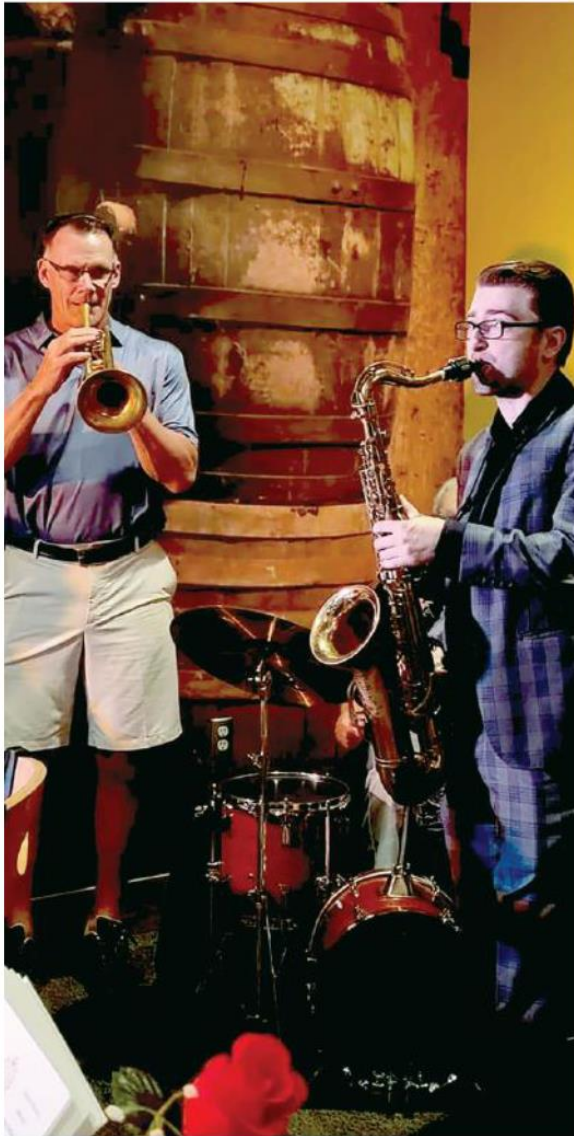


Jazzman Lehman says: You can either like it or flumpet

By “CP” Christopher Peppas



Joel Lehman, he of the GIL Jazz Combo, is not one to toot his own horn. But he will, however, cite chapter and verse on his instrument of choice.

That would be the flumpet. And before you ask Google, Siri, Alexa or spellcheck, it is a thing.

In Lehman’s terms, this is a cross between a flugelhorn, cornet and trumpet and it’s more than a simple hybrid, it has a sound all its own.

“It produces some very big sounds,” Lehman said in a recent interview. “But mellower sounds and not as harsh without sacrificing power.”

It was created by Art Farmer and is still the horn of choice for many of the greats and continues to be manufactured today by Monette.

If you ever go to see the GIL Jazz Combo (and why wouldn’t you?), don’t look in your program for a member of the band named Gil. “GIL stands for the Genius of Jazz Music, the Improvisation of the players and the Love we have for making music and connecting with the audience,” Lehman explained.

The original group consisted of Lehman, the late Neal Chandek, Dan Schneck and THE Mike Standal.

“What we try to be about and a bit of who we are is

based on our influences,” Lehman added. “Miles Davis had a real feel for the melodies. From his “Kind of Blue” album. The songs are not terribly difficult to play. They’re fairly simple but beautiful.”

The GIL Combo is all about “playing away into the night that we share with the audience.”

Lehman got a good deal of his appetite for jazz during the explosion of fusion in the late 70s, so it should come as no surprise to the readers that Chuck Mangione, Maynard Ferguson and Wynton Marsalis top the list of his influences.

Joel was playing out a good deal at that time, but then (like many others) he hit the pause button and put his playing career on hold as he pursued life. “I would say that I’ve been playing a lot in the last ten or twelve years,” Lehman said.

Joel tipped his cap to the Milwaukee jazz scene. “I’ve played a lot of jams in Chicago, Kansas City and elsewhere,” he said. “It’s not the same welcoming feel that I experienced when I came here. It’s more competitive, more cutthroat.”

Lehman stated that working at jams in town with the likes of Jeff Stoll, Joe Turano and other great players and vocalists has been a joy. “They are so very accessible,” he said.



“They’re incredibly inviting and are willing to give good tips and such good feedback.”

Lehman likes to play a combination of 80s disco and 80s jazz to have a little fun.

His setlist has quite a sense of humor and runs from the very cool Spiderman television theme to a witty takeoff on a standard like “Bennie’s from Heaven’ about the simple math of the human gestation period and even Sinatra’s “Nancy with the Laughing Face” gets a little massage.

The GIL guys play around a little bit by doing a mashup of “Summertime” using the lyrics of “Autumn Leaves.”

“It’s a simple formula,” Lehman said. “I want everyone to have fun and I want to be the guy to do it.”

You can catch Lehman and the GIL Jazz Combo at SIP Milwaukee in Mequon and elsewhere. He recently played a sold-out show at the Jazz Estate and sat in at ‘the baaree’ with Standard Issue which features Sue Russell, Jeff Stoll and Bill Schmidt.

He stops in to play at a variety of jams and open mics, especially the Tuesday night Jazz and Blues jam at Brewtown Eatery on 51st & Howard in Milwaukee.

And, whether you like it or lump it, get a load of his flumpet.

