Jimmy McGriff and his Organ Trio will give tonight's Jazz in the Garden concert (Thursday, August 8) at The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, at 8:30. Jimmy McGriff, on the organ, will be joined by Thornel Schwartz, guitar; Arthur Theus, saxophone; and Jimmy Smith, drums.

This summer's Jazz in the Garden series, directed by Ed Bland, features a variety of contemporary musical styles including some of the various attempts at synthesizing jazz and rock. Buddy Guy will give the August 15 concert. The concert to have been given by the Clark Terry Quintet on June 27 was cancelled because of rain, and has been rescheduled for August 29.

The entire Museum is open Thursday evening until 10 throughout the summer. The regular Museum admission, $1.50, admits visitors to galleries and to 8 p.m. film showings in the Auditorium; there is no charge for Museum members. Admission to jazz concerts is an additional 75 cents for members and public.

As in previous Jazz in the Garden concerts, tickets for each concert are on sale in the Museum lobby from the preceding Saturday until the time of the Thursday evening performance. A few chairs are available on the garden terraces, but most of the audience stands or sits on the ground. Cushions may be rented for 25 cents. Beer and sandwiches are available for concert patrons. When a concert is cancelled because of rain, tickets are honored for the following Thursday. Other Museum activities continue as announced.

Jimmy McGriff uses the distinctive sound of the Hammond organ to produce the scream of ghetto outrage -- using blue notes and tone clusters. At other times, his organ-playing sounds like a choir of a hundred voices, singing gospel. But, most of all, his deft, incisive lines swing.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, McGriff was a police trainee before he started playing professionally in Trenton, N.J. He has had two hit albums on the charts -- "I've Got a Woman" and "Topkapi."

Additional information available from Joan Wiggins, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.