

Take a moment to 'DISCOVER' the talented Eric Jacobson



By CP Christopher Peppas

Eric Jacobson is not one to toot his own horn. So, we'll just have to do it for him. Eric has established himself as one of the premier players of the trumpet in this area.

But his tentacles reach much further and the proof of that was his recent string of gigs in what is arguably the Jazz Capital of The World, New York City.

"When I got out of college, I dreamed of moving to New York and having a career playing there," Jacobson said in his interview. "But, my wife got a teaching job here and that didn't take place (at least not then)."

Jacobson played around the Milwaukee scene at the usual venues like "The Jazz Estate," The Jazz Gallery for the Arts" and many others. He was teaching and running clinics at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music for years.

Now, he does the same thing for Mark Davis at the Milwaukee Jazz Institute, which was born just months before the pandemic struck and shut lessons and all in-person contact down from the jump.

The virtual model they were forced to improvise on the fly has been a huge success and now the combination of live performances, jazz jams, virtual clinics and concerts has irrigated the next generations of jazz players.

Jacobson teaches high school combos, adult combos and works with drummer/teacher extraordinaire, Dave Bayles, on Big Bands

Eric is the go-to guy for many high profile gigs in Milwaukee, natch, but also Madison, Chicago and into Indiana.



If he were dealing with the paranormal instead of playing trumpet, he'd be a Ghostbuster. His talent on the C.G. Conn trumpet (he's a spokesperson) is of a paranormal nature, so, of course, "Who you gonna call?"

Jacobson did manage to make it to New York "three or four times a year," he said hooking up with Milwaukeeans who've made the great jazz migration there like Grammy winning fellow trumpeter Brian Lynch and pianist David Hazeltine. Both were fixtures on the jazz scene here for years before taking a bite out of the Big Apple.

"Now, I book my own gigs and meet other players. I find it exciting," Jacobson said. "I played six nights in New York and every one was packed."

Eric went on to say that the crowds show up all at once. At one show at the renowned Café Bohemia, he looked out at a sea of empty seats. But when the show started, it was wall-to-wall humanity. "It's like a revolving door audience."

Jazz is known for its improvisation, but is more accurately a pastiche of musical genres all balled up into one.

There's Traditional, Standard, Straight Ahead, Gypsy, Bebop, Cool Bop, Hard Bop, Fusion...you get the idea.

"I guess I'd say Hard Bop with a twist," Eric said. "I do that with originals and with some of the covers. It's a wide style. I don't categorize it, I just go out and play."

Among Eric's major influences are Freddy Hubbard and Woody Shaw. "They took Bebop and made it a little edgier, harmonically as well," he said. "We can take a song and dig deep into the chords."

Eric's Grandpa was a fan of Clifford Brown and "he was a huge go-to for a long time. Ditto for Blue Mitchell and Tom Harrell.

It's in the individual interpretation of the notes where jazz takes up residence and gives it its unique flavor and distinction.

The audience might not figure out what's playing until the very end. A song like "I Hear a Rhapsody" is way different when covered by John Coltrane than when sung by Frank Sinatra.

You can hear the above mentioned tune on "Discover," the eight-piece opus by The Eric Jacobson Quintet, which dropped in November of 2022 on Origin Records (82858).

"Discover" is not merely the title cut but also one of four Jacobson originals on the recording which is on the Top 100 Chart for jazz albums as we speak.

With a little help from his friends and fellow players in Chicago and New York to work on this masterpiece which critics say is "harmonically, rhythmically and soulfully in sync." Fellow and former denizen of the Cream City, Brian Lynch says it all: "Eric is the real deal. A truly world-class jazz trumpeter...strong, assured technique, a hip, dark sound on the trumpet and aggressive without gimmicks."

There's nothing anyone can add to that other than go see him when you can and add "Discover" to your playlist.



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