

Life in the fast lane

WHEN it comes to displays of bravura technique at breakneck speeds, Richie Cole has few equals.

His style is to jump without hesitation into the fast lane and stay there, as a wildly enthusiastic Perth Jazz Society audience discovered on Monday night.

In tunes taken mainly from the bebop repertoire, Cole left no one in any doubt as to his considerable digital dexterity and seemingly inexhaustible storehouse of ideas.

And the madcap humour that has become such a familiar Cole trademark was much in evi-

JAZZ Adrian Kenyon

ence throughout the evening, though - thank goodness - not overbearingly so.

Occasionally, Cole switched to the middle lane for a Latin feel or medium tempo standard, but it was almost impossible to detect any loss of momentum.

Carping though it may seem in the face of such virtuosity, one might have wished for even more pressure on the brakes and a further shift to the left. But Cole does not give the impress-

ion of being comfortable in the slow lane.

Even the tempo of his "Sophisticated Lady" was doubled after the first chorus.

The rhythm section of Mike Nelson (piano), Paul Pooley (bass) and Gary France (drums) - a trio not short on technical prowess itself - was well suited to the ferocity of the Cole style.

With the end in sight, Cole invited a bevy of Perth saxophonists to join him for a touch of Alto Madness. It was the ultimate Big Finish - a thrilling climax to an evening of exceptional musicianship.