



Safe Harbor

Even though it is June and the summer is definitely full on, Snug Harbor is gearing up rather than down with its schedule. The month's first week at the club featured several stunning performances.

The combination of saxophonist Ed Petersen and pianist Henry Butler lived up to its high expectations, with the combo slam-dunking from the outset and keeping up the pace throughout two remarkable sets. During one solo, Petersen headed to the stratosphere, taking the melody so far outside that his landing back into the swing amazed the crowd.

Many attendees agreed that it was great to hear Butler back behind an acoustic piano in a jazz combo setting, considering that recently he's been working mainly on the funk and R&B scene. Butler is a master innovator with an imagination that leads him to rarely taken paths. Bassist James Singleton would not be left out of the fun and challenge, and besides providing solid support along with drummer Herman Jackson, he also enhanced the music with many provocative solos.

The next night, guitarist Mark Whitfield was back in town. Whitfield, who used to be a regular on the scene when he was living in Baton Rouge, currently lives in New York, so the date was seen as a welcome home. Even in the short time he's been gone, Whitfield has improved his command of his instrument and appeared extremely focused in his direction. He performed material from such earlier albums as *7th Avenue Stroll* (Verve) with an even

greater sense of purpose. He, too, had strong support, with pianist Peter Martin matching the guitarist's technical prowess and sense of play. Drummer Donald Edwards, who also moved from Louisiana to New York and is a member of Whitfield's regular band, is another guy who continues to develop his chops. Interestingly, the group was rounded out with a newcomer to New Orleans, bassist Ed Livingston. We lose some, we gain some.

This Wednesday and Thursday marks the first time the prestigious Blue Note label — for many years considered jazz's premier record label — will record a live album from Snug Harbor. For two nights, tapes will roll during the performances of Prysm, a trio from Paris that has released two discs on the label, including last year's *Second Rhythm*. The band, with the brilliant Pierre De Bethmann on piano, bassist Christophe Wallemme and drummer Benjamin Henocq, played Snug Harbor when it toured the Unit-

GERALDINE WYCKOFF

percussions

ed States last summer.

Snug Harbor was specifically selected by Prysm out of the many spots the group will play during its upcoming tour. "We felt really comfortable and enjoyed playing there last year," says De Bethmann, "and we appreciated being welcomed there."

De Bethmann says the trio will play some new material as well as revisit some songs

from its previous albums, which includes adventurous original numbers composed by the three members. "We appreciated the team over there," DeBethmann says of the venue. "Snug Harbor is in the category of clubs which are involved with supporting a type of music very sincerely. This ambiance can really be felt."

Snug Harbor also recently announced a new admittance policy that allows Louisiana residents half-price admission to its 11 p.m. shows from Sunday through Thursday with proof of residency. And June 22, the club will begin broadcasting a show live on WWOZ (90.7 FM) each month, kicking off with the Peter Martin Trio.

Jazz Park Summer Concerts

It's not Yellowstone and its aim isn't wildlife, but New Orleans does have its own National Historical Park, with a goal of preserving this city's own treasure: jazz. Still in its infancy, the New Orleans Jazz Historical Park's activities have been most visible during the summer concert series, which first was set in Armstrong Park and then expanded to include Woldenberg Park. This year, the Saturday afternoon concerts move around the city, with this week's show held outdoors at Mary C. Terrell Elementary



BLUE NOTE RECORDING ARTIST PRYSM WILL RECORD A LIVE ALBUM AT SNUG HARBOR THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, A FIRST FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS JAZZ LABEL AT THE CLUB.

School (3411 Broad St.) from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a Gert Town/Carrollton Revue with the Golden Star Hunters Mardi Gras Indians, the Afro-American Jazz Quartet, Cheryl Jenkins, Ben Hunter, and Willie Tee. Other concert locations include Algiers Point, Palmer Park, A.L. Davis Park and Washington Square.

The goal, says Margie Ortiz of the Park's Education and Visitors Services, is to reach out to other areas. "A lot of neighborhoods made significant influences on jazz," says Ortiz. Beyond the music, information about jazz also will be provided. "We want to enhance the audiences' appreciation [of the music] with a better understanding of jazz and its evolution."

The Community Concerts '99 series continues each Saturday, concluding Sept. 4 with a summer-ending bash at Armstrong Park. ☺