



Jazz time: Club opens big with smooth saxophonist

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ALTON— A new kid on the block plays jazz all the time and supports local musicians.

Altonian Cindy Crawford realized a dream when she opened Jazz on Broadway at 554 E. Broadway, as much for herself as for other jazz lovers.

"My grandfather was a blues person; he played guitar and cello," Crawford said about the late Carl Dickerson, of Alton, who died more than 30 years ago. "I remember that cello and the sound."

Crawford felt strongly enough about her dream that she opened Jazz on Broadway while she still works full-time at Olin Brass, where she has worked for the last 30 years. Jazz on Broadway features local and national jazz and blues artists.

"I had a vision, because I love jazz," said Crawford, who opened the doors the first weekend in July. "Myself, I don't like bars. I have nothing against them, but I just like to go somewhere that I can go and have a glass of wine and relax."

Jazz on Broadway's hours are from 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. Wednesday through Sunday, when there is no cover charge, but beautiful music flowing throughout the space of exposed brick and soft lighting, creating a warm ambience. The setting lends itself to using a laptop or reading a book, as well as sipping wine and just listening.

For live music, there could be a ticket charge for certain artists, and on days of concerts, Jazz on Broadway will be closed, opening about a half-hour before the show. At this time, Jazz on Broadway is a cash-only establishment, while Crawford works on setting up for other methods of payment. She also currently is working on the club's website.

The club has an extensive wine list, champagne, sangria and domestic and international beers, as well as non-alcoholic beverages.

"My mom and dad go out to eat, and they don't want to go home yet when they're done. Now, they can come here and relax and don't have to go across the bridge, because we've got it right here," Crawford said. "It's here."

For Jazz on Broadway's grand opening this weekend, R&B saxophonist Tim Cunningham will play two shows nightly at 8:30 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Tickets cost \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. for the first show and at 9:30 for the second show.

Cunningham recently released a new CD in June entitled, "Reflection."

Jazz aficionados describe Cunningham's sound as smooth, sultry, cool and funky.

He has played the sax for more than half his life, headlining in nightclubs, Las Vegas casinos and festivals spanning the United States and the Caribbean, where he appeared at the inaugural St. Lucia Jazz Festival in 1992.

He also opened the Cincinnati Jazz Festival for six consecutive years from 1994 to 1999.

On stage, Cunningham exudes high energy and emotion. He has opened for other artists including Dave Koz, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Brian Culbertson, George Benson, Norman Brown, Earth, Wind and Fire, R. Kelly, Luther Vandross, The Temptations, The O'Jays, Cameo, Keith Sweat, The Yellow Jackets, Chick Corea, The Whispers, Wynton Marsalis, The Average White Band, Patti Labelle, Jeffery Osborne, Al Green and Boys II Men.

Atlantic Records signed Cunningham in 1996, after which he worked with Culbertson, Will Downing, Kevin Whalum and Bobby Lyle on his release, "Right Turn Only." The feature track, "This Is The Life," made the Smooth Jazz Chart at No. 19, receiving national and international airplay.

Cunningham also has appeared on BET's "Jazz Central," and had three appearances on the television series, "The Untouchables." Visit www.timcunningham.com for more about the artist.

Some other favorite jazz and blues artists of Crawford's are Boney James, Rick Braun, David Sanborn, Miles Davis and B.B. King.

Some River Bend and regional musicians among her favorites are The Ralph Butler Band and Gigi Darr of Alton, who regularly plays with Butler, Ellen Martinez of Alton, and StarCity recording artist Fred Walker and Danita Mumphard, both of St. Louis.

Walker, a saxophonist, will play from 7 to 10 p.m. every Sunday, starting Aug. 21. Walker plays intimately in his Saxxy Jazz Music Show, near the front window of Jazz on Broadway, and takes requests. His repertoire includes covers and original tunes, and genres range from jazz to classical. Visit www.stlsounds.com to hear Walker's Saxxy Jazz music.

With football season coming up, Crawford's cousin, Samuel "John" Chatman, of Alton, coordinated Jazz on Broadway's audio-visual equipment to include flat-screen TVs for sports.

"If you're a fan, but just want to relax, come in and watch the games on our flat screens and enjoy some smooth jazz at the same time," Crawford said.

To receive Crawford's e-jazzletter by email, send contact information to jazzonbroadway@gmail.com. The telephone number is (618) 465-5299.