TRADITIONAL JAZZ SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR EIGHTY-SIXTH PROGRAM

MIKE MARKAVERICH
SOLO PIANO

SPONSORED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY OF TRADITIONAL JAZZ

8 PM MONDAY
NOVEMBER 2, 1992
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Whenever we are so fortunate as to present a specimen of that rare breed, the solo jazz pianist, we are usually moved to wax eloquent about the problem of manipulating in an instantaneously creative manner the multiple demands of melody, harmony, rhythm, and texture with only two hands. Be that as it may, that complex pianistic endeavor takes on a new dimension with the absence of sight, and tonight we are thus placed in the presence of one who represents transcendent accomplishment in a manner both humbling and inspiring, especially to those of us who feel overwhelmed by lesser challenges.

Ironically, the history of jazz would be much the poorer without its sightless pianists - Art Tatum, George Shearing, and Marcus Roberts come immediately to mind - and in a not unrelated popular idiom, Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder are notable; moreover, the activities of specific blind composer/performers on the keyboard can be traced back at least as far as the early Renaissance. One might speculate on what directions such lives would have taken had the piano or organ not existed to allow for the full release and realization of their imaginative energies!

Even more ironically, Mike was not born without sight; he arrived prematurely, and one of the treatments of 43 years ago resulted in pumping too much oxygen into the necessary incubator; the medical term is retrolental fibroplasia.

Mike grew up in Nashua, attended the Perkins Institute for the Blind, graduated from Bishop Guertin High School, and was accepted at Dartmouth. Intending to major in French, he was waylaid by some Oscar Peterson recordings, and, as they say, the rest is history. However, in his pursuit of jazz excellence his spacious intellectual curiosity caused him to complete a Master of Arts degree here at UNH in 1978, dealing with history, theory, and classical piano. (Some of us still have vivid memories of Mike's successful conquest of Beethoven, coincidentally another musician who had adjustments to make in regard to his physical condition!)

Shortly thereafter Mike settled on Cape Cod where he flourished musically and survived financially for a decade, then moved on to Florida, having been tempted when he placed third in the Great American Jazz Piano Competition in Jacksonville in 1986, an event previously won by Marcus Roberts. Presently, Mike lives in Sarasota, works both solo and with a trio, has two recordings available, and made a triumphant musical return to Dartmouth for his 20th reunion last year. He returns to us for his third appearance on our series, having done a remarkable two-piano program with Jack Bumer in 1981, and a
memorable solo evening in 1987. Mike's growth as an artist comes from talent, energy, joyfulness, curiosity, and perspective. He listens with an open mind and loving heart to sounds past and present, and applies a combination of spontaneous enthusiasm and reflective judgment to his own statements in the jazz language; long may his voice be heard.

Not too long ago, in a Florida interview, Mike was quoted as follows: "I look at it this way. When I was born they didn't give me much of a chance of living, and I am thankful to be alive. I figure God more than compensated me for not having sight with my musical gift." Would that we all might recognize our "gifts", and use them so well.

Finally, a private word to Mike: the Tin Palace is still open.

Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements. Your cooperation is requested.
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

THE SCHEDULE

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