

Yuma Jazz Company celebrates 10 years

Trio making music to treat its fan base

BY DARIN FENGER
@YSDARINFENGER

The Yuma Jazz Company turns 10 this year and the popular musicians are celebrating by making music.

The group has been adding quite a few extra performances to its already full schedule, treating its fan base to a sound that's spent the past decade growing up in patio cafes, on local stages and in the spotlight at some big outdoor jazz festivals.

"It's kind of a thrill!" said trumpeter Steven Hennig. "A decade of performing this art form and maintaining a local audience — I am very thankful."

The Yuma Jazz Company originally formed to perform for a concert series at St. Paul's Cultural Center in 2002. The group moved on from there to present several successful concert series and perform at many public and private events.

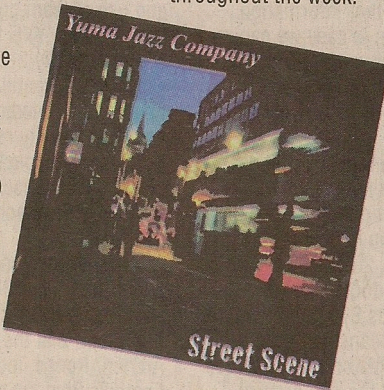
The group recorded its debut album, "Shades After Dark," in late 2004. The recording has been reviewed positively by national publications and has aired extensively on KAWC-FM. The group followed with "95 North" in 2006 and "Street Scene" in 2010.

The Yuma Jazz Company is also a staple music maker each year during the Village Jazz Series, which Hennig helps to organize.

Hennig says he credits love for the music itself as the driving force behind

The Yuma Sun is giving away copies of the CD "Street Scene" by the Yuma Jazz Company.

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the group's success — and its longevity.

"Improvisation is a major element of jazz, so the way we play is constantly growing, evolving, and no two gigs are the same. It stays fresh, so people can hear the group numerous times and still look forward to the next."

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— Band member Steven Hennig

the group's success — and its longevity. The Yuma Jazz Company returns to its roots Friday when the Yuma Jazz Co. Quintet welcomes back an original player. Robby Carrillo, the group's first drummer, will

perform with the quintet at Lutes Casino from 7 to 9 that night. Admission is free.

Carrillo's father, also Robby Carrillo, plays for the local country band Slick Nickel. The junior Carrillo graduated from Yuma High School and started his study of jazz at

Mesa Community College. He later followed teacher and recording artist Dom Moio to Arizona State University, where Carrillo is now completing a degree in jazz performance.

"You're always trying to expand what you say as a musician, in your playing and in your vocabulary," the young performer says. "I think I have learned to relax and just go with the music, not trying to prove anything or impress anybody. Looking at it this way seems to work very well. Playing is more fun and the result is more musical."

The Yuma Jazz Company's trio will perform at Cocopah Casino on Tuesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. through September. The quintet is also scheduled to perform at Julieanna's Patio Cafe from 7 to 9 p.m. every other Friday from October through April. The Yuma Jazz Company's full schedule can be seen at YumaJazz.com.

Features editor Darin Fenger can be reached at dfenger@yumasun.com or 539-6860.



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