

**THE SCENE**  
**OCTOBER 2010**

**PAUL WEITZ QUARTET**  
**At The Blue Whale**

The Blue Whale is located in the Weller Court complex in downtown's Little Tokyo district. The club is located on the third floor and is a cool looking place, with a cement floor, some photo are on the walls, a bar area and low, cushy stools scattered about the performance area. It's hip and spare which puts all the focus on the artists appearing there. A huge chalkboard by the entrance lists performers, such as the Michael White trio, Bob Sheppard trio and a jam session every Monday at 10PM, hosted by Kevin Kanner.

Paul Weitz is a talented guitarist and was accompanied this early evening by saxophonist Wayne Wayne, bassist Matt Van Benschoten and drummer Tina Raymond. Weitz began with the easy-going jazz waltz, "Sometime Ago." Wayne used his alto sax to stake his area, Weitz played with a bright buoyancy, followed by Van Benschoten's small fillip of low notes on his space bass. Raymond added a jolt of rhythm with a hearty serving of just about everything she had at her drumset, then the tune ended softly. Wayne's alto was solid on "Sunny Moon For Two." The quartet was melding all the elements well as Weitz continued on bop stride, confident and comfortable. Raymond was using cymbals effectively, churning the rhythmic effects nicely. The club was starting to fill up as folks got their drinks and found a place to sit. There was no cover for this early evening Sunday jazz feast. By this time I was really enjoying Weitz and his cohorts, their musical chops and the strong flavors they added to the material.

Changing pace, Weitz began with a gorgeous intro to "Beautiful Love." Van Benschoten added counterweight with his husky bass and Wayne stepped back in with his tenor sax. I thought Raymond was a bit loud and a bit too busy for the mood of the tune. They are a cohesive group and jazz allows for a lot of variations and personalities to emerge. Weitz began delicately on the lovely "Stella By Starlight."

Wayne followed with his soothing tenor. Raymond used brushes with restraint; it was a good display of her essential drum technique. Wayne's sax work was sensitive, thoughtful, taking the melody forward, Weitz summed up the tune with a lovely close.

"Beatrice" is a tune I'm not familiar with, but it was pleasant, with its pacing--slow, fast, slow. Wayne was able to take it outside for a bit. Weitz is a strong player; I hear that lightness that Montgomery and Szabo had, but Weitz is not imitative. If anything, I wanted to hear more from him, longer solos, but in this group everyone gets enough solo space. "Days of Wine and Roses" was a mid-tempo toe tapper. Nothing too sentimental here as the upped the boppish spirit. Vanbenshoten's bass was very present and when he got to his solo he got fierce about it. Raymond added flashes of color and Weitz's steady leadership made for an excellent, stimulating version. "A Day in the Life of a Fool" was so gorgeous, it was a pure pleasure to hear it. Wayne's tenor delicately defined the melody to start, with everyone playing softly behind him. The energy got a big boost as the tune grew in scope. After lulling the audience, they gave it a jolt. Weitz produced a solo that was the soul of refinement yet so beautiful. the melody, harmonies, and rhythm became powerful. Wayne's coda was simple just perfect for a great finish. "Dear Old Stockholm" was the last tune of the set. A little ore than an hour just flew by and the audience applauded warmly.

The Paul Weitz Quartet is another L.A.-based group that should be heard by a bigger audience. It's strongly bop-flavored without being over wrought but it leavened with doses of pure beauty for its own sake. Weitz goes into each tune with confidence and skill. When you see his name in the calendar section. check him out in a club. Also, check out the Blue Whale Jazz Club's website for more info: [www.bluewhalemusic.com](http://www.bluewhalemusic.com)

**- Myrna Daniels**

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