Hub hits high note for trumpeter

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Four and an original. Yet it was clearly more than his sleek playing that captured the judge's attention, "I went out there to entertain," he said. "Cats were going out there bailing and I said to myself, 'Man, I'm going to go out there and put on a show.'" That's how Louis Armstrong would put on a show.

"It's not just how great you play. People want to feel close to you. They want to feel that they know you or can get to know you by the end of the performance," I felt that by the end of my performance, they were able to know a bit of my personality," Carl Johnson, program director at NEC's Monk Institute, wasn't surprised to hear that Barrett snatched the award.

"We certainly like to think that while he was here we helped him get to a place in his playing where he's ready to compete at that level and be successful," Johnson said. "I'm proud of both of them and I'm happy for the program." Barrett, who graduated from Berklee College of Music in 1990 and earned a master's degree from Queens College before moving back to the Hub in '95, said that he isn't surprised by the offer to relocate to New York. He plans to continue using Boston as his base of operations for his new gig as a member of a trio run by his friend Kevin Naja's quintet.

"People are sleeping on Boston," he said. "They don't realize that there are musicians who are here. They're going to go out and be the next ones. I can play Waldy's anytime I want. For me, I'm trying to get to the level of my musical growth. Boston is the place for me. I love Boston because I can really, really work my stuff out here."

**TOOTING**

**Hub's horn**

Despite Big Apple's appeal, award-winning trumpeter calls Boston home

Music

By BOB YOUNG

If Waldy's is more crowded than usual the next few weekends, blame trumpeter Darren Barrett, the Roxbury resident, who performs at the Boston Jazz Club as often as he can, last Friday took the top prize in the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Trumpet Competition.

Besides winning $20,000, Barrett quickly saw his world change. In short order, he made his network TV debut and heard from several record labels. Now he's being pressed to relocate to the Big Apple.

"It was hard for a guy who had to be convinced to enter the competition at all," Barrett said by Boston friends to send in a tape of his playing. Barrett eventually received and found himself one of 15 finalists being judged at the Washington, D.C., event by a Who's Who of jazz trumpets, Art Farmer, Jon Faddis, Clark Terry, Arturo Sandoval, Randy Brecker and Wallace Roney.

Barrett was first prize, leaving Monk International Jazz Trumpet Competition.

"I thought long and hard about it," Barrett, 30, recalls. "I wanted to go out there and play the history of the instrument. Ron Carter taught me about that.

From 1963 to 1965, bassist Carter was a mentor to Barrett at the New England Conservatory, where the trumpeter won the part of the first class admitted to the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. Barrett applied his real-life lessons well during last weekend's competition.

"I made it to the finals and it was even scarier than the semifinals, because I got to hear the other six out. If it and they were killing," Barrett said. "And I had to play last."

Backed by the stellar rhythm section of drummer Brian Blade, pianist Eric Reed and bassist Rodney Whitaker, he performed "Sweet Lorraine," Monk's "Raise Turn to next page