

brooklyn's Jazzy Times



VOLUME I ISSUE III

MARCH 2010

michael ward and tom browne culminate all-star weekend at brooklyn jazz cafe

n.m shabazz

All-Star Weekend at Brooklyn Jazz Café was a bevy of stars and sensational music. The restaurant that features live jazz hosted musical performances by R&B songstress KeKe Wyatt on Friday night, February 12th. A day party that took place Saturday afternoon saw an appearance by N.B.A. superstar Kenyon Martin. DJ Kid Capri capped that event with a live performance on the wheels of steel.



Jazz violinist Michael Ward (left) and Jazz trumpeter Tom Browne (right) on-stage at Brooklyn Jazz Café
Picture courtesy of Frank Lott Photography

Yet paired with Browne, Ward—ever the showman—raised his playing to new heights. By the time Browne launched into the 1980 single *Jamaica Funk*, one of his signature tunes, the crowd was salivating from the infectious, music they were hearing.

Several times the audience jumped to their feet, clapping their hands as they became insatiable, wanting more and more.

Browne, who was born in Queens, New York, originally started playing the piano at 11 years old. Eventually after one year of taking lessons, he turned to playing the trumpet as his main instrument of choice. His collection of Jazz albums inspired the change.

Though he released his first album in 1979, *Browne Sugar*, it was only after the release of his second album, *Love Approach* (also in 1979), that he rose to prominence.

From 1980-1989, he dominated jazz charts with songs such as *Fungi Mama*, *Bye Gones*, *Magic*, *Rockin' Radio*, and *Secret Fantasy*, which was produced by Maurice Starr and featured Siedah Garrett singing lead.

Brooklyn patrons who came Saturday and Sunday night saw a concert featuring Jazz trumpeter Tom Browne and Jazz violinist Michael Ward. After Browne and Ward's performance on Sunday night, Brooklyn Jazz Café hosted an All-Star Jazz Summit that took donations for the people affected by the earthquake in Haiti.

"Their performance...oh my God! I feel like I'm actually in Brooklyn, New York, listening to a real, live concert!"

Brooklyn, New York, listening to a real, live concert!"

Such was the feeling throughout the audience as the two figuratively set the stage on fire. Of course, Ward is no stranger to Brooklyn Jazz Café.

Earlier this year, he performed with Jazz saxophonist Marion Meadows on New Year's Eve (see **brooklyn's Jazzy Times**, January 2010 Edition) where he also gave an exceptional performance.

It was so dynamic that many patrons didn't leave until the wee hours of the morning. But truly the culmination of the weekend was Browne and Ward. Their electrifying performance—particularly Saturday night when they performed with native Dallas band *Natural Change*—seemingly tantalized every person in Brooklyn Jazz Cafe.

Brenda Ngozi Stallings, an attorney who works with the Public Defender's

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the jimi hendrix experience by I. Lourdes Shabazz

Long before rocker Ozzy Osborn actually decapitated a bat's head with his mouth onstage, long before the group Kiss ever disguised themselves with makeup, there was Jimi Hendrix. He was the epitome of Rock and Roll music; sudden, bombastic, innovative, tragic. Often thought of as the greatest electric guitarist of all time, his is a mythos that has remained for almost 40 years after his tragic death. Some even speculate whether or not Hendrix was destined to live a long life.

Like similar others in pop culture lore—such as James Dean—his flame burned all too brightly, too quickly. Yet he left an indelible impression, not only on Rock and Roll, but several other music forms as well. As writer Ann Powers said in a New York Times October 13, 2000 article, “...the three genres Hendrix helped found—heavy metal, jazz fusion, and funk—have evolved beyond his contributions.”

But Hendrix did more than this. He was the catalyst for the blues guitar, bringing it in with the modern age of Rock and Roll.

The man who would become Jimi Hendrix was born Johnny Marshall Hendrix on November 27, 1942 in Seattle, Washington. Hendrix would only see his mother, Lucille Hendrix née Jeter, sporadically before her death in 1958. She was 17 when she had Hendrix and she had a tumultuous relationship with his father, James Allen ‘Al’ Hendrix. After his birth, she put Hendrix in tem-



Jimi Hendrix (November 27, 1942—September 18, 1970)
Picture courtesy of the Associated Press

porary care with relatives in California.

James Hendrix was stationed at an army base in Oklahoma when his son was born. After his release there, he united with his son, taking him and changing his name to James Marshall Hendrix, supposedly in memory of Hendrix's deceased brother, Leon Marshall Hendrix. For a brief period, James Hendrix also reunited with Lucille.

The couple had several more children together: Joseph, Kathy, and Pamela. Born with physical ailments, Joseph was given to the state to care for when he was three. Hendrix's sisters wouldn't fare much better as they were also given up to the state and for adoption. Kathy was born blind and Pamela—like Joseph—was born with physical disabilities.

The Hendrix's divorced when Jimi was nine. Though he was not raised with a silver spoon in his mouth, he did grow up around diverse cultures. It is said that his high school, “...had a relatively equitable mix of African, European (including Jews), and Asian (Japanese, Filipino and Chinese)

Americans.” Growing up with such diversity is perhaps what later led Hendrix to caution against racial barriers in music.

Ironically, Hendrix didn't pick up his first guitar until he was 15 years old. At 14, he had seen Elvis Presley perform and had taken to mimicking him, playing a broomstick in imitation, for about a year. Once the acoustic guitar was in his hands, however, he took to it like

a fish to water.

From constant practice—through osmosis of watching others play and taking tips from experienced guitarists—Hendrix honed his craft. He also received additional guitar tutelage from listening to his father's Muddy Waters and B.B. King records.

Though Hendrix would become known for his musicianship, he was also become known for wild antics onstage. Being a leftie, but playing a right-handed guitar, made him a standout. Some, however, did not like such showboating. Hendrix was fired from his first formal band, *The Velvetones*, for his guitar theatrics.

After a stint in the Army, Hendrix continued to pursue a musical career; working as a session musician, backing up Little Richards, Sam Cooke, and the Isley Brothers. For a brief period, he even worked with Ike and Tina Turner. Yet, it wasn't until he was discovered by Chas Chandler—the former bassist for the *Animals*—in a Greenwich Village club in New York that doors began to open for him.

When he heard Hendrix play, Chandler, (continued on page three)

the jimi hendrix experience (continued from page two)

spilling a milkshake on himself, had an epiphany. He begged Hendrix to come to England so that he could introduce him to some other musicians. Hendrix only agreed to come if Chandler could introduce him to Eric Clapton. Through sheer luck and destiny, Hendrix went overseas, played at key clubs, and met the right people at English music venues.

Additionally, not only did Hendrix get to meet Clapton, who at that time was in the band *Cream*, he was able to play for him. Says Charles R. Cross of Hendrix, in the article *The Legend of Jimi Hendrix*, in **Rolling Stone** magazine July 28, 2005, "He had spent 23 years of his life struggling in an America where black musicians were outcasts within rock music. In one single day in London, his entire life had permanently been recast."

Later paired with musicians Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell, Hendrix created *The Jimi Hendrix Experience*, a band that made admirers out of England's music royalty: the *Beatles*, the *Rolling Stones*, the *Who*, and *Eric Clapton*. In 1967, the band released its first single, **Hey Joe**. It was an instant smash in England and was followed by **Purple Haze** and **The Wind Cried Mary**.

Part of Hendrix's popularity came because of his guitar proclivity, to be sure, but Hendrix also harbored a certain sensual aura about himself. As writer Pete Townshend said, "To a man watching, he was erotic like Mick Jagger is erotic. It was a high form of eroticism, almost spiritual in quality. There was a sense of wanting to possess him and wanting to be a part of him, to know how he did what he did because he was so powerfully affecting."

Still, there were two sides of the coin. While Hendrix was light-hearted and free-spirited, he was heavy into drug use. Though he allegedly had never tried any psychedelic drugs, such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) until he met Linda Keith, Hendrix had a voracious appetite for cannabis and alcohol. Later, he would acquire a predilection for heroin and amphetamines.

Accordingly, Hendrix was infamous for episodes where he became belligerent after consuming a lot of alcohol. Former girlfriend Kathy Etchingham says an inebriated Hendrix assaulted her with a telephone headset, thinking she was calling another man on the pay phone; another ex-girlfriend, Carmen Borrero, claims she had to have stitches after he became jealous and struck her with a bottle.

Despite the *Experience* achieving success in Europe, the group had yet to duplicate it in America. Their chance came when Paul McCartney suggested the band to organizers of the Monterey International Pop Festival in 1967 (the start of the *Summer of Love*) on the fairgrounds of Monterey, California. There, Hendrix gave an electrifying performance, doing a rendition of Howlin' Wolf's **Killing Floor** (1965) and B.B. King's **Rock Me Baby** (1964), among others. He ended the act by lighting his guitar on fire.

American audiences started to take notice of the *Jimi Hendrix Experience*. The group scored again in 1968 with another album, **Axis: Bold as Love**, followed up by another later that year, **Electric Ladyland**, which featured the smash hit **All Along the Watchtower**, written by Bob Dylan. The *Jimi Hendrix Experience* continued to tour until

1969 when it split up, mainly due to creative differences.

That same year, after Hendrix attempted unsuccessfully to create a new group—*Band of Gypsies*—he performed at the Woodstock Festival, in the little town of Walkill, New York. It was here that perhaps his legend was etched in stone after he gave one of the most memorable renditions of the **Star-Spangled Banner** ever performed.

After restructuring the *Jimi Hendrix Experience* in 1970 and doing a European leg of a tour, Hendrix returned to London and talked about parting ways with his manager, Michael Jeffery, to Chandler and several others. Several days later, on September 18, 1970, Hendrix died. The cause was ruled to be barbiturate intoxication and inhalation of vomit. An ambulance crew found his body in the Samarkand Hotel, west London, in the room of a woman called Monika Dannemann, whom he had known only a few days.

Some theorize, however, that Jeffrey killed Hendrix to collect on a multi-million dollar insurance policy he had taken out on the musician before Hendrix could fire him. Supposedly, Jeffrey drunkenly confessed in 1971 to stuffing pills and pouring red wine down Hendrix's mouth, but nothing was ever proven. Jeffrey died in a plane crash in 1973.

Whatever the cause for Hendrix's demise, it could never eclipse how he affected Rock and Roll and the impact he had on music overall. Even in death, his legend seemingly grows. Hendrix continues to *kiss the sky*.

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brooklyn Jazz Calendar

March 2010

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 2 Mahogany and The Jam Box	March 3 <i>Name That Tune</i> with Eric Willis and Friends	March 4 Mark Harper CD Release Event	March 5 Natural Change	March 6 Melanie Dutton
March 9 Watusi	March 10 <i>Name That Tune</i> with Eric Willis and Friends	March 11 The Freddie Jones Quartet	March 12 The Buster Brown Band	March 13 Zac Harmon
March 16 Ben Adkins and U.B.U.	March 17 <i>Name That Tune</i> with Eric Willis and Friends	March 18 Fingerprints	March 19 Natural Change	March 20 Melanie Dutton
March 23 Montrose	March 24 <i>Name That Tune</i> with Eric Willis and Friends	March 25 The Freddie Jones Quartet	March 26 Natural Change	March 27 Zac Harmon
March 30 Domino Effect	March 31 <i>Name That Tune</i> with Eric Willis and Friends			

Sunday March 7, 2010
1:00pm to 1:00am
Haitian Relief 12 Hour Concert

Sunday Jazz Brunch 11:00am – 4:00pm
Musical Performances 11:30am – 3:30pm

March 14
Linny Nance

March 21
Freddie Jones

March 28
Carolyn Lee Jones

Jazzy Sunday Evenings - March 14, 21 and 28
Mahogany and The Jam Box Band
Musical Performances 7:00pm – 11:00pm

Special Events @ brooklyn Jazz Cafe

Spoken Jazz, A SpokenWord Event—Tuesday March 2nd @ 7:00PM
 Mark Harper CD release event, *The Mark Harper Project*—Thursday March 4th @ 7:00PM
 Haitian Relief Benefit Concert—Sunday March 7th @ 1:00PM — 1:00AM
Name That Tune Wednesdays hosted by Eric Willis—Wednesday March 10th @ 7:00PM
 The Single Mingles Show (courtyard) hosted by CJ “CedMan” Carter—Wednesday March 17th @ 8:00PM
 Out In The Open...A Talent Showcase hosted by Domino Effect—Tuesday March 30th @ 7:00PM



the jazzy insert

game change is a political eye-opener

by n.m. shabazz

It's not very often I get excited when I read a political book, but John Heilemann and Mark Halperin's *Game Change* is by far **the** best rhetoric I've read this year. It has all the allure of a daytime television soap opera with just enough *West Wing* injection to keep it spicy. Based on the behind-the-scenes 2008 Presidential race, *Game Change* centers on the machinations of then senators Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Joe Biden, and John McCain; plus former Alaskan governor Sarah Palin.

Among other things, the book asserts that both Clinton and McCain underestimated the determination of Obama. Clinton believed him to be a charismatic upstart who had a bright future, but needed to wait his turn. McCain thought him nothing more than an arrogant newcomer surrounded by a cult phenomenon of celebrity status that was sure to fade.

However, after wowing audiences with a speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, being put in several high profile positions, and having a best-selling book (*Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, originally published in 1995), it was prominent others who seemed to at first put that thought in the freshman senator's mind.

Among them was Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader from Nevada, who earlier this year had to apologize for past comments he made—as reported in the book—about Obama; that, “...the country was ready to embrace a black presidential candidate, especially one such as Obama—a light skinned African American with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one.”

Sensing much potential in him, early on Reid called Obama into his Senate office and advised that while he didn't think Obama had the



Vice-President Joe Biden (left) and President Barack Obama (right) talk politics in Washington
Picture courtesy of the Associated Press

stomach to make a career out of being a Senator—Reid called him too impatient—he did think Obama should consider running for President. The time was right, he tried to impress upon him.

The book also talks about the fading Presidential hopes of Senator Edwards and his burgeoning affair with Riley Hunter (watch for my review next month of the newly released *The Politician*, by Andrew Young, which is about Edwards and his downfall). Despite mounting bad press and low poll numbers, Edwards still believed he could be elected President up until the very end. When reality finally started seeping in, he is found begging for some sort of administration post in exchange for his endorsement with his voters. By the time he resorts to pandering, though, Edwards is too toxic politically to be associated with.

The last part of the book centers on McCain and his choice of a running mate. Originally, McCain had Senator Joe Lieberman—the maverick turncoat of the Democratic Party who now lists his party affiliation as an *Independent Democrat*—in mind. Despite being a Democrat, Lieberman and McCain were good friends and Lieberman—like McCain—openly supported the war in Iraq. Lieberman also

endorsed McCain for President over Obama.

Yet because Lieberman would have supposedly split the Republican ticket—due to a majority of his views—Palin was picked as a last minute alternative. According to *Game Change*, McCain's camp only had 48 hours with which to vet Palin. None of her political enemies in Alaska were interviewed for the process, nor were any of her family members.

It was only later did McCain's campaign people discover the real Sarah Palin. In the book, she comes off as an ignoramus (she thought Sadaam Hussein behind the 9/11 attack, didn't know why North and South Korea were separate nations, and couldn't identify the enemy her son was going to Iraq to fight).

Game Change's length—448 pages—and frequent use of grandiloquent words might intimidate some. It shouldn't. It's a salacious tidbit that is a page burner, keeping the reader engaged throughout. Both Heilemann, who works for *New York* magazine, and Malperin, for *Time* magazine, conducted over 300 interviews with more than 200 people between July 2008 and September 2009. On condition of anonymity, their names are not listed in the book.

Even if you're not into political books or politics, you'll enjoy even a brief perusal of *Game Change*. It's an interesting insight as to the political process, the ambitions of our elected leaders, why and how they do what they do. There's plenty of Palin's “*You betcha*” moments, but also plenty of Obama's, “*I got this*” vibe, to keep readers engaged.

Haitian Relief

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Breggett Rideau
Robin Hackett
Natural Change
Claire Fowler/Eric Faires
Rusty Johnson
John Adams Trio
Freddie Jones
Gary Floyd
Tom Prasad-Rao/Cary Cooper
Cornell Kinderknecht
Veronica Valles
Boss City & Brent Campbell
Candy Williams
Pastor Terry Crenshaw
StepSix
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