

# Jazz lovers savor wealth of pianists

By Philip Elwood  
Examiner music critic

**W**HAT A PLETHORA of pianists are playing in our midst. Ramsey Lewis at the Fairmont, Mose Allison bouncing among various Bay Area clubs; the Washington Square Bar & Grill keyboardists, Peter Mintun at L'Etoile, Abe Battat at the St. Francis — the list is formidable.

And then, this weekend, there are around some more prominent ones known to the local jazz scene — Denny Zeitlin, Alan Broadbent, and Larry Vuckovich.

Last night Zeitlin, with Charles Haden on bass and Peter Donald on drums, played at the Great American Music Hall as well as I've ever heard him. The crowd must have agreed — most of the opening show's audience stayed for the second set.

The Zeitlin-Haden rendition of "Lonely Woman," an Ornette Coleman tune of intense and dramatic inflection, was outstanding.

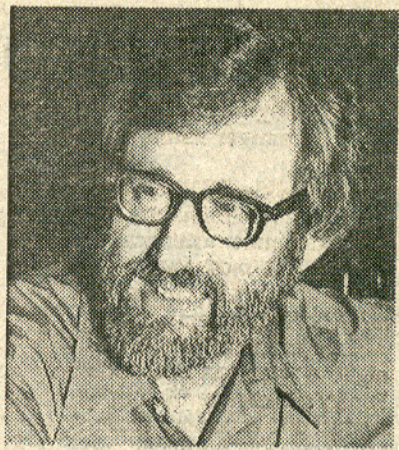
Zeitlin over the years has tried to salve and mellow his tendency to technically overkill in his piano renditions. He has also worked in contexts more electronic than acoustic — and there have been times that he preferred solo to ensemble presentations.

But last night it was back to the Zeitlin-acoustic-grand roots — and what glorious music. Zeitlin has a gorgeous touch. Massive, bright technique and an intellectual approach to his playing; Haden is among the best

of all jazz bassists, and Donald lays back and not only enjoys the whole scene but also contributes splendidly to it.

The interplay of Haden's bass, Zeitlin's piano and Donald's drums is a thing to behold. At the Great American last night they balanced the feature jazz stuff with ballads, bebop ... and the exquisite "Lonely Woman".

The trio will be at Bach Dancing at Miramar at 4:30 p.m. today.



**Denny Zeitlin's gone back to the roots, and is better for it**