



February, '07

Hello friends;

January was a pretty groovy month, overall with a few bumps. The IAJE was, for me, the best one I have ever attended due in no small part to my gracious hosts Tim and Nikki Armacost. Tim and I came in event day around two and hung until midnight. There was much great music to hear such as Rufus Reid's commissioned performance with large orchestra, The Dizzy Gillespie Tribute Big Band w/ Jimmy Heath, James Moody, Antonio Hart, The Clayton Brothers Quintet and many more, Jerry Dodgian's Joy of Sax featuring Frank Wess who absolutely killed and the Phil Woods, George Robert, Bob Mintzer group with old friend Jon Davis on piano. Also of great interest was Greg Osby interviewing Ornette Coleman or was it the other way around? After the opening question, it was hard to tell. The interview is to be published in Downbeat. The Eddie Gomez clinic was also well attended featuring musician educators from The Conservatory of Puerto Rico including my good friend Marco Pignataro. There was clearly much more that I don't have space here to enumerate and, of course, the hang. Always great. Saturday morning, however, we were greeted with the sad news that both Mike Brecker and Alice Coltrane had passed away the night before. I did not know Alice but I certainly knew Mike and of his two and a half year health battle. The news put quite a damper on spirits throughout the conference but also brought an inspired performance from Bob Mintzer later that evening.



Me and "Homes"



Me and my teacher, Lee Konitz

I first heard Mike Brecker on Randy's album "Score" and was immediately impressed with his extreme ability as a saxophonist and in consolidating the great R&B tenor stylists with Coltrane's sound. I had met Randy early on in Philadelphia at a jam session with the alto player C# and the legendary drummer Ronald Tucker. He was 15 and I was 18 and we played "A Night In Tunisia" for 45 minutes. Afterwards his very kind parents came up to me and asked if I would like to be in a band with there son which was problematic as I lived in California. I first heard Mike live at the Fillmore Auditorium on Market street in San Francisco

with the great band Dreams. He took a solo break on something and I'm still picking my jaw up off of the floor to this day. We crossed paths again in the early '70s when I arrived for a gig at the Keystone Korner with Art Lande. Mike was sitting in with the band featuring me, Warren Gale, Elliot Zigmund and Ron McClure (I think). That was pretty scary and inspiring as well. He was really stretching out in a New York kind of way. We would see each other at various times through out the years and I was always struck by his kind and gentle demeanor as contrasted with his fierce playing. I remember one memorable evening at the old Yoshi's where he was appearing with his quartet featuring Jeff "Tain" Watts. I was able to get a seat right in front of the bandstand and remember enjoying his development as a composer as well as his always inspired and inspiring playing. The last communication I had with him was asking him to do a Tenor Conclave gig back East with me and Tim Armacost. He replied that it sounded like fun but that he was having severe "back problems" and had just canceled all his performances mentioning that the situation for him was "beyond sadness". So was his passing.



Here are some links about Mike's passing:

[Randy Brecker](#)

[Randy Sanke](#)

[Barry Finnerty](#)

[David Liebman](#)

[Joe Lovano](#)

To see more pics from IAJE 2007 click [here](#).

## THE MEL MARTIN QUARTET

WWW.MELMARTIN.COM  
mel@melmartin.com



Barry Finnerty



Robb Fisher



Jeff Mairs



Mel Martin

### February dates:

**Friday Evening, February 9, 2007 - [The MEL MARTIN QUARTET@Cafe VanKleef](#) , 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, California 94621 phone or fax 510 763-7711, [peter@cafevankleef.com](mailto:peter@cafevankleef.com), [Barry Finnerty](#) - guitar, D.J. Foster - bass and Jeff Mairs - drums. 9-1 PM \$8**

**Saturday Evening, February 17, 2007 - [The MEL MARTIN QUARTET @ the No Name Bar](#), 757 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965 (415)332-1392, 9PM-1AM w/ [Barry Finnerty](#) - guitar , Robb Fisher- bass and Jeff Marrs - drums.**

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**Friday Evening, February, 23, 2007 - MEL MARTIN W/ The [Dave Mathews All-Star Organ Quartet@ The Purple Onion](#) w/ Mel Martin - Tenor & soprano saxophones and flute, [Barry Finnerty](#) - Guitar and Jeff Marrs - Drums, 140 Columbus Avenue San Francisco, CA 94133 Telefono: (415) 956-1653 8PM**March Dates

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**Tuesday Evening, March 13, 2007 - MEL MARTIN W/ The [Dave Mathews All-Star Organ Quartet@ Jazz at Pearl's](#) w/ Mel Martin - Tenor & soprano saxophones and flute, [Barry Finnerty](#) - Guitar and [Akira Tana](#) - Drums, 140 Columbus Avenue San Francisco, CA 94133 Shows at 8 & 10PM (415) 291-8255**

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**Saturday Evening, March 17, 2007 - [The MEL MARTIN QUARTET @ the No Name Bar](#), 757 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965 (415)332-1392, 9PM-1AM w/ [Barry Finnerty](#) - guitar , Robb Fisher- bass and Jeff Marrs - drums**

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**Saturday Evening, March 24, 2006 - [The MEL MARTIN QUARTET@Cafe VanKleef](#), 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, California 94621 phone or fax 510 763-7711, [peter@cafevankleef.com](mailto:peter@cafevankleef.com), [Barry Finnerty](#) - guitar, Robb Fisher- bass and Jeff Marrs - drums. 9-1 PM \$8**

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**Coming in August, 2007 - "Just Friends" The Mel Martin/Benny Carter Quintet Live @ Yoshi's on [Jazzed Media](#) celebrating [Benny Carter's](#) Centennial birthday.**

**MEL MARTIN and the all-star BENNY CARTER CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE BAND - featuring [Roger Kellaway](#) , [Winard Harper](#) and [Andrew Speight](#). Details to be announced.**

These recordings are available at my [web site](#).

**[Mel Martin and Bebop and Beyond CD-5006](#)**

**Friends and Mentors - Bebop and Beyond Plays the Music of Mel Martin**  
(Also available at [iTunes](#))

**[Mel Martin and Bebop & Beyond Plays Dizzy Gillespie](#)**  
featuring Dizzy Gillespie CD-R2 7917

**[Mel Martin and Bebop & Beyond Plays Thelonious Monk](#)**  
featuring Joe Henderson and Howard Johnson - CD R2 79154

**[Mel Martin and Bebop & Beyond CD-244](#)**  
Special Edition

Mel Martin is a [Rico Reeds](#) (J'Daddario Corp.) and [Yanagisawa](#) (Conn-Selmer) artist.

For updates on upcoming events, please check out my [events page](#).

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[mel@melmartin.com](mailto:mel@melmartin.com)

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