

Thursday evening of wings and all that jazz

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I am going to reveal a secret about Cutler Bay and I don't care who knows it! You see, I am now a fervent listener to radio station WDNA because all of the other stupid radio

stations that I listened to are now doing "sports talk," which to me is the most boring thing in the world on radio.

WDNA features jazz, which is my favorite kind of music. Apparently a couple of Cutler Bay merchants decided to get together and have a "Jazz Night" every Thursday. Lino Alvarez, owner of Miami Wings at 19401 S. Dixie Hwy., and his neighbor Mike Cohen of Musicians Discount Center put it together. Being a lover of jazz and hearing so much about this venue on WDNA, I decided to give it a try.

I enjoyed it so much that I ended up going home a lot later than I anticipated. (Ask my wife.) The music was just fantastic. Different people kept coming through the door lugging their own instruments and sitting in with the group already assembled. Each musician seemed to have his or her own style and blended perfectly with the others. A woman — who looked like anybody's mother, aunt or sister — got up and blew a trumpet like I have never heard before. She was accompanied by a young boy, probably not old enough to drink or even be up that late, who also played his trumpet as well as any of the pros there.

A couple of guys, who I believe were

from FIU, sat in, adding even more excitement.

A young guy unpacked his guitar and blew me away with his bluesy sound. I hear he also plays on Tuesdays, which is "Blues Night." I even saw a guy lug in a full size string bass (When's the last time you saw or heard one of those?) and replaced the electric bass guitar that had been playing. A new piano player sat in and once again changed the timbre of the music. Steve Kirkland plays tenor sax with a passion beyond compare. Mike Cohen, who is one of the best drummers I have heard since Art Blakey or Louis Bellson, kept driving the band like an 18-wheeler going down Dixie Highway.

The frustrating part for me is when Mike began pleading with the audience for someone to take his place on the drums because he was just about worn out. Frustrating for me because many moons ago I did play drums but I was frankly frightened to death to get up there and follow Mike and perhaps look like a fool in front of a lot of people. I do enough of that at my council meetings. One guy did offer to play, but obviously had never played before and thought it was easy. He was dismissed promptly by Mike. The same thing probably would have happened to me.

They finally found a young guy to sit in and save me the embarrassment, because I was almost ready to give it a try.

Folks, for real music lovers, this is a genuine treasure, and here it is, right in Cutler Bay, at a Miami Wings no less. Please don't tell too many people about it. It might get too crowded and besides, there are the Sunshine Laws.