

File Photo

Norman Hedman

Long-awaited release party finally happens

By Norman Hedman

I arrived at the Jazz Standard at 5:00 p.m. to setup my equipment and found the staff calmly going through their routine getting the club ready for the night's performance. Anticipation of what the turnout would be and if the press would attend was nerve racking. The first show was to start at 8:00 p.m., but by 7:00 p.m. the club was half full.

You would think that as an artist all I would be concerned with was the performance, but in today's market, club and festival promoters are only concerned with the turnout. New artists usually draw the worst day, and that's Monday.

At 7:45 p.m. you could feel the excitement in the air, the club was completely packed. There wasn't even standing room! The band was in the dressing room ready to go when we got the message our legendary host for the evening was delayed by traffic. One more thing to add to the jitters!

"...it was exciting and satisfying and that's just part of the reason why I'm in the business."

After a few minutes, it was decided that we could wait no longer. As we entered the stage, in walked our host Earl "The Pearl" Monroe. Relieved, the band performed brilliantly. The executives from Palmetto Records, who have never seen the band perform live before, were thoroughly impressed.

The audience showing their appreciation for the performance purchased all 150 CDs the record company brought for the evening. And most gratifying, we were not able to leave the stage for at least 30 minutes do to signing autographs. The club manager claims it was the best Monday he's had in months and promised he would have us back for a week's engagement.

I have heard this before at the Blue Note two years ago, but I am still waiting a return. To say the least, it was exciting and satisfying and that's just part of the reason why I'm in the business.

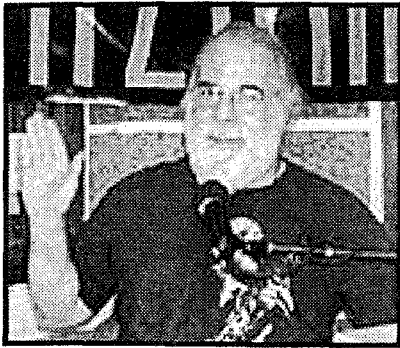
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Prez Sez "Taken by Surprise" out at last

By Butch Berman



Dear Jazz Pilgrims,

Well it's a little late "Happy Thanksgiving" and a little early "Merry Christmas"...but nevertheless this is our end of year/start of new year issue with our 2001 Second Annual BMF Jazz Calendar included.

This year we chose the artists and areas surrounding the Topeka Jazz Festival, held each year over Memorial Day weekend in Topeka, Kansas. We sponsor this event yearly – and they make us feel very welcome. So – we felt the wonderful pictures mostly taken by our head staff photographer Rich Hoover would be most appropriate. Don't you agree?

The new release on Palmetto by Norman Hedman's Tropique – "Taken by Surprise" – is now on the air and in the stores. Already being reported by 18 Gavin stations (many reporting multiple spins), and a sold-out CD release party at New York's new East Side bistro The Jazz Standard that was a smash, launches this gem of a CD in fine fashion (see Norman's own account of this special night on page 1).

Thus, this sets the stage for our own Lincoln CD release party at the Lied Center, March 24th with Tropique opening for the Jerry Gonzales and Fort Apache Band for a gala Latin-tinted double bill of great New York jazz. We're hoping the execs from

Palmetto – Pat Rustici, Matt Balitsaris, and Michael Lesser (spelled incorrectly on the back page of our last issue – sorry) will be in town also. Then with Wade Wright from Jack's Record Cellar of San Francisco here, too, we will complete our 2001 BMF meeting with all bases loaded - to insure more jazzy happenings around here.

We regret to inform you, our readers, of a couple of setbacks that slightly marred the end of our year 2000 and changed situations

"We don't want to run the show – but just be included..."

a bit about a January show we felt we needed to pull out of. Referring to bringing Benny Powell here to celebrate the 25 years of NJO – Mr. Powell and I seemed to have a difference of opinion in our communication to solidify all the necessities leading up to the gig. We were verbally (I felt) assured enough to allow NJO to begin the needed promotion; but I was taken aback when Benny (in his own genteel manner) cancelled due to conflicting business ventures – but later called back to try and "work things out..." Fearing that this might have more to do with salary discrepancies – I felt the need to remove Foundation involvement, and not stir up any more negative feelings. As of this writing – the NJO and Mr. Powell are negotiating – and they are still waiting for his reply.

Now on a more positive note

– I can't wait for the return of singer Kendra Shank along with virtuoso pianist Frank Kimbrough for a lovely Valentine's Day party/concert at the 7th Street Loft. Be there for a splendid night to share the magic made by this talented duo to be with the one you love in high style. For early reservations or for more information, call our office at 402-476-3112, and you'll be glad you did.

In closing, I want to mention a luncheon/meeting the BMF held at the Cornhusker Hotel to try to better collaborate in 2001 with some factions that in the past we didn't feel responded to us, or truly understood what we were all about (see Tony Rager's article on page 11 for all the facts). Those invited that attended were Jeff Korbelik from the Journal Star newspaper and Molly Nance, representing the Updowntowners, in reference to July Jamm. Unfortunately, Pete Watters, Tim and Jeff Boehmer from the Zoo Bar and Kathy Piper from the Nebraska Arts Association, in reference to Jazz in June, didn't attend with cloudy regrets (since writing this article the BMF met with Kathy Piper for lunch one day and seemed to work out our differences - hopefully she and the Nebraska Art Association will feel more inclined to utilize our offerings and make Jazz in June even jazzier). We don't want to run the show – but just be included because we can, and in doing so add a lot to make jazz more of a permanent faction here as, shall we say...football? That's probably setting my sights a little high, but we can try.

Happy Holidays, folks!

Butch Berman

Butch Berman

NJO shines in silver anniversary opener

By Tom Ineck

In its 25th anniversary season opener, the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra sparkled like newly minted silver.

The sterling Oct. 13 performance for several hundred fans also marked the NJO's debut at The Cornhusker hotel, a decided improvement after last year's residence at the stodgy Plamor Ballroom.

Helping to celebrate the occasion was guest soloist Kirk Garrison, a Chicago-area trumpeter who favors the horn's upper registers and plays with power and confidence at any tempo.

"Swing's the Thing," proclaimed the evening's theme, and Sammy Nestico's clever arrangement of "Big Band Milestones" launched that theme with an ensemble medley that neatly folded together Glenn Miller's "String of Pearls," Count Basie's "Lil' Darlin'" and Tommy Dorsey's "Opus One."

The tempo picked up with a John LaBarbera arrangement of Duke Ellington's "Cottontail," a good vehicle and a welcome return for a couple of NJO alumni, bassist Andy Hall and trumpeter L.J. McCormick. It also featured the entire saxophone section, which initially stated the melody and took a unison solo later in the tune.

The only driver behind the wheel on Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady" was Scott Vicroy, whose baritone sax work on the classic ballad was tender, imaginative and made the most of every note.

Joining the NJO, Garrison unveiled his new composition "Remembrance," a memorial to all jazz giants. The composer began on flugelhorn, first with the rhythm section only, then with the rest of the horns. Going up-tempo, he switched to trumpet and revealed a sophisticated fusion style with a propulsive Latin tinge.

Garrison returned to flugelhorn

for the lovely "Taylor's Waltz," a playful romp written for his daughter and featuring Ed Love on soprano sax. His "Inside the Lines" was a medium swing tune deftly matching Garrison's trumpet with Love's alto sax in the melody.

To begin the second half of the concert, the NJO tipped its collective hat to the late Stanley Turrentine with guitarist Peter Bouffard's unique arrangement of the tenor saxophonist's hit "Sugar." Darren Pettit of Omaha took the lead on tenor sax, the trumpet section maneuvered through a masterful unison flugelhorn passage, and Tom Harvill delivered a soulful piano solo.

After typically unconventional interpretations of the standards "All the Things You Are" (featuring the trombones) and "All or Nothing at All" (in a convoluted arrangement by Randall Snyder), the NJO brought Garrison back to the stage to front a nine-piece ensemble performing the trumpeter's stunning arrangements of Herbie Hancock's "One Finger Snap" and Gerry Mulligan's "Kaper," a fast swinger with piercing high notes by Garrison.

Besides the solid rhythm section of Harvill, Hall and drummer Greg Ahl, the smaller unit included NJO standouts Love, Vicroy, Pettit, trumpeter Dean Haist and trombonist Todd Thatcher.

But it was the trumpeter's salsified take on George Gershwin's "Fascinatin' Rhythm" that blew the roof off the joint as he leaped for the stratosphere in the bravura style of Maynard Ferguson and Arturo Sandoval. Sustaining unbelievably high notes, he even quoted Sonny Rollins' calypso tune "St. Thomas."

The closer, "A Trumpeter's Prayer," teamed Garrison's trumpet with the brass section in a spiritual chorale to cap a winning performance.

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Tomfoolery: "NightTown" website is a nocturnal refuge

By Tom Ineck

Like everyone else these days, I now have my own website. The unwieldy address is: <http://hometown.aol.com/tineck/NightTown.html>.

It really began about seven years ago, when I created the imaginary "NightTown" as a make-believe community with a jazz soundtrack for a weekly, 90-minute program on KZUM Community Radio in Lincoln. Through the years, the show moved from Monday nights to Tuesdays and finally to Thursdays from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., where it remains "that nocturnal refuge for the romantic heart."

The thought of having a virtual electronic "NightTown" was intriguing. I began working on the site months ago and, like most websites worth their salt, it has grown and continues to grow as a work-in-progress.

More than just a radio program with an emphasis on jazz ballads and the classic melodies and lyrics of the Great American Songbook, this "NightTown" gives me an opportunity to share some of the jazz artist interviews, concert reviews and CD reviews that I've written over the last 15 years.

So, allow me to conduct a guided tour. When you arrive at the home page, you are given a short introduc-

tion to "NightTown." From there, you can visit the **Program** page, where you can choose from nine different "neighborhoods," each with a list of favorite recordings to be heard on the radio program.

For example, stroll down **Main Street** for a list of recordings by some

"More than just a radio program with an emphasis on jazz ballads and the classic melodies and lyrics of the Great American Songbook, this "NightTown" gives me an opportunity to share some of the jazz artist interviews, concert reviews and CD reviews that I've written over the last 15 years."

of our favorite mainstream jazz artists. Visit the **Night Club Section** for a sampling of exciting live performances. Get a ticket for **Cinema Row** for some of the best jazz-inspired film soundtrack music. Wander into the **Historic District** for the original recordings. Take a walk on the jazz fringes in the **Outskirts of Town**.

In all, hundreds of recordings are listed alphabetically by artist's name. Also included are the recording title,

the year it was released and the label.

On the **Interviews** page you can read the artists speaking candidly about their work. A 1987 interview with Cleo Laine is the first to be featured, with more to come.

Go to **Performances** for written accounts of live concerts. The 1989 Birmingham (England) International Jazz Festival is the debut in this series. Five recent CDs are featured on the **CD Reviews** page, including recordings by singer Kurt Elling, organist Joey DeFrancesco, saxophonist Flip Phillips, singer Joni Mitchell and pianist Joe Cartwright.

On the **Web Sites** page, you can browse some of our favorite online addresses for jazz clubs, jazz festivals, jazz labels and more. When the **Photo Gallery** page is completed, it will highlight photographs of jazz performances that I've shot since I began covering jazz for the Lincoln Journal newspaper.

So, visit "NightTown" the website at <http://hometown.aol.com/tineck/NightTown.html> and bookmark it so you can return often for a visit. If you live in the Lincoln area, join us in "NightTown" every Thursday evening from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 89.3 FM.

NightTown <http://hometown.aol.com/tineck/NightTown.html>.

NightTown is a nocturnal refuge for the romantic heart....

It's a radio program of jazz and the lyrics of the Great American Song Book.

It's artist interviews, reviews and photographs. It's a mood. It's jazz noir.

Holland's Hastings concert is year's best

By Tom Ineck

Certainly the year's best live jazz performance in Nebraska — and perhaps the best in the Midwest — is the Oct. 26 appearance by the Dave Holland Quintet in this most unlikely place, an historic railroad town of just 23,000 people.

The concert was the brilliant brainchild of Turner McGehee, a professor at Hastings College and a close friend of professional jazz photographer W. Patrick Hinely. In a collaborative coup, McGehee mounted a month-long exhibition of Hinely's behind-the-scenes photos of Holland and booked the bassist's band for a free performance at the lovely 500-seat French Memorial Chapel on the Hastings College campus.

As I predicted in the last issue of *Jazz*, the concert was well worth the 90-minute drive westward from Lincoln. The near-capacity audience, largely comprised of students and faculty members, seemed to agree.

Holland fronted a top-notch outfit, the members of which are all at the peak of their playing ability. All have performed and recorded extensively with Holland except the great saxophonist Antonio Hart, who sat in for Holland's regular reed player, the ubiquitous and much-in-demand Chris Potter.

Contributing superb compositions and providing a formidable front-line voice is trombonist Robin Eubanks.

Vibraphonist Steve Nelson creates the harmonic textures that a pianist would ordinarily provide, but with a more percussive edge. In tandem with Holland, drummer Billy Kilson holds the rhythm together with his flawless technique, astounding polyrhythmic fills

and "Points of View," its most recent CD releases on ECM, but the real treat was hearing selections from a recording completed just a month before their appearance in Hastings.

That included the opener, a yet-untitled tune by Eubanks. Its unconventional and complex construction was typical of the quintet's sophisticated ways.

With vibes and soprano sax riffing in unison, Eubanks took the uptempo lead, then Hart joined him before passing it off to Nelson for a vibes solo with bass and drums riffing behind him. After a bass solo segued to bass and vibes, Eubanks returned for a trombone solo with a virtuosic display of range, tone and tonguing technique.

"Cosmosis," another new tune, was a fiery showpiece for Hart on soprano sax and Kilson, who displayed a remarkable control of tension-and-

and sensitive eyes and ears.

More than just a prodigiously talented bassist, Holland is every musician's dream leader — a boss who allows his sidemen plenty of space and creative input. Firmly at the controls, Holland seemed to send an electrical current through the quintet, making the music crackle with hair-raising power and precision.

The quintet played a mixture of tunes from "Prime Directive"



Bassist Dave Holland bears down as Antonio Hart solos on soprano sax and drummer Billy Kilson keeps perfect time.

Photo by Tom Ineck



Photo by Tom Ineck

The Dave Holland Quintet shows its ensemble skills. From left they are vibraphonist Steve Nelson, bassist Dave Holland, trombonist Robin Eubanks, drummer Billy Kilson and tenor saxophonist Antonio Hart.

release percussion. The ballad "For All You Are" teamed Eubanks and Hart (on alto sax) for the melody. Kilson tastefully doubled the tempo on the hi-hat cymbal without seem-

(Holland continued on pg. 6)

(Holland continued from pg. 5)
ing obtrusive.

Without announcing the next tune, Holland launched into a funky bass riff, off of which Eubanks and Hart constructed contrapuntal lines, building in ferocity into a trombone solo that displayed Eubanks' triple-tonguing technique. More abstract and arrhythmic than most of the band's material, the piece seemed

to grow in volcanic, surging passages before exploding in a funky, shifting drum solo that betrayed its New Orleans street-marching influences.

Holland's mid-tempo "Clarence" was written for the bassist's wife and featured trombone and alto sax with solos on vibes and bass. Kilson again showed his powers of observation and sensitivity, reading every note and every nuance like an open book. From "Prime Directive" came Nelson's "Candlelight Vigil," a

drummerless ballad with classical overtones. Holland's showed his all-around technique with a wonderful bowed bass introduction.

The title track from "Prime Directive" topped off the performance in style. Holland's tone on the bass was a thing of beauty, an exquisitely warm woodiness that sounded intimate at any tempo.

Psychically fueled by this high-octane performance, I made the 90-minute homeward trip with a smile on my face and no regrets.

Jazz on Disc

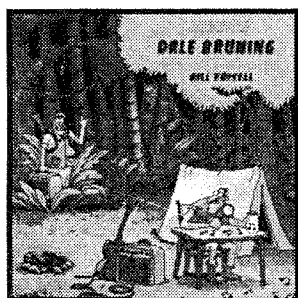
Teacher and former student go fret-for-fret

By Tom Ineck

DALE BRUNING WITH BILL FRISSELL

Reunion

Jazz Link Enterprises



Denver-area guitarist Dale Bruning figured prominently in the early career of Bill Frisell, who began on clarinet and saxophone before moving to the fretted instrument under Bruning's tutelage.

Today, Frisell excels as an eclectic guitar stylist with an unmistakable sound, a talent for offbeat compositions and a prolific recording schedule as leader and sideman.

Teacher and student first performed together just five years ago in Denver. On "Reunion," they are reunited for a two-day series of concerts at the Cornish School of the Arts in Seattle.

A double CD, "Reunion" has the two fret masters collaborating on a collection of well-known standards, an

unusual (and very intriguing) choice for Frisell, who seldom records the classic popular songs. But what's important in this face-off is the clear camaraderie and mutual respect between the elder and his former protégé.

It's hard to fault the choice of material. Among the even dozen tunes are "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," "Body and Soul," "All the Things You Are," "Seven Come Eleven," "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "Round Midnight" and "The Shadow of Your Smile."

They may seem predictable. They may even seem old hat. But they're still just as warm and comfortable as that old hat, too. To my ears, the most surprising revelation is the 10-minute re-interpretation of "Besame Mucho," with Frisell's shimmering, mournful statement of the melody and Bruning's low-register harmonies creating the perfect counterpoint.

BEN THOMAS
The Mystagogue
Origin Records

"The Mystagogue" by vibraphonist Ben Thomas is post-bop music for the 21st century. Both the composing and the performance reflect originality and confidence.



Thomas' co-conspirators in this bold outing are pianist Laura Caviani, bassist Clipper Anderson and drummer John Bishop, along with occasional support from clarinetist Eric Likkell, tenor saxophonist Rick Mandyck and soprano saxophonist Mark Piszczek. All are relative unknowns, with the exception of Twin Cities pianist Caviani, a longtime friend and musical colleague of singer Karrin Allyson.

The title track leaps off the mark like a sprinter at the sound of the starting gun. Bishop drives the ensemble with help from Caviani, whose percussive keyboard work is very exciting. "Still Livin' with Mama" is a soulful blues with brash tenor sax and a greasy rhythmic swing. Introduced by Caviani on solo piano, "Melody for Mr. Mike" resembles a French impressionist's nocturne. All 10 tunes are by Thomas, a credit to his skill with a pen.

Discorama

By Butch Berman

EARL MAY QUINTET

Live at Shanghai Jazz

Shanghai Jazz



When I got a call from Earl and Lee May telling me they were sending the Berman Music Foundation some promo copies of Earl's first recording with his name stamped on it as bandleader – my premiere thoughts were the same as track #14 – At Last!

Earl May was one of my first "jazz friends" after I got out of the rock and roll biz six years ago (now back with the Nebraska Rocks Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, I'm doin' both) and founded the BMF. Also, my numero uno radio (KZUM 89.3) interview where I marveled at Earl's vast, past history including long stints with Billy Taylor, Gloria Lynne, and Diz to name a few. All the more reason to rush out and get – "Earl May Quintet's Live at Shanghai Jazz," introducing Catherine Russell on Shanghai Jazz out of Madison, New Jersey (Earl states that this is the best jazz club in New Jersey that also serves wonderful Chinese cuisine).

Earl's deft, left handed bass style is in fabulous form as he proves to me, and will you, the listener that no one swings, has such great tone and

accompanies singers with such aplomb as Mr. May.

The band's tight, featuring vocalist Catherine Russell whose lovely voice grows on you with each cut. Drummer Eddie Locke goes back with Earl a long way, and it shows. Pianist Larry Ham and David Glasser on sax along with percussionist Joel Hirsch all do a fine job. Still, in my opinion – Earl's bass work is the real standout and if he wanted to could play with any top-tiered players of any age and come out on top – he's that good.

Yes Earl, you're the man.

Fave tunes are "Laughing on the Outside" – a beautiful tearjerker showcasing Ms. Russell; a rousing arrangement of "A Night in Tunisia," "I Cover the Waterfront" and "Blues for Boz" showing off excellent piano and sax chops. In all – a most enjoyable musical adventure with a well-chosen setlist.

Always the dependable sideman – Earl May solidly steps out as a leader on Live at Shanghai Jazz. Get it!!!

YOSHIYUKI YAMANAKA

Great Time

Origin



Congrats to the powers that be at Origin Records in coming up with

this clever pairing of Japanese tenor artist Yoshiyuki Yamanaka with some of the truly grand masters of the art of jazz with the rhythm section of Junior Mance on piano, bassist Earl May, and Ben Riley on the drums. Sounds like a great time – as the title of this new Origin release proclaims. Great Time – you could tell that was had by the entire ensemble.

Yamanaka assimilates the mournful timbre of Prez Young within many of the well-worn but well-revisited standards...to a more subtle Zoot Sims approach on others. The many years of experience between Junior, Earl, and Ben understand every nuance Yamanaka puts out – and does so well, earning more than the usual prelim spins to check it out in the car or at home. Both faired four stars on perfect execution and keeping a mighty groove steeped in jazz history.

Yes sir – this collaboration was certainly well named – "Great Time" – who doesn't want to have one? Truly a jazzmic journey to behold.

Check out the new Berman Music Foundation Web Site. Filled with more photos, articles and information about artists we support.

www.bermanmusicfoundation.org

Unsung Heroes Billy Higgins

By Bill Wimmer

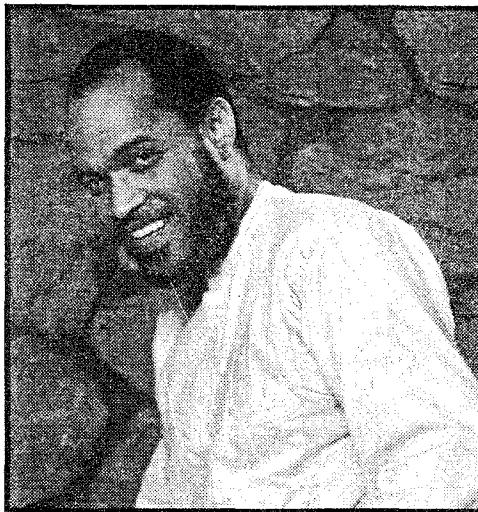
We have honored some great players in this column, but I think the time has come to "Give the Drummer some", as they used to say. Billy Higgins seems as good of a choice as any for the first drummer to be honored here, not only because I've always loved his under appreciated playing but because he is as vital today and as active as when he first came to prominence over 40 years ago.

Billy Higgins was born in Los Angeles on October 11, 1936 and began playing drums at an early age. Although his first work was with R&B groups, he soon began playing jazz with such local luminaries as Dexter Gordon, Teddy Edwards, Leroy Vinneger, Red Mitchell, James Clay and high school chum Don Cherry. While on a job with Cherry, a bassist named Charlie Haden came in as a substitute and the three soon joined forces with a young alto player from Ft. Worth named Ornette Coleman, in 1957. The rest, as they say, is history that would soon either be dubbed "The Change Of The Century" or "The End Of The World", depending on your point of view.

Ornette Coleman's music was like none before or after, and when the group moved to New York in 1959, it was met with such controversy that it began to really split the ranks of musicians, listeners and Critics alike. At the same time that The Ornette Coleman Group was shaking things up in NYC, Billy Higgins was beginning to freelance around the city and make a name for himself as hard-swinging, mainstream player at home in many situations and capable of great subtlety and sensitivity.

After leaving Coleman's group, Higgins played with Thelonious Monk

and John Coltrane and became one of the most popular drummers at Blue Note Records. In 1961 Higgins won the Downbeat New Star Award and had began to appear on dozens of albums on Blue Note for the likes of Sonny Rollins, Lee Morgan, Jackie McLean, Dexter Gordon, Hank Mobley, Donald Byrd, Sonny Clarke and others, many of which are con-



Billy Higgins

sidered classics today.

By 1971, when the heyday of Blue Note was winding down, Higgins hooked up with an old buddy from many of those dates, pianist Cedar Walton, with whom he still plays today. Walton, along with bassists Sam Jones and later David Williams, came together to form one of the most exquisite trios in jazz.

Augmented over the years with horn players like George Coleman, Clifford Jordan, Art Farmer, Bob Berg, Ralph Moore and others, this group, anchored by Higgin's propulsive drumming, continues to be one of the finest small groups in jazz.

Along with a busy schedule as a sideman, Higgins also has 5 records out as a leader. In 1986, Higgins became somewhat of a movie star,

appearing in the critically acclaimed movie *Round Midnight* with Dexter Gordon, and later touring with Gordon as part of The Round

Midnight Band. Higgins also is involved in teaching workshops, clinics and master classes. Billy founded the World Stage, which helps young musicians from the Los Angeles area with instruction and rehearsal space.

The most difficult part of this feature is trying to limit the number of recordings to recommend by an artist who is so well documented and consistent in his recorded output. He is probably the most recorded living drummer in jazz, and the number of Blue Note sessions he cut in the 60's is staggering on its own. A great place to start with the Blue Note is with Lee Morgan. Billy is on virtually all of Morgan's 60's sessions with classics like *The Sidewinder* and *The Gigolo* being the most famous and hidden treasures like *DELIGHTFULEE*, a

fantastic record featuring Joe Henderson in a quintet and Wayne Shorter in a larger ensemble. In the 70's, it was hard to beat the simpatico grooves and support that the Cedar Walton groups shared. One of my own personal favorites is *Eastern Rebellion*, originally on *Timeless Muse* and now, sadly, out of print. It features Walton along with Sam Jones, Higgins and George Coleman on some of the most memorable music of the decade. This group's seamless interplay is also evident on *Art Farmer Quintet at Boomer's*, any of the *Eastern Rebellion* follow-ups and *Walton's Bluesville Time*. Most recently this band has recorded for *Musicmasters*.

(Heroes continued on pg. 9)

Photo by Phil Bray

(Heroes continued from pg. 8)

Billy Higgins is one of the most consistent talents in jazz. He sounds just as tasteful and confident on a 1962 Dexter Gordon session as he does on one with Dex in 1986. It is incredible that one of the earliest drummers in a "free jazz" context turned out to be one of the most sought-after and adaptable mainstream drummers in history. On Jimmy Heath's fine record *Picture Of Heath*, one of the tunes Heath penned was called *Smilin' Billy*, his nickname for Higgins and the phrases that always describes the happy look on Higgin's face as well as the warmth he brings to every session as soon as he hits his shimmering ride cymbal.

While Higgins has never been considered flashy or bombastic, he is always a more than capable soloist, taking his own melodic turns in an ensemble. His playing has always been more musical and supportive of the rest of his bandmates and his musical and personal attitude have helped keep his talent in demand since the start of his career. Billy Higgins deserves to be brought out from the back of the bandstand and respected for his rightful place in jazz. I want to honor and thank him for all of the beautiful music over the years.

Blues Corner

By Rich Hoover

B.B. KING

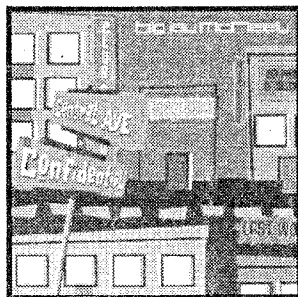
Blues fans had a rare treat when B.B. King came to the Lied Center in early November. He put on a great show, full of the energy and variety of styles that he has standardized in his blues genre. The opening act was a wower also, with Shemekia Copeland putting on one of the best "Hollerin' Blues Women" shows I've seen since Koko Taylor came to town. For those who have not seen a B.B. King show, do not miss an opportunity.

Blues on disc

By Rich Hoover

"Big" Jay McNeely

Central Ave. Confidential
Atomic Theory Records



Big Jay has been recording since 1949 when his tune "Deacon's Hop" hit the R&B charts. In 1959, his recording of "There is Something on Your Mind" hit the charts and became a blues standard. During this time Big Jay McNeely earned the title "King of the Honkers" while touring on his own and as an opening band for Bill Haley and the Comets.

However, Central Avenue in L.A. is where Big Jay called home. Central Avenue had dozens of clubs featuring artists such as, T-Bone Walker, Dinah Washington, Joe Turner, Johnny Otis, Big Mama Thornton, Charles Brown, Dexter Gordon, and, of course, Big Jay McNeely.

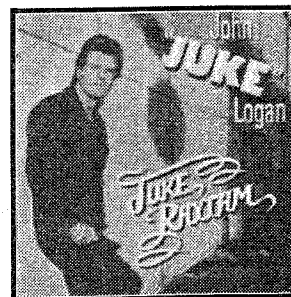
This CD has 10 great instrumental tunes both old and new, from "Caravan" and "Stranger on the Shore," to "Emiko" and the title cut "Central Avenue Confidential."

The artist lineup includes: Big Jay McNeely on tenor and soprano sax; Red Young on B-3 organ; Skip Heller on guitar; Howard Greene on drums; Skip Waring, trumpet (on three tunes); Jay Work, baritone sax (on one tune); and Bob Drasnin, flute (on one cut).

An excellent CD for any listener's collection.

John "Juke" Logan

Juke Rhythm
Mocombo Records



I'm going to put this in the category of "Hipster's blues" because it's rhythmic, it's poetic, and it's top-notch entertainment. Along with John doin' vocals, harmonica, guitar, organ, piano, tambourine, and a few other instruments are: Rick Vito, Kid Ramos, Brenda Burns, David Hidalgo, and Glenn Nishida mixing and matching on guitar; Dan Durran, Gregory Boaz, and Conrad Lozano doing bassline duties; Joe Yuele, Richard Innes, Jerry Angel on drums; and Michael Tempo doing bongos, congas, and other assorted percussion instruments.

This CD is filled with all kinds of West Coast blues, funk, R&B, hip hop, world rhythms, and all that jazz. The CD even has four instrumental tracks, including one with "Juke" on the bongos accompanied by the sounds of a jungle, and another with "Juke" and Gary Primich doing a harmonica duet.

It's just plain fun to listen and learn. To find out more about this disc, check out www.mocomborecords.com.

Jazz on the radio

By Dave Hughes

Jazz on Nebraska Public Radio

Nebraska Public Radio, KUCV at 90.9 FM in Lincoln and at other frequencies around the state (except Omaha), offers two nights of jazz each week.

However, shortly before 4 p.m. on selected weekdays in December NPRN host Lora Black will be spinning some jazzy Christmas tunes. Also at that same time in January she will be bringing you some short features promoting Ken Burns new public television documentary on jazz which will be airing on most public television stations, including NETV in January.

At 11 p.m. on Fridays you can still hear National Public Radio's "Jazz Profiles," an audio biography of jazz artists. At midnight Graham House presents "Round Midnight" a program that still features some locally programmed jazz.

On Saturday nights Don Gill hosts "Big Band Spotlight" at 8 p.m., followed by two NPR programs, "Piano Jazz," with Marian McPartland at 9 p.m. and "JazzSet," with Branford Marsalis, at 10 p.m. Then at 11 p.m., "Late in the Evening" with host Dave Hughes, gives you a set of jazz, then a mix of blues, roots rock, Cajun, zydeco, reggae, and world music. Listen to Dave's Holiday Party every Saturday in December.

For a free copy of NPRN's program guide "Choice," call 472-2200, or 1-800-290-6850.

Jazz on KZUM

KZUM Community Radio, at 89.3 FM in Lincoln, offers jazz programs

Monday-Thursday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m. and some other days and times.

The weekday afternoon schedule now goes like this: on Mondays, Rachel Principato programs "Rachel's Jazz;" on Tuesdays, Herb Thomas guides "Zero Street;" Randy Morse hosts "Som do Brasil" on Wednesdays; and on Thursdays, Butch Berman does "Re-boppin'."

There are other jazz programs scattered throughout the schedule. On Mondays, "Dance Bands: When Melody was King" with Con Good airs from 8 to 10 a.m.; "Jazz Journey," hosted by jazz musician Bill Wimmer, runs from 10 a.m. to 12 noon; and "Hotter Than That" with Warren "Rude Dog" Rudolph goes from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

"NightTown," with Tom Ineck, continues to run from 8:30-10 p.m. on Thursdays.

On Friday mornings, Ed Rumbaugh starts off your day with "Plug in the Sun" from 6 to 8 a.m. This program features Ed's eclectic tastes in jazz and assorted world music. Then on Friday evenings, tune in for some western swing on the "KZUM Heyride" from 7:30 to 9 p.m. with long time host John Schmitz.

If you would like detailed information about the jazz programs on KZUM, or would like to receive a current copy of their program guide, give them a call at 474-5086.

Jazz and blues on KIOS

KIOS at 91.5 in Omaha has jazz

(and some blues) every weekday from 1 p.m. until 3:30 pm.

On Mondays it's all blues as "Beale Street Caravan" starts off the day at 1 p.m., then at 2 p.m. is "Blues in the Afternoon" hosted by Mike Jacobs. On Tuesdays, it's the "Brazilian Hour" at 1 p.m., followed by "Jazz in the Afternoon" with Chris Cooke from 2-3:30 p.m. On Wednesdays at 1 p.m. it's "Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz," then 90 minutes of "Jazz in the Afternoon" hosted by Mike Jacobs. On Thursdays, "One Night Stand" with host Chris Nielsen kicks off the afternoon of jazz at 1 p.m., followed by another "Jazz in the Afternoon" at 2 p.m. with Cooke. On Fridays "Jazz From Studio 1" starts it off at 1 p.m., followed by even another "Jazz in the Afternoon" with Jacobs again that lasts until 3:30 p.m.

On Saturdays KIOS now airs NPR's "Jazz Profiles" at 8 p.m. followed by "Jazz Junction" with Rick Erben at 9 p.m. and "Last Call" with Cooke again at 11 p.m.

For a free copy of the KIOS program guide, give them a call at 402-557-2777 in Omaha.

Jazz on KVNO

KVNO at 90.7 in Omaha continues to have locally programmed jazz on Friday and Saturday evenings. However, they are now doing it without one of the hosts, Duff Gainey, who has left.

Jazz runs from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. on Fridays, and from 8 p.m. to 1 am on Saturdays.

Building Community Collaboration

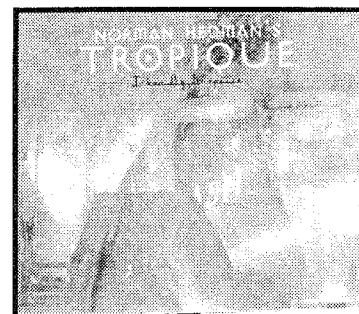
By Tony Rager

The Berman Music Foundation held a luncheon/meeting on November 1 at the Cornhusker Hotel with individuals/organizations from the community regarding BMF collaborations in 2001.

Attendees included Jeff Korbek from the Lincoln Journal Star and Molly Nance from the Updowntowners (July Jamm). Unable to attend were representatives from the Zoo Bar and Kathy Piper from the Nebraska Art Association (Jazz in June); however, Butch and I had a pleasant lunch meeting with Kathy at a later date as discussed below. Representing BMF were Butch, Dave Hughes, Kay Davis and Tony Rager.

The primary focus of the meeting was to encourage the use of BMF as a valuable resource in the Lincoln Community. Jeff Korbek offered insight into the newspaper and its operation as a voice in the community. Molly Nance was genuinely excited about working with BMF and to that end has already discussed projects/performers with BMF. The meeting with Kathy Piper was also promising and BMF looks forward to collaborating on projects that promote the arts, particularly, jazz.

BMF hopes to foster relationships with individuals/organizations in the community to assist in the education and promotion of jazz as a unique American art form.



Norman Hedman's
Tropique "Taken By Surprise" on Palmetto Records

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes

Monday Night Big Band continues

The Monday Night Big Band is still playing every Monday night at P.O. Pears, 322 S. 9th St in Lincoln.

Every week features a different music director that leads the group in three sets from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Audience members are still encouraged to bring their own instruments and sit in with the band during the second and third sets. The cover charge is still \$4, \$3 for students.

For more information, call 402-477-8008.

Brazilian music jam

On the second Tuesday of every month, there is an informal Brazilian music jam in Lincoln. The jam will be held in the lower level of 4 Friends (formerly Ebenezer's and Miscellanea), 2110 Winthrop Rd. (31st & South Streets) starting at 7:30 p.m.

It's a chance to play some great Brazilian music just for the fun of it, to socialize, to drink a few beers, and have a good time. This isn't a performance, it's a chance to hang out and play some music together.

It's also very informal, and is open to all interested musicians. Whoever shows up plays. If you have some music, bring it along, otherwise some lead sheets will be provided.

For more information, call Randy

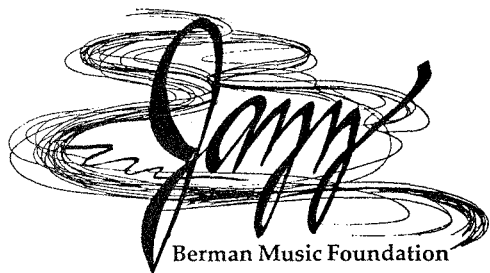
Morse at 402-421-2160.

Jazz at The Oven

On Thursday and Sunday evenings at The Oven, 201 N. 8th St. in Lincoln, you can still hear the duos of either: Dave Novak & Dennis Taylor; Steve Hanson & Nancy Marshall; John Carlini & Andy Hall; or Peter Bouffard & John Carlini. Call 402-475-6118 for more information.

Jazz at The Five Reasons

On Friday and Saturday evenings from 8 to 11 p.m. at The Five Reasons Lounge in the Cornhusker Hotel, 333 S. 13th St in Lincoln, pianist John Carlini (occasionally with saxophonist Bill Wimmer) continues to play. Call 402-474-7474 for more information.

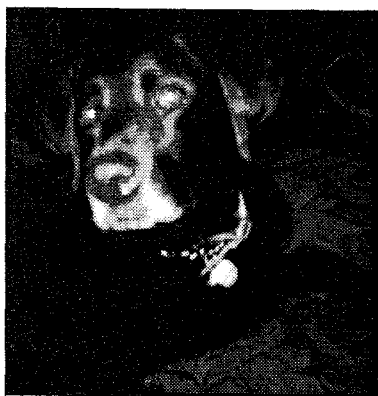


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"Ben"



Ben, if you had been a woman I probably would have married you, or chose you to be my mother – if you were a man – we'd have been brothers, but no – you were just my dog – my true best friend – that understood and accepted me

no matter what and showed me that even in the classy way you died – his own way with dignity, showing me what a wonderful champion you were.

Enjoying the Dog Run one last time with the rest of the Pack (Sherman, Toby, and me) you hadn't eaten in days – but stayed alive for your family by sharing your unconditional love and soulful brown eyes with us all (Bruno the cat, too).

We'll never forget you Benny – enjoy your new life on two legs for a change. You earned it. Maybe we'll still meet again, this life. The Best...my friend, you were!

--Butch Berman

How can you help the foundation?

The Berman Music Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)(3) private foundation, and your tax deductible donation is needed to help offset the costs of this newsletter and its programs.

☐ \$ 10 ☐ \$ 25 ☐ \$ 50
☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$Other

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