



MEDIA RELEASE

Second Line Memorial for The Boswell Sisters

Date July 5th, 2008, 11:00 a.m.

Location: Hillside Cemetery, 1033 Oregon Rd. Cortlandt Manor, NY

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Saints of Swing to Lead Boswell Sisters Second Line and Memorial Celebration, July 5th

Peekskill, NY June 17, 2008 - The Boswell Sisters were three New Orleans' girls whose jazz harmonies set radio and the world in a whirl in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Trained as classical musicians, the sisters caught the jazz fever that was born in their hometown and soon began to sing in a way no one had done before. Three years after they left home they were recording with the Dorsey Brothers and featured on national radio. So popular was their sound that an epidemic of sister acts and trios burst onto the scene. After a career that included Hollywood movies, Broadway shows, playing for the crowned heads of Europe and reaching what seemed to be the pinnacle of their career, two of the sisters retired in favor of marriage and family. Their paths led them to Peekskill, NY, where they raised their families and stayed until their deaths. Martha Boswell Lloyd, the piano playing eldest sister, passed away 50 years ago on July 2, 1958. Helvetia Boswell Jones, the youngest sister, died in Peekskill in 1988.

Bozzies.com will honor the lives and music of the Boswell Sisters with a traditional "Second Line" march near Peekskill, NY, featuring the Saints of Swing, on Saturday, July 5th, at 11 AM at the Hillside Cemetery, 1033 Oregon Rd. Cortlandt Manor, NY. Fans of the Boswell Sisters, and friends of Martha, Connee, Vet and their families have been invited to take part in this rich New Orleans tradition.

"Although Martha and Vet lived in and loved the Hudson Valley, they had the bayou in their souls," said Cynthia Lucas, director of Bozzies.com and the Boswell Sisters Centennial. "They didn't have a chance to have a Second Line when they passed away so we are taking this milestone year to remember them and introduce their amazing music to a new generation."

The tradition of the Second Line runs deep in the history of New Orleans. At funerals, a brass band would lead the mourners (the second line) to the cemetery to the sound of gospel hymns such as "Flee Like a Bird" and "Just a Closer Walk With Thee." After "releasing" the body the

sound of the music would change to upbeat songs, and the marchers would dance as they returned.

"We didn't know if we could find a group who could play this style of music here in New York," said Lucas. We were very pleased when we heard the Saints of Swing and learned about their repertoire. They are able to mix the traditional second line numbers with music from the Boswell Sisters, which we believe will make this a real tribute to Martha, Connee and Vet."

Martha was the first to settle in the Peekskill area in 1936. She and husband George "Major" Lloyd purchased an old farmhouse in the Putnam Valley area and converted it into an estate referred to as the "Lloyd-Boswell Farm." It became a place where Connee, in Manhattan, and Vet, in Toronto, could get together with the family. It also became a favored country destination for the Crosby and Bauduc brothers and other show business personalities. Martha's adventures in farming produced a variety of livestock and crops including minks, turkeys and corn.

Vet and family moved to Peekskill in the early 1950s to be closer to her sisters. She lived on Pemart Avenue until her death in 1988.

Connee continued to perform and became a favorite duet partner of Bing Crosby. Her career included more movies, more Broadway shows, radio and eventually television. She made appearances on the Perry Como Show, Ed Sullivan and even had a starring role in the 1959 TV series "Pete Kelly's Blues." She passed away in 1976.

Participants will meet at Hillside Cemetery's office between 10:30 and 11:00 AM. The Saints of Swing will then lead the Second Line through the cemetery to the area where most of the Boswell family is interred. Memorials will be given by those who knew and loved the Sisters and the ensemble will march back to the office in the celebratory tradition of the Crescent City.

All are invited to attend, encouraged to bring umbrella's and to dress in their carnival finery for this tribute.

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About the Saints of Swing

The Saints of Swing are an extraordinary collective of some of the tri-state area's finest performers. Providing a fresh and exciting experience in art and entertainment, the Saints of Swing specialize in eclectic and electric selections of foot-tappin' Swing classics... Hot N' Cool Jazz served up however you like it - from spicy New Orleans Dixieland style (complete with a dancin' tuba player!) to elegant New York City sizzlers... Motown, R&B... Ballroom favorites... and even 1,000,000-watt Gospel, Latin, and Klezmer classics. www.Saintsofswing.com

Bozzies.com

The first website devoted exclusively to the Boswell Sisters and Connee Boswell, Bozzies.com features bios, articles, pictures, interviews and music from the Boswell Sisters and Connee Boswell, as well as podcasts and features on musicians who perform their music and the fans who still avidly enjoy them.



QUOTES AND COMMENTARY

"Who influenced me? There was only one singer who influenced me. I tried to sing like her all the time because everything she did made sense musically and that singer was Connee Boswell. When I was a girl I listened to all the singers, black and white, and I know that Connee Boswell was doing things that no one else was doing at the time. You don't have to take my word for it. Just check the recordings made at the time and hear for yourself." *Ella Fitzgerald*

"The Boswell Sisters



Classic Jazz: The Essential Listening Companion

by Scott Yanow

There were many sister vocal groups in the 1920s including the Keller Sisters and Lynch (who recorded with Jean Goldkette), the Brox Sisters and the Hannah Sisters. Most at best featured appealing voices and little else, but the Boswell Sisters were on a completely different level all together. Not only were they the finest of all the sister groups of the last century, but the Boswell Sisters were arguably the best vocal jazz ensemble prior to Lambert, Hendricks and Ross of the late 1950s.

Martha (1905-58), Connee (later known as "Connee") (1907-1976) and Helvetia (better known as "Vet") (1911-88) were raised in New Orleans. Connee contracted polio at age three and was never able to walk. Each of the sisters played instruments early on with Connee learning cello,

piano, sax and trombone, Vet playing violin and banjo, and Martha, the only one to record playing an instrument*, became an exceptional pianist.

After creating a stir in Los Angeles in the 1920s where they appeared on radio five nights a week, they began recording in 1930. From the very start they offered something different than most vocal groups of the time. Their adventurous arrangements, done mostly by Connee and Martha, had surprise tempo and key changes, mixed together lyrics and hot scatting, built up to unpredictable conclusions and swung hard. Connee was almost always the solo voice, but the harmonies of Vet and Martha were just as important.

Although some radio listeners called in to ask where the melody was and many assumed that the white siblings were African Americans, the Boswell Sisters became a hit in 1931 when they appeared at New York's Paramount Hotel.

The Boswell Sisters had spots in several films (the best is "Crazy People" in 1932's *Big Broadcast*), they toured Europe in 1933 and 1935 and, other than the Mills Brothers, they had no competition among jazz vocal groups. Many of their records featured top jazz soloists including Bunny Berrigan, the Dorsey Brothers and Joe Venutti, and they still sound fresh and exciting today.

The group came to a premature end in 1936 when all three sisters got married and Martha and Vet decided to retire. Connee Boswell, whom Ella Fitzgerald always cited as her main influence, continued with her solo career that included memorable recordings with Bob Crosby's orchestra, short appearances in a number of movies, Broadway revues and a role in the late 1950s television series "Pete Kelly's Blues".



The Sisters and Connee made over 300 sides, sold over 75 million records and are still delightful to listen to decades after their last recording.

Hi-res photos and additional information available at www.bozzies.com/press