



Vermont Jazz Center

News Release

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Jazz Octogenarian Legends Jimmy Heath and Howard Brofsky to Meet on Stage Again Saturday, May 19, 8 p.m., Vermont Jazz Center

BRATTLEBORO, Vt.—The paths of longtime jazz masters, trumpeter Howard Brofsky and saxophonist Jimmy Heath, have crisscrossed frequently over the past 30 years. Both jazzmen have shared many commonalities dating back to the 1970s, including an appreciation for jazz and bebop, faculty posts at Queens College, and the same stage on numerous occasions.

They also share the same age. Both now 85, Brofsky's and Heath's paths will cross again when they take the stage together at the Vermont Jazz Center (VJC) for a concert, "Howard Brofsky and Friends," on Saturday, May 19, at 8 p.m. at the center, 72 Cotton Mill Hill.

Brofsky, who has earned the moniker "Dr. Bebop," started playing trumpet at age 17, following bebop legend Charlie Parker and listening to Roy Eldridge. "I was blown away by the newly emerging bebop," he recalls of his early music days growing up around New York in 1945-46. Several years later, after immersion in the jazz scene, playing and recording in Paris, Brofsky left jazz and turned to classical music scholarship, earning his master's and doctoral degrees at New York University in 18th Century Italian classical music. "The jazz life was so difficult," says Brofsky, who was married and raising a family. "I put my horn away and stopped playing and stopped listening to jazz."

That path led him to a faculty post at Queens College, where he taught classical music history, specializing in composer Padre Giovanni Battista Martini and the transition from Baroque to Classical styles. But nearly 20 years later, at age 46, Brofsky, in a self-described mid-life crisis, "took my horn out of the closet, got back in shape, looked up some of my old friends," and has been playing ever since.

Brofsky's sound, now on his preferred cornet, is sublime and always tasteful. Whether playing a ballad or tearing through bebop changes, he never forgets that the melody is what it's all about.

Brofsky met Jimmy Heath some 30 years ago at a private jam session. Heath had already been around the jazz block, having played with Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham, Gil Evans, Art Farmer,

and as one of the Heath Brothers in the 1970s. Heath has collected a host of music awards and accolades over the years, most recently being named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master.

Brofsky and Heath hit it off immediately, and Brofsky, who had started a Master's of Arts in Jazz Program at Queens, in the Aaron Copland School of Music, procured a faculty appointment for Heath to direct the new program.

Brofsky and Heath have played together many times since, but their May 19 concert at VJC will be the first time the two legends have shared a stage since 2005, when they last played at VJC.

According to Brofsky, their common age had something to do with it. "We're both 85 this year," says Brofsky, who officially hit 85 in May. "I asked Jimmy to join me for this year's concert and without hesitation he said he would."

Joining Heath and Brofsky will be pianist Jeb Patton, a former student of Heath's at Queens, who now sits on the faculty there, as well as bassist Mike Karn and drummer Pete Van Nostrand, both of whom have performed with Heath and who make up a piano trio with Patton in New York.

The program will consist of original compositions by Heath and Brofsky, as well as jazz standards.

While they share an advanced age, Brofsky and Heath show no signs of slowing down. Heath continues to teach and perform. Brofsky is back at Queens College, teaching jazz history and coaching an ensemble. He performs weekly at a club in Brooklyn.

On May 19, they will share their vast wealth of bebop and jazz knowledge, experience and innovation with each other and a very lucky VJC audience.

"Howard Brofsky and Friends," featuring Jimmy Heath at VJC is made possible with generous financial support from _____, as well the Vermont Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tickets for the "Howard Brofsky and Friends" at VJC, May 19, are \$20 general admission, \$15 for students with I.D. (contact VJC about educational discounts); available at In the Moment in Brattleboro, or online at www.ntjazz.org. Tickets can also be reserved by calling the Vermont Jazz Center ticket line, 802-254-9088, ext. 1.

Next up at the Vermont Jazz Center: The Eugene Uman Project, Saturday, June 9, 8 p.m.