

Trumpeter has good reason to toot his own horn

Go see Taylor Haskins perform at the Ryles jazz club in Cambridge, Mass., next month, but realize you're experiencing only part of his musical persona. There's the Haskins who made a name for himself as an accomplished trumpet player with small groups, such as the quartet with pianist Mark Shilansky that he's bringing to Ryles on March 9.

But there's also the Haskins who as a member of the Dave Holland Big Band recently won a Grammy in the category of best large jazz ensemble album for "Overtime."

Or Haskins the composer, who has written tracks for the big and small screens, as well as TV commercials.

"Trumpet playing is my primary thing," said Haskins, 34, a musician with strong New Hampshire roots who has lived in New York City for most of the past 12 years.

Born in Haverhill, Mass., Haskins grew up north of the state line in Plaistow and Atkinson, and his parents now live in Milford.

"I got into composing as a way of expanding my improvisation technique, as most jazz musicians do," the University of New Hampshire graduate said.

Recently, he's also delved deeply into engineering a jazz record.

As leader of a quintet, Haskins has a new CD scheduled to come out sometime in March. The music was recorded in late 2004. Since then, Haskins has taken on the post-production work entirely himself.

"It was the first time I've done all that for a recording project," Haskins said, noting that he probably did 10-15 versions of the final mix.

"I'm actually pretty happy with the end result," he said.

Haskins has produced music for more than 50 national commercials that touted products such as diet colas, department stores, credit cards and autos.

But he separated his work in commercial music from "quote-unquote real music," he said.

"I wanted to see if I could create a high-quality jazz recording solely on a computer."

Though playing trumpet is his No. 1 passion, Haskins hasn't shied from technology, specifically how technology can enhance acoustic music.

With the aid of computer technology, Haskins processed and experimented with the acoustic music recorded in 2004. He describes the end result as "expanding the palette for the quintet."

Another way to look at it, Haskins said, is integrating "the human element with the computer aspect" of producing music.

"It really has changed the way I approach music entirely."

Haskins maintains a large hand in the commercials and other projects. There's a down side and an up side to that.

"A lot of it was taking my passion away from my trumpet-playing," he said.

But at the same time, it was providing more income.

"One hand shakes the other, I guess you could say."

Haskins wrote the trailer for a PBS documentary, "Touching the Void," the true story of a perilous climb in the Peruvian Andes.

He'll also have a song he wrote included in the motion picture "Sorry, Haters," a political thriller starring Robin Wright Penn slated to be released later this year. He performs the instrumental piece with bassist Joshua Davis.

Beyond these, Haskins has ongoing affiliations, such as Los Gauchos, led by Argentinean pianist Guillermo Klein. He'll be touring Spain with them in May and then playing a week at NYC's Village Vanguard in June.

Later this summer, Haskins will return to Europe to tour with the Dave Holland Big Band, a gig he got through the recommendation of trombonist Robin Eubanks, brother of "Tonight Show" bandleader Kevin Eubanks.

"It really feels like a family when we're on the road," Haskins said of his longtime association with the big band.

On top of all that, he also plays in the house band on the Style Network TV show "Isaac," which airs daily.

Then there's the small matter of that Grammy.

First off, he didn't go to the ceremony, held Feb. 8 in Los Angeles. Even nominees had to buy a ticket, which cost about \$500, Haskins said.

Secondly, as a member, albeit the lead trumpeter, in a large ensemble, he didn't get a statuette, just a certificate that he'll hang on his studio wall.

Not that he's complaining.

"It's really exciting," Haskins said of receiving the honor.

Illustration: Courtesy photo

Jazz trumpeter Taylor Haskins will release a CD with his quintet next month. He will also appear at the Ryles jazz club in

Cambridge, Mass., on Thursday, March 9. The University

of New Hampshire grad lives in New York City, but his
parents reside in Milford.
Copyright, 2006, The Telegraph, Nashua, N.H. All Rights
Reserved.