

Dale Fielder Salutes Pepper Adams in a Recorded Concert

by Skoot Larson

Saxophonist **Dale Fielder** brought his fine quartet to **Rosalie and Alva's Performance Gallery** once again last Saturday night (June 9, 2007) to record a tribute to hardbop baritone legend **Pepper Adams**

before a live and appreciative audience.

The quartet, which included Fielder regulars **Jane Getz** on piano, bassist **Edwin Livingston** and **Thomas White** at the drums, played two sets of music for inclusion on the group's next compact disc.



The first set put the spotlight on seven compositions from the pen of Pepper Adams whom, while known as a master of the big horn, has never received sufficient credit for his music writing abilities. The second set paid homage to three other saxophone giants. A melodic tip-of-the-hat went to Sam Rivers' "**Cyclic Episode**," Wayne Shorter's "**Lester Left Town**," and Coltrane's "**After the Rain**," spiced up by some of Fielder's own originals.

Dale Fielder is an attuned and sensitive artist across the full spectrum of saxophones, although in the past few years he has concentrated much energy on the baritone citing a specific interest in the works of Pepper Adams. Fielder's recent exclusively *big horn* CD, *Baritone Sunrise* featured an inspired music tribute to the great Adams entitled "Pepper's Mood."

Fielder's quartet set the evening rolling with Adams' spirited "**Rue Serpente**." Dale gave the first solo to bassist Livingston who took command and wove a lush web in the low register setting the stage for baritone fireworks. Fielder jumped in behind Livingston with style and grace.

While Dale Fielder is passionate about the legacy of Pepper Adams, he could never be accused of being an imitator. Pepper Adams played with a hard, brittle edge to his tone as he roared through the changes. Dale displays a similar facility as he moves across the

horn's spectrum top-to-bottom, but Fielder has a less harsh sound, all his own, that polishes the edges and brings new beauty to Pepper's works.

Fielder adds more depth to Adams by performing on the other saxophones in his arsenal. On "**Bossa Allegro**," he chooses the alto sax, commenting that he "Feels the beauty of this Pepper Adam's tune gets lost in the baritone's low range." Edwin Livingston further enhances "**Bossa**" with some exceptional arco bass work for his solo.



A true gem in the first set was a song associated with Adams, although not composed by the baritone master. "**Baubles, Bangles and Beads**," from the musical "**Kismet**" proved an excellent vehicle for the quartet. Taking the first shot out of the box, Jane Getz delivered a world-class piano solo, cutting it up and serving it hot! Fielder followed blowing long interesting ideas that toyed with the tunes original waltz-time.

Pepper Adams wrote a deep and meaningful ballad, "Now In Our Lives," in his last days of battling the cancer that took him from us. The Dale Fielder Quartet captures all the pathos of this introspective work while all four players dip it in such serious soul one can feel the composer's questioning emotions.

Fielder performed the second half of the evening primarily on tenor. By the point in the evening, all four had really settled into a comfortable swinging groove. Dale and company almost seemed to be more relaxed playing the saxophonist's originals along with the "three tenors" salute.

The pinnacle of part two proved to be an Fielder selection, "Light and Shadow," excerpted from a larger work that the sax-man had composed for symphony orchestra. The structure of this piece appeared to be built on set chord changes interspersed with Lydian modal choruses. Again, on this work, Jane Getz captured the solo spotlight blowing some gorgeous, full, open-voiced changes.

The Dale Fielder Quartet is fast becoming an L.A. legend, always delivering a dynamic and interesting performance of music that can be thoughtful while it is entertaining and enlivening. Dale Fielder, Jane Getz, Edwin Livingston and Thomas White are without a doubt a part of this writer's circle of favorites.

