

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**MEMORIAL FOR LEE SHAW DECEMBER, 11th AT UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY, SCHENECTADY, NY**

Shokan, NY – November 25, 2015

To honor the memory of the late great internationally renowned pianist, composer and bandleader **Dr. Lee Shaw** (who passed away at age 89 on October 25<sup>th</sup>), 22 musicians will come together to remember and celebrate her life and music. There will also be various local keynote speakers at the event as well as some others skyping in internationally to celebrate Dr. Shaw. The memorial and celebration of Lee's life and legacy will be held on **Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Society (Great Hall, Whisperdome), 1221 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady, NY.** There is no admission for the memorial.

The music will feature seven bands including the talents of the following musicians:

Joe Barna, Bill Delaney, Peg Delaney, Mike Demicco, John Esposito, Matt Finck, Otto Gardner, Gene Garone, Nick Hetko, Pete Levin, Rob Lindquist, **John Medeski**, Patti Melita, Lou Pappas, Chris Pasin, Brian Patneaude, Sarah Pedinotti, Jason Rogers, Adam Siegel, Jeff "Siege" Siegel & Rich Syracuse.

Besides Dr. Shaw's original music and standards she loved to play, musicians will also feature original music written in honor of Ms. Shaw.

MCs for the evening will include local radio DJs Tim Coakley and Bill McCann. A trailer from the recent film celebrating Lee Shaw "Lee's 88 Keys" will be presented by its director Susan Robbins. An ongoing slide presentation of photos will be shown by Diane Reiner.

The audience will be invited to sign a remembrance book that will then be sent to the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame to be included in the display about inductee Lee Shaw.

A recent press release by Lee Shaw's publicist Ann Braithwaite of Boston described her life:

"Shaw - who studied with Oscar Peterson, taught piano to John Medeski, and worked with countless jazz luminaries including Dexter Gordon, Thad Jones, Chico Hamilton, Pepper Adams, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Richard Davis, Slam Stewart, Major Holly, and Eddie Jones - was one of jazz's unsung heroines whose late-career resurgence began in 2001 when she began performing with drummer Jeff "Siege" Siegel and bassist Rich Syracuse (Syracuse joined Shaw in 1991). Scott Yanow of Jaziz described Shaw's playing as "lyrical and sophisticated," and stated of the trio: "Interplay between the musicians recalls the Bill Evans Trio in spots, but Shaw's chord voicings are her own and she does not sound like any of her predecessors."

Until the end of her life Lee continued to perform in clubs, nursing homes and for her fellow residents of the Eddy Memorial Geriatric Center where she lived for her final months. Shaw practiced on an almost daily schedule until there were no more notes left to play. "Lee Shaw personified love and beauty in every way," said Jeff "Siege" Siegel. "Her compositions and lyrical, swinging piano playing were direct reflections of the beautiful person that Lee was inside and out. Lee was a role model not only for women, but for any person seeking the life worth living. Her grace, humility, and concern for others will never be forgotten."

"Lee Shaw was one of the true masters of improvised music," says Rich Syracuse. "Her vast knowledge of the repertoire, the history, the soul of the music was inspiring and a lesson in what can be important to yourself if you are lucky to find yourself in the middle of it."

Born in Ada, Oklahoma in 1926, Lee Shaw learned the now iconic "American Songbook" tunes when they were new. At college in Chicago she studied classical piano, but the lure of jazz was overwhelming, and soon she was playing in clubs throughout the city. It was there that she met drummer Stan Shaw, a New York native whom she later married. They formed a piano trio and eventually moved to NYC, where they played at Birdland and other top venues. Bandleaders such as Lionel Hampton asked her to join their groups, but she turned down these offers in order to focus on the trio with her husband. After moving to the Albany area, where she lived for the last five decades, they worked with all the first-call musicians who came through town. After Stan's death in 2001, Shaw began working with trio of Syracuse and Siegel. These two musicians have a singular devotion to Shaw, and it is partly through their efforts that the myriad talents of this jazz heroine began to earn the recognition she

deserved.

The trio released seven highly acclaimed recordings including the 2008 CD+DVD "Lee Shaw Trio: Live in Graz," 2009's "Blossom," 2010's "Lee Shaw Trio Live at Art Gallery Reutlingen" and 2011's "John Medeski & Lee Shaw Together Again" on the Artists Recording Collective label (ARC). They performed internationally in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and nationally at the Kennedy Center, Wall Street Jazz Festival, Albany Jazz Festival, Lake George Jazz Festival, SUNY Albany, Caspe Center in Des Moines, IA, Oklahoma Central University, East Central University, University of Arts and Sciences and Filene Center at Skidmore College, amongst others.

In 1993, Shaw was inducted into the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, joining Dizzy Gillespie, Chet Baker, Charlie Christian, Barney Kessel, Cecil McBee, Ruth Brown and a host of other jazz heavyweights. In 2008, Shaw was honored by her alma mater, the University of Art and Science in Chickasha, OK (formerly the Oklahoma College for Women), as one of the school's Ten Highly Successful Women Graduates. In 1999 she was also inducted into the school's Alumni Hall of Fame. In 2002 The College of St. Rose in Albany, NY, where she's been on the faculty since 1983, awarded her an Honorary Doctorate. The success of the 2007 concert at the Art Gallery (World of Basses) in Reutlingen, Germany led the gallery to plan a week-long Lee Shaw Jazz Festival which took place in September 2008, and it was so successful that they asked her return in May 2009 to record and perform. Shaw appeared on Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz program, and NPR hailed her, along with McPartland and the late Mary Lou Williams, as "one of jazz's premier pianists." Jeff Dayton-Johnson of *All About Jazz* states: "Bold and strong, her playing lavishes attention on the lower and middle ranges of the keyboard, and - metaphorically - on the architectural and emotional resources of the compositions. Let's hope that Shaw's second act is a long one: between the growing Shaw songbook and the hundreds of songs by others that the pianist has played hundreds of times, she quite clearly has a lot to communicate to a wider audience."

According to [Swingtime Jazz Society](#), the "Lee Shaw Memorial Fund has been set up for donations. A scholarship will be awarded yearly to a high school pianist pursuing jazz studies in college. This fund is under the umbrella of the not-for-profit Swingtime Jazz Society. Contributions to this fund can be made payable to Swingtime Jazz Society and mailed to Patti Melita, Treasurer, PO Box 232, Troy, NY 12181-0232 with "Lee Shaw Scholarship Fund" in the memo line.

(Please remember that Swingtime Jazz Society, as a 501(c)(3) organization, should qualify if your employer matches your charitable donations.)”

Producing the event are Lee Shaw’s long time trio members Jeff “Siege” Siegel and Rich Syracuse.

Photo courtesy of Diane Reiner.

*Contact:*

*Jeff Siegel*

914-466-9782

[jsiege@aol.com](mailto:jsiege@aol.com)

Siegel and Syracuse are Not responsible for and are held harmless from any occurrences.