

Lee brings Bulls Head

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

I DON'T know about the movement of Birnam Wood, but Bulls Head did come to Gibbs where Tony Lee's performance with the John Silva Quartette on Thursday evening was a reminder of the importance of the role played by specialised venues in our musical lives.

What the Cross Keys is to folk music and the Reardon Smith is to Chamber music, Gibbs is to jazz in Cardiff.

Similarly, the Bulls Head in Barnes has long been an important Mecca for jazz enthusiasts in London.

It was fitting then, that a musical ambassador from the Bulls Head should come to Gibbs for

the last in the current series of presentations by the Cardiff Jazz Society.

Pianist Tony Lee, long a stalwart of the Barnes scene, demonstrated to the Cardiff audience his attractive pianism sharply etched chording and wide range of stylistic references.

The home team was represented this time by the John Silva Quartette and they are a notably smooth and professional group. For those whose years are jaded by the aggressive sounds of out and out be-bop, John Silva, his vibes, and the rest of the quartette on string bass guitar and

drums generate a soothing and attractive MJQ'esque sound.

As *Weaver of Dreams* followed *Broadway* and *The Man I Love* there was little in the well integrated playing to suggest that Tony Lee was a guest as opposed to a regular member of the group.

His extended solo not only provided a pleasant contrast to the group numbers, but also demonstrated his range of stylistic allusions. Seemingly without taking digital breath, he traversed the keyboard from Jarratt to Stride.

Undemanding, maybe, but entertaining it certainly was.

A nod also to Max Davies filling in ably on bass for the first time with the group.