

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

Banu Gibson Band



Photo by Elsa Hahne

Sunday, November 8, 2015

2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Haddonfield Methodist Church

29 Warwick Road

Haddonfield, NJ 08033

Directions at

<http://www.tristatejazz.org/directions-haddonfield.html>

Tri-State Jazz Society presents the world-acclaimed singer and bandleader Banu Gibson, on tour direct from New Orleans, in a rare northeastern US performance.

Banu Gibson - vocals, guitar, banjo

Mike Davis - trumpet

David Sager - trombone

Dan Levinson - reeds

Mark Shane - piano

Joel Forbes - bass

Kevin Dorn - drums

Banu is one of the few vocalists of her generation to maintain exclusive loyalty to songs of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Rather than mimic singers of the past, she mixes fresh renditions of Tin Pan Alley standards and jazz classics by Gershwin, Ellington, Berlin, Carmichael, Waller, Porter, et al.

With an extensive repertoire of songs, Banu's performances cover many high points of America's golden age of popular music. Not content to copy the past, Banu Gibson is creative within the boundaries of the genre, consistently inventing fresh and imaginative variations giving new life to timeless, unforgettable music.

"Eloquent trumpet prodigy" Mike Davis (Wall Street Journal) has a voice beyond his years on his instrument. Trombonist David Sager just made his TSJS debut as leader with his Pie-In-the-Sky Jazz Band, which performed in Wallingford, PA in October. The Mississippi Rag calls Dan Levinson the "in-demand reedman." A specialist in traditional jazz and swing, Dan is indeed one of the most prolific musicians on the scene today, equally at home as both a leader and sideman. Mark Shane began his professional career as a pianist in dance bands in the metropolitan New York area. An accomplished master of the acoustic bass, Joel Forbes was born in 1956 and has held a place on the NY jazz scene for 30 years. From 2002 to 2004, Kevin Dorn was the drummer for the Jim Cullum Jazz Band, the nation's foremost traditional jazz group,

### Concert Admissions

\$10 First-time attendees and Members

\$20 General Admission

High school/college students with ID and children with paying adult admitted free

*Pay at the door*

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## LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR JANUARY 2016 CONCERT

Terry Waldo will play a piano concert for Tri-State Jazz at the Community Arts Center, Wallingford, PA on January 17, 2016. There will be no Tri-States Jazz concerts in December due to the holidays.



“Terry Waldo, ragtime pianist nonpareil and eminent scholar of the form, is a musical director and arranger at the piano. Mr. Waldo is worth the price of a ticket.” THE NEW YORK TIMES

Terry Waldo is considered one of America's premier performers and presenters of Ragtime and Early Jazz. Known for his virtuoso ragtime and stride piano playing, charming vocals, and disarming wit, he is the protégé of the legendary Eubie Blake, who called Waldo "an extension of my own musical self." Waldo has played countless New York jazz clubs, including the legendary Cookery, Hanratty's and Michaels's Pub where he produced and starred in nine critically acclaimed musical revues. He has appeared in concerts worldwide, including the Grand Parade du Jazz in Venice, George Wein's JVC Jazz Festival at Carnegie Hall and Jazz At Lincoln Center. He also appeared with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall where he performed the world premier of "The Eubie Blake Concerto."

His *This Is Ragtime*, presently being republished by Jazz at Lincoln Center, is the definitive book on the subject and it along with his 26-part series, of the same title, produced for National Public Radio, fueled the 1970s ragtime revival. Terry has also taught a ragtime course for Swing University at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

## DAVID SAGER'S Pie-in-the-Sky JAZZ BAND OCTOBER 18 CONCERT

Review by Jim McGann  
Photos by Paul Macatee

### The Band:

David Sager, leader, trombone and vocals  
Ben Mauger, cornet and trumpet  
Anita Thomas, clarinet, soprano, alto, tenor and  
bass saxes  
Reese Gray, piano  
George Welling, guitar  
Jay Miles, string bass and tuba  
Tommy Barrick, drums



Having heard David Sager with Ben Mauger's Vintage Jazz Band a few years ago, there was no need to be concerned what his Pie-In-The-Sky Band would sound like in performance. The fact that Ben Mauger was one of the players made things more comfortable. This talented unit delivered with material that more than casual Jazzers (or in Mr. Sager's words "Mouldy Figs") appreciate. That and its clean execution made for a successful concert.

The band also featured new faces. Aside from the leader and Mauger, this TSJS concert was a first for Anita Thomas on reeds, pianist Reese Gray, guitarist George Welling, bassist Jay Miles and drummer Tommy Barrick. Ms. Thomas definitely earned the title of 'multi-instrumentalist' performing on clarinet and most of the saxophone family, including the elephantine bass sax! The rhythm section with the exception of Miles and to a lesser extent, Barrick, focused more on driving the band. In fact, save for Gray's feature "Someday Sweetheart," I do not recall a moment when any member of the band soloed beyond one full chorus. For the hard line Jazzbo who thrives on chorus after chorus from a "hot" soloist, Sager's band would not attract his attention, but for this reviewer, it kept

things moving at a good clip. And I like a long solo like the rest of you jazzers out there.



David Sager



Anita Thomas

Not surprisingly the arrangement was the star at this concert. Pieces like "Deep Henderson", "Tank Town Bump," and "Sweet like This" featured little if any solo work. The overall performance was paramount. This is not to state that the band was lacking in talented soloists, for there were many. The whole was greater than the sum of its parts. A good example, Don Redman's "Save It Pretty Mama" highlighted one of the band's strengths - nice clean ensemble work. There were other examples of this - particularly on Dippermouth Blues where the 7 piece group playing the Louis Armstrong chorus, gave the impression of a larger big band performing.



Ben Mauger



Jay Miles

It was welcoming to hear such pieces as "There'll Come A Time" performed in a loose, swinging manner that was lacking on the original 1928 recording. Or the rarely heard "Liza" - not the Gershwin standard, but a composition recorded by MacKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans. Another one was the slow, sensual "Sweet like This" with its nice

ensemble blend, Mauger's fat toned cornet, and Thomas' soprano.



Reese Gray



Tommy Barrick

Everyone in the band save for guitarist Welling had an opportunity to solo. The leader's trombone was most effective on "Keepin' Out of Mischief Now," "Exactly like You" and on "I Never Knew." Mauger, in addition to "Sweet like This," was fiery on "Love Is Just Around the Corner" and swinging effortlessly on "I Found A New Baby." Ms. Thomas surprised all by providing a bass sax lead on the following "Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now." Her best moment with the giant instrument was when she and tubist Jay Miles engaged in a "bass" cutting contest on "At the Jazz Band Ball." Miles had a chance to solo on string bass on "Save It Pretty Mama" and "I Never Knew" Drummer Barrick displayed effective brush work on "I Found A New Baby" and generated excitement on "I Never Knew."

Pie in the Sky is an idiom, which depending on the context, means "heavenly reward" or "an empty wish or promise." I think it is safe to say that Mr. Sager's Pie-in-the Sky band aimed towards the heavens rather than not deliver on their promises.



## BANU GIBSON AND THE SIMPLE LESSONS OF JAZZ

By Brett Milano

*The following is an excerpt, at the courtesy of OffBeat Magazine, from their May 27, 2015 issue.*

If you study with Banu Gibson at her New Orleans Traditional Jazz Camp, one of the first things she'll do is march you around the French Quarter with your axe. To her, learning the notes is easy, but learning the feel is a little harder—and a lot more important. And sometimes the simplest lessons are the crucial ones, starting with learning not to play too damn fast.

“One of the first things you notice as you listen to the traditional jazz repertoire over the years is that it just got faster,” she explains. “People forget that it used to be dance music and that if you can't dance to it, you're playing the wrong tempo. A lot of these guys have never second lined, so we start by marching them around the French Quarter in the heat. So they start out playing at full speed and I'm thinking ‘Oh my God, they're going to drop dead in the heat if they keep up at that tempo.’ But you just start walking, and within a couple of blocks you're hitting the natural tempo that you need for that New Orleans feel. It really comes from walking and dancing in the streets. Otherwise you'd be roadkill.”

Getting the feel right has been a hallmark of Gibson's career. Well before arriving in New Orleans in 1973, she was a crusader for traditional jazz, and she's since traveled the world on that material. At home, she's long been a beloved figure, and even after traditional jazz has seen a few revivals, her ability to personalize material that's coming on a century old makes her something of an anomaly.

“You mean like dinosaur time?” she asks.

“Absolutely! I find I've been a unique kind of thing running around out there, and I'm proud to have been this different kind of influence. Don't forget that when I first hit town there were no female singers per se, even some of the original ones like Betty Assunto (of the original Dukes of Dixieland) weren't performing. Nowadays there must be 70 little chickie singers doing this music, and I hear people saying things like ‘Wow, Banu must be pissed, she was doing this shit 30 years ago.’ But the cross ventilation has been really terrific. The

best thing is that nowadays you can get together with some of the younger singers and say, ‘Hey, did you know this or that song?’”

Originally conceived after Katrina by Gibson with musician/educators Leslie Cooper and Nita Hemeter, the Jazz Camp will be holding its sixth annual session during June. About 90 players attend from all over the country and Europe, plus about a dozen younger students on scholarships. For one week, they're based at the Bourbon Orleans Hotel, jamming with locals, getting daily instrumental lessons, hanging out at hotspots like Preservation Hall, Snug Harbor, Buffa's and Fritzel's, and ultimately performing as a band. And, ideally, going back home to spread the gospel.

The camp started modestly enough when the founders came together under the New Orleans Women in Music banner to do something productive after Katrina. The first goal was to buy new clothes for performers who'd lost their gig-wear in the storm. In the process, Cooper mentioned that she was sending her son to study traditional jazz in Sacramento. “She was really fuming that he couldn't learn it here, and I came to realize that I'd been complaining about the same thing since the '90s—kids could take jazz classes at NOCCA and Preservation Hall, but there was no place for adults to learn it,” Gibson said. “So we broke off and ran with that.” Though many of the attendees are already musicians, the level of expertise varies. “We get a pretty wide range of abilities, but it's more important to come with passion than with unbelievable technique,” she said. “The key thing is to help keep New Orleans traditional jazz alive, and to me it comes down to the joy I see when they walk into Preservation Hall. I've seen grown people start crying, and I say, ‘See? Now you know why I'm doing this.’ It's the love of the music that I can pass on to people.”

Her music and her local scene connections were two of the lifelines during her own dark period in the past couple of years. Her husband Buzz Podewell, a much-admired member of Tulane's theater faculty and director of its summer stock company and associated Shakespeare festival, died of lung cancer in March 2013. The couple had been together four decades, and his hiring at Tulane was one of the main factors that brought them to town.

As one might expect, performing after the loss wasn't easy.

"When you lose a spouse, you have to figure out other reasons to keep going," Gibson said. "It's the kind of moment that makes you think, 'Who am I, and what am I doing again?' And if you don't have anyone to travel the road with, it's painful. So you invent carrots that give you something to look forward to, just so you have a reason to get out of bed. Riding in the Muses parade was one, and I had a cruise gig that was still on the books. And being part of the (female singers' collective) New Orleans Nightingales helped a lot. They had some gigs booked, and that kept me singing. Mostly though, I didn't turn work down, but I didn't go looking for any either. The shows I did were emotionally good. They at least kept me singing. But for a while my private face was very different from my public face."

When Tony Bennett played Jazz Fest, he noted onstage that he only sings old songs "because I don't like the new songs." To some extent, Gibson shares that mindset (though not entirely: She was recently part of a local show celebrating Randy Newman, something of a proud throwback himself). But as a singer, she has the same knack Bennett does for bringing out the romance and the underlying joy of her chosen material, making it clear why this music speaks to her. "There is pure happiness in this early jazz. You have to feel good when you're singing it. It's funny because one of my favorite lyricists is Lorenz Hart, and he was such a sad individual. His lyrics are just breathtakingly full of agony, and I think we've all been there. But I am attracted to the happy stuff because I've been happy my whole life and I like sharing the joie de vivre."

To Gibson, each era of music has its own defining spirit. "When you think about it, during the 1920's, jazz was in its own teens and 20's," she said. "That was when it was full of incredible energy and life. During the '30s, things mellowed and matured a little bit, but you still had a good melody and some meat on the bone. The '40s was when it all sped up, the riff starts becoming a song. Then in the '50s it all went back to melody. Everybody was tired, we'd just come through a war, and it was 'Can I have a nice little song, please?' Then we took off on rock 'n' roll, and to me the Stones were the point where it just got in your face."

Yet the Rolling Stones and their contemporaries were just what she grew up listening to. A child of the '60s, she was born in Dayton, Ohio, raised in Florida, and spent the usual teenage time driving around in a Ford Falcon convertible with the top down and the AM radio up. It was old movies on TV that gave her the first taste of something different. "It came from watching Fred Astaire and Shirley Temple movies," Gibson said. "I was studying dance, so I loved watching Bojangles Robinson. I didn't understand what movies were, but I knew that I liked the sound of the songs, the harmonic and rhythmic content." She got an early gig with Phil Napoleon, the '30s hot-jazz trumpeter who'd settled in Miami by 1967. But her first national exposure, for better or worse, was with Your Father's Moustache, a spinoff band from a chain of '20s themed restaurants of the same name.

"We used to call it 'Music to Throw Up By,'" she said. "It originated as a series of nightclubs that sold pizza and beer. You'd sit at tables and have big singalongs. That's when everybody's collective repertoire was pretty much the same." She did get on TV once (a long-forgotten Jack Jones special) and nearly made the Tonight Show before guest host George Segal bumped her, but most of those gigs were less glorious. "It was playing for college students with a lot of beer. Everybody was certainly being wild and rowdy. There was a tuba and a trombone and two banjos and me. It wasn't Carnegie Hall." She hooked up with a touring Walt Disney revue soon after, at around the time her husband entertained two job offers: One at Tulane and one in Plattsburgh, Pennsylvania. "Funny to think that I could just as easily have wound up there—I mean, shoot me now."

*This article is too long for this issue of the Strutter. If you have enjoyed it, check out the full article in the May 27 issue of DownBeat magazine.*

## FUTURE CONCERTS



**All Concerts from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**February 21, 2016 Bria Skonberg Quintet,** Bria has been a TSJS favorite ever since her first appearance here on tour in 2008. An international star singer, trumpeter, composer, she now lives in NYC, Haddonfield, NJ.

**March 20, 2016 Danny Tobias Band,** Danny is a TSJS veteran, played trumpet with the Midiri Brothers, Jerry Rife, and others; now leading his own early jazz and swing band, Wallingford, PA.

**April 17, 2016 Ivory & Gold® featuring Jeff and Anne Barnhart,** Stride pianist and flutist, last time at TSJS was 2011, Haddonfield, NJ.

**May 22, 2016 The Al Harrison Dixieland Band,** Trumpeter Al Harrison will be returning to TSJS with a sextet. The program will again feature authentic early New Orleans jazz and traditional jazz standards, Wallingford, PA

**June 5, 2016 Neville Dickie and the Midiri Brothers Trio,** Neville's coming from England, Joe Midiri is on clarinet, Paul Midiri is on drums - jamming with Neville just like last year. Come early; it's likely to be a sellout. Haddonfield, NJ

**Wallingford:** Concerts are held at the Community Arts Center, 414 Plush Mill Rd; just west of exit 3 of I-495 ("The Blue Route").

**Haddonfield:** Concerts are held at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Rd., just south of Kings Highway; about a ten minute walk from the PATCO train station.

**Detailed directions at [www.tristatejazz.org](http://www.tristatejazz.org).**

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[www.pajazzsociety.org](http://www.pajazzsociety.org)

(610)-625-4640

Dewey Banquet Hall, 502 Durham Street, Hellertown, PA.

**October 25** The Dave Roper Trio, 2:00-3:00p.m.  
The Elm Street Jazz Workshop Big Band, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

**November 15** Jam Session

### NEW JERSEY JAZZ SOCIETY

[www.njjs.org](http://www.njjs.org)

(800)-303-NJJS

NJJS also co-sponsors events at the Bickford Theatre and Ocean County College.

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6 Normandy Heights Road  
Morristown, NJ

[www.njjs.org/p/services/bickford.html](http://www.njjs.org/p/services/bickford.html)

All concerts 8:00 p.m. (973)-971-3706.

**November 2** Full Count Big Band

**November 9** Banu Gibson

**December 1** Rio Clemente and Carrie Jackson

### OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

Toms River, NJ 08753

[www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html](http://www.njjs.org/p/services/ocean.html)

(732)-255-0500

All concerts start at 8:00 p.m. Ocean County College campus, Community and Arts Center, College Drive.

**November 10** Daryl Sherman

### CAPE MAY TRADITIONAL JAZZ SOCIETY

VFW Post 386, 419 Congress St.,  
Cape May, NJ

[www.capemaytraditionaljazzsociety.com](http://www.capemaytraditionaljazzsociety.com)

**November 8** Midiri Brothers Jazz Band

### POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB

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*Tri-State Jazz Society*



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[www.tristatejazz.org/application-to-mail.html](http://www.tristatejazz.org/application-to-mail.html).

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