Marian Mcpartland's Piano Jazz With Norah Jones (2003)

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Norah Jones - piano, vocals Marian McPartland – piano

Marian McPartland, who died on Tuesday at 95, was an erudite jazz pianist whose career stretched back to the heyday of 52nd Street. But she will be best remembered for “Marian McPartland’s Piano Jazz,” the public radio show she hosted for more than 30 years, featuring duets and conversation with an array of musicians. Some of those guests, like Eubie Blake, were her elders, others her accomplished peers. And some grew up listening to the show. That was the case for Norah Jones, who was an aspiring jazz pianist in Texas before she moved to New York and made her name as a singer-songwriter.

Ms. Jones, 34, first appeared on “Piano Jazz” shortly after releasing her debut album, “Come Away With Me” (Blue Note), which earned eight Grammy Awards. “It made me happy because I had listened to Marian for so long,” she said. “My mom and her ended up becoming friends, writing letters for the last 10 years.”

Speaking by phone from her apartment in Brooklyn, Ms. Jones reflected on both Ms. McPartland and the show. Here are some excerpts:

FIRST LISTEN My first exposure to Marian McPartland actually wasn’t through “Piano Jazz.” When I was 14 or 15, my mom took me to a free concert in Dallas with Marian and her trio. I was already into jazz and going to a performing arts school. But up until then I hadn’t seen a lot of women perform jazz, certainly no women instrumentalists. And to see this lady who was my grandmother’s age up there, playing with a piano trio, was just the coolest thing I’d ever seen.

I went to school that week, and I had a teacher, Kent Ellingson, who had every “Piano Jazz” show on cassette. So I dubbed all the tapes, and listened to almost all of them. ---nytimes.com

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