

A night of jazz with the Roy Patterson Quartet

BY KATHY REID

On Saturday, November 6, the sweet sounds of jazz were offered by the Roy Patterson Quartet, along with special guest, New York trumpet sensation Ingrid Jensen. The Holiday Inn Select on Robie Street provided a calm atmosphere conducive to the hypnotic sounds.

The Canadian ensemble is currently on tour to promote their fifth CD, *On A Cloud*. Roy Patterson grew up in rural Nova Scotia, but moved to Toronto to fulfil his dreams of musicianship.

Two hours of pure relaxation was apparent on the faces of the many jazz-loving observers. At first, my date and I felt a little out of place — we were the youngest people there — but

soon remembered music speaks to all ages. The absence of a student crowd taking advantage of this blissful jazz experience is somewhat of a surprise.

The members of the band, Roy Patterson (guitar), Brian Dickinson (piano), Jim Vivian (bass) and Jed Warren (drums) all contributed harmony individually to the songs with melodic solos. Warren is exceptionally impressive with his percussive skills, which keep the band in synch with so many varying rhythms. Jensen improvised her way through a number of songs in both sets. Her trumpeting added intensity without absorbing any of the quartet's soul. The evening was a delight, and it is no surprise that the quartet won the coveted Prix du Maurier at the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Incognito Boogie Woogie

BY AARON RICHMOND

On October 29, the Boogie Woogie Piano Festival stormed Heritage Hall in Pier 21. Hosting a myriad of international talents, the show marked the beginning of a Canadian tour, organized by 22 year old pianist Michael Kaeshammer. Kaeshammer, who grew up in Hamburg, Germany, gathered European legend Vince Weber, Alabama's Big Joe Duskin and Canadian Willie MacCalder in a show which sent a sold out crowd into a rhythmical frenzy.

The show exploded in two sets of high energy boogie woogie piano. At first, the crew was introduced in solo performances, revealing the technical mastery and individual styles that have distinguished these artists as their country's best. Michael Kaeshammer opened the evening with two wildly improvised piano classics. In his red suit and black hat, Kaeshammer completed his demonic motif with a playful grin, a mischievous tune, and hands which seemed possessed.

He was followed by his childhood inspiration Vince Weber, who shook the stage, shouting through his thick black mustache, stomping his knee and nodding his shaggy grey dread locks. If not for its musical artistry, Weber's performance gave the satisfaction of watching Einstein play boogie woogie piano.

The highlight of the night came when the four pianists came to the floor and pooled wits in an

improvisational masterpiece. At one point the four successfully rotated seats while awkwardly shifting and squeezing between the two grand pianos on the stage. Then, as though the audience hadn't seen enough, Michael Kaeshammer stood between the two pianos and played both, sending each pianist into whatever rhythm he prescribed.

Before opening the second set, Big Joe Duskin slowed down the pace with a song he created with pianist Pete Johnson, in a session had long ago. Joe remembered creating the song entitled "Incognito," with the intention of assigning no meaning to the word, which he argued, simply spoke for itself. In retrospect, it seems ironic that this word was explored throughout the second set and essentially became the theme of the evening's music.

The second set began with Vince Weber's commentary on the evolution of modern jazz.

Seeing as the evening was an ongoing dialogue between Europe and North America, his words were truly in the spirit of Joe's song Incognito. He explained jazz as a circle and a three part dialogue across the Atlantic Ocean. The process began when the French and Anglo-Saxon troops marched through the southern states, bringing their hymns, songs, and dances to the eyes and ears of the Louisiana slave trade. Within a few years, the 20th century was born and with it came the birth of New Orleans Jazz — or European

music.

The cycle then continued when this "American music" returned to Europe with the troops of both World Wars. By the fifties, the swing era reached the German front. Jazz greats such as Charlie Parker and Benny Goodman became staples in European music. At this stage, North America goes incognito at a Paris jazz club.

Finally, the third stage of this development takes place now in events such as the Boogie Woogie Piano Festival. As Weber announced at Friday's performance, "The final part of this process takes place tonight." With the presentation of two great German pianists, jazz is returned to North America with a new spice — an energy which was so triumphant in both Michael and Vince's performance. Therefore, it is fitting that such a performance be held at the new Heritage Hall at Pier 21, the point of arrival and departure for soldiers and immigrants in the 20th Century. Answering the soldiers who presumably carried jazz to the wars in Europe, Michael and Vince arrived at the same port to once again return the favor to musicians such as Willie and Joe, and a crowd of Canadians.

When eight hands of piano genius probed every ivory in Pier 21, it was not merely two sets of great improvised music. Along with the boogie woogie piano came a brief history of jazz and a century of change delivered incognito.

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