

Percy Brice (drums & percussion)



was born on March 25, 1923 and has from a young age been a performer. In the 1940s he was already familiar with some of the jazz all-stars performing with Lewis Russell, Benny Carter and Mercer Ellington. Uptown at the Savoy Ballroom and Minton's Playhouse he was the featured drummer with Tab Smith, Cootie Williams, Tiny Grimes, Lucky Thompson and Oscar Pettiford.

In the 1950s he led his own groups at Minton's Playhouse before joining the great jazz trio led by Dr. Billy Taylor. As a member of George Shearing's quintet he appeared in the film, "The Big Beat"—then in the late '50s returned to Minton's to work with Kenny Burrell for a year. Mr. Brice worked as an accompanist to Sarah Vaughan from 1959-61. From 1961-68 he worked with the popular singer, Harry Belafonte, where he appeared with Carmen McRae and Ahmad Jamal. By the 1970s he led his own group for five years before working on Broadway.

During a long Broadway career, he worked on some of the top musicals including stints in "Eubie" and "Bubbling Brown Sugar"—the latter in which he played and conducted. Between tours he has worked with the legendary tappers, the Copasetics. He continues to perform on and off Broadway in musicals, revues and jazz festivals.

George Bouchard



was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. He didn't have formal training in music during his early, school years, although his love for Jazz was evident at a young age.

It wasn't until his third year of college that George decided to take up saxophone. He was in a bar, of course, in Buffalo (Big Mother's), when he heard his idol, Don Menza, play. He had followed Menza for years, whenever the great tenorman was home from one of his road gigs, usually with Maynard Ferguson. George asked Menza who taught him, and the answer was "John Sedola".

Sedola was the dean of saxophone teachers in Buffalo, and George, age 19, showed up the next day to start saxophone lessons. Three years later, having completed a degree program at the University of Buffalo with a major in economics, George joined the Navy and was a musician in the service for the next four years. During this time, he finished the correspondence course in arranging from the Berklee School of Music, in Boston, and began to write.

After the Navy, George earned a Master's degree in composition from Memphis State University, and wrote a symphonic poem for a thesis. He began his college teaching career immediately upon graduation from Memphis State, having been hired to set up a Jazz program at Jackson State Community College, 60 miles away.

George left Tennessee when he was 33, relocating to New York City. As an educator, George was on the faculty at Laguardia Community College, in Queens; William Paterson College, in New Jersey; and Nassau Community College, on Long Island, where he still teaches in the Music Department as a full professor. George has had a long, rewarding, and successful academic career, for which he is most grateful.

George developed his writing skills slowly over the years, mostly through committee work as a professor. His teaching expertise and specialization has been in the area of improvisation. He has been a member of the Summer Jazz Workshop faculty---which focuses on jazz improvisation---since the late 70s. In 2001, George's book, *Intermediate Jazz Improvisation*, was published. It was heralded as an instant classic in the field. George is honored to have had the chance to make what appears to be an indelible mark in his chosen field as the author of an important text.

None of the above touches on the human element, however. All along the way, numerous relationships and romantic excursions into fantasy showed George the other side of life. He learned a lot, most of it the hard way, and he used the composite of those experiences as the source material for the other major creative work of this period in his life---his cd of originals, *Mellow Lane*, released in 2008. George wanted to take his songs, written over several years, and record them as professionally as possible, using the best players and technicians available.

Danny Kean, an extraordinarily gifted musician, produced the album. as an important work right alongside *Intermediate Jazz Improvisation*.

George has built a life for himself and his son, Derek, in Westbury, New York, not far from his gig at the school. Two cats live there, too, Sparkie and Vicki, and everybody's cool.

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-Senator Kemp Hannon-

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