

# ARTS:

## Fat Tuesday's, A New Jazz Club Debuts With Ron Carter

BY CHRISTOPHER PETKANAS

Less than two years ago, Ron Carter formed a quartet surprising for the instrumentation he chose to include. Given the task of creating a four-man group, few would choose to staff it, as Carter has, with two basses, piano and drums. He usually plays double-bass, though in this group he has assigned the instrument to Buster Williams.

Carter is behind the piccolo bass (also called the three-quarter bass), a smaller version of the bass that permits him to lead the quartet and to solo rather extensively. Williams is left to supply the harmonic foundation as an accompanist playing relatively straight bass notes, and Carter is free to take on the melodic line and, occasionally, make like a horn player.

Fat Tuesday's makes its debut as a jazz club with this two-week Ron Carter date. The downstairs room has an entrance separate from the one that leads into the street-level restaurant with which it is associated. The rectangular room is small and narrow, though not uncomfortably so, and has what must be one of the lowest ceilings of any entertainment establishment in New York. The musicians play in

linear formation against a mirrored wall, and it looks as if all seats afford a full view. The fact that the quartet is not positioned on a stage contributes to the special intimate ambiance. The sound is clean and level, and visibility and sound from the bar are unusually good. The clientele looked young and paid rapt attention.

For a special one-night performance in the beginning of the year at Storytowne, an inferior uptown club, Carter added a section of four cellos to serve as a small version of a jazz-pop string section. Although it would be interesting to hear the group with that addition, it is certainly complex and intriguing enough on its own. The Miles Davis' song, "All Blues," allowed the fine, sensitive Williams to perform both a duet and dialogue with Carter. Riley offered gentle, thoughtful drum support throughout the set while Barron showed an ability to play light avant-garde piano that was easily understood.

**THE RON CARTER QUARTET**  
at Fat Tuesday's, Third Ave. &  
17th St. 533-7902. Two shows  
Wed. & Thurs. Three on Fri. &  
Sat.



The Ron Carter Quartet: Ron Carter, Kenny Barron, Buster Williams and Ben Riley.

## Laurie Beechman: New Wave With Show Biz Values at Tramps

BY CHRISTOPHER PETKANAS

Laurie Beechman was so emotionally caught up singing the war horse "New York State of Mind" that it seemed as if she might not get through it. She spilled intensity, smiling all the while. The Tramps audience was divided between those who were taken with her prodigious energy and those who were alienated or made uncomfortable by it.

The number came near the middle of her act, through Beechman did not wait until then to display everything she knows about singing and performing. This she did in the first song, and it was the equivalent of giving herself away. Starting a show at the top of a mountain, so to speak, and spending the next 50 minutes or so treading air is a grand, not uncommon cabaret snag. Beechman did not use up all she had at the outset. Most of what followed, however, was mere reiteration. She performs on a consistently high level, though here voice could be used more expressively if she explored varying degrees of loudness and softness.

After two years with the Broadway show "Annie" ("a big, big part of my career"), Beechman has molded herself into a rock singer. If women had a difficult time in the genre even when it was the consuming musical interest, today must be considered a gravely unfortunate one. The singer is either undaunted or unaware, for she rips into original, soft-rock material ("I need your love right now...I want the magic to remain") with strength and familiarity, as if it were the kind of thing regularly heard on the radio. The band, led by pianist Derek Fox, provides a solid, compatible setting. Their tempos suggest—as does Beechman herself—that they could convincingly handle a disco-arranged number. Many of the songs in the current repertoire overreach lyrically, a criticism disco tunes usually escape.

As might be guessed, there is a strong show business side to Beechman's performance. She is slender, wears black pants and a hugging black tank top, and sports a short, pixie haircut that points up a resemblance to Judy

Carne. She works effectively with a boom mike and jumps around, a bit like a go-go dancer, practically non-stop.

She has grafted a few Minnellisms—working her body as if it were that of a Gumby doll—though the guts-and-bravura animation the two share seems anachronistic. The relatively new forms of pop music—disco, punk, new wave—have introduced new and pronounced "show biz values." Beechman has a mixed media effect and juggles time by applying once-fashionable vulnerability to her version of rock.

The final song before the encore was "The Wiz" finale "Home." Beechman took a private moment, composed her body and face, then began to sing in a soft voice for the first time that night. If it was a nonsequitur, it was also pleasant and welcome.

**LAURIE BEECHMAN at Tramps,**  
125 E. 15th St. 777-5077.  
Thursdays in April at 9 & 11.  
Fridays & Saturdays at 10 & 12.



Laurie Beechman appearing at Tramps, Thursdays through Saturdays during April.

## DANCE

### David Gordon's Verbal Choreography Has Verve

BY DORIS DIETHER

David Gordon is almost more involved with words than he is with dance. His new work, "An Audience with the Pope," devised in collaboration with David Vaughan, explores variations suggested by changing the "with" in the title to "for" and "by," and words which sound like they are related to "Pope" such as popular, pope-dance/pop-dance, potpourrie, poppycock.

Slides projected giant size on the rear wall showed Vaughan as Pope in various moods—benevolent, curious, startled. Against a running

dialogue on tape by Vaughan, supposedly relating the changing aspects of papal audiences and the origin of the words which grew out of them, Gordon walked, slid on the floor, rolled, zoomed like a plan. His casual movements occasionally were directed toward the projected Vaughan who sometimes seemed to be observing or reacting to Gordon.

Sans slides, and creating her own running dialogue in which only phrases and isolated words were clearly audible, Valda Setterfield continued the piece, her movements and Gordon's only rarely in

unison. The same movement patterns were then performed in silence by three women; two women and two men, two couples, two women and two men; and then by the whole company with Setterfield's monologue again supplying a verbal background. Gordon's solo against the Vaughan dialogue and slides and his duet with Setterfield were fine, but the repetitions of the same material by the other dancers were overlong.

The program opener, "One Part of the Matter," was a solo of sorts for Setterfield in which she struck one pose after another, such as

leaning one elbow on a non-existent support, and held it for a time, more like a series of still photographs than a dance work. Gordon, Vaughan, and Setterfield discussed via a tape recorder, how the work should be performed, and there was Vaughan singing, "Every Little Movement Has a Meaning All Its Own."

"What Happened," seen at American Theatre Lab last September, wound up the evening. Here again, Gordon played with language, the dancers acting out the individual words in a story about an accident and part of

Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech, sometimes using phonetic interpretations such as two for "to" and witch for "which." You never get to hear the whole story because of the overlapping of the lines, but the shift to Shakespeare and back to the accident story is always a surprise, and the antics of the performers are amusing.

**DAVID GORDON/PICKUP COMPANY:** 541 Broadway [between Prince & Spring Sts.].  
Thursday thru Sunday, April  
19-22 and 26-29, 8:30 p.m.  
\$4/TDF plus \$1. 279-4200.