

JAZZ AVENUES

BY STEVE MONROE

A Carr kickoff

Getting July kicked off in fine form is the saxman Paul Carr, having a CD release party for himself July 6 at Blues Alley.

Released in May, it's his latest effort as a leader, "Straight Ahead Soul," which promises to follow on the success two years ago of "Musically Yours," which turned out to be one of the finest recordings by an area musician in the last few years.

"Straight Ahead Soul is the kind of music I heard growing up in Houston," says Carr. "I wanted to do a [CD] with that kind of soulful music. I grew up listening to Arnett Cobb and Don Wilkerson, two soulful tenor players with the Texas tenor sound."

With that, Carr enlisted Bobby Broom on guitar, Allyn Johnson on piano, Michael Bowie on bass, Lewis Nash on drums and Sam Turner on percussion, to play some soulful jazz.

One highlight is "Side Yard Tracks," indeed; a honking, funky, blues dripping off the rib bone Carr original that certainly sounds like back roads Texas. Another is a gospel medley that closes out the recording in a uniquely spiritual fashion. On the Blues Alley CD release date, Carr is to play with Broom, Johnson and Bowie.

"I think the CD turned out great," says Carr, who has had a busy year. The recording dropped in May, and last month he traveled to Russia for the White Nights international festival to perform with the Alex Cheremizov trio.

And earlier this year, Carr spearheaded the first-ever Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival over three days in February at a Rockville, Md., hotel. It drew large crowds of listeners and a favorable response

from performers, and Carr plans another one in February 2011.

DCJF does it again...

Upon review, the DC Jazz Festival delivered another winner this year. The 13 days in June were great for those Jazz 'N the Hoods dates, especially, with pianist Marc Cary one of the top opening weekend acts at the Bohemian Caverns. On that Friday night Cary entertained a near full house with his blend of traditional plus funky avant garde jazz.

Bohemian Caverns manager Omrao Brown said during a break, "One of the most important things the DC Jazz Festival is unique in is that it's keen on presenting traditional jazz forms, even though that may bring less people ... because it's important to present this music," said Brown, whose audience that night included festival producer Charlie Fishman. "That's a big part of what we set out to do, and it's hard to do, because it doesn't bring in a ton of money. We are happy to be a part of the festival. And the festival has been supportive of us all year round."

Earlier that same night, at a completely different setting, the Mandarin Oriental jazz lounge, vocalist Felicia Carter was in form on "How High the Moon," "I Remember You," "So Dance A Samba," and more.

The following week, one highlight was the James Moody tribute show at the Lincoln Theater, with Roy Hargrove, Cyrus Chestnut and the Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars, along with special guests Paquito D'Rivera, Kenny Barron and violinist Regina Carter. Barron and Carter were a treat, especially on "Georgia,"



Regina Carter wowed the crowd at the Lincoln Theater during the DC Jazz Festival in June.

with Carter segueing that tune into a spiritual ending with her sweetly glowing tones on "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

That last Saturday night of the festival featured a special performance by Roberta Flack, in place of Dianne Reeves, at the Lisner Auditorium, and the Benito Gonzalez group at Twins Jazz.

Another Benito CD...

Gonzalez and friends – including saxophonist Azar Lawrence, drummer Ronnie Burrage and Michael Bowie on bass – swung hard at Twins, Gonzalez in his inimitable big-handed multi-voiced style, especially notable on "A Love Supreme."

On break, Gonzalez, the Venezuelan who now calls this area home, promised a follow up CD to his 2004 debut CD "Starting Point." He said it has a working title of "Circles" and is planned for an August release, with special guests like Christian McBride on bass and Jeff Tain Watts on drums. ♦

July Highlights:

Paul Carr CD Release Party, July 6, Blues Alley ... Roland Matias and Afro-Rican Ensemble, July 9, 10, Twins Jazz ... Terence Blanchard, July 15-18, Blues Alley ... The Last Poets, July 19, Blues Alley ... Kenny Rittenhouse, July 23, 24, Bohemian Caverns ... Cyrus Chestnut, July 29-31 ... Andrew Adair Trio, July 30, Westminster Church

July Birthdays:

Rashied Ali 1; Ahmad Jamal 2; Johnny Hartman 3; Hank Mobley 7; Louis Jordan 8; Billy Eckstine, Lee Morgan 10; Albert Ayler 13; Philly Joe Jones 15; Cal Tjader 16; Chico Freeman 17; Sonny Clark 21; Billy Taylor, Charles McPherson 24; Johnny Hodges 25; Carl Grubbs 27; Charlie Christian 29; Hank Jones, Kenny Burrell 31.

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