

# Mother and Son

## Two Minds of Jazz

*by Tom Pierce and Rachelle Pierce*

Two people, a mother and a son, attended the concert of the Upstate Swing Band. As you will see below, the music brought them to very different places. Tell us what you think. Even better, consider writing a review for the APFJ newsletter about Jazz performances you've attended

### The Upstate Swing Band in Concert *by Tom Pierce*

Big Band lovers were treated to an enjoyable "Blast From the Past" on Sunday March 3, 2002 at a sold-out concert/dinner-dance at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Schenectady.

The 16 piece Upstate Swing Band, led by saxophonist John Van Voris, played favorites from the various facets of the rich jazz tradition (with striking influences from Count Basie and Glenn Miller) as well as the Motown and contemporary periods. They featured popular instrumental selections in addition to their fine vocalist, Karen Lee; with special guest singers Colleen Pratt, Bobby Van Detta and pianist Peg Delaney.

Saxophonist Doc Salvatore, who created arrangements for many of the numbers, produced the event, which inspired many attendees to consistently crowd the dance floor and add another level of excitement. The concert reminded one of the powerful fullness and musical variety only possible with jazz big bands, that unfortunately seldom receive opportunities to play regularly now, as was done in the swing era.

8 A Place for Jazz

### Memories of the Savoy Ballroom - A Mother Reminisces to Her Son *by Rachelle Pierce*

Tommy, that very nice concert you brought me to in Schenectady on March 3 brought back so many wonderful memories of all the many times your father and our friends enjoyed at the famous Savoy Ballroom in Harlem.

Thousands of folks would come from all over New York every night to listen to the great bands and singers and dance the Lindy Hop, Jitterbug, Waltz and One-Step on the floor they used to call "The Track". The place took up the whole block from 140th to 141st street on Lenox Avenue. They had two bandstands with people like Chick Webb, with Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Louis Jordan, Billie Holiday and my favorite, Louis Armstrong.

A special night for me and my friends was Thursday, our day off from work as domestics; they called it "Kitchen Mechanics Night Off" and many of the men would come to dance with all the

young ladies who were glad to be there and stayed until it closed at 3 AM.

There were many ballrooms back then, but there never was a place as special as the Savoy and probably never will be.

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### Tom Pierce's Desert Island Favorites

#### Instrumental

1. John Coltrane - "A Love Supreme"
2. Duke Ellington - "Latin American Suite"
3. Oscar Peterson - "West Side Story"
4. Dexter Gordon - "GO!"
5. Zoot Sims - "If I'm Lucky"
6. Jim Hall - "Concierto" (original release)

#### Vocal

1. Ella Fitzgerald - "Clap Hands; Here Comes Charlie"
2. Carmen McRae - "Lover Man & other Billie Holiday classics"
3. Lorez Alexandria - "Alexandria the Great"
4. Chris Connor - "As Time Goes By"
5. Anita O'Day - "Waiter, Make Mine Blues"
6. Carol Sloane - "Out Of The Blue"

*(Eds. Note We'd love to hear about your "desert island favorites" as well.)*