

Music Beat

Sonny King Lives Again

by Jim Stiak

When the cold hand of death abruptly grabbed Sonny King in December of '83, the Northwest jazz community wasted little time honoring him, creating a scholarship fund to preserve the memory of the saxophonist and educator. To bolster that fund, Sunday, April 21, virtually every jazz musician in town will congregate at DeFrisco's for the second annual Sonny King Memorial Benefit Concert.

Up from the Bay Area for the event will be popular pianist Ed Kelly. Local performers will include Le Jazz Hot, Emmet Williams, Don Latarski, Nancy King, the Eugene Jazz Orchestra, John Workman, and a list of others that could fill this column. From 4:30 till midnight, the Atrium Courtyard will be filled with the various sounds of these performers, and the glass-tinkling conversation of those enjoying the cabaret atmosphere.

All proceeds from the event will help "advance the music education of promising Oregon high school age musicians." Tickets are available at an array of outlets, including Old Taylor's, Videoland, Larry's Video, Backstage Dancewear and others.

About this drummer is said that no other leader, except Count Basie, has introduced so many famous players to the national spotlight. He led his first band when only 15, virtually invented hard-bop drumming, and has yet to slow down after half a century of performing. April 20 Art Blakey brings his Jazz Messengers to the WOW Hall for a driving evening of rhythm and melodies. Despite his decades of successes, the "Shakespeare of percussion" is not content to rely on his old hits, but continually searches for new music, playing the tunes that his band members write.

While expanding the horizons of acoustic music in the 80's, the artists on the Windham Hill record label have attracted quite a following. April 21 at the Silva in the Hult, many of those musicians will present their electric sounds to Eugene. Barbara Higbie on piano, Darol Anger on violin and Mike Marshall on mandolin and guitar will blend their talents in one part of the show. Bill Oskay and Michael O'Domhnaill, with violin and guitar, will evoke the "magic of Irish leprechauns and four-leaf clovers," and Pierre Ben-



Barbara Higbie, Darol Anger and Mike Marshall will perform Sunday, April 21, in Silva Concert Hall. Photograph by Heather Hatleigh

susan, 27-year-old Algerian master of several instruments, singer, and "guitarist's guitarist," will crown the evening's musical jewels.

A local boy who made good is coming back to the Hult. Mason Williams, who escaped the trap of mill-town life in Oakridge for fame with the Smothers Brothers and nine record albums, plays with his six-piece group April 23. "Of Time and Rivers Flowing" is the name of his show, contemporary arrangements of traditional songs about rivers and water. Mason says he wants to "give the river a chance to speak to us."

Another local boy, yet to make it big on the national scene, attacks the Lone Star April 19-20. Johnny and the Distractions, with their pile-driving sound and bended-knee lyrics, will try once again to fire the crowd into semi-hysteria. Their show runs from 9-11, followed by "After Hours Rock," with Nasty Habit, till 4. That, followed by a quick trip to Hoots, ought to satisfy all you nocturnal nomads.

Over at the EMU Ballroom April 20 will be the young ska-rock sound of the Hoodlums. Once again, they'll be playing with local favorites the Crazy-8's, who always lay their cards on the table.

Claude Frank, in his 26th year of classical piano performances, visits the Hult April 18. He joins the Eugene Symphony Orchestra and guest conductor Gary Sheldon for the final concert of the 84/5 Classical Series, Beethoven's Concerto #3 for Piano and Orchestra.

WINDHAM HILL

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Darol Anger/Mike Marshall/Barbara Higbie
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