

Rachel & Smith Swing Shop

PO Box 8331, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-8331
info@smithswingshop.com www.smithswingshop.com
408-348-7003

BAND BIOS

MS. RACHEL SMITH Bandleader & vocalist



Ms. Rachel & Friends is a group lead by vocalist Ms. Rachel Nelson mainly playing in the jazz genre, some bebop, and beyond. She can play with people she's known for years or with someone she's just met. It is the spontaneity and freedom jazz IS that Ms. Rachel loves so much. Nate Pruiett of Primary Colors has said when she sings, you know she means it. As a jazz activist she maintains <http://www.msRachel.com>, is a past member of the Jazz Society of Santa Cruz County board of directors and has volunteered with KCSM, and the San Jose Jazz Festival. She has studied with Kitty Margolis, Nate Pruiett, Madeline Eastman, Dena de Rose, and Mark Murphy.

DAVE HOWELL Piano



Dave Howell began playing the piano at age six, and in high school he played trumpet and piano for weddings and other events. After studying improvisation with the composer and jazz pianist Marshall Griffith at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Dave received a B.A. in Music in 1987. After a misguided foray into electronic music and MIDI software engineering in the late eighties, he has concentrated on jazz piano performance. His musical influences range from Art Tatum to Bill Evans to Chucho Valdez.

SCOTT NORDGREN Woodwinds



Scott Nordgren is a local woodwind player, teacher and composer, who has been working in Santa Cruz and the greater Bay Area for over twenty years. An alumnus of Aptos High, Scott finished his B.A. and M.A. in music at CSU Hayward. He has performed on numerous CDs, recordings and commercials, as well as in Sincluding Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Joe Henderson, Diane Schurr, Louie Bellson, Ray Charles, The Temptations and many others. For seven years, Scott played woodwinds for the long-running show, Beach Blanket Babylon in San Francisco. He is currently teaching jazz studies at Cabrillo College as well as offering private instruction, and enjoys freelance work around the country. He also performs and writes for his own Big Band, the Mood Swing Orchestra.

JOHN WITKOWSKI Guitar



Raised in Japan, John Witkowski originally studied classical guitar but later switched to jazz. John studied with guitarist Peter Sprague in southern California and then moved to Austin, where he worked playing in many different genres and settings for five years. John came to Santa Cruz three years ago and has become one of the most sought-after up-and-coming guitarists in the area.

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VICTOR REVERE

Basses



Victor Revere has played many musical styles with a focus on bass and percussion instruments and rhythms. He's a former member of several popular Santa Cruz music groups including Worlds Collide and Kosono and has played with local artists Samba Ngo, Tocara, Bob Burnett and a host of others. Largely a self-taught player, he has studied with jazz bassist Bunny Brunell and taken jazz courses with Ray Brown at Cabrillo College. Earlier musical influences started with cartoon and classical music, and later incorporating progressive rock, jazz, fusion, the gamut of funk, R&B, and other forms of pop music from all parts of the world. As an active board member of the Jazz Society of Santa Cruz County (JSSCC) he holds down the bass chair in the weekly Sunday jam sessions. In addition to Ms. Rachel & Friends, he plays with Pankind and the JSSCC All-Stars.

STEVE PETERS

Drums



Steve has been drumming for more than 10 years, playing in a variety of pop, funk, orchestral, and jazz bands on the east coast before moving to California. A resident of Capitola, he was the house drummer for the Jazz Society of Santa Cruz County's weekly jam sessions for its first six months. He has played with Take Two Jazz Band and a variety of other local jazz combos in clubs, restaurants, at weddings, and for special events at such venues as the Kuumbwa Jazz Center and Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.

PETE NOVEMBRE

Basses



Over the past decade, Pete Novembre has cultivated one of the most diverse styles of bass playing on the scene today. Novembre began his musical career in New Jersey playing in funk and rock groups such as Fatty Lumpkin and Velour. While earning an English degree from Rutgers University, Pete began playing the upright bass, and thus his jazz career began. Since then Novembre has been seen all over New Jersey and the San Francisco Bay Area circuits playing everything from jazz to funk to bluegrass. Although Novembre is influenced by many acoustic and electric bass players, he cites his primary influence as Parliament funk guru Bootsy Collins.

JEFF ARLT

Drums



Jeffrey Arlt was born and raised on Long Island, New York. He studied music and drum set at Cabrillo College and privately with Dan Sabanovich. In addition he has studied Afro-Cuban percussion with Raul Rivera. Having played and recorded in a variety of musical styles while living in Santa Cruz, Jeffrey currently drums for Ms. Rachel and is the house drummer for the Jazz Society of Santa Cruz Sunday Jam sessions.

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