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MUSIC REVIEW

'Begin the Beguine' and Other Delicacies From the Shaw Oeuvre



Matthew Murphy for The New York Times

The singer Daryl Sherman, accompanied by, from left, Steve Ash, Pete Anderson, Clovis Nicholas, Jon-Erik Kellso, Kevin Dorn and Will Anderson.

By **STEPHEN HOLDEN**
Published: May 26, 2010

To commemorate the centennial of Artie Shaw, who would have turned 100 on Sunday, two of his most ardent admirers, the Anderson Twins, are celebrating his music at 59E59 Theaters. Handsome, soft-spoken 23-year-old identical twins from Bethesda, Md., Pete and Will Anderson are virtuosos on both clarinet and saxophone. They lead a sextet that includes Jon-Erik Kellso on trumpet, Steve Ash on piano, Clovis Nicholas on bass and Kevin Dorn on drums. On Tuesday evening the group was joined by Daryl Sherman, the ebullient swing vocalist who briefly sang with Shaw's band when he reconvened it in 1983.

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For the appreciation of jazz, context matters almost as much as the quality of the playing. To hear Shaw's music in a staid theatrical environment inescapably lent it a museumlike formality. The brothers made it a point to reproduce Shaw's clarinet solos, including the accents, inflections and shifting timbres, although in numbers like "Frenesi," which began with Pete Anderson strolling onto the stage playing the

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clarinet, the air of formality was momentarily interrupted.

But for the most part, the two-hour concert consisted of classic swing executed with great respect but little spontaneity and dynamism. You had the feeling of attending a classical chamber music concert at which the performers verbally supplied reverential annotation.

The show swung somewhat more freely in its second half, when the sextet played several of Shaw's signature hits, including "Begin the Beguine" and "Star Dust."

Its archival perspective was embodied by an overly polite performance of Shaw's "Concerto for Clarinet," which Will Anderson introduced as Shaw's competitive response to [Benny Goodman](#)'s "Sing, Sing, Sing," right down to having the piece end on a higher note.

Ms. Sherman helped loosen things up with her effervescent renditions of "Any Old Time," which [Billie Holiday](#) sang with Shaw's band, and the Artie Shaw-[Johnny Mercer](#) ballad "Love of My Life," from the 1940 movie "Second Chorus" in which Shaw co-starred with [Fred Astaire](#).

In a revealing anecdote about Shaw's notorious perfectionism, Ms. Sherman recalled his telling her after a performance that it was "divine," and at first thinking he had paid her an undeserved compliment. She was right. It was criticism of her pronunciation of a word in a song: it should be "divine," not "dee-vine," he told her sharply.

"The Anderson Twins Celebrate Artie Shaw at 100" continues through Sunday at 59E59 Theaters, 59 East 59th Street, Manhattan; (212) 279-4200, 59e59.org.

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