

RIFFS JAZZ NOTES

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LOGOZZO LEADS BENEFIT FOR SKIP HUGHES



OWEN McNALLY

Connecticut traditional-jazz fans rally Saturday in support of trombonist/singer Skip Hughes, whose house burned down several weeks before Christmas while his wife, who has been battling ovarian cancer for more than a decade, was recuperating in the hospital from major surgery.

Drummer **Bill Logozzo**, a successful Connecticut businessman who combines jazz performances with his many philanthropic causes, leads his Heartbeat Jazz Band in a benefit concert for Hughes on Saturday at 3 p.m. at the First Church of Christ, 190 Court St., Middletown.

Over the years, Hughes, who lives with his wife, Joyce, in Pawling, N.Y., has built up a large, loyal following among Connecticut trad-jazz fans with his warm, amiable performances at trad fests and venues throughout the state.

Playing 90 percent of his gigs in Connecticut, the popular free-lance musician has performed many times over the years with such noted Nutmeg trad bands as the Galvanized Jazz Band, the Bearcats Jazz Band and Logozzo's Heartbeat Jazz Band, an all-star, Dixieland jazz ensemble that specializes in raising funds for a wide range of charitable causes.

Logozzo, who's the CEO and owner of Nutmeg Chrome Corp., a hard chrome-electroplating company in West Hartford, leads his band, whose lineup includes **Fred Vigorito**, cornet; **Noel Kaletskey** and **Dr. John Clark**, clarinet and saxophone; Hughes, trombone and vocals; **Charlie Freeman**, piano; and **Art Hovey**, bass and tuba. More than likely, Hughes will do duets with Logozzo's guest vocalist, **Dianne Mower**, the Hartford-based singer/educator.

"Skip came out of this with just the clothes on his back and his horn in the trunk of his car. The guy is a trouper, and he's just plugging along," Logozzo says of his friend's plight since his 200-year-old farmhouse burned down Nov. 30.



Courant file photo

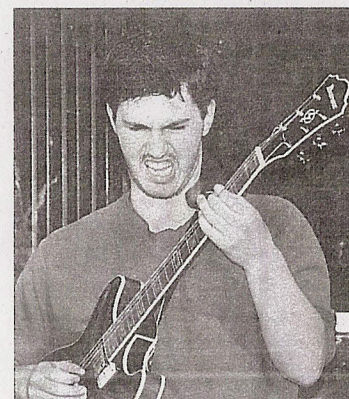
SKIP HUGHES, seen at right in a 2006 file photo with Fred Vigorito, lost his house in a fire, and an event this weekend will help him bounce back.

Since the fire, Skip and his wife have moved in their rural community to a nearby log cabin-styled lodging with a finished interior. It's located just a half-mile away from the ruins of what used to be their dream house and traditional holiday gathering spot for their children and grandchildren.

With the insurance settlement tied up in negotiation, mortgage payments to be met and credit-card bills to be paid for new clothes, shoes and other necessities, Hughes, an employee in New York state's correctional system, is hurting fiscally. But, more than anything, he's grateful that no one was hurt physically in the fire.

"Sure, we lost material objects. But when God is your interior decorator; as in this case, you don't have much choice, and appreciate that you could be far worse off," Hughes says. "Joyce, who was told about the fire while in rehab is doing OK now in our temporary home, recovering from surgery and going through her fifth regimen of chemotherapy.

The couple's two Labrador retrievers were staying with a step-daughter who lives down the street. And, as luck would have it, Hughes' best trombone — the favorite one he uses on gigs — was safe in the trunk of his car, where he had left it after his last gig.



handout

JAZZ GUITARIST SEAN CLAPIS leads his trio in a free show Saturday at 2 at Integrity 'n Music in Wethersfield as part of its "Jazz Jam" series

The cause of the fire was an electrical short-circuit near a wall outlet caused by squirrels or other feral creatures in the wall chewing through the wires, Hughes says.

When Logozzo heard about the catastrophe, he put a fund-raising appeal for Hughes up on the Internet through his non-profit charitable foundation, Musical Dreams for Human Harmony, created in connection with his charity-driven jazz band. In his next step to aid his friend, Logozzo decided to present a benefit at First Church of Christ, where the businessman/bandleader's wife, Shari Lewis, a classically trained pianist and organist, is musical director. Mixed with some trad-jazz standards, the benefit concert will focus on gospel and be recorded for eventual release on CD, Logozzo says.

Reservations are not required, but a \$10 donation is requested. If you can't attend but wish to contribute, make out a check to Musical Dreams for Human Harmony, c/o Bill Logozzo, 111 Vanderbilt Ave., West Hartford, 06110. Information: Jean Hadley at 203-250-8881.

Other Notes

Ed Krech continues his free "Jazz Jam" series Saturday at 2 p.m. with guitarist **Sean Clapis** leading his trio at Integrity 'n Music, 506 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. Clapis is joined by bassist **Matt Dwonszyk** and drummer **Joe Palmer**. Information: 860-563-4005.

Trumpeter **Josh Evans** leads his band tonight from 6 to 8 at the new "Happy Hour Jazz Jam" series at Barca Restaurant, 1429 Park St., Hartford. No cover. Information: 860-597-6100. Bassist **Paul Fuller** and friends entertain tonight at 7 at the "Happy Hour" at Mama Juana's, 626 Franklin Ave., Hartford. Fuller's friends are: **Norman Gage**, baritone saxophone; **Sinan Bakir**, guitar; and **Bob Turrigiano**, congas. Information: 860-869-0775.

Pianist **Kent Hewitt** and vocalist **Carolyn Hartsfield** collaborate Friday at 8 p.m. at Szechuan Tokyo, 1245 New Britain Ave., West Hartford. **Troy Brown** serves R&B-flavored jazz at the restaurant Saturday at 8:30 p.m. Information: 860-561-0180.

Exploring improvisation from a global perspective, **Tom Crean** presents prepared guitar music (a technique evoking varied timbres from altered strings) Saturday at 8 p.m. at Martocchio Music, 1 Massaco St., Simsbury. Crean, who has worked with Anthony Braxton and The Flux Quartet, is joined by guitarist **Craig Huntington**. Information: 860-651-6683.

» Send information to jazz@courant.com.