

Giles

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gave him his start. "He's come back several times and worked with the jazz bands and things," said Moreno.

This, along with his success, has apparently made Giles a hero to local band students.

Childhood friend Chris Conway also attended last year's band reunion, and noted that many others in attendance treated Giles like a celebrity. "Brooks sees me and comes up and gives me a big hug," Conway said. "People looked at me like 'wow, you know him.'"

Giles is currently playing with Eldee Young, who won a Grammy with the Ramsey Lewis trio in 1964.

He will return to New York, which has been home for 12 years, this week. He has been in Hong Kong with the Eldee Young Jazz Quartet — which also includes a drummer, a pianist and Young on bass and vocals — for the past three months. After a short break, Giles will go with the group to Singapore in early June.

Giles plans to release a CD of his original work next year.

The quartet has received a warm welcome in Hong Kong, where they have performed at the newly

opened Blue Note, in the Kowloon Shangri-La hotel.

"It's been a hit," said Giles. "We've gotten a lot of publicity."

Giles feels the audience plays a big part in performing. "Depending on the energy of the audience, it affects the music constantly. If it's a very active audience, the energy level is that much higher."

Giles toured Europe with the Broadway musical "Bubbling Brown Sugar" in 1993 and 94, and recently appeared in Woody Allen's "Sweet and Low-Down."

In the film, Giles plays a musician in a scene with Sean Penn, who received an Oscar nomination for his role. He didn't have the opportunity to talk with Penn during filming, but was surprised to find himself in a make-up chair next to Uma Thurman, Penn's co-star.

Giles can't name a favorite from all the places he's been. He finds charm in each locale.

"I think the best education is traveling," he said.

His musical career allows him to live in different places for a few months at a time, which Giles feels is the best way to experience a country. "You're living in the culture, and you find so much out

about human nature and how much people have in common," he said.

Giles returns to Kentucky once or twice a year to visit his family, and a few old friends. He misses the beauty of Kentucky, and the space, but prefers to live in large cities.

His parents are planning to visit him during his break, one way or another. "If he doesn't have time to come here, we're going to New York," said his mother, Gloria Giles.

As for his chosen vocation, Giles is quick to point out that the music business is a business.

"I love music," he said, "but there is a difference between music and the music business." Having good people who handle the business aspect is very important, according to Giles.

The Giles family also provided encouragement to him. His mother is a pianist and vocalist, and she has two brothers who play saxophone. She had hoped he would be a professional musician. "I was in music myself and I always encouraged him," she said.

As a youngster, Giles listened to funk and rock 'n' roll, but started getting really interested in jazz during junior high school.

He feels fortunate to have studied with some great jazz musicians, including Donald Byrd, Junior



Photo submitted

Brooks Giles

Manse, Reggie Workman and Arni Lawrence.

He attended Ohio State University before transferring to the new School for Social Research, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He holds an M.F.A. from The Aaron Copeland School of Music at Queens College.

Giles, who works on a freelance basis, enjoys the flexibility his career allows.

"I like having the freedom to travel and I like being able to decide where I am going to perform and with whom," he noted. "I've been blessed to be able to do what I love to do and see the world."