

IVAL... KOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL... KOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL.

QUARTET TIMES TWO = THUNDER

TWO ensembles produced thunderous sounds in a packed Avery Fischer Hall as the Kool Jazz Festival got under way last weekend.

Producer George Wein introduced percussionist Max Roach's double-quartet of Roach's regular crew plus four string players. The other group, dubbed the "Great Quartet," consisted of McCoy Tyner, piano, Freddie Hubbard, trumpet, Ron Carter, bass, and Elvin Jones, drums.

Roach's tribute to late trumpeter Booker Little successfully blended rugged, uptempo horn solos with a background of

rhythmic riffs, metallic plucking, and bow-tapping sounds from the strings, led by violinist Gayle Dixon, and had a pulsing bass solo by Calvin Hill.

In a piece by Peter Phillips, a sort of space-age version of *Cute*, the conversation between Roach's virtuoso drumming and the starkly shifting string patterns was a fusion that might have been more interesting if a portion had been given to the strings alone for contrast.

A more conventional piece by trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater, built over a familiar chord progression

used by Charlie Parker, was the most pleasurable. It drew on the lyrical side of the strings, with pretty washes of color behind a clear, clean trumpet solo. Odean Pope's tenor-sax solo was full of scrolls of sound rather than melodic ideas. Roach brought cheers with a solo that caught every conceivable combination of rhythms with flying sticks.

The Great Quartet's opener, Monk's *Rhythm-a-ning*, was badly chewed by the sound system, but once the piano mikes were working, Tyner shone brightly with dense, dancing piano. Earthy rumblings gave way to vivid medal

patterns and runs up the keyboard.

Hubbard's flugelhorn had a satisfying richness on *Theme from Black Orpheus*, but his playing often seemed to reach for effects and wasn't focused. Carter grabbed attention on a zesty Hubbard blues with an out-of-tempo bass solo that had strummed chords, chromatic slides, and pedal points. Elvin Jones was ebullient, scooping multiple rhythms from drums and cymbals that were always propelling. The encore was a playful (and relaxed) *There Is No Greater Love*.

— JILL McMANUS