How high Hancock

Kushal Biswas

The second half began with a brisk reworking of Curtis Fuller's "Alamode," but the band really soared with the next item: "Dolphin Dance," a Hancock classic written during his days with the Miles Davis Quintet. Hancock's wistful piano introduction, Haynes' dissonant trombone solo and Dinne's lyrical saxophone, topped by Thomas' crashing cymbal work—all this made it a memorable reworking of a modern standard.

The band climbed even higher with their swinging version of Monk's "Dream," an uncharacteristically uncomplicated Thelonious Monk tune, but with the last number, Billy Strayhorn's classic "Take the A Train," they really went beyond the stratosphere. Guitarist Gaynor supplied a scintillating little solo, and the three-piece wind section added a humorous train whistle for good effect to leave the audience clamoring for more. For an encore, the ensemble did "Watermelon Man," the third Hancock composition that evening. The simple, brilliant theme and the cheerful, relaxed rhythms have an infectious appeal that never fails. At the end of the show, sponsored by the USIS and The Economic Times, nobody seemed to mind that only one side of Hancock, the man they called the Chameleon of modern jazz, was displayed. Or perhaps what had been on view was so good that nothing else mattered.

A concert by the musicians of The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance: Doing things in unison and harmony.