

Harry Skoler, Warren Vache at Jazz at Sunset

New clarinet- and trumpet-playing out of the old school

By Chet Williamson

Clarinetist Harry Skoler first heard Benny Goodman's music played during a lesson with his teacher in 1971. It was the professor's attempt to introduce the young novice to jazz.

After hearing the teacher blaze through a transcribed solo of Goodman's, the pupil was hooked. That night he informed

his parents that he would aspire to become a

jazz clarinetist. Twenty-five years later, Skoler has become one of the few professional clarinetists working in the world of jazz today.

Not since the late 1930s, when Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw traded licks for top spot on the charts, has the licorice stick enjoyed any kind of popularity. The instrument's warm wooden tone and upper-register squeals never found a voice in today's popular music. Still, it is Skoler's voice - and his quartet never strays far from the sound of yesteryear.

The Harry Skoler Quartet with special guest trumpeter Warren Vache appear in a special tribute concert to Goodman at 6 p.m. Friday, June 14, at the jazz at Sunset series, New England Science Center, 222 Hanington Wa-f.

Skoler is a well-schooled and -traveled musician. A graduate of Berklee College



Harry Skoler

of Music, Skoler spent three years in Nashville, where he performed with his jazz groups, worked the studios and taught. Skoler dropped out of music for a spell to study architecture, which may explain his well-structured solos and tight arrangements. Renewing his interest in music, he enrolled in the New England Conservatory, where he graduated with a master's degree in music. While there, he studied with multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Guiffre.

Skoler's Quartet is an empathetic

ensemble that can best be described as chamberlike.

"It is a very sensitive quartet, much as one would think of the Modern Jazz Quartet," Skoler said, speaking by phone from Haverhill. "There are a lot of colors. There is a wide range of dynamics."

The quartet is vibist Ed Saindon, who doubles on piano, bassist Roger Kimball and drummer Tim Gilmore. The group has released one CD to date, the Brownstone recording *Conversations in the Language of Jazz*, which reached as high as No. 38 on the national Gavin charts.

Warren Vache is a very impressive addition to the quartet. Balliett called trumpeter Vache's playing, "truly on the mark. He can play Beiderbecke note for note, but he makes the notes sound as if he had invented them."

Vache spent almost 10 years in the Benny Goodman Orchestra. He was in much demand as a member of the Concord All Stars, a group that recorded and toured extensively.

"As far as I'm concerned, he is a living legend," Skoler crowed. "He is just a premier artist. He is such a melodic and warm player. It's his sound. His sound embodies a very soulful, expressive artist. Along with it, his ideas are never-ending. He is one of the freshest players I've ever heard. No matter what style he plays in, he is a complete master, not only the instrument but the music."

Music