

## NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band Starts Year on a High Note with a September 16 Tribute to Former Blood, Sweat & Tears Trumpeter

September 2016



An upcoming concert in Jersey City celebrates New Jersey City University (NJCU) alumni musicians, the jazz program at NJCU and the life of the Jersey City waterfront. The New Jersey City University Alumni Jazz Big Band, conducted by NJCU Professor Richard Lowenthal, will perform a "Tribute to Lew Soloff" with a special guest appearance by acclaimed trumpeter Randy Brecker on Friday, September 16, 2016, 6 p.m. at the **J. Owen Grundy Pier, Exchange Place** in Jersey City.

Admission is free for the spectacular conversion of jazz music talent that also includes saxophonist Blue Lou Marini, trumpeter Tony Kadleck, bassist Harvie S, and bass trombonist Dave Taylor. In the event of rain, the concert will be held in the Mack-Cali Atrium, Harborside Plaza 2 at 34 Exchange Place.

This concert is the fourth annual collaboration between NJCU and the City of Jersey City and marks the start of NJCU's arts programming, bringing together a number of musicians who had known, performed with, or studied with Mr. Soloff. He performed at NJCU several times as a guest artist with the NJCU Jazz Band.

Mr. Soloff's storied career included a five-year tenure with jazz-rock pioneers Blood, Sweat & Tears, which he joined in 1968 replacing Randy Brecker. His playing created the band's signature horn sound on its Grammy-winning 1968 album "Blood Sweat & Tears" which produced three hits - "Spinning Wheel," "And When I Die," and "You've Made Me So Very Happy."

Mr. Soloff also performed with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra, Maynard Ferguson, and Ornette Coleman. An in-demand studio musician, he recorded and performed with many musical giants, including Paul Simon, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Barbra Streisand, Miles Davis/Quincy Jones, Laura Nyro, Paquito D'Rivera, Lionel Hampton, Herbie Mann, Carmen McRae, and Wayne Shorter.

"NJCU is proud to partner with the City to present this special tribute to New Jersey's own Lew Soloff and to share his musical contributions with our talented guests and the fine artistry of our music alumni and faculty," President Sue Henderson stated.

"We are honored to salute Dick Lowenthal as he begins his 50<sup>th</sup> year as a faculty member in our Caroline L. Guarini Department of Music, Dance and Theatre. Thanks to talented professionals like Professor Lowenthal, NJCU students benefit from the teaching, mentoring, and networking of our fine faculty," said Dr. Henderson.

The NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band will feature musicians who studied at the University dating back to the late 1960s. Among the alumni performing this year will be drummer Rich DeRosa (recipient of the 2014 NJCU Distinguished Alumni Award); sax players Mark Friedman, Daryl Dixon, John DiSanto, and Bob Magnuson; trumpeters Vinnie Cutro and Nathan Eklund; trombonists Rob Edwards, Danny Hall, and Conrad Zulauf; and pianist Barry Spatz. In addition, NJCU's Coordinator of Musical Theatre Marc Dalio will perform and conduct a group of NJCU alumni in a tribute to Blood, Sweat & Tears.

The second annual "Clark Terry Award" will be presented at the concert to an NJCU student who honors the legacy, fine musicianship, and strong humanitarian values of the great man for whom the award is named.

The "Tribute to Lew Soloff" concert is free and open to the public. The J. Owen Grundy Pier is conveniently located near public transportation and there are parking lots in the area. For more information, call 201-200-3426 or visit the NJCU website at [www.njcu.edu/arts](http://www.njcu.edu/arts).

*Sponsors for the Fourth Annual NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band Concert include: The NJCU Foundation, Arch Insurance, RBC Capital Markets, Genova Burns, BBC Community Bank, Bijou Properties, Cambridge Construction, Connell Foley, Cushman & Wakefield, Del-Sano Contracting, Harrison Rand, Hillier Studios, Langan Engineering, Mack-Cali, Panepinto Properties, Partner Engineering and Science, The PRC Group, 30 Montgomery Partners, Withum, Avison Young, ConnectOne Bank, Fineberg & Associates, Hyatt Regency of Jersey City, New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce, Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Jazz Society, WBGO, and Hot House Jazz Magazine.*

### ***About Lew Soloff***

Lew Soloff was an American jazz and classical trumpeter and composer, who grew up in Lakewood, New Jersey. After studying trumpet at the Eastman School of Music and the Julliard School, Mr. Soloff started his professional career performing with Machito, Maynard Ferguson, Tito Puente, and the Thad Jones and Mel Lewis Orchestra, Clark Terry, and the Gil Evans Orchestra, with whom Mr. Soloff would continue to collaborate until Mr. Evans' death in 1988.

Mr. Soloff was best known for his five-year stint with jazz-rock pioneers Blood, Sweat & Tears, which he joined in 1968, replacing Randy Brecker and performing with them until 1973. His playing was essential to the success of the band. The band's second album, which won the Grammy Award for Album of the Year in late 1968, included three singles that went gold: "You've Made Me Feel So Very Happy," "And When I Die," and "Spinning Wheel." The album version featured a be-bop inflected upper-register solo on "Spinning Wheel" that changed the style of fusion bands forever.

He was among a handful of trumpeters capable of playing difficult lead trumpet parts as well as outstanding improvisational solos. Mr. Soloff had the ability to perform baroque, classical and chamber music styles. Because of this virtuosity, he has a long list of credits including performances with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra, Miles Davis/Quincy Jones, Gil Evans, Ornette Coleman, Maynard Ferguson, Clark Terry, That Jones/Mel Lewis Band, Elvis Costello, Bob James, and Barbra Streisand among others.

### ***About Randy Brecker***

Randy Brecker's versatility in different musical genres has made him a much sought-after trumpet and flugelhorn player, equally accomplished in jazz, rock, and R&B. Growing up in a Philadelphia suburb, his father took Randy and his younger brother, Michael Brecker, to see and hear Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and Duke Ellington among others. After graduating from Indiana University, he performed with Clark Terry's Big Bad Band and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Band.

In 1967, Mr. Brecker recorded with the band Blood, Sweat & Tears on their first album "Child is Father to the Man." He left soon after to perform with the Horace Silver Quintet and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. He then joined his brother Michael to form the fusion group Dreams.

In 1975, Randy and Michael formed the Brecker Brothers band, releasing six albums that had seven Grammy nominations between 1975 and 1981. After the Brecker Brothers disbanded in 1982, Randy performed with Jaco Pastorius and Brazilian jazz pianist Elaine Elias.

In 1997, "Into the Sun" earned him his first Grammy as a solo artist, and the 2005 album, "34<sup>th</sup> N Lex" won him a Grammy for Best Contemporary Jazz album. His recording with the WDR Big Band earned him another Grammy Award, as did "Randy in Brazil" (2008), making for a total of five Grammy Awards. He won his sixth Grammy with the 2012 recording "Night in Calisia" which was his third collaboration with Polish jazz pianist Wlodzimierz Pawlik.

A collaboration with Polish musicians, (Brecker Family ancestors hail from an area near Bialystok.) an album released in Poland in 2012 called "Night in Calisia," was released in the US in 2013 and won the 2014 Grammy Award for the Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, Randy Brecker's sixth Grammy Award.

His latest work, "Brecker Brothers Band Reunion" was released in 2013 and was dedicated to his late brother Michael Brecker, who died of leukemia in 2007.

### ***About Blue Lou Marini***

Blue Lou Marini, a platinum recording artist, soloist, arranger and composer, has been a member of Blood, Sweat & Tears, The Saturday Night Live Band, the Blues Brother Band, The Band, Frank Zappa, The Doc Severinson Orchestra, The Woody Herman Orchestra, Buddy Rich Band, among others. He has recorded with such legends as Aretha Franklin, Tony Bennett, Billy Joel, B.B. King, The Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Lou Reed, and Diana Ross, and performed with many great artists, including Eric Clapton, Jose Carreras, Lou Rawls, The Supremes, Sting, and Tina Turner.

### ***About the NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band***

This is the fourth year the NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band has been featured in a waterfront concert on the J. Owen Grundy Pier. Previous concerts have been "A Tribute to Clark Terry" with special guest Wynton Marsalis; "A Salute to the Other Jersey Boys" with John Pizzarelli, Bucky Pizzarelli and Ed Laub; and "A Celebration of the Inauguration of President Sue Henderson" with guest artist Jon Faddis.

NJCU President Sue Henderson, who is a jazz fan, initiated the NJCU Alumni Jazz Big Band's summer concert event in 2013. Professor Richard Lowenthal, who begins his 50<sup>th</sup> year as a faculty member at the University in September, has conducted the concerts. Mr. Lowenthal founded the Jazz Program at NJCU, then Jersey City State College, in 1969. Under his leadership, the band has appeared at concerts and festivals throughout the world, including a one-week residency with Gerry Mulligan in Paris, the Montreux Jazz Festival, the Notre Dame Jazz Festival, and a U.S. State Department tour of Romania. Under Professor Lowenthal's leadership and then continuing with Professors Ed Joffe and Walt

Weiskopf, NJCU has offered a strong program for the past half century. In February of 2015, Mr. Lowenthal led an NJCU student quartet in a one-week residency at the True Music School in Mumbai, India.

NJCU alumni have an impressive list of credits in Broadway, television, recording industry, and symphony orchestras. NJCU jazz alumni have worked with some of the most legendary artists of all time, including Gerry Mulligan, Ray Charles, Buddy Rich, Maynard Ferguson, Lionel Hampton, Johnny Mathis, Nancy Wilson, Cher, Mel Torme, and Tony Bennett.