

AL NEIL

— a Charlie Parkerish sort of 1960 version of Charles Ives with Schoenberg overtones

By LAWRENCE CLUDERAY

Al Neil, whose trio will be playing an important part in next week's Intermedia Nights at the Vancouver Art Gallery, is a hard man to locate. A recluse who is less sparing of words than he is of notes.

Al Neil is no ordinary musician. On the other hand he is a published poet and novelist, a recording artist who has had a pretty orthodox scholastic and musical training.

For example, years ago Al was a piano pupil of the late Glen Nelson, and also a composition student of Jean Coulthard, who remembers him as a something - out - of - the - ordinary lad from way back.

For years Al played be-bop and went through the gamut of changing styles, only to arrive at a style of his own which, though it may occasionally display overtones of Charlie Parker, still conveys an individual message, for Al is no imitator but rather an innovator who regards all sounds as being musical material.

In other words, Al Neil is a sort of 1960 version of Charles Ives — a British Columbian original who doesn't compose fugues and fantasies, but whose works are listened to in often chairless and airless studios by the young, and the young-in-heart, who are invariably enraptured by his creativity.

Neil, who for years played be-bop in Vancouver clubs, long ago developed his own particular style which is often frantic and always highly emotional.

When one talks to him about Schoenberg, Webern, Feldman or Cage, he is far more articulate than the most professional musicians I know.

His style, however, cannot be said to have been based on any one of them, rather is it an assimilation of varied influences—a Charlie Parkerish sort of phraseology with Schoenbergian overtones — a collage of Cage and Feldman upon which Neil has placed his individual stamp.

At first Al Neil and the skilled members of his trio will probably shatter you with their music. It will be like nothing you have ever heard before — not because Neil is a nut, but because he is an inventor and the entire unlimited world of sound and movement is his oyster.

Try Al Neil and his Trio at Intermedia next Wednesday for Al is a real creator — a lively searcher after new aural sensations. You may not like what you hear, of his music — but you won't easily forget it.



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