

Jazz Beyond Borders

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BETHESDA BLUES & JAZZ HOSTS HANK LEVY LEGACY BAND IN WHIPLASH! THE CONCERT EXPERIENCE

Bethesda, Maryland – Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club presents “Whiplash! The Concert Experience” on Sunday, March 22. The event will give music and movie lovers a chance to explore the authentic musical treasure behind the triple Academy Award winning film. Not everyone knows about the big band music that inspired filmmaker Damien Chazelle’s musically driven story – but perhaps they should.

Henry Jacob (Hank) Levy (1927-2001) was a saxophonist who is best known as a big band composer for Stan Kenton and the Don Ellis Orchestra. He was instrumental in developing the Towson University jazz program, which he directed for 21 years. There he led many award-winning student bands. High school and college students and professional musicians around the world still perform his big band compositions. Filmmaker Damien Chazelle was among the initiates. Chazelle played Hank Levy’s music in high school. The tune “Whiplash” was one of his favorites, and he titled his film after the tricky composition.

Hank Levy was known for his use of odd time signatures (which predates the classic Brubeck band piece “Take Five” from the album *Time Out*). Unlike the overbearing character portrayed by J.K. Simmons in *Whiplash*, Levy was beloved by colleagues and students. Many continued to practice and play with him after his retirement. Thus, the Hank Levy Legacy Band was born in 1992 and continues to this day, nurtured by Hank’s nephew Stewart Levy.

Many original members continue to nail Levy’s challenging tunes in Sunday morning rehearsals at Towson University. They include band manager Bernie Robier who promises an entertaining set list for the March 22 show. The program includes tunes such as “Passacaglia & Fugue,” “Between & Betwixt,” and of course, “Whiplash.” Says Robier, “It starts out as a funk tune in 7/4, features a solo for development, then moves into 14/8.” He notes the ethnic flavor that hints at Bulgarian or Greek folk music. The band will play the piece a bit faster than Levy originally intended but not at the breakneck pace associated with the film.

The Legacy Band has several recordings to their credit including two up-tempo versions of the piece “Whiplash” recorded in 2014. (Studio musicians recorded the version heard in the film.) The band has also recorded two live CDs: *Hank At Home* (2000) and *An “Odd-Time” Was Had By All* (2004), both distributed by Sonority Records. The original version of “Whiplash” was

recorded by the world famous Jazz Ambassadors in their album *The Legacy of Hank Levy*, It is said to be among Levy's favorite recordings of his long-lived music. For more information about the Hank Levy Legacy Band visit <http://www.hanklevyjazz.com/>.

Bethesda Blues & Jazz is located at 7719 Wisconsin Ave, Bethesda, Maryland 20814 (240-330-4500). Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students. A 20-minute Film-Short version of the film *Whiplash* will be shown at 7:00 p.m., and the band plays at 7:30 p.m. For tickets visit <http://www.bethesdabluesjazz.com>