The New York Perspective
Michael Abene & Dick Oatts
Sponsored by the Department of Music and the New Hampshire Library of Traditional Jazz

8:00 p.m. Monday, March 1, 1999
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
MIKE ABENE & DICK OATTS

Most of us who have immersed ourselves in what we believe to be the mainstream of the jazz tradition, with its various eddies and tributaries, may not be able to define just what we fully accept as falling under that rubric, but to paraphrase a Supreme Court justice in reference to an even more colorful realm of human activity, “We know it when we hear it.” We may be somewhat less thoughtful about the myriad ways in which jazz techniques and sensibilities penetrate other aspects of our musical culture, the articulation of such a level of detail being of major concern only to the kind of people who are guilty of the infinite categorization of the Grammy Awards. However, we must recognize that pure jazz in any of its dialects rarely is self-sustaining, even in metropolitan areas, and those who would be true professionals had best develop the comprehensiveness, flexibility, and resourcefulness which would allow the application of their skills and values within a diversity of musical contexts, the term “crossover” having come to mean something other than a walkway.

Although each was shaped in a different musical generation, Mike Abene and Dick Oatts typify the artistic lifestyles which command attention and respect in today’s New York milieu. Mike arrived on the scene in the early 60’s with the Maynard Ferguson band for whom he was composer/arranger as well as pianist. He soon branched out into the music director’s role for vocalists, and ultimately into record production where he was responsible for the Grammy winner “Digital Duke” (1987) and “The GRP All-Star Big Band – All Blues” (1996). The range of his clients and colleagues in one or more of his roles would provide a virtual musical “Yellow Pages;” more than a few examples: singers Liza Minnelli, Diane Schuur, Joe Williams, and Charles Aznavour, big bands Mel Lewis, Buddy Rich, Dizzy Gillespie, and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, and unique personalities Dr. Billy Taylor, Dave Grusin, Chick Corea, and B. B. King.

Dick Oatts is a native Iowan who got his start in Minneapolis and came to New York in 1977. Best known for his long membership in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra (and its successors), he also has had significant associations with Bob Brookmeyer and Red Rodney, enhanced (among many others) Latin bands led by Tito Puente and Machito, and recorded extensively with the pop-oriented group Flim and the BBs. His 1989 recording with pianist Garry Dial was well received not only for its musical imagination and execution but also because of the decision to use 30 live string players instead of electronic paraphernalia!
Despite the lure of the so called Big Apple, we are proud to report that not all Boston celebrities follow the example of Bill Parcells and Roger Clemens. John Lockwood and Bob Gullotti possess international reputations but have chosen (thus far) to continue to grace New England with their distinguished presences, contributing to numerous winning teams.

While performers of this level of ability and integrity still walk the planet, we need not fear the millennium. Rejoice!
THE SERIES

The UNH Traditional Jazz Series began in 1979. It promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the art through concerts featuring musicians of regional, national, and international prominence. The program represents a unique endeavor to expand interest and honor outstanding talent and achievement.

Musicians wishing to do so are encouraged to offer their recordings for sale or mail order during intermission; a brief announcement may be made. The sponsors have no financial interest in such sales beyond offering a courtesy service to the artists and the public.

Program Notes -- Paul Verrette
Production -- David Seiler

1998-1999 SCHEDULE

September 14: New Black Eagle Jazz Band
October 19: Donna Byrne & Company
November 9: Trombonist Al Grey, Jane Jarvis, piano, & Clark Terry, trumpet
January 25: Clarinetist Bob Wilber
March 1: The New York Perspective: Dick Oatts, reeds, Mike Abene, piano
April 5: Dick Hyman, piano
May 3: The Original Salty Dogs (postponed until fall)

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

October 14: Rebecca Parris, John Bunch and Bucky Pizzarelli with the Seacoast Big Band. Harry Jones Memorial Education Fund Concert, Portsmouth Music Hall (603) 436-6017
January 19: James Williams and the Intensive Care Unit, Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH
March 21: Gala Jazz Concert: Dr. Clark Terry and guests with the UNH Jazz Band. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH