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By HOWARD REICH

DIANE DELIN

"Talking Stick" Blujazz

The violin has a long and distinguished history in jazz, with players such as Stephane Grappelli and Eddie South conceiving deeply personal approaches to the instrument. Yet few young musicians turn to the jazz fiddle these days. That makes Delin's recording particularly welcome, for in this disc she announces herself as one of the more promising young violinists to swing into view in years. A melodist to the core, Delin is not afraid to linger over a phrase on American pop standards such as "Beautiful Love" or "If I Should Lose You," nor does she refrain from producing an ineffably sweet and buttery tone. Yet for all its lyric poetry, this recording never becomes maudlin or sentimental. Whether leading her jazz quartet or luxuriating in orchestral accompaniments, Delin produces improvisations of considerable style and unmistakable integrity. If Delin still has a way to go to match the virtuosity of a young jazz fiddler such as Regina Carter, this recording nevertheless proves that she's swinging in the right direction.

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MUSIC

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Windy City jazz goes airborne

BY LLOYD SACHS
entertainment critic

Those waiting for the new Chicago improvising scene to peak are going to have to find something to keep themselves busy. The level of creativity is only increasing as the level of familiarity among Chicagoans and non-Chicagoans rises. It's a great time to be a jazz fan in this city—and not only for the "outside" stuff, as witness the crop of young players and veterans leaving their mark in the mainstream. Here are my 10 favorite albums released in 2001 by Chicago artists of all stylistic stripes:

Diane Delin, "Talking Stick" (Bluejazz)—A violinist who avoids the cloying effects that are the stock and trade of other jazz musicians who play the instrument, Delin also avoids the sweetening factor in backing her quartet on three tunes with a string section. Her playing has a toughness and stringency to go with its elegance and verve. A consistently attractive effort, "Talking Stick" sets off familiar standards such as "I Can't Get Started" with diverse originals. Delin's first-rate quartet includes pianist Dennis Luxion (with whom she performs two duets), bassist Michael Arnopol and drummer Tom Hipkin.