

About Town (/columns/about-town-32)

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## The Neighborhood Files

### Hastings Jazz Collective to Record First CD

Local groovemeisters are scheduled to head into the studio later this month.

The Rivertowns are filled with creative people, so perhaps it's no surprise that a group of top-flight musicians and friends formed the five-piece Hastings Jazz Collective, which plays local gigs and will be heading into the studio later this month to record a disc.

"A couple of years ago, I decided to try to put together a band, do some gigs together, do some recording and see what we can do," said pianist David Janeway. "I wanted to form collaborative group where everyone contributes to the repertoire. It's a chance to work on composing as a workshop, which is different than just writing, since this is specific to the band and is a much more worthwhile and meaningful experience."

Touring, teaching and gigging schedules make it difficult to get everyone together. Everyone except Janeway, a psychiatrist who went to medical school while playing on the New York City club scene, is a professional musician full time.

The group has performed under the aegis of Jazz Forum Arts at the Dobbs Ferry waterfront and played other local gigs at the [Common Ground Coffeehouse](#). (<http://rivertowns.patch.com/articles/brewing-coffee-concerts-and-community-activism>) At a recent gig at the cozy Watercolor Café in Larchmont, just about the only place to hear live jazz on a regular basis in Westchester, the group grooved for an appreciative audience that applauded after almost every solo. The ability to see such accomplished musicians in an intimate space with no cover and no minimum represents a great bargain, although the audience largely emptied out for the second set.

Propelled by drummer Ron Vincent, who has played with sax legend Gerry Mulligan, the group toyed with dynamics, handling deft tempo shifts with ease. They can play pleasant and smooth, without descending into Muzak, and also dig in to ride roughshod on the beat. During the second set, they experimented with more free form material, some of which will be on the group's new disc, allowing compositions to spin seemingly out of control and then reign them back in. At times Vincent, the only band member who lives in Dobbs Ferry, hit like a rocker, then brought his kit to a hush and incorporated his tom-toms to tap out a creative backbeat.

Saxophonist Tim Armacost, who has toured Euproe and has a big following in Japan, displays a strong tone and great feel. He played a looping solo in a song by Wayne Shorter where he used circular breathing to unleash long lines and a cascade of notes.

It's rare for a guitar to be in a jazz combo's lineup, but when former Spyro Gyra alum Jay Azzolina plays, one wonders why. With a singing tone and technical command, he tastefully vamped underneath solos by his bandmates and provided enough solo flash and furious flurries of notes to replace the piano if need be.

But Janeway, who has performed with Art Farmer and The Supremes, provided several accomplished piano solos and

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