

# Improvisation

West Virginia's Jazz Newsletter for December 2014

## Manhattan Comes To Bridgeport For 2015 Winter Jazz Weekend

The sixth annual Winter Jazz Weekend is set for Friday and Saturday, January 23-24, in Bridgeport at the Bridgeport Conference Center (BCC), according to event planners with the Bridgeport Arts Council (BAC). The theme of this year's music and dining festival is "New York Nights", billed as "a celebration of music and dining from Manhattan's distinctive clubs and restaurants."

Scheduled to appear on successive evenings on the Jazz at Charles Pointe stage in BCC is Eddie Allen's PUSH, a New York City-based septet, presented on Friday at a five course dinner, and on Saturday with five dining stations featuring cuisine inspired by restaurants in five NYC neighborhoods.

"We want to offer a genuine taste of New York City, musically and with the dining," said Mary Kay Greer, BAC Chairperson, "So we asked the West Virginia Jazz Society to work with the Bridgeport Conference chefs to make the event authentic Manhattan."

Greer said the chefs plan an "Uptown Steakhouse" plated dinner on Friday evening featuring wedge salad, Manhattan Clam Chowder inspired by The Oyster Bar at Grand Central Station, sliced filet ala Keene's Steakhouse, plus similarly inspired dishes of crab stuffed shrimp, pasta, salad, and dessert.

On Saturday evening, five "Night On The Town" dining stations will feature dishes from five famous neighborhoods in New York. See "New York Nights" Bill of Fare for each evening on the next page.

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Eddie Allen, composer, band leader and trumpeter, will bring his septet, PUSH, to the Jazz At Charles Pointe stage in the Bridgeport Conference Center for Winter Jazz Weekend on Jan. 23-24.

## WV State Tourism Survey Supports Jazz Society Vision

In West Virginia, we like to tout outdoor recreation and scenic beauty when encouraging people to visit the Mountain State, and according to a recent survey, West Virginia does a good job of providing those experiences, even better than neighboring states.

Unfortunately, those things are way down on the list of attractions tourists seek when planning their vacations.

At the top of the list are luxurious accommodations and entertainment and nightlife options. For those options, West Virginia ranked fifth compared to neighboring states, ahead of only Ohio, according to the Longwoods International survey.

WV Tourism Commissioner, Joseph Manchin IV, was quoted in a release in the December 19 Charleston Gazette.

"It's beautiful...but, what are we going to do tonight? It's the nightlife perception: What are we going to do after the sun goes down?", said Manchin.

The West Virginia Jazz Society has been strategically focusing on identifying and developing markets for live jazz music in the hope of filling the seats in live music venues in the cities throughout the region.

"We are not the only ones to see this survey," said Eric Spelsberg, WVJS President. "So we not only need to develop our nightlife options, but we also need to make sure those options are competitive and make us stand out from all the rest. Live jazz music does that."

"If we offer the same things as our competitors, we end up in an argument about who is best," he continued. "That's a waste of time."

## Manhattan (Cont)

Among the selections are dishes enjoyed by BCC, BAC and WV Jazz Society staff during trips to New York City.

"Gnocci and Pesta with Sausage and Peppers is a knockout dish," added Greer, "and one we are proud to introduce to the foodies in our area."

On Saturday morning, in conjunction with BAC's weekend event, the West Virginia Jazz Society and West Virginia Wesleyan College will host the sixth annual West Virginia Winter Jazz Academy for scholastic and college students. The Academy includes a luncheon and a performance opportunity in space donated by the Bridgeport Conference Center.

The Jazz Academy provides students with a demonstrated interest in jazz music the opportunity to meet, study with and perform with professional jazz musicians who appear in the Winter Jazz Weekend's Friday and Saturday night performances.

This year, Eddie Allen, a trumpeter, band leader, composer and educator with a 30-year resume in the New York City jazz scene, will present to the students along with Dr. James Moore, Director of Jazz Programs at Wesleyan..

This will be the first year BAC has sponsored the annual Winter Jazz Weekend event, now in its sixth year. The first five editions of the weekend-long food, music and education festival were co-produced by the Bridgeport Conference Center and their partners in the jazz vision, the West Virginia Jazz Society.

BCC officials explained the long-term motivation behind their investment in jazz music, jazz music education, and jazz-themed events like Winter Jazz Weekend and others scheduled the past five years.

"It's about cultural and economic development. Our long term goal has been to partner with a community-based group that wants to 'own' the event," said Scott Duarte, BCC Director. "BAC members have been participating all along so it's logical for them to become vested. We are very pleased with where they want to go."

### Disclaimer

We sure don't want to, but sometimes we make mistakes, so no phone number, address or other piece of information herein should be taken to be certifiably accurate.

Think of the typographical errors, the misspellings and the just plain wrong as "blue notes" that provide you with a chance to improvise.

## NEW YORK NIGHTS

### Bill of Fare

#### Friday January 23

##### *Uptown Steakhouse*

Romaine Salad, Manhattan Clam Chowder

Angel Hair Primavera w/ Olives

Sliced Filet & Crab Stuffed Shrimp

Steamed Asparagus Spears

Twice Baked Potato, Crème Brulee

#### Saturday January 24

##### *Night On The Town*

Gnocci & Pesta w/ Sausage & Peppers

Chef Carved NY Strip Steak

Char Siu BBQ Pork Ribs

Zupa Fagioli Cannellini, Antipasto Display

Grilled Calamari & Clams Casino

Peking Duck Burger Sliders

Cast Iron Mac and Cheese w/ bacon

Seared Veal and Beef Meatballs

Canollis and Cheese Cake

### Coming To

## Washington Square

216 Washington Avenue Clarksburg, WV 304.622.7100

### Wednesday December 30

## The Mendoza Brothers

\$5 cover Begins 6:30pm

### Friday April 17

## Marshall Keys

\$35 cover 7pm and 9pm

Dinner Menu Full Bar Pizzas & Salads

# Hidden Gems Found Inside Holiday Jazz Stroll Venues

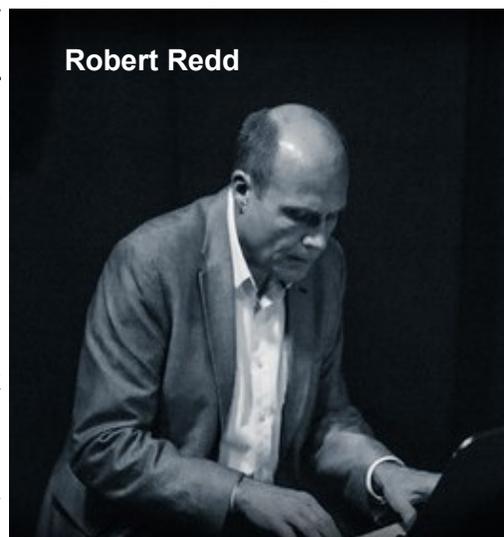


Victor Dvoskin

Headliners are headliners and you've got to have them. It's the hook that catches the attention of the crowd, the reason to go wherever. But lurking just behind the marquee and banner are the supporting cast, the other artists in the group who allow the headliners to do what headliners do.

If you watch and listen closely, you'll note that in most good jazz outfits all the players have the talent and style of a headliner and on any given night, the roles can vary. As long as the music swings, it's a good thing, as it was during the 2014 Holiday Jazz Stroll in Clarksburg, WV on Dec. 12 2014. Astute jazz fans discovered hidden gems among the score of jazz professionals performing in the six Stroll venues. One who some thought nearly "stole the show" was **Victor Dvoskin**, the bassist who played with **The Entertainers** at Kelly's Pub backing up Barbara Martin. Based in Washington, DC, and originally from Russia, Dvoskin could pose something of a bear-like presence as he dutifully tracked the work of his partners adding a foundation filled with nuance and challenge. Each time he seemed headed into the face of a cliff, he would pull back in

time to open a door for next artist to solo. Playing piano for **Sharon Clark** at Washington Square was **Robert Redd**, known as a "musician's musician" for his ability to blend in and faithfully support his musical collaborators whether in a duo as he did at the Stroll or in larger ensembles. Vocalist, **Barbara Martin**, said Redd is "sensitive to each an every note" a singer sings. One audience member said, "They make it look so easy."



Robert Redd

## BLUE NOTES

We never anticipated getting thank you notes from the musicians, jazz fans and others who have been motivated to let us know their thoughts. We can share some of the general content of these notes without violating anyone's privacy.

Of course, the musicians are getting paid, so... But the things they have to say go beyond appreciation for monetary benefit. Almost each of them say something about preserving or saving jazz as an art form. That's overstated for sure, but very much appreciated. We have no doubt about their sincerity.

Notes from fans, especially from students who have participated in WVJS educational activities are extra nice to get.

When one promotes or advocates, there is always the risk of *imago super substantia*, (image over substance), but when a high school student takes the time to express thanks and appreciation for learning opportunities, you tend to believe you're doing something worthwhile. When was the last time a teenager told you thanks for their education?

And then there are the complete surprises., like the note we received from a Clarksburg business, not one of the jazz venues or anyone who had an obvious connection, but just one of the businesses that operate in the uptown area. They said thanks for the contribution to the success of the business community in general by bringing more people out at night.

No problem. And thanks for letting us know.

To react to anything in Blue Notes, email to: [WVJazzSociety@aol.com](mailto:WVJazzSociety@aol.com) or phone 304-269-3683.

# Question & Answer

**Improvisation:**

How are the dynamics of jazz ensembles like everyday group dynamics?

**Eddie Allen, trumpeter, composer, educator:**

Jazz is an interactive conversation among musicians. Usually that interaction is what the listeners enjoy. Sometimes without even realizing it.

When having any conversation the art of listening and responding appropriately is involved. If you said to someone, "I was reading the Bible last night about Mary and Joseph" and the person you're talking to responds with, "I love how princess Leia looks in Star Wars". That would be an inappropriate response. They're not listening to what you have to say.

That shouldn't happen in a conversation, verbal or Jazz. So we have to listen to what each person wants to say when they're speaking or improvising musically. We'll get a chance to express ourselves and give our opinions when its our time to speak.

If we think of music as a universal language, we get a better understanding of it. Music can be listened to and understood by everyone. Regardless of where you're from. That makes it universal. Just like in any other language, you don't have to agree with what everybody says.

In music, you don't have to like everything you hear. In most music we have to listen to a solitary perspective from the composer. A composition is the speech that is written and the musicians are the ones reading the speech.

In Jazz, there's an actual conversation.

When you visit West Virginia, you can...

**golf, hike, bike, ski, tour and explore, all day long, then...**

# Jazz All Night!

For more information: email:

[WVAfterDark@WVJazzSociety.com](mailto:WVAfterDark@WVJazzSociety.com)



## Gallery: 2104 Holiday Jazz Stroll in Clarksburg, WV



Top Row Left to Right: **Doris "Lady D" Fields** in fine form at Fifth Floor Lounge; **Karen Greene** solos on her alto sax in Main St Café; **Garrett Friend** directs the **Buckhannon Upshur Big Band** in Main St Café for the opening performance of the Holiday Jazz Stroll Bottom Row, Left to Right: Drummer **Nasar Abadey** in Waldomore Mansion; **Connor Nevin** plays bass for Interplay in Kelly's Pub; **Mark Cappellini** behind his trap set keeping the music moving in Kelly's Pub. **Photos by David Bruffy**