

The Local Scene story and photos by Frank Sole

Bucky Pizzarelli and Ed Laub Jazz Up the Minstrel Coffeehouse

Friday, July 17 was a special night at the Minstrel Coffeehouse in Morristown, marking only the second time in 30 years that the venerable traditional Folk music venue presented a jazz night. The event was a huge success, bringing out both the Folk music world's cognoscenti as well as many jazz fans. There was a capacity crowd and organizers eventually had to put chairs on the stage to accommodate the many music fans in attendance.

Bucky performed with his longtime friend and protégé Ed Laub who also played a seven-string guitar. Ed also provided some very nice vocals on a few numbers including heartfelt renditions of "It Had to be You" and "I Thought About You."

Frederic Chopin once said: "There is nothing more beautiful than the sound of a guitar, save perhaps two." This was certainly true in Morristown last July 17 as Bucky and Ed held the audience in a musical rapture for the entire evening.



Bob Himmelberger, Rick Crane and Surprise Guest Russell Malone at Shanghai

Bob Himmelberger and Rick Crane were the scheduled performers for Thursday night July 30 at Shanghai Jazz. I met Bob last year at a party and got to play a tune with him. I found him to be a nice guy and a great piano player so I was looking forward to hearing him play that night especially with Rick on bass. I've known Rick for many years and he is a smokin' bass player.

After arriving early, Margy and I settled in and began looking at the menu. I usually pick from one or two of my favorite items but that night I decided to try something new. When my "3 Chili Chicken" arrived I was surprised and pleased at how hot and spicy the dish tasted. It would turn out to be the first of two surprises that evening.

Bob and Rick began to play and they were hot and swingin'! I finished eating and settled back with a beer to listen. Well about

half way through the set Rick announced that a special surprise guest was going to sit in on guitar. Being a guitar player I was happily wondering who it might be. Rick then introduced none other than Russell Malone who proceeded to turn the heat up a notch and the band never looked back. This was the first time Bob and Rick had met Russell and it was as much a surprise to them as it was to the audience. Bob and Rick and Russell were having a great time and so was the audience.

I got to talk with Russell a little bit during the break and I can tell you that he is a

warm-hearted and friendly individual. We had one of those "guitar player" conversations about everything from players to picks to amps. He's also a very funny guy.

You can tell by the smiles on their faces in this shot that they all had a good time. So did everyone else who was lucky enough to be there that night. □



Frank Sole is an NJJS member and occasional contributor to Jersey Jazz.

Tell them you saw it in Jersey Jazz!