SUNDAY

JAM

MAR'I 0 1382 worcester Public Library,

Jazz traditionwarms Hottentotte Lounge

Dressed in blue'suit and diagonally-'striped blue lie, Reggie Walley sat in disregard of the

chill. His wife, Mary, sat on the other side of a small square table that fit into a slightlyJarger space in the angle between the bar and the entrance. She wore a fur hat and coat and looked

A small, head-high window let in gray light from the overcast, damp outdoors.

If the Wallevs shared sections of the Sunday paper, along with the heat from an electric spaceheater glowing orange on the table. Sunday afternoon jazz at the Hottentotte Lounge was off to a cool, slow start. That seemed to hardly disturb the Walleys, who have spent

ds of Sunday afternoons in clubs waiting for things to warm up, one way or the other. iri,lbly, they do.

eggie Walley, entertainer, looked maybe 10. years younger than his age of 67ln his salad days, he danced on chairs stacked upon a table top. Persons familiar with en~ ertainment in Worcester slill recallthe tap of lis agile feel. Dancing seems to have preserved his trim silhouette and broad smile.

Walley worked clubs In the heyday of live ntertainment, house bands and floor, shows. 'hen there was the after-hours jamming and performing, lie and his wife keep thattradilion Jive at the 110ttentotte.

In the past 13 years, the Walleys have been associated with two clubs. The Kitty Kat, an upstairs lounge on Main Street next to Coughlin's, was taken for a parking lot. The late Howie Jefferson, a contemporary of Walley's, played there many a Sunday afternoon. The sessions nurtured musicians such as Jim and Dick Odgren, Tom Herbert, Gene Woloscz, Al Arseneault and Al Mueller.

After the close of the Kitty Kat In s1976, Mary opened the Hottentotte, 8 Auslin St., near the corner of Main. She preserved a jazz tradilion, the Sunday afternoon jam session. The sessions feature a set with W alley on drums. Usually he sings a song or two after that.

Trumpeter Ted Blandin

A core of players regularly shapes the ses- S - sIons. They play standards - older pieces by Ellington or Jimmy Van Husen, as well as newer compositions like Jimmy, Heath's Gingerbread Boy. Visiting musicians sit, in on occasion. Most pieces fonow the expected jazz format: Play the melody and then let the soloists go at it, one by one. On some tunes, only one player solos:

he scene outside the Hottentotte cap-tures a bleak urban landscape. Diag-S onally across Main Street, boards sheathe the old Worcester Market in a plywood coffin. In front of the club, on the other side of cobblestoned Austin Street, cars park in a vacant lot. The selling of the Hottentotte might deter the Brie-and-quiche crowd. But it's tonic - and the only regular place in town -- for those who like Sunday afternoon jazz, cold beer at \$I a bottle and no

Inside the Hottentotte on this S'unday afternoon, a luminous jukebox squatted on Ihe floor opposite The door. On a small balcony above' the box, a color televisiOI1 carried the SundaY afternoon college basketball game. No sign of live music, nor musicians, at the time when the session was supposed to start. Then again, few jazz events ever begin on times

Walley grew up in Worcester. A newspaper story from August 1939 described him, then 25, as "a former night club entertainer, now a WPA workers" That was probably the first andlast time Ihe local paper referred to Walley as a former entertainer.

*r5unday jamsessionsattheHotterItotte



Saxophonist Nat Simpkins

c\'n~Yl'ijr on ll.eggtc.wauey tOOk his first pald job as II minstrel show' performer in Shrewsbury during the: Roaring Twenties.

His club career began, earlier in he 19:10s when the late George Wells helped" Valley land a job at the old Allas Club on. ~ront Street. Thirty years later, Walley did lrelly much the same routines aUhe Wells Asocjation "All American Nights."

He worked clubs all through the area, in Vebster, West Brookfield, Westboro and :hrewsbury, as well as Worcester. He went on JSO tour ~fter World War II.During the war, Ie served in Army ordnance and slill managed: o perform whenever he could.

m Cape Cod, singing, dancing and drumming .It clubs like the Mill Hill, Casino and Skylark.! n Ihe l'arly 1960s, he played the Peacock Club and the Fox Lounge in Westboro, s ng' dance i!1 Worcester and we st

> n this Sunday at 3 p.m., a few reg-Illars sat at the bar, some perched on stools, others dangling one leg; to Just above the floor. To the left 1 of the bar, in an unlit area.rna. de.

yen darker by its deep brown wall paneling, 1

mpty tables awaited patrons. Two speaker cabinets stood like black p'll us. one close to the drums the other In the tilr, ttlr. balrony with the televl~lon. In the cenl('r f the club, twin steel supporle; ran from floor; o the high, raised lin ceiling. A revolving cell-

19 light sparkled between the steel supports. About 3:45 p.ms, the band startl'd to arrive lroad.shouldl'red trumpeter nnd flugelhornistl' 'ed BI d' dd' h b I an III, wearing a re IS rown ealher oat, strode In Saxophoni!lt Nat Simpkin!!, who vorl' a tim fedora with brown band, arrived vllh Rlanllins Simpkins. relaxed and confident, :l'pt his h;lt on all afternoon, lie wore lintI'd

:Iasses and carried his tenor and alto cases. Guitarist Bill Vigliotti and ~axophonist-f1I1-1st Stephen Thomas joined them, as did bassist Junny Prices Thomas wore a black and white ;hirt patterned after a piano keyboard.

Walley sat and talked with a visitor while hey warmed liP, then took his seat behind the)rum kit. still dressed In jack~ and tie. Over at t_{he} b<lr, drummer Willie Pye who would take Ver for Walley after the fi~st set, sipped a

~______uu,;,o" "UD\... UH up 1.68111 po blues. The r;nen.played it easy, not pushing hard. For the first and only ti"."e this night, the rt~mpo slowed as the saxophomsts and trumpet. ,t~.k..~oIo ~u~~s. ..

A·Tram, said Blan~tn, calling Ollt the next tunes Imme~lately, the Jukebox turned on acei-,de?tall~. With a fe,:" steps to his sides and a qUIck flick of hl~wnst, Blandin shut the errant j?kebox and raised the trumpet to his lips Ill, tlln~ for th.e unl~on entrance. The familiar:: .stram of Elltng.ton s Take the A Train filled the: club and.Blandm wa~ on bo~rd.

.The 011 ~an arrived mldw~y through the piece .. Wearmg a. doth hat With vi.sor and a -atchlng blue umform, he stood agamst a wall' i In the 1950s, he taught dance and performed sin front of another space heater, maybe 12 feet from ~alley. Blan~lin shaped a strong trumpet solo, sfmgers pushing valves, finessing some fast. passages whose intricacies caught the ear.

Simpkin~, who looked like he came to play, f~II?wed With tasteful ~olo work that made the dlfftcult sound easy. Ills phrasing struck a posture of sophiSticatl.on and understated Irony; and gav~ every eVldenc: of a strong Dexler Gordon mfluences On t~IS tu~e, and on Polka sDots and Moonbeans, Slmpkms used a legato style that ~ept his sound creamy smooth. In the upper register he seldom let harshness creep into his tone. Evidence there of Scott Hamilton In hi 0 . h Ss'

"Iy k tSh Pdenth or orudsehs, tmpkms unhumed the sec e grou" i planned to cover. As'

soe s~ o p~ogre~~ed, he reworked the lines, s n~~ m~s nser ng an occasional .quote from a~t :r ~ne I~Idan unelcpected 'pOint. ~arder a ac s ~ gna e a chang.e .I? IITlprOVlsatory co~rse. ~ gave a good exhibition of craft.

~us'lc teacher adt Beverly lligh School, i ,Imp in S Ins app<'llrt' at the Holtenlotte s('s -l11?ns the past,l~'1f1'onth!!s He pl\lys"inil band ~ "Ill?ns the past,1~1110ntin:s The prays"

With Bobby Hebb, who wrote ~he tune~onny"j

Dreaf11fioht. 2 I and he has also played with Dreaf!1f\ight,

Worcester-based band. ThS!oll delIvery man Iistehed unllIthe Ell-,Ington e~ded, then Walley gave him the keys

necessaty to make the 011delivery. The ~udie~ce, by now about 30 or so, warmly appreCiated \the rendering of the Ellington

~tandard. s

~eld '! pipe in his teeth and shook his arms in a lim~ermg moti~n. Ellingtonish!s ~tiJrr, and A-Tram broughtlnm a big smile.

Throughout the entire set, Walley I~ked like a stu?ent of Emerson's essay on I'conomy. His no-fnlls drum kit was the equivalent of th!? it~o.door hatchback with four-speed transmis: \slOn. Walley kept it simple, but he was always there. His slicks snapped.

Here's That Rainy Day featured Blandin's mellow flug~lhorn. He chose to let the tune's!

haunting melody.stand on ItS own, adding only

a few_so~t embelltshments. t C~anglng ~ace, the b~nd broke. mt.o,a kneeverslon~helomus Monk s UeJ/ ~ou, t...Walleys push.~d the temp? along while ha Issued a ~~I lng, ~rcusslve tenor solo

ght th~ Sptrlt of thiS contrary tune. :','.the break,. ~homas stood in front f the teleVISIOn. Blond and bearded, he" runs a solar energy and-~indmlll bl1sln~ss.i~ Barrl.'. A nahve of ~esLVlrglma, he wanted

.to .see how hl~ home state basketball team was

Thomas has played at Aimberly crossi-Aft m sl B f M h tt I'I er oving ~ arre. rom an.a an on a year ago, he sald he shU was getting the hang' of things here. A brother teaches at Derklee, he ld d I I i h d b k horne In West Virginia. A sistl'I', he ~a'id. is a mnsic therapist. ':We're 311111tOllusl~," he said.

Guilarist Vigliolti livl's in Holden and is a student...at Berklee. He filled in for the pianist who regularly. plays the session. Vigliotti played mostly rhythm guitar and supplied the necessary hllrmonic bll(kground

Blandm lives io Brighton and plays in all manner of bands s- Latin, .futtk, soul, b)ues and the catch-all, general bu!;mess. Bet.ween sets, he jo~:d that he wanted "to pl:.'y 10 a polka

band. They IIIakr. rn(lnl'~, he R~111. He has one record to hiS credit, an old .Budd? M!les. album, T~cm Ch,111gcsrecorded In Chl-

cago 10 the late 60s.. Bassist. Bunny Price hrst met Wa~ley through hIS father, trumpeter Barney Price. Barney and Walley ~flen played together. Bunny Price said that WIth that ~in~lof h?f1uen('e, It was no wonder !Ie started playing With Walley, toos They still ~ork together, doing weddings and general bustness.

"alley put down his ~ the second sel.Heplanl~ Willie Pye joked ahout h~ s-in size 12 feet, and the forces which thl"{ grnrrated as he

slammed the hass drum pedal. They opened the set with Gingerbread Roy. an exciting, fast tune with a jumpy melody and funky rhythm. Blandin took a page from his Mongo Santa Maria book and uttered stuttering stllccato phrases on this up tempo cooker. Pye stroked his cymbals. more so than Walleys The television lost the pkture, but no

seemed to notice. That set the stage for two vocals, Cupping his hands around a microphone. Walley sang Th,1t Old Blm'k M,1~icslIis vokr rose above the loud band, As he sang Mis/y. he leaned toward Mary, his wife of 31 years, who sal at a table

npar the band. The band p,la^yI'd one more set, to an audience now numbering about 50s Outside the Hottentolle. the gray sky of the afternoon had giveh way to a dark, damp. slippl'rY night lhat could not erasl' sthe warmth of thl' rnu,i('s Tlwre

s, would be more jan. nl'xl ~lInd;1Y, "I wanl to krep playing." Wallt'y ,aids

".~, !lob IUIISS.Is \ rl'p~rtl'r for Thl' r.\'l'llir~' llC:azl'.tteJIII writes B1u!'nntes fnr Tim!' ()ut.