

Pan Jazz opens to small audience

By JOANNAH BHAROSE

A SMALL group of jazz lovers, mainly visitors, turned up for the first night of the Pan Jazz Festival VII, at the Spektakula Forum, on Thursday.

The Amoco Renegades Steel Orchestra opened the show a little after 8.30 pm, the scheduled start, and was followed by Claude Sommier's Quintet, Djoa, featuring Annise Hadeed. Jerry Gonzalez and the Fort Apache Band closed the show a few minutes after midnight.

Djoa's Xavier Desandre-Navarre on the percussion stole the show. Barefooted and dressed in jeans and a sleeveless cut off t-shirt Desandre-Navarre thrilled the crowd with more than 15 different instruments in his number 'Monkey's Desperation'. It was impossible to separate him from his music.

The group led by Martiniquan born pianist and composer Sommier is a melodic, percussive jazz based quintet. Sommier's compositions are coloured by the traditional Martinique rhythms and are influenced by Afro-Latin music creating a unique combination of bebop, bolero, beguine, calypso and belia. They played in the festival four years ago. The other band members were Francois Laizeau on drums, Jean Marc Larche on saxophone and Marc Michel le Bevilion on bass.

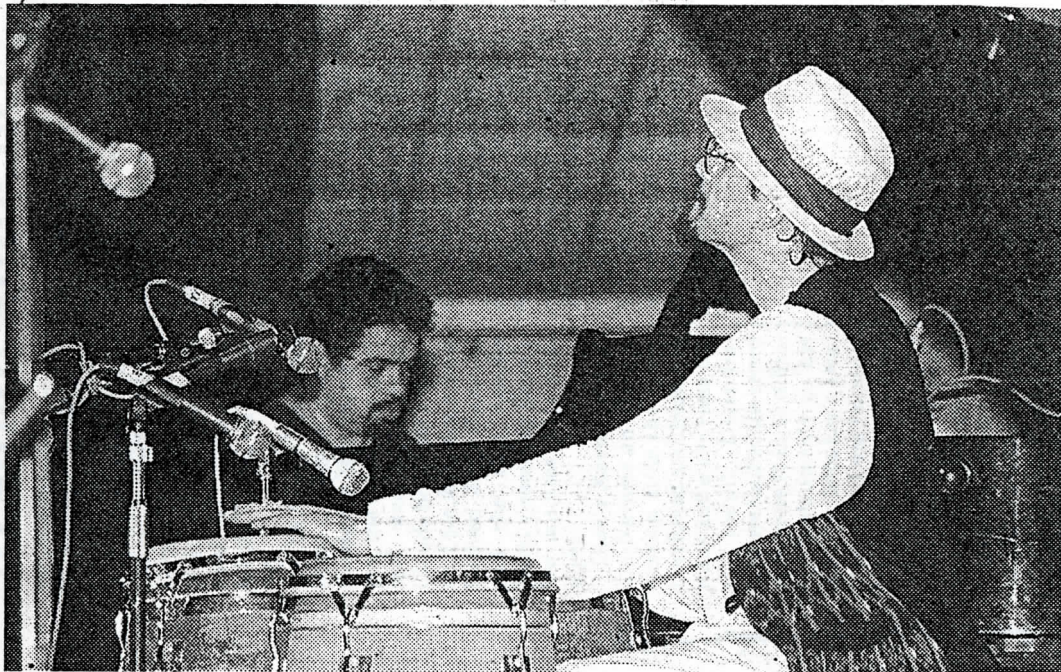
By the time Gonzalez and the Fort Apache Band finished performing more than half the crowd had left. This team has been hailed by the New York Times as "the best Latin Jazz Group working today." This was a rare opportunity for Jazz lovers to experience Gonzalez's crossover music and witness him on the trumpet and congas. He has performed with great names like McCoy Tyner, Tito Puente, Machito and Dizzy Gillespie. Other members of the band have played with Art Blakey, Max Roach and Wynton Marsalis.

The group's album

'Rumba Para Monk' was named 'Jazz Record of The Year' in 1989 by the French Academie du Jazz. In 1989 the Fort Apache band was voted number one World Beat Group in Down Beat's annual Readers Poll. The other band members are John Stubblefield on tenor sax, Joe Forde on Alto Sax, Larry Willis on piano, Andy Gonzales on bass and Steve Berrios on drums and poercussion.

The final night of Pan Jazz VII will be staged tonight at Pier 1, Chaguaramas and features Phase II Pan Grove Steel Orchestra, Fun da Mental, Monty Alexander's Quartet with Derek Diccenco on Steel Drum and Yellow Jackets.

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IN THE LATIN GROOVE: JERRY Gonzalez on the congas during his performance with the Fort Apache Band at the Pan Jazz Festival VII at Spektakula Forum. **Photo by AURTHUR EDWARDS.**