

"Solid, hard-driving jazz fusion"

How often people who don't deserve it become famous due to lucky circumstances. Unfortunately, even more often people who deserve it remain unknown. This happens especially often in the world of art and music. One right move, a nice "wrapping" or a shrewd trick in advertisement and one becomes a "star" known to millions. The other one remains unknown although being a bright talent; perhaps he wasn't in the right circles, or didn't move fast enough in time. Often the fault falls on the spectators, listeners, and readers who take a quick look at a painting, listen to just a few bars in the beginning, or go through the first couple pages of the unknown author and put it away saying, "I don't know this person." And it's a shame! Because very often a new artist is considerably better than one who is broadly advertised and hence more popular with the public.

I am almost certain that the name of David Hartl doesn't say anything to the jazz fans in Armenia. Too bad for them! "Thinking man's jazz" is how well-known jazz critic John Zech described the music performed by Dave Hartl's jazz quartet.

Indeed, the music of this quartet makes you think about every note and every bar. Beautiful acoustic sound on the last album "Straight, a Head," along with high-level technique puts this album and naturally the quartet itself in the category of best achievements in contemporary jazz music.

Dave Hartl, keyboard player, composer, and arranger, devoted his whole life to jazz. He plays, records, and teaches. He likes to play in the student auditoriums, passing along to the musical youth his vision of jazz. With him in the quartet are Ron Kerber on the saxophone, Craig Thomas on the bass, and Mark Graham on the drums. All of them individually are pretty well-known musicians, participating in different musical projects but being most successful when combining their efforts. Dave Hartl's previous project was called "Dave Hartl & Gaijin." Within this project he released two albums, although the style of music performed by the musicians was different then. A well-known observer of the very authoritative publication "Keyboard," Titus Levi, said this about the album "Foreign Growth;" "Solid, hard-driving jazz fusion... consistently well-rendered and lively. A definite hit for fusion fans." Although electric instruments are dominating, the music can be well compared to the latest album, which is purely acoustical.

Four veterans of the jazz scene in Philadelphia under the direction of Dave Hartl have said their word and have their place in contemporary jazz. And only conservative thinking and lack of information deprive an Armenian jazz society of being able to enjoy the music performed by Mr. Hartl.

-Armen Manukyan . From the March 31, 1998 issue of <u>Republic of Armenia</u>, the largest-circulation newspaper in the republic of Armenia.

Translated by Gregory Teperman