

# Talk of the Town

by Steve Matrazzo



## Guitar lovers, Carl Filipiak's got your Mantra

I'm a bit of a music lover. I play a little piano – fairly well, I'd like to think – but more importantly, I have a collection of old vinyl, CDs and downloads that spans nearly a century of recorded music, from old 78 rpm records to current-day digital recordings.

My tastes cover a broad spectrum of music – classical, bluegrass, soul, folk, blues, reggae, klezmer, funk, Scottish bagpipes ... and rock 'n' roll of a variety of styles and eras.

In the end, though, I always come back to jazz.

Jazz remains the great American art form, born on our soil and founded on the experimentation and invention that are the core of the American identity, evolving across generations, constantly innovating and always absorbing new influences.

While many may picture the Dixieland style associated with Louis Armstrong or the swing modes of Benny Goodman and Count Basie, jazz has continued to grow and evolve, and subsequent generations of performers have kept it fresh and vibrant.

Like guitarist and Dundalk native Carl Filipiak. A longtime fixture on the Baltimore jazz landscape, he brings a unique blend of jazz and rock to the Cat's Eye Pub in Fell's Point in monthly doses of what he calls "Jimi Jazz."

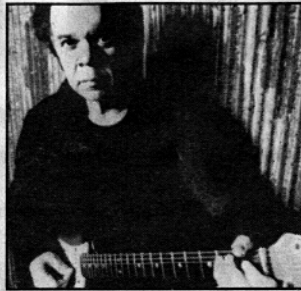
What's more, he's recorded it on a CD entitled *I Got Your Mantra*.

Most of Filipiak's performances and recordings stick to a consistent jazz repertoire, mixing original works with classics by Charlie Parker and John Coltrane.

All are delivered in the "fusion" style, influenced by rock 'n' roll and other popular genres, that came to life in the 1960s and has since evolved to include funk, rhythm-and-blues and even hip-hop stylings.

Both Filipiak's "Jimi Jazz" shows and *I Got Your Mantra*, however, go a step further. Grounded in original material, they veer away from the standard jazz menu in both style and song selection. The key, of course, is Jimi.

To Filipiak, as to all those who love the guitar, Jimi Hendrix is the gold standard. In the liner



**Carl Filipiak brings "Jimi Jazz" to the Cat's Eye and to disc on *I Got Your Mantra*.**

notes of *I Got Your Mantra*, he recalls, "I was fortunate to have had the experience of witnessing Hendrix play live. It's always been an eternal tape loop in my mind's eye."

It shows. Filipiak covered the Hendrix classic "Little Wing" on his disc *Right On Time* and put a clearly Hendrix-influenced original called "Hey Jimi" on his *Hotel Real*.

Growing up in Dundalk, he says, it was the pioneers of rock 'n' roll who first caught his ear.

"Hearing the radio as a kid, listening to Elvis [Presley] and all of those guys, anything with a guitar I thought was cool," he recalls. "But it was the

Beatles that really shined a light on it. That led me to all the others in the '60s – the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds." And, of course, to Hendrix.

By the time he was in his late teens, Filipiak was playing in local clubs, developing the style and the skill that he now brings to the shows at the Cat's Eye.

"The Cat's Eye is a great venue where we can just do tunes we love," he says. "Sometimes, I'm surprised by what I get away with. I love the whole spectrum – jazz, blues, rock, whatever – at any given moment, it's some mix of that," but, he adds, "We try to keep things in the spirit of that era; we try to capture that vibe," he says. "Bring out the old Marshalls [speakers] and put them on 10."

And put it on disc. *I Got Your Mantra* – Filipiak's seventh CD – is available on Art of Life Records, a label he says gives him the freedom he relishes.

"The cool thing about them is that I can do whatever I want. There aren't many places you can do that."

The disc opens with a

**"Unless you're doing something different, don't do it."**

Carl Filipiak

Visit [dundalkeagle.com](http://dundalkeagle.com)  
to read more.

cover of the Beatles' "A Day in the Life" that compares favorably with George Benson's interpretation of the Jefferson Airplane classic "White Rabbit," and also features Filipiak's psychedelic take on Hendrix's "Bold as Love."

The remaining eight tracks are originals, including two that are clearly Hendrix-inspired: "Into the Sea," a soulful cut that references "1983 ... (A Merman I Should Turn To Be)" from Electric Ladyland and "Hey Jimi (Slight Return)," the title of which mirrors the Hendrix classic "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)" and echoes Hendrix's signature sound.

The rhapsodic title

■ Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not represent the opinion of *The Dundalk Eagle* or Kimbel Publication Inc. You can contact *Eagle* editor Steve Matrazzo via e-mail at [editor@dundalkeagle.net](mailto:editor@dundalkeagle.net).