

The Countdown Is On

...AS I write this, I'm being drawn forward with thoughts of seeing one of the most interesting, musically challenging groups this city has to offer. I've not heard **Talking Pictures** since last June's **du Maurier International Jazz Festival**, nearly five months. Of course that only leads to thoughts of next year's fest, only seven months away. Only. It seemed so long, that 11 1/2 months I had to wait as the fest ended this year. Now it's seven months from this week until 10 days of heaven, June 25-July 4. Wow, Canada Day will actually be something to celebrate next year.

...MEANTIME, lots going on that I can't wait to get my ears to. Last week's full-on blustery attempt to wrap the **Time Flies** series in 1000 words or less didn't allow room for the unofficial final night at **Lubie Sunday**. Visitors **Gianni Gebbia** (alto sax,

Italy); **Eyvind Kang** (violin, US) and **Joe Williamson** (bass, Germany) sat in with regular Sunday nighter **Dylan van der Schyff** (drums) and **Ron Samworth** (guitar, usually heard playing down the street at the **Latin Quarter** on Sundays). Announced at the official **Time Flies** concerts, the informal Sunday gig was billed as a "Tribute to Sly & the Family Stone". Uh huh... They played a couple of tunes which sounded vaguely familiar, but soon 'degenerated' (ya, right) into more of what they (and some of the rest of us) probably couldn't get enough of

during the previous four nights at the **Western Front** - that unpredictable, sometimes (at its best) crazy stuff called improv. I don't know if it's the time of year, or the time of life or this crazy-assed, wanting-to-funk-it-up time I'm in, but I cannot get enough of the stuff. I think it's the part about never knowing what's coming and the awareness of a sound or movement existing only in that moment or even second, then feeling it stretched into 30 minutes or even three hours of many of those moments... it's as alive as I've ever felt and goddamn it if that doesn't go hand in hand with the essence of improv. So, it was a looser, more relaxed feel in Lubie

that night, compared with the more serious 'playing with the big boys' feeling of the series, especially when the evening ended with a rocker I can only imagine was called *In Frisco*, about 'digging the scene in Frisco' or some such, with a previously unseen

loopy, almost teenage-boy side to the intense, dramatic violinist Kang on vocals. Strangely ironic note to end an improv weekend on. For anyone who thinks jazz is boring, you might want to start with these guys.

...HAD an absolutely lovely time at **Mojo Room** where I turned up to hear **Brad Turner** and whoever he was playing with for his weekly Wednesday gig (trio or quartet alternates each week). This week had the trio (**Darren Radtke**, bass; **Bernie Arai**, drums) with guest **Ross Taggart** blowing some seriously gorgeous, classic romantic-toned tenor sax for the most pleasant surprise this tired

soul (and companion) could've asked for on that weary night. Sent us off sleepily home at night's end (originally planned to stay til 11:30, but Taggart refused to let us leave, with that sax of his).

...ONLY two dates left in the dance/improv workshops hosted by the **New Orchestra Workshop (NOW)** and **EDAM** at the **Western Front**, Mon Nov 23, 4-6pm & 30, 8pm (it's FREE!). Musicians, dancers and observers alike are invited to participate/watch how a dance/improv performance is put together/rehearsed on the 23rd. The 30th will see the performance resulting from the previous workshop. I attended the first of the four in this portion of the series and was impressed, even awed by some of the segments 'performed' by these students of improv, eager to participate and lap it up. Double bonus: getting to see some new performers in action and checking out the machinations behind putting it all together. Cool experience.

...THIS weekend... it's the **Taking Wing** jazz series at **Sugar Refinery**. Look forward to a newer group named **Amour Fou**, which has the interesting situation of having both the ex- and current alto sax player from the punky jazz group **SMAC**: **Chris Kelly** and **John Anzai**. Saw them at Shug a few weeks back. Dug the boisterous energy and double-sax harmonies. Ya, harmonies'll get me every time. Looking forward to the full set - Friday, 9pm. Followed by **Mark Nodwell Quintet** (see encapsulated city for full line-ups), and by the way, Nodwell was at the two NOW/EDAM workshops I attended, and I'd like to hear some more improv outta him. Looseness good. Maybe get more of a taste this weekend? Anything could happen. And, as per usual these days, I hope it does. ✨

