another look and a quick purchase. CDs were also going like hotcakes — the perfect way to bring the day home for lasting enjoyment.

Before the evening program commenced in Dolan Hall, Hotel executive Bill Boyle was honored for his commitment to jazz. He's partnered with the New Jersey Jazz Society and with Hibiscus Restaurant, housed in the Best Western Morristown Inn operated by his management firm. Hibiscus presents live jazz four times per week and is the home base for the NJJS baby grand piano.

Champian Fulton complemented Andy Farber's Swing Mavens. Photo by Mitchell Seidel.

Andy Farber rises for a solo. Photo by Tony Mottola.

A lucky 50/50 winner went home with some extra cash, too.

And then the very polished and wryly witty saxman Andy Farber brought his 7-piece band, the Swing Mavens, to the stage. They specialize in tunes like those of Ellington and Basie, and lots of original material in that vein. The very accomplished young pianist/vocalist Champian Fulton joined them this evening. She's been a favorite of ours since she appeared at one of our Jazz Socials at Shanghai Jazz. She's also frequently seen on the NYC swing dance circuit. "Primrose Path" was a lively original swing number based on "King Porter Stomp." "It Seems I've Heard That Song Before" was originally arranged for a huge orchestra and Farber "boiled it down to a jazz demi glace." It featured the trumpet work of Brian Cresci.

Youthful jazz aficionados. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

A carefree scene outdoors at Jazzfest 2012. Photo by Lynn Redmile.

For the final act, Tony DeSare appeared as a trio with Steve Doyle on bass and Ed Decker on guitar. Tony himself moved easily between singing and creating beautiful things at the piano. "Just One of Those Things" demonstrated his easy delivery. The set exhibited the genre-flexibility of the group, ranging from a slow take on a Prince tune, "You Don't Have to Be Rich" to insanely hot guitar licks on a jumpin' tune. On the way, "New Orleans Tango" — Tony says tango is the sexiest dance, "other than the Macarena, of course!" And "Just in Time" flew by with a speedy chug chug and a fantastic bowed bass solo.

Indeed the whole day flew in a languorously summery, jazzy way!