

FOCUS

'African Spirits' Open Gallery Season

Foreign ancestry July focus at Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center



'Nurturer' is an acrylic on canvas painting depicting a mother and child by Ghanaian painter and sculptor Astraal.

'Esu, The Provider,' is a welded steel sculpture by Mufu Ahmed who retains the indigenous values of his African culture in his art.

Nigerian artist Mufu Ahmed will display some of his works at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in July.



Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center opens its 2003-2004 gallery season on July 3 with "African Spirits: Yoruba Gods and Goddesses of Nigeria," a collection of metal sculptures by Mufu Ahmed and "Celebration of an Astraal Heritage," paintings by Ghanaian artist Astraal.

for First Thursday, the free public IFCC reception with featured artists from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. the first Thursday of each month. Artist Ahmed said he draws from his experience as a Muslim who attended Christian primary, secondary school and college. "I come from a country, Nigeria, where people still believe in

the power and authority of our ancestor spirits," he said. "The teaching of our ancestors provide the guiding principles for our daily activities and through them people know how to behave and act towards each other." Astraal, who was educated in Ghana and Europe, offers a col-

lection of paintings and wood carvings influenced by her African culture and European travels. Both exhibits run through July 31. IFCC is located at 5340 N. Interstate Ave. for more information, call 503-823-2072 or visit www.ifcc-arts.org.

Fund for Families of Jazz Pioneers

Prestigious musicians die in poverty

(AP) — They soared with Bird and got down with the Count, putting the intersection of 18th and Vine on every jazz fan's map.

"It was the Kansas City style," said 87-year-old pianist and bandleader Jay "Hootie" McShann, who gave sax icon Charlie "Bird" Parker his first steady gig, in 1940. "They knew it on the East Coast. They knew it on the West Coast. They knew it up north, and they knew it down south."

But one by one, the city's jazz pioneers are falling silent. And after a lifetime of playing for a living, some musicians can't afford the cost of dying.



Coda Jazz Fund has helped numerous families of artists such as "Speedy" Huggins (above) by marking their graves or paying for the entire funeral.

That's where the Coda Jazz Fund steps in.

The fund bought headstones for bassist David Daahoud Williams and trumpeter-bandleader Oliver Todd, who lay for years in unmarked

graves. Williams was only a few yards away from the elaborate slab covering Parker's resting place.

The fund also paid to mark the graves of entertainer Speedy Huggins and pianist-

singer Elbert "Coots" Dye. The fund was there when Rudolph "School Boy" Dennis, who stepped into McShann's band when Parker left, died with a month's worth of fixed income - \$538 - to his name.

"This was a man who played with (Count) Basie and Bird," said Dennis' sister-in-law, Barbara Dennis. "Charlie Bird stayed at his house. He knew him like I know my own children."

The Coda Jazz Fund paid for Dennis' funeral and cremation-down to the programs and a courtesy car for the family.

"It wasn't just, 'We'll pay half,' or, 'We'll pay so much and you pay the rest,'" said Dennis' niece, Stephanie Adams. "They took care of everything. I call them our under-cover angels."

Boy Born to Angie Martinez and Niko

(AP) — Elektra recording artist and New York radio personality Angie Martinez, whose albums include "Animal House" and "Up Close and Personal," has given birth to a baby boy, Niko Ruffin.

The baby, who weighs 9 pounds and is 21 inches long, was

born Thursday in Manhattan, the record label said Friday.

Niko's father is R&B singer Niko from DefJam recording group DruHill.

Angie Martinez does the afternoon show at WQHT, New York, Hot 97.

This is the couple's first child.

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