

Don Byron - Bug Music for Juniors. For children 7 and over—and for the kid in all of us... A family concert.

The mission of the Healdsburg Jazz Festival (HJF) is to develop a greater appreciation of the American musical art form known as jazz. The objective is to educate students and adults through in-school and after-school programs, as well as lectures and concerts that offer greater exposure to jazz throughout Sonoma County. As part of our past festivals, segments of our programming included an education program that brought visiting festival musicians into the area schools. However, in 2008, the academic year is ending before our festival, preventing this segment of our program from happening. Because of the scheduling conflict, we are presenting this very special concert for children and their families to attend together as part of the 10th Anniversary 2008 Healdsburg Jazz Festival.

The show kicks off in whimsical, *hare*-raising style with a screening of an early Bugs Bunny cartoon, whose score includes Raymond Scott's pulsating hit "Power House." With the kids already captivated by the "wascally wabbit" and the jaunty music, Byron and his sextet begin their multi-media swing through jazz history, always keeping the mood light and the pace lively. Throughout the program, Byron carries on a friendly call-and-response dialogue with the kids—and shares witty asides that teens and parents will enjoy—as he and the band introduce and demonstrate their instruments; enlighten the audience with musical "five-dollar words" and "nerdy factoids"; share anecdotes about Ellington, Scott, and Kirby; and perform live onstage to the accompaniment of movie footage from New York's legendary Cotton Club, images of paintings by "Harlem Renaissance" artist Romare Bearden, photos of leaping Lindy Hoppers, and still more rare visuals from the Swing Era. From start to finish, the hour-long program is so varied, entertaining, and pulse-quickening that kids might not even realize they're learning important lessons in American art, history, and culture. And that's perfectly okay with Don Byron. "They feel our enthusiasm," Byron says, "and they realize that the music they're hearing is hard to play and is being well-played. They may not remember everything we say about Ellington and the others, but at least they will know who Ellington is, and their pores are opened by the experience."

This event will bring the jazz experience to grade school children and their families across Sonoma County by presenting Don Byron's *Bug Music for Juniors*. Bug Music for Juniors is for children 7 and over —and for the kid in all of us. Inspired by Byron's best-selling 1996 Bug Music album, this fun-filled and fascinating program unites live jazz, classic cartoons, and historic film footage in a one-of-a-kind exploration of the Swing Era. Originally commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and produced in a two-week run on Broadway's New Victory Theater, "Bug Music for Juniors" spotlights works by three great composers of the Swing Era—Duke Ellington, Raymond Scott, and John Kirby—performed in razor-sharp arrangements by Byron's stellar sextet. These classic tunes are paired with timeless 'toons from Warner Bros. 1940's heyday, along with a wealth of other intriguing and historic visuals. Part concert, part demonstration, part Q&A, and 100% pleasure, "Bug Music for Juniors" is jazz education at its most entertaining and exciting.

This extremely popular and innovative children's concert will be a completely new way to experience jazz. This event will be a family concert with a strong incentive that adults be accompanied by a child. Bio information on Don Byron is included below.

The project will realize our mission to educate students and community members and promote the jazz art form in unique and creative ways. The performance presents important lessons about American music, art, and culture. The project will meet the need for students to experience the joy and excitement of jazz. Sonoma County children and families will experience jazz in a new way through this event.

The performance will be open to all Sonoma County residents, and will be held at The Raven Theater in Healdsburg on June 2008. We anticipate serving 600-700 children and families in two shows to be held as part of the 2008 Healdsburg Jazz Festival. The concert will be one of the main events during the week of the 2008 Healdsburg Jazz Festival. It will be promoted along with all events of the Healdsburg Jazz Festival and open to any family throughout the area.

More on Bug Music and Don Byron

In *The New York Times*' words: "Love jazz? Want to share its joys with a youngster? If so, head for... "Bug Music,"... a delightful guided tour [and a] fine family show."

For well over a decade, Don Byron has been a singular voice in an astounding range of musical contexts, exploring widely divergent traditions while continually striving for what he calls "a sound above genre." As clarinetist, saxophonist, composer, arranger, and social critic, he redefines every genre of music he plays, be it classical, salsa, hip-hop, funk, rhythm & blues, klezmer, or any jazz style from swing and bop to cutting-edge downtown improvisation. He has been consistently voted best clarinetist by critics and readers alike in leading international music journals since being named "Jazz Artist of the Year" by *Down Beat* in 1992. Acclaimed as much for his restless creativity as for his unsurpassed virtuosity as a player, Byron has presented a multitude of projects at major music festivals around the world, including recent performances in Vienna, San Francisco, Hong Kong, London, Monterey, New Zealand, and on New York's Broadway.

Bug Music for Juniors – The Band

Don Byron: clarinet, MC

Ron Miles: trumpet

Robert DeBellis: tenor and alto saxophones

George Colligan: piano

Brad Jones: bass

Billy Hart: drums, percussion