A Tribute to Mr. Wonderful

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A Tribute to Mr. Wonderful, a special benefit concert in memory of Nicholas Jordanoff was held on Saturday October 3, 2009. Proceeds from the event are going to the Nicholas Jordanoff Jazz Trumpet Scholarship.

Jordanoff, who passed away unexpectedly in March 2009, was given the nickname “Mr. Wonderful” by members of the University staff. He was a member of the Duquesne community for more than 50 years and most recently held the position of director of admissions in the Mary Pappert School of Music, until his retirement in 2008.

A Tribute to Mr. Wonderful featured an all-star lineup of his friends and colleagues as well as a new work for jazz ensemble composed in Jordanoff’s honor by saxophonist and chair of jazz studies Mike Tomaro.

Tony Mowod, on-air personality for WDUQ-FM, Pittsburgh’s jazz station, was the master of ceremonies. Taking the stage were jazz guitar legend Joe Negri, Catch 22 (Duquesne’s jazz guitar ensemble-in-residence), trumpeter Sean Jones, Grammy award-winning record producer and trombonist Jay Ashby, jazz vocalist Maureen Budway, pianist and University Chancellor John Murray, founding member of the...
New York Voices Kim Nazarian, a number of Tamburitzan alumni and Tomaro, who performed with a faculty jazz ensemble.

Jordanoff earned a teaching certificate and a degree in business administration from Duquesne. In 1970, he was asked to join the Tamburitzans as artistic director. There, at an audition, he met his wife, the current director of choral organizations and professor of music education in the School of Music, Christine Jordanoff.

In addition to his work at Duquesne, Jordanoff was well known in Pittsburgh’s music community. A drummer and trumpet player, he was a board member of the Pittsburgh Jazz Society and longtime member of that group as well as one of the founders of the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, for which he served as program director from 1961–1989. In addition, he was the original founder of the Pittsburgh Dance Council and served for 23 years as a board member of the Children’s Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh.

Jordanoff’s abilities went far beyond the world of music and dance. Through his language skills and knowledge of ethnic customs, he became an escort officer and interpreter for the U.S. Department of State.

Edward Kocher, dean of the music school, recalled Jordanoff’s professional abilities in his years as director of music admissions. “He counseled hundreds of music students and their families as they considered the important decision about studying for a professional career in music,” Kocher said. “He was a highly skilled evaluator of talent and over the decades, he quietly and earnestly helped our music students pursue and achieve their dreams.”

Jazz Faculty Write the Book on Jazz Arranging

Mike Tomaro, director of Jazz Studies, and Dr. John Wilson, a member of the adjunct faculty and former Jazz Studies director (1972–1996), have teamed up to write a comprehensive textbook on jazz arranging.

Instrumental Jazz Arranging presents a systematic approach to the essential techniques and materials of the subject, and Tomaro and Wilson have drawn upon more than 50 years of combined teaching experience to create a work that addresses all of the basic needs of beginning arrangers. Topics in the work include counterpoint/linear writing, jazz harmony, compositional techniques and orchestration.

According to Tomaro, it took approximately five years to write the 536-page book. The work is intended for use in individual or classroom instructional situations and comes with two CDs that include recordings of the examples in the book as well as assignment templates formatted for Finale software.

Instrumental Jazz Arranging is published by Hal Leonard Corporation and is available at book and music stores throughout the world.

The Savvy Musician

The Savvy Musician, a new book by David Cutler, associate professor of musicianship and coordinator of entrepreneurship studies, takes a comprehensive look at how today’s musicians can build their careers and make a living. The book examines critical elements often overlooked or misunderstood by musicians, such as entrepreneurship, product development, branding, marketing, networking, the new recording paradigm, personal finance, funding, relevance and legacy. This book helps you take control of your career by discovering opportunities that are both prosperous and meaningful. For more information, visit http://savvymusician.com.