



Phil Elwood, *San Francisco Examiner*

Hargrove's sextet was the omnipresent superstar of the Big Sur JazzFest weekend, but pianist **Jack Perla's** quintet, saxist Dave Ellis and his quartet and singer-guitarist Claudia Gomez and her remarkably effective Latin quartet also performed wonderfully.

Perla's group played both at the KRML Jazz Store and at Sunday's JazzFest concert, with Perla's compositions providing ample blowing space to saxist Harvey Wainapel, Derek Jones on bass, Alan Miguel Hall on drums and Andre Bush, guitar. Playing his Thelonious Monk Institute / BMI Composers award number, titled "Roman Candles," as well as the beautiful "Restless," a tough chart called "Minefield" (which has complex Bud Powell-like lines) and "Swimming Lessons for the Dead," among others, Perla's performance had a fine, sophisticated ring to it.

This is a superb instrumental mix that was better presented in the Jazz Store's unamplified sound environment than in the over-amped setting at the conference center. Bassist Jones, a beautiful player, had a different sound and made an entirely different impression when playing *sans* mike than amplified.