

WATERFRONT JAZZ

Barry Finnerty

Barry Finnerty was born in San Francisco in 1951. He began playing piano and reading music at age 5, got a classical guitar for his 13th birthday, then got his first electric guitar for his 14th birthday. That same year, he formed The New Breed and was invited to open shows for Herman's Hermits.

"I seemed to get some attention for my ability to play the guitar solos from the 'Louie Louie' and 'Heart Of Stone' note for note."

In San Francisco, Finnerty heard Jerry Garcia with the Grateful Dead, Mike Bloomfield with the Butterfield Blues Band, Eric Clapton with the Cream and Jimi Hendrix.

About the same time he became interested in jazz, listening to records by Kenny Burrell, George Benson, Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. He traded in his Fender for a blond Gibson Johnny Smith.

Finnerty attended UC Berkeley, then Berklee School of Music in Boston. A good friend from the Bay Area, saxophonist Alex Foster, was playing with Chico Hamilton, so Finnerty auditioned and, three months later, the 21-year-old was performing at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland on the same bill as Miles Davis.

Since then, Finnerty has played with Joe Farrell; the Crusaders; Miles Davis; Blood, Sweat and Tears; Jon Hammond; Taj Mahal; Thad Jones/Mel Lewis and more. He's toured the U.S., Europe, and Japan, and released six solo albums.

Finnerty's style is a mixture of clean jazz sounds and the distortion he learned as a young man, emulating Jeff Beck and Jimi Hendrix. The Barry Finnerty Quartet plays the Petaluma Waterfront Jazz Festival on Saturday, August 19.

Gary Vogensen

The 60s were exciting times musically in the Bay Area for a teenager in Marin County—just across the Golden Gate Bridge from the Fillmore Auditorium, Avalon Ballroom, and Keystone Corner. Gary Vogensen had access to it all. He learned to play guitar and began hanging out at rehearsal halls where he rubbed shoulders with the great musicians of the time.

"I learned a lot just hanging out watching people play."

In the early 70's, Vogensen had a chance meeting with legendary guitarist Mike Bloomfield and was invited to join in a jam session. "Imagine me, 22 years old, singing a Howlin' Wolf tune in my lyric tenor voice. Anyway, Michael was charmed."

Bloomfield hired Gary for many gigs and recording sessions and introduced him to musicians such as Frank Zappa, Mark Naftalin, Nick Gravenitas, Norton Buffalo, and Maria Muldaur.

From those early days, Gary has not looked back. He has toured throughout the U.S. and abroad with national acts including The Elvin Bishop Band, Maria Muldaur, Norton Buffalo, Commander Cody and the Airmen, Boz Scaggs, Steve Miller, Etta James, Tracy Nelson, Judy Henske, Rick Danko, Lloyd Price, and others. He still works with Angela Strehli and the New Riders of the Purple Sage.

While Gary is best known as a versatile and proficient guitarist, his voice is beautifully pure, strong, and articulate. "My mom says I sang in tune before I could talk. I learned music theory and vocal arranging in church, high school and college choirs."

On Saturday, August 19, the Gary Vogensen Organ Trio will appear at the Golden Eagle Center venue of the Petaluma Waterfront Jazz Festival.

Pete Yellin

Alto saxophonist and educator Pete Yellin is a native New Yorker who has toured and recorded with many of the seminal names in jazz, among them Joe Henderson, Tito Puente, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, Eddie Palmieri, Machito, Mario Bausa and Maynard Ferguson.

Pete also leads his own groups, releasing three CDs in the last three years with another in the can that features Eddie Henderson, Peter Leitch, Harvie S, Carl Allen and special guest Chick Corea.

In 1984, Yellin founded the jazz program at Long Island University -- New York's first serious full-time degree program in jazz -- and continues to be involved in its leadership as Coordinator of Jazz Studies.

He started playing music seriously in the late 1950s after hearing the great alto sax artist Art Pepper. On a basketball scholarship at Denver University, Pete borrowed an alto saxophone from the music department and his life changed. Yellin's father -- an NBC studio pianist -- guided Pete to begin his music studies at Julliard with clarinet specialist Augustine Duques, then in saxophone under the great Joseph Allard.

The young saxophonist was able to work in big dance bands, Latin big bands, Broadway shows and do studio gigs as well as to play jazz. In the late 60s, he met Joe Henderson, with whom he was to work for a number of years. Yellin was also a frequent player in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band.

Pete continues to appear as a sideman or leader, to record, and to give clinics and concerts around the world. Pete Yellin's Organ Trio will appear at the Petaluma Waterfront Jazz Festival Saturday, August 19, on the lawn near the Graffiti restaurant.



The century-old scow-schooner Alma will be available for tours during the jazz festival/Photo by Terry Smith



Al Molina



Barry Finnerty



Gary Vogensen



Pete Yellin

Al Molina

Among the scores of famous names with whom Al Molina has shared the stage are Eddie Henderson, Pete Escovedo, Red Holloway, Jack Sheldon, Bill Watrous, Merv Griffin, Larry Vuckovich, Eddie Marshall, Tootie Heath, Flip Nunez, Al Plank, Johnny Griffin, and Al Porcino.

Vuckovich calls Molina "one of the most lyrical, tasteful and melodic trumpet players on the jazz scene today." *LA Jazz Scene* reviewer Scott Yanow praises Molina's "catchy latin rhythms, high-quality solos and irresistible group spirit." Mark Turner of *Jazz Improv Magazine* says "Molina's skilled trumpet delves out a warm and polished sound with experienced control. His flugelhorn glows."

A frequent guest artist at Peter Welker's "Jazz on the River" concerts on Friday evenings in the summer, Molina is well-known to Petaluma jazz fans. But his credits extend throughout the Bay Area and beyond. In 1983 the Bay Area Jazz Society voted Molina "Best Jazz Trumpeter in San Francisco". He's listed in Scott Yarnow's "Trumpet Kings". He's toured in Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hawaii, the Philippines, Korea and Japan. He's appeared at the San Jose Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Russian River Jazz Festival, and the Bay Area Loft Jazz Festival.

Al Molina's Latin Jazz Sextet will be playing on the lawn near Graffiti restaurant on Sunday afternoon, August 20.