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Jazz Review: Eddie Palmieri

Pianist focuses show on Latin influences

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FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

At the outset, Eddie Palmieri warned the small but eager audience in the Lincoln Theatre tonight that his program would consist entirely of Latin jazz. Nothing like bad news, it served rather to focus attention on only one part of his more than 50-year career.

Not only has he recorded Latin jazz in the manner pioneered by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, but the native New York pianist, composer, and bandleader was key in the development of salsa music, which grafted pop and funk onto Afro-Cuban roots.

Some of his recent work has found an audience on the dance floor with its fusion of Latin rhythms with house music beats.

Last night, Palmieri was accompanied by a mighty rhythm section consisting of congas, bongos, timbales and acoustic bass. Despite its dizzying rhythms, the evening was all about improvisation and a feast of harmonic variations.

One piece was based on a modal scheme not unlike the compositions of pianist McCoy Tyner, whose style Palmieri echoed during his solo. A splendid improvisation during one of the salsa tunes managed to sound elegant, dissonant and soulful at once.

Trumpeter Brian Lynch was no less inspired if a bit more focused in style. During the opening number, a sashaying funk piece reminiscent of Herbie Hancock's '60s recordings, he suggested former Hancock sideman Freddie Hubbard. Later, though, he revealed the more substantial influence of Dizzy Gillespie by quoting *A Night in Tunisia*.

The rhythm section, ostensibly there to anchor the Latin part of the equation, was persistent and irrepensible. The timekeepers only were irrelevant during a ballad that sounded like it was based on the changes of *Round Midnight*.

Bassist Luques Curtis was riveting during solos on piccolo bass, while bongo man Jose "Papo" Rodriguez delivered an extended solo during the encore that was, well, just enough.