

Autumn & Winter, 2008

Dear Friend:

I would like to introduce you to Michael Arenella & His Dreamland Orchestra, the New York-based ensemble that—with a youthful, polished, lively, and dapper approach—celebrates the music of the Jazz Age for listeners and dancers.

We enjoy a keen following, having performed at major special events (Governor's Island Hot Roaring 20's Lawn Party and Dance, summer 2006; the February 2007 Save Venice gala; New Haven Jazz Festival, summer 2006; a product launch for Absolut 100 Vodka and the Bogardus Mansion, fall 2007; benefits at the Guggenheim Museum, spring 2006 and 2007; New York City Marathon finish line, 2004 and 2006); numerous corporate events and private weddings and parties including a Rockefeller family wedding held at Kykuit in the spring of 2004.

Our authenticity results from my personally transcribing note for note the original recordings rather than relying on later stock arrangements. Indeed, our large repertoire includes many long-forgotten, sizzling orchestrations not in the books of most bands today. We are revivifying a great body of forgotten music while also playing beloved standards, infusing them all with the dynamic spirit of the Jazz Age.

We appear in vintage-inspired clothing; our bandstands bear an Art Deco design; our instruments are vintage; and I sing into a period microphone. We were featured in the Bumble & Bumble quarterly *Hair Stories* magazine and DVD in a story on the “bob” hairstyle and 1920s fashion and culture.

Of equal importance to the development of our fan base among jazz enthusiasts and dancers are our local “residencies.” We are the house band at the National Arts Club (Gramercy Park); Bar Tabac, Brooklyn (where for four years we have also been the centerpiece of the widely publicised Bastille Day street celebration); the Union Smith Cafe, Brooklyn; and the Antique Garage (SoHo). We also play monthly at the Grand Harmony Palace in Chinatown for dancers and enthusiasts of vintage culture.

Please consider us for an upcoming event, and feel free to contact me if I can provide further information. In the meantime, thank you for reviewing our materials and music.

Cordially,

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Michael Arenella & His Dreamland Orchestra is an ensemble steeped in the hot-dance band tradition of the Jazz Age. Their size ranges from a full 11-piece orchestra to smaller incarnations. They play their "Hot-and-Sweet" music anywhere that fine and eclectic tastes meet.

The Dreamland Orchestra is authentic. Arenella transcribes by hand their entire repertoire from period recordings. Their delivery, as well as their instruments, attire, and equipment — are faithfully accurate. Arenella's strong yet vulnerable baritone lacks pretense or sarcasm. He treasures each lyric, and has faith in the songs he sings. Even the most optimistic Tin Pan Alley tune has a disarming quality in his hands.

Though certainly anachronistic, the orchestra's presence invokes the vibrations of something unmistakably timeless. While authentic to a "T", Michael Arenella prefers not to be labeled a recreationalist. He takes an antiquated template and infuses it with the immediacy of the present. Spontaneity is what gave the original music of the era its magic, and it is also the primary ingredient and imprimatur of the Dreamland Orchestra.

His men are dapper dandies; hair pomaded and shoes shined. They are based in New York, which with London were the halcyon capitals of decadence. All of this allows them to capture the essence of what this music and times were all about: joy, romance, modernity, and possibility.

These are essential themes, just as valid today as eighty years ago. Ask the punk and heavy metal kids who end up liking the orchestra more than the bands they originally came to hear at the same venue. Truly, this music was the rock 'n' roll or punk of its day: rebellious, reckless, and in the eyes of the older generations, dangerous. The Dreamland Orchestra's mission is to mine the forgotten yet vital beauty of the past and bring it into the light of today — to be danced and romanced to by a new generation of flappers and sheiks.

The Music

In the fashionable rooms of the '20s, the hot dance orchestra was the berries. Fiery young men, adept on their instruments, left home to play in these bands. They were hot and tight, always competing for the reign over dance halls and pavilions. They outdid each other with fresh orchestrations, tricky rhythms, and agile jazzing. They were also the toast of the college set, traveling from campus to campus mesmerizing the Charleston-crazed youths at all-night dance parties.

The Dreamland Orchestra recreates these bands with the following forces:

Michael Arenella leads the band, sings, and plays cornet and trombone.

- Clarinets
- Saxophones
- Cornet
- Trumpet
- Violin
- Banjo & Ukulele
- Guitar
- Piano
- Bass Saxophone & Sousaphone
- Drum

Bio

Michael Arenella grew up in Georgia with parents who were artists from New York City. He sang in the church choir and studied music from an early age, working as a professional musician by his teens.

Among his formative influences is his life-long obsession with times past. He has always loved trains and jokes that he was a brakeman in an earlier life. As a boy he could often be found exploring abandoned rail yards. The story of those trains' forgotten routes were illuminated when he heard this old music. Suddenly he saw new worlds.

Michael is also a composer, with a considerable body of work written for string quartet up to large chamber orchestra. His style is comprised of elements gleaned from Baroque through to Impressionism. This background helps him to break-down and reassemble the fragile orchestrations of '20s dance music. He knows that Claude Debussy and Bix Beiderbecke would have really dug each other.

Like his Jazz-Age avatars, he moved from rural America to New York, where he entered music school. Disenchanted, he shortly made his departure from the gloomy conservatory halls and set out to bring his lost music into the daylight. Though his initial audiences were subway commuters, he eventually made his way above ground and founded his Dreamland Orchestra.

Engaging the Dreamland Orchestra for your Affair

The Dreamland Orchestra will tailor its resources to your unique vision and needs. It can provide the full 11-piece band or smaller versions such as a septet, a quintet, a trio, or even a duo. We will work with you to give you the most and best music for your space and budget.

Please e-mail Michael Arenella at

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Michael
Arenella



**Michael Arenella & His 11-Piece Dreamland Dance
Orchestra**



Annual Governor's Island Roaring '20s Lawn Party and Dance

