

A WHOLE LOT OF JAZZ GOING ON ...



Woodwind artist Tim Eyermann will perform Saturday night

UNC's 15th annual festival brings you all that jazz

JENNI SPITZ
Staff Writer

Spring is still weeks away, but the temperature in Chapel Hill will be on the rise this weekend. The town is heating up with four days of classical jazz, beginning today. As celebrity jazz artists, like Terence Blanchard, Rick Lillard and Tim Eyermann arrive for the weekend, UNC's own jazz bands will also be sending up some of their local steam.

The 15th Annual Jazz Festival will run from Feb. 20-23, and will include a series of concerts by bands from local colleges, area high schools, guest performers, and the UNC Jazz Band and Jazz Lab Band.

On opening night, the festival will begin with a program entitled "Jazz Sessions with UNC." The show, which starts at 8 p.m. in the Carolina Union Cabaret, will feature instrumental and vocal jazz students of UNC, and, take note, it's free. Thursday night is sponsored by the Carolina Union Activities Board, which has worked closely with the Department of Music to coordinate the Jazz Festival.

Jennifer Werner, chairwoman of the Union committee in charge of

Thursday's performance, expects opening night to be an eye-opener for those interested in jazz, and they're working to set the mood for the weekend. "We're shooting for a nightclub atmosphere," Werner said.

"Jazz Sessions with UNC" will include three 20-minute sets with vocalists and pianists, and one 40-minute "jam" with the UNC Jazz Band. The evening is intended to focus on the students.

Friday night will feature one of the festival's highlights. Terence Blanchard, the jazz trumpeter who scored and performed much of the music for the Spike Lee films *Mo' Better Blues* and *Jungle Fever*, is expected to draw a large crowd to Memorial Hall. The concert is scheduled to begin at 8 p.m.

Blanchard has been called "a true innovator on the trumpet." He will be performing selections from his first solo release, 1991's *Terence Blanchard*, which includes several tracks from

his work with Lee. This album has been acclaimed as "a triumphant step forward for one of the most distinctive trumpet voices today."

Tickets for the Blanchard concert are on sale at the Carolina Union Box Office and are \$8 for the general public and \$4 for UNC students.

Inviting guest artists to the Jazz Festival was part of an effort to include the student body and community in the annual event, said James Ketch, director of the UNC Jazz Band, an associate professor of music and one of the festival's organizers.

Werner also sees Blanchard's concert as a main attraction of the festival, especially for the student body.

"We decided to choose Terence Blanchard because he has one of the newer, younger groups around today," she said. "His quintet is alive, and he has popular appeal because he is associated with Spike Lee."

The third evening of the Jazz Festival will bring two other great musicians, Rick Lillard and Tim Eyermann, to Chapel Hill. Both artists will be playing with the UNC Jazz Band in their feature performances of the year.

The show will be held Feb. 22 at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Tickets, on sale at the Union, are \$3 for the general public and \$1 for UNC students.

Lillard was formerly the lead trombonist for the famed U.S. Air Force Airmen of Note Jazz Orchestra. He has appeared on the Tonight Show with bandleader Doc Severinson (who is great fan of Airmen of Note), and has performed with such artists as Sarah Vaughn and Joe Williams. Currently Lillard has been performing with the Jazz Society of Gainesville, Fla., as a guest artist.

Eyermann is a woodwind artist who has recorded eight albums with his jazz group East Coast Offering. He has also toured and recorded with Ray Charles and Frank Sinatra over the last two decades.

Ketch said the band is looking forward to performing with both musicians. "They've sent us some difficult material to work with, so we've been practicing hard. I think they'll be pleased with how professionally we can create a backdrop for them."

For example, the Jazz Band found themselves expanding their horizons when they added conga drums for one Latin-oriented number.

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Vocals play powerful role in concert

VICKI HYMAN
Editor

Profile

Miles Davis and his trumpet.

Wynton Marsalis and his saxophone.

Jevonna Brooks-Fox and her voice.

Her voice? Brooks-Fox and her special jazz "instrument" may be unfamiliar to you now, but if you attend this weekend's UNC Jazz Festival, you will forever associate the strong and flexible rhythms of jazz with Brooks-Fox's vocals.

Brooks-Fox, a junior speech communications and Spanish major from Cary, will be the featured vocalist with the UNC Jazz Band, who will perform this Thursday and Saturday night.

James Ketch, director of the UNC Jazz Band and an associate professor of music, said that previously, he had rarely used a vocalist with the band. "Most of the students I've encountered really didn't have a really good feel for jazz. I didn't feel like the students had ever listened to the great jazz singers."

They were mostly pop or classically trained, he said.

Ketch decided to give it another try after North Carolina Central University brought a very impressive

vocal group to festival last year.

He posted openings for vocalists for the Jazz Band this spring, and that's how he found Brooks-Fox.

"I'd never met her before or heard her sing before," he said. "She's terrific."

Brooks-Fox, who lists among her influences Sara Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Diane Schurr and Billie Holiday, said she's been singing "everything else forever" and decided she wanted to make a change. She's sung a lot of blues, and she compared that to jazz: "Blues is just a lot slower a lot of different feeling. Jazz is just a happening kind of thing."

"It's an outlet to allow you to feel so much," she said.

The next step was to find some tunes that would be effective showcases for her, he said. Grammy-award winning vocalist Diane Schurr recorded with Count Basie the two songs Brooks-Fox will be singing, "I Just Found Out About Love" and "Travelling Blues."

"She's been blessed with a wonderful voice," Ketch said. "It's quite flexible — she can sing with a lot of emotion and yet she has a lot of high notes that can really be exciting."

A jazz singer can't be intimidated of her accompaniment, Ketch said. "You have to get on top of the band, so to speak." He said that Brooks-Fox really carries herself well with the band.

Voices and instruments in jazz form a sort of dichotomy. "Good horn players develop a vocal-like quality and good vocalists will have a sort of horn-like instrumental quality," Ketch said.

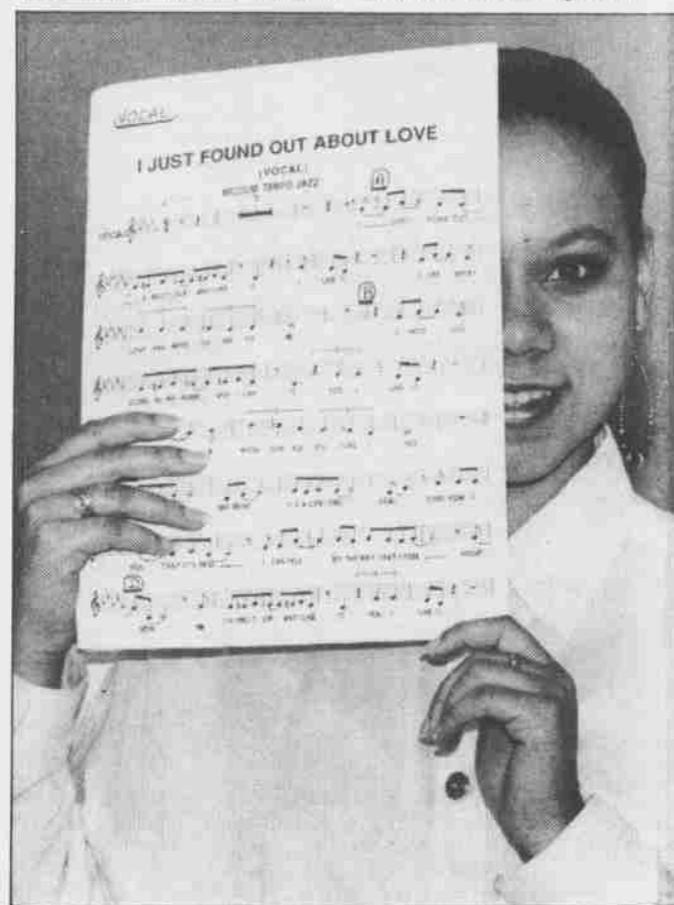
"That's what I appreciate about Jevonna — she already has an authentic quality and I would think the more she listens, the deeper she's going to be inside the lyrics or the melody or the tune."

Brooks-Fox considers herself an instrument to the band. "My purpose is to just kind of fit in where the blanks are."

Those patrons who have been following the Jazz Band for a number of years will get a big treat, Ketch said. "I hope she'll create a tradition she can maintain so others can follow in her footsteps."

Brooks-Fox expressed the same sentiment. "I'd love to keep doing it," she said. "It's become my new pastime."

But she gave credit to Ketch for making jazz such a wonderful experience. "He allows you to live through music," she said. "You find your own sort of happening."



Jazz vocalist Jevonna Brooks-Fox will sing with the UNC Jazz Band

"Terence Blanchard is part of a group of musicians who have had an incredible impact on jazz," Ketch said. "Musicians like him have stood up for the historical value of acoustical jazz."

Ketch said it is important for jazz students to take advantage of the opportunity to hear one of the standard bearers of their art.

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said experiences like the Jazz Festival enable amateur musicians to grow musically.

Band members and Ketch expect Saturday night's concert to be exciting and full of diversity. In a change from previous years, the band will be accompanied by a vocalist in several numbers.

This year's vocalist, selected through open audition, is Jevonna Brooks-Fox. She will appear with the Jazz Band on the Thursday and Saturday night performances. She plans to sing several Count Basie songs, including "I Just Found Out About Love," and "Travelling Blues."

Saturday's festival itinerary also includes the High School Jazz Festival, to be held at Hill Hall. Clinics will be held for participating area high school jazz students, with Lillard, Eyermann and Ketch acting as instructors and adjudicators. Sessions will focus on jazz techniques and improvisation.

Each high school band will play three numbers to be judged by clinic instructors. Awards will be given to the best bands and soloists.

The festival culminates on Sunday, with College/University Jazz Day. Held in the Carolina Union's Great Hall, the performances are free and open to the public.

The UNC Jazz Lab Band, with director Keith Jackson, UNC Jazz Band, NCCU Jazz Ensemble directed by Ira Wiggins, the ECU Jazz Ensemble directed by Carroll Dashiell, and St. Augustine's Jazz Band directed by Harold Jeffries will participate in a day of jazz jams. The show will run from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Ketch said that Sunday's showcase should have a "street-festival atmosphere." Last year was the first time that the idea of inviting visiting jazz bands to play in a free concert was incorporated into the festival, and it was met with great success.

College Jazz Day drew the largest crowd and the most enthusiasm in last year's festival, and organizers hope for the same turnout this year.

The Jazz Festival is an excellent opportunity for current or prospective jazz students, Ketch said, and with performances by celebrities of the industry, this year's festival could have a significant impact on future musicians.

Through the cooperation of the Carolina Union Activities Board and the Department of Music, UNC is able to host one of the greatest jazz festivals on the East Coast. By exposing the community and students to renowned artists of our time, as well as the talent within the University, festival organizers continue to add to Chapel Hill's diverse cultural appeal.



Terence Blanchard, one of the best young jazz musicians today

Blanchard plays 'jazz of tomorrow'

Terence Blanchard Quintet

Friday, February 21

Memorial Hall

Tickets: \$4 for students; \$8 public
For information call 962-2285

You can hear the jazz of tomorrow — the spirited, emotional and technically complex — this Saturday from the horn of rising young trumpeter Terence Blanchard as part of UNC's 15th annual Jazz Festival.

One of the innovators of new, soulful jazz, this 29-year-old from New Orleans comes from a strong traditional background of classical trumpet (he studied with George Jensen and Bill Fielder) and concentrated

on jazz with Ellis Marsalis (father of Branford, Wynton and Delfeayo), Kenny Barron and Paul Jeffries.

These days, Blanchard also works with Spike Lee — he and saxophonist Donald Harrison recorded the soundtrack on Lee's 1987 film, *School Daze*, and when Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington) blew his horn in Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*, it was Blanchard's magical notes that flew out. He recorded the soundtrack with the Branford Marsalis Quartet as well as serving as technical supervisor and music composer for the film.

Blanchard, who has toured and performed with some of jazz's greats, formed his own quintet in 1990, and then he released his first solo album last year, titled simply *Terence Blanchard*. The album, a vigorous, potent exercise which was produced by Delfeayo Marsalis, was called "a triumphant step forward for one of

JAZZFEST SCHEDULE

Thursday, Feb. 20

8:00 p.m. — Jazz Sessions with UNC Instrumental and Vocal Jazz Students in Carolina Union Cabaret. Admission is free and it is open to all.

Friday, Feb. 21

8:00 p.m. — The Terence Blanchard Quintet will perform in Memorial Hall. See preview below.

Saturday, Feb. 22

The High School division of the Jazz Festival will take place during the day in Hill Hall Auditorium.

8:30 - 11:25 a.m. — High School Band and combo performances.

11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. — Open Rehearsal with the UNC Jazz Band with guest soloists.

1:30 - 3:30 p.m. — Jazz Workshops with Rick Lillard, Tim Eyermann and Jim Ketch.

3:00 - 4:40 p.m. — High School Jazz Band and combo performances.

5:00 p.m. — Awards.

8:00 p.m. — UNC Jazz Band concert with guest soloists.

Sunday, Feb. 23

2:00 - 6:00 p.m. — The finale will be a concert in Great Hall with UNC Jazz Lab Band, UNC Jazz Band, NCCU Jazz Ensemble, ECU Jazz Ensemble and St. Augustine's Jazz Band.

the most distinctive trumpet voices today."

One's of the album's standouts is its mesmerizing, bluesy version of "Amazing Grace." That song was very personal for Blanchard, whose musical career almost came to a halt last year.

Blanchard finally noticed a problem with his embouchure (the formation of the lips on the mouthpiece of the trumpet) that had been present since he first learned to play. "I had been plying incorrectly with my bottom lip over my bottom teeth, which often caused me to cut my lip," he said. He realized that he couldn't develop as a musician until he corrected this problem, so he took some time off to work on his new technique. Luckily for us, he returns to the stage sounding better and stronger than ever.

—from staff reports