



L-R Chuck Johnson, Richard Simon, James "Smitty" Smith and Koji Ono
Photo by Glenn A. Mitchell

CJS Quintet's Dexter Gordon Tribute at LAX Crowne Plaza

Saxophonist, Chuck Johnson and trumpeter/flugelhorn, James "Smitty" Smith are celebrating their quintet's tenth anniversary early 2011. During working ten years they have won several key awards: The Chuck Niles Jazz Music Award and Mainstream Jazz Artists of the Year Award.

Their Dexter Gordon Tribute was presented, Thursday, February 17th, '11 at LAX's Crowne Plaza and included pianist, Koji Ono; bassist, Richard Simon and drummer, Keita Akutsu.

Starting the set was a Gordon number, "Hanky, Panky." They got off to a roaring beginning with Johnson and Smith both taking choruses followed by Ono blending in with a smooth piano solo. Simon is one of the best bassists in the business. His solo shined very well and he performed extraordinarily well throughout the evening! They continued with Gordon's "Catalonian Nights," in a Latinized version and rendering a beautiful chorus and more from Smith's muted trumpet, putting a nice groove on. This tune goes into a 4/4 time signature in the bridge. Simon and Akutsu both gave vibrant solos. In Gordon's "The Apartment" Johnson designated some nice tenor lines while Smith got into his flugelhorn for meaningful solos. Smith was featured on his trumpet in a gorgeous rendition in the ballad "For All We Know." A minor tune, "Cheesecake" is a number Gordon composed that has been played for quite a long time and gave everyone lots of musical expression. Johnson's tenor sax produced a very 'down home' sound along with Smith once again grooving on his flugelhorn while they both exchanged 4 bar breaks during early choruses.

For the second set included a Gordon waltz titled, "Tivoli" and was performed on Johnson's soprano saxophone and flugelhorn again from

Smith. A highlight was Gordon's "Benji's Bounce," an up tempo gem that gave Smith the opportunity in producing a fantastic trumpet solo and another great fluid tenor solo from Johnson. The audience was full this evening at Crowne Plaza. The audience enthusiastically gave much appreciation in their applause for all numbers.

See CJS website:

www.chuckjohnsonmusic.com.

Glenn A. Mitchell

GRAMMY-NOMINATED ALAN BROADBENT Brings Trio Back To Giannelli Square Of Northridge

It seemed fitting that pianist Alan Broadbent returned his Trio to the same concert site where his Grammy-nominated solo on CD was recorded, to celebrate its official release. Some of the selections from that CD, Alan Broadbent Trio Live At Giannelli Square, were recreated during the evening. Broadbent, a two-time Grammy-award winner, previously received the prestigious award for his arrangements for vocalists Natalie Cole and Shirley Horn, among other recognitions for his arranging, composing, and playing. A classically trained pianist growing up in New Zealand, a young Broadbent saw and heard jazz icon Dave Brubeck play in person while on tour in New Zealand that changed the then 14 year old's life, certainly his direction in music. His music continues to carry residuals of his early formal training, also reflecting influences of earlier jazz greats like Bud Powell and others, heard in his compositions and performance of his works.

This trio is made up of outstanding jazz musicians, certainly well known and busy individual players with a remarkable simpatico between them.

that occurs when he performs with Broadbent that ignites an energetic creativity, producing an evening of innovative, wonderful solo and supportive bass work. Kendall Kay primarily used brushes with his drums, setting a musical foundation with thoughtful subtlety and pattern originality. Quite an amazing trio, with full, rich interpretations -- a lesson in sophistication and tasteful originality.

Most selections played were traditional favorite tunes, as "Stranger In Paradise," "Just One Of Those Things," "Body And Soul," "Alone Together," "Lullaby Of The Leaves," and originals written by Broadbent, including "I'll Be Alright" and "Adam's Apple," a blues written in his teens in New Zealand. Renditions were unrushed, regardless of tempo, sometimes yielding unexpected results in the lush products produced.

Giannelli Square was filled to capacity with an audience that included musicians, recording industry people, and "black-belt level" serious jazz fans with knowledgeable high-expectations. They were attentive but quiet and almost motionless, deeply engrossed in what was coming to them from the stage, dazzled by the Trio playing for them. This was a discerning audience that was obviously rather impressed by an exceptional night of cerebral jazz by the Alan Broadbent Trio.

For information on future programs, contact Giannellisquare.com.

Harvey Barkan

Lorraine Feather at Vitello's

Singer/lyricist Lorraine Feather had a lot to celebrate at her February appearance at Vitello's in Studio City. Her CD, *Ages*, was nominated for a Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal. She now lives in the San Juan Islands in Washington state so that's another reason we don't see her performing very often in the Southland. Feather was accompanied by pianist Russell Ferrante and bassist Michael Valerio. With a simple intro she came on stage to a packed room.

She sang "I Forgot To Have Children" at a rapid pace, one of her trademarks. She sings the clever lyrics well because these are her own words. Each tune is a story which she delivers crisply, smartly. Between tunes she's chatty and warm with the audience. She talks about her life enough to give some clues to what she finally comes up with as a lyricist and how she comes upon some of her collaborations. Case in point: "Peculiar Universe" had music by Bela Fleck, lyrics by Feather. Valerio used his bow to begin, as Ferrante used a gentle touch at the piano. Feather used a spare approach, vocalized to the