

# Phoenix Jazz Workshop plays June 22nd JIA Party



By Patricia Myers and Tom Coulson

Phoenix Jazz Workshop, a quintet that performs the music of Horace Silver, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, Wayne Shorter and Jim Hall, as well as original compositions, will play for the June 22 Jazz in AZ party from 3 to 5 p.m. at Johnny's Uptown, 40 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix, info at 480-994-0807.

This exceptional band is co-led by acoustic bassist Ted Sistrunk and tenor saxophonist Bryon Ruth, and features original member Scott Zimmer on soprano and alto saxes, with Rachel Eckroth on piano and Rob Moore on drums.

Sistrunk promises the afternoon concert will interest listeners. "We love the music we play, and we have fun doing that. Bryon and Scott have different approaches to playing sax, so they work together and off each other, always making up lines," he said.

The band's concept emerged from the now-legendary 10-year-long Monday night jam sessions led by drummer Dave Cook at the Melody Lounge in Tempe. "Both Bryon and I played at those sessions, and we liked the way they worked," said Sistrunk. "It was a chance for the band to work on new music, and for people to come and play. We liked the sense of community there.



"When it ended, we thought it was too bad that there was nothing similar. About two years later, we started to play on Mondays with a similar format at the Lucky Dragon in Tempe. The band performed new music in the first set, and then opened it up for

a jam. We were there a year and a half until the place closed."

Sistrunk came to Phoenix in the early '80s from Manhattan, Kan. "I was an electric bassist there, and didn't play upright bass until I went to ASU. I got into jazz by listening as a teenager to Weather Report and Return to Forever. One time I saw an album by Wayne Shorter and knew of his playing with Weather Report, but didn't have any idea what his thing was outside of that. I listened to that album and was blown away." Sistrunk teaches at Paradise Valley Jazz College and writes arrangements.

Ruth teaches at ASU, Mesa Community College and PVCC. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa, and a master's in saxophone performance/pedagogy from Arizona State University. He is a first-call musician for touring shows and has performed with the Phoenix Symphony, Bobby Caldwell, The Temptations, The Four Tops, Rosemary Clooney, Tony Bennett, Rita Moreno, Rufus Reid, Tim Hagans and others.