



FREDERICK MOYER

PIANIST

FREDERICK MOYER FEATURED IN BERKSHIRE EAGLE ARTICLES FOR PITTSFIELD JAZZ FESTIVAL CONCERTS

October, 2012 - Pianist Frederick Moyer's and his Jazz Arts Trio recently headlined a performance at the Pittsfield City Jazz Festival in Pittsfield, MA. The performance took place at the Barrington Stage Company's Sydelle and Lee Blatt Performing Arts Center.

Fred and the Trio were featured in the Berkshire Eagle in anticipation for the performance. Fred was also featured in the Berkshire Eagle for his educational performance at the Berkshire Museum for music students of the Herberg and Reid middle school. Both articles can be read below.

The Berkshire Eagle, Friday, October 12, 2012

The Berkshires

ON THE WEB: www.berkshireeagle.com

Pittsfield

Classical, jazz are in harmony

■ Pianist tells middle school students the different forms of music aren't very different.

By Jenn Smith
Berkshire Eagle Staff

PITTSFIELD — As it turns out, Herbie Hancock's jazz works and Claude Debussy's classical compositions have more in common than people might think.

On Thursday morning, concert pianist Frederick Moyer of the Jazz Arts Trio shared his insights on the ties between jazz and classical during an hour long program for Herberg and Reid middle school music students at the Berkshire Museum.

The program was sponsored by Berkshires Jazz Inc., as part of the Pittsfield CityJazz festival.

What gives jazz its varying sound from classical?

"It's the improv that makes it interesting," said Moyer.

"But," he said, "the classical guys were far hipper than the jazz guys."



Ben Garver / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Frederick Moyer conducts a workshop in jazz piano at the Berkshire Museum projecting his hands onto the piano for the audience to see.

Mayor cited, as an example, how classical composers were pairing mismatched chords long before jazz musicians.

Moyer encouraged the students to experiment with both genres of music.

During his presentation, the pianist performed classical Mozart to contemporary pieces, such as applying a snippet of the "James Bond" theme and George Gershwin's genre-blending "Rhapsody in Blue."

Moyer listed jazz's Oscar Peterson and classical music's Sergei Rachmaninoff as among his influences.

Whenever possible, the middle

school music teachers say they try to expose their pupils to a range of music styles.

Herberg has about 175 students enrolled between its orchestra, jazz band, chorus and concert band groups.

Reid has a smaller music program, with only a chorus and concert band group, because the school's schedule only allows band students, for example, to meet for 20 minutes of instruction twice a week.

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A finish with a flourish

By **Jeremy D. Goodwin**

Special to the Eagle

PITTSFIELD — Now in its eighth year, Pittfield CityJazz Festival heads toward its “headline weekend” this evening at 7:30, with a performance by the Jazz Arts Trio at Barrington Stage Company’s Sydelle and Lee Blatt Performing Arts Center on Linden Street.

The 10-day festival will be capped off on Saturday evening at 8 by the New England Jazz Ensemble, with guest vocal-

ist Giacomo Gates and flutist Ali Ryerson, in a concert at the Colonial Theatre that will also include the Williams College Jazz Ensemble.

Jazz Arts Trio is led by pianist Frederick Moyer, who

CityJazz Weekend

Who: Jazz Arts Trio

When: Tonight at 7:30

Where: Barrington Stage Company, Sydelle and Lee Blatt Performing Arts Center, 36 Linden St., Pittsfield

Tickets: \$20

How: (413) 236-8888; www.barringtonstageco.org; at the box office — 30 Union St., Pittsfield

Pittsfield CityJazz Festival

has spent most of his professional life playing works by the likes of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms over the course of a 25-year career as a concert pianist. In recent years he’s taken a classical music approach to mid-century jazz, seeking to expose the work to new audiences and to more fully understand the accomplishments of the genre’s great improvisers.

In 2007 he took a break from his grueling concert schedule, he explains, and found his musical proclivities taking an unexpected turn.

“I remember the very first few days when I didn’t have to practice anything. I found myself listening to [jazz pianist] Oscar Peterson and starting to transcribe his solos. I had no plan, it just became so fascinating to try to figure out now how they were creating this feeling,” he says.

Though he’d been trained on classical piano since age seven (his father William was a trombonist for the Boston Symphony), Moyer started listening to jazz early as well. Freshly inspired, he teamed up with two musi-

Who: New England Jazz Ensemble with guest artists Ali Ryerson and Giacomo Gates; Williams College Jazz Ensemble

When: Saturday 8 p.m.

Where: Berkshire Theatre Group, Colonial Theatre, 111 South St., Pittsfield

Tickets: \$25, \$15

How: (413) 997-4444; www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org; at the box office — 111 South St., Pittsfield

cians with whom he had played jazz informally as a teenager: bassist Peter Tillotson and drummer Peter Fraenkel.

They pick great moments in jazz history, and re-create them, note-for note. Tonight’s concert will feature a healthy dose from their performance of Ahmad Jamal’s album “But Not For Me: Live at the Pershing,” the centerpiece of Jazz Arts Trio’s second record, released in February. Moyer continues his solo classical engagements, but works in jazz compositions whenever possible.

The spirit of improvisation is firmly ensconced at the heart of jazz, and the notion of transcribing and re-playing another artist’s solos may not at first seem to be keeping with that spirit. But Moyer likens it to classical music, in which performers interpret inherited compositions and imbue them with their own flavor.

“By transcribing them, we’ve basically turned them into chamber music. They are now compositions, and in a way are now classical music, if you define classical music as music that is written down, where the performers don’t change the notes but their job is to interpret those notes as they wish to play them,” Moyer says. “Sometimes we play it faster, slower, quieter, more sweet, more swinging. We play it our way, just as we would do with Beethoven.”

The CityJazz Festival is built around two distinct phases, opening with a series of “jazz about town” performances in Pittsfield restaurants last weekend and building

toward the ticketed events this weekend.

Meanwhile, some musicians are working with local students.

“That’s something that’s sort of invisible to the public, but it’s a very important part of our mission,” says Ed Bride, chairman of the festival and president of Berkshires Jazz.

“Jazz is not the music of the masses, and it will disappear if students are not exposed to it while their minds are open and impressionable.”

Bride said two of the restaurants participating in the “jazz crawl,” who don’t typically feature live music, have already asked the bands to return. With other cultural organizations providing venues and now beginning to program shows and workshops, Bride sees momentum in the life of the festival. “I like how that’s moving, and I think the other organizations do as well,” he says.

Moyer will lead a workshop with area children on the topic of relationships between classical music and jazz.

“My dream was to take this stuff onto a concert stage after playing Beethoven and Mozart and show how the elbow grease method of revising, throwing away, pondering, writing things down, that whole essence of that kind of artistic creation certainly creates great music — but there’s a whole different way, which is just playing in the moment,” Moyer says.

“Each great form of music has its own kind of a swing. You have to find it, but there is that feeling of almost levitation, when you really get in the groove. It’s common, I think, to all music.”

GAIL MCCARTHY

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ON THE WEB:

Check out capsule versions of theater critic Jeffrey Borak’s reviews in Berkshire Stages online at www.berkshireeagle.com.