

Jazz Visiting Artist

Joe LaBarbera

Percussion

Joe LaBarbera has enjoyed a long and varied career in music, a career that has taken him all over the world with some of the finest names in jazz. He is regarded by his peers as a musical drummer and a supportive accompanist. Jazz great Bill Evans summed it up best when he said that Joe is very dedicated to playing quality music, and he's willing to make the concessions of dues toward that end. He's a top soloist and he does the right thing at the right time.

Born in Mt. Morris, New York, his first musical experiences began at home as part of the family band with his parents and two older brothers, saxophonist Pat and trumpeter and arranger/composer John LaBarbera. From his father he received a solid foundation in drumming as well as lessons on clarinet and saxophone. His education continued at the Berklee College of Music in Boston where his teachers included John LaPorta, Charlie Mariano, Herb Pomeroy and the great Alan Dawson.



After Berklee and two years with the U.S. Army band at Fort Dix, New Jersey, Joe began his professional career with Woody Herman and the Thundering Herd. The Chuck Mangione Quartet followed with gigs ranging from jazz clubs with the small group to symphony halls with full orchestra. Then it was onto New York and a fruitful two-year period of freelancing with Jim Hall, Phil Woods, Art Farmer, Gary Burton, Art Pepper, John Scofield, Bob Brookmeyer and Toots Thielmans to name just a few.

In 1978 Joe was asked to join Bill Evans in what was to become a landmark trio. Along with bassist Marc Johnson, the trio grew over a two-year period to become one of Evans' finest. After Bill's untimely death in 1980, Joe joined pop singer Tony Bennett.

Currently residing in Los Angeles, Joe is involved in a wide range of music locally, nationally and internationally. On the local scene he is busy with his own quintet as well as sideman duties with many well known jazz artists. Recent dates in North America include performances with Bill Mays, Eddie Daniels, Randy Brecker and brother Pat La Barbera.

During the last few years, Joe has toured Europe with Kenny Wheeler, Bassline (with Hein Van De Geyn and John Abercrombie) and the WDR Big Band. Most recently, he toured Japan with Lee Konitz, Europe with The West Coast All Stars and with Karrin Allyson, and South America with Bud Shank.

In 1999 along with Tom Warrington, Larry Koonse and Clay Jenkins, Joe created JazzCompass, an independent recording company dedicated to the kind of creative music that has always been close to his heart. Joe has two releases on JazzCompass, Live (JC1004) and Mark Time (JC1437) which was selected one of the top 10 2003 releases in Dr. Herb Wong's Blue Chip Jazz CD Awards. He is also heard on other JazzCompass projects including brother John La Barbera's exciting new big band recording, "On The Wild Side" (JC1007).

Since 1993, Joe has been on the faculty of California Institute For The Arts in Valencia, California. He is also a visiting artist at UNLV (Las Vegas), and a faculty member of the Bud Shank Jazz Workshop. In the past he has also served on the National Endowment For The Arts council in Washington D.C. and has been a guest at many other colleges as both performer and lecturer.