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## **Award-winning Documentary About Providence-Born Jazz Legend Carol Sloane to Screen at Rhode Island International Film Festival on August 12**

***Film also features her longtime pianist, close friend and 'Providence pal,' the late Mike Renzi***

***As a teenager at North Providence High School, a young Carol Sloane (then Carol Morvan) would get dressed up and sneak into the city's famed Celebrity Club where she would intently listen to the world's finest jazz artists onstage. She also spent many hours at the record shop next door, where store owner Carl Henry ensured she was tuned in to all the latest sounds, while introducing her to many of the outstanding musicians who were playing at the club.***

***Carol made her professional debut with the Ed Drew Orchestra in Providence when she was fourteen-years-old. She was introduced at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1961, became a 1960s regular on The Tonight Show and opened for Oscar Peterson at The Village Vanguard. Throughout her career, she was often compared to Ella Fitzgerald.***

***And she spent most of her life just trying to pay the rent.***

World-renowned singer and Providence native, the late [Carol Sloane](#) is the subject of the new multi-award winning feature-length documentary, [Sloane: A Jazz Singer](#). On Saturday, August 12, the documentary will have its New England premiere as an official selection of the Rhode Island International Film Festival, screening at the Showcase Cinema in Providence at 4:00pm.

*Sloane: A Jazz Singer*, directed by Michael Lippert, was awarded Best Documentary at its world premiere at the Santa Fe Film Festival in February. The premiere came only thirty days after Carol Sloane passed away on January 23 near Boston due to long-term complications from a stroke.

The film was also jury-awarded Best Documentary Feature at the Buffalo Roots Film Festival in Rome, Italy and at the Manhattan International Film Festival in New York City in June. Other juried-festival screenings have included La Femme Independent Film Festival in Cannes, the Nepal-America International Film Festival in Maryland, the Cinequest festival in San Jose, CA plus festivals in Orlando, FL, Louisville, KY and Winston-Salem, NC. Upcoming screenings include festivals in Richmond, VA, New York, NY and Newburyport, MA.

*Sloane: A Jazz Singer* follows an 82-year-old Carol Sloane in September 2019 in the days leading up to her final live album recording at Birdland Jazz Club in New York City. In revealing interviews and through fascinating archival footage, the film shares reflections on her storied but largely unknown career involving everyone from Ella Fitzgerald to The Rolling Stones.

Inspired as a teen by the great Black singers of the day like Carmen McRae and Sarah Vaughan, whom she heard on late night radio performing standards at NYC clubs like Birdland, Sloane later became an overnight sensation herself in the 1960s after stunning crowds with an a cappella performance at The Newport Jazz Festival, where she landed a two-record deal with Columbia. The film reveals, however, that her star faded almost as quickly as it formed, particularly when Rock's British Invasion swept popular culture and rendered her professionally obsolete and often penniless. Despite singing and touring the world with everyone from Oscar Peterson to Ella Fitzgerald, offering advice to an unknown Barbra Streisand, impressing luminaries like Johnny Carson and Richard Pryor, and recording over 30 albums, she never received one cent in royalties, and is still barely known among the public at large.

The 90-minute documentary investigates how such a staggering talent, once called "Fitzgerald's rightful heir" by The New York Times, could go so underappreciated, while also exploring the meaning of success in a world where "art don't pay," as the artist herself contends. Through a decades-spanning narrative of rare archival footage, intimate and sometimes tearful moments with Sloane, as well as enlightening commentary from industry notables, we learn of this singular artist's faithful adherence to her craft, despite ever-mounting trials. As she sings in one of her popular tunes by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, "I never went away."

Director Lippert follows Sloane's tumultuous career through years of ups and downs from one-room apartments in Greenwich Village, to a career 'second act' in North Carolina, to major popularity in Japan, only to find endless dead ends and financial strife

around nearly every corner. As longtime friend and producer Stephen Barefoot puts it in the film, “That’s just the story of her life: the ups and downs ... and the downs go very far.”

She was always an after-thought. Critics would frequently comment when speaking about the major female vocal jazz legends of the time, “And then, there’s Carol Sloane.”

The film never loses focus of Sloane’s iron will to keep pursuing her passion, to “always leave the door a little open,” as viewers hear her sing. Her place in jazz legacy is illuminated by commentaries from multi-Grammy winning editor/writer Dan Morgenstern, Grammy-winning singer Catherine Russell, Emmy-winning composer and musician - the late Mike Renzi, Grammy-winning pianist Bill Charlap, Duke University Vice-Provost for the Arts John Brown, Emmy-winning recording engineer Joel Moss, plus notables John McDaniel, Natalie Douglas, Rhode Island native Daryl Sherman and others. Together, they reveal to us a flawed but inspiring woman determined to not only stick to her art, but to keep it alive for future generations.

Captured just prior to the 2020 pandemic, the film’s reminder of the social and cultural importance of live jazz, its venues and the preservation of its history, proves especially timely. During the film, Carol recalls “walking the earth when all the hierarchy of jazz were alive,” and she would perform and attend at all the famous clubs on 52nd Street. “I was surrounded by it and it was so healthy. And then suddenly, it was gone.”

Carol’s 2019 performance at New York City’s Birdland is the major climactic moment of the film.

“Everyone knows about Birdland, around the world,” Birdland owner Gino Valenti says in the film. Knowing Birdland’s special historic significance, Lippert wanted to capture Carol’s performance without getting in the way.

“The real joy is seeing just how Sloane defies all preconceived notions about old age, walks up there with an aching back and an incessant film crew following her, and still knocks it out of the park,” Lippert comments. “The young woman who blew everyone away in the 60s is still in there, totally intact, just a little wiser and sassier now.”

Carol’s last live performance was at NC’s Clayton Center in October 2019, billed as “Two for the Road, with her longtime friend and pianist Mike Renzi. The pandemic soon brought performance opportunities to a halt around the globe.

Two-and-a-half years after her Birdland performance was filmed and recorded, “Carol Sloane: Live at Birdland” was released in April 2022 by Club 44 Records. It would become Sloane’s final album.

In June 2020, Carol Sloane suffered a stroke and lived in a nursing facility near Boston until her death, only days before the film’s official world premiere in Santa Fe. Mike Renzi, Carol’s longtime musical director with her at the Birdland engagement, passed away in September of 2021. Before she died, Miss Sloane was able to view a close-to-final cut of the film, gave it her blessing and asked that it be dedicated to Mike Renzi. Both Sloane and Renzi are inductees into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame.

As a testament to Carol's lasting impression on peers and critics, memorial tributes soon poured in, following her death, from [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The Boston Globe](#) and others.

"She's a part of America's cultural history, and this story aims to find her a rightful seat in the pantheon of legends of jazz and the Great American Songbook," Lippert says.

Reviews for the film have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Jazz writer Joe Vanderford recently said the film is "a proper couplet to the renowned 20 Feet from Stardom. This film needs to be seen by everyone who loves music – and those who understand the challenges of growing up and growing old..." The film was also called "an invaluable gift" by the [New York City Jazz Record](#), and [Boston Jazz Chronicles](#) said "the true summa to [Carol's] sixty-year career is Michael Lippert's documentary, [Sloane: A Jazz Singer](#)."

Members of the producing team for Sloane: A Jazz Singer are filmmaker/director/editor Michael Lippert, arts and patent attorney L. Taylor Arnold of Raleigh, Emmy-winning partners of Carrboro North Carolina's Minnow Media, Donna Campbell and Georgann Eubanks, and Stephen Barefoot, former proprietor of Stephen's, After All in Chapel Hill. Original scoring for the documentary is by renowned jazz vibraphonist and pianist, Christian Tamburr, with cinematography by Donald Monroe.

***"If Carol Sloane isn't America's greatest living jazz singer, then no one deserves the title." - Matt Schudel, The Washington Post***

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#### SLOANE: A JAZZ SINGER

- To learn more about the film, please visit [sloanefilm.com](http://sloanefilm.com)
- Background, fundraising campaign, media resources: <https://www.goingbarefoot.com/sloane-documentary.php>
- View trailer: <https://vimeo.com/655496596>
- For tickets/ info on the Rhode Island International Film Festival, visit: <http://www.film-festival.org/>