

Dark clouds over area jazz scene disper

By Fernando Gonzalez
Globe Staff

After the closing of the 1369 Jazz Club several weeks ago, many worried about the health of jazz in the Boston area.

It seems now, well into the fall season, that the fears were exaggerated. Jazz is doing very well, thank you.

Consider some of the choices this weekend.

Bassist Charlie Haden and his group, Quartet West, along with Ernie Watts, reeds, Alan Broadbent, piano, and Larance Marable, drums, are at the Charles Hotel's Regattabar through Saturday.

Haden's rich career includes stints with players as diverse as the original Ornette Coleman Quartet, Keith Jarrett, Old and New Dreams, and Pat Metheny. He has been as effective with the fiery, highly politicized avant-garde of his own Liberation Orchestra or the striking Song X Metheny-Coleman band as he has been with the subtle, dark-toned lyricism of Magico, his trio with Brazilian guitarist Egberto Gismonti and Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek.

Quartet West's material often suggests a distillation of many of those experiences into a deceptively simple, straight-ahead, lyrical music. And Broadbent might be one of the most underrated pianists in jazz today.

Percussionist and trumpeter Jerry Gonzalez has long established a reputation as one of the better musicians in New York's Latin scene. He has performed and recorded with Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie and maestro Eddie Palmieri, as well as with his own Fort Apache Band, a mix of raw, street Latin music and sophisticated jazz. Gonzalez is bringing a small band to the Willow for shows tonight and tomorrow. He calls it the Fort Apache Quartet and features brother Andy on bass (the Ron Carter of Latin music), Steve Berrios on drums and Larry Willis on piano.

Bassist Reggie Workman is best known for his work with John Coltrane's quartet, but his experience includes stints with Art Blakey, Yusef Lateef and Max Roach among others. He released an album last year leading a very strong quartet. Workman heads a true all-star band featuring Geri Allen, on piano, Art Ensemble of Chicago's Joseph Jarman on reeds and the ubiquitous Andrew Cyrille on drums, Sunday at the Willow, shows at 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Not to be missed.

A summit of sorts next Tuesday at Ryles when Soviet musicians Igor Butman (saxophone), Sergei Kuriokhin (piano) and Victor Dvoskin (considered the best bass player in the Soviet Union) meet a couple of American mystery guests.

Starting Friday Dec. 2, the Museum of Fine Arts is presenting a series of documentaries about the lives and music of several influential jazz artists. The films will be screened at Remis Auditorium at the MFA and the schedule is as follows:

"Art Blakey: The Jazz Messenger," Dec. 2 at 8 p.m.; "A Brother with Perfect Timing (Abdullah Ibrahim)," Dec. 9 at 8 p.m.; "Bix: Ain't None of Them Play Like Him Yet," Dec. 15 at 5:30 p.m.; "Artie Shaw: Time Is All You've Got," Dec. 15 at 8 p.m.; "Ernie Andrews: Blues For Central Avenue" and "Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy," Dec. 16 at 8 p.m. For ticket information call (617) 267-9300 ext. 306.

OUT AND ABOUT: Rave notices preceded Soviet pianist Sergei Kuriokhin's arrival, and his hourlong appearance at the Wang Center Wednesday did nothing to diminish his reputation as a player. Playing one piece nonstop, he raised the musical equivalent of name-dropping to an art. The piece was a sort of stream-of-consciousness affair that included Viennese waltzes, boogie-woogies, Terry Riley minimalism, Debussy,

Ravel and tangos, just to name a few influences. There were grand gestures; big, heavy, open chords and dramatic descending bass-lines; small Bill Evans-esque moments; piano-bar sentimentality; and fiery blues phrases. None of these lasted more than a few bars. Kuriokhin is such a good technician and his cutting and pasting so clever that, during the first 15 minutes, one couldn't help but smile. Unfortunately it was also impossible to make any emotional connection. After a while the piece became tiresome and increasingly meaningless. One could only sit back and marvel at his ability and think of dinner after the show.

Guitarist Stanley Jordan and pianist Harry Connick Jr. are both young players and both use as their calling card an often stunning technical ability. There the similarities end. Last Friday's concert at the Berklee Performance Center was a study in contrast. At 20, Connick is showing a