

The Steve Sonntag – Dave Shapiro Quintet will perform at 8pm on Saturday, June 5, to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Arts Council of Windham County. The concert will be held at the Rivergarden in downtown Brattleboro, VT and is open to the public. The band started in 1993 as a trio and has gone through many configurations over the years. The current quintet consists of **Steve Sonntag**, tpt/flug; **Paul Lieberman**, sax/flute/piccolo; **Paul Arslanian**, piano; **Dave Shapiro**, bass; and **Peter Moutis** on drums. The musicians in the quintet have performed with a wide variety of artists including Airtio Moreira, Flora Purim, The AJO, Chet Baker, Woody Herman and The Temptations, to name just a few. The band plays many jazz styles and will present original jazz compositions as well as some tasty jazz classics.



The Steve Sonntag Dave Shapiro Band

The band started in 1993, with a trio gig with Steve, Dave, and Draa Hobbs on guitar at the Snow Lake Lodge in West Dover, VT. The trio moved around a little after that, with semi-regular gigs at Snow Lake Lodge, Averill's Restaurant (Saxton's River), Grant's Tavern and Restaurant (Rawsonville), and the Outback Restaurant (Bondville). In 1995, we did our first Sextet concert in Grafton, where Dave and Tom McClung had been playing duo gigs for about a year. We played originals by Steve and Tom, plus some Monk and Ellington tunes. We had Fred Haas on saxophone for this first concert, and Jeff Brillinger from NYC on drums. Tom and Fred became our regular pianist and saxophonist for the next few years. Later in 1995, we also did a Sextet concert in Colrain, MA with Tim Moran on saxophone and the late Randy Kaye on drums.

Following the first concert, the band of Steve, Draa, Tom, Fred, Dave, and various drummers became the core group for a long run of concerts at the Old Tavern in Grafton. Between 1995 and 2003, when the Old Tavern cut back its music program, we did over 40 concerts, New Year's Eve gigs and Youth Services events there. We bought in many guest musicians including Ralph Lalama, Danny D'Imperio, Dave Pinardi, Jay Messer, Randy Kaye, Scott Mullett, Peter Moutis, Michael Musillami, Don Hesterberg, Nicole Pasternak, Marion Groves, Jeff Holmes, Andy Jaffe, Fred Tillis, Rob Faulkner, Howard Broofsky and Chris Mertz. In 1997, trombonist Tim Atherton became a semi-regular member of the band.

In December of 1997, the band played a three concert series featuring the music of Thelonious Monk, Duke Ellington, and Charles Mingus. We recorded these concerts, and the first one, with Steve, Dave, Tom, Tim, saxophonist Marc Weissman and drummer Phil Ori has recently been released on CD: "The Steve Sonntag Dave Shapiro Sextet (featuring Tom McClung) plays the music of Monk, Duke & Mingus." A few months after the Monk/Duke/Mingus concerts, we recorded a CD of Steve's original tunes. The title of this CD is "Not a Day Goes By," by the Steve Sonntag Quintet and features Steve, Tom, Draa, Dave, and Phil Ori.

In November, 2003 the Trio of Steve, Draa and Dave began a 5-year Thursday night residency at Rick's Tavern in Newfane. Thursday Night "Jazz at Rick's" soon became a popular destination for both musicians and jazz fans in the area. We always encouraged visiting musicians to sit in, and very often we would have a 8-10 piece band by the end of the evening. During this period we did a few concerts with the 6-piece band: The Newfane Common Summer Music Series (2005, 2006); "Key Into Jazz" at the Rivergarden in Brattleboro (2006); "Key Into Music," also at the Rivergarden (2007). In October 2009, the Quintet of Steve, Dave, Paul Lieberman, Paul Arslanian and Peter Moutis played a concert at the Jamaica (VT) Town Hall as part of their monthly Music Series. Our next scheduled 6-piece Band Concert will be at the Rivergarden on Saturday, June 5, 2010 to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Arts Council of Windham County.