

Jazz, Boogaloo...And Food (*Glorious Food!*) In Princeton

JazzFest dodges stormy weather in its 25th year

Story and photos by Lynn Redmile

It's a little nerve-racking when the weather reports talk about the possibility of thundershowers the day of an event which is billed as "rain or shine." The reality is that while the sound equipment and the bands are under cover, the audience is not — and the chance of them continuing to sit out in the rain while a band plays is pretty slim. But thankfully, that possibility of rain during the afternoon failed to materialize, and the 25th Annual Princeton Jazz Feast went off without a hitch. Jazz fans quickly filled empty seats on

Palmer Square, the beautiful green in front of the Nassau Inn. The aromatic breezes wafting in over the various food vendors from the area's finest restaurants and eateries helped ease the humidity's discomfort.

Alan Dale and the New Legacy Jazz Band were first on the bandstand for his 25th consecutive appearance at the Jazz Feast — they really enjoy this event! It's not often that bands position the drummer at the front of the stage, so it was a treat to be able to see DC-based bandleader Dale working his magic. Joining Dale on drums was Scott Silbert on tenor sax, Jon Mathis on trumpet, Lou Rainone on piano and Jay Miles on bass. They love the great American songbook (as do we!), and played a number of selections from it, such as "Sweet Sue," "Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me," "Puttin' On The Ritz," "Skylark," and "Sweet Georgia Brown." Dale and the New Legacy Jazz Band play at various events in New Jersey through the year — you can contact them through their website at www.NewLegacyJazzBand.com

After a few words from co-producer Ed Polcer, and a quick change on the bandstand, the Chuck Redd Quintet opened their set. Highly accomplished on drums, Redd is a master of the vibraphone, and the day before this event, he was presented with Hot House Jazz Magazine's Fans' Decision "Best Vibes" award for the second consecutive year. Redd put together a very impressive all-star group to join him on vibraphone for this event: the extraordinary Ron Blake was on tenor saxophone, Larry Fuller was on piano, Peter Washington played bass and young Charles Goold was on drums. Starting with a Thelonius Monk tune "In Walked Bud," they moved onto a lovely rendition of Cahn/Van Heusen's "Love is The Tender



CROWD SCENE: There were crowds on and off stage when Spanglish Fly let fly with timbales, congas, bongos, raucous horns and joie de vivre at JazzFest in Princeton on Sept. 18.

Trap." With their fans hanging onto every note, "The Newest Blues" (Cedar Walton) preceded Richard Evans' soulful "Bossa Nova Do Marilla" and they closed out the set with Monty Alexander's "Reggae Later." Hear his beautiful style at ChuckRedd.com.

The audience took full opportunity of the set breaks to walk around and indulge in tasty offerings from the various food vendors, choosing from a wide variety of culinary treats including paella, hotdogs, pizza, Indian

cuisine, or snacking on cookies, cupcakes, crepes or ice-cream.

The effervescent Spanglish Fly took to the stage — ten performers, inspired by the likes of Joe Cuba, Joe Bataan, and Mongo Santamaria, with timbales, congas, bongos and raucous horns and joie de vivre. As the Latin Boogaloo energy spread out across the square, many fans couldn't stay seated and just had to get up and dance. Bandleader Jonathan Goldman on trumpet was supported by a strong wind section, with Matt Thomas on tenor sax, John Speck on trombone and Jonathan Flothow on baritone sax. Kenny Bruno on piano and Rafael Gomez on bass were integral in the rhythm section, but it was the expanded percussion in the form of Teddy Acosta on timbales, Ronnie Roc on congas/percussion and Edwin "Machuco" Estremera on bongos/percussion who brought weight to the Afro-Caribbean rhythms. Paloma Muñoz on vocals and percussion brought an added dimension of soul and energy to the ensemble, encouraging the audience to actively participate. Mixing originals with their renditions of boogaloo classics, their set included "Esta Tierra," their Latinized version of Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," their arrangement of Joe Cuba's "El Pito," and an original "Ojala-In'sh'alah," a tumbao composed by Goldman." They also performed "La Clave e'Mi Bugalú," a fast-tempo salsa composed by Goldman in collaboration with Chaco Garcia Orozco, Ray Barretto's "New York Soul" and another original, the ballad "How Do You Know," composed by Goldman. If you would like to recapture some of the magic of their performance, their 2015 release *New York Boogaloo* is available on their website www.SpanglishFly.com.

Another short break between sets to allow the next musicians to set

up and we were ready for the Peter and Will Anderson Quintet. Based in New York City, but originally from Washington DC, these clarinet and saxophone virtuosos are in high demand, and have headlined at many of the top venues in our area, and at many notable events nationally — they have also toured Japan. Joining both Will on clarinet, alto sax, and flute, and Peter on clarinet and tenor sax, were Jeb Patton on piano, Neal Miner on bass, and Phil Stewart on drum set. Their set started with Roger Wolfe Kahn’s “Crazy Rhythm” which was followed by a sweetly exquisite rendition of Jack Strachey’s “These Foolish Things.” Their creative rendition of Dizzy Gillespie’s “A Night in Tunisia” swung so beautifully, after which they slowed it down with Richard Rogers’ “My Funny Valentine.” “Shaw Nuff,” another Gillespie composition, received their special touch and was followed by Hoagy Carmichael’s “Stardust.” They ended the set with a unique interpretation of “Blues in the Closet” by Oscar Pettiford. Peter and Will continue to tour the USA with their trio — be sure to check their schedule on their website.

Closing out the event after a quick break was “Professor” Adrian Cunningham and His Old School, a traditional/New Orleans style jazz band. Hailing from Australia but now living in New York City, Cunningham is a very fine jazz multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, with fluent command of the saxophones, clarinet and flute. When he is not busy performing in NYC with some of its finest players, he is touring the world playing jazz festivals and swing dance events. For this event, Cunningham was joined by Charlie Caranicas on trumpet, Matt Musselman on trombone, John Merrill on guitar, Alberto Pibiri on piano, Daniel Foose on bass, and Paul Wells on drums. Starting the set with “Sunny Side of the Street,” “Bourbon Street Parade” followed, creating a perfect launching pad for “Chant in the Night.” An original swinging composition from Cunningham, “High Degree” can also be found on his new CD, *The Rhythm Method*. “Egyptian Fantasy” preceded “Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand” which was followed by “You Shook Me All Night Long.” Another Cunningham original, the upbeat “Lesson in Groove,” was the perfect piece before their final number, “Down by the Riverside” — which had the audience singing along! Be sure to pick up a copy of Cunningham’s CD, which is a mix of classics and originals, from his website at ProfessorCunninghamJazz.com.

What a fabulous day — the rain held, the musicians energized their fans, and the food vendors were determined to cultivate repeat customers! It couldn’t have been better. You’ll not want to miss next year’s event — it’s always advertised on our website as soon as we know which bands are performing, so do save the date and join us then!



Chuck Redd Quintet



Peter and Will Anderson Quintet



Professor Cunningham and His Old School