

The Mood Swings, and they're a hit

By Carolyn McKibbin
CORRESPONDENT

In purple, silver and black sequins, their horns held high and cheeks bulging, the 17-member all-women big band The Mood Swings dazzled the largest audience yet at the Roslindale Congressional Church's Friday night Jazz in the Square concert.

"Historically, jazz has been male-dominated. But times change," said Bob Tumposky, a self-described "semi-competent" saxophonist who founded Jazz in the Square in collaboration with the Roslindale Village Main Streets. "We want to help that along by giving female jazz musicians a place to play."

In the second performance of the current three-part Jazz in the Square series, saxophone, trombone and trumpet solos by the Mood Swings motivated crowd participation and garnered cheers and standing ovations. By the end of the show, they proved how jazzy women can be.

Organizers were expecting 60 to 70 people, but when the number surpassed 100, they opened a partitioned wall to another room for the overflow. The church has been home to Jazz in the Square concerts since September 2003.

The Mood Swings is composed of women ranging from 21 to 55 years of age. However, there was one male exception to Friday's performance — Karl Haakonsen, who filled in for the bassist. (With hair longer than many of his fellow musicians, backstage Haakonsen said the gender outnumbering did not intimidate him.)

The band featured swing-era music, including selections from the Dorsey brothers, Count Basie and Duke Ellington. For the first few songs, the audience swayed to the tempo comfortably in their wooden chairs. But soon enough, the courageous headed to a small corner reserved for dancing.

Dody Riggs and friend
JAll, page 16

All jazzed up in Rozzie Square

JAll, from page 1

Patrick Kelly, who both live in Roslindale, were the first couple to swing on the dance floor.

"Every time a group like this is performing, it's special," said Kelly, catching his breath at intermission. "When everyone gets into the mood, it encourages the musicians and everyone has a good time. It's for a love of music on a local level, and the musicians don't have to be famous for there to be a good concert."

Jazz in the Square concerts

This year's series of concerts are on the first Friday of March, April and May at 7:30 p.m. Organizers ask for a \$10 donation and provide refreshments and an assortment of baked goods.

Riggs said she respected the performers after playing in the band as a child.

"I think it's so great, I don't know why more people aren't dancing," said Riggs. "We came here to dance, but that's just us."

Soon children started dancing

with parents, the lights on their tennis shoes catching the eye of conductor and drummer Kathleen Hepburn.

"We like it when the crowd enjoys us, when people are dancing and the room is full," said Hepburn, who has been conduct-

ing The Mood Swings for almost two years. "We had a lot of fun tonight, we always do."

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The Dueling Divas, in their second Jazz in the Square performance, will mark the end of the series in May. The group is fronted by saxophonists Miriam Hyman and Diane Wernick.