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Attention Jazz Lovers: Roberta Piket Trio Coming to South Pas Saturday Night

The Roberta Piket Trio returns to California with a performance at the South Pasadena Music Center and Conservatory on Oct. 16.

By [Devra Hall Levy](#) | [Email the author](#) |

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Roberta Piket has been waiting for my long distance call while simultaneously waiting for a parking spot to open up. Of course, both events happen at once and I agree to hold on while she maneuvers her car into a tight spot on 20th Street in New York City.

The nomadic life of a jazz pianist and composer has its up and down sides, the downside being the constant commute between her home in Teaneck, NJ, and the myriad rehearsals and gigs in New York City and beyond. The upside is the exposure to different peoples and places.

This infusion of sound and experience is the life-blood of a forward-thinking artist. Piket is juggling a bunch of appointments and rehearsals before an evening gig that is a tribute to John Coltrane, but she's also excited about her upcoming West Coast tour that will bring her to the [South Pasadena Music Center and Conservatory](#) for an 8 p.m. concert on Saturday, Oct. 16.

A New York native, Piket is known in major venues such as New York City's Birdland and Blue Note jazz clubs, Dizzy's at Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center in Washington. With her trio she has toured Japan and Spain, but it's been a few years since her California-based fans have heard her live.

Her musical style defies genre categories as she's lauded equally for her straight-ahead chops and her full-throttle forays into free jazz. Her eclecticism may be a marketing challenge, but, as she says, "It's not about making a living, it's about making music."

She adds: "I do think about my career but I never let that concern interfere with what I do musically. There are some listeners who have an agenda about what they want to hear--'free jazz is the only creative music,' and others think 'free is a farce.' Those who are rigid will be confused by me, but music is music." This is a philosophy that she shares both in word and action when conducting clinics and master classes.

Whether leading her own trio or as a sidewoman with jazz stars as diverse as David Liebman, Lionel Hampton and Benny Golson, Piket goes where the music wants to go. "I explore the musical paths that excite me. If I did anything less, then the music would be less," she says.

Sides, Colors is the title of Piket's seventh CD as a leader, but she says it's a first for her in many ways. As always, the selections are a mix of free and straight-ahead compositions, but this time she has augmented her trio with a string quartet and woodwinds for added aural color and dimension. On this album, she makes her second vocal debut and plays the organ on a few tracks.

Billy Mintz--her drummer, partner and collaborator, who will be with her on this West Coast tour--has also worked with an array of major talent, including Lee Konitz, Eddie Daniels, Mose Allison, Mark Murphy, Bobby Shew, Charles Lloyd and Alan Broadbent. They will be joined by acoustic bassist Jeff D'Angelo, who moved to Los Angeles in 1981 to work with Doc Severinsen.

Opening for Piket's Trio at the South Pasadena concert will be a [unique jazz and poetry performance, billed as *Call & Response*](#), with poet Dottie Grossman, trombonist Michael Pierre Vlatkovich and percussionist Christopher Garcia.

In addition to the South Pasadena show, the trio will play seven other California concerts ranging from San Diego to Sacramento. "This tour might be a money-loser but we love the music and want to bring it to people," Piket says.

More information about what Piket calls her "scrappy survival tour" can be found in her [website](#).

Roberta Piket Trio, Saturday, Oct. 16, 8 p.m.-10 p.m., [South Pasadena Music Center and Conservatory](#), 1509 Mission St., South Pasadena

<http://southpasadena.patch.com/articles/attention-jazz-lovers-roberta-piket-trio-coming-to-south-pas>