

Swingcats of Astoria bring jazz to KALA

ASTORIA — Swingcats of Astoria will perform from 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 19 at KALA. Guest musicians will also perform, including jazz and blues singer Dinah Urell.

Swingcats of Astoria is a revival of the original Swingcats from a few years ago. The group plays swing and jazz from the 1930s gypsy jazz of Django Reinhardt, jazz and bebop of the '50s, and jazz of the 1960s and '70s as well as original compositions. The group features Richard Thomasian,

Ted Brainard, Dave Ambrose and Lawrence Aldred.

Thomasian began playing the guitar at age 13 in Fresno, California. It was just a hobby until 1972, when, at 21, he decided to make a career out of it. Thomasian has been playing music up and down the West Coast for 42 years. He has focused on jazz but also enjoys blues, rock, funk, country, folk and reggae.

Brainard started his musical journey in Southern California in the early 1970s. He relocated to Oregon in 1980 after

passing through on tour. He continued his musical career as a performer and a teacher. On the North Coast, he enjoys playing and performing with many local musicians.

Ambrose started playing violin in the mid-1990s and fell in love with a blond stand-up bass in 2000. Since then he's played with a bluegrass quintet, the original Swingcats, and Astoria-based international music quartet Acustica.

Aldred's playing started with Skiffle and early rhythm

and blues in Manchester, England. He also grew up in a home full of big-band sounds, a mom who sang standards, and "a great tolerance of my tapping on things," he says. Coming to America in 1962, Aldred moved to Nashville and developed his drumming in rock, rhythm and blues, jazz and Western swing before moving to the Bay Area in '65. Aldred played around Northern California for about 30 years before retiring and moving to Astoria 10 years ago. Since arriving on the North Coast, he has enjoyed playing with several jazz groups.



Submitted photo

Swingcats of Astoria is a revival of the Swingcats band from a few years ago, and features, from left, Ted Brainard, Richard Thomasian, Dave Ambrose and Larry Aldred.

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