

Jazz Insights: The Downbeats

The Downbeats were a group of young high school musicians that formed a quartet that was to play local school dances, featuring upbeat music of the times. These young performers were in the graduating Class of 1957 at Pawtucket West High School, where they excelled in the school band and orchestra.

They chose jazz standards and dance favorites of that era in their performances. As a group they began playing parties, private events and a variety of local competitions.

Featured was **Fred Dupuis**, a gifted pianist, who after graduating Brown University, went on to play local clubs and lounges. His skills remain even today. The reed section was handled by **Sumner Fishbein**, who later became a Doctor of Optometry in Augusta, Georgia. He continued with his skills in the Augusta Symphony Orchestra. **Jerry Schwartz** was the long-time drummer, who later went on to New York. The horn section featured **John Gaskill** and **Burt Jagolinzer**. Collectively, they performed several years around the state, offering excellent music for dancing and socializing. John Gaskill became a gifted and sought-after trumpet soloist, and a successful local business man. Burt Jagolinzer became a lead trumpet in the U.S. Army band at Fort Dix in New Jersey. Later, he received a Doctorate in Jazzology, and is today a jazz critic, author and columnist behind Jazz Insights.