

Boojum Tree, alternating most nights with another renowned pianist, Armand Boatman. "And if I wasn't there, I was at a place called Page Four or Valley Ho or Playboy Club," Goldenthal says. "There was this circuit of really great jazz rooms, plus there was a whole underground. There was Marvin's Gardens at 16th Street and Thom- as that had jazz until 3 in the morning. There was a lot more going on back then."

In 1977, the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts launched its first season of jazz, which included Sonny Rollins and, later, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and Dave Brubeck. That same year saw the founding of both Jazz In Arizona and the Arizona Classic Jazz Society (azclassicjazz.org), and in 1978, jazz impresario and producer Don Miller threw the first Paradise Valley Jazz Party. The desert blossomed with brilliant jazz cats over the next three decades, including Lewis Nash, singer and charismatic bandleader Dennis Rowland, late pianist and former Playboy Club music director Keith Greko, guitarist Stan Sorenson, vocalist Alice Tatum, and drummer Dave Cook. In 2005, 10-time Grammy Award-winning jazz guitarist George Benson took up primary residence in Phoenix, further nurturing the city's still-growing jazz pedigree, borne on the swinging club circuits of the '60s and '70s and the educational programs of today.

Jazz education and awareness is alive and well here. The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra has partnered with Mesa Arts Center for educational jazz programming and performances with young players, and local colleges are working with The Nash. "The community colleges want to do their seasonal performances here. ASU is doing their performances here. Students are doing their senior recitals here," Goldenthal says. "We have some of the finest educators in the Valley... actually coming down here and teaching for us."

For Valley jazz fans, being an educational epicenter is just one of many pluses. Asked to compare the current jazz scene in Phoenix to that of other cities, international jazz critic Patricia Myers says: "More venues compared to Chicago; less distance between venues compared to the widespread Los Angeles club scene; lower admission costs for touring big-name stars compared to New York City; primo location on the southern tour route by noted musicians."

Myers tacks on accessible venues, the variety of jazz styles, the high-level ability of local musicians, and diverse audiences from teens to seniors as further marks of Phoenix's unique jazz scene. "But mostly it is the local jazz scene's sustained and ever-evolving existence despite the recession and other universal factors," she says. "Like the stock market, live local jazz is cyclical; it ebbs and flows. I endorse the mantra 'Support live jazz - go out and listen.'"

— Patricia Myers contributed significantly to this report.

Phoenix Jazz Fams

Margo Reed closes her eyes and snaps her fingers to a swinging snare beat, swaying her head slightly as she sings on a black bar stool. Her voice carries a quivering timbre similar to Eartha Kitt's, sometimes sweeping into the deep

notes of her own soulful tenor as she croons "Fly Me to the Moon." Backed by mellow yellow stage lighting and a tight trio of veteran jazz players on piano, sax, and drums, the 71-year-old local legend looks and sounds great.

Every Monday night for the past 15 years, Reed has performed here at Kazimierz World Wine Bar in Scottsdale, backed by the city's most skillful players – tonight, they're Joel Robin Goldenthal on keys, saxophonist Jerry Donato, and drummer Cleve Huff. It's a treat to see Reed; recent health concerns limit her gigs to these weekly shows. Between smooth renditions of standards like "Sentimental Journey" and "Call Me Irresponsible," she repeatedly says into the microphone, "If you have any requests, tell the guys. They do that part; I just sing. Okie dokie? Fine."

Margo Reed was the first of her musical clan to move to the Valley from Chicago, followed by her sister Francine Reed (backup vocalist for Willie Nelson and Lyle Lovett) and their brothers, bass player Michael and late genre-bending drummer Bucko.

The Reeds represent one of a few famous Phoenix jazz families, including the Moios and the DeFrancescos. Drummer Dom Moio is faculty associate of jazz percussion at ASU and author of the book *Be Bop Phrasing for Drums*. He's performed with the likes of Tony Orlando and Herb Ellis. Dom's brother, Bill Moio, is an accomplished jazz guitarist who's performed with soul band Tower of Power and the Phoenix Jazz Quartet, along with his brother, bassist Warren Jones, and pianist Armand Boatman.

Former Miles Davis bandmate Joey DeFrancesco, named top jazz organist multiple times by *Down Beat* magazine, once described his family as "like the hip Partridge family." The other hipsters: his father, top organist John DeFrancesco; brother Johnny, a blues guitarist; and sister saxophonist Cheryle. Originally from Philadelphia, Joey DeFrancesco relocated to Phoenix in the '90s; his parents followed in 2005.

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Essential Arizona Jazz Albums

As Music Director of KJZZ 91.5 FM, Blaise Lantana has heard the cream of Phoenix's jazz scene. Here are her recommendations of five great homegrown albums for your listening pleasure.

Stan Sorenson, *New View* (stansorenson.com): "A guitarist, Stan plays all over the Valley and is from here. He is a graduate of ASU in guitar performance and teaches in Scottsdale."

Tony Vacca, *Three Point Landing* (Half Note Records; saxplayer.com): "Tony Vacca is a brilliant saxophonist and teacher. He lives in Scottsdale now and has been a resident performer and teacher in Chicago."

Joe Corral, *Groovin' Higher* (joecorral.com): "Joe is an amazing flutist who played with the Phoenix Symphony for many years and is now playing jazz. He grew up here and started out playing in mariachi bands with his family."

Cinco de Moio, *Cinco de Moio* (dommoio.com): "This is the band with drummer Dom Moio, and his brother Bill Moio and other Arizona musicians (see right). They focus mainly on Latin music."

Mike Kocour, *Speaking in Tongues* (michaelkocour.com): "Mike is the director of jazz studies at ASU and an inspired pianist and organist."