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—LEONARD FEATHER

Karen Briggs Rises Above the Room

Serendipity can lead the inquisitive musicologist to the most improbable places. Take, for example, Phillip's Restaurant, a busy and lively room on Devonshire Street in Chatsworth where, every Friday and Saturday, Karen Briggs can be heard playing the violin.

A newcomer to town (she arrived here in April from Virginia, where she had spent three years playing in a symphony orchestra), Briggs seems likely to lose very little time establishing a local and, ultimately, national reputation.

Jazz violinists have always been a rare breed, particularly, in recent years, those who eschew electronic gimmickry. Briggs plays a white violin to which no enhancement devices are attached; she extracts from it a basic, pure sound, weaving her way through standard tunes, blues and jazz numbers with consummate ease.

Her "Summertime" was graced with a long, unaccompanied introduction; after the rhythm section joined her, she moved seamlessly from slight variations on the Gershwin melody to intense forays into double time.



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