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Jazz Concert Series Enlivens Mount Vernon Scene on Sundays

By F. ROMALL SMALLS

ON Sundays through the end of the month, this city is being filled with the haunting sounds of saxophones and piano riffs in "Jazz Around the City," a concert series taking place in various supper clubs, restaurants and nightclubs.

The aim of the organizer, Donna Monifa May, 28, a graduate of Mount Vernon High School, is to increase appreciation of jazz and offer the community something different. "I did it because I love music," Ms. May said. "New York City is far away, and Mount Vernon is chock full of musicians. If I can at my age hire an artist to do what they love and bring culture to the venues here, I am willing to make this type of music available."

Last Sunday at the Lowdown Nightclub in the Fleetwood neighborhood of Mount Vernon, new vibes prevailed. In center stage, a quintet of former Purchase College students called Quint-Essential made its first professional appearance, moving through some smooth Jazz sets. Marc S. Slutsky, 24, drummer and leader of the quintet, said: "I think this event is great; the enthusiasm for jazz in Westchester is really dead. It seems like the only place for jazz is New York City."

Headliners included Henry P. Warner and New Perspectives, a Mount Vernon-based group replete with the saxophonist Henry P. Warner, African drummers, a flutist, a bassist and a vocalist.

"Jazz Around the City" is sponsored by Black Sapphire Promotions, a public relations company headed by Ms. May, and Music Under New York, a visual and performing arts program administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Arts for Transit office. Ms. May said she hopes the series will make Mount Vernon the jazz hub of Westchester. She believes that even though the series received no financial support from the city of Mount Vernon it will increase awareness of entertainment opportunities here.

"Jazz Around the City" will also include a master class, a professional music training seminar, on April 26 from 3 to 6 P.M. at the Association of Community-Based Artists of Westchester Center for the Arts at 128 South Fourth Avenue, giving local youths a chance to receive training from seasoned musicians.

Today at 2 P.M. "Jazz Around the City" takes place at the Bayou, at 580 Gramatan Avenue. Next Sunday at 2 P.M. it will be at the Calabash, at 12 East First Street, and on April 27 at 2 P.M. the series will conclude at the Association of Community-Based Artists. The fee to all concerts is \$10. A percentage of the proceeds will go to the Boys and Girls Club of Mount Vernon and the Literacy Volunteers of America of Mount Vernon Public Library. F. ROMALL SMALLS