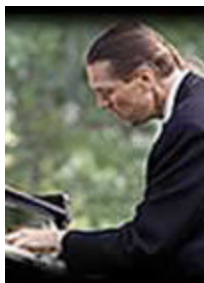




Jon Weber

Birdland



An evening of dazzling yet musically warm-hearted jazz and stride piano playing — combined with commentary that brought the selections alive — delighted a packed-house audience as Chicago pianist Jon Weber made his Birdland debut, in mid-July. Weber, whose pianistics stopped the MAC Awards show earlier in the spring, played numbers both of his choosing as he went along and also of the audience's as they shouted out requests. Selection ranged from classic jazz pieces such as *Carolina Shout*, *Blues March* and (requested by audience member Skitch Henderson) *Little Rick Getaway* to mellow standards that included *All The Things You Are* and *Skylark*. Weber, even on his breathtakingly fast stride work, was remarkably crystal clear, all notes in place as they poured from Birdland's grand Bösendorfer piano. For some songs, Jon, to choose the key, reached into the piano, plucked an unseen string, and used that note to build his chords. Throughout the evening, he illuminated his song selections with tales of their composers and origins. (Bet you didn't know that *Elmer's Tune* was derived from *If I Could Be With You!*) Jon also proved to be a sensitive accompanist, playing impromptu behind audience-member Hilary Kole as she stepped to the stage to sing *Lush Life*. Easy-going, charming and informative, Jon provides not only terrific music but also a thoroughly entertaining evening.

Peter Haas

June 20, 2005