

Andrews jams at Afro-Am

Charity jazz concert benefits famine victims, Black Church

BY JOE LEVY

"When that tune started out," said Dwight Andrews to the audience at his Friday night concert, "you thought you were in Africa — I saw ya. Then it changed to the Caribbean, you were dancing in your seats. Then boom, we were in New York."

Andrews' concert, benefitting both African famine relief and the Black Church at Yale, was a mixture of African and Brazilian rhythms, straight ahead jazz soloing, and electric funk backbeat. The crowd that filled the Afro-American House was nothing short of adoring, and the music that Andrews and his sextet of old friends created was consistently enjoyable. At times they came up with some transcendently invigorating music that nearly turned the concert into a dance party.

Andrews is as varied as the music which he plays. In addition to being an accomplished jazz musician, (he plays alto and soprano sax, flute, and bass clarinet), he is a Ph.D. candidate in music theory, a playwright, and senior pastor of the Black Church at Yale.

Throughout the concert, Andrews' alto sax playing was astonishingly good. He has a remarkable jazz vocabulary at his command, able to call up Charlie Parker fleet-fingered

bursts, Albert Ayler between the notes honks and screams, and lush warm passages all his own. There simply wasn't enough alto playing from Dwight — there couldn't have been. That's not to say there was anything wrong with his work on soprano sax, flute or bass clarinet, but compared to his alto playing, everything else was just a bit disappointing.

Powered by the rock-hard rhythm section of Pheeroan Aklaaf on drums and Jerome Harris (a fingerpopping powerhouse) on bass, Andrews' sextet ran down seven tunes ranging from a bossa nova Andrews composed at Yorkside, to a Horace Silver-like hard bop "No Nuke Blues."

The songs were all Andrews originals with the exception of "Doodle Number 1500," a composition by keyboardist Onaje Allan Gumbs, and "Dawn Song" by Grover Washington, Jr. Gumb's funk background came through in "Doodle Number 1500." The song began with a syncopated piano figure which was picked up by bass and drums.

Andrews and his group ended the show with a Grover Washington, Jr. composition, "Dawn Song." Much to their credit, the sextet made this bit of fluff, the sort of ineffectual infectious soul pop that leaves you humm-



YDN: Daniela Saunders

JAZZY — Dwight Andrews performed Friday night at the Afro-American House. Proceeds from his jazz concert will benefit African famine relief and the Black Church at Yale.

ing, a vehicle for the exploration of the peaks of funkified jazz. The bass playing was propulsive, the solos driving. But when they came back to

Washington's "Taxi"-like melody at the end, you were left with a disappointing taste in your mouth. Not a bad taste, just a bit disappointing.