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jazzAVENUES

BY STEVE MONROE

Shoo-be-doo-wop, bee-doo-wop- bow, bee-da-bow, do doo-wop bop...

Imagine that sung by the golden tones of vocalist Chad Carter scatting his way through a jazz standard, over a rippling piano, crisp rolls on the drums, a throbbing bass and a sweet sax riffing the melody, and you have your own virtual reality of one of our area's promising musical highlights.

Carter is a local boy bidding to make good as he continues to hone his skills. He has many of the basics, such as a passion for the music and a voice that at its best commands a room. He also has learned some of the nuts and bolts of the trade from a leading jazz emissary, the late vocalist and festival entrepreneur Ronnie Wells.

A DC native, Carter actually played the viola as a member of the DC Youth Orchestra and then took up the piano. After attending Howard University undergrad and Carnegie Mellon for graduate school, Chad, who works in information technology by day, found his way back to the music through workshops that Wells and her husband, pianist Ron Elliston, conducted for aspiring vocalists.

The rest is history as Carter developed his craft well enough to perform at the old One Step Down, Utopia, Bohemian Caverns, Blues Alley, Twins Lounge and elsewhere. He's worked with music veterans like Bootsie Barnes, Buck Hill, Chris Grasso, Nasar Abadey



and many others.

Carter performed with sax legend Barnes at Vicino's in Silver Spring on a Monday night in June, along with Bob Butta on piano, James King on bass, and Abadey on drums. With Carter sitting in on vocals for a few songs each set, they kept a packed house entertained all night with vintage standards like "Satin Doll," "Straight No Chaser," "A Nigh in Tunisia" and "On Green Dolphin Street."

Carter said of that night with Barnes, "As long as a pro like Bootsie Barnes is happy with my performance then that tells me I'm on the right track. He was pleased, and I felt I had a strong performance, particularly given that none of us had time to get together for a rehearsal."

Last month Carter led a group with Paul Carr on tenor sax, Fred Hughes on piano, Michael Bowie on bass and Chuck Redd on drums in front of an even larger crowd at the Smithsonian Jazz Café – Carter said he had a lot of "nervous energy" before the show.

He later said, "Once we struck up the band I was in my element and had a ball! It's like the opening song said, 'Life's a ball if only you know it, and it's all up to you, you're alive so come on and show it. There's such a lot of livin' to do!' I thought the show was energetic, well attended and fun...my musicians were fantastic and the crowd stayed for the entire evening. There is of course always room for improvement and I look to the audience and to my musicians to give me feedback."

Carter says he needs to work on "vocal breathing, increasing my repertoire, increasing my creativity and continuing to select songs to which I can connect."

Duke Fest around the corner

New news from the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival (Sept. 9-17) folks includes the launch of the new Web site, www.dejazzfest.org, which includes information on the jazz legends to receive the festival's annual Lifetime Achievement Award. Tickets for DEJF featured events will go on sale Aug. 13. And Grammy Award-winning Latin jazz pianist Eddie Palmieri has been added to the lineup for the free jazz on the mall event Sept. 16.

August Highlights: Jason Marshall Quartet, Aug. 3-4, Twins Jazz ... Buck Hill, Aug. 6, Vicino's ... Blues Alley Youth Orchestra, Aug. 6, Blues Alley ... Abdullah Ibrahim, Aug. 8, Blues Alley ... Lonnie Plaxico Group, Aug. 10-11, Twins Jazz ... Terence Blanchard, Aug. 16-19, Blues Alley ... Larry Brown Quintet, Aug. 17, Smithsonian Jazz Café ... Billy Hart Quartet, Aug. 17-18, Twins Jazz ... Chad Carter, Aug. 24, Westminster Presbyterian Church ... Mose Allison, Aug. 30, Blues Alley ... Latin Jazz & Salsa Tribute Concert, Aug. 31, Smithsonian Jazz Café ...

August Birthdays: Big Nick Nicholas 2; Eddie Jefferson 3; Louis Armstrong, Sonny Simmons 4; Lenny Breau 5; Rahsaan Roland Kirk 7; Lucky Millinder, Benny Carter 8; Jack DeJohnette 9; Claude Thornhill 10; Russell Procope 11; Earl Coleman, Pat Matheny 12; Mulgrew Miller 13; Stuff Smith 14; Oscar Peterson, Stix Hooper 15; Mal Waldron, Bill Evans 16; Ike Quebec, Duke Pearson 17; Oscar Brashear 18; Jimmy Rowles 19; Count Basie, Art Farmer 21; Bobby Watson 23, Claude Hopkins 24; Wayne Shorter, Pat Martino 25; Branford Marsalis 26; Lester Young 27; Kenny Drew 28; Charlie Parker, Dinah Washington 29; Kenny Dorham 30; Wilton Felder 31. ■

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