



Quarter Notes TM

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By Ted Belastock

The beat goes on - literally! The real problem is trying to share it all - so bear with me, and a random sampling follows:

Upon reflection, this sure seems like it's been a fast year. Before jotting this column I reviewed the venues I attended in 2004 - an energizing event; then I noted the events I missed - a depressing event. Oh, well, ya can't do it all. The following is a snapshot of the recent quarter: Big news - The opening of **The Real Deal Jazz Club & Cafe** at The Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center. **Fenton Hollander** has assumed the leadership role in this new venture, and kicked off the season with an All-Star lineup - including **The Abdullah Ibrahim Trio, Jim Hall & Dave Holland, The McCoy Tyner Quartet**, and many other notable artists. The first performance at **Real Deal** was to catch the attention of the community, by a near total consensus. Musical tributes were offered to **John LaPorta, Greg Hopkins, Matt Marvuglio, Tiger Dameron, Andy McGhee, Ray Santisi, John Repucci, Bob Winter, Herb Pomeroy, Phil Wilson, Ken Pullig**, and many others. An eight piece ensemble performed excerpts of John's "*Theme and Variations*". In 2003, **John LaPorta** conducted and played this entire composition with the same players in the same hall. That performance was reviewed in a past column of this publication.

It was an extremely touching tribute to a great Berklee Faculty Legend.

Hopefully, **Bob Collins** will forgive another intrusion into the Northern Region, but I closed my musical quarter by attending a joyous CD release party at **The Chit Chat Club** in Haverhill, featuring **The Paul Combs' Pocket Big Band**. This is a nine piece powerhouse with an outstanding jazz book. The sets featured many originals along with selections from the pen of **Tad Dameron** and jazz greats. The group is tight, swings as an ensemble, and features fine solo performances by all. Watch for CD review in the next issue, as well as a Feb. Release party at **Ryles Jazz Club**.

Happy Holiday Season to all - see you in '05!

TB