Along the way…

"Janice Friedman, the agile pianist who creatively mixes melody and rhythm into intriguing, beguiling performances, and has been playing piano since she was four…" *Zan Stewart, The Star Ledger 2008*

ticket
The Star-Ledger
MAY 9-15 08
YOUR GUIDE TO THIS WEEK'S ENTERTAINMENT

WILLIAM PERLMAN/THE STAR-LEDGER

"I'm a romantic," says jazz pianist Janice Friedman, who's happy when she's at the keyboard, whether performing or just practicing. "If I didn't play piano, I'd be a matchmaker."

…CETOWN BANNER • WINNER OF 10 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT — NEW ENGLAND PRESS ASSOCIA…

…rts&Entertainmen…

…hursday, March 12, 2009

High-def… broadcast is nex… thing to being there…

…dman makes music with all that Jazz

Janice Friedman performs Saturday at the Pennsylvania Art…

PAGE 22 FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2008

musicmakers

Portrait of a passionate pianist

Friedman enjoys adding a few vocals to her tunes

JAZZ

Janice Friedman Trio

When: 7:30-11:30 p.m., Friday.

Where: Lana's Fine Dining, 1300 Raritan Road, adjacent to Hyatt Hills Golf Complex, Clark.

How much: No music charge, no minimum. Call (732) 669-9024 or visit lanasfinedining.com.

What else: Friedman appears solo, Saturday and May 17 and 24, 7:30-11 p.m., at Barell's Restaurant, 219 Route 3 East, Secaucus. No music charge, no minimum; (201) 865-0473; barella.com. She also appears June 5, 7-9:30 p.m., at Shanghai Jazz, 24 Main St., Madison; (973) 822-2899; shanghaijazz.com.

BY ZAN STEWART
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

JANICE FRIEDMAN, the agile pianist who creatively mixes melody and rhythm into intriguing, beguiling performances, has been playing piano since she was 4 — and began rendering classic American standards not long after. Now, she knows about 2,000 evergreens, and rolls them out whenever she can.

"I love standards, you can do anything you want with them, take them in any direction because musicians feel free with them," says Friedman, 47, a Bronx native who grew up in Livingston and now lives in Manhattan. "And people recognize them, too. It makes them happy to hear tunes that they know."

Friedman appears Friday with bassist Steve LaSpina and drummer Mark Farnsworth at Lana's in Clark. She also appears solo Saturday at Barell's in Secaucus. On both occasions, she'll draw on standards, originals, Brazilian songs and items she calls "funky."

One of the latter group is her composition and title track of her 2007 CD, "Swingin' for the Ride" (Janika Music). "It's a playful song," says Friedman, whose web site is janicefriedman.com. "I took the music to the pop song, 'Ode to Billie Joe,' and reworked it, wrote my version with words. It's about me and my hubby, David Prager. The words came so easily, it felt like I was channeling them."

Brazilian songs, such as "Corcovado" and "Dindi," draw Friedman because "They're very sensual. They're not trying to prove anything, and they give you a mood to work off of."

Friedman — who in 1988 toured with the Woody Herman Orchestra directed by Frank Tiberi — keeps the words to songs in mind when she's playing, trying to get a picture, a story. She also often seats along with her solo lines.

A few years back, Friedman began to sing during her shows, though, she admits, "I have been singing at home all my life."

"When you sing, you have to really believe those words, and you're so exposed, more than just playing," says the artist, a member of Women's Work, led by vocalist Judi Silvano. "When I decided to sing in public, I saw that this is my job on earth at this time, to let it out, be who I am. Maybe by doing so, I give other people the permission to do the same."

This last thought prompted some personal information. "I'm a romantic. I want everybody to be happy and in love," she says. "If I didn't play piano, I'd be a matchmaker."

But she does play the piano, and adores the instrument. Her zest comes out in her performances. "There are so many things you can do with it," she says. "You sit down to practice and, all of a sudden, four hours have gone by."

Looking at music in her life, Friedman sees a deep gift she does her best to serve. "I feel like a servant in best way," she says. "Music has helped me through every aspect of my life. It's fun, and it's a healing experience for people."

Zan Stewart is the Star-Ledger's jazz writer. He is also a musician who occasionally performs at local clubs. He may be reached at zanstewart@starledger.com or at (973) 324-9018.

THE ALTERNATIVE 3-83

Jazz Pianist Doesn't Fit Stereotype

"Janice Friedman, a 22 year old keyboard wiz in her final year at Indiana University has turned a lot of heads around since she began playing at The Place to Start early last December." *The Alternative, 1983*