

THE BOSTON HERALD

Weiskopf quartet's set a sizzler

Walt Weiskopf Quartet at Scullers Tuesday Night

by Bob Young

Tuesday night's visit to Scullers by the Walt Weiskopf Quartet drove home a point followers of Boston's music scene have known for years: You don't need to be a big name to make interesting music. Brooklyn-based tenor saxophonist Weiskopf isn't exactly a new face; he has spent much of the last decade working in the big bands of Buddy Rich and Toshiko Akiyoshi. Nor are his bandmates novices. Besides leading her own group -- which sometimes includes Weiskopf -- pianist

changes into unified structures which felt truly complete. The set's stongest tunes were the unhurried groove-rich, mid-tempo originals, a number of which were drawn from Weiskopf's two fine Iris recordings: "Exact Science" and "MindWalking."

As the replacement for Weiskopf's brother, Joel, Rosnes' lighter style proved to be the ideal foil for the leader's aggressive, sharp-toned attacks. The pianist made the often knotty jumps in Weiskopf's songs sound seamless. Major reputations or not, the fresh, simmering intensity Weiskopf and his quartet brought to Boston is welcome anytime. Renee Rosnes has teamed with James Moody, Wayne Shorter and Jon Faddis; bassist Jay Anderson is member of Michael Brecker's quintet; and drummer Jeff Hirshfield has backed such heavies as Mike Stern and Jim Hall. Still, none of the four is a household name, but the quartet played as if it wanted to become better known.

Weiskopf's writing gave the group a distinct advantage right off the bat. Owing more to the harmonic adventurism of John Coltrane than to predictable big band swing, his pieces -- at their best -- blended unexpected tempo shifts and off beat melodic Weiskopf quartet's set a sizzler.