

AFTER HOURS

JAZZ & ZEN MASTER

Karen Mamone takes in the aura of positive energy surrounding artist and pianist Bill Buchman as he works in his industrial park studio – an exterior setting that belies the creativity within.



1B

After Hours

Bill Buchman: Zen and the art of jazz

BY KAREN MAMONE

On a rather dismal concrete prairie inside the chain link fence of an industrial park off 17th Street, there are bunches of wildflowers growing at the threshold of Bill Buchman's studio door.

Three clumps of one of those several species of bushy white asters that cling tenaciously to even urban deserts have ingratiated themselves into a sliver of sand next to the doorway.

They were not planted there, and if one were inclined to dreamy notions of the pathetic fallacy, one might say that some magnetic pull of Buchman's creative energy drew the airborne seeds to just that spot.

As it is, the barn-like studio has its own positive appeal. Soft jazz – Buchman has been a jazz pianist as long as he has been an artist, for 50 years or so – fills the space, and large brilliant canvases cover the walls and the floor.

Buchman is an accomplished artist, musician and art educator who gives local and national workshops on both the creative process and on figure drawing, and has made popular educational DVDs on both of these subjects.

His inspiration is drawn from Abstract Expressionism, European Modernism and the art of the Far East. He believes in that moment of creation, when impulse and inspiration merge and art becomes a kind of meditation. He describes it as "Picasso meets Zen."

Now in his early 60s, the Albany native was educated at Cornell University, Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music.



Bill Buchman is both an artist and a jazz musician and uses his love of music to inspire his art. Above r., Buchman's "Flying Colors."

He studied with leading American art teachers and spent 20 years working in Europe (Holland, France and Denmark) before moving to Sarasota seven years ago with his Danish wife Metta, so that his 14-year-old son Noah might have some experience in his father's country.

Buchman's work seems to fall into one of two groups, both interesting and very different.

His expressive black and white figure drawings seem mostly to conduct that lightening burst of energy compressed into a fine line. They seem like the work of a solo instrument, where his



brightly colored abstractions are symphonies of space and dynamic tension.

This latest work, seems to have come more purely instinctual, and over the years, figurative elements have been replaced by pure color and form.

He often makes his own paper, and even this seems laden with meaning, as he works recently on a piece of rough-hewn material he made from the leaves and stems of a hollyhock plant that grew near the family's cottage in Denmark.

Buchman has also developed a working relationship with the California-based company called Savoir Faire, an importer of European art materials, and he gives demonstrations of new materials for artists all over the country.

He gives classes on how to draw the human figure every Monday morning at Ringling College's Longboat Key Center for the Arts (through April). His book on this subject, "Expressive Figure Drawing," will be published in 2010 by Random House/Crown publishers.

After so many years abroad,

SEE BUCHMAN, PAGE 6B



BUCHMAN FROM PAGE 1B

much of Buchman's work is in private and public collections in Denmark, Sweden and England. Currently, he's exhibiting both in Copenhagen at "Gallerihuset" and here in town, at the new Longboat Key Club Tennis Gardens.

Last month, he donated a painting which became the poster for a SCOPE-sponsored event on aging, and talked about his own ways of keeping the creativity spark new and vital.

On April 9, he will present an event to celebrate the release of his newest art instruction video.

"Bill Buchman: The Art of Jazz and the Jazz of Art" will be held at Longboat Key Center for the Arts from 7 to 9 p.m. He will perform his compositions on the piano and then do a live demonstration showing how his spontaneous painting techniques parallel his music and the jazz approach.

Tying in with this there will be a premier showing of excerpts from both of Bill's new DVD films – "Art Is an Attitude: The Art of Drawing the Figure" and "Creative Breakout: The Art of Freedom."

His paintings, drawings and DVDs may be found at www.billbuchman.com.