

Kate Smith Promotions

DOM MINASI

It's not common to hear a guitarist compared to adventurous players like Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane and Cecil Taylor, but Dom Minasi is not your common type of guitarist.

"I have no idea where that comes from," he says of his unique approach to improvisation. "It just happened. It just felt like the natural progression. I like to get that looseness, that creative stuff happening." Like many highly creative artists, Dom needs a variety of contexts to express the full range of his musical vision. Already maintaining five separate groups - 3 duos, with pianist Michael Jefry Stevens, saxophonist Blaise Siwula, and vocalist Carol Mennie, his recording trio with Ken Filiano on bass and Jackson Krall on drums, DDT + 2 with Tomas Ulrich-cello, Ken Filiano-bass, John Bollinger-drums and vocalist Carol Mennie.

Dom has just completed writing extensively for his new 9-piece group Time (The Improvisational Music Ensemble), comprised of tenor sax, alto sax, trumpet, trombone, violin, cello, bass, percussion and, of course, guitar. He has also formed a new collective of outstanding musicians to focus on mutual educational and musical activities, operating under the name N.I.C.E. (New Improvisational Composers Ensemble) with Mark Whitecage-reeds, Steve Swell-trombone, Dom Minasi-guitar, Cameron Brown-bass and Harvey Sorgen on drums.

His 2001 release, *Takin' The Duke Out*, recorded Live at the Knitting Factory in New York City, featuring fresh interpretations of classic Ellington compositions, took the jazz community by storm and caused such a controversy that critics and musicians alike are still talking about it. *Goin' Out Again* followed in 2002 focusing on a combination of originals and jazz classics, also receiving enormous critical acclaim.

His most recent release, *Time Will Tell* by DDT + 2 (with cellist Tomas Ulrich and bassist Ken Filiano, augmented by John Bollinger on drums and vocalist Carol Mennie) is causing huge ripples in the pond of progressive music, showing the gentler, but no less provocative side of this extraordinary guitarist/composer.

Born on March 6, 1943 (sharing a birthday with legendary guitarist Wes Montgomery), Dom is a 44-year veteran of the music scene, with a history and scope of activities as varied and jam-packed as his native New York City.

Backing up top singing groups at rock'n roll shows, church dances and the like while still in his early teens, Dom has maintained a jazz trio with bass and drums since he was 15 years old. But education has also played a major role in his overall musical activities.

"By the time I was 19 or 20, I had more than 100 students, but I cut it down to 95 so I could play six nights a week."

A lot of those nights were spent backing up, and providing musical direction for vocalists, something that Dom has continued to do since 1964 and almost exclusively until 1973, when his own trio began to really take shape, coming to the attention of George Butler who had taken the reins at Blue Note from the label's visionary founder and producer, Alfred Lion.

Unfortunately, a lack of direction at the immortal label caught Dom between the proverbial rock and hard place and after two records in much less than ideal circumstances, Dom forced his way out.

"I walked away. I didn't want to be bothered."

So from 1976-1993, Dom involved himself in a variety of pursuits, freelancing and occasionally performing with the late, great pianist Dennis Moorman. Providing the music for a variety of off-Broadway shows, authoring three books for Sunrise Artistries, two books on jazz theory and chord substitution and one on improvising. Returning to school where he studied with Academy Award-winning (The Red Violin) composer John Corigliano at Lehman College, receiving his degree in composition in 1990.

He also composed over 300 vocal and instrumental compositions during those years, as well as regularly providing literacy through songwriting workshops for children.

Fellow musicians kept trying to get Dom more involved with the regular scene but he continued to resist. "I'm happy. I do my workshops with the kids. I'm doing great. Why do I need the aggravation?" was his general response.

But finally in 1993 he began to take an interest again, becoming principal composer for the Manhattan Improvisational Chamber Ensemble (MICE) and beginning to work on various projects of his own. By 1996, he was in the thick of it, but entirely on his own terms.

"For the past 11 years, I've only done what I want to do," he says contentedly.

That includes his own critically acclaimed album *Finishing Touches and Dialing Privileges*, co-led with Blaise Siwula & John Bollinger both for CIMP; arranging all the music for the 1997 revival of *Torch Song Trilogy*; writing his fourth book *The Singer's Guide to Reading Rhythms*, developing a program to teach literacy through songwriting and music for the New York City Public School System. This latter activity has also resulted in a CD for the Board of Education and the composing of more than 300 children's songs.

Deciding to keep total control over his career and what he musically produces, Dom and his wife, vocalist Carol Mennie formed CDM Records and CDM, Inc. (Can Do More, Inc.) a not-for profit organization where Carol is president and Dom is the Artistic Director. CDM, Inc.'s mission statement is to promote music & theatre activities within the educational systems of public schools and colleges throughout the United States.

Over his long career, Dom has worked with countless heavyweights, crossing all styles of Jazz. He's performed in venues ranging from top jazz clubs to Carnegie Hall to the White House for President Bill Clinton.

But it's musical expansion and personal growth that are his principal motivations.

"I'm trying to bring the guitar and my music to the next level, without effects, electronics, etc." And in true keeping with the most fundamental aspect of the great jazz tradition, Dom Minasi continues to explore and discover new ideas in pursuit of his true and most personal musical vision.