



A marriage of jazz and rock

Friday, August 18, 2006

By **ELZY KOLB**
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

WHO: Adam Holzman/Jane Getter Band.

WHAT: Jazz-rock fusion.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Sunday.

WHERE: School of Rock, 31 Schrieffer St., South Hackensack; 201-342-8314.

HOW MUCH: \$15.

For a lot of people, performing with jazz superstar Miles Davis would be a career-crowning achievement. Not so for keyboardist Adam Holzman. Though he enjoyed his four-year tenure in the legendary trumpeter's band, he'd rather play his own music.

"I was very fortunate to work with one of the greatest musicians of the 20th century," says Holzman. "But I always had my own band, even when I was doing great, high-profile sideman gigs. At the end of the day, the music I make with my own band is what I'm really excited about. That's my baby."

One such project is the jazz-rock fusion band he co-leads with guitarist Jane Getter. The band plays original compositions by the leaders, along with music written by rock guitarist Jeff Beck, keyboardist Jan Hammer and others.

Getter and Holzman began collaborating in 1990. "She had really cool tunes," he recalls. They worked on demo recordings together, and he helped with arranging her compositions and programming drums. The two have been married since 1992.

"One reason the collaboration with Adam works is our similar tastes in music, plus we each have separate projects," Getter says. "We have similar sensibilities, similar likes and dislikes in music. We're able to collaborate easily most of the time."

Holzman was drawn to keyboards because of Ray Manzarek of the Doors, "one of the first keyboard players in rock to stand out." He taught himself to play blues, boogie and rock before starting classical piano lessons at age 12.

In the early 1980s Holzman worked in a music store that sold MIDI keyboards. "Because of selling MIDIs, I learned how to work the stuff," he says. Word of Holzman's programming skills spread, leading to gigs in recording studios and in bands. "I was kind of the musical equivalent of the Geek Squad."

Like Holzman, Getter has stints with more than a few jazz icons on her resume, including tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano, groundbreaking trombonist-composer-arranger Melba Liston, renowned soul jazz organist Jack McDuff, and the "Saturday Night Live" band.

Piano was Getter's first instrument, too. However, from the get-go, she spied on her sister's guitar lessons. "I always had a connection to the instrument, but I didn't know it yet," she says. Before long, Getter switched to acoustic guitar: "No girls were playing electric then." By the time she hit her teens, she was writing music and leading her own bands. "That's the only way to get your own songs played," Getter says.

Contradicting the cliché that musicians don't dance, Getter was torn between majoring in music or dance in college. Hearing jazz guitarist Joe Pass in a solo concert made up her mind. "I never imagined that guitar could sound like that or be played like that," Getter recalls. She bought an electric guitar and often practiced eight hours a day to build her jazz chops.

Her gig with organist McDuff was another turning point. Getter describes most of the jazz she had listened to as "intellectual, head-y" music, whereas McDuff played "happy, party music" that got audience members clapping and dancing in their seats. "It was great for me to see that," she says. "It got me thinking about reaching the core of people -- the soul, not the brain." With that goal, Getter's music evolved as she began getting more into funk and R&B.

In addition to her busy touring schedule, Getter teaches guitar at a variety of venues. "I throw in things from my performance experience, practice experience, obstacles, things I've encountered that got me where I am today -- good and bad," she says. When teaching girls, "It's great to show them a woman can do it -- it's possible. And I'm helping to form boys' opinions of female musicians."

Besides collaborating with Getter, Holzman focuses on fusion in other settings, including his band Brave New World. "The jazz-rock tradition should be honored just like any other jazz tradition," Holzman says. Though the genre produced "great music and great players, no one is covering the songs." He says that fusion got a bad name when second-generation fusion players focused on demonstrating their playing skills rather than their creativity. "Technique is nice, but it's not what it's about," Holzman says. "Fusion originally came straight from Miles, full of mood, feeling and energy."

To hear music samples, go to:

- www.adamholzman.com
- www.janegetter.com

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