



Buskers. Apparently not a word in the vocabulary of Frederictonians. Thanks to all who had the nerve and the talent.



JazFX. C'mon guys, slow down, I gotta catch my breath here.



The Cosmic Quartet
National Exhibition Centre
Thursday, September 12, 1991
Review by Luis Cardoso

The Cosmic Quartet has undoubtedly been, and continues to be, Fredericton's most successful jazz export. Their repertoire of jazz standards and fascinating original compositions has entertained audiences both in Fredericton and other major Canadian centres.

The Cosmic Quartet, as jazz combos tend to do, has featured a number of exceptional musicians over the years. The band that wowed a small but appreciative audience at the National Exhibition Centre featured Geordie Haley on guitar, Lloyd Hanson on bass, Eric Bourque on soprano and alto saxophones, and Brian Mitton on drums.

The venue was ideal. The National Exhibition

Centre is a warm room that enveloped the Quartet in a soft light. It is a small room (thus the small audience), and even from the balcony where I sat the setting was intimate. The facial contortions which were advertised on the posters for the show did not disappoint and could be seen anywhere in the house. The band seemed as relaxed as the audience in this cozy environment; the amusing between-song banter and deliberations over the next selection

served to cement the bond between performer and viewer.

The band played among an exhibit of photographs by James Wilson entitled *Visions in a Rainforest* and paintings by Brian LaSaga. The lush photographs surrounding the performers and audience were a perfect counterpoint to the very cool strains happening on stage.

Sprinkled generously amongst jazz standards

by Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis like raisins in a box of Kellogg's Raisin Bran were a generous helping of original compositions. Geordie Haley's *Simple Tune* and *The Irving Two Step* were frantic explorations that forefronted some of the show's finest guitar playing. The audience seemed particularly appreciative of the virtuosity demonstrated on *Simple Tune*.

Lloyd Hanson's original pieces, *Ballad* and

Gotcha Now, were intense and ironic and quirky as the best of Hanson's music often is. Bourque's compositions, *Demented Snowflakes* and *One Thirty-Eight* rounded out the show's original selections.

Their renditions of jazz standards were also impeccable and exciting. The Quartet brings its own quirky personality to their covers of some of the most interesting work by Parker, Coltrane, and Davis. A nice selection.

The Quartet is not only impressive to listen to but also to behold. This combo is as charismatic as a fusing of very different personas. Haley's elegant appearance and guitar playing is a study in contrast to his Ibanez hollow-body jazz guitar and his funky black Telecaster stands in opposition to Hanson's intimidating and impressive stature and the sheer presence of his six-string fretless electric bass. Eric Bourque stands solemnly between the two of them, the odd smile brought to his face as Hanson throws in witty and sarcastic remarks while Haley addresses the audience. Brian Mitton rides shotgun behind the goings on upstage; he alternates between hypnotic brush work and sharp, crisp hat and snare.

Not being a jazz aficionado or expert by any stretch of the imagination, I thoroughly enjoyed the Quartet. I must add that this is my favourite (per)mutation of the Quartet. For those who want to see more, look for the Cosmic Quartet among this year's First Night festivities.