

# Math teacher doubles on jazz guitar

BY ROBERT HICKS

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

Hackettstown jazz guitarist B.D. Lenz, 35, divides his time between teaching math at Lenape Valley Regional High School in Stanhope and pursuing his music career.

"Music is basically mathematical. It's based on patterns and relationships. I think somebody with an aptitude for mathematics is naturally going to have an aptitude for music theory. You might not necessarily be a great musician, but the logic behind them is the same," he said.

Lenz's trio, including bassist Kermitt Driscoll and Sparta drummer Karl Latham, will perform at the Walpack Inn in Walpack Center in Sussex County on Friday.

"We'll play a mix of my stuff, standards, Karl's stuff. This particular gig is pretty democratic," Lenz said.

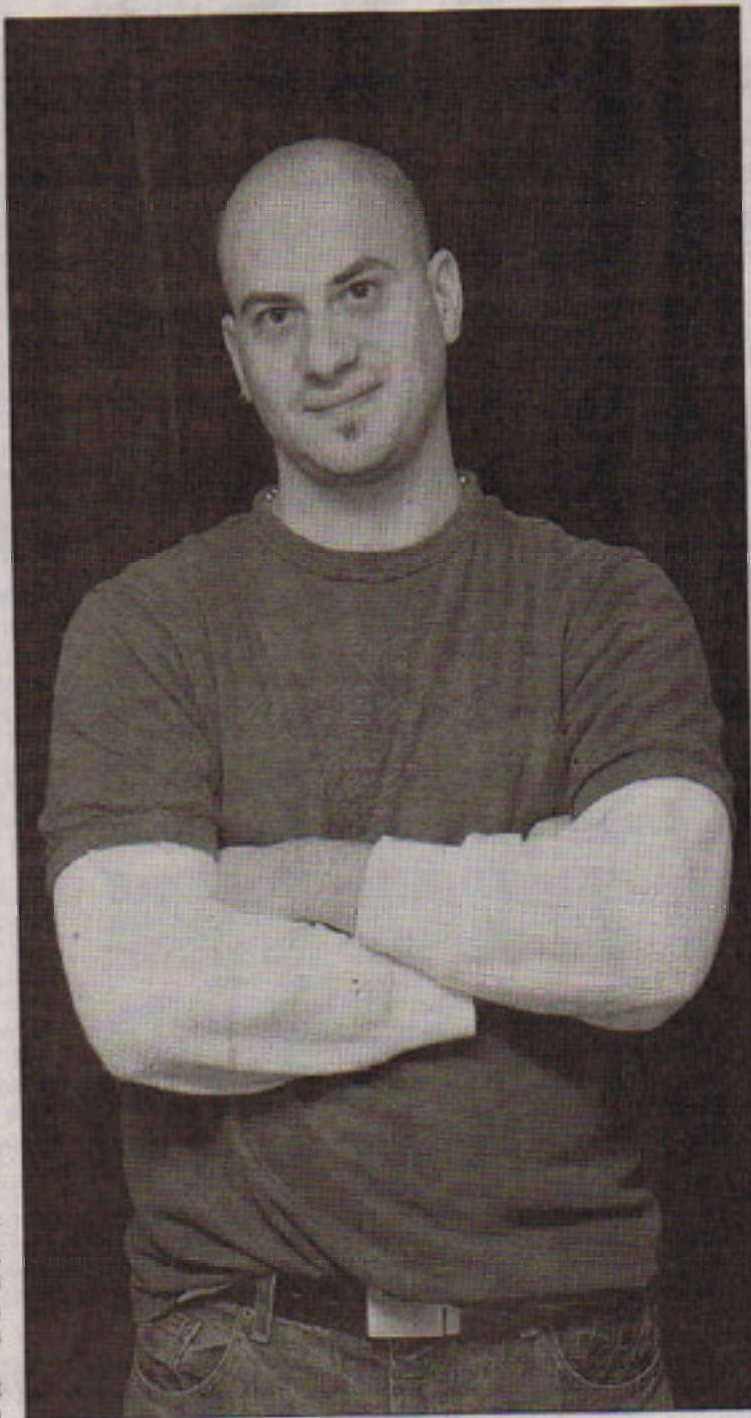
Lenz is performing in support of his new CD, "Straight Up," on Apria Records. The recording departs from his more fully arranged earlier efforts. The sound is stripped down with the aim of providing music that can easily transfer from the recording studio to a live stage performance.

Lenz wrote 10 of the 11 instrumental tracks on the CD, which was recorded at Skyline Studios in Warren.

"I basically took a quartet into the studio and we played it all live," he said.

The core quartet for the new CD includes Lenz, keyboardist Joe Ashlar, bassist James Rosocha and drummer Tom Cottone. Latham plays drums on two compositions.

Lenz, who grew up in West Milford, played saxophone in school and took up guitar at age 14 with aims of becoming a rock star. After graduating from West Milford High School in 1989, he



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## B.D. Lenz Trio

Friday from 8 to 10 p.m.  
The Walpack Inn  
Route 615, Walpack  
Center  
\$4 cover  
Call (973) 948-3890

left his home state to pursue a one-year music program at Musician's Institute in Hollywood.

"West Milford was a beautiful place to grow up. It's pretty rural. It's in the woods. I had a great childhood growing up there," he said.

"On the other hand, I was kind of sheltered musically. I didn't hear a lot of different music until I got out of there. I just wanted to throw myself into a totally new environment at the Musician's Institute," he said.

He returned to New Jersey, taking private music lessons from jazz guitarists Vic Juris and Mike Stern and pianist Charlie Banacos while studying at Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) where he received a bachelor's degree in math education (with a music minor) in 1995.

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Known for his melodic jazz funk, Lenz has led his own jazz group for the past 14 years. As a leader, he has released five recordings: "Tell the World" (1997), "Lost and Found" (2000), "Simple Life" (2003), "Tomorrow's Too Late" (2005) and "Straight Up" (June 2007).

"I find myself, as much as I love improvised music, getting bored with empty jamming," he said. "I want to hear a good song."