

Disco club enlarges scene to include jazz bands

By ERIC MOBEY

The idea of opening a disco club once a week for jazz concerts is an unusual concept. The renewed interest in jazz, evident in many clubs in the Detroit area is now finding its way to Oakland County.

Thumpers, a disco located in a shopping complex in Auburn Heights, is experimenting with live jazz on Sunday evenings.

Normally, Thumpers is closed on Sundays, but owner John Khani decided to open the club April 29 and feature a jazz group called the Garrison Payne Jazz Revue.

Judging from the size of the crowd in

attendance for the first night of jazz, the concept may take hold. Rick Kiehle, an employee of Thumpers and vocalist for the Garrison Payne group, gave Khani a recording of the newly formed group and from there things fell into place.

This was the first professional outing for the Garrison Payne Jazz Revue. The group's members have been to-

gether for just two months. Their nervousness was apparent, but the near-capacity audience responded warmly.

THE GARRISON PAYNE Jazz Revue features John Payne on vibes, synthesizer and bass; Mike Gutierrez on drums; Rob Brown on guitar and bass, and Rick Kiehle on vocals, keyboards, guitar and bass.

The name Garrison is derived from Rick Kiehle's middle name.

John Payne is the motivating force behind the band. Payne was a music major in college and performing is a new venture. His work on vibes is solid. Both Brown and Gutierrez give music lessons on the side. Kiehle's background is rock and jazz, and he once was part of a group that did a USO tour.

The Garrison Payne sound is a mixture of electronic jazz, easy listening and pop. Their two sets consisted of familiar arrangements such as Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine," Aretha Franklin's "Daydreaming" and "On Broadway" ala George Benson.

The group also performs some original material that is more of a jazz nature.

The idea of a starter club for beginning jazz musicians is a palatable one. It provides a showcase for new talent and a chance for jazz fans to enjoy a live show in Oakland County.

Thumpers will continue to provide live jazz on Sundays on an experimental basis, according to John Khani. Both Khani and members of the Garrison Payne group seemed very pleased with the response of the opening night.

Varied plays span festival

Comedy, drama, a murder thriller and an audience participation play for children have been announced for the ninth annual Summer Theater Festival at Wayne State University's Hilberry Theater, July 3-Aug. 11.

The season, according to university theater director Leonard Leone, will feature five eminent modern American and English playwrights: Arthur Miller, Emlin Williams, Lorraine Hansberry, Alan Ayckbourn and David Mamet.

First play to open, July 3, will be "Aladdin," a new version of the tale from "A Thousand and One Nights," incorporating active participation by children in the audience. Performances are Tuesdays-Thursdays at 10 and 11:30 a.m. through July 26, in the Studio Theater, downstairs at the Hilberry. No performances are scheduled for Wednesday, July 4.

First production to open upstairs on the Hilberry stage is Ayckbourn's comedy "Absurd Person Singular," one of the most successful British comedy imports to come to Broadway in recent years. It will play July 5-7 and 11-14 at 8:30 p.m.

They are followed Aug. 1 by British actor Emlin Williams' first success as a playwright, the chilling melodrama "Night Must Fall," in the Hilberry, and "American Buffalo" by David Mamet, one of America's most successful new playwrights, in the Studio. They continue for two weeks, Wednesday-Saturday at 8:30 p.m., closing the festival Aug. 11.

Brochures with complete information, ticket prices and order forms will be available later in the spring. They may be requested by calling 577-2972 or by writing to the Wayne State University Theater Box Office, Hilberry Theater, Cass and Hancock, Detroit 48202.

Luncheon event offered showgoers

Tickets are still available for a theater/luncheon afternoon that includes the Kurt Weill musical "Berlin to Broadway" at Meadow Brook Theater, plus luncheon at the Double Eagle Restaurant.

Round-trip transportation also is included in the entertainment package offered by The Community House in Birmingham. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, May 9.

Persons interested in joining the group for this spring afternoon of theater and dining should call The Community House at 644-5832.

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"Berlin to Broadway" encompasses more than 30 songs and offers a panorama of 20 years, from Hindenburg and Hitler in Germany where Weill was born to Roosevelt and Truman in America to which Weill emigrated.

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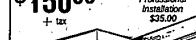
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