

# Trey Keepin at El Farol

By Michael Handler

For all the years sax man Trey Keepin has been gigging in this town, you'd think he'd be a household name---and I'm sure he is amongst blues fans. But on his (almost) solo gigs every Friday at El Farol in Santa Fe, Trey shows another side, full of clarinets, big saxophones and tunes, bebop and swing . Taking the stage on the very relaxing back patio, Trey and occasional bass man Myron Zuidema offer standards and some originals using Trey's abilities on a variety of instruments, and one you don't see him play on his regular gigs around town. And he's good at it!

The first tune was indeed on clarinet, a jazzy rendition of Gershwin's "American in Paris" I believe. It set the tone for the show by playing tunes that are not jazz standards but also sound great on the particular axe he uses. On the solo tunes you can hear the tone and feel of the instrument; the vibrato, the rumble of the lower notes, and the fullness of the sound. Next up was a version of "Basin Street Blues", which had a nice, New Orleans feel, especially appropriate with JazzFest just completed, and the current troubles with the lower Mississippi River.

I have to admit that I didn't get all the names of the tunes, and some are originals from his CD "Straysax". But my notes tell me that the next selection of the evening was "more of a funky thing with soul and passion". So there you go. Trey injects lots of soul and passion into his playing (no matter in what context or band), and as a primarily solo artist in this intimate room, it really stands out. The next song sounded like it was right out of a grade B film noir movie, and had a big city feel to it. It was actually Duke Ellington's "Harlem Nocturne", and it never sounded better. I halfway expected to see Raymond Chandler or Humphrey Bogart stroll into the patio and come up to my companion Irene Campos and say, "What's up, baby...?" Back to the Delta, Trey next did a classic clarinet tune, "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?", which is also on the new CD....it's the tune I played on KSFR. Again, our thoughts went to the people in the flood zone, where the verdict on their fate is still unknown at the time of this writing. I was also reminded of that great New Orleans musical institution, Al Hirt, but there are touches of Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman in what Trey does, especially with the tunes he selects. Classic stuff!

Then it was time for the big bass clarinet, and man, he made the house shake with that lower than low tone! The song was a beautiful rendition of the Beatle's "Yesterday", and right away we jumped from the swing era to modern musical times. Then with a click of a foot switch, the whole band magically appeared (sound-wise anyway) to round out and fill the song in a very creative way.

During the second short set, Trey featured a wildly popular clarinet instrumental from the 60's called "Stranger on the Shore" by a man with an even stranger name, Mr. Acker Bilk...remember that one? After a standard intro and straight reading for the first part, he and the "band" tore into an up-tempo swing version that AM listeners never heard 40 years ago! It was very hip. Other tunes to close out the night included "All of Me" and "Mysterioso", and another selection from the CD that started as a free jazz sound scape and ended with the "band" giving it focus and swing. It's nice that Trey can have

a venue like this to play HIS music, as well as part of the great American songbook. So every song was really a stand out, and he himself said earlier that with all the tunes running through his head, he wanted "every song to be a gem". With all the tunes in his head and in his book, Trey is aware that every song counts. Credit goes to El Farol for the use of the beautiful space, and Trey for putting out his beautiful music. Hopefully this Friday night up on Canyon Road will turn into a real scene.