

As drummer Mike Fieleke unconsciously mouthed the bee-bop rhythm of the percussion and the shadow of John Stein's bass danced across the wall, an audience of several dozen people tapped their feet and nodded their heads to the beat of the five-piece band Bluetopia.

The band made its second appearance at the Roslindale Congregational Church on Friday as the monthly Jazz in the Square concert series entered its second year of existence. Jointly sponsored by Roslindale Village Main Streets and the church, the series began as a means of putting the town on the map as an entertainment destination, said organizer Bob Tumposky.

"Live music is Roslindale is kind of rare, or at least, I don't know about any other venues," said Tumposky. "And we have the restaurants here now, so we want to really encourage people to come out and spend an evening here rather than just going home for the night or going downtown."

While restaurateurs have overlooked the neighborhood for decades, at least four staple dining establishments - most notably, Gusto's - moved into Roslindale over the past three to five years, said church volunteers Mary Howard and Sue Whitehead, a general trend in the area's food industries that started when the grocery store Village Market set up shop, they said.

"I've lived here all my life, and I think the change is really about a new group of people moving into town who are really looking for something more and willing to make it happen," said Whitehead,

manning the hospitality station of coffee and baked goods.

Each month brings a variety of performers to the church, differing in style, caliber and sub-genre, Whitehead said, noting a recent performance by a 12-piece saxophone ensemble as an example.

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Bluetopia, normally a quartet, performed as a quintet on Friday, as bandleader Bob McCloskey joked, "Our rhythm section has left town, but don't worry, not permanently," and so the two band's two regulars - McCloskey and guitarist Jay Geyer - joined forces with several other local musicians for the occasion.

"We kind of stress jazz from the '60s," McCloskey said. "The quintessential jazz recording label, Blue Note Records type stuff - a lot of funky and bluesy-based stuff."

The band's performance worked in tandem with the atmosphere, which was arranged simi-

half of the venue, and rows of seating in the back, which continued to fill up throughout the evening, leaving standing-room only.

Even the preteen set sat quietly and attentively listening to the performance, as they munched on baked goods distributed outside in exchange for a donation. Attendees were also asked for a \$10 donation which is passed on directly to the performers at the end of the night.

"It's a really great venue and they have a wonderful arrangement," said McCloskey. "I believe we get to keep everything that comes in, and this is a lot better than playing in a bar and dealing with that whole scene."

Sax player Allan Walkey emerged from the audience to play a song with the group, after having met the other players at the Jamaica Bookstore, where several of the evening's musicians can be found on Sunday afternoons for the weekly jam session.

Although attendance varies, Tumposky said, the series has attracted a lot of loyal music enthusiasts, including his own friend and co-worker, Ellen Harrower.

"Bob told me about the series a while back, and now I try to come to as many of them as I can," Harrower said. "The quality of the bands is great and the venue is wonderful, and I can just come alone - how much safer can this be?"

For the remainder of the winter and spring seasons, the church will feature all/mostly female bands, Tumposky said, including next month's headliner, Circie Miller.

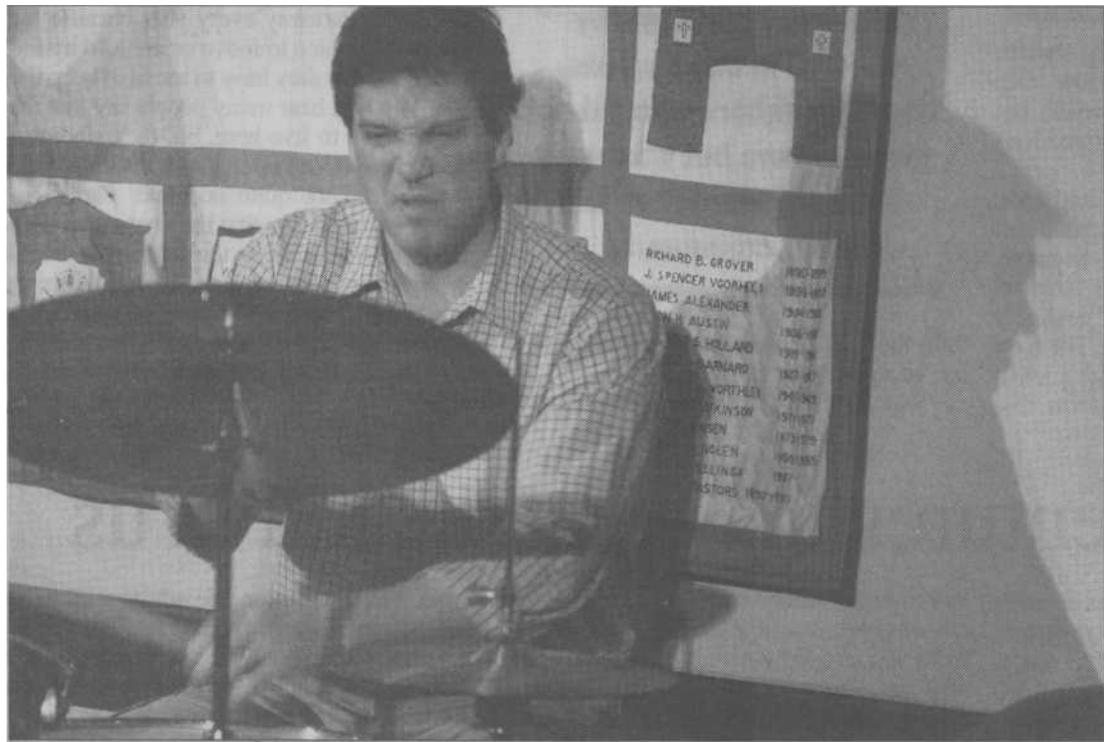


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Drummer Mike Fieleke was one of the musicians performing with Bluetopia on Friday night at the Roslindale Congregational Church.