

SINCE

New York
Sheet Music Society

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1980

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC POPULAR MUSIC

**A Bravura Performance in Tribute to Alan Jay Lerner.
Barbara Brussell is Unadulterated Dynamite!
Beautifully Ignited by Tedd Firth**



Photos by Sam Teicher

By Jerry Laird

I have always really enjoyed Barbara Brussell's delightful performances, but for some reason she just seemed to have topped everything she's ever done when she appeared at our December 2nd meeting. She was so relaxed, so at ease, and so wonderfully interesting as she wove dialog into song into legend. Wow. I'm still reeling.

Her opening number set up the mood for the afternoon: "It's Time for a Love Song." Lerner's life became a bittersweet story, filled with glorious music. She delightfully caught us off-guard with her casual, breathless statement,

"What a day this has been..." which was such an obvious but not obvious jump right into song. And once she caught us, she never let us go. Wow, again! While giving us lots of his life story, she would sing one of his lyrics that would seem to come as much out of his life story as it did from the show it is in. I did know about his eight wives, but I didn't know about his height. To me, he was and always will be a big man. There is nothing small about his talent.

Barbara did the near-impossible. She did the Rex Harrison song, "Why Can't a

Woman be More Like a Man?" and you never questioned why she would be performing a song associated with a male singer. She did the same with Astaire's "How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Love You When You Know I've Been a Liar all My Life?" I was also caught in the spell she created with her version of "Heather on the Hill."

I also did not know he had received an Academy Award for the screenplay of "An American in Paris," or the strange relationship between Lerner and his father. Although I should

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President's Message...

It's hard to believe that 2006 has come and gone. Wasn't it only a short time ago that we were waiting for the Millennium? Anyway, I hope you all had a great holiday, had fun and didn't gain too much weight with all those parties and temptations. I celebrated by going on a cruise with a friend to the Caribbean and we sang on the ship at The Passenger Talent Show!

It is even harder to believe that 2007 represents the 30th year of The Singing Experience (over 425 workshops) and my eighth year as President of the NYSMS.

My best wishes to all of you for a healthy, happy and safe 2007!

2006 started off with three remarkable singers or as I call them "Three Great Ladies of Cabaret": **Lynn DiMenna** (Tribute to Dinah Shore), **Jane Sheckter** (Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields) and **Barbara Brussell** (Alan Jay Lerner). Each performer outdid herself and received rave reviews from our members. One show alone is enough of a reason to join the NYSMS. One evening at a club costs over \$50 with the cover, minimum + tax and tip....so bring friends to the meetings and encourage them to be part of the Society. The only way we can keep this wonderful organization alive is by spreading the word and getting new and enthusiastic members.

One of our New Year's Resolutions is to have a new and informative brochure/ application form to send out and put in the clubs. For now, please send people to our website, managed by **Debi Smith** (www.NYSMS.org). It is chock full of info, photos, schedule of events and our glorious history. **Glen Charlow**, our Treasurer and Newsletter designer, has arranged for you to **renew and join online** at our website - www.NYSMS.org. Many people have already taken advantage of this easy way to join and/or renew. If you have moved, please let us know. A few people asked me why they are not receiving the Newsletter anymore. Well, the Newsletter is for MEMBERS ONLY - printing and mailing are very expensive, so if you don't join or renew your membership, you will not receive the Newsletter. It's as simple as that!

We lost four important members this year and it has saddened us all. The incomparable **Betty Comden** passed away. She was a remarkable woman and the Program that she did for us was very special. I'm sure that ASCAP will be having a memorial for her at a Broadway theater. **Diane McCulloh**, our Recording Secretary, loved to sing, and was getting better with each performance. She bravely fought cancer for many years, and our hearts go out to her son. **Dottie Burman** had been a teacher and dreamed of performing and writing songs when she retired. She lived her dream and produced three CD's of her music and many shows. Her songs were sung by nearly everyone in cabaret. Dottie was a popular and beloved figure in the Cabaret World and we are all still reeling from the news of her death. **Walter Gold** was in the audience in the front row asking questions in the fall, and then had a fatal heart attack in November at the age of only 65. Our condolences to the families and friends of those who have left us. These people will be missed but we will treasure the time we had with them and the memories that we shared.

2007 is shaping up to be another winner! **January** - Elliot Ames produces the great Hotel Pianist/Singers. **February** - Jerry Laird produces the songs of Yip Harburg. **March** - our fabulous Collectors Meeting with our VP Sandy Marrone. **April** - Richard Skipper tells us about the life of Carol Channing as he channels Carol for us. **May** - Sandi Durell's fabulous New Songwriter Series with the great talents of today strutting their stuff. The full schedule and dates are in this issue.

Happy Birthday to our many Capricorn members (myself included). See you on January 13th!

Best wishes,

Linda

New York Sheet Music Society

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ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Joan Adams

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Glen Charlow

WEBSITE:

Debi Smith

<http://www.NYSMS.org>

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & PUBLISHER:

Jerry Laird

lairdstdio@optonline.net

214 Highland Ave., Norwalk, CT 06853

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Joan Adams

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Glen Charlow

designer@gcdtp.com

We welcome your comments. Information about performance dates, and other items you feel our readers will be interested in. Please be brief, & send it to the Editor at the address above.



Member News...

Lynn Dimenna will be brightening the Chestnut Room at **Tavern on the Green** on Thursday & Friday, January 18th & 19th as part of a new cabaret series produced by Len Triola. **Paul Greenwood** on piano, **Rick Petrone** on bass, and **Joe Corsello** on drums. Lynn is also producing a series of interviews at the **Darien Arts Center**, with three of our favorite divas: **Julie Wilson**, **Margaret Whiting**, and **Kitty Carlisle Hart**.

Ronny Whyte is producer of **Midtown Jazz at Midday** (now in its 23rd season) at St. Peter's Church (Lexington Avenue & 54th), every Wednesday at 1 pm. (\$5 donation suggested.) There are always outstanding performances. Here's January's schedule: Jan. 3rd: **Bill Kirchner** on reeds and **Junior Mance** on piano; Jan. 10th: **John Bunch** on piano; Jan. 17th: The **Alvester Garnett** Trio; Jan. 24th: **John Wallowitch** Jan. 31st: **Bucky Pizzarelli** on guitar.

Linda Amiel Burns' next Singing Experience will be *Love is in the Air*, with rehearsals starting Tuesday, January 16th and the performance at **The Triad** on February 12th. This is a wonderful Valentine's Day gift: be sure to reserve now.

The Singing Experience Cable TV Show on MNN - Time Warner: Chan 56 - RCN: Chan 111 Broadcasts are every other Sunday at 5:00PM.

Trudi Mann and accompanist **Gordon Webster** host an open mic on Sundays. They're at **La Bella's** back room (581 2nd Ave, 683-3889, 1 to 5, featuring **Saadi Zain** on bass, with Trudi on drums and vocals. Bring 2 copies of music. \$10 min. No cover.

David Berk is at **Tutto Bene** Restaurant, 102-15 Metropolitan Ave., Forest hills, Fridays and Saturdays at 7 pm. For reservations, call 718-375-3331 or 718-520-9598.

Mel Miller offers five musicals for less than the price of one Broadway ticket, with his *Musicals Tonight*. (Actually, a LOT less than some of the prices now!!!) Call 212-468-4444 for information.

Sheet Music Magazine always has wonderful tributes to The Great American Songbook. It includes sheet music to over a dozen songs. NYSMS member **Ed Shanaphy** (Publisher & Editor-In-Chief) makes sure that each and every issue is equally wonderful. If you aren't subscribing, you should be. It's \$14.95 for each one-year subscription, Send to: **Sheet Music** PO Box 58629 Boulder, CO 80323-8629

Sheet Music Plus is the Internet's biggest sheet music seller, with hundreds of thousands of titles to choose from. You can check the site out for yourself at: <http://www.SheetMusicPlus.com/store/tellfriendsite.html>

From our president, **Linda Amiel Burns**: Special Theater Discounts for NYSMS Members! We know that you love a good deal, so in association with Marna Mintzer and MGM Consulting, NYSMS members are being offered Broadway & Off Broadway theatre ticket discounts of approximately 48% or more off retail, plus arts event ticket discounts ranging from 30-50% off. For show updates and ordering information, call 212-935-2664 to hear what is available and please mention your special Membership code "A1." Offerings change frequently so phone the Hotline and listen carefully to the many choices.

In early January, "At The Ritz!" will return to radio, hosted by NYSNS board member **Lynn DiMenna** and Jeffrey Williams on Sundays, 3-5 pm on WVOF 88.5 FM and simulcast on www.wvof.org.

Karen Benedetto continues her string of songwriting contest recognition with awards in the Billboard, Unisong, Piano Press, Great American Song, and Texas Songwriters competitions. She recently made her cabaret debut as a performing songwriter in the **Anthony Santelmo Jr**-produced "Cabaret On Demand" evening at Baruch Performing Arts Center in NYC. The show features music and interviews with people like you. For info: 800-529-8497.

Henry & Bobbie Shaffner are doing a great job of keeping the world informed on how they are keeping their end of the Great American Songbook alive and singing. They've contributed music for various causes, from politics (for Hilary Clinton, for one) to history (they contributed a song to Ted Turner's production about Stonewall Jackson, "Gods & Generals.) They are very active in producing music about Philadelphia, where Bobbie was born, and where they both live now. "The Philadelphia Song," and the "Two Street Strut" are just two of their efforts. They were also commissioned to write a tribute to Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg. You can learn more about this remarkable couple by going to their page on our NYSMS web site.

Annual membership to NYSMS is \$50, which includes nine monthly meetings and newsletters. There is a \$10 guest fee at each meeting, which can be applied towards membership



Laird's Lair

To get this off to a running start, here's my view of what the Songbook means to me:

I never seem to be able to see as many of our members' performances as I would like, but when I do go, I'm always reminded of what a fantastic lot of talent there is in our membership. At the same time, I'm upset by the fact that the venues we do have seem to be disappearing. Went to see Eric Comstock's tribute to Charles DeForest at *Danny's*, featuring Christopher Gines as his guest. Eric was his usual fantastic self, and Gines was also fantastic. Great performers. Great room. What a shame that by the time you read this, *Danny's* will be closed.

One of my local librarians asked me to define "The American Songbook," when she noticed I used that term in one of my recent flyers. "Jonathan Schwartz refers to it a lot, also," she added. So, I told her they were all or any of the popular songs from about the time of very early Kern and Berlin to the present day, as there are still people writing in the style of the 20s to the 50s.

I somehow feel that that doesn't really cover it. So, I have this bright idea of asking you, dear members, to send me your concept of "The American Songbook," or perhaps it should be "The Great American Songbook" and I'll include your suggestions in the next issue. Anyhow, if you would, please, send them to my e-mail: lairdstudio@optonline.com.

(At our November meeting, highlighted by Barbara Brussell's beautiful musical theater piece on the life of Alan Jay Lerner, I mentioned the above idea, what does "The Great American Songbook" mean to each of us? to Elliott Ames. Here's his reply:

The pages of The Great American Songbook are made up of music from everywhere — Broadway, Tin Pan Alley, Hollywood; they are songs most often marked by sophisticated, intricate harmonies and surprising rhythmic devices with melodies that touch the heart and lyrics that simply say "I Love You." ("All The Things You Are").

Fellow guardians of The Great American Songbook, what's your take?

What does the Songbook mean to you? — Elliott Ames

This has been a rough time on people in our business: **Betty Comdon**. **Anita O'Day**. **Shirley Horn**. Read all three obits on the same day. Closer to home, however, is **Diane McCulloh**, who was on the NYSMS Board as the recording secretary. And **Dottie Burman**, one of our songwriter/performer members, also died. No matter what the individual's age, it always seems they were much too young.

New Year's Resolutions Can Be Fun!



For those who care for The Great American Songbook, New Year's resolutions need not be un-keepable vows of extreme asceticism such as drinking eight glasses of water a day or foregoing bacon cheeseburgers. Au

contraire, your resolutions can be vehicles of pleasure while helping to keep our music alive. No musically literate soul could possibly object to the following:

- When giving gifts at any time of the year, choose a CD or book by the performers who have so generously donated their time and talents to gifting us with Saturday afternoon programs of pure musical delight. Those singers and musicians who have entertained us so royally are all too numerous to mention — but in the book department, you might not be aware of our Vice President Bob Kimball's stunning new volume on the lyrics of Cole Porter.

- Make it a point to treat a different friend or coworker every month to one of our meetings. With the wonderful lineup of programs we have scheduled through June, you will surely delight your guests and win their eternal gratitude for introducing them to the Society. They're virtually certain to want to join (It's happened to me almost every month.)

- Fulfill your lifelong desire to be able to sing. Check with our president, Linda Amiel Burns, on the joy and health benefits of *The Singing Experience*.

- When the decision on where to dine is in your hands, think of it as a point of honor to choose a restaurant that employs live music. A little light research will reveal literally dozens of them throughout the city, and even more for weekend brunches. And for cocktails, what more atmospheric place than in the musical company of our supportive friends Daryl Sherman at the piano late afternoons and early evenings on the Terrace of *The Waldorf* and into the night with Kathleen Landis and Nancy Winston at *The Pierre*.

See, New Year's resolutions can be fun -- and a pleasure to keep!

Jane Scheckter Gave us Plenty to be Thankful For At our November Meeting

By Gregg Culling

Singer **Jane Scheckter** honored the recent centennial of lyricist Dorothy Fields and the long career of Cy Coleman in a wonderful pop/jazz concert at the November meeting of the New York Sheet Music Society. This pairing was a clever choice, since the two songwriters were often partners in song, but she also included tunes they wrote with other collaborators. Jane was accompanied on piano by the talented Patt Firth, who was a worthy last-minute replacement for her previously-announced accompanist.

Jane warmed up with Fields' first big hit from the Broadway show *Blackbirds of 1928*, "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," written with composer Jimmy McHugh. She proved that this 78-year-old song is still alive and vital when she led the audience in a sing-along and everyone joined in. Since Dorothy Fields was born into a show business family (her father was Lew Fields of vaudeville fame, and her brother Herbert a librettist for many Broadway shows, including several with Dorothy), her parents did not want young Dorothy to enter into the business. But after she wrote this show, at the young age of 23, she was already well on her way. Even then, her father said to her, "Well, are you satisfied? Now will you get out of show business?" Luckily, the answer was no.

The Oscar-winning lyricist does not have the name recognition of many of her peers, but her songs are well-known and loved. She was the first woman to be elected to the Songwriters' Hall of Fame, and she collaborated with a long list of esteemed composers including Jerome Kern, Fritz Kriesler, Sigmund Romberg, Harold Arlen, Harry Warren, and Arthur Schwartz.

A rousing "My Personal Property" (Coleman/Fields) from *Sweet Charity* (1966) again livened up the room with a strong and vivid attitude. Jane is a pro when it comes to selling a song, and she made it swing and sang the second chorus freely and easily. Jane made no attempt to make this a biographical show about these songwriters; it was simply a collection of their songs selected from their considerable outputs. Being that this was the Sheet Music Society, she said, she did make an effort to choose some songs that were not as well-known.

A smooth and torch-y "I Walk a Little Faster" (Coleman/Carolyn Leigh), written as an independent song (not for a show), was sung in



Photo by Lynn DiMenna

an arrangement that highlighted the fact that she was ever hopeful, "thinking you'll be there." Her use of dynamics in this tune was noticeably appropriate. Two songs by Jerome Kern, "Pick Yourself Up," done in an upbeat tempo, and the verse and chorus of "I Won't Dance," highlighted Fields' brilliant lyrics. Jane even attempted a nifty soft-shoe.

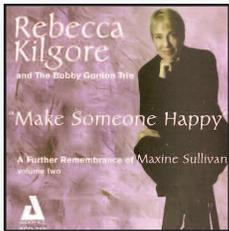
Jane mentioned that when working on her first album, *I've Got My Standards*, with pianist/arranger Mike Renzi, he had suggested "I'm in Love Again" by Coleman and Peggy Lee. But he suggested they call Ms. Lee to check on the then-unpublished lyrics. Jane ended up taking dictation over the phone from Miss Peggy Lee before they recorded it. What a lovely song, and Jane sang the long drawn lines of the music beautifully. With "I'm a Brass Band" (Coleman/Fields) she and Firth sounded almost like a full orchestra, as they made it march and swing!

Harold Arlen and Fields' "Look Who's Been Dreaming" was another winner, reminding us that "time goes so terribly fast, but look who's awake at last!" sung with great expression and broad gestures. Jimmy McHugh was an important man in Fields' early days, and "I Must Have That Man" was another one of their early collaborations. It was given a nice bluesy feel with Patt punctuating it, and they literally heated up the room!

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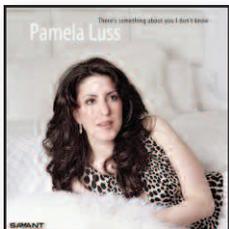
Singer's Singers...

CD Reviews by Dan Singer



Rebecca Kilgore
"Make Someone Happy"
Audiophile 319
www.jazzology.com

In ITI #128 I wrote about her impressive 17 song remembrance of Maxine Sullivan on Audiophile 308 called "Harlem Butterfly". Thoughtfully, Rebecca has released a much-needed 17-song follow-up called "a further remembrance". The spell cast on these additional 17 standards is blissful. Rebecca could probably sing the Manhattan telephone directory and mesmerize me completely. This collection from 2004 offers the lucky listener old songs presented in happy go lucky Anita O Day like joyous presentations. Each song has a zippy freshness to it. What you hear are familiar songs in sparkling feel good arrangements. In the true meaning of music being a great healer this cd should actually be sold in Drug Stores.



Pamela Luss
"There's Something About You I Don't Know" Savant 2071
www.jazzdepot.com

Producer alto sax and flute player Vincent Herring has come up with a most appealing collection of one dozen songs for Pamela to make her disc debut. She has the vocal similarity of Nancy Wilson and Wesla Whitfield while adding much of her very own independent sound. "Fools Rush In" (Bloom/Mercer), with its important verse, is a lovers delight. She brings to it her very own up-tempo arrangement to this lament to love. "This Heart Of Mine" (Fried/Warren) is sung most captivatingly. The Gershwin's "Embraceable You" is a real emotional torch song. It's bursting with painful dramatic singing. Jobim's "The Waters Of March", one of the most difficult songs to sing, is a

down and out swinging finger snapping masterpiece. Finally there's "My Funny Valentine" (Rodgers/Hart). It's sung respectfully in yet an all-new modern original arrangement. Pamela's future looks very bright.



Nancy Kelly
"Born To Swing"
Amherst 4422
www.jazzpromoservices.com

Wisely Nancy has chosen the renowned ace tenor man Houston Person to enhance her appealing vocalizing on this commanding cd. Song after song she dazzles reminding one of Anita Oday's finest hours. Nancy actually sounds like another member of the accomplished quartet that so ably accompanies her. There is so much occurring during "More Than You Know" (Ellsco/Rose/Youmans) that I just don't know where to begin. Nancy delves into this significant oldie and unearths fresh and new sounds. It's ballad artistry taken to vocal perfection. "Let Me Off Uptown" (Bostic/Evans) highlights Houston in a spectacular one of a kind tenor solo and surprisingly a polished vocal, assisting an amazing swift vocal by Nancy. It's so up you are bound to push the replay button.

NYSMS BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

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Now, each back issue of the past season NYSMS Newsletter is available for purchase.



Back issues are \$3.50 each and available starting with issues as of Oct 2005 and while quantities last. Email glen@gcdtp.com your request and to check if the issue wanted is available. Note: back issues are only available to current NYSMS members.

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Brussell is Dynamite...



not have been surprised, as Lerner had talent to burn (and he did) and his father was not much different from any other father who doesn't want his offspring to go into something as difficult to make money out of as the theater.

To me, the wildest story (and there were lots of wild, weird, and funny ones) was Barbara's telling of Lerner and Loewe having lunch, and afterwards, although they were in a time bind to catch a plane for the United States, Lerner insisting on stopping at the Rolls-Royce salesroom and ordering a Rolls. Lerner deliberated forever on color, etc., and finally made his selection and insisted on Loewe's buying one, too. With very little deliberation, he chose the "grey one" and added, "You got lunch. Let me get this."

There's no room to praise Barbara for all her wonderful and individual performances: "Hurry, It's Lovely Up Here," "What Did She Have that I Don't Have?," "You're All the World to Me." And everything else she sang.

It was just as if Barbara Brussel dropped into each of our living rooms, and sang just to us as individuals. Barbara, you were lovely up there!

dele

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Jane Scheckter...

Jane then noted that some of Fields' clever lyrics revealed the fact that Dorothy liked to write songs about how people looked: their eyes, their ears, their nose, their features... notably in "It's a Nice Face" (Coleman) and "You Couldn't Be Cuter" (Kern) - purportedly written about her new son David Lahm. One of Jane's best performances was on "I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life" (Coleman/Joseph A. McCarthy), another independent song, which she must include on her next recording. She was in perfect control as she drew out the emotion in the lyric by lengthening the notes and letting it soar.

From Coleman and Fields' last show together in 1973, *Seesaw*, Jane said she chose the following song because the lyrics prove that Fields was still "hip" and had a great sense of humor. "Welcome to Holiday Inn" tells of the horny and sexy receptionists, and those who do not charge for "extra activity." Jane made the most of it, before singing one of the tender, reflective ballads from the same show "I'm Way Ahead" about looking back on a troubled relationship. A beautiful song beautifully sung.

For a 1991 show Jane performed at the club 88's featuring the lyrics of Dorothy Fields, Mike Renzi had conceived a triple medley of biographical love songs by three different composers: Morton Gould's "You Kissed Me," a sentimental ballad of love a-borning, Albert

Hague's "Look Who's in Love," an up-tempo realization of what a kiss has revealed, and wrapped up with Arthur Schwartz's "This Is It," a feel-good ending to a love that is sure to last. She then combined two major ballads by Fields/McHugh that have become two of their most

enduring standards: "I'm in the Mood for Love" and "Don't Blame Me," with Jane wrenching every bit of emotion in her majestic belting tones.

To send us out on an optimistic note, Jane again led us in a sing-along of one of Dorothy Fields' trademark lyrics with that colloquial touch:

Grab your coat, and get your hat,
Leave your worries on the doorstep
Just direct your feet
To the sunny side of the street



What's Coming Up Next...

JANUARY 13, 2007

Elliott Ames celebrates those grand hotel pianists of the past who brought a new sophistication to music in dining rooms and lounges. Surely you remember Joey Bushkin, Charles DeForrest, Joe Derise, Hugh Shannon, Cy Walter et al. They'll be honored by today's gifted hotel artists including **Daryl Sherman** (The Waldorf), **Kathleen Landis & Nancy Winston** (The Pierre) and from everywhere: **Peter Minton, Steve Ross, Ronny Whyte, John Wallowitch** and, schedule permitting, **Irving Fields**. And, oh, what stories they have to tell!

FEBRUARY 10, 2007

Jerry Laird, will present a program celebrating that unique, wonderful (Wizard of Oz) lyricist, the great Y.P. "Yip" Harburg. ("What is there to do/What is there to say?/My heart's in a deadlock/I'd even face wedlock with you.").

MARCH 10, 2007

Our fabulous Collectors Meeting with our VP Sandy Marrone.

LOCATION – Local 802 – Musicians' Hall at 322 West 48th Street.
Flea market 12:30 – Great place to find music sheets, tapes, CD's etc.
Program: 1:45 – 3:30PM. Non-member guest fee \$10. Membership only \$50 per year...quite a bargain! Nine great programs and our monthly Newsletter.



P.O. Box 564
New York, NY 10008



Meetings -
2nd Saturday of
every month!

January 13	April 14
February 10	May 12
March 10	June 9