

Vancouver's summer jazz festival rates as one of the best anywhere

From CI

Set aside the hype, though, and 2004 once again proved that the music continues to quietly evolve from within the tradition. Pianist Keith Jarrett's trio continues on a peerless 20-year run through the American popular song. While bassist Dave Holland's groups have probably done more to subtly reshape our notions of line and voice than any other bands today.

Here in Vancouver, the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society always has its ears to the ground, producing a summer festival that throws a net over the entire spectrum of the music. Opening night this year asked you to choose from a legend (Oscar Peterson), a modern master (saxophonist Joe Lovano), a funk outfit (Bullfrog) and a genius of cross-pollination (trumpeter Dave Douglas). Any critic who's been here leaves saying it's one of the finest festivals in the world.

Indeed, Coastal's year-long programming and its ongoing relationship with different international musicians makes a great many Canadians envious.

Douglas, for example, gave his large-scale composition, *Mountain Passages*, its North American debut here, teaming up with local cellist Peggy Lee and drummer Dylan van der Schyff.

Lee and van der Schyff's work with Douglas might just be emblematic of the increasingly high international profile



WALTER BIERI/AP FILES

Diana Krall's soft-centre migration continued in 2004.

of Vancouver's creative music community. *Bow River Falls*, their disc with him and French clarinetist Louis Sclavis, was

recorded on a Chicago label and reviewed favourably in the *New York Times*.

At the Lisbon jazz festival

in August, Vancouver musicians were given a primary role, perhaps the first time this has ever happened at a major event outside Canada. Nearly every night featured a local group, from Coat Cooke's *NOW Orchestra* to clarinetist François Houle's electro-acoustic quartet.

Back home in February the depth of the city's scene was recognized at the third annual National Jazz Awards. Despite a dodgy premise (winners were chosen in an unregulated e-mail vote) and a distinctly Toronto point of view, Vancouver's jazz community received 27 nominations. Multi-instrumentalist Brad Turner received five, including one for musician of the year.

Gradually the scene's growing infrastructure is beginning to challenge established institutions in Toronto and Montreal.

There are thriving independent labels here (Maximum Jazz, Songlines, Spool), a solid, mainstream venue (The Cellar), a musicians' co-op (1067) and a fastidious website (www.vancouverjazz.com) keeping track of current affairs.

Just think, 15 years ago Juno Award-winning saxophonist and pianist Phil Dwyer left Vancouver for Toronto. This summer he returned to his childhood home in Qualicum Beach.

In 2005, who knows who might be close behind.

Greg Buium is a Vancouver music writer.