

Candlelight and Jazz

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

The cozy, candle-lit Commons Room of the Holiday Inn Select was the intimate setting of a concert by jazz pianist John Stetch.

The small room needed no sound system, along with very few electric lights. Stetch sat at a grand piano positioned just off centre on the main floor of the room, the audience at tables on all sides of him. There was an atmosphere similar to that when watching a friend play a few tunes in your living room, rather than watching a performance by one of Canada's best young pianists and composers.

In keeping with the relaxed atmosphere, Stetch spoke candidly to the audience in between pieces, without the aid of a microphone. He shared anecdotes from his tour and his personal life, not to mention demonstrating dance steps

and a few personal Tai Chi exercises.

It was Stetch's first time in Halifax on a solo tour, and he was quick to point out the benefits: "Everyone in the band is always on time, for once we have a matching uniform, and I get all the solos! It's a lot of fun."

Stetch treated the audience to many of his original compositions, along with jazz classics by the likes of Gershwin and Thelonius Monk. He also played some of his contemporary favorites, including Annie Lennox's "Why".

Perhaps the night's most memorable moment came when he played an original piece entitled "Famine Improvisations". It was a dark piece which demonstrated Stetch's amazing talent

better than any other piece that night. The audience was mesmerized as he alternated between playing the keys and plucking the strings, all the while taking advantage of the overtones like no one I'd ever seen.

"Full of surprises and completely unpredictable, he is one of the most compelling musicians to emerge on the jazz scene in many, many years," reads one critic's opinion of Stetch, and I

don't believe I could have put it any better.

Stetch was born in Edmonton, Alberta, and now bases himself out of New York City. He was recently nominated at the Juno Awards for Best Jazz Album for his

Rectangle Man and Carpathian Blues.

The Saturday night concert was one of the last in a nationwide tour promoting his latest CD *Stetching Out*.



Piano guru John Stetch

See Dick.

See Dick run.

Run Dick run!

Dick sees Spot.

Spot sees Dick.

Spot likes Dick.

Spot licks Dick.

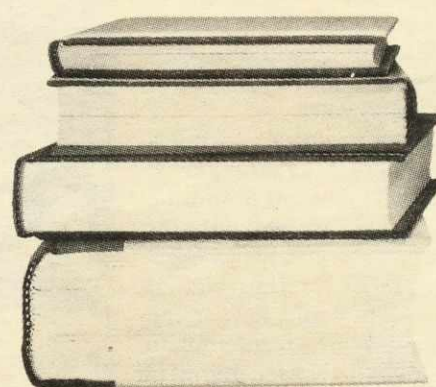
Good Spot, good Spot!

There is a spot for you within the pages of the Gazette Arts Section. Come see John and Andrew at staff meetings — Monday's at 4:30 in room 312 of the SUB.



Careful now spot...

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