

## Paul Serrato Biography: The Early Years

Paul Serrato's talents as a performer/composer and pianist/arranger, as well as his experience leading groups, have seen him at work in all major New York clubs: The Red Parrot, Inner Circle, S.N. A.F. U., Copacabana, The Ballroom, Freddy's Supper Club, Les Mouches, and The Pyramid Club. In the Citicorp Building, audiences at St. Peter's Church have heard Paul's music as its renowned Jazz Vespers on several occasions.

Off-Broadway, Paul has composed the musical scores for many shows. Of **Lucky Wonderful, Show Business** found "tunes memorable enough for later recall...well-played by Serrato and the band." Of **Vain Victory**, a musical with a score by Serrato, John Lennon enthusiastically declared, "One of the best musicals I've seen," and Emory Lewis found that score to be one of "enormous style." Paul's musical numbers for this production were prominently featured in the PBS-TV series of the Louds: **An American Family**.

A film blending realism and fantasy, **THERE IS NO 13**, starring Ron Kelly and Harvey Lembeck, opened with a Busby Berkeley-type production number for which Serrato wrote the music and lyrics (and also was seen playing the piano). Of the screening at the **24<sup>th</sup> Berlin Film Festival**(1974), **Die Welt** wrote, "...a remarkable American fantasy film...a stirring anti-war film... one is often reminded of Fellini's 8 1/2."

Serrato provided the score for a musical farce, **Feudal Follies**, presented at **Reno Sweeney**, the fabled club of the '70s. He was also seen there as a frequent performer. This vehicle was later done in special performance at the **Public Theatre**.

A song cycle for soprano, **Coney Island of the Resigned**, with both text and music by Serrato was performed in recital in 1981 at Christ and St. Stephen's Church on West 69<sup>th</sup> Street in New York. This song quartet ranged in expression from poignant lyricism to surreal sprechstimme.

In 1982 he was commissioned to compose a score for the highly evocative trilogy, **Cityscapes 3** by Melba LaRose, presented off-Broadway at the **Chapel Theatre** in Chelsea. As a special event for the intermission, he created a fifteen-minute work of "found sound" (as he termed it), or "musique concrete," entitled **Broadway Electronic**, a sound image of urban surrealism. Both the music for the plays and **Broadway Electronic** proved to be highlights of the production during the four-week engagement.

Paul and his band, **Declining Income**, had the distinction of being the "band in residence" on the Staten Island Ferry, the Cornelius Ryan, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1983. The occasion was the extravagant holiday event staged on-board that afternoon by the Maritime Commission, and by poet Cynthia Nibblemink and her **Commotion Poets**, titled, appropriately, **Commotion on the Ferry**. On that day Paul had the unique distinction of being the only person who has ever played a piano on the Staten Island Ferry! This event was well-covered by the media.