

Jazz Guitar Series At Papashon Encino

Harvey Barkam, L.A. JAZZ SCENE (Nov. 97)

The unusual combination of two guitars and a bass were featured at Papashon Restaurant in Encino on October 14 for their new Tuesday night guitar series. Barry Zweig, popular LA jazz guitarist, with John Leitham on bass and John Pisano accompanying on guitar played to a most appreciative and responsive audience. There was no talking or clinking of glasses while this trio played. The music was fresh and alive throughout the evening.

The enjoyment between guitar players was evident when Zweig and Pisano would go mano-a-mano, with one playing a break then backing off so the other could meet the challenge and play back a response. Zweig frequently changed his right hand technique, switching from the customary guitar pick to individual finger picking while holding the pick in his lips until needed again. His sophisticated chord progressions made every tune a delight. Zweig's styling of "Nuages" by Django Reinhardt was particularly memorable as was his solo of "People." Especially the musicians in the audience enjoyed his novelty version of "Take Five" played in 4/4 time, as he explained he had long wanted to take that liberty with it.

All the while Leitham was right there with his unusual assertive left handed playing. At times he used a guitar style tremolo to produce rapid note runs on his bass. He played with a self-challenging innovation and drive. The evening ended with Leitham featured on "Jitterbug Waltz" as only he could play it. The spell of the music-moment was occasionally disturbed by traffic noise coming through the extensive windows overlooking busy Ventura Boulevard. As an emergency vehicle was speeding by with red lights flashing and siren blaring, Zweig, without missing a note quipped, "It must be the jazz police."