

# JerseyJazz

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Clarinetist Dave Bennett has a very highly cultivated Benny Goodman sound...and look.

## Second Annual **ARBORS RECORDS** International **JAZZ Party**

Story and photos  
by Mitchell Seidel

The great thing about attending out-of-town jazz parties is not just hearing familiar musicians in different settings but perhaps also discovering one who may have escaped your notice. When Mat and Rachel Domber used to hold their annual “March of Jazz” events in Clearwater Beach, Florida, you were always assured of hearing newcomers for the first time. Fortunately, with their new Arbors Records Invitational International Piano Party, the two have carried on the tradition.

When the Dombers stopped holding their annual March of Jazz parties several years ago, they left open the possibility that something else would take its place, but did not elaborate. Last January that question was answered with the inauguration of the Arbors Records Invitational International Piano Party at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort, the same venue as their previous events. This January welcomed the second annual event, that, keeping with the Arbors Jazz Records policy, mixed graybeards and young bucks playing swinging jazz.

*continued on page 30*

**2010**  
**Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp**  
SUNDAY, MARCH 7  
Birchwood Manor, Whippany  
**LAST CALL!**  
see ad page 7

ARBORS PARTY *continued from page 1*



top left: Trombonists Dan Barrett and John Allred exchange ideas as they perform at the Arbors Jazz Records event.

top right: Mat Domber and his pants of many colors welcomes attendees.

second row left: Clarinetists Antti Sarpila, left, Bob Wilber and Nik Payton, right, use a poolside guestroom as a rehearsal studio at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort as they prepare for an evening's performance at the Arbors Records jazz party in Clearwater Beach.

second row right: Legendary 93-year-old violinist Svend Asmussen shows he can hold his own with a "younger" crowd at the party. From left: Antti Sarpila, Asmussen, Nicki Parrott, Bucky Pizzarelli, Ed Metz and John Allred.

For people who wanted to get away from the ballroom, there were duo and solo sets in the Sheraton's Mainstay Tavern. Pianist Ehud Asherie and saxophonist Harry Allen entertain the cocktail crowd.



Dick Hyman, back, Bernd Lhotzky, middle and Chris Hopkins, foreground, engage in some piano madness at Matt and Rachel Domber's party.

Photos by Mitchell Seidel



Drummer Ed Metz is reflected in a nearby piano lid as he performs in Clearwater Beach, Florida.

While the March of Jazz used to provide a laundry list of musicians that Domber would mix and match into various 25-minute sets, his latest jazz parties use more formal groupings for stepping-off points. The results, happily, are pretty much the same. And because working groups are involved, listeners have more of an opportunity to catch their favorite collections together. This year featured the Harry Allen-Joe Cohn Quartet, BED — Rebecca Kilgore, Eddie Erickson, Dan Barrett and Joel Forbes and Chris Hopkins and Echoes of Swing. Rounding out the performers was a selection of musicians including Warren and Allan Vaché, John Allred, Dave Bennett, Bucky Pizzarelli, Nicki Parrott, Ed Metz, Antti Sarpila, Bob Wilber, Nik Payton, Ehud Asherie and Svend Asmussen.

Some of the surprises included hearing a still spry Asmussen still able to swing the violin at age 93. It may sound funny, but he doesn't seem a day over 75.

Attendees may have thought they were having a muggles flashback when they caught site of 25-year-old clarinetist Dave Bennett, who with his rimless glasses and two-toned wingtip shoes



seemed to be channelling a young Benny Goodman. Even more surprising was an impromptu performance Bennett gave on the upright piano in the hotel bar that was reserved for jamming jazzers when he broke into a Jerry Lee Lewis number (a peek at Bennett's Web site explains the obvious: he's an aficionado of both Swing and Rockabilly).

When listening to the German quartet Echoes of Swing one was taken as much by their enthusiasm for the material as the arrangements. Somehow the thought of just four people getting their arms around the small group arrangements à la John Kirby's groups and making them sound full and robust is simply amazing, but they did it. They truly are a "little big band."

There were, of course, the usual suspects: the cornet-playing Vaché brother making just about everything he played sound sublime; ditto for saxophonist Harry

Allen, particularly his intimate performances in the hotel bar; 24-year-old violinist Aaron Weinstein, who combines the talent of a swing era veteran with the soul of a Borscht Belt tumbler. And the usual cherry on top of the Domber Sundae was a raucous piano-go-round, with two sets of 88s and about six pairs of hands rotating up and down the keys.

As was the case with the March of Jazz, the sets, most lasting no more than 25 minutes, were too brief to fully enjoy some of the performances. But even if you felt one course of the Arbors musical buffet not enough, another was waiting to sate your appetite.

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Benny Goodman clone Dave Bennett leaps out of the Swing Era and off the piano bench as he shows off his Rockabilly chops with a rendition of Jerry Lee Lewis's "Great Balls of Fire" during an idle moment at the Mainstay Tavern.