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Cho a cool guide to hot jazz

You couldn't have asked for a better guide to the music at yesterday's Connoisseur Series concert than Ottawa bassist Adrian Cho.

As well as assembling the nine-piece Impressions in Jazz band and its repertoire, Cho provided details about the origins and background of each piece, and apologized when even a Google search had failed to turn up any information on a Gil Evans tune called *Jambangle*.

The concert featured a complete performance of a seminal 1957 collaboration between trumpeter Miles Davis and arranger Gil Evans, the *Birth of the Cool* suite. In fact, the unusual instrumentation, which included a French horn and a tuba, was chosen to mimic that album.

Most rewarding was hearing Evans' thick and unusual harmonies. The brief solos tended to be overwhelmed by the ensemble parts, but trombonist Mark Ferguson in particular provided solos that stood out as personal while fitting into the dense brass background.

As well as sparking the "cool" West Coast school of jazz, *Birth of the Cool* also hinted at future interactions between jazz and classical music. Cho developed this theme with a new composition called *Impressions and Fugue in D Minor* that combined elements of J.S. Bach and John Coltrane — "the well-tempered clavier and the ill-tempered saxophonist," Cho quipped.

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