



Helen Sung performs at the Sequoia Room in Fort Bragg, California.

Sequoia Room Caters to Artists, Listeners

Doug Moody has successfully combined his passions for business, jazz, philanthropy and beer-crafting into a single lifestyle. As co-owner and senior vice president of North Coast Brewing Co. in Fort Bragg, California—located on the Pacific coast about 175 miles north of San Francisco—he has effectively committed his company’s name-brand support to a host of jazz initiatives throughout the United States as well as close to home.

One of Moody’s endeavors is the Sequoia Room, Northern California’s newest jazz club. “Probably my favorite thing to do in this world is to listen to great live jazz while enjoying a great craft beer,” Moody said. “And since the closest jazz club was nearly 200 miles away, we decided to build one right here in Fort Bragg.”

Moody and his business partner, Mark Ruedrich, North Coast’s president, founder and original brewmaster, spared no expense in converting the banquet room of the company’s Taproom into a bona fide jazz club. Seating 70 comfortably, the Sequoia Room is one of the finest-sounding jazz clubs in the country. “It was important that if we were going to do this, we were going to do it right, that is, truly serve the music, the musicians and the audience,” Moody explained. “So we brought in the best sound and light people, bought a beautiful grand piano, bass amp and drum kit, and decorated the room with a cozy jazz vibe. We always have the piano meticulously tuned, do a thorough sound check and adjust the stage lighting for each artist; and we employ one of

the best sound engineers in the area. We even have a fixed video camera focused on the pianist’s fingers so everyone in the room can see on the screen what he or she is playing.”

Since opening in March 2015, the Sequoia Room has experienced notable success, often hosting sold-out performances. However, the room does not depend strictly on the door and food-and-beverage receipts to keep its doors open. Rather, the club is subsidized in part by North Coast’s marketing budget. “We don’t expect the room alone to cover our costs,” Moody explained. “This is really a labor of love and a marketing program for our commitment to jazz. I’m really proud of the scene we’ve created here, as our goal from the beginning has been to create an environment that allows these remarkable artists to perform at the absolute highest level. We feel that by paying them well, providing them with great ocean-view accommodations and offering them great food and craft beer helps make that happen. They also have a beautiful room in which to perform with state-of-the-art sound and lights, and an audience that comes to listen.”

Artists who have performed at the venue include Alan Broadbent, the Brubeck Brothers, Chico Freeman, Giacomo Gates, Terreon Gully, Holly Hoffmann, Jeremy Pelt and Helen Sung.

“I have never met a more altruistic person than Doug Moody,” remarked saxophonist Claire Daly. “His passion for the music and his support of the jazz community are second to none. The Sequoia Room is not only a wonder-

ful place to play, it’s an old-school experience of being respected and treated as such.”

Moody and North Coast are deeply committed to jazz philanthropy. Maker of Brother Thelonious Belgian Style Abbey Ale, North Coast donates a percentage from every case sold to the education programs of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz—a contribution recently exceeding the \$1 million mark. “The partnership between the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and the North Coast Brewing Company is such a necessary one on a really basic level,” said Monk Institute Chairman Herbie Hancock. “They really help us keep the lights on.”

North Coast is also the official beer sponsor of many jazz festivals, including those based in Monterey, California, and Newport, Rhode Island. It also underwrites jazz programming for radio stations nationwide, including KOZT in Northern California, where Moody personally hosts the Sunday-night show *Jazz from the Coast* (which streams online at kozt.com).

Moody lives his passion, enriching copious lives in the process. “It’s not just about producing a great product like Brother Thelonious and making money, but what you do with that money, what you do with your life,” Moody said. “For me it’s about the good you can do, the difference you can make. I feel it’s an honor and a privilege, not to mention an absolute joy, to support the art form, the artists who play it, and especially the students who want to bring it into the future.”

—JB Dyas, PhD