

• Andy Kahn Protects the Classics

Andy Kahn left music producing when disco faded, but he never stopped playing jazz. Saturday he plays A.C.'s Ocean Club Condominiums.

By Mike Pritchard

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Andy Kahn plays the Ocean Club Aug. 29.

Andy Kahn, a veteran of the music business who produced a No. 1 dance hit "Hot Shot" in the 70s disco era, is on a mission. At a time when the Internet and other technologies have created a new wave of interest and nostalgia in classic music, Kahn sees himself on the front lines of a battle to keep the songs he loves alive. But the audience for his Aug. 29 concert at the Ocean Club Condominiums won't hear much of the disco he produced for dynamic performer Karen Young who sang "Hot Shot." Instead they will hear Kahn's take on the jazz stylings of Gershwin, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers and other jazz greats. "I think that with all that's going on in the world and the way we are so connected through the Internet and so on, there is a real desire from people to reconnect with quality," Kahn tells Atlantic City Weekly in a telephone interview. "You see it all the time these days, for example with young audiences connecting with Tony Bennett. And I think I'm a lieutenant out there trying to keep the songs I love alive and introduce them to new audiences. If we don't go out and play these songs for people who never heard them before, they would die." And there may be no better example than Kahn's recent experiences with "Hot Shot." The song, originally a hit and No. 1 dance track in 1978, lived again in 2007 when Kahn released a remix which Young's vocals, but new musical arrangements. The song cracked the top 10 on the dance club charts. "I was on a mediterranean cruise in about 2005, and I noticed that the DJs on the cruise were playing all these songs from the 70s," Kahn says. "I'm a big believer in the idea that everything comes around again and I turned to my partner and I said 'You know, I should do a remix of "Hot Shot."' And he said "You should." "They told me that was one of the only times a deceased disco artist (Young passed in 1991) had ever made the top 10," Kahn says. "Or at least its unheard of." Kahn also released a previously unheard song he had sort of half-produced with Young in the 70s called "Rendezvous With Me." Kahn still had the vocals and horn tracks, added some arrangements and released it. Again the song charted on the club dance charts. "It's been very exciting to remember those days and bring this back," he says. "Karen was one of the shyest and even one of the most insecure people I've ever known, but on stage it was just the opposite. This volcano erupted and she was just amazing to watch." Still Kahn had a falling out with Young and then left the music business to focus on his family's paint and decorating business. But he never stopped performing, doing occasional appearances each year for charities and organizations he supports. A long time condo owner at the Ocean Club, he started giving Labor Day performances with his jazz trio at the Ocean Club in the early 90s, stopping about five years ago. "People just kind of got tired of it," he says. "And I got tired of it. But after five years or so, I think its time to bring it back." This time Kahn will perform solo, without his trio. But Kahn knows he has plenty of material to hold an audience. "I love telling the stories associated with these songs," he says. When you talk about songs from guys like Gershwin and Porter, there are just so many stories and anecdotes that go with them. I did this recently in Maine (in support of a local museum) and people wouldn't let me off the stage. They love the stories and they love the songs. Like I said, people are reconnecting with quality."

Andy Kahn performs at 10pm in the 6th Floor Green Room at the Ocean Club Condominiums, 3100 Boardwalk, Atlantic City. A dessert reception at 8:30pm (\$10) precedes the concert. Call 345-4800 for information.