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## **JAZZ FLOURISHING IN THE CLUBS AND STREETS OF VANCOUVER**

**Renee Doruyter**

**Reports of the death of live jazz in Vancouver are greatly exaggerated. As critic Renee Doruyter – herself a familiar performer on the local jazz scene – reports, a new, younger audience is creating a healthy resurgence.**

It has been about 50 years since jazz was the popular music of the day. But as increasing numbers of young music fans branch out from rock 'n' roll, there are signs that jazz is on the verge of a major comeback.

The popularity of such musical neo-traditionalists as Harry Connick, Jr., Wynton Marsalis and Courtenay Pine, the frequently-declared love of jazz by rock stars such as Charlie Watts, and the popularity of swing and touch dancing in European clubs are indications that young music lovers are developing a taste for the sophisticated sounds of jazz.

Locally, there's a steady increase in attendance and interest in Coastal Jazz and Blues Society's annual jazz festival and a number of new clubs devoted to the continuation and rebirth of this creative musical expression.

"I think it's really healthy when you have a core of musicians who are calling Vancouver their home and are creating all this original music and it's being recognized not just by people who live here but by people across Canada, the United States, and Europe," says John Orysik of the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, producers of the duMaurier International Jazz Festival (this year's dates are June 25 through July 4).

"What we're doing to facilitate that even more, especially for this year's festival, is setting up special projects where Vancouver musicians will be playing with other musicians from the States, from Europe."

Orysik says Coastal's success is based on promotion and approach ("We promote jazz as if it's rock 'n' roll") and wonders how well the jazz scene would be doing if only the media and record companies got behind the players.

"Imagine if all those things were really informing the communities they allegedly serve – the jazz scene would be even more vibrant," says Orysik.

So how vibrant is it? In Vancouver, there are plenty of places to go, plenty of excellent people to see. There's an audience too – Coastal Jazz and Blues has a 10,000 member mailing list for its newsletter; the Association for the Preservation of Swing and Big Band Music, which holds monthly dances and which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, has about 3,000 members.