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Chopin's music performed by jazz pianist

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Byline: Adam Makowicz

Asper Foundation Jazz Performances

Berney Theatre

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By Chris Smith

HOW often does Chopin appear as the favourite composer at a jazz performance?

Not often, granted, but his music held a place of honour yesterday at two shows performed by New York-based, Polish-born jazz pianist Adam Makowicz.

And Chopin sounds surprisingly jazzy in the right hands, like Makowicz's. The pianist's latest disc, *Reflections on Chopin*, presented the Polish composer in a jazz idiom and audiences at yesterday's **Asper Foundation Jazz Performances** got a taste of the classical-jazz mix.

Makowicz has made a name for himself interpreting the American Songbook, and it becomes clear why when you see and hear him; he is a technically skilled pianist with a love for the music he plays.

Makowicz opened the show with a couple of Chopin pieces, performed solo, before being joined by bassist Gilles Fournier and guitarist Tim Cummings.

The ad-hoc trio performed for the most part as if it was a working band. Fournier and Cummings settled into the ensemble play as if it was a piece of cake and both turned in excellent solos.

For example, Fournier performed a beautiful bass solo on *My Romance* before Cummings slipped in behind him for some tasty playing of his own before they gave the tune back to Makowicz.

Gershwin got a lot of attention at the afternoon show, which is no surprise considering the number of his tunes that have become jazz standards and that he is a favourite of series founder Izzy Asper.

But when Makowicz dug into Louis Armstrong's repertoire for *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans*, he performed a simply beautiful rendition of the tune.

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THE Asper series has changed a couple of concerts in this series. Saxophonist Scott Hamilton will perform Feb. 16 instead of his scheduled May 25 concert.

Singer Ernestine Anderson, this season's surprise concert guest, will perform in the May 25 slot with the Ron Paley Trio. Anderson began her singing career in R&B, but shifted to jazz in the 1950s.

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