

Jazz vibist merits 'world class' status

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Staff Writer

It says so in big red and white letters on the new poster from Ludwig/Musser Instruments, "Jerry Tachoir: World Class Jazz."

"I'm Jerry's poster kid of the year," says Tachoir with a chuckle. "The poster came out last week. See? It says 'world class' right on it."

Tachoir, 32, is indeed an international tyro as a jazz vibraphonist and he's got the festival invitations to prove it. So many, in fact, that this year he's turning some down.

The prestigious international Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland has offered him a slot. The Northsea jazz festival in Holland, at which he performed in 1986, has extended a return invitation.

"That is a great festival," Tachoir says of the world-renowned Dutch event. "Twenty thousand people! I was worried about being there with just the small group, but it was amazing how quiet and respectful the whole crowd got as soon as we started to play."

"In conjunction with Montreux, I'm supposed to be part of something called the International Music Seminar. It's where kids attend classes with American artists."

Despite the distinguished reputation of both European events, Tachoir is bypassing them, postponing both festival appearances until 1989.

Instead, The Jerry Tachoir Quartet is heading north to Canada for the Montreal Jazz Festival and the Quebec/Saguenay Festival in July. In June he's booked to appear at Nashville's Summer Lights Festival, a downtown arts event that is attended by half a

million people; at a Tennessee Jazz & Blues Society concert at Belle Meade Mansion and at the chic Mere Bulles jazz club and wine bar in the historic Nashville Market Street district.

He'll also be promoting the release of the first vibraphone instructional home video. Tachoir performs three tunes on the new video and explains techniques of playing jazz vibes. Produced in Music City by Iimagemaker Productions, it is being nationally distributed by New York's DCI Video company.

"And we're rehearsing right now for our fourth album, which we'll be recording right after the Canadian tour."

The LPs *Forces* (1979), *Canvas* (1982) and *Jerry Tachoir and Friends* (1986) have all previously showcased Tachoir's fluid, dextrous style. He is classically trained.

His mallet skills first came to prominence when he joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at age 14. Two years later, Ludwig "needed somebody to play this new marimba they had. They hired me at age 16 and that's how I became a clinician."

The relationship has been fruitful for both parties. A clinician tours with the instrument maker's support to universities where he performs concerts, does demonstrations and holds classes.

Tachoir is one of the most widely traveled vibists in this regard, holding forth on vibes at colleges in Chicago, Boston, Toronto, Dallas, Montreal, Knoxville and other cities. A 1976 *summa cum laude* graduate of the famed Berklee College of Music, he is an adjunct

professor at Belmont College in Nashville.

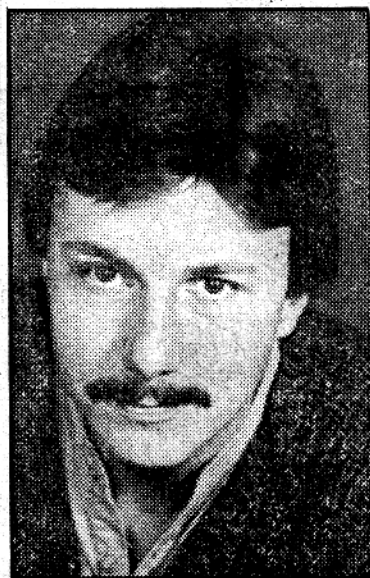
He's been a Nashvillian since 1979, which may explain why his music hasn't caught the ears of national jazz talent scouts.

"The record labels never really listen to anything that is sent to them on tape. Unless they see you in a club and it piques their interest, you don't get heard." And they don't generally come looking for a jazz vibraphonist in the capital of country music.

Although Tachoir's international instrumentalist reputation is his group's "calling card," it is not its only outstanding feature. The Jerry Tachoir Quartet performs the atmospheric compositions of its keyboardist, Marlene Desbiens Tachoir. Her award-winning composing style is the subject of the forthcoming book, *Creative Studies for Keyboard Voicings*. She is also the mother of the Tachoirs' year-old daughter Erica.

"She's a drummer already," jokes Marlene. Although Erica Tachoir will tour with her parents this summer, the drum slot in the Quartet is being filled by the far more accomplished Wayne Killius. In-demand Nashville bassist Roy Vogt rounds out the group.

The Jerry Tachoir Quartet's Nashville dates before the tour are June 3 (Mere Bulles), June 4 (Summer Lights) and June 12 (Belle Meade Mansion).



Jerry Tachoir
Video star