

A deeper shade of cool

► Yuma Jazz Company releases compact disc

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After years of jonesing for a CD from their favorite group, fans of the Yuma Jazz Company can finally stop singing the blues.

The popular local band — founded about three years ago — has paid its dues, honed its musical craft, and survived the terrible twos to finally reach a completely new level. The musicians have not only released their first professional CD, but they're launching a unique, new nightclub series as well.

Trumpeter Steve Hennig, kind of the spokesman for the Yuma Jazz Company, says these two current milestones are pretty humbling markers for just how much the group has grown — and how quickly.

"The group has come a long ways since we started," Hennig said. "There's very little comparison to where we were at the beginning. At times we played very well, but at times it was very mediocre."

The secret, he said, was simply learning how to melt together as a group.

"Playing together is the biggest thing. With jazz everything depends on being able to create together because based on the tune everyone is inventing together," Hennig explained. "It's a listening and almost an intuitive thing."

However humble he may be, though, the Yuma Jazz Company has been wowing crowds from the start. That makes it pretty exciting to see, then, just what the response will be when the group unveils its newest project during a CD release concert and party. The event is set for 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 27 at the Shilo Inn's newly opened

YUMA JAZZ COMPANY IS...

- STEVE HENNIG: TRUMPET AND FLUGELHORN
- BRIAN CARLSON: ALTO AND TENOR SAXOPHONES
- CARL POSCH: GUITAR
- JON KNUDTSON: BASS
- BRANDON COZ: DRUMS
- JIMMY GRIFFIN: PIANO

restaurant, The Terrace.

Hennig said he and the rest of the guys in the band just feel that Yuma is hungry for live performances in a classy and upscale setting.

He described the atmosphere fans can expect.

"The evening will have a jazz nightclub feel, which is very relaxed and people can have drinks and appetizers or dinner," he said. "It will be a pretty sophisticated environment."

In addition to the music, there will be mingling and CD sales, too.

"We will all be hanging around. We'll take a break and communicate with the audience a bit."

Admission to the event will be free.

But that nightclub feel won't end there. The Terrace has signed up the band to perform three more events. There will be a Latin jazz night on Dec. 10, a jazz Christmas party on Dec. 18, and a New Year's brunch set on Jan. 1. The first two events will run from 7 to 9 p.m. The brunch will go from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a \$19.95 admission.

The name, by the way, of the new CD is "Shades after Dark." It's a compilation of



PHOTO BY CARLOS

THE YUMA JAZZ COMPANY will be releasing their CD, "Shades After Dark," with a party at the Shilo Inn restaurant. The members include Steve Hennig (from left), Carl Posch, Jon Knudtson, Brandon Coz and Jimmy Griffin.

eight songs demonstrating the Yuma Jazz Company's ability to play everything from Latin and Afro styles to the traditional, laid-back style of jazz.

Other than being the first CD, this recording is also special because all of the songs are Hennig's own creations. The CD will be sold at local

shows and is also available online at www.cajazz.com

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