



Paul Fowler and Robin Abeles are B Section.

The B-Section rises to the occasion

B-SECTION RISES TO THE OCCASION

by Brandt Legg, Taos Hum, July 29, 2004.

On a cold Friday night last January, fate brought three young musicians together in front of the fire at Momentitos de la Vida restaurant in Arroyo Seco. While the warm glow filled the room, Paul Fowler's fingers floated along the piano keys, Robin Abeles talked hip with his bass and Jeremiah Glauser brushed jazzy world-drum rhythms. It was all very cool and signaled a growing symbiosis that was to become the B-Section. The trio were immediately booked for

every Saturday night at Vida and soon showed up at the Taos Inn, El Monte Sagrado's Anaconda Bar, The Alley Cantina and, now, they play every Tuesday at The Apple Tree restaurant.

After several months, though, the trio became a duo (Glauser's other group, Nama Mala, pulled him away). Abeles and Fowler like the new arrangement of rotating drummers. "The freedom and change keeps things fresh," Fowler said. One favorite guest has been bluesman Cullen Winter, who many know as a great guitarist, but, as it turns out, he's one of the best drummers around. Fowler calls him "brilliant."

Abeles and Fowler have billed themselves as the youngest jazz group in Taos, but their age (both 26) belies their level of experience and professionalism. Abeles has played in about 25 bands, including touring with Robert Mirabal, and has dabbled in most forms of music from hip-hop to Zydeco. Fowler has won an ASCAP young composer award, had his music performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington and elsewhere around the world. The B-Section expects to break into Santa Fe and Albuquerque soon with its progressive jazz sound.

Fowler, like many in Taos, was working another job when his fiancée finally convinced him to "let go" and he took the chance. Things have gone well since then, making it possible to manage a living entirely from his music. Between the B-Section's steady gigs, teaching and composition, it seems to be working. Abeles, likewise a full-time musician, will be expanding his already impressive music credentials this fall by studying classical composition and upright bass at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

The band can twist and tweak old standards into something half restrained and part wild. It's a modern feel influenced by popular music with a backbeat, funk and crafted improvs. Fowler claims that at their live shows, "About every other song we perform we just made up off the top of our heads right there." The B-Section is good enough to pull it off and the fresh seat-of-your-pants approach makes for an exciting show. Caution is gone. Even Abeles and Fowler and the guest drummer don't know where a song might end up, but they enjoy the ride. "Each gig is so much fun," Abeles said, "and the songs

are like exploring a dialog between us. We can do the same piece 50 times and it won't ever sound the same.

Both are writing much more now, adding another dimension to their repertoire. Fowler is in the process of creating a solo CD of all originals. His first release, "Photograph," displays his vocal abilities and was produced by Grammy winner Robbie Parish. The B-Section often records their live shows -- in surprisingly high technical quality -- and sells them at subsequent gigs.

There seems to be a buzz already started about this young band and both Abeles and Fowler are continuously sought out to work as session players or to fill out bands. Abeles smiles, "I've always been somewhat musically promiscuous, I'll play with anyone."

His days with Standing Wave, Desert Highway, plus many blues, rock and jazz bands in between demonstrate his love for music and capacity to adapt. If you caught Fowler and Abeles as the house band during the last Kids Unleashed show you know how wide their music can go.

Clearly though, the pair have found something special in a collaboration that pushes them individually to the edge of their abilities. At the same time they are uniting separate talents into a unique sonic experience.

B-Section plays at Momentitos de la Vida every Saturday from 7:30-10:30 p.m. and at The Apple Tree every Tuesday from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Also, watch for their appearances at El Monte Sagrado and other locations by checking the weekly "Que pasa" calendar in the Tempo or visit www.paulfowler.net.