

Jazz great serves up sweet trumpet treats

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IMAGINE Clark Terry soloing on muted trumpet on Mood Indigo with just bassist Gilles Fournier tastefully accompanying him.

You're right; it sounds great.

The 81-year-old jazz great showed he still has some stuff, if not necessarily the stuff of his heyday, in two shows yesterday as part of the **Asper Foundation Jazz Performances** series.

Mood Indigo, which Terry described as an "Ellington evergreen," but which remains a crowd-pleaser nonetheless, wasn't short of good solos. Pianist Ron Paley, whose quartet performed with Terry, took one of many terrific solos at the afternoon show on the staple of the Duke Ellington songbook.

The Paley quartet, with Janice Finlay on tenor and alto saxophones and Rob Siwik on drums, was an inspired choice to back Terry. Each member soloed beautifully, accompanied Terry with taste and had the musical smarts to read the needs of a guest soloist of the trumpet and flugel horn player's stature.

The only other piece on which he played trumpet was the classic tune All Blues, from Miles Davis's Kind of Blue album, a marvellous version in the hands of the five musicians.

The repertoire ran to standards (The Nearness of You, Days of Wines and Roses, Perdido) but that's to be expected from a musician who performs with different musicians all the time. And, besides, they sounded damn good.

The Paley quartet was in top form, comping beautifully behind Terry as he soloed and taking tasty solos themselves as an appreciative Terry listened with obvious joy.

Terry is ever the showman, cracking jokes and proving that it does pay sometimes to poke fun at the boss. The trumpeter is known for his tune Mumbles on which he sings nonsense phrases as if he doesn't know the words to a song.

At the end of the mumbo jumbo in yesterday afternoon's version, he ended the tune by very clearly saying "national editorials," a reference to the furor over CanWest Global Communications requiring its Southam newspapers to run editorials written in its Winnipeg head office. Izzy Asper, the executive chairman of CanWest, is the man behind the jazz series.

Terry also had the audience sing along on Bye Bye Blackbird, joking about its ability to remember the lines, but amid the fun, he also performed one of his better solos of the afternoon on flugel horn.

Terry still keeps up enough chops to keep audiences happy, and his joy in performing almost guarantees his fans will leave the theatre happy.

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