



Blue notes: musicians on Trumpets Jazz Club closing (includes video)



Diane Moser's Composers Big Band plays at Trumpets. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Trumpets Jazz Club

1 of 18



The door of Trumpets/



Diane Moser



Chris Rogers



Glenn Makos, Mike Spengler, and Chris Rogers KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL



Barbara Ciifelli



DIANE MOSER



GLEN MAKOS



ANTON DENNER



Attendees applaud. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL



Diane Moser's Composers Big Band



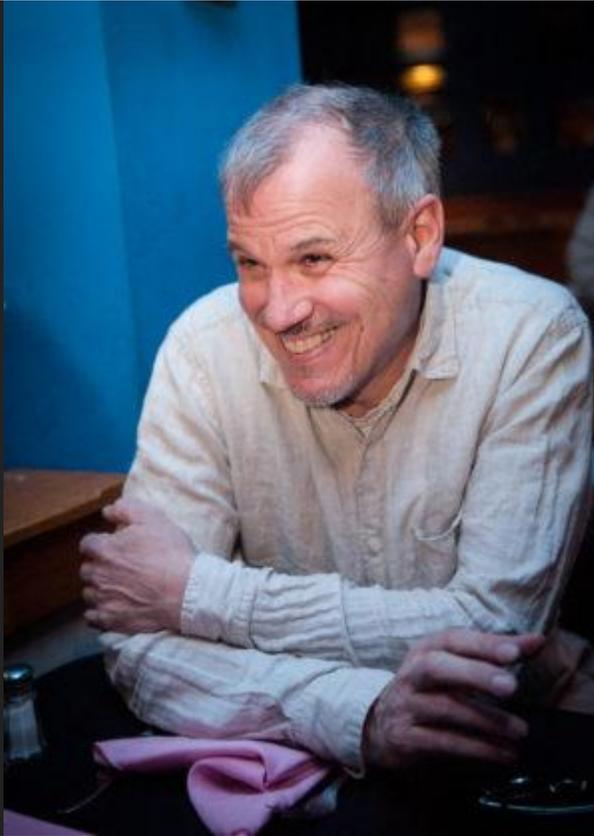
Kate McGregor and Keif Matera applaud.



Susan Palermo enjoys the music.



Diane Moser



JOHN EHLIS



Dan Christian and David McLean



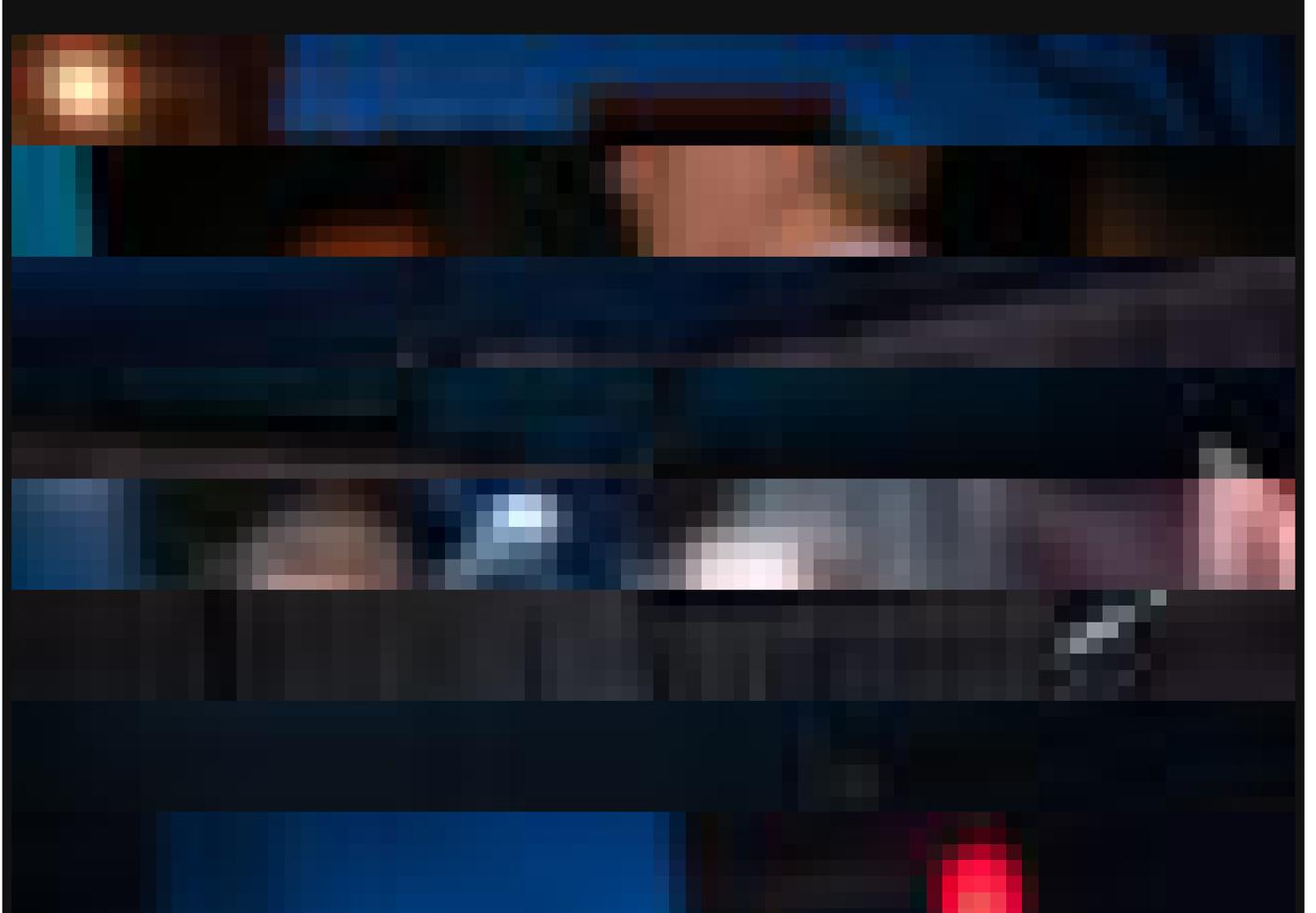
Rob Henke

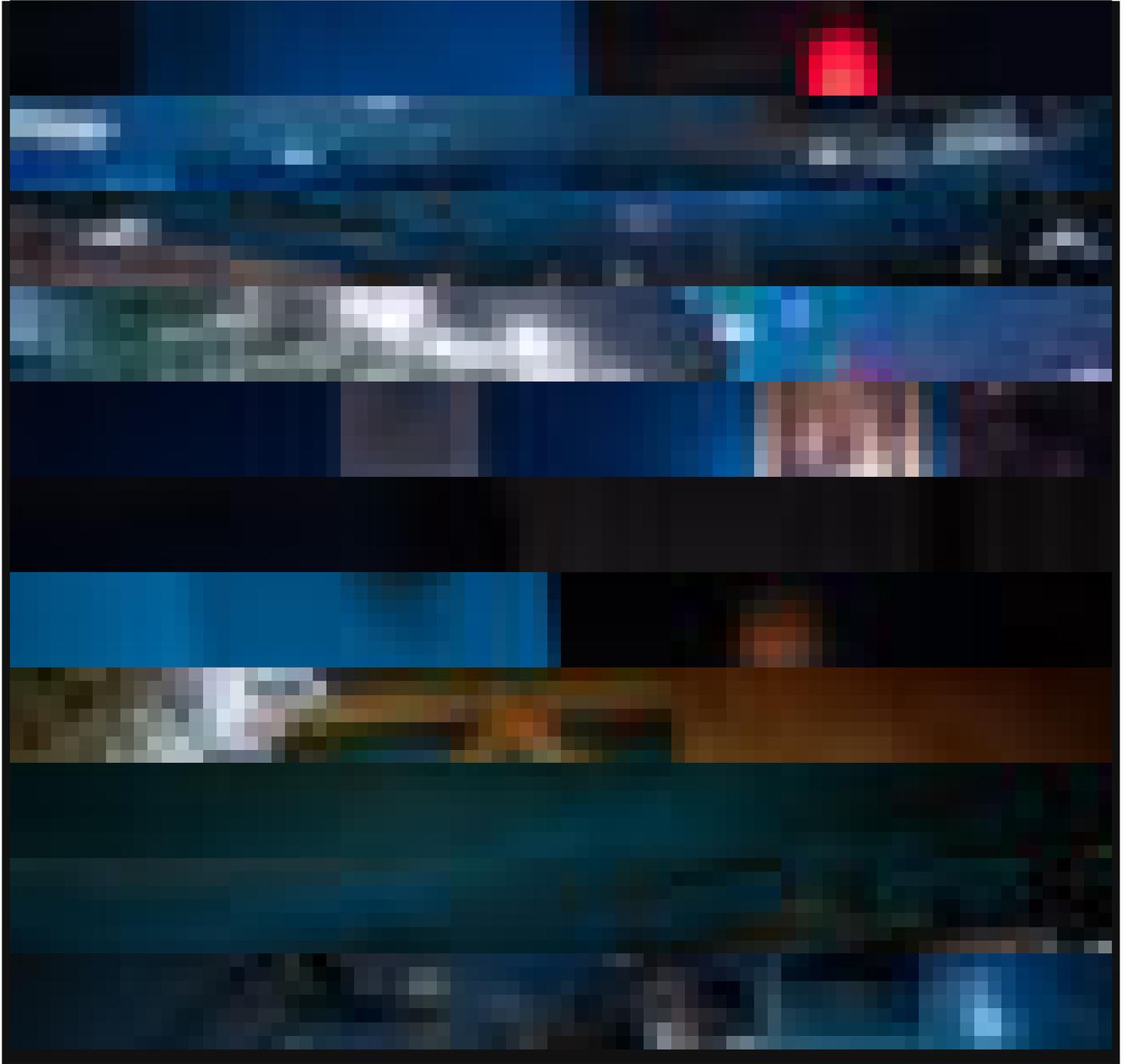


Rob Henke plays at Trumpets. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL



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By GWEN OREL

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On a Wednesday night at [Trumpets Jazz Club and Restaurant](#), 6 Depot Square, [Diane Moser's Composers Big Band](#) plays its 22nd anniversary concert.

The band is so large it takes up the entire floor. As they play their set, beginning at 7:30 p.m., people wander in. There are 20-somethings, 50 and 60-somethings, and a few under 20-somethings: Trumpets is a jazz club with a bar, but it's also a restaurant, so minors are welcome.

The vibe is enthusiastic. People at the bar snap their fingers, applaud each solo and composer.

For at least a few more months, Montclairites can enjoy more nights like this at Trumpets. But the club is up for sale. It lists with Keller Williams for \$3.6 million, including the liquor license.

Owners Enrico Granafei and his wife Kristine Massari, who live in one of the two apartments upstairs from the club (which are included in the purchase), will have owned the club for 20 years this summer. Massari is retiring from her job teaching Italian in the West Orange schools in June.



ENRICO GRANAFEI

Jazz is the reason Granafei, an internationally known chromatic harmonica player and guitarist, left Italy for the United States in 1984. But becoming a businessman, when he and Massari bought Trumpets in 1999, was tough.

“If I went on the road in Europe for two weeks my mind was always here, because I was worrying about the place and what’s happening,” he said. “There are a few people who are musicians and club owners at the same time. But to me they’re divided into main categories. There are club owners who play an instrument, and musicians who are condemned to run a jazz club. That’s how I see myself.”

When Massari and Granafei first opened the club, they had financial partners, but for some time it’s been just the two of them.

Bruce Tyler, drummer with [Black Lace Blues](#), worked with Emily Wingert, the original owner of Trumpets, who converted it to a jazz club from the Strand bar in 1988. Tyler praised Granafei and Massari for their commitment to the community and to jazz. “To keep any club running nowadays is a tough job,” he said. “I know what it’s like to keep the lights on.” He does: he ran a Montclair Blues and Jazz Festival from 1986 to 2000. He knows first-hand the difficulty of keeping refrigeration going, BMI and ASCAP licensing up to date. “It’s a tremendous job. They’ve managed to do it for 20 years.”

But while nobody begrudges the couple their decision, musicians and audience are worried.



Rob Henke plays at Trumpets. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Institution with a capital I

"We have very few places in New Jersey, period, that play jazz," said Diane Moser. "This is a



DIANE MOSER

legendary place. People know this place all around the world. So it's not just like another venue. This place has real history. All of the top jazz people ever played here. But also it's been a place for us as a jazz community to come to you. We've done some crazy stuff here. We've had actors and dancers, a lot of different stuff. "

Moser, who lives in Montclair, also haunts the club when she's not performing. In New York, the cover would be twice as high, plus the fee for the tunnel, parking and the time spent. "It'll be a huge void once they close down if no one opens it up as a jazz venue," she said, adding that she's heard there are a few people interested in keeping it open as a club.

"Trumpets is an institution, with a capital I," said audience member Tom Nussbaum, an East Orange resident. "Montclair needs a jazz place. Jazz is part of what Montclair is."

"Institution" was also the word used by [Meg Beattie Patrick](#), a singer who runs Trumpets' Open Stage nights. "I was at the Algonquin listening to jazz music over the holidays," she said. "A friend said, 'Meg sings at trumpets.' It's renowned in New York circles in jazz. They invited me up to sing. It would be very sad to turn it into something else."

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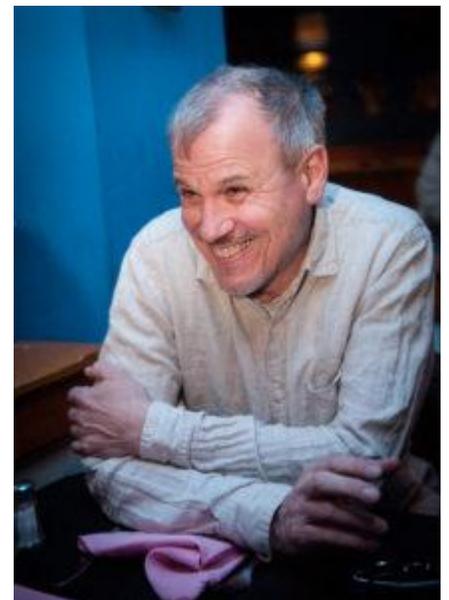
'THIS IS OUR PLACE'

People praise how Granafei and Massari kept on the staff who had worked for the club when it first opened in 1988 by the previous owner. "Trumpets has been my life. I'm a

piece of furniture, and I love it," said bartender Judy. "This is a very difficult thing to do. Jazz goes round and round. It's like a big circle."

Even the club's quirks endeared it to locals. "It's such an odd place," Gene Sower commented. "I've been there many times, and there's a woman who manages the place that always scolded us for something. It became sort of a badge of honor with my wife and I and our friends. Funny story, we were sitting at the bar on New Year's a few years ago and we asked for scotch or tequila or something and the woman who manages was also bartending, and she got all huffy because she had to open a new bottle. We would just laugh and laugh. Little things like that. Real characters, but I love the place."

Keeping it local is important for [John Ehlis](#), a Montclair jazz guitarist., who loves living 10-minutes away from a great jazz club.



JOHN EHLIS

Another place could open up, and musicians would always find a place to play, he said. But Trumpets is "our neighborhood. This is our place."

"I would go into an instant depression if I couldn't just jump in my car and hear some jazz," said Dan Christian of Fairfield, sitting at the bar with David McLean of Passaic. Both have been coming to the club for years.

Many jazz clubs have closed down. Granafei pointed out that even New York City, with a population of 10 million, has very few.

Downbeat Magazine placed Trumpets, three years in a row, among the 200 best clubs in the world.

Both Granafei and Massari praised jazz as a uniquely American product, a cultural revolution, with its rhythms, melodies, different traditions. Massari hopes to sell the club to someone who will keep it as a music club, and to keep the doors open until then, if they can. "I feel proud to have had Trumpets contribute to making peoples' lives better. The wife of a famous jazz musician told me when they were looking for houses they bought a house in Montclair because of Trumpets being here."

She's proud of that. And, she said, "I'll miss it."