

happy apple happy apple back on top



Happy Apple, Even Happier

Celebrating the release of its new CD, *Happy Apple Back On Top*, the local jazz trio makes music worth the climb.

By Megan Willey

When: CD-release show Aug. 31-Sept. 2

Where: Artists' Quarter, 408 St. Peter St., St. Paul, 651-292-1359, artistsquarter.com, happyapplemusic.net

Happy Apple Back On Top, improv jazz trio Happy Apple's follow-up to 2005's *The Peace Between Our Companies*, opens with a swanky bass line from Erik Fratzke, followed by saxophonist Michael Lewis and drummer David King simultaneously kicking in to rocket the song into a funkified jazz conversation. The swaggering rhythm felt in the opening song, "The New Bison," reappears throughout the disk,

weaving between the lightest drum brushes and soft soprano sax melodies back to harder, head-bobbing diatribes and back again.

This seventh album in the trio's eleven-year history has plenty of influences—Latin, electronica, and rock can be plucked out of several tunes. The result is an album that's not quite schizophrenic, but definitely has bipolar tendencies—in a good way. Its balance of rhythmic tunes ("Very Small Rock," "Calgon for Hetfield"), ballads ("He's OK"), and frenetic, often dissonant songs ("1996 A.D.," "Lefse Los Cubanos," "Density in Dan's Fan City") showcases the band's versatility and range. It's not entirely clear which musical mountain Happy Apple is trying to climb, but the ascent is always thrilling, because this is a band that isn't afraid to flirt with danger. *Happy Apple Back On Top* is available in stores September 11.

▼ Dhafer Youssef

When: Sept. 27

Where: Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., 612-375-7600, walkerart.org

A virtuoso on the oud, a lute-like instrument from North Africa, Tunisian-born singer Dhafer Youssef plays a hypnotic, atmospheric type of music that draws on Sufi mysticism, Islamic culture, and European jazz traditions. Percussionist Satoshi Takeishi joins him in his Minnesota debut.



▼ Pat Metheny Trio

When: Oct. 14

Where: Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Mpls., 612-371-5656, minnesotaorchestra.org

Grammy-winning jazz guitarist Pat Metheny has been playing for so long, in so many styles and genres that it's impossible to pin a single label on him. Jazz. Rock. Fusion. World. Blues. Free. Metheny does it all, and what he sounds like on a given night depends a great deal on the people with whom he is playing. For this gig, Metheny brings with him his regular drummer, international superstar Antonio Sanchez, and Christian McBride, one of the most creative bassists on the planet.



▲ Christian Scott

When: Oct. 19

Where: Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant, 1010 Nicollet Mall, Mpls., 612-332-1010, dakotacooks.com

Named one of *Billboard* magazine's "10 Faces to Watch" last year, twenty-four-year-old trumpeter Christian Scott is regularly compared with Miles Davis and Wynton Marsalis, but he is definitely forging his own artistic path. Scott writes all of his own tunes, which draw from jazz, R & B, and funk, and recently released his second album, *Anthem*.



▼ The Bad Plus

When: Sept. 24

Where: The Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls., 612-377-2224, guthrietheater.com

Progressive jazz trio The Bad Plus has been called both the best and worst thing in contemporary jazz. This show is technically the CD-release show for the band's latest CD, *Prog*, which was released in May, but a European tour kept our local bad boys busy over the summer. *Prog* features covers of David Bowie, Rush, and Burt Bacharach songs.



▲ Mina Agossi

When: Sept. 9-10

Where: Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant, 1010 Nicollet Mall, Mpls., 612-332-1010, dakotacooks.com

A favorite on the French jazz charts, Mina Agossi mixes her love of jazz with hip-hop, rock, traditional folk music, and her original compositions. Known for using minimal accompaniment—drums and bass only—Agossi's voice is her main instrument, and she used every bit of it to win over Dakota audiences last year.