

# Review: ‘Swing That Music,’ Effortless Fun in a Tribute to Jazz Forerunners

By STEPHEN HOLDENAUG. 5, 2015



Danny Bacher performing in his show “Swing That Music” at the Metropolitan Room. Credit Lewis Bogaty

The secret of serious fun is not to take it too seriously, especially if it involves playing jazz. That attitude is something that the easygoing singer and saxophonist [Danny Bacher](#), who appeared with a small swing band at the Metropolitan Room on Tuesday evening, knows in his bones. It is about making hot music but staying cool, about cutting up while maintaining effortless self-control, about having a blast with friends. And at his performance of “[Swing That Music](#),” a homage to the era of jumpin’ jive with a dollop of Dixieland, Mr. Bacher conflated the music of three Louises — Armstrong, Jordan and Prima — in a concert revealing him to be a prodigiously talented musical preservationist.

Mr. Bacher may not yet have as defined a musical personality as his forerunners, but his performance was much more than a nostalgic pastiche. Gathered around him was a first-rate lineup of seasoned traditional jazzmen led by the pianist Allen Farnham, and featuring Warren Vache on cornet, Jay Rodriguez on tenor sax and Noah Bless on trombone.

Except for the playful interpolation of a few contemporary references into lyrics, Mr. Bacher took few liberties with the material, mostly from the '40s and '50s. Of the three Louises, Prima was the one he channeled most effectively in "[That Old Black Magic](#)" (the guest vocalist, Vanessa Racci, sang the Keely Smith role) and in a recreation of "[Just a Gigolo](#)" and "I Ain't Got Nobody."

Mr. Bacher's voice is smoother than Prima's rasp, but in his bebop solos he revealed enough of his inner wild man to suggest a maniac behind the cool. "[I Wanna Be Like You](#) (The Monkey Song)," from "The Jungle Book," in particular, made me grin. It was a reminder that behind its academic trappings, a prime element of jazz has always been a game of monkey see, monkey do.