

Pat Malone Quartet

Thursdays in the Summer at La Posada's Patio

Guitarist Pat Malone is one of our most versatile musicians on the jazz scene today. I've seen him on the Plaza Summer Bandstand series, in soul bands, and recently at Lydia Clark's CD release party. A few Thursdays ago I was able to catch his wonderful (and hopefully not disbanded) quartet on one of the last lovely September evenings on the patio at La Posada. Offering straight ahead tunes and standards for room for plenty of improvisation, the players clearly enjoyed each other as the audience enjoyed them. The band consists of Pat on guitar, Kona Kaluhiwa on sax, Asher Barreras on bass and drummer John Bartlit. I arrived as the band was into Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" at a nice swift tempo, and immediately my toe got a-tappin'. John Bartlit was a band unto himself, adding fills and even playing the melody; still, he never got in the way of the other players. Being outside, however, it was sometimes hard to hear his quieter passages. The band then went into Blue Mitchells "Blue Silver" (I'd like to hear that with Jan McDonald or Chief Sanchez sometime...), and then the Latin tinged "Obsession". Pat's strong, fluid lines were punctuated by John's hand drums and Asher's driving bass...these guys were on it. Then it was playtime for Kanoa as the band dove into Coltrane's Mr. Simms, giving the sax man free range to wail. Since it was Trane's birthday, the band treated us to a restrained, almost modal version of "Central Park West", and as it started getting dark the La Posada staff brought out those tall gas heater to keep us (and the band) warm. It was also nice to hear this tune with the gentle glow of the lights and the near-by fire pit, *and* to hear this inventive band that's respectful of the jazz tradition while still making the music their own. I hope this band is back for next summer, and if so, I plan to visit the patio at La Posada much more often!