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CAFFE VIVALDI TO CLOSE ITS DOORS

By Van Tieu | June 22, 2018 @11:13 PM

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Each note, a bittersweet bid farewell to a refuge musicians and artists across the globe call a second home.

"The idea was to make it a haven of young musicians, and they came," said owner Ishrat Ansari.

Ansari, a Pakistani immigrant, opened Caffe Vivaldi at 32 Jones Street 35 years ago, naming it after his favorite composer.

Working seven days a week in the dimly lit salon, he stoked the fireplace and creative minds.

"It wasn't about business. It was more about love and affection," Ansari said.
ALL BOROUGHES

Ansari says he made it his life to give undiscovered talent a space to explore and share their passion in a city where competition for the spotlight can be a soul-crushing gauntlet.

He booked composer Kevin Keller for a weekly gig, who, back then, was a young pianist

"That's pretty unheard of," Keller said. "To be able to perform, like, instrumental neoclassical music that's completely original in a club in New York City, it was pretty unique."

These opportunities: life-changing.

"I was 19. I dropped out of school. I was playing on the street," said performer John Lander. "Ishrat looks for people who he can help, and he makes it a point to try to give them a leg up when he can."

Vivaldi closes its doors Saturday.



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