

Benoit JazzWorks

Cool Jazz for Hot Maui Nights

Strolling through breezy Ma`alaea Harbor at sunset on Thursdays and Friday nights you'll hear the sounds of smooth jazz wafting on the winds. If this style of music lifts your soul, just follow the tunes (and the aromas) to Ma`alaea Grill and allow your ears to be filled with excellent renditions of jazz classics and Brazilian jazz by Benoit JazzWorks.

Anchoring the group are Phil and Angela Benoit, on guitars and vocals respectively. Both come from musical families, and their obvious enjoyment of the music they present makes hearing their performances a delight.

Maui native Angela has been singing since she was a child. Playtime with her many cousins included pretending to perform songs, including ones she had made up. With both her grandfathers being members of a Filipino string band, and her mother, Dorothy Pellazar, as their lead vocalist, Angela had quite a level of professional performance to aspire to. As a teen, around her family, she'd keep her singing voice quiet, tho' she'd sing in choir and was a cheerleader. She credits Phil for pulling her out of the shower, where she would let her voice soar, and putting her in as the vocalist of their group.

She loves to hear the recordings of jazz divas of the '40's jazz period and especially loves hearing accomplished scat singers. As she continues to add to



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her vocal repertoire with the Brazilian tunes the JazzWorks is known for, Angela is finding her comfort zone in front of the band expanding.

Phil spent many years in rock and roll and R&B cover bands. With his dad's visit six or so years ago, he was inspired to return to the jazz standards her grew up with. Bob Benoit was a working jazz rhythm guitarist in the Los Angeles area and was Phil's early guitar teacher. Upon his dad's debilitating stroke, Phil has been the caretaker of several of his dad's guitars. He rotates between them at the gigs, knowing each one allows him to bring his dad's spirit through at each performance. Most of the time, he'll bring the Gibson 335 along.

Their CD, "Watch What Happens," was released earlier this year, and includes guest performances by various Maui musicians and Phil's brother David who is soaring in his own jazz career on the mainland. The thirteen tracks are a nicely balanced group of tunes that feature Angela's clear voice with fingerpopping instrumentals that make you want to bop.

With Jimmy "C" on drums, Augustino Magliosi on congas, and guest appearances by various resident horn players and bassists Benoit JazzWorks ensures a fresh sound during their 6 to 9PM performances. They can be reached at 575-9382 or on the web at <www.benoitjazzworks.com>.