

Duo from page B1

We have passed many a bohemian night with our dear friend, the wonderful Argentinean guitarist/composer Jorge Morel, who lives in our building. Art D'Luogo, the famous improviser and owner of the world renowned club "The Village Gate," has booked the Ramo & Hepler Duo for various events here and in the U.S. Virgin Islands where we performed a double bill with Morel.

Ramo meets guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli

Bucky played with Benny Goodman for years, and has performed with all the jazz violin greats in the last century including Stephane Grappelli.

Here's what Bucky said about Ramo's jazz violin: "Ramo's the real thing! Stephane Grappelli would have loved him."

Michele recently finished a new jazz violin recording project with Pizzarelli on guitar and Jerry Bruno (formerly with Frank Sinatra's Orchestra) on bass. The release date for this project is not yet known. Michele played a week for five months beginning Sept. 12. There was free food around the clock for rescue workers and all individuals involved in the recovery efforts at the World Trade Center. It was here where we found the opportunity to become involved in the volunteer efforts. We played regularly at Nino's sharing our music with firemen, Red Cross Workers and volunteers from all over the U.S. It was an honor to be part of this humbling and rewarding experience. We have made friends for life.

We find ourselves veering off into some new horizons. My brother Todd Curtis, actor and trumpeter, is currently in L.A. and will be joining us soon here on the East Coast. He is writing and producing a screen play we are collaborating with him composing the film score for this project.

We've had many adventures. In fact, at one of our concerts, we were honored to have the famous rescue dog Bear (first on the scene at The World Trade Center) in the audience. His handler, Scott said that Bear loved our music! What more could we ask for? So now all we wonder...is there any time to sleep?

Performing in New York

Our New York performances include - Weill Recital at Carnegie Hall, The Iridium Jazz Club, Ashford and Simpson's "Sugar Bar" Duplex Theater, Nascimento Brazilian Club, The

National Arts Club, Columbia Union night and a month engagement at The Grand Tienno in the Village, the Merlot at Rockefeller Center. We volunteer for "Hearts and Voices" and visit hospitals to perform for AIDS patients.

Michele has performed on jazz violin with Les Paul, and Bucky Pizzarelli at the Iridium Jazz Club; Tony Motola, soloist and guitarist for Frank Sinatra; Wayne Wright, guitarist for Peggy Lee, Judy Garland and Tony Bennett; Jerry Bruns, bassist with Frank Sinatra; Al Caiola the guitarist of *Bonanza* theme fame, and for Steve and Edie. And, it is here in New York where Michele hooked up with saxophonist James Carter whom he had known in Detroit. He now tours around the world with Carter's "Chasin' the Gypsy Band."

Ground Zero

Nino's restaurant located near Ground Zero on Canal street became a resting place 24 hours a day for Michele and his wife Brenda. Paquito defected from months beginning Sept. 12. There was free food around the clock for rescue workers and all individuals involved in the recovery efforts at the World Trade Center. It was here where we found the opportunity to become involved in the volunteer efforts. We played regularly at Nino's sharing our music with firemen, Red Cross Workers and volunteers from all over the U.S. It was an honor to be part of this humbling and rewarding experience. We have made friends for life.

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(Heidi Hepler is a former Miss Louisiana and a singer who has and performs in New York with her musician husband.)

Landis from page B1

novas and Latin love songs, is a true winner. Hit play on the stereo and instantly the smooth sounds of Landis' voice meld with the air. It doesn't take a trained ear to know that she is good — really good. Landis' range goes up, down and sideways, and the delight she takes in her music is ever evident.

"My mom has been the most influential in formulating my early taste. She had some good records — by Sarah Vaughn, the Getz/Gilberto Collaboration. (Stan Getz, an American jazz tenor saxophonist, collaborated with the Brazilian guitarist/composer/vocalist Jono Gilberto). It was Gilberto's then-wife, Astrud Gilberto, who was the singer of *Girl From Ipanema*, the huge hit from the early 1960s. It was her guitar work with the Brazilian music solidified with American jazz. I really ended up liking it."

As a lifelong resident of Rochester Hills, (with a little time spent in Royal Oak), Landis grew up in vocal class or choir throughout school. "It was my favorite class," she says.

Singing career

She went on to launch SheLaN Records in 1981. Oddly enough, her early days of vinyl are being revived in Japan. Harbor Exports, a company out of Liberty, New York, recently made a request for and sold 4,200 vinyl records there.

Although the duo are working on two other CD above and beyond *Colors of Brazil*, Landis says it's nice to focus on this one in particular:

"This is a compilation of different compositions, but all will make you sit up and take notice."

The music could fill up a concert hall, an intimate café, or a living room, such is its comfort level and richness.

There are songs you'll want to

Musicians from page B1

perform for children as well as adults — an often overlooked group.

A standing concert may also be held on a monthly basis in the main lobby.

A similar program has been successful at New York's Sloan-

See Sheila Sing

■ Sheila Landis Trio performs 9 p.m.-midnight Friday, May 17, at Good Night Gracie, 102 South First, Ann Arbor. (734) 623-7400.

■ Sheila Landis and Brazilian Love Affair entertain 3-6 p.m. Sunday, May 19, at the Detroit Jazz Discovery Series at The Magic Bag, located on Woodward Avenue, just north of Nine Mile, Ferndale. (248) 544-3030.

■ The trio performs 9:30 p.m.-1 a.m., Saturday, June 1, at Woodruff's, located on Fifth, between Main and Washington in downtown Royal Oak. (248) 666-1618.

listen to again and again. *Summertime*, based on *Summertime* and the *Liun'* is easy, is easily recognizable, but clearly Landis' own.

"It features a larger group than we usually use in public — a saxophonist, trumpet — about eight people. It's so exciting to hear it, especially with our arranger, Scott Peterson. This is more of an Afro-Cuban arrangement than Gershwin."

Then there are the bossa novas (translated from the Brazilian as "new beat"), intrinsic elements to any collection of Latin music. *House By the Sea*, a cooler than cool bossa nova is an original Matle composition, and at first only an instrumental.

"Later on," reports Landis, "I wrote some lyrics for his melodic song with a winding melody."

Versatile performers

Quite a few of the cuts on the CD are live, performed at the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival in 2000 as well. Landis and Matle can and do perform as a duo, a trio, or in a larger group, one they've appropriately named Brazilian Love Affair.

With six to eight pieces, this group will play for larger engagements such as the Ford Festival.

Pianist Phil Kelly (also a

Rochester native) plays an amazing solo. A regular on the piano at Morels on Telegraph Road, in an all-occasion band, Kelly is really one-of-a-kind. The song is based on the samba, and happily blows along.

Matle is as seasoned a musician as they come. As the guitarist and producer for the duo, he has done it all. The genesis of his career began at the time spent at Oakland University. He admits to having been brought up on classic rock — Santana, Jimi Hendrix — like many a Detroit Rock City youth (he grew up in Bloomfield), but didn't find his career until school.

"Without any career plans of any sort, I gravitated toward music there. I was always interested in jazz but didn't really play it until I was there," Matle reports.

Eventually he picked it up as his major and received a degree in jazz performance. Seven years later, with much experience and ability under his belt, he was more than ready to expand. Landis and Matle have worked together for close to ten years.

Nothing is as easy as put this duo down. In addition to making their own music, Landis and Matle book clients into their studio. Then there is distribution. A few places buy and distribute their CDs nationally, but they

are basically on their own. They have a Weblog to their own page on the homepage of HYPERLINK: <http://www.artserve.michigan.org/at/members/landis>.

And then there are also the live gigs, where they end up selling a lot of their music. None of this has gone unnoticed by the public or those in the know: Their awards include "Outstanding Traditional Jazz Group" from the Detroit Music Awards in 1999 and the Spirit of Detroit Award to the Sheila Landis Trio for the 1998 Jazz for Literacy Concert. In 2001,

Landis won her fifth "Outstanding Jazz Vocalist" award from the Detroit Music Awards; both Landis and Matle were also nominated for "Outstanding Jazz Composer" and Matle for "Outstanding Jazz Instrumentalist" as well.

Landis and Matle continue to lead the artistic attack on multiple fronts: The duo is awaiting delivery this month of their new CD, *Riding the Wind*, which is mostly poetry-based musical improvisations. Landis says it has made for some of their most interesting improvisation.

"We use a lot of folk songs — Margot LaGatuta and Ivy Parat, to name a few — as well as poetry by Robert Frost."

As if there were not all enough, Landis and Matle have started work on a R&B album and continue "Music and Metaphor" workshops in jazz which present music programs to the schools.

A recent e-mail brought yet another interesting project into the fold: Michigan Outreach of Michigan (MOM) has contacted Landis and Matle in an effort to bring music to cancer centers, playing for patients and their families. Cancer has touched both Landis' brother and father, so it is a program they wholeheartedly embrace.

Family from page B1

musicians living and working in southeast Michigan, and particularly those who are passing through town. The organization will welcome all genres.

If you are a musician or know of a musician who may be interested, contact MOM through the NBMT Link (nbmtlink@aol.com) or Pete Wurdeck (wurdeck@blueboundary.com). Record labels and music stores may contact MOM at (248) 668-9091.

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plays, Roy, a local in *Lurking Terror* and a bar bouncer in *Biker Zombies*.

Since the young filmmakers formed Crossbow 5 Entertainment, named for a Canton street the couple lived on and the five members of their family, they swap jobs. One thing they never do together, however, Tommy said, is write. It's not good for their marriage, she said.

"One of the reasons we decided to do this, is that one of us had to stay home with the kids and Todd was jealous," Tommy said. "Now it's pretty even."

They both see the milestones. Take the kids to school and enjoy the times watching them grow.

How do they juggle the demands of making films and the added responsibility of raising three children under six years old? Tommy's answer was quick and to the point: "We just don't ask how. We just do it and our house is not very clean."

Right now their focus is on promoting the release of *Lurking Terror* and they had to put the sudden and unexpected blockbuster success of *Dumping Ground* on the back burner.

But, the psychological thriller has gotten a lot of attention. Written by Tommy, the \$2 million budget movie will star Michael Madsen, Dennis Hopper, Jeff Goldblum and William Baldwin. Filming is expected to begin this summer.

When Tommy wrote the script it was intended for about \$2,000 budget.

They sent the work to Los Angeles for review by their attorney, Peter P. Starston, Jr. who gave it to Michael Madsen who passed it along to a couple of his celebrity friends.

One week later Starston called Todd and Tommy asking who they wanted to star.

Dumping Ground will be their first film where they didn't have to wear all the hats. The budget allowed them to hire professional

als for the different roles.

"They're learning early on in their careers, that the most important rule of filmmaking is that, 'Just when you think you know all the rules, you understand you don't.'

"And you realize it's always different," Tommy explained. "You have to be able to roll with the punches no matter what happens."

Karen Nyman, a Fenton resident and executive producer for *Lurking Terror*, developed investors for the movie and she sensed early on that Tommy and Todd would succeed.

"They're beginning filmmakers, but they're very focused and they understand what it takes to make it in the business," Nyman said. "It's very energizing to work with people like that. It takes a real understanding of what needs to go into the movie, a good sense of people and the ability to overcome obstacles."

PROM

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