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A CurtainUp Review

The Anderson Twins Play the Fabulous Dorseys

By [Elyse Sommer](#)

Tangerine,

She is all they claim

With her eyes of night and lips as bright as flame

— from "Tangerine" (Victor Schertzinger, composer; words, Johnny Mercer) one of the many '40s hits brought back to life by the gifted twin brothers, Pete and Will Anderson Twins and their terrific combo.



Pete Anderson, Jon-Erik Kelso, Kevin Dorn, Will Anderson
(Photo credit: Lynn Redmile)

I can't think of a better antidote to the headlines ablaze with distressing news about man-made and natural disasters and the Great Recession's assault on the American dream, than *The Anderson Twins Play the Fabulous Dorseys*. This bouncy 90 minute tribute to the big band era's famous bandleaders Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey by two 25-year-olds, themselves brothers, is a sure-fire gloom and doom chaser .

59E59's Theater C has been transformed into a club for this 3-week engagement. Audience members are seated around tiny tables, the walls are decorated with posters featuring the Dorseys . The stage is small but not too small to hold the six musicians and a grand piano — the Andersons flanking trumpeter Jon-Erik Kellso up front, Drummer Kevin Dorn, Bass player Clovis Nicolas drums, and pianist Ehud Asherie behind them. Given



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the intimacy of the venue and the musicianship of that combo what we get is a glorious recreation of the big band sound.

While just listening to the more than a dozen great swing era songs would satisfy most jazz fans, the Andersons have smartly enhanced the presentation with footage from the 1947 film *The Fabulous Dorseys* projected onto a large screen near the bandstand. The excerpts add context and theatricality to make this more than just a concert. The film clips cover Jimmy and Tommy's boyhood, their flourishing joint careers and the sibling rivalry that not only ended the partnership but the brotherly closeness. If the alternating film footage and concertizing is a bit schematic, it works,, especially since the projections always end with the title, composer and arranger of the next number. The opening and closing clips from the popular *What's My Line?* TV show' when it featured Jimmy and Tommy as mystery guests adds to the fun and further points to the Andersons' directorial as well as musical talents.

When the sextet strikes up Ray Noble's bouncy "Cherokee" anyone old enough to remember the old Paramount theater when a dollar or less bought you a seat for a movie and a live show by a big band, is likely to feel like jumping back into their bobby sox and do a hot Lindy Hop. But you don't have to be an old-timer to get into the swing of this and other numbers like "Dusk in Upper Sandusky," "Runnin' Wild," "Bee be," "Tangerine," "Im Getting Sentimental," "Song of India" and "Sunny Side of the Street," and "Oodles of Noodles" — or to appreciate Sy Oliver,'s unique arrangements for universally familiar songs like "Swanee River" and "Deep River."

If there's any shortcoming to this enjoyable show it's that that we don't get to hear some of the vocalists who sang with the Dorseys (Frank Sinatra, Helen O'Conenell ad the Eberly Brothers). At any rate, who can complain when there's the timeless universality of this music and the fascinating story of the Dorseys.

The charm of the twin brothers right on stage seems to engender an element of friendly camaraderie among the viewers. At the performance I attended, several people for whom this was "their music" shared their memories of the Dorseys and other big band talents with younger people. And at the end of the show the musicians interacted graciously with the audience.

At the moment, Pete and Will, like Jimmy and Tommy, are still very much a team. Being look-alike twins and both Juilliard graduates, their sibling and career bond seems even tighter than the initial one of the Dorseys. Still as they move forward with their careers, they may pursue separate paths to most fully develop their talents. Whatever happens, *The Anderson Twins play The Fabulous Dorseys* will be a highlight of their collaborative work.

Postscript: Anderson CDs are available at 59E59 and MP3 downloads at their website: www.andersontwinsjazz.com. The complete DVD of the Dorsey Brothers film is available for less than \$10.

The Anderson Twins Play the Fabulous Dorseys
Wwritten and directed by Pete and Will Anderson
Cast: Pete Anderson and Will Anderson, clarinets/saxophones/flute; Jon-Erik Kellso, trumpet; Ehud Asherie, piano; Kevin Dorn, drums, Clovis Nicolas, bass (alternate musicians: Charlie Caranicas, Jack Glottman, Daniel Glass, Dave Baron)