

Arts & Entertainment

If this is Thursday, there must be jazz

Analysis by Carrie Ahrens

The sounds of the Lincoln Jazz Society, heard at McGuffey's every Thursday, serves as an introduction to popular jazz culture.

It has become a tradition. In the northwest corner of McGuffey's, 1042 P St., is a stage that livens Lincoln into a jazz-lover's paradise each Thursday night. There are students, professors, businessmen and mechanics; the dress varies from greasy jeans to three-piece suits.

Dim lights, a low haze, bar stools, booths and tables fill McGuffey's. The clientele doesn't come for the beer, though — not on Thursday night. The customers come for the music.

Jazz fans are swept away to New Orleans and the musical mood of the early 20th century. Toes tap, conversation flows, laughter abounds.

Guided by a common body of tunes, the Lincoln Jazz Society has assembled for the past three years at McGuffey's Lounge.

The four current regulars of the band are Tom Larson, piano; Ed Love, saxophone; Rusty White, bass; and Joe Gourlay, drums. The original Jazz Society was started by Jack Hart in late 1977. When he moved to New York, the organization slowly dissolved. The Jazz Society reorganized in 1981.

Between sets, Love discussed the free style of the jazz form used in the band.

"We rely a lot on our intuition among ourselves," he said. "We are frequently successful. In jazz, there is an element of danger." He said sometimes one player starts playing and the others slowly join in. Other times, they don't play a song, they just perform a free style of nameless music.

Some of the composers represented in the Society's repertoire include Thelonious Monk, Tom Larson, Cole Porter and George Gershwin. The Society plays some of the old 1930 jazz standards as well as present day jazz expressions.

The Jazz Society members do not play exclusively with the Society. Love and Larson are members of the Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra — Love is the leader. White is a professor of jazz studies at UNL. Gourlay plays with several other bands. Eventually, he wants to leave Lincoln and go to an area where jazz is more popular.

The Jazz Society has the unusual policy of letting walk-ons play with the band. Anyone is welcome to play.

Many of those who do walk on are UNL students or professional musicians from Lincoln. Knowledge of jazz sounds and keys and an ability to improvise are expected.

Larson said it occasionally is annoying to work with walk-ons. "There have been guitar players who can't tune a guitar, and drummers who can't even keep beat. But not very often."

When the first Lincoln Jazz Society dissolved several years ago, the band decided to have a contest to select a new name for the group. Ted Eschliman, easily recognized as a devoted fan, submitted the winning name, Sax Without Guilt. Nevertheless, the group elected to keep Lincoln Jazz Society as its moniker.

Occasionally, something unusual happens during the Society's weekly appearance. Larson said there is a man who has come into McGuffey's to listen to them several times. The man sits in a chair adjacent to the small stage, where he screams and sings strangely. Although somewhat humorous, the distraction can annoy the musicians.

Eschliman, a UNL graduate student and piano walk-on for the Jazz Society, explained why he keeps coming back to hear the jazz musicians.

"I learn so much from listening to these guys," he said. You have to hear jazz. It is a laboratory situation. You learn it from playing it and listening to it." Eschliman has come to McGuffey's every Thursday night for almost a year.

There is something different about



Ted Kauf/Daily Nebraskan

Ed Love of the Lincoln Jazz Society.

the crowd that walks in the double doors of McGuffey's on jazz night. "The Jazz Society brings in an academic crowd — a lot of professors said students," said McGuffey's manager, Jan McGrath.

"You get to know the Thursday night crowd," said UNL senior Cindy Greiss, a waitress at the bar.

One of the Society's biggest fans is Terry Maher, a visiting professor in the School of Music. Maher said he comes to McGuffey's every week, and has

missed only once since he arrived in Nebraska last August. One of the first things he did when he got to town, he said, was ask where jazz music was played live in Lincoln.

"I've always been involved in jazz; it has always been part of my musical life," he said.

Andrew Chisholm, a UNL student from Lincoln, summed up the feeling many have for the Jazz Society.

"It is simply a chance to hear an excellent live jazz ensemble," he said.

HOTSPOTS

Television

• If you loved them in *Two of a Kind*, you probably loved them in *Grease* first. The 1978 John Travolta/Olivia Newton-John film airs tonight on Channel 7 at 7 p.m. Although critics generally razzed this film, it went on to be one of the all-time box office champions.

• For fans of slightly more dignified television, tonight's episode of *Hill Street Blues* (9 p.m., Channel 3) deals with the death of Sgt. Phil Esterhaus. Although *Hill Street* has killed off literally hundreds of characters since its inception three years ago, this is the first time mortality has affected a lead character. The move was necessitated by the death of Michael Conrad, who portrayed Esterhaus.

Radio

• William Smith is the guest conductor on tonight's edition of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Selections include two of Beethoven's compositions, "Overture from The Hebrides" and "Piano Concerto No. 3" and Ives' "Symphony No. 2." Pianist Jeffrey Siegel is guest soloist.

At the Sheldon

• The first Sheldon Video Showcase of the semester features Canadian filmmaker Ron Mann. Mann's specialty is capturing musical artists in action. Today's offering, *Imagine the Sound*, chronicles the performances of jazz musicians Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp, Bill Cixon and Paul Bley. Shows are at 1 and 7:30 p.m. Mann will be present at the evening screening. Admission is \$3.

Around Town

• No, it's not Boy George, it's Fred Boye, a local acoustic musician, who will be appearing tonight at the Ninth Street Chili Bar, 901 O St. There's no cover charge to see Boye, and the show coincides with Ninth Street's weekly 75 cent Moosehead night.

• Long-time Lincoln favorite The Star City Players open up a three-night stand at Judges, 2650 Cornhusker Highway. There's a \$2 cover charge.

Desserts 222: spectre of immorality

There is something somehow immoral about a restaurant that serves only dessert.

After interviewing Jan Deshayes and Geary Buckwalter, though, I thought a trip to Desserts 222, 222 S. 13th St., would be a culinary adventure, rather than an orgiastic pig-out.

Deshayes and Buckwalter both used to sell baked goods from their homes. They met through a mutual



Chris Welsch

acquaintance, and the idea for Desserts 222 was born.

The partners opened the restaurant Dec. 5, and according to both owners, Desserts 222 has been a success.

Judging by the size of the number of people filling the small dining room Tuesday night, it has been.

Three intrepid Daily Nebraskan researchers braved the onslaught of fudge pie, chocolate marbled cheesecake and almond torte and came away fat and happy.

We sat down at one of the several glass-covered tables after Buckwalter had taken our coats. Although the atmosphere at Desserts 222 is generally formal, Buckwalter said casual diners are welcome. We took a hard fall into the latter category.

After briefly perusing the menu we ordered coffee. I had the Vienna roast, and my comrades had Hawaiian Kona. Each person got a two-cup pot of coffee. The Kona was \$1.05 per pot, the Vienna roast 90 cents.

The waiter then brought the dessert tray, so we could see what the menu offered.

The fudge pie was richer than J. Paul Getty. The cheesecake, complete with a chocolate dorsal fin, was fluffier than most cheesecakes and was good enough that I didn't breathe until it was all gone.

The chocolate almond torte tasted as if it had a nip of brandy in it; and Caleb, one of the intrepid three, ate it in 17 seconds.

After those few moments of intense concentration on our food, we sipped at the first-rate coffee and discussed etiquette.

Dessert 222 is elegant, the desserts are par excellence, the atmosphere is pleasant, and the prices, logically, are high.

But not unreasonable. Our coffees and desserts cost us \$10.07. We did have a good time; and we did gain weight.

Earlier, as we ate, the spectre of immorality appeared. Five rotund women stopped to peer through the window at the delicacies that lay inside. Desserts are good, but they can make you fat. That's a consumer warning. Disregard it if you don't care.

As we left we couldn't help but take one parting look at those cakes and pies in the window. Immorality at its best.

Cards & Letters

Change festival name

I found Walpurgisnacht to be better than ever this year. The acts were excellent and everyone seemed to have a great time.

I have only one complaint. Can the name of the festival be changed? By definition, hundreds of UNL students just attended a "witch's demonic orgy in the mountains." I had a good time, but it wasn't a demonic orgy, was it? As the pamphlet said, UPC brought Walpurgisnacht out of the mountains and across the sea to Nebraska Union.

I'd feel a lot better if UPC could bring us "January Fest," "wintertainment" or "Fun Night, U.S.A." rather than evil revelry. But keep the programming. It was superb.

Ed Kacsmarek
junior
geology/geography