

# Monty Alexander Trio best jazz group in town

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Some of you said, "How come we can't get anything but rock and country-western in Tucson?"

Where are you? Monty Alexander is waiting for you at the Twin Flame.

Some of you said, "I wouldn't mind a cover charge for really good jazz."

Where are you? Senator Eugene Wright is waiting for you at the Twin Flame.

When Les McCann told a packed house, "Y'all got one of the best jazz clubs in the country here, so you better take care of it," you applauded and yelled "Right on!"

Bobby Durham is waiting for you at the Twin Flame.

The Monty Alexander Trio began a three-week stay at the East Speedway nightspot Monday before a modest opening-night audience.

And that in itself is almost criminal. Anything less than a packed house for this trio is a sin.

How do you like your jazz? Hard and funky, in the Ramsey Lewis vein? You'll get it, in such numbers as the Isaac Hayes invention "Shaft." Maybe Shearing-like in concept? You'll get it again with the likes of "Here's That Rainy Day," the theme from "Love Story" and the theme from "Summer of '42."

If you're a bit more traditional, you'll groove on the Miles Davis classic, "Milestones."

Alexander's style is his own, distinct and smooth and polished.

Of course, no piano player can go far wrong with the redoubtable Gene Wright on bass and Bobby Durham on drums.

Wright is among the absolute top-rank of bassists. For a decade and more, he was a member (along with Paul Desmond and Joe Morello) of the Dave Brubeck Quartet, through Brubeck's greatest years and such classic albums as the Carnegie Hall concert

and the "Gone With the Wind" recording.

Brubeck never swung again like he did with Wright behind him. The big bassist calls his job "layin' down the law," which is to say he ... sets ... the ... rhythm ... right ... here .. and ... heaven ... help..you ... if... you stray.

Alexander himself says "I wouldn't want to play without guys like Senator and Bobby behind me (Durham's credentials are verified by his stint with the Oscar Peterson Trio). We want to be happy and make happy music, good music, and that's what's happening."

The trio's latest album is titled "We've Only Just Begun," but Alexander, Wright and Durham have been together some two years and it comes through in the tight musical awareness of each other.

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Around the town (cover charges only where noted):

Zella Lear, a show which closed last week at The Mint in Las Vegas, is appearing for

three weeks at the Flying Tiger, with two shows nightly and dancing music ... The Al Gambino Show holds stage at the Pirate's Den until Saturday, with Quest, a Dallas rock-show group, opening next Monday ... At The Baron's, the contract of Just Friends has been extended for the second time, and the pop music specialists will be playing until Jan. 7 ... Kim Marie, the lovely blond Tucson songstress, is heading a substitute group with keyboard man Bill Fox at Jester's Court for the remainder of this week, with Third Story, the long-running pop trio, returning from vacation next Tuesday ...

Singer Beverlee Reed and the Mickey Greco trio are spotlighted at the Hilton Inn, with the Jerry Haymes-Brenda D show slated Sunday ... Main Street, an Atlanta-based combo, is at the Ramada Inn through Nov. 25 ... Cass Preston's Rhythm Rascals are filling the Thursday-Saturday slot at the Executive Inn, with Two Plus Twink providing the music Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

