

February Member Meeting **Gerry Jazz 101**

By **Tony Mottola** Editor *Jersey Jazz*

Gerry Cappuccio's business card displays a picture of the amiable musician surrounded by no fewer than 13 woodwind instruments. "All Saxes – Flutes – Picc – Clarinets" reads the promo copy. For the February 18 NJJS Member Meeting at Montclair's Trumpets Jazz Club, the versatile player and music educator made do with the alto and tenor saxes and a flute. He also brought along Monroe Quinn, a fine young North Bergen guitarist.

Gerry's presentation, part jazz gig and part music class, was entertaining throughout. One of the jazz music practices examined by the duo is the penchant of many players to "quote" melodic lines from tunes other than the one they are playing, often for wry or harmonic reasons, and equally often for no reason at all. As Gerry pointed out many great players, notably Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon, often peppered their improvisations with excerpts from other tunes.

So much of the first set was a pop quiz, with Gerry and Monroe slyly slipping a variety of musical references into their tunes. There was "Candy" sweetening up "Perdido," the "Girl from Ipanema" and "Laura" floating along on Jobim's "Wave," while "Sweet Georgia Brown" opted to "Take the A Train." The audience was asked to "name those tunes" and batted close to a thousand.

When Gerry played snippets of "Summertime" and "Emily" in his performance of "My One and Only Love," and didn't ask the audience afterwards about what other tunes they might have heard one disgruntled listener called out: "What, no quiz?"

During the second set Gerry discussed the not uncommon jazz composition technique



Gerry Cappuccio, left, and Monroe Quinn share a jazzy laugh. Photo: Tony Mottola.

of taking the chord changes of a popular song and setting an entirely new melody to those changes, perhaps most famously as in Charlie Parker's transformation of "How High the Moon" into "Ornithology."

To illustrate the point the duo performed an original by Quinn, a melodic and tasteful player who was mentored by the late jazz guitar master Remo Palmier. Quinn proclaimed himself a big fan of both Charlie Parker and J.S. Bach and his disguised opus was accordingly entitled "Bachology." The charming fugue-like but jazzy piece featured airy pure-toned fluting by Cappuccio.

This time the formerly smarty-pants jazz audience was stumped, and no one could identify the underlying chord pattern of "Fly Me to the Moon" upon which Quinn crafted his Bach homage.

To put a cherry on this particular Sunday, Monroe's wife Joy joined her husband on stage for a one-chorus turn on Julie Styne's "Small World." The diminutive Ms. Quinn possesses a beautiful soprano voice that could fill a Broadway theater, and she brought the afternoon to a happy and uplifting conclusion. **J**

Next up, the NJJS Member Meeting series presents singer/pianist Dena DeRose on Sunday, April 26.