

Goldstein finds freedom in jazz

By KEN FREEMAN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Beginning at 10 tomorrow evening, Penn State's student run radio station, stereo 91 WDFM, will broadcast The Arthur Goldstein Trio "live" from LeBistro.

Since last October 30, the trio has held residence at LeBistro on Monday nights. And a few months ago, LeBistro owner, Kurosh Ostavar, generously extended that to Saturday evenings, also.

enthusiasts of State College, simply because the kind of traditional jazz the trio emphasizes is a rare commodity here.

"I found out that we hadn't had a local bar with a regular jazz group so I found out there's some good local talents. I'm very pleased with what they've done," said Ostovar.

The trio consists of three of the most respected musicians in State College; of course, on piano is Arthur Goldstein, on guitar is Justin Ezzi and playing various

saxophones is Steve Bowman. All three graduates of Penn State, these musicians not only know the most minute subtleties of their instruments, but have also paid their dues.

Bowman's credentials are most impressive. Shortly after his commitments to school were completed, he joined the Glenn Miller Band and toured with them all over the world. After settling in State College, Bowman joined the 7-11 Band. Ezzi has been in various State College bands; most notably among them are Sweet Pain, Phoenix and now a new version of Sweet Pain.

One might be surprised to know that Goldstein has played more commercial music the past two years with Ezzi in Phoenix and before that in Round Two.

"I sort of figuratively walked out of the Scorpion and into LeBistro after the break-up of Phoenix," said Goldstein.

Goldstein became frustrated and tired of the bar scene. "There seems to be this real limited kind of strata about playing certain kinds of music in bars. There's all this stigma about getting people to dance," he explains.

At LeBistro, Goldstein has found freedom. "For me the only pressure is to play well and sound interesting. Nobody tells me it's not commercial or the big one, 'I've never heard that before,'" said Goldstein.

"We play what we think is a really important selection of the literature of modern jazz, the best from four decades. We're rooted in the acoustic tradition," revealed Goldstein.

Jules Reuter, jazz director at WDFM along with Just Jazz staff member, Elliot Grossman, organized and will be co-hosting the simulcast.



Pianist Arthur Goldstein says his jazz trio is "rooted in the acoustic tradition." Photo by Chuck Andraso

The big band sound back again

By TIM KONSKI
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

If art is timeless, then Duke Ellington is immortal. Performing Wednesday night at Gatsby's, the late composer's orchestra, under the direction of Ellington's son Mercer, opened their show with "Mood Indigo," one of Ellington's earliest and most popular songs, and the forties lived again.

With a smooth first set of Ellington's most famous songs such as "Louisiana Baby" and "In A Sentimental Mood," the orchestra demonstrated the key to the composer's extended success; Ellington remained a star for over fifty years because he surrounded himself with a band of star musicians.

For example, John Halls' trumpet solo during "Bye Bye Blues" and Pete Beckett's trombone solo during "Love You Madly" were demonstrations of powerful musicianship that seemed beyond the limits of human talent.

And when the orchestra played "Caravan," a New Orleans type jazz number with strong percussion and brass solos, the audience abandoned their tables for the dance floor making the listener wonder why "Swing Music" was not readily accepted by "established" musical circles 40 years ago.

Introducing the show's highpoint, Ellington said, "There's a 'Tale of Two Cities' and there are two tales of one city. It's so grand they had to name it twice; New York, New York" and "Take the A Train" performed by vocalist Anita Moore whose style was simultaneously reminiscent of Billie Holiday and similar to Bonnie Raitt.

During the medley, she alternated between an interpretive mellow and a staccato jazz, complete with a string bass and percussion solo which Moore winged through in the style of a Sarah Vaughn or an Ella Fitzgerald.

Moore deviated from the orchestra's traditional fare of old Ellington favorites with Gilbert O'Sullivan's "Alone Again Naturally." However, Moore took the song on a visit to Harlem's Cotton Club of the 40's and gave it an old-fashioned jazz sound.

The strength and range of Moore's voice was best demonstrated during "In My Solitude" which she sang slowly, at first, to allow the melody to flow as a single note. Then, after a hard brass solo, she belted the blues so powerfully all action in the room stopped to take notice.

Moore ended her first set with "Rocks In My Bed," which was a collaboration of instrumental and vocal improvisation. Moore repeated the song's one line, "rocks in my bed," but varied the tone and range to give the line a new meaning each time.

The orchestra's second set was less successful than the first because the band strayed from Ellington compositions to perform more contemporary numbers like "Broadway" and "Misty."

Nevertheless, the second set did have its memorable moments such as Ellington's "Things Ain't What They Used to Be," an alternately slow then fast number that spot-lighted the entire orchestra with no featured solos.

This song proved Ellington's genius lay in his ability to compose for an orchestra rather than any individual instrument. As a result, Ellington's tunes combined the best aspects of each musical device to make the orchestra itself seem like a single instrument.

The third and final set returned to a more traditional style such as the bluesy and belting "Sweet and Gentle." Moore's final number, "Until you Hear From Me," was an old times blues number reminiscent of classic blues songs such as Lena Horne's "Stormy Weather."

Despite Moore's sensitive interpretation of this song's lyrics, a provocative tenor sax and trombone solo proved music does not necessarily need words to convey emotion.

After the performance, Ellington said his band's success sometimes depends on his ability to imitate his father's style of conducting. He said his orchestra was panned at Carnegie Hall because he strayed too far from his father's smooth and energetic public style.

"If you look at me from the rear while I'm conducting, you'll swear I'm my father," Ellington said.

Ellington also said he has two sons studying music. Maybe the Ellington tradition and the '40's will survive.

Broadway's fare gets lighter as costs get higher

By MARY ANN HARVEY
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

The entertainment business was once famous for rags to riches stories, but Broadway's own flight from poverty has been a long struggle.

While Broadway is booming financially it's "still in a slump artistically," says Lee Triplett, (graduate-theater management).

Brooks Atkinson, once a theater critic for The New York Times, says in his book "Broadway" that Broadway is "technically proficient, but no longer creative."

"The daring plays that performed the primary function of criticizing life and that represented the thought and mood of the time were produced off-Broadway with varying degrees of success," he says.

Atkinson made that statement in 1970 and, for the most part, it's probably true today. Most of

the 37 shows on Broadway are either light-hearted (or light-headed) musicals and comedies.

Triplett says the Broadway theater is "offering just pure entertainment" like "Annie," and the same thing is happening in films. Movies like "Superman" reflect the popular taste for escapism, he says, but people will eventually tire of mindless entertainment. "The Deer Hunter" and other weightier movies may signal the beginning of a new trend, he says.

Indeed a radical change may soon be evident. James W. Assad, assistant professor of theater, says "Broadway, which had been a Mecca for musicals" is becoming more intellectual. An indication of this is New York's two biggest current hits, "The Elephant Man" and "Whose Life is it Anyway?" The new plays

are dynamic and, he says, the trend is sure to continue.

Ironically, though, shows like "Annie" and "A Chorus Line" rescued Broadway financially and helped to rekindle interest in the theater.

Broadway took in gross receipts of more than \$57 million in the 1974-75 season, according to Variety. The figure represents a 24 percent increase over the previous season and was the first sign that Broadway, which had been in financial straits for years, would recover from the nationwide recession.

Observers at that time said one reason for the good showing that season was that people sought release from their personal problems caused by the recession.

Bernard B. Jacobs, of the Shubert Organization, said in The New York Times that shows also began to appeal to younger audiences.

Previously, Broadway was a medium for the over-45 crowd, but with shows like "Grease," those younger than 35 became more frequent theater-goers.

Improved marketing techniques also figured in the continued success of Broadway. Tickets could be purchased with credit cards at the box office or by phone for the first time during the 1976-77 season.

A computerized ticket buying system, similar to Ticketron, was begun by the Shubert Organization in 1978. Jacobs says he expects the increased convenience to multiply the audiences by three or four fold. The organization owns 17 of the 37 legitimate Broadway theaters.

Events in New York during the Bicentennial probably had some effect on theater attendance. A member of the League of New York Theaters and Producers said in The Times that theater

benefited from "good feelings from Operation Sail and the Democratic National Convention."

About the same time, the New York state legislature approved an advertising budget to promote New York City. More than \$1 million of the \$5.2 million total was spent on advertising shows and most of that money went into television ads.

The result was a 1977-78 season that topped all previous attendance records and gross receipts with 9.6 million tickets sold for a total of \$114 million.

Broadway's gradual blossoming, however, may have roots that extend beyond New York. Douglas N. Cook, head of the theater and film department at the University says the increasing popularity of regional theater is "creating a whole new audience" and the "winner of that is profit theater."

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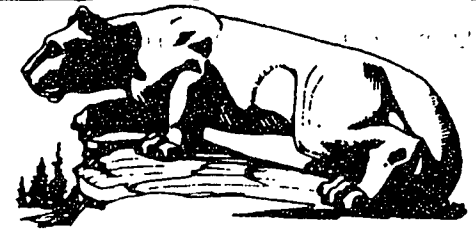
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