

LEO Weekly

Five Important Questions

MIKE TRACY cooks a few notes with STEPHEN GEORGE

Mike Tracy really doesn't fit the jazz player stereotype: shrouded in mystery, behind a veil of cigarette smoke, smooth talking and brooding, a man (or woman) whose life is so taken with his art that he has no time for worldly concerns.

Tracy, an accomplished sax blower whose latest record, *Gusting*, is a pleasant stroll with all the requisite swirls, is quite the opposite: He hates cigarette smoke, is outspoken and very direct, and has a healthily wide world view perhaps fostered by his extensive travels and tours.

Tracy plays the Louisville Jazz Society's second annual Jazz Bash and Benefit this Sunday at the Jazz Factory, where smoking's not even allowed. Steve Crews, Jennifer Lauletta, Dave Klingman and Jeff Sherman are among a host of others playing. There's also a silent auction where one can win everything from ear X-tacy gift certificates to a vacation getaway at a home in Cape Cod, Mass.

The LJS's former president took some time last week to address these five important questions.



Check out Mike Tracy and his sax appeal on Sunday at the Jazz Factory's Jazz Bash & Benefit. (photo by Hartmut Beifuss)

[Zoom](#)

If you were Mayor, what would you do to help promote people like you in this city?

I believe that the people within our community who speak to supporting the arts really mean supporting the major arts groups — Louisville Orchestra, Actors Theatre, Ballet, Opera, etc. — essentially the groups supported by the Fund for the Arts. I understand and applaud supporting those larger concerns. However, there is so much more to arts in Louisville than the chosen few major concerns supported by the Fund.

I believe there are people, like the Mayor, who do recognize that there are other individuals and groups that add breadth to our arts community. The challenge is how to support them, not just financially, but with opportunities for growth and recognition. Reaching the larger pool of both developing and mature artists within our community is a far more difficult task. I would welcome being part of a group that would address that challenge. ... This is not really an answer to the question. Wow, I guess I am ready for politics.

Which Louisville musician needs to get more attention?

Not musician but musicians — all of the young boys and girls who are just beginning. With so much of the funding being taken away from our school systems for the non-basics, they are the ones who need the attention.

Now this also applies to numerous, more mature musicians who have been passed over. They, too, are worthy of attention. There are so many established, excellent jazz and non-jazz musicians who almost get no attention, who have to take whatever engagements come along

to make ends meet. They need recognition and support.

Finally, I find it very curious that the major print concern in Louisville is willing to review almost anything but rarely, very rarely, local, non-rock artists. Many can get reviewed in national print and overseas but can't get a mention in The C-J. Talk about not being recognized within one's own community.

If music were food, what kind would yours be?

I love Thai and Indian food. There seems to be so many creative ways to make the food, so many subtle ways of using simple ingredients. Reminds me of good jazz solos. Great cooks are great improvisers.

Tell me about one of your favorite works of art aside from your medium.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia. While all of it was amazing, I really liked the section on Impressionism. Monet kills me. The imagination and skill he and others had to have to create from nothing such masterpieces. On the other hand, I really dig Salvador Dali. I even have two numbered prints.

What do you want to say that you know you shouldn't?

I certainly want to see the violence against America stop, but there has to be another way other than more violence.

Finally, as someone who has spent many hours playing in various locations, I cannot say loudly enough how important it is to pass the no-smoking ordinance. I hate coming home after playing/working in an environment where I could not get away from the smoke. Besides

smelling of smoke, I could feel how it affected my eyes and lungs. I don't care if someone else smokes — just don't make me do so just because I am working. ... Don't get me started, I better stop. Wait a minute, why stop at being Mayor. When is the next Senate race?

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Jazz Bash & Benefit

Sunday, June 12

Jazz Factory at Glassworks

815 W. Market St.

992-3242

\$5 donation; All ages; 2 p.m.

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