

# Winnipeg Free Press

## Pianist Oliver Jones wows audience

Winnipeg Free Press  
Monday, May 8, 2006  
Page: D2  
Section: Entertainment  
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MONTREAL pianist Oliver Jones closed out the **Asper jazz** series with a bang yesterday, wowing his audience, receiving an award and helping a high school student pay for university.

Not bad for a Sunday afternoon when you've only had about three hours sleep.

Jones is a favourite of Winnipeg **jazz** fans for his mastery of standards, his own intricate compositions and his unfailing good spirits.

There were plenty of standards yesterday, including a Gershwin medley, some Ellington, and Jones dipped into the composition well of fellow Montrealer Oscar Peterson a couple of times during his afternoon concert, the first of two yesterday.

His rendition of Peterson's Place St. Henri conjured up the sounds of the busy, vibrant community that both pianists grew up in. He later used Peterson's classic Hymn to Freedom as a rousing encore.

Jones was accompanied by bassist Dave Young, the former Winnipegger, and drummer Terry Clarke - a dream rhythm section in most cases and especially so with their experience playing with him.

Young is such a fine player and he really sank his teeth into some blues yesterday, the kind of rollicking blues that raises rather than sinks your spirits.

The trio performed a tune Jones was asked to write for Canadian pianist-singer Diana Krall when she won the Oscar Peterson award - Dance Again, Diana. It was an unusual piece for Jones's repertoire, which relies heavily on standards, but it was lively and well-played and caught the audience's attention. He also performed a tune written for Montreal singer Raneé Lee, a frequent collaborator - Good Day, Miss Lee, another beautifully played and lively tune.

Duke Ellington's Satin Doll is often played so sweetly, it can rot your teeth. But Jones's version was enough to knock off your socks.

\* \* \*

Jones was presented the Izzy **Asper Jazz** Performances award yesterday afternoon "in recognition of his profound contribution to nurturing future Canadian **jazz** talent."

Jones donated his performance fee to be used for a scholarship to the **jazz** studies program at the University of Manitoba's faculty of music. High school student Curt Nowosad, a drummer, won the scholarship and had a chance to perform with Jones on the Sonny Rollins tune Oleo.

The kid more than held his own in a trio with Jones and bassist Steve Kirby, director of **jazz** studies and the man giving out the awards.

It was Nowosad's second award this year. He already had won the Jimmy King Memorial Trust scholarship of \$750.

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Concert Review

Oliver Jones

Izzy **Asper Jazz** Performances

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Berney Theatre

May 7

4 stars out of five.

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Idnumber: 200605080007  
Length: 432 words