

Ingenious

Jazz Producer/Promoter Jim Wadsworth



Who brings top named jazz talent to Nighttown in Cleveland Heights to perform? Music greats like the legendary Count Basie Orchestra, Chuchito Valdes, and Freddy Cole (Nat King Cole's brother). Jim Wadsworth and Steve Frumkin from Jim Wadsworth Productions (<http://www.jwpjazz.com>), that's who! Wadsworth started booking shows at Nighttown in June 1999. Before that, he had a track record of producing shows at Peabody's Down Under, Peabody's Cafe, Rhythms at Playhouse Square, Diamondback Brewery, and Wilbert's.

Always passionate about music, Wadsworth has turned this feeling into his profession. "Having an interest in pop music, I learned its roots came from blues and jazz" he says. "I am self taught in piano, guitar, and harmonica, but somehow that never stuck." While in high school in the San Francisco Bay Area, he heard jazz greats like

Charles Mingus and Horace Silver perform. And Wadsworth was hooked.

In 1990, he formed his own artist booking and management company producing shows focusing on Jazz, Fusion, Great American Songbook, and World Music genres. Nine years later, recognizing the special synergy at Nighttown, he approached the present owner, Brendan Ring, a native Irishman, about adding live jazz music to the venue. "When people come here to eat," says Ring, "the live music now makes for a better experience." Nighttown was founded by John Barr in 1965. A uniquely Cleveland establishment, the pub-like interior is filled with legends and stories, along with good people and good food. Ring bought the business in 2001 and has made the place even better adding an outdoor eating terrace and a jazz club attracting major music talent.

Wadsworth produced 20 shows his first year at Nighttown, and has built a growing momentum and jazz following each succeeding year. Enjoying the quality of life surrounding this art form, Wadsworth believes "Jazz washes away the dust of everyday life," a philosophy quoted from the great American jazz drummer and bandleader, Art Blakely.

Steve Frumkin, a fellow jazz enthusiast, approached Wadsworth in 2000 and suggested compiling an email list to announce the jazz shows. With his sales background and jazz knowledge, Frumkin came on board as a partner in 2002. At the end of this year, they will have produced 120 shows for 2007 at Nighttown and going strong. The February 2007 issue of Down Beat magazine, the jazz authority, recognized Nighttown as one of the 100 Great Jazz Clubs Worldwide and the only Ohio club with this distinction.

Jim Wadsworth Productions, separate from Nighttown, is building a strong roster of talented artists booking shows in 40 states as well as international shows in Japan and Europe. "I read the music trade journals, research and track the talent," says Wadsworth. "It's a continual learning experience to keep up. It is a very competitive industry; we are only as good as our last concert produced." And as a result, jazz fans are filling the audience and clapping!

From *Cool Cleveland* contributor Susan Schaul susn1ATatt.net