

Jazz organ trio enralls listeners in newly re-opened Hurley's

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Issue date: 2/6/09 **Section:** [A&E](#)

The Left Ear Trio is the best live band I have seen at Hurley's. Compared to the usually terrible hardcore or boring indie bands that Student Entertainment Services (SES) brings, the Left Ear Trio was a breath of fresh air. Although I hesitate to use this term, The Left Ear trio play postmodern jazz, insofar that they clearly have no allegiance to any particular musical period or concept of what "jazz" is. That fact all three members are extremely well versed in the history of modern music was obvious from the first song.

I was able to detect strains of every style of improvisational music. Some songs were clearly aligned with the twelve bar blues concept of a musical head followed by individual solos always cycling back to the head at regular intervals. Some songs were clearly indebted to the strophic "verse-chorus-verse" format of pop/rock music, especially the song "Gone." Others were fairly free, with varying degrees of collective improvisation going on.

All three members were always conscious of the musical texture they were creating. The drummer often used a shaker, driving the songs with propulsive sixteenth notes, rather than a typical eighth note pattern on the hi-hat employed by most drummers. The guitarist made ample use of ringing open strings and unresolved 7th chords, perfectly suiting the more open songs, while implementing the genre appropriate muted stings/wah-wah approach on the funkier songs. The organist was especially amazing considering he had a broken collarbone. It was obvious that he had total control of his instrument, implementing organ stop changes and varying the speed of his rotating speaker, all while playing on two manuals and providing very funky syncopated bass with his feet. He was performing the jobs of two people and did it perfectly.

Additional praise is deserved by Ben O'Brien Smith, SES Hurley's chairperson, in choosing to not mic the drum set except for the bass drum. This created a sound onstage that was probably not unlike what the musicians were used to when practicing, leading to greater onstage comfort, while allowing the drummer to use the cymbals much more texturally.

Hurley's will host another jazz show on Friday, February 6 featuring a double bill of The Max Howard Band and Third Rail at 7:30 p.m. It is free for students and only \$3 for non-students. I look forward with renewed enthusiasm to live music at Hurley's.



Media Credit: [Amanda Stockwell](#)
Michael-Louis Smith, guitarist and
Mike Daillak, drummer of Left Ear
Trio perform.