

Winnipeg Free Press

Seashells add to trombonist's chops

Mon Mar 9 2009
Page: C9
Section: Music Reviews
Byline: Chris Smith

TROMBONIST Steve Turre can make his instruments moan and wail with a blues intensity not often heard in jazz these days.

Instruments, as in his main axe, the slide trombone, and his pet axes, a variety of different-sized seashells.

Believe me, you haven't heard the blues until you've heard them played by a tight band fronted by a man playing shells so intently and skilfully.

Turre played the shells on a blues called Ray's Collard Greens, named after former boss Ray Charles, Saturday night in the first of his three weekend concerts in the Izzy Asper Jazz Performances series.

The quintet -- with Jimmy Greene on tenor saxophone, Xavier Davis on piano, Dion Parson on drums and Steve Kirby on bass -- was tight through a mix of blues, standards and originals, mainly by Turre.

Turre's version of the bop standby Cherokee, which he calls Blackfoot, was a feature for drummer Parson, but also was reminiscent of the old cutting contests where younger players were tested on stage by veterans.

If Saturday night had been a cutting contest, Turre would have cut Greene, but not by much. The saxophonist was hot and made a formidable front line with Turre.

Pianist Davis was a delight as soloist and accompanist, especially comping on the blues numbers. Parson can be a powerhouse -- his Blackfoot solo was great -- as well as a sensitive accompanist.

Winnipeg's Kirby played extremely well, backing his old boss and mentor Turre with verve, and taking a couple of great solos and contributing his composition Cleopatra's Needle, named after a famous New York City jazz club known for its jam sessions.

The trombone is an evocative instrument in the right hands, and Turre's performance of the standard The Nearness of You was a gem in a concert that highlighted just how varied, visceral and full of vitality small-group jazz can be.

chris.smith@freepress.mb.ca

Steve Turre Quintet

Izzy Asper Jazz Performances

Berney Theatre, March 7

Attendance: 200

4 stars out of 5

© 2009 The Winnipeg Free Press. All rights reserved.

Reproduced with permission from the Winnipeg Free Press
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/>