

# Chaise Lounge Gets Feet Tapping, Fingers Snapping

## REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO Chaise Lounge, the jazz band that appeared at the Highland Center for the Arts on Tuesday evening of last week, is well named. As a piece of furniture, a chaise lounge is something between a chair and a sofa, combining comfort and relaxation for a summer's day, the epitome of being laid back. And a Lounge is a bar where you might hear sophisticated jazz in an intimate setting.

This group of six excellent musicians returned to Greensboro for the third time in what is fast becoming an annual tradition in the Summer Music From Greensboro series, a very generous free concert that marked the beginning of the season.

The band leader, Charlie Barnett, plays guitar, accordion and keyboards, joined by Marilyn Older in most of the vocals, Tommy Barrick on percussion, Gary Gregg alternating among the saxophone, clarinet and flute, Joe Jackson on trombone and Pete Ostle on double bass. The band really has fun performing old standard songs and original compositions, and their energy is readily communicated to the audience. Part of the secret of their well-deserved popularity is that they pick engaging melodies and great lyrics, through which they shine forth both in their well-integrated ensemble effect and in imaginative solo improvisations.

The first number on the program was My Baby Just Cares For Me, which Older sang with her wonderfully seductive torch voice. The verses of the second tune urged a lover to make up his mind, or someone else would get her first, all with a hint of Latin rhythms. The next

piece had a repeated refrain, "It's wonderful", with fine clarinet and trombone work. That Old Black Magic got the audience snapping their fingers to the infectious beat, with the saxophone and trombone playing off each other in a lively duet, while Barnett's original song, If I Ever Get To Paris, evoked all the beauties of that city. Another of his works, Tick Tock, Tick Tock, had a sense of relentless time in the tapping on the hollow block by the drummer, reinforcing the lyrics about deciding whether a relationship was going anywhere.

Gregg on saxophone and Jackson on trombone were spotlighted in a song with the chorus, "Wahila," having a slightly Mexican lilt to it, in which the drummer showed his talents. Another Barnett tune had the curious title, Surreal Woman Slumped Over The Bar, about unrequited love. Yes had a driving rhythm, like the dance bands of **See LOUNGE Page Ten**

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the 30s and 40s, and Mozambique was a humorous fantasy about a trip never taken. It had a fine melody and an extended part for bass player Ostle, who was very entertaining to hear and watch.

After intermission, Barnett showed his skills on first the accordion and then the guitar in two numbers with a good flow, the second inspired by New Orleans. Another piece cleverly used the sounds of the Morse code distress signal, SOS, in the words, for someone hoping for help in a difficult relationship. The Earl was written especially for Gregg by Barnett, giving him a chance to demonstrate his improvisational talents. A bittersweet

love song was followed by a very funny song with a story line about a geeky guy who nevertheless had "the coolest car I ever saw", leading to marriage. The final offering of the evening was Burning Down The House, written by David Byrne of the Talking Heads, a terrific tune with amusing lyrics. A spontaneous standing ovation brought the players back for an encore, If I Only Had A Brain from the famous film version of The Wizard of Oz, with had some extended riffs by the drummer Barrick, making full use of his traps.

Chaise Lounge certainly is a band that takes you away with them on their musical journey and we hope that they will return next summer to share their high-energy performance again!