

Toots Thielemans at the Caspian Jazz  
and Blues Festival, Baku



*Porgy and Bess in Almaty,  
Kazakhstan*

## CADENCE

*The Quarterly Newsletter of American Voices*



*"With rain splattering in from the open sides and the leaky roof of the performance hall, American Voices director John Ferguson treated concert-goers in the central city of Hue to its first performance by an American musician since the end of the Vietnam War. Ferguson's strong solo renditions of music by Gershwin, Joplin and Charles Ives charged the audience members with enthusiasm for music forms which many of them had never before heard."*

*US Consulate General, Ho Chi Minh City*

February 1, 2003

### Director's Update

Welcome to the first on-line edition of American Voices' newsletter *Cadence*.

Since our last newsletter of August of 2001, there have been dramatic changes for many of us. For American Voices, there has been the unexpected effect of our programs being more in demand than ever before. We are pleased to report from the field that the United States and its culture are probably more appreciated than one would realize from listening to the evening news! And this appears to be true especially in countries that tend to get bad press back home: Syria, Lebanon, Burma, Nicaragua....

We have been operating in unusually high gear since late September 2001 and are spending more time than ever before in the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia. The past 18 months have been a fascinating journey and I hope you enjoy reading about our cultural bridge building in countries as diverse as Vietnam and Turkmenistan.

After the attacks of September 11th, the rush of goodwill as well as requests for our services from so many different corners of the globe has been a bit overwhelming and the many offers and opportunities have taken us farther away from home for longer periods of time than ever before.

We have achieved much in the past eighteen months. Whether it was the hugely successful *Caspian Jazz and Blues Festival*, American music concerts off the beaten paths in *Vietnam*, or bringing the magic of *Porgy and Bess* to audiences in La Paz, Bolivia, the 2001-2002 season has been a satisfying and productive year.

[John Ferguson, Artistic Director](#)



*Masterclass in Hanoi*

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*American Music Score Donation,  
Burma*

### Recent Press:

*"Delight! The two-day holiday given by our guests on the Baku stage can only be called a miracle."*

*The Echo, Baku*

*"On the second day of the*

*Festival one could hear this kind of conversation in the lobby of the Hall: 'Unfortunately, I could not get to the first day of the festival'. 'You have lost half of your life... But do not worry- you still have the second half!'*  
*' Delovaya Nedelya' Almaty Business Week*

*" Ira Spaulding truly captivated the audience with the wonderful timeless 'Summertime', a song that had bewitched the whole generation of 'old' people in the former Saigon when they were young..."*  
*Thanh Nien (Young People) Newspaper, Vietnam*



*High Notes.....Gershwin at 14,000 feet in La Paz, Bolivia*

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**Mission Statement:**

American Voices is a non-profit

**News:**

**Unique Sounds from Azerbaijan and Burma**

American Voices has produced two CDs in 2002 from our Jazz projects in Baku and Burma. *Jazz Bridges* features a fascinating blend of Jazz and Burmese Traditional Music while the *Caspian Jazz and Blues Festival 2002* features highlights from the festival and Jazz/Azeri Mugham fusion. *Get a complimentary CD of your choice when you join 'Friends of American Voices'!*

**Caspian Jazz and Blues**

[Read more](#)

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**Jazz Bridges**

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[Video](#)

**'It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing'**

**Jazz and Blues Initiatives**



*Young Azeri Jazz All-Stars*

2002 marked many highlights for American Voices' Jazz and Blues programming. In addition to tours of Central and Southeast Asia, the year brought us the opportunity to realize major projects such as the [The Caspian Jazz and Blues Festival](#), the [Jazz from J to Z Festival in Almaty](#) and [Jazz Bridges in Burma](#).

As part of American Voices deeper commitment to Jazz programming, a new member has been added to our team. [Mike del Ferro](#) has been appointed Director of Jazz Programming to assist with artist programming at our festivals. An extraordinary jazz pianist, Mike tours for us with his trio as well as with our vocalists, CoCo York and Deborah Carter. In addition to these American Voices Artists-in-Residence, we have also had the honor to work closely with presenting the legendary *Toots Thielemans* in Baku and we will present *Maynard Ferguson* in concert in Baku and Bishkek this coming May. [Read more](#)

**Recent Projects 2001/2002:**

A selection from our many projects in 2001 and 2002! Follow the links for more photos and project details:

*Festivals:*

[Caspian Jazz and Blues 2002, Baku](#)

[Jazz from J to Z Festival, Almaty](#)

[Jazz Bridges, Burma](#)

organization devoted to the better understanding of American music and culture in countries lacking information about and regular contact with the United States and its artists.



Jazz Workshop in Baku

American Voices organizes festivals, projects with conservatories, orchestras and opera houses, Artist-in-Residence programs and music score donations in countries as diverse as Burma, Vietnam, Syria, Oman, Turkmenistan, Estonia, El Salvador and Bolivia in addition to more traditional venues in countries such as Germany, Greece and Japan.

In repertoire ranging from Broadway and Jazz to contemporary composers and opera, American Voices performs over 100 concerts, masterclasses and workshops annually in over 30 countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.



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- Lufthansa Airlines
- Newmont Mines
- Polar Lights, Arkangelsk
- RadissonHotels
- Regent Hotel, Almaty

*Broadway Off the Beaten Path:* Young Kazakh and Uzbek singers stir excitement in [Almaty](#) and [Tashkent](#) with West Side Story.

*American Opera in Unlikely Places:* 'Porgy and Bess' in [Caracas](#), [Bolivia](#), [Bangkok](#), [Malta](#) and [Kazakhstan](#).

*Ives in Vietnam and Rzewski in Albania:* Contemporary Music Performances in [Vietnam](#), [Albania](#) and [Kyrgyzstan](#).

*Variations on America:* The [Balkans](#), [Philippines](#), [Vietnam](#), [Thailand](#), [Burma](#),

*Jazz from J to Z:* [Southeast Asia Tour 2002](#) in Laos Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam

*American Choral Music:* [Lithuania](#), [Bosnia](#)



CoCo York sings the Blues

**Over 3000 music scores donated in 30 cities from Caracas to Manila:**

The past two years saw a record year in terms of music scores donations via American Voices' *Music Library Project* with over 30 donations to libraries in all corners of the world. In addition, the scope of the repertoire continues to expand to include orchestral scores, jazz scores and teaching materials in co-ordination with our increased activities in jazz education. [Read more](#)

**Introducing New Artists Mike Del Ferro and Audrey Vallance:**

American Voices is pleased to welcome two new artists into our artist roster.

*Mike Del Ferro:* Jazz pianist Mike del Ferro has joined our Jazz roster in 2002 and recently began serving as director of Jazz Programs. [Read more](#)

*Audrey Vallance:* Soprano Audrey Vallance began her collaborations with American Voices in the autumn of 2002 as soprano soloist and chorusmaster with our 'Porgy and Bess' project in Bangkok. [Read more](#)

**As the Foundation Grows...Sponsorship News:**

2001-2002 saw our sponsorship base increase exponentially. We would like to thank our numerous sponsors for helping us to reach our ambitious program goals over the past two seasons. In particular, we would like to thank the *Unocal Foundation* for their \$50,000 matching grant to American Voices for our projects in Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar and Azerbaijan in 2002. We would also like to thank the broad coalition of sponsors that emerged in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to help make the *Caspian Jazz and*

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**Middle East:**

Lebanese-American  
Chamber of Commerce  
Plaza Suites Hotel, Beirut

**American Voices' Artists in  
Their Own Words:**

"In April and May 2002, I performed with my own Trio and jazz vocalist, CoCo York in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam... The appreciation of the audience in each country touched me deeply. It also showed me the importance of bringing good music to these

Blues' and the 'Jazz from J to Z' festivals possible. [Read more](#)



American Voice and Friend

**Friends of American Voices:**

If you would like help American Voices in our projects around the world, please let us know. There are many ways you can become part of our team bringing American music and expertise to audiences and students around the world. Perhaps you would like to facilitate and music score donation in a favorite country or contribute to one of our festivals? By joining 'Friends of American Voices' with a donation of \$25 or over you will receive a complimentary copy of either our *Jazz Bridges* or *Caspian Jazz and Blues Festival 2002* CDs. [Read more](#)

**Sound, video, brochures and news now on-line at [www.americanvoices.org](http://www.americanvoices.org):**

The new and improved American Voices website awaits you with a wider array of sound files, video, detailed program information, on-line brochure and much more: [www.americanvoices.org](http://www.americanvoices.org)



Young Jazz Fans

**What's Up in 2003? Projects and Festival Schedule:**

Our current plans include:

*Festivals:*

Caspian Jazz and Blues 2003  
Almaty Jazz Autumn  
American Music Month Kyrgyzstan  
American Music Festival Vietnam

*Broadway Projects:*

*West Side Story* in Kosovo, Bishkek and Syria  
*Porgy and Bess* In South America  
*American Choral Music* in Estonia, Belarus and Kazakhstan  
*American Voices 10th anniversary* on June 16, 2003

**[American Voices Complete Schedule:](#)**



parts of the world. I'm honored that John Ferguson has approached me to collaborate more in the future with this great organization and look forward to promoting Jazz, one of the few pure American Art Forms (!), all over the world."

Mike del Ferro

**Excerpted from 'Quantumland'  
By CoCo York:**

When I was a small child, prior to dawning the name CoCo, I vividly remember laying in bed in a darkened room, the moon shining brightly upon my bed, and listening to the night creatures and birds improvise their symphonies. Not being able to sleep right away, I would just dream. Dream of what I thought far away lands would be like. What I thought the people would be like.

Anyway, as I've grown, developed and become wiser I now know that I was shaping my reality. I must mention here that I grew up in a very small town in Arkansas. Population at that time was 700 or so. Since then the population has declined down a hundred or so, and this should give you an idea of why dreaming was so important to me.

Mama was a country girl who wanted to see and know what was beyond her living boundaries. So she would, just as soon as school was over, pack us up, put a little Vaseline on my face and legs wait for the Greyhound and off we went...Well, I have graduated up to airplanes now, but the dreaming has never stopped. A few months back I was invited to sojourn on the trip of a lifetime.....

[continues....](#)

*Bridge in Burma*

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**CoCo York continued....**

I am a musician. A Jazz, Blues, Gospel, Pop singer with Classical training as my roots and first love. I am earning my living by doing what it is that I love. I lived in The Netherlands for 20 years where I 'culturalised' myself while I was Professor of Music at the Rotterdam Conservatory. This Conservatory is the Sister School to Berkeley School of Music in Boston. While teaching, the school encouraged me to continue my performances, the grander the better, all over the world. And so I did. Needless to say, it was all very, very special and of course a lifetime of dreaming come true.

In the interim, I was introduced to an organization called "American Voices" and an American pianist, Mr. John Ferguson.

John travels and performs in exotic places that most Americans wouldn't have a clue about or have heard of before.

When he asked me to join, I gladly said. Of Course!!!! This leads me to the grandest dream ever: For two months I traveled to and through Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam for American Voices.

As I have mentioned earlier, I taught on a University level for years at the Conservatory in Rotterdam. So, often for the very first time, western jazz musicians, such as myself and Mike's Trio, were invited to share our knowledge with aspiring jazz musicians in these countries - quite often with classical singers and teachers who needed to know how to teach their students to sing American popular music such as jazz, pop, and the Blues.

Now, Let's talk about musicianship!!!!!! Technique discipline, fortitude and focus?? These students undoubtedly had it - no questions asked. If you want speed, they have it. But, there are a couple of ingredients that were sometimes missing ....Feeling and playing from the heart. Is this due to youth and lack of life experience? It is possible.

However, in Kazakhstan, which is a mixture of Mongolian, Turkish, Chinese, Russian, and other cultures, I have never heard such a wonderful mixture of styles that included Stevie Wonder, Brother's Johnson, Isley Brothers, Quincy Jones, Puff Daddy, Brandy, Whitney Houston and the 12 bar blues! Western rhythms mixed with Kazakh rhythms and interpretations....It was different and just wonderful!!!!!!

The gala grand finale concerts were always the icing on the cake to us. We performed in some of the most fantastic concert halls one can imagine...Like something out of a fairy tale ...

One hall seated 7000 people and all seats were filled. Some stages were large. Some stages were small, but always standing room only. As a surprise for the public, the musicians and vocalists who participated in the workshops were invited to perform with us as an encore. They would play their traditional music and we would take it into Jazz. I would improvise along while the local singers sang their traditional songs...This always brought the house down!!!!!! Hard to believe that in most of these countries this kind of fusion has never ever been done before...The audience would go wild!

As an African-American woman, from a small town in Arkansas, I must say that I dreamed

well!! I've experienced a fantastic realm of such grand experiences and, even though this part of the dream has finished, another is beginning to take shape.

[Read more about CoCo](#)

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[Video](#)