

Irish Independent

Walk on the wild side

Sunday March 14th 2004

JAZZ

GRAINNE

FARREN

IN WHELAN'S last Sunday night, David Berkman (piano) led a programme based on his own compositions, leaving plenty of leeway to Dick Oatts (saxes and flute), Johannes Weidenmuller (bass) and Nasheet Waits (drums) to develop the themes as the fancy took them. The results ranged from lyrical to wild - Oatts in particular going a bit too frantic at times - but the leader's dynamism and all four musicians' total mastery of their instruments meant that there was never a dull moment.

The pianist paid tribute to the late Kenny Kirkland with *Back in the Nineties*, featuring a rapid-fire piano solo but with rather too much repetitive alto. Later a Brazilian tango, with Oatts on flute, turned into a free-for-all in which bass and drums got a chance to show their virtuosity, but it went on too long. Encore time found Berkman alone on stage, winding down elegantly with Billy Strayhorn's *Blood Count*.

MEANWHILE, today in the Temple Bar Music Centre, Open Jazz 2004 offers six hours of live performances free of charge, beginning with the Phil Ware Trio and ending with the Kai Big Band. Doors open at 12 noon and families are welcome.

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