

# ARTS & CULTURE

# O l i v e r J o n e s



Canadian jazz legend Oliver Jones plays for sold-out crowd

BY AARON RICHMOND

On Wednesday night, Canadian jazz legend Oliver Jones bid a final farewell to a sold out crowd at Dartmouth's Alderney Landing. Cradled by the skill of local bassist Skip Beckwith and drummer Norman Villeneuve, Jones' performance — which marked the conclusion of his retirement tour of the Maritimes — was both dazzling in form and charming in content.

Through wandering improvisations, the trio stretched the

limits of countless jazz classics, and left the crowd at the mercy of their rhythm.

Like any good jazz performance, its success was read in the crowd's submission to the stage, in their weakness to a pantomime groove — a tap in their heels, and a nod of their heads.

However, from within the casual lake-side venue came much more than two sets of great jazz.

The night also offered a short glimpse into the mind of a sixty-five year old pianist, and recollections of his life in music. For the most part, Jones' thoughts on retirement were conveyed with good humor.

Norman Villeneuve, in his first appearance accompanying Jones, was the butt of the evening's jokes, most of which poked fun at the trio's old age.

At one point, Jones called out to him: "Norm, you awake?" and then challenged him to a tune with a little spunk — "something that would make him work" — as Jones put it. Norm replied in full form, with a knock-your-socks off variation of Sonny Rollins "Oleo."

The night also captured a look into the life of Jones as a young boy growing up in Mon-

tréal. He reminisced about being raised under a roof where "boogie woogie" was "the devil's music." Being the "white sheep of the family," Jones found his own ways of sneaking jazz into the classical traditions he and his sisters were taught. He would incorporate classical scales into jazz standards, creating a fusion which is typical of the genius that has carried him so far.

When accepting requests in the second set, Jones demonstrated his lifelong skill at storming down the ivories in a classical rendition of Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek."

Before leaving the crowd with Oscar Peterson's Canadian classic "Hymn to Freedom," Jones imparted a final thanks to all who have supported his career on the road. While many of us wait eagerly for what wonders will emerge from his studio, Jones urged that we continue to support the young talent hidden throughout Canada. How do we find it? By sitting ourselves down at a local bar, and wait for someone like Jones to put that tap in our heels and that groove in our spine. Wait long enough, and we will inevitably find a new rhythm to succumb to.

## Avant garde entertainment

BY DIANE TIBBET

Ever heard of improv? Probably. But musical improv? Doubt that.

This past Friday, the Upstream Music Association presented an evening of improvisation at the du Maurier Theatre.

It was the first duo appearance of performers, Jerry Granelli

on drums and Jeff Reilly on bass clarinet. These incredibly talented musicians explored the power of music and the magic of entertainment while taking advantage of the acoustic setting of the theatre.

With their modern "avant garde" style of jazz music, these two are definitely a new experience. Their stage was set up as a playing field, with very exotic looking sculptures (AKA instruments). As the lights dimmed, Jeff

and Jerry to the stage and introduced themselves and their friend "Sagremides of Venus." She was about 9 feet tall, with several horns and strings protruding from her body. A very fascinating looking instrument, with powerful music making tools. Sagremides was made by John Little, who was inspired after Granelli told him "if you build something, I will play it."

The performance was

delightful and, naturally, unpredictable. Jeff and Jerry had a relationship that allowed them to go with the flow and explore the different facets of music. Their style of playing freely had an enchanting effect and kept the audience interested.

The show was both relaxing and exciting. The musicians took turns performing quiet solos, exploring a very soothing form of music. They also played duets that

were full of surprises. One of the most fascinating aspects of the production was the curiosity of what would come next, and in what style.


This type of musical improv is especially appreciated by those with a deep understanding for music. The duo's ability to create music on-the-spot was impressive, and definitely material for a unique and memorable experience.



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