

CATCH THEIR ACT

WHO: The Dalton Gang

WHAT: A 10-piece jazz band

WHEN: Sunday, Sept. 15, at 2 p.m.

WHERE: The Bergen Music and Arts Festival at the Bergen Mall, Paramus

ON CD: "Rhythms," 1993; "Miami Shadows," 1995; "Just For Tonight," 2002. All are from Second Step Music.

The CDs are now available online at CD Baby!. Log onto <http://www.cdbaby.com> and search for "The Dalton Gang."

In addition to teaching, Dalton has also been busy arranging multiple versions of the "Peter Gunn Theme" for an upcoming documentary about "The Sopranos."

Dalton's musical history begins at age 10, after he was gifted a guitar by an aunt one Christmas. Then an Elvis Presley fan, he became an admirer of the blues, which led to a love for jazz while in high school.

"Barney Kessel was a jazz player with a bluesy touch," he says, "and he really moved me and got me into jazz."

After graduating from Boston College with a degree in English, Dalton headed out to California and started studying with noted guitarist Jerry Hahn. After a few years studying and playing small gigs, he returned to New Jersey for a spell before moving to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. It was the late '70s, and disco was booming. Clubs were filled with revelers, and there was much work to be had for players in the Latin jazz-cum-disco melange popular at the time. Dalton immersed himself in the scene, playing regular lucrative gigs. But he eventually got bored and realized that, while the gigs were steady, he wasn't advancing on his instrument.

"I was very ambitious and wanted to musically improve myself," he says of moving back to New Jersey in order to study with New York players. "I wanted to

make a more credible career as a musician than just playing clubs with the disco thing."

Shortly after settling in Paterson, Dalton began the group along with his other endeavors. Among his other credits is working with famous Latin jazzer Daniel Ponce and being commissioned to compose a string quartet, "River Walk" for the National Urban History Initiative, which was performed at the Paterson Museum.

"If you're going to do it, especially in jazz, you have to be on the road all the time, which is not that great," he says. "I prefer to stay local and do 25 different things."

Residing in the city's artist housing on Mill Street, he says he enjoys his current method of gainful music employment and finds Paterson an ideal place to practice his art.

"I'm not a big suburban guy, I'm more into the urban thing," he says.

"I love my neighborhood. I go to the Roma Club on Cianci Street for cappuccino. It's convenient going to gigs because you're close to places in Jersey and Manhattan, you're near highways. I love teaching at PCCC, and I can walk there from my home. For me, the whole situation is perfect."

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