

Alexander, Betters Among Jazz Stars Playing Here This Week

By Lenny Litman

When Monty Alexander was growing up in his native Jamaica, he must have listened to a lot of records by Pittsburgh's Erroll Garner and Mary Lou Williams.

While he has a very definite style of his own, some of the techniques employed by Erroll and Mary Lou come out along with a bit of the late Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson—which isn't a bad kind of company to keep.

At the Encore II through Saturday, Monty has Benjamin Nelson on bass and Oliver Jackson on drums. Jackson gets a solo every set, but the true excitement of the trio is Monty and his piano.

Harold Betters moves to the Encore in Shadyside tonight through Saturday. Dizzy Gillespie continues the big jazz parade this week at Walt Harper's Attic. The great jazz bassist, Charlie Mingus, comes to the Shadyside Encore next week, and the wonderful Morgana King



MONTY ALEXANDER
Pianist at Encore II.

comes to the Encore II for a week starting July 8.

Bob McCully and Joe Negri will present their 17th show at Beck's Patio Theater for the summer starting next Friday night. The new show, "Whatever Happened to Desdemona Fink," will feature McCully, Esther Lapiduss, Natalie DiSilvio, Ted White and Winkie Miller.

Martin Appreciated

"You're the greatest." Tony Martin bowed graciously last week when someone in the audience shouted this at the Holiday House right after the singer had finished a medley of his many recording hits.

"No," Tony answered, "just one of the few."

With his wife, Cyd Charisse, Tony is doing one of the great acts in show business today. There are but two nights to

see the show. They are both remarkable performers, and the act is one of singular excellence.

There has always been the legend that the Holiday House gets all those good shows from Las Vegas because once an act is framed, other dates around the country are taken to amortize the enormous cost of putting a Vegas show together.

In an interview later, Martin said this was not true—even though he did spend \$85,000 getting the show ready for the season.

"We love to work," Tony said, "and there is nothing like the smell of a club. What choice do we have—watching television at home? No, this is our life and believe me, when an act signs to play the Holiday House, he better be ready."

Would you say that Steven Weed was giving marijuana a bad name? Or do you agree with the late Jack E. Leonard

when he said, "Death is nature's way of telling you to slow down."

Pittsburgh In, Out

During the Variety Club convention in San Francisco, a strong rumor sped through the Hilton Hotel that Pittsburgh would have the 50th annual convention for the showmen's club that began here in 1927 when a baby was found at the Sheridan Square Theater.

Jim Ecker, chief barker, and Harry Kodinsky, vice president of Variety Clubs International, were making a strong pitch for the convention after London and Toronto.

Seattle and Philadelphia had also bid for the 1977 convention, but Pittsburgh was in the lead until a call came in from Prince Rainier of Monaco.

When the announcement was made, Jack Van Lloyd, a former chief barker, commented, "When the Prince offered Monte Carlo and Princess Grace as

hostess, Jack and Harry were just overwhelmed.

The Point in Point Breeze, generally considered the city's first modern cocktail lounge, has added a brand new kitchen and is serving dinners. Chester Finkbiener, formerly with Tambellini's on Wood Street, is the chef. Chester is six-feet-three and hits the Toledo at 350 pounds. He certainly likes what he cooks.

Remodeling Planned

Bob Calderone, one of the owners of the Twin Coaches, postponed his trip to Las Vegas to buy some talent when fire hit his room Saturday night.

Bob cleared out the room of 600 people when the fire started at 6:45 and brought them back in for Bobby Vinton's two shows. Calderone will begin the remodeling before taking his Las Vegas Trip.