



CAST OUT!

Northway Church Must Find a New Home

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Photo Courtesy of Northway Church

New Rochelle Green-Lights Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study

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Jazz Learning Center & YOHO Artists Open Studios

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Handmade and Machine-Made Walk the Aisle Together at the Met

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ARTS & CULTURE

Cool Sounds to Emanate From Jazz Learning Center



By Joseph P. Griffith

Some of the greatest artists in the history of jazz – Duke Ellington, Art Blakey, Miles Davis and others – were more than just musicians; they were also teachers. Apprenticeship in their bands lent prestige to their sidemen, but it was also a musical education that no amount of money, only life experience, could buy.

Jazz ebbs and flows in popularity, and in recent years other forms of popular music have ruled the waves of public imagination. A new teaching venue is about to prepare a new generation for perhaps the next wave of popularity for jazz, and other music.

The Westchester Center for Jazz and Contemporary Music is opening this weekend at 540 Nepperhan Ave., to coincide with the Yonkers Arts Weekend. Its students will be performing alongside professionals, partly to entertain the large crowds expected to visit the YOHO Open Studios, and also to drum up publicity and perhaps recruit new students. The project is the brainchild of Liz and Paul Sander of Bedford, who want to give music students a quality learning experience.

Liz Sander, executive vice president and chief actuary at Odyssey

Reinsurance Co. in Stamford, said the center began with the family's search for a challenging jazz ensemble for their son. They engaged Joey Berkley, a saxophonist and music teacher at Fox Lane High School in Bedford, who suggested not just teaching him, but also creating an education center for other students. Berkley knew about the YOHO studios and suggested creating it there.

The center currently has about six students, signed up mostly through word-of-mouth among the Sanders' friends. "It's hard to go and recruit students without a place," she said. "Some people reached out and said when you open let us know. As we talked about it we realized a lot of adults would also be interested. Now that we actually have a space it will be easier to do. From our perspective, the center doesn't have to be big; we just want it to be good." Besides the stage and performing area, there will be a parents' lounge, kitchen and room for a few small tables and chairs. Performances may be staged at other venues.

As they were renovating the space, the \$100,000 to \$150,000 the Sanders expected to spend ballooned to \$240,000, all of it their own money. They also received assistance from



Photo of Joey Berkley at Untermyer Park by Amy Kerwin

a New York-based fund-raising and arts-empowerment nonprofit called Fractured Atlas. Liz Sander said part of the center's mission is to allow students who may not be able to afford \$300 a month or more for lessons elsewhere to have quality training at lower prices.

"I've been fortunate to have a good career and a good job, so I can give back. I played classical piano in college but improvisation was not my thing. When I chose this career my teacher said, 'Go make a lot of money and support the arts.' I realized the need and the potential, and frankly, all

I ever want is to produce good music and give kids a quality experience. I never want to turn a kid away because of money." Both she and Joey Berkley employ a Duke Ellington quote in describing the center's mission: "There are two kinds of music. Good music, and the other kind."

"I'm not trying to get kids interested in jazz, but in quality music," Berkley said. "It doesn't matter if it's hip-hop or jazz or whatever. I ask students to listen to something on the radio and I want an explanation, tell me why it's great or not. There are so many basic fundamentals missing in

commercial music. Art comes from a good base of mastering fundamentals.

"The philosophy is to bring the professional world into the classroom. I want students to have the opportunity to play next to seasoned professionals. The educational value is beyond the ability to quantify. For a lot of kids, when they get the chance to sit next to and play with them, it leaves a lasting impression that can take hold and change their life. It changed mine. I don't make a distinction between me playing as a performer and teaching. To me, they're not students, they're just young musicians."

Berkley has played with numerous well-known artists, including the trumpeter Lew Soloff and guitarist John Tropea, whom he called a mentor, "incredibly supportive" and "the epitome of great session players. He represents an era of playing I'm trying to recreate in a more contemporary setting." He said his own band, Joey Berkley's Bandits, will soon release a new recording.

Having lived in Yonkers for eight years, he said "it's great to be part of the transformation of the city on some small level. There's a real renaissance with the arts going on. It feels like Yonkers is on the way to coming back to greatness."

Westchester Center for Jazz and Contemporary Music

<http://westchesterjazzcenter.com/>

You Gotta Have Art, and Yonkers Will Have It



By Joseph P. Griffith

About a dozen years ago, George Huang, a real estate broker who is not an artist, nevertheless had an artistic vision. He saw the potential for an arts community in a pair of buildings in Yonkers, and thus the YOHO arts district was born.

This weekend, the artistic tradition continues with the 13th annual YOHO Artists Open Studio tour, to be held from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday at 540 and 578 Nepperhan Ave. This year, the event has expanded to coincide with the Yonkers Arts Weekend, which will coordinate several venues around the

city into a single celebration of the arts and much of what Yonkers has to offer in connection with them.

"I stumbled across these buildings in 2004 and saw a lot of potential in them," said Huang, a principal in Heights Real Estate in Manhattan. "That and what is now that entire Carpet Mills Arts District as a potential artists' community and arts-related district. In 2005 we had 25 artists. We helped promote, nurture and grow the community, and we now have 85 artists, the largest artist community in Westchester. All that creativity, the vibe of that energy indicates that something bigger is going on."

The artists who are part of the

collective have been exhibited and collected by museums, universities and institutions, and the Open Studios weekend is one of the largest and longest-running such tours in the metropolitan area. The free event gives the public the opportunity to visit professional studios to speak with the artists and see where and how their work is created.

In recent years Yonkers has been aggressively marketing itself as a place to live and work, for businesses, particularly in the technology sector, as well as artists. Much of that effort aims at New York City. "We do a lot of our own marketing to promote the building and the arts district, and we get our share of inquiries from

upper Manhattan and Brooklyn," said Huang. "Considering that rents in Brooklyn are three times what they are in Yonkers, and that Yonkers is 20 or 25 minutes away from Manhattan, it's not difficult to guess that this is where everyone wants to be."

He cited the buildings' "industrial charm," which includes high ceilings, interior columns and 19th-century origins, as part of the appeal. Most of the 150,000 square feet is leased, he said. In addition to artists, there are tenants with roots in the buildings' history, such as a piano refinisher, antiques dealers and woodworkers.

R.J. Rose Realty, headquartered at 500 Nepperhan Ave., in December obtained a \$500,000 grant from New York state to create the Carpet Mills Arts District. Street lighting and

signage are among the improvements planned, the goal being to beautify the neighborhood and attract business. A legislative signing ceremony officially designating the district was scheduled for this week. Huang credited Randolph Rose, that company's president, with enthusiastically helping to spearhead the effort, and he also praised the city's government for its cooperation and assistance.

"It's a fabulous, family-friendly event and the artists really get into it," said Huang. "The event was previously all at 540 and 578 Nepperhan, but now several of the neighbors have joined us and it's extended into a number of buildings. Somewhere along the way, the city decided to build the arts weekend around us.

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ARTS & CULTURE

You Gotta Have Art, and Yonkers Will Have It

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Now we're part of something bigger. The best stuff is just about to begin."

In addition to the events at the buildings along Nepperhan Avenue,

Entertainment will be provided by musicians from the new Westchester Center for Jazz and Contemporary Music, which opens this weekend at 540 Nepperhan.

Adam Shultz, an artist who paints,

has tripled in the time since he took over the administration, he said. The events expect perhaps 1,000 visitors.

"I attribute the increase to the community becoming larger, with more contact with the public and marketing, and being better organized," he said. "All the artists participate in social media, and there is cross-collaboration with the other venues, and a lot of support from Mayor Mike Spano."

Biagio Civale, a listed artist who lives in Yonkers, has had a studio at 578 Nepperhan for three years, a fraction of his 66-year career. "It gives me a reason to work away from everyday life, some sort of privacy, silence, all the things that an artist needs," he said. "At the same time on the same floor it's possible to see other artists and discuss with them common or different concerns."

He chose the studio because "my garage and basement were full of my artwork and I needed another space to create new things. There was also the opportunity to become more known in that environment because of the Yonkers Arts Weekend, and the possibility of adding social activities. The entire neighborhood is going to become the center of activities. It's promising to become

presentations will take place at other venues including the Hudson River Museum, Untermyer Park and the waterfront area.

Refreshments will be served, and many of the artists provide their own snacks and drinks in their studios.

sculpts and does installations, has been a tenant at 540 Nepperhan for eight years. He took over the operation of the Open Studios weekend about four years ago. "Being in an arts community was very attractive to me as an artist," he said.

The number of artist participants



Studio of Shelley Haven. Photo by Joseph P. Griffith



Studio of George M. Gutierrez. Photo by Joseph P. Griffith



Mayor Mike Spano visits studio of Biagio Civale

very exciting."

It would be difficult to describe Civale's work in a few words. It seems to range over much of the history of art, with painting, mixed-media, sculpture, and influences from the ancient to the modern, the political, the representational and the abstract.

"Well," he said, "it's been 66 years."

Yonkers Arts Weekend and YOHO Open Studios

<http://www.yohoartists.com/>
<http://www.yohoartists.org/>



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