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### JAZZ WEEKEND

## Riches from Hyde Park to Wilson downtown and Barber at the Green Mill

By Howard Reich Tribune critic

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Where does jazz live in Chicago?

On the streets of the South Side, for instance, which swelled with more than 15,000 listeners who traveled by foot and trolley among nearly a dozen sites during the second annual Hyde Park Jazz Festival. That's three times the number who turned out for the fest's debut last year, suggesting that a new musical behemoth is in our midst.

The Hyde Park event, though, offered a bold new twist on the typical jazz festival formula: You actually could hear and savor the music. Unlike the recently concluded Chicago Jazz Festival — where poor production values in Grant Park diminished a beautifully programmed event—the Hyde Park soiree put the listener first. From the intimate auditorium at the DuSable Museum of African American History to the idyllic courtyard of the Smart Museum of Art, the gathering treated jazz with the respect it deserves.

Any event that features ragtime visionary Reginald R. Robinson as its opening headliner clearly has a great deal going for it. But Robinson asserted himself as something more than just a creator of contemporary rags. He evoked early 20th Century saloon-style pianism in "Mr. Murphy's Blues" and delved into classic boogie-woogie (while updating it) in "To Mimic."

Chicagoans have encountered flutist Nicole Mitchell in practically every venue imaginable, but there were revelations to be heard when she led a quartet in the leafy courtyard of the Smart Museum. One might have thought the signature sensuousness of her sound would have been lost in the great outdoors. On the contrary, her lines—by turns sweetly lyric and aggressively rhythmic—practically enveloped the audience.

Jeff Lindberg's Chicago Jazz Orchestra, which exudes the blues-swing spirit of Count Basie, roared through Basie-band staples and Charlie Parker bebop on the Midway Plaisance, and Dee Alexander brought improv to Rockefeller Chapel.

Later Saturday evening, jazz was breathing-room-only at the Green Mill, where Patricia Barber celebrated the release of "The Cole Porter Mix" (Blue Note Records), her incisively literate re-examination of work by America's most adroit musical wordsmith. Not surprisingly, Barber's responses to Porter's writing—as in her wickedly clever addenda to "You're the Top"—drew the noisiest ovations.

The setting may have been more opulent but the music proved characteristically earthy when vocalist Cassandra Wilson opened the Jazz at Symphony Center series before a packed house Friday night. Close your eyes, and you might have thought you were in a Southern roadhouse, the singer slathering thick country blues on "St. James

Infirmary" (from Wilson's "Lovely" CD) and a husky, moaning cry on "Sweet Lorraine."

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