

Bennett, Basie band please their audience

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Another Meadow Brook Musical Festival was officially underway Wednesday with the jazz sounds of the Count Basie Orchestra and the lively presence of singer Tony Bennett.

The orchestra, under the direction of trumpeter Thad Jones of Pontiac, quickly had the audience in the palm of its hands or the bells of its horns, as the case may be, during its uninterrupted first half.

Bennett who came on after intermission, quickly built a rapport with his audience that arched from the stage to the top of the hill as neatly as San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge.

He said he looked forward to coming to Meadow Brook Festival every year and sharing his favorite songs on a pleasant summer evening. On stage he is laid-back energetic, moving, always smiling, smiling, chatty and informal.

BENNETT AND the orchestra were just fine for this audience which included several hundred from the Oakland University president's dinner party for media people, corporate festival sponsors, university trustees and friends.

There's still definitely a Basie sound to the orchestra. The side men may have changed, but the arrangements are familiar. "Sweet" was a little slower than remembered, but still a great piece of soft, gentle jazz.

Others like "Right On" and Ernie Wilkins' "Way

review

Out Basie" were close to ear-splitting. Those who followed the band when the Count himself was at the piano know he could do a lot even without amplification, which is de rigueur in concerts now.

Band singer Carmen Bradford was fighting all the way to be heard over the band and occasionally succeeded.

Bennett isn't quite as strong on all notes as he once was, but his showmanship improves with age. He brings his heart back from San Francisco and puts it into every note he sings, mixing in enough spoken words to keep things moving easily. He does especially well on smooth oldies such as "Once Upon a Time" and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore."

THE PIANIST — who followed the Basie arrangements during the band's portion of the program and led from the piano bench during the second half with Bennett — is excellent. Bennett acknowledged his contributions to the program graciously.

It was a good, tight show with music that helped keep a good share of the audience warm on a cool June night.

correction

Phyllis Diller, who was originally scheduled as one of the stars of the Meadow Brook Music Festival concert at 8 p.m. Friday, June 28, will not be appearing. Instead, on the same bill with singer Jack Jones will be Maureen Murphy, an Australian comedian who has been a frequent guest on TV's "Tonight Show."

Two evening concerts were incorrectly listed as morning Children's Concerts in Thursday's editions of the Observer & Eccentric. Trumpeter Chuck Mangione will be performing with his quartet at 8

p.m. Saturday, July 20. Peter, Paul and Mary will be starred at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10.

Upcoming Children's Concerts include the Oakland Youth Symphony featuring "Tubby the Tuba," with Erv Monroe, conductor, at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 20, and "Hansel and Gretel," the opera in a production for children featuring the Piccolo Opera Company, at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 10.

For further information about Meadow Brook Music Festival concerts at Baldwin Pavilion on the Oakland University campus near Rochester, call the box office at 377-2010.

outdoor concerts

MEADOW BROOK MUSIC FESTIVAL
At Baldwin Pavilion, Oakland University campus near Rochester.
Pavilion \$16.50-\$23 and lawn \$10-\$14, depending on concert.
Ticket information at 377-2010.

Jack Jones with special guest Maureen Murphy
8 p.m. Friday, June 28

Kenny G with special guest Jeff Lorber Fusion
8 p.m. Saturday, June 29

PINE KNOB MUSIC THEATRE Outdoor amphitheater at Pine Knob in Clarkston. Pavilion and lawn seats available. Tickets at all Ticket World outlets. Pine Knob Hotline 647-7790.

Jimmy Buffet and the Coral Reefer Band
Tuesday, June 25

Phil Collins and His Hot Tub Club
Thursday-Friday, June 27-28

New Edition with special guest Domino
Saturday, June 29

PJAZZ Pool Terrace, Hotel Pontchartrain, Detroit. Monday and Wednesday concerts begin at 6 or 8:30 p.m. Friday night concerts begin at 6 p.m. General admission tickets are \$5-\$10 and reserved seating tickets \$9-\$13, depending on the concert. For ticket information call 965-0200, ext. 3766 or 3968.

An Evening with Maynard Ferguson
Monday, June 24

Buena Vista winery achieves prominence

Two events occurred recently, independent of each other, that caused many people, and now yours, to focus on one of California's renaissance wineries, Buena Vista. The changes this Sonoma County property has gone through recently have brought it from relative obscurity to esteemed national prominence.

For a winery that perhaps seven years ago was known more for its important history than its lousy wines, that is quite a step. But Buena Vista has done it.

Just east of the city of Sonoma, this is the site of the original plantings of the modern California wine industry. Indeed, one can still visit the locations of the original vineyards planted by Count Haraszthy in the mid-1800s. Here zinfaandel was developed during a checkered decade of hype and promotion, and a huge stone structure, still standing, was built to make wine. This was all well before Krug, Schramm and Beringer began their winemaking work in neighboring Napa.

But Buena Vista has never really been a winery of great distinction. In the last 20 years, it has been troubled by erratic ownership and lack of capital to develop into a competitive position.

THINGS BEGAN to change only a few years ago. By the early 1980s it had developed so rapidly that it began to win awards with astonishing regularity and today has become recognized as one of the premier labels in all of California.

Jill Davis, winemaker, was brought in from Beringer in 1982. Her presence, both in finishing off the wines she inherited and producing new ones, seems to be one of the key factors in the changes that have occurred. Her tenure is coincident with Buena Vista's resurgence.

The winery now produces fewer varietals than in the past and is relating Special Selection Chardonnay, Cabernet and Pinot Noir. These have been highly acclaimed and have perhaps done the most in making BV the respected name it is today.

Also, lovely things are being done with fume (sauvignon) blanc and gewurztraminer, in addition to its regular releases of chardonnay and cabernet. And their sparkling, a blend of about equal parts of riesling and gewurztraminer, has been a marketing success.

wine
Richard Watson

achieve with that grape, that demonstrates fine winemaking skills at work.

BUT IT IS with the reserve wines that BV is truly making its mark in the industry. The reserve wines are quickly earning awards and prestige that have enabled them to rival the best. They are not inexpensive but are usually more affordable than Beauvieu Latour, Mondavi Reserve and other high premiums. Investment wines for the future.

And this bridges us nicely to the second event to be reported, a recent wine-tasting shootout held locally.

Ten of the most successful 1978 and 1979 cabernets were assembled for a comparative tasting by an experienced group of winelaters. All of the wines had previously won previous tasting flights of their kind in recent months.

Thus, winners were pitted against winners. Big names (and prices) were involved, including Beringer Private Reserve, Jordan, Estrella Reserve, Pine Ridge Rutherford, William Hill and Carneros Creek. The scores were almost uniformly high for the evening. The wines were excellent.

The winner: Buena Vista 1978 Special Selection; the runner up, Buena Vista 1979 Special Selection. Rarely does one winery so dominate a tasting event.

The future for BV looks good, too. It has built a new winery in the Carneros district of Napa-Sonoma, to grow and produce its wines of the future. BV will concentrate on the cool weather grapes that do so well in the region. And the old winery is to become wholly dedicated to being a tourist attraction, continuing to display its proud history to wine-country travelers.

Buena Vista's past, historically important and viticulturally forgettable, remains in Sonoma. Its future lies in those Carneros Chardonnays, Pinot Noirs and Cabernets from the cool south. And it lies with people like Jill Davis who can turn a winery around. It could even name a new proprietary wine "Phoenix" in its own honor.

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