

## JAZZBEAT

# Ian Ross improvises on myriad of forms

By Matt Warner  
Contributing Writer

Guitarist Ian Ross plays jazz, seriously and regularly. But he doesn't call himself a "jazz guitarist," per se. Ross, a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, plies the musical skills he developed playing jazz in a variety of settings, including rock, blues and classical music.

"I think of myself as being an improviser first and foremost," says Ross, 25. "I'd like to think of myself as a jazz guitar player ... but I see myself more as an improviser who draws upon various things."

Ross will perform with one of his groups, an organ trio, Saturday, Oct. 17, at Pacchia. Although Ross calls his trio a throwback in some ways to the jazz organ trios of the 1960s, he says the group offers a fresh take on some familiar sounds.

"We do some of the traditional soul jazz tunes in that vein ... so it's some-



**Ian Ross** Affiliated Entertainment Industries photo

thing I think is a little more accessible," Ross says, "and we also do some originals, funk and R&B. You'll be able to find something you like about this group."

Improvisation is certainly central to Ross's musical life, but he also appreciates working with a steady group. In addition to his trio, Ross plays in the Cleveland-area rock-fusion group Locos Gatos, and as a regular member of some jazz groups in Cincinnati, where he lives now.

He says that allows for some deeper moments

of expression and more refined treatments of songs. Ross says the trio plays mostly original arrangements worked out in advance, rather than just using "heads" — the basic melodies of tunes — as a sketch to be improvised around. Dedicated groups also give Ross the opportunity to play tunes that are more obscure, and to explore one of his other musical interests, composition.

A native of Cleveland, Ross became interested in music after his older cousin became a professional musician. Soon Ross was learning guitar, and as a teenager he began to sit in at local blues and rock clubs around Cleveland. Ross says local musicians Sonny Robertson and Alan Greene mentored him and were a strong early influence in his development.

Ross was part of a band that caught the ear of Carlos Santana's producer, who spent some time guiding the group in the recording studio. That experience led Ross to

seek out more in-depth training to pursue a music career. Already immersed in jazz through the recordings of George Benson, Ross decided to attend CCM because he was "blown away" by the quality of the jazz faculty and students. He knew that learning jazz would prepare him to do almost anything as a musician.

Since graduating from CCM, Ross has been playing and teaching in Cincinnati, Dayton and northwest Ohio. He also has gone back as a student to University of Cincinnati, this time for a master's degree in history, another of his interests.

Ross's trio includes Dan Karlsberg on organ and Joe Jahnigen on drums. You can hear them from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday at Pacchia, 410 W. Fifth St., Dayton. Call (937) 341-5050 for more information.

Matt Warner is a contributing writer on music for the Dayton Daily News. He can be reached by e-mail at [warner.matt@me.com](mailto:warner.matt@me.com). Jazzbeat appears on Sundays.

# Celebrations

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## Anniversary



### ROSCOE & IRENE NAPIER 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Roscoe and Irene Napier celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 4th. They reside in Miamisburg and are members of MorningStar Baptist Church. Congratulations Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa. We love you!

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