

Don Byron and band cook in Rosendale

By KITY MONTGOMERY
Reviewer

Music review

ROSENDALE - You can call your music club The Kitchen, but name is no guarantee you will serve the soul-stirring, down-home international haute cuisine mixed up by clarinetist Don Byron and his Afro-Cuban band of six at the Rosendale Cafe Monday night.

Surrounded on stage by an affectionate press of peers and fans, like a bridegroom who happens to bring his own band to his wedding, Byron effected instant transport of the diners to the infinite beyond, from whence come pipe, in a 8010 search of "Getting Sentimental" - With tone more transparent than smoke, he disturbed irrational yearning in a room-

ful of transfixed eavesdroppers. Subsequent trips through the night raucously, tenderly, brilliantly shared, had their source in this same launch point.

A former student of the New England Conservatory of Music with multi-ethnic roots in the Bronx, Byron is mocking-bird eclectic in repertoire. When his band strikes up with expansive Latino gusto, Byron's improv lines may turn up anything - the dervishing boil of klezmer, some fragment of a Broadway show tune, a loose, looping blueshine,

And sometimes, he'll engage in sheer rhythmic tone play. Tooting 4.10. With James Zolnerovick on trumpet, he contracts

clarinet vibrate to the straight horn clarity of Dizzy Gillespie's blows - same intensity, same connective reach. Zolnerovick is his own phenomenon in solos - a deep resonance to bright cuts in brilliant eruption.

Depending on who's doing what, these winds are propelled by a four-number percussion section, providing a grit more Neville Brothers than Budde Vista Social Club. Ben Witman is the malleable trap drummer, with congero Milton Cardona's insidious, warrior's work a match for Indian tabla master Chatterjee. Passman

Leo Traversa wraps and rocks the band, drawing the resonance of an acoustic on his electric, and contributing soul depth and humor in equal parts.

Working with steel digit and agape heart, Edsel Gomez does amazing things to a keyboard, and survives. His piano is an intimate, a pet, an animal. Sometimes he slashes it with bear-claw strikes, sometimes reaches solos with a fluency that seems impossible, coming out of such propulsive force. Tenderness is the enabling transmittal of his chords cherish Byron's exploratory wisps like a man catching kittens falling from the sky.

Occasionally this sextet plus one does engage and indulge in traffic-jam cacophony - you will hear horn echoes of the Chicago Arts Ensemble's excursions. It is the expansive play of high spirits, meant to blow the mind but never hurt you"