

Jazz Legacy Bios



Frank Strazzeri, pianist, composer. Born in Rochester, New York, Frank Strazzeri started his musical studies playing tenor saxophone and clarinet at the age of twelve. He began piano lessons in the seventh grade and later enrolled in the Eastman School of Music preparatory department, where he continued studying piano through high school.

When Frank arrived in Los Angeles in 1960, he began working with many jazz notables such as Kenny Dorham, Bud Shank, Chet Baker, Art Pepper, Frank Rosolino, Joe Pass, Conti Candoli, Kai Winding, Joe Henderson, and Stan Getz, to name a few.

Frank became the house pianist for World Pacific Jazz label, and during the next five years, recorded numerous albums with such great artists as Red Mitchell, Harold Land, Terry Gibbs, Herb Ellis, Joe Pass, Carmell Jones, Bobby Hutcherson, and the big bands of Oliver Nelson, Gerald Wilson, and countless others.

In 1969, Frank served as musical coordinator for the nationally televised Johnny Cash Show, and shortly thereafter joined the great Les Brown band for three years performing with many stars including Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra in concerts and TV specials throughout the world.

After leaving Les Brown, Frank joined Elvis Presley for two tours. The concert at Madison Square Garden, and the now famous Hawaii Special were recorded live and are still available on the RCA Victor label.

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Frank has written two piano books currently available. One titled Jazz Piano Solos on Try Publishing, and the other titled Strazzatonic on Warner Brothers.

Jeff Littleton, Bass. One of the most versatile and in demand bassists on the West Coast, he has performed with a virtual who's who of top jazz artist's including Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Hank Crawford, Pharoah Sanders, Charles Lloyd, Charles McPherson, James Newton, Harold Land, Tom Harrell, Billy Higgins, Bobby Hutcherson, Billy Higgins to name a few. His own band, the Littleton Brothers, with his brother Don, has a CD out and another in the works.

Kenny Elliott, Drums. Born in Chicago, Kenny has played with a host of spectacular artists, which is a testimony to his long-standing talent and skill. He has an extensive list of outstanding musicians, vocalists, celebrity entertainers, and Symphonic orchestras that he has performed for or with in his very successful career. Some well known and respected examples would include: Jazz instrumentalists such as Phil Upchurch, Eddie Harris, Lionel Hampton, Russ Freeman, and Benny Maupin, Jazz vocalists such as Ray Charles, Lou Rawls, Ella Fitzgerald, and Al Jarreau, Pop vocalists such as Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Al Green, Gladys Knight, and Dionne Warwick, Celebrities such as Lucy Arnez, Barbara McNair, and Carol Channing, as well as classical ensembles such as the Boston Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra.

George Harper, Tenor Saxophone. George has had a notable and stellar career playing the Saxophone, Flute and Clarinet. He was inducted into the Savannah Coastal Jazz Association Hall of Fame in September, 2005. Born in Savannah, Georgia he is both a composer and an arranger as well as a performer. George has performed with Clayton Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Ray Charles, Curtis Fuller, Herbie Hancock, Hubert Laws, Luckman Jazz Orchestra, Jimmy Smith, Bobby Caldwell, Jimmy Cleveland, Barbara Morrison, Billy Higgins, Eric Heed, Harold Land Jr., Phil Ranelin, Buddy Ranelin, Buddy Childers, LaMont Johnson, Henry Franklin, Louie Spears, Kevin O'Neal and More. George has also performed for various schools in the LA Unified School District leading, the George Harper Ensemble, and featuring Jazz styles from Dixie Land to Contemporary. The National GRAMMY Concert Series for Children featured "The George Harper Saxophone Quartet" at Elementary schools in the LA Unified School District. The program included music and composers of various musical styles from Classical to Jazz.

Steve Johnson, Trombone. Steve has played his trombone at the highest levels of all major styles: from Be Bop to Soft Pop, Classical to Salsa. He has done it all. Credits include: Ray Charles Orchestra (Lead & Jazz); Don Ellis Big Band (Lead & Jazz); Grover Mitchell (Lead & Jazz); Tommy Vig- Very Vig Band (Lead & Jazz); Buddy Collette; Benny Carter; Willie Bobo; David Benoit; Little Anthony; The Temptations; Captain and Tennille; Jan and Dean; Johnny Polanco; Alfredo de la Fe; Johnny Blas; Hector Rivera; Azteca; Johnny Martinez; Johnny Nelson; Sinfonia Orchestra (Roger Wagner Master Chorale); Valley Symphony; Los Angeles Solo Repertory Orchestra; Opera A La Carte. TV/Media work includes: ABC Movie of the Week, Comedy Central, The Golden Eagle Awards; New York, New York and the Swiss Radio Big Band. Steve has performed with the Jazz Legacy Duo at the Hilton Universal City Jazz Brunch on Saturdays and Sundays from October 2009 through August 2010, and is a regular performer with Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad. Leading a collaboration of great musicians such as those represented by Jazz Legacy is a dream come true and an exciting opportunity to make great music with the very best in the world of Jazz music.