



A frequent player on the Capital Region club scene, the Rotterdam-bred, St. Rose-schooled Brian Patneau has in recent years become one of the new voices promoting local jazz.

Saxophonist Brian Patneau boosts Capital Region jazz scene

Busy performer in many bands, runs Web site

BY PHILIP SCHWARTZ
Gazette Reporter

He can't help it. These tangents just seem to come up. During a recent interview, sax player Brian Patneau, when he's supposed to be talking about himself, oftentimes diverts attention to other jazz players in his circle to promote their gigs instead of his.

In recent years, the 31-year-old Patneau has become one of the new voices championing the Capital Region jazz scene, partly through the albanyjazz.com Web site he runs and partly by being a ubiquitous figure in clubs from Schenectady to Saratoga to Albany, playing in a host of bands, including his own Brian Patneau Quartet.

"That was something ... to give a little unity to the scene," he said referring to albanyjazz.com, "and let people know that even though we're not New York City, even though we're not Boston or Chicago, there is a ton of people out there playing jazz music at a pretty high level."

HIS OWN GROUP

Despite that noble role as jazz champion, and aside from his spot in Alex Torres' locally based Latin Orchestra, his baby remains the Brian Patneau Quartet, which, given various configurations, sometimes plays as a trio.

Last year, the quartet, consisting of George Muscatello (guitar), Mike DelPrete (bass) and Danny Whelchel (drums), released "Distance," a full-length album of Patneau's compositions released on Torres' WEPA records. It followed 2003's "Variations," which was made up of several Muscatello songs based on the music of Leo Brouwer, the progressive Cuban composer.

Both CDs were met with critical praise. Al-

AboutJazz.com wrote that "Distance" sounds "at various turns exuberant, soaring, grooving, or longing. ... [It] leaves you in suspense from one track to the next about what is going to happen." Meanwhile, "Variations" was a *JazzTimes* pick in 2003, making one critic's Top 10 list for that year alongside heavyweights such as Dave Douglas and Terence Blanchard.

"With 'Distance,'" Patneau said, "I started to have more of an idea of a group sound and where I wanted the sound of the band to go. And I started to go more in a direction of less traditional swing-oriented [jazz] and more in the style of straight eighth notes, and I'm hesitant to say it, but like a European jazz approach that's ... influenced by rock and pop but [has] a definite jazz sensibility."

These days, the Schenectady-born, Rotterdam-bred Patneau splits time between teaching at Blue Sky Music Studios in Delmar and a busy gig schedule. He performs as many as five or six nights a week, including his Sunday night residency at Justin's in Albany.

And the quartet is getting ready for a performance at the Kingston International Jazz Festival at the end of the month. Appearing on the same bill as the Count Basie Orchestra, Russell Malone and Ben Allison, among others, Patneau called this the biggest gig the four have landed yet.

NEXT RECORDING

Meanwhile, Patneau and company are hoping to get into the studio by the end of the summer to record a fourth album.

"With this new record we're working on, it's definitely in the same vein [as 'Distance'] but I wanted to have a little more variety and textures and feels. It's going to be interesting listening to those two records back to back."

Reach Gazette reporter Philip Schwartz at 395-3111 or pschwartz@dailygazette.net.

The Brian Patneau Trio

WHERE: Daily Grind, 46 Third St., Troy

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday

HOW MUCH: Free

MORE INFO: 272-8658,
www.dailygrind.com/troy or
www.brianpatneau.com



The Brian Patneau Quartet — from left, Danny Whelchel (drums), Mike DelPrete (bass), George Muscatello (guitar) and Patneau (sax) — plays the Daily Grind in Troy Friday as a trio, minus Muscatello.