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## The best of both jazz worlds

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JOE LOVANO is like a bridge.

The saxophonist straddles the worlds of so-called mainstream and avant garde **jazz**, but insists, "I play **jazz** free, not free **jazz**."

An A-list player, Lovano says he improvises freely, whatever the context, from bebop to the many folk musics that come together in creative **jazz**.

Lovano, 53, performs here twice next month in the Izzy **Asper Jazz** Performance series and will hold a workshop at the University of Manitoba's faculty of music. He will be backed by Winnipeggers pianist Ron Paley, bassist Steve Kirby, guitarist Larry Roy and New York drummer Winard Harper.

In a phone interview from the upstate New York home he shares with his wife, singer Judi Silvano, Lovano says he'll perform some of his own compositions as well as some Monk and Coltrane in his concerts here.

He seldom does solo gigs like this anymore, where he plays with local musicians, but he knows Kirby (director of **jazz** studies in the music faculty) from New York City and he enjoys helping students learn and communities nurture **jazz**.

He holds a chair in **jazz** performance at the Berklee College of Music in Boston and when he's not touring, he works with students once a week. "**Jazz** development is what your personal history is. It's great to have the forums to play and hear young people," he says.

"You're always a student," the saxophonist says of a musician's life.

Besides, a gig like the one here gives him the opportunity to perform with new players: "New music happens when you put different personalities together to make good music," he says.

"I'm thrilled Winard is going to be there," he says, having performed with the drummer in New York. And Winnipeg is "lucky to have Kirby. He has the foundation and passion to make things happen."

Lovano was in the studio last week mixing the sound on his new CD, *Streams of Expression*, a five-movement suite recorded with his nonet augmented by a half-dozen musicians over the course of the album.

It includes Gunther Schuller's *Birth of the Cool Suite* written for Lovano, based on three tunes from the original Miles Davis-Gil Evans collaboration.

The disc has Lovano playing unaccompanied, in duets and trios and with the full ensemble. It should be released in late summer or early fall on Blue Note.

The allmusic.com website lists two dozen recordings under Lovano's name. He has performed with the likes of Dr. Lonnie Smith, Elvin Jones, Lee Konitz and Bob Brookmeyer, toured with Woody Herman's band, performed in guitarist John Scofield's band and recorded in a great trio with guitarist Bill Frisell and drummer Paul Motian, among others.

"The heart of **jazz** and creative music is a beautiful world to live in," Lovano says. "I live in the world of music. As an international musician, I've had the chance to play with musicians from all over the world.

"To be a success in **jazz**, you have to be on an international scale."