

Photo by Rich Hoover

The Motion Poets at Westbrook Recital Hall on October 19th
Volume 3, Number 2

December 1997

Mingus Big Band Rips Up Lied!



Photo by Rich Hoover

Luis Bonilla, Butch Berman, Dave Hughes, & Tommy Campbell
 By Tom Ineck

While heavily influenced by Duke Ellington's dense orchestration and full palette of tonal colors and by Thelonious Monk's quirky chord structures, the music of Charles Mingus is wholly original.

His idiosyncratic compositions demand superb musicianship, fiery passion and a sense of fun, a rare combination that the 14-piece Mingus Big Band exhibited in spades during its performance Nov. 18 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. The concert was financed, in part, by the Berman Music Foundation.

Playing to a relaxed, but emotional audience of almost 1,500, the ensemble proved that the legacy of Charles Mingus is in good hands, even 18 years after his death of Lou Gehrig's disease at age 57.

Maintaining the direct link to Mingus were three musicians who either played or recorded with the legendary bandleader -- saxophonists John Stubblefield and Ronnie Cuber and trumpeter Randy Brecker. But, even the younger players seem to have absorbed that special, "sanctified" Mingus feel.

"Boogie Stop Shuffle" got the show off to a roaring, uptempo start, featuring Cuber on baritone sax, Mark Shim on tenor sax and trumpeter Ryan Kisor of Sioux City, Iowa, who appeared as a guest soloist with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra several times before graduating from high school.

Kisor squeezed off a series of high-register bursts, leading into a two-fisted percussive piano solo by Kenny Drew Jr., who drew enthusiastic applause from the audience all night.

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The Prez sez

Happy Holiday My Dear Readers!

Well, we endured one mutha of a blizzard, had the kids home, out of school until almost Halloween, stuffed our bods with Thanksgiving goodies, braced ourselves for the upcoming Xmas rush and watched our blessed Big Red Machine fall from #1 to 3 to 2 in the polls. One thing however remains standard - jazz is always hot, jazz is always cool - or to quote the title of Nat Hentoff's famed book - "Jazz Is."

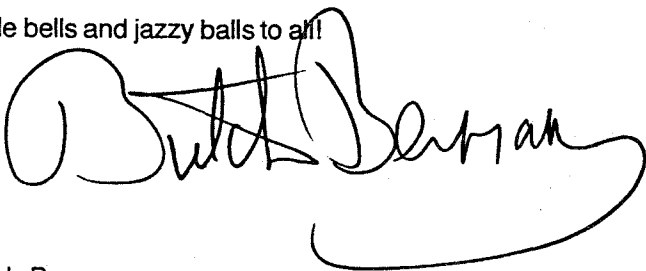
Boy oh boy - jazz was something amazing since our last issue. Following Doug Talley's triumphant debut at Ebenezer's - Minneapolis' young lions the Motion Poets blazed their way through our town giving a stellar concert at Westbrook and then leading workshops at UNL, Southeast, and Park Middle School. Entertain and educate - you can't beat that combo. By the way, I was more than entertained by a late night piano trio session at my pad by the Motion Poets rhythm section including the bass-drum brother duo J.T. and Chris Bates, and kick ass piano player Nate Shaw. Just about blew my gourd. So young, so talented.

Last but certainly not least - all of our minds were blown by the killer diller Charles Mingus Big Band concert at the Lied Center that we sponsored. New York's finest put on a show that I'm sure prevented any of the 1,500 plus audience the impetus to get a good night's sleep. These cats blew and cooked! See Tom Ineck's fine review, included in this newsletter, for the details. Thanks also go out to the Lied staff and Misty's for the fine reception afterwards.

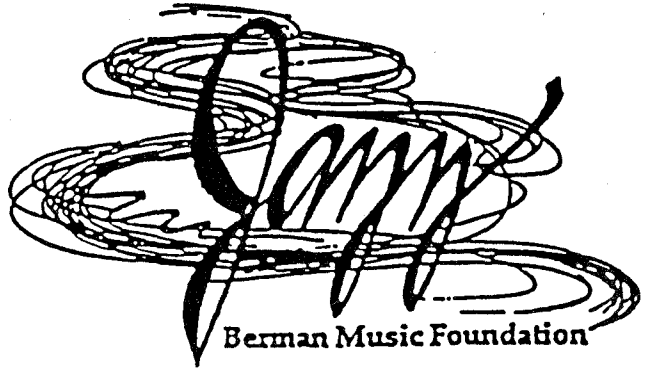
Before I close, I want to remind everybody to get ready for, on a national level, our February release of *She's Dangerous!* by Andrienne Wilson, produced by Norman Hedman on the Arabesque label in collaboration with the Berman Music Foundation. A CD release party to follow - hopefully to pass through Lincoln heading from one coast to the other. Don't have all the final facts yet - but stay posted and toasted as another cold Nebraska winter approaches.

I just received an early DAT of our next CD on Arabesque following *She's Dangerous!* - by Norman Hedman and Tropique who wowed us all at Jazz in June. Hey - we're happening!

Jingle bells and jazzy balls to all!



Butch Berman



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Mingus Big Band

(continued from page 1)

After a false start, a rarely-heard orchestral piece from the band's upcoming release, "Que Viva Mingus," blossomed into a complex suite full of thematic shifts and a pulsing tuba motif. Music director Steve Slagle provided the lead flute line, while Vincent Herring on alto sax and Alex Sipiaguine on trumpet fleshed out the rich harmonic textures with stunning solos.

"Number 29," a mid-tempo swinger that opens the band's 1996 live double-disc "Live in Time" (reviewed on page 6), featured Slagle on alto sax, Brecker on trumpet and Stubblefield on tenor sax, weaving their brief individual statements into an intricate pattern. At last, Slagle and Stubblefield went head-to-head in a playful musical joust.

When his health was failing and he was no longer able to compose in notation, Mingus wrote "Chair in the Sky" by singing into a tape recorder for someone else to transcribe. The result is one of his most poignant, heart-rending ballads, arranged by Sy Johnson and here featuring Slagle on soprano sax.

"Tijuana Gift Shop," on the other hand, leapt like the proverbial Mexican jumping bean, with Slagle and Stubblefield on flutes, Luis Bonilla on lead trombone, short solos by Kisor on trumpet and Cuber on baritone sax. Finally, Drew delivered an extended solo full of astounding keyboard runs from top to bottom.

The second half of the program began with "Nostalgia in Times Square," an uptempo favorite featuring Slagle on alto sax, Sipiaguine on trumpet, Bonilla on trombone and Drew, who deftly accelerated the tempo.

"Fables of Faubus," Mingus' angry cry against racism and segregation in the deep South of the 1950s, had Stubblefield shouting in disgust, a proxy for every black man or woman who has ever been denied equal rights and opportunities. Solos by Herring and Brecker increased the intensity.

The 20-minute "Cumbia and Jazz Fusion," arranged by Sy Johnson and included on the band's upcoming release, began with an exotic Latin introduction, then shifted into overdrive. Slagle on soprano sax, Jamal Haynes on trombone and Brecker on trumpet took turns punctuating each phrase, then Stubblefield launched into a tenor sax solo that segued neatly into an impressionistic piano interlude. Drew's obvious classical training blended seamlessly with his bebop chops for a dazzling technical display.

Bringing the piece to a rousing conclusion, Stubblefield and trombonist Earl McIntyre shouted humorous exchanges refuting racial stereotypes, including the misperception that "Mama's little baby likes shortnin' bread."

"Mama's little baby don't like shortnin' bread," Stubblefield insisted. "Mama's little baby likes truffles. Mama's little baby likes caviar."

"Mama's little baby likes African gold mines," said MacIntyre. "Mama's little baby likes African diamond mines."



Photo by Rich Hoover

Mingus pianist Kenny Drew, Jr. at post-concert reception

A solo by bassist Andy McKee, who has the daunting task of substituting for Mingus, completed "Cumbia and Jazz Fusion" in grand style. Another musician who deserves special mention is drummer Tommy Campbell, who skillfully and imaginatively filled the seat once held by longtime Mingus colleague Dannie Richmond.

The Lied Center concert ended with the great "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting," as do most of the Mingus Big Band's late-night sessions at the Time Cafe in New York City, where the ensemble has held court every Thursday night for the last five years.

Brought back on stage with an enthusiastic round of applause, the band offered up the high-speed, celebrative "O.P.," written by Mingus for bassist Oscar Pettiford's newborn son. It was the perfect, virtuosic encore to an artistic event that Lincoln jazz fans will never forget.

The Mingus Big Band brilliantly succeeds where other repertory bands fail. It remains faithful to the spirit and the content of the composer's music, a body of work that comprises one of America's greatest artistic treasures.

"Charles lives on absolutely in his music," Sue Mingus, the composer's widow, recently told Lincoln Journal Star reporter Dan Moser. "It's amazing how much this enormous presence is there. The musicians will tell you that -- they feel it; it's mystical almost. There is a spirit and a power and an individual personality to the music that is just unmistakable."

With some 150 musicians to draw on for concert tours and the regular Thursday night gigs back home, the band and the Mingus legacy appear to be secure.

"If he could have had this kind of palette to write for, there's no telling what he could have created," Sue Mingus told Moser. "It's a great irony."

Whether it is ironic or just one more example of the injustices done to jazz composers in their lifetimes, we all should be thankful for the success of the Mingus Big Band.

Motion Poets show passion and skill

By Tom Ineck

A group of 20-somethings who compose with imagination, perform difficult ensemble passages with ease and assurance and solo with fire and technical skill may be the rule in New York City, but it still is the exception in Nebraska.

That made the Oct. 19 Lincoln performance by the Motion Poets jazz sextet especially pleasing. Still in their mid-20s, these Twin Cities-based young lions already have an extensive book of original tunes to draw on. The group's core of five members have been together for nearly four years (trumpeter Matt Shulman is the relative newcomer), and it shows.

Their appearance at Westbrook Recital Hall began with an uptempo rendition of the Dietz and Schwartz standard "Alone Together," an uncharacteristic opener for this team of prolific composers.



Photo by Rich Hoover

The Motion Poets' Doug Little takes a solo

Shulman stated part of the familiar theme, which was continued by saxophonist Doug Little and completed by trombonist Mark Miller. Little took a solo of snaking lines from one idea to the next, Shulman's sound is clean and bright and his ideas seemed endless. Bassist Chris Bates dug in on an intense solo, followed by his brother, J.T. Bates, whipping up a frenzy during a solo and several breaks.

Pianist Nate Shaw's "Deep Snag" began with the bass setting a modified New Orleans march rhythm pattern, which was ideal for the lively trombone lead and solo that followed, accompanied by bass and drums. Miller bore down in funky, New Orleans style, cleverly serving notice to the predominantly young audience of 230 that it was time to lighten up and have some fun.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Pianist Nate Shaw all alone

In case they didn't get the hint, Little explicitly invited listeners to relax. "Pretend you've had a few drinks at a club," Little told the audience, many of whom were UNL students.

On "Phases," a Mark Miller composition, the entire group played the opening line in unison. Adding variations to the theme, in succession, were Little, Chris Bates, Shaw, and Shulman, creating a modal fugue. During a short piano interlude, Shaw accelerated and decelerated the tempo before returning to the unison theme.

Next, it was Shulman's turn to explore the changes, and he did so with gusto and creativity, digging deep for new discoveries, while remaining logical, even melodic. The rhythm section took its solo turn, with the horns playing offstage and, finally, fading to a close.

"True Sanctuary," a Chris Bates contribution to the Poets' book, began with the rhythm section setting the mood. Chris Bates (on arco bass) and Little stated the theme in unison. The Poets again showed their ensemble skills during a passage that required exact intonation between piano, bass and horns. Bates' subsequent bass solo was outstanding.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Bassist Chris Bates and Drummer J.T. Bates

Returning to the standard jazz repertoire, the Poets infused the Ellington evergreen "Caravan" with wit and a wisdom of the entire jazz continuum, from the blues to the avant garde. In a jaunty, mid-tempo trombone solo, Miller intelligently employed the slide valve's full range. In similar fashion, Shaw used Latin patterns, octaves and block chords across the keyboard, and Shulman worked the plunger mute in a style popularized by the Ellington band in the 1930s.

The second half of the concert began with Shulman's "Little Willie Steeps," an obvious reference to the bop classic "Little Willie Leaps." Taken at a very fast tempo, it was a showpiece for Shulman's astounding talents, though it also included superb solos by Little, Miller and J.T. Bates, who exhibited a powerful Elvin Jones-style penchant for tension and release.

Miles Davis was paid his due with "Phrancing," a blues launched by the horns, segueing into a piano solo, then a trumpet solo complete with growled phrases punctuating each line for maximum blues effect. The concluding bass solo was remarkable for its depth and breadth of ideas.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Trumpeter Matt Shulman

Motion Poets Also Educate Students

By Dave Hughes

The Motion Poets were not in Lincoln to just entertain, they also helped to educate Lincoln's students about jazz.

In addition to the performance at Westbrook, the Motion Poets also played during all three of Dave Sharp's Jazz History classes at UNL on the Monday morning after the show.

They also performed at an all-school assembly at Lincoln Southeast High School and at Park Middle School on Tuesday.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Motion Poets from behind the drum kit

"A Montpelier," a new ballad composed by Miller, began with a wistful piano line and deep horn resonance. Miller's solo was followed by Shaw, who worked the piano's middle registers with close chords that seemed to contain notes hidden between the keys.

Closing out the show was Little's "TM," a bouncy, mid-tempo tune that goes outside while remaining funky. Little's alto sax solo was long and spirited, leading to piano and drum solos before returning to the three-horn theme.

It is the high degree of tight ensemble playing, complex arrangements and extended soloing that makes a Motion Poets performance so satisfying. Only a group that has been together for several years could attempt it and succeed so convincingly. This kind of poetry deserves bestseller status.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Motion Poets perform on the Prasch floor at Southeast

Tomfoolery

By Tom Ineck

For Lincoln jazz fans, this could be the winter of our discontent.

The landmark appearance of the Mingus Big Band at the Lied Center for Performing Arts is history, and only the Tito Puente Latin Jazz Ensemble brightens the Lied horizon (Saturday, Jan. 31).

Seventh Street Loft, The Oven and Inn Harms Way continue to feature jazz on occasion, but our one great hope for a club devoted exclusively to live jazz has apparently been dashed.

A year ago, when plans were announced that the old Sandy's bar would be turned into a jazz club, anticipation ran high among musicians and jazz patrons alike. Months passed, remodeling began and it soon became obvious that the owners were serious about creating an atmosphere conducive to live jazz.

A superb sound system and lighting, an elevated stage, comfortable seating, a grand piano and jazz-related artwork on the walls indicated a commitment the scale of which Lincoln hadn't seen in years.

The July 11 grand opening of Rogues Gallery should have been an event for longtime jazz fans to remember. Instead, it seems the management was more interested in trendiness than tradition.

Live jazz was relegated to Thursday nights, and limited to groups of three musicians. The budget for the extensive menu of fancy, exotic mixed drinks probably exceeded the budget for the players.

There was little publicity and no attempt to reach out to the more loyal jazz audience. A little imaginative marketing and promotion would have gone a long way to making Rogues Gallery a success.

When the club didn't achieve the numbers it was hoping for, it quickly and quietly discontinued Thursday night jazz, and it hasn't been heard from since.

So it goes.

The most reliable presenters of jazz in Lincoln still are the musicians themselves, especially those who comprise the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra and the Monday Night Big Band. Both of those groups perform at the Ramada Plaza Hotel at Ninth and P streets.

The NJO features guest vocalist Annette Murrell Dec. 15 in a concert entitled "Christmas and All That Jazz," with seasonal favorites "Little Drummer Boy," "Silent Night" and "Carol of the Bells." On Feb. 3, "One More For Thad" will spotlight the music of composer Thad Jones.

The weekly Monday night performances allow musicians to stretch out and practice their sightreading and playing skills. Occasional small-group sessions have been added to the mix.

By the way, Annette Murrell's debut CD, "Shining Hour," soon will be available. It features many of Lincoln's finest jazz and blues musicians and liner notes by yours truly. KZUM Radio is planning a CD release party in January, so stay tuned.

Jazz on disc

by Tom Ineck

MINGUS BIG BAND

Live In Time

Dreyfus Records

This live recording by the Mingus Big Band has been a long time coming. The band's third release on the Dreyfus label beautifully captures the epic power and improvisational passion of the Mingus repertory band at home -- in the basement of New York City's Time Cafe.

Recorded over a period of three nights, the two-disc set includes 22 musicians rotating through the 14-piece band. Despite the changes in personnel, the band maintains an amazing consistency as it reinterprets some of Mingus' most demanding compositions.

Among others, there are exquisite renditions of the hard-charging "Boogie Stop Shuffle," "Sue's Changes," the through-composed "Children's Hour of Dream," the poignant ballad "Chair in the Sky" and "The Shoes of the Fisherman's Wife (Are Some Jive-Ass Slippers)," a masterpiece of 20th century composition.

"Moanin'" has metamorphosed into the Latinized "Moanin' Mambo." The ever-popular "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting" closes the recording, as the tune does in most of the band's live performances.

With seven of the 15 tracks extending beyond 10 minutes each, everyone gets a chance to be heard.

CHARLES MINGUS

Passions of a Man: The Complete Atlantic Recordings, 1956-1961.

Rhino Records

In typically comprehensive fashion, Rhino Records has released a six-disc boxed set that includes every note that Charles Mingus recorded for Atlantic Records during his first tenure with that label, from 1956 to 1961.

In fact, the entire musical output (including alternate takes) fits on five discs. The sixth contains a 70-minute interview of Mingus by producer Nesuhi Ertegun.

Recorded when Mingus was in his formative years ages 34 to 40, here are original versions of such classics as "Pithecanthropus Erectus," "Reincarnation of a Lovebird," "Haitian Fight Song," "E's Flat, Ah's Flat Too," "Moanin'," "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting," "Better Git Hit in Your Soul," "Peggy's Blue Skylight" and "Hog Callin' Blues."

But, we also get Mingus' unique take on the standards "A Foggy Day," "Laura," "Just One of Those Things" and "I'll Remember April."

The box includes a 120-page booklet containing liner notes, photos, biographical information on all the players and several insightful new essays about the sessions and what this music means in the larger context.

What it means for Mingus fans is a wealth of great listening.

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Nancy Marshall

Gallery Walk Cabaret

In its second year, the Gallery Walk Cabaret at the Seventh Street Loft is be another local venue for good jazz. Although you have to be ever vigilant since the shows occur on the first Friday of every month, coinciding with the art gallery openings in the Haymarket District, you will be well rewarded for your attention because this is the place to hear fine music in a smoke free cabaret setting, with refreshments available, at a very reasonable price.

The Seventh Street Loft is at 504 S. 7th is at the top of a brick business building down by the Haymarket, and is run by the Wagon Train Project. It is five blocks south of O Street on 7th, and there is a sign in big red letters by the entrance, which is just off the parking lot.

Here are the dates for the rest of the cabaret season (all dates tentative): Dec. 5, The Special Consensus (bluegrass); Jan. 9, Braziliance; Feb. 6, Nancy Marshall & friends; March 6, Bill Wimmer; April 3, Joel Mabus (folk); May 1, TBA; and June 5, Janet Lawson. If you have questions, call Nancy Marshall at 474-4080.

Monday Night Big Band

The Monday Night Big Band continues its performances every Monday night at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, 141 N. 9th St., from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. in the Riverside Room. There is a small cover charge for this weekly event, but it is well worth it. At least once a month or so, a small group takes a turn as the big band takes a break. For more information, call 477-8008.

Jazz at The Oven

Jazz is still being played at The Oven, 201 N. 8th St. in Lincoln, on Sunday evenings by the duos of Dave Novak & Dennis Taylor; Steve Hanson & Nancy Marshall; Dave Sharp & Andy Hall; and Peter Bouffard & John Carlini. Call The Oven at 475-6118 for more details.

Jazz at Inn Harms Way

Also, Inn Harms Way, 7th & P Streets (inside the train depot in the Haymarket), will continue live jazz every Thursday evening from 7-9 p.m. through December 18. Jazz duos will feature local performers like Peter Bouffard, Tom Larson, and Rusty White. Call Inn Harms Way at 438-3033 for more information.

Jazz on the radio

By Dave Hughes

Jazz on KZUM

KZUM Community Radio, at 89.3 FM in Lincoln, offers a wide variety of jazz programs almost every weekday afternoon and various other places on the schedule.

The weekday afternoon schedule goes like this: on Mondays, Dave Hoffman hosts "Jazz Divas," a new program featuring classic female vocalists from 1 to 3 p.m.; on Tuesdays, Herb Thomas still hosts "Zero Street" from 12:30 to 3 p.m.; on Wednesdays, Dave Hoffman is still opening "Dave's Closet" from 12:30 to 3 p.m.; on Thursdays, Butch Berman is still the "bebop man" with "Reboppin'" from 12:30 to 2 p.m., and a new host, Rachel Principato, hosts "Rachel's Jazz" from 2 to 4 p.m. There is no jazz on Friday afternoons, when the blues rolls all afternoon long.

There are also two jazz programs on Mondays from 8 to 10 a.m. with "Dance Bands: When Melody was King," with Con Good and from 8:30 to 10 p.m. with "Hotter Than That" hosted by Warren "Rude Dog" Rudolph. Another jazz program airs on Tuesday nights as "The Mayor of Night Town," Tom Ineck, presides over "Night Town." Also, on Thursday nights from 8:30 to 10 p.m. a new show called "Jazz-A-Mataz," is hosted by Demetrious Jenkins. And, if western swing is your flask of whiskey, then tune in to the "KZUM Heyride" on Fridays 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 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.

On Friday nights at 11 p.m. you can hear National Public Radio's "Jazz Profiles," an audio biography of jazz artists. Then, Liz Chadwick presents "Bohemia After Dark," an hour of locally programmed jazz from 12 midnight until sign off at 1 a.m.

On Saturday nights the jazz continues with Don Gill and his "Big Band Spotlight" at 8 p.m., followed by two other NPR programs, "Jazzset" at 9 p.m., hosted by Branford Marsalis, and "Piano Jazz," hosted by Marian McPartland, at 10 p.m.

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

JAZZ PROFILES in Dec. & Jan. '98 (Friday nights at 11 pm)

12-05 Ray Brown

12-12 Fletcher Henderson (100th Birthday Tribute)†

12-19 Cab Calloway (90th Birthday Tribute)

12-26 Billy Taylor

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Jazz on the radio

(continued from page 7)

01-02 Tony Bennett
01-09 George Shearing
01-16 Jimmy Smith
01-23 Mary Lou Williams
01-30 George Russell

JAZZSET in Dec. & Jan. '98 (Saturday nights at 9 pm)

12-06 A Sidney Bechet Centennial Celebration
12-13 Wessell Anderson and Nicholas Payton
12-20 Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra
12-27 Branford Marsalis Trio
01-03 Clark Terry & Carol Sloan Play & Sing Louis & Ella
01-10 Paquito D;Rivera Joins the Bela Fleck Trio
01-17 Billy Childs Trio and Eddie Palmieri Band
01-24 Conrad Herwig's Latin Coltrane
01-31 Coltrane Remembered at the Village Vanguard

PIANO JAZZ in Dec. & Jan. '98 (Saturday nights at 10 pm)

12-06 Bobby Short
12-13 Travis Shook
12-20 Tommy Flanagan
12-27 John Eaton
01-03 TBA
01-10 Barry Harris
01-17 Roy Hargrove
01-24 Bud Freeman
01-31 Freddy Cole

Jazz on KRNU

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's student station, KRNU at 90.3 in Lincoln, now has only one jazz related show. The program featuring beat poetry called "Words," hosted by Joe Krings, continues on Friday nights from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. (new summer hours). For more information about this program call KRNU at 472-5768.

Jazz (and some blues) on KIOS

KIOS at 91.5 in Omaha has jazz every weekday that starts at 1 p.m. in the afternoon and runs until their daily news block starts at 3:30 pm.

On Mondays at 1 p.m., "Jazz Classics in Stereo" with Robert Parker comes your way and then at 2 p.m the afternoon finishes with "Blues in the Afternoon" hosted by Mike Jacobs.

On Tuesdays, the "Brazilian Hour" starts off the afternoon at 1 p.m., followed by "Jazz in the Afternoon" with Chris Cooke from 2 until 3:30 p.m.

On Wednesdays at 1 p.m. the same "Jazzset" that aired on Nebraska Public Radio the Saturday before is repeated, but at 2 p.m., the "Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz" programs are a week ahead of NPRN's schedule. Wednesday concludes with a half hour of "Jazz Revisited" hosted by Helen Schumacher.

On Thursdays, "One Night Stand" with host Chris

Nielsen kicks off the afternoon of jazz at 1 p.m., followed by "Jazz Junction" at 2 with Rick Erben.

On Fridays "The Good Old Days" starts it off at 1 p.m. followed by another "Jazz in the Afternoon" with Jacobs again that lasts until 3:30 p.m.

On the weekends, "Marian McPartland" airs again at 8 p.m. on Saturday followed by "Jazz Junction" with Erben again at 9 p.m. and "Last Call" with Cooke again at 11 p.m. There are no jazz programs on Sundays.

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

Discorama By Butch Berman

WAYNE HAWKINS

Trio, Volume 1
Hawkins Productions

When the Doug Talley Quartet played Ebenezer's in Lincoln last month, I knew these cats were major players. Well, I tell you - after listening to *Trio, Volume 1* - I'm convinced that pianist Wayne Hawkins is a monster of his craft - as we only caught glimpses of his keyboard wizardry at the aforementioned gig. *Trio, Volume 1* enters the CD pool and Wayne Hawkins emerges as a force to contend with.

Backed by ace KC stalwarts Bob Bowman on bass and Todd Strait on drums (Karrin Allyson's main rhythm section) - I've never heard these guys recorded so strong. You're all getting closer to New York every day with tough sound like these recorded on this splendid 1997 disc on the Hawkins Productions label. Now - let me summarize on the grooves a bit.

Every track a stunner, as Coltrane's "Moment's Notice" opens the CD at a blistering pace. This may be Wayne's concept project, but each player could claim his moniker as trio leader as solos are cleverly traded and shared throughout. Besides Hawkins' "Chickie Baby" and Bowman's soulful "Blues for John" - KC band mates Doug Talley and Stan Kessler also add their originals to the mix.

My personal fave is their great up tempo rave-up of the old Victor Young chestnut - "Love Letters" - made famous as an r & b hit by Ketty Lester in the 60s and revisited in David Lynch's wondrous *Blue Velvet* film soundtrack. Now with *Trio, Volume 1* - all's in excellent company. This CD starts out hot and continues to grow on you with each listening.

This CD may be ordered from:

Hawkins Productions
7325 Quivira #182
Shawnee KS 62216

phone: 913-268-6849

web: whawkins@oz.sunflower.org

Scrapple from the Apple

© Russ Dantzer

BARRY HARRIS, CLAUDE WILLIAMS, BENNY WATERS AND GENEVIEVE ROSE DELIVER JAZZ TO THE NEXT GENERATION

After a hundred or so musicians had performed eight gorgeous jazz tunes, a couple hundred public school kids joined them on-stage, enlarging the chorus for the next few numbers at Symphony Space in Manhattan on November 29. The children covered a wide range of ages and backgrounds. Dr. Barry Harris, a practicing Pied Piper in jazz, emerged from behind the piano and said, "This is New York," as his hands reached toward the edges of the massive stage. New York, where according to him, "there's little music in schools these days. The first thing cut out of school budgets is music, and it shouldn't be that way."

"The main thing about jazz is that we aren't given an ample chance to be disliked," Harris continues. "If we were more exposed, on TV, people could at least say I like you or I don't like you. I'm going to grab kids off the streets and say, 'Here, come on, play!'" He did just that beginning in 1978, and for the most part has ambitiously assembled a massive jazz love-fest annually. Each time, he brings new young people into his own faithful family of regular musicians.

This year's concert was named "A Rose, A Wishing Well (With Love to Cast A Spell)." In 1989, I had attended "The Breeze's Song," and wish I had not waited so long to go again. In each case, guest soloists included saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Charles Davis, and inventive bop pianist Chris Anderson. Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson again conducted the strings, chorus and horns. This time Teri Thornton gave me goose bumps singing "East of the Sun." Clark Terry was a surprise guest, and mumbled as eloquently as ever. In the audience was Harris' old friend from Detroit, Berry Gordy, founder of Motown.

"We're the children, we look to you to show the way," the Barry Harris Ensemble sang. Kids, who might simply assume they would not like jazz unless someone exposed them to it, were really swinging and enjoying themselves. Barry Harris did not control them, he just led them with a smile that came from his soul. The choruses had begun practicing in August, but this appeared to be pure joy rather than work.

Dr. Barry Harris' piano playing evokes the spirits of Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell so effectively that he would never need to do anything but play to make a comfortable living. His contagious devotion to advancing jazz is something to be grateful for. Please keep grabbing them off the streets, Dr. Harris!

* * *

Claude Williams used to take Charlie Parker aside in the 1930s and show him correct chord changes. His last New York visit in November simply had him passing through on the way to classroom work in the upstate area of Utica. Musician and educator Monk Rowe had worked with the Central New York Community Arts Council's Arts in Education Institute and Hamilton College - where he will open a new jazz archive next year - to present Claude to students in eight different settings in three days.

In each classroom, the students had learned something about Claude and his music before meeting him. In every situation, the teachers raved about the way students responded to the music. Playing along with Claude were Monk Rowe on saxophone or piano, Mark Copani on guitar, and an acoustic bassist you may hear a lot more about, Genevieve Rose.

"Doesn't that hurt your fingers?" asked a junior high school girl after intently watching Genevieve endlessly plucking bass strings during Claude's presentation. "It used to, when I first started playing this," this twenty-year-old role model answered. Rose did have her work cut out for her, as the budget did not allow for a drummer, causing her more work in the band. Genevieve began playing classical guitar as a child, but found that "you can put a lot of personal expression into jazz. In a way, you try to play a piece of music that's been composed by someone else, but you try to play it as if it's your piece."

Young Genevieve Rose speaks and plays with wisdom that belies her age. Her solos are more interesting than most professional bassists that I hear. And she appreciates the fact that she is learning right on the band stand from Claude Williams and others.

* * *

Benny Waters personally tutored saxophonist Harry Carney before he was a career Duke Ellington orchestra star. As he's approaching his 96th birthday, he's still at it. Six-time Grammy winner Phil Schaap engages Benny annually to speak and play for his Princeton University Jazz History class students. Benny gave them an earful on November 25 about Carney, trying out for Fletcher Henderson's band, and the deep influence that Louis Armstrong had on all of jazz. A natural teacher, he includes humor to keep everyone's attention.

Bucky Pizzarelli strummed guitar perfection along with Genevieve Rose behind Benny. The big tone of Waters' alto saxophone commanded undivided attention until he was done. Afterwards we had dinner with the Princeton class, and once again Genevieve was queried by one student after another.

Genevieve will join Benny again in December with Cyrus Chestnut and Vinnie Johnson for the New York Chapter of the Duke Ellington Society's Holiday party. She'll be back in January for a clinic with Waters for the International Association of Jazz Educators. And when Claude Williams turns 90 on February 22, Genevieve will be playing bass behind him and Johnny Gimble in

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Freewillin'

By Michele Michaels

NEVILLE BROTHERS FLY NORTHWEST

If they continue their flight plan, Northwest Airlines might give corporate America a good name. With a tour of benefit concerts to assist various community causes, presenting bands such as Chicago, Diane Schuur, and the Neville Brothers to name a few, the international carrier is exhibiting exquisite taste in music, and the forethought to know that all of this can raise money where it is needed.

At the Fifth Avenue Theater in Seattle, Washington on November 20, 1997, the airline helped to raise money for the Leukemia Society of America. The show, headlining the Neville Brothers, began with a brief commercial video introduction to Northwest Airlines and the charitable reasons for the assemblage. Marilee McCorriston, the Executive Director of the Washington State Chapter of the Leukemia Society, offered some insight into the Society's efforts toward research and the eradication of leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood related cancers. They are now able to cure 80 percent of children diagnosed with these diseases, but the sadder statistic is that the cure rate for adults is only 30 percent - adding to the pressing concern over medical research.

The opening set was an eye, as well as an ear, opener. Keb' Mo', an artist clearly from the backwater South brought a depth of Memphis magic that was as daring as it was toe tapping. Solo songwriting, singing, guitar playing, or dobro pickin' (depending on the number) is hard enough to pull off, but in front of the Neville Brothers it is an amazing feat. Keb' Mo' caught the audience off guard as he insisted on their participation, even if the cold Northwest isn't used to the Southern gospel tradition of chiming in. His opening three numbers held true to down home blues traditions, and he even announced, "The first three songs are the same, they may sound different, but they are the same song." He strummed, howled and tapped a rim shot beat to his witty and poignant commentaries, some not even musical, as he admonished an appreciative but shy crowd, "come on, communicate with me, it helps in your personal life, too!" Laughs, and a few chagrined faces, shared a moment of realization that in their protected daily lives, the onlookers were not used to simple fun. To top this off, his ballads were heart wrenching, tender, and full of complex chordal structures that went way beyond the usual "1-4-5" jam we have learned to expect with this music. With a back-up band, this man would have had several hits by now. This is not to say that his music should be watered down, it is more to the point that our lives would be richer if this music were presented as part of our steady diet.

The intermission was spent raising money for The Leukemia Society. The auction items were what you would expect from the airline, round trip tickets to exotic places, and were snatched up. The highlight was the generous donation of one of two "Lucille's" (the famous guitar)

belonging to B. B. King. "Beebs," as his friends call him, may make money from his commercials for the airline, but he knows how to give back. This event brought Aaron Neville out from backstage to present the instrument with the respect it deserved. The guitar went for \$9,500, and somebody got a great deal.

There may be no better way to permanently end an intermission than the introduction of The Neville Brothers. A 10 piece band with as funky a zydeco/blues/creole combination as anyone can imagine. The choice of material ranged from songs that made you fight to remain seated, to soulful ballads sung by Aaron Neville's unmistakably slow vibratoed, honey glazed hymn. "All I Need To Know," and "When Something Goes Wrong," his hits with Linda Ronstadt, were included and sounded much better than the simplified commercial versions. This band cooks no matter what tempo they are playing, and the music just flies. Moving effortlessly from lower to higher registers, Aaron Neville distinguishes himself as one of the great voices in this world.

The rhythm section was absolutely driven by triggered drums that brought a world of synthesized strength to each hit. In a theater this size (the 5th Avenue seats 1800) it was completely appropriate. Art Neville (also known as Poppa Funk), who announced his 60th birthday this month, ran up and down the Hammond B-3 as if he were thumbing through a phone book. He stopped every place you'd want to call. His soulful singing, and adept synthesizer work were most welcome, and clearly announced that each of the brothers has a completely different strength to offer. His leading of such a tight and obviously technically modern rhythm section only pointed out why these guys have made it - they know what they are doing.

The band's energy was awesome, but the range in the material was even more impressive. Charles Neville, when playing alto or tenor saxophone, takes the turn into straight up jazz, creole-style. His Plantation/Caribbean version of "begin the Beguine" was one for the books (hand me that pina colada, and play it again). A couple of post-bop riffs were added to several tunes reminding everyone of just where this music comes from. After all, New Orleans and jazz are not exactly mutually exclusive. Charles' version of "Old Man River" is something no one present will ever forget. The brothers featured their back-up singer Earl Smith (normally wielding a cow bell) in as romping a New Orleans dance as Mardi Gras can muster. Earl's dance duet to the funk-up sax lines was straight out of a Broadway bound show. STOMP has nothing on these guys.

Cyril Neville, percussionist and vocalist, was featured toward the end of the show and brought everything up another notch. Aaron has received most of the acclaim on vocals, but Cyril has one of the most soulful voices to sing anything. Rich, and full of the promise of a prayer. His presence added a Jamaican/r & b flare that was unmistakable. His rendition of Bob Dylan's classic anthem of consciousness, "The Times They Are A Changin'," took

the entire audience someplace they had not counted on going. They thought they were going out for a nice Thursday evening, and then came back a millennium later. His pleas to the audience to love one another and create a world where there is one race (the human race), by speaking to our children about these things now, was just right to a group of people that might have forgotten their charitable reason for being there.

While on the surface, one might question the jazzness of the Neville Brothers Band, I would in return ask one to define jazz by its most important components. Does it swing (even good Latin music must swing)? Are there great solos? Does it make you want to light a cigarette when you are through? The answer to all of these questions, where the Neville Brothers are concerned, is a resounding yes! It swung like a "mutha," the solos followed complex chord changes well beyond the typical blues background creole fair, and were dynamic expressions of the vast influence jazz has on our society. The cigarette part, I personally quit a couple of months ago, but right now I'm trying to determine if I need a medicinal nicotine patch to bring me down from the high.

Scrapple *(continued from page 9, column 2)*

a Northampton, Massachusetts birthday concert.

"What I like most about playing with these men is that it's like playing with history," Rose said. "Benny and I are 75 years apart in age, and we're able to communicate musically. There's no generation gap in the music."

* * *

Given a choice, I would never want to hear a young person say that he or she does not like jazz. But to hear young people saying this without ever hearing soulful, swinging, bluesy jazz from the likes of Barry Harris, Claude Williams or Benny Waters is very frustrating. Those of us in a position to influence young people simply need to be sure they get to make an intelligent choice as early as possible -- while their ears are still wide open. More often than not, when jazz is presented well, it will become an enriching part of the rest of their lives. Play it cool -- teach jazz in school!

* * *

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Baked, Goods, and Jazz *By Andrienne Wilson*

In the rear of a landmark building that has meant fresh baked bread to Angelinos for more than fifty years (Helms Bakery), resides one of the premiere jazz clubs on the West Coast, and arguably the country. For one week toward the end of September the fresh steaming hot commodity coming out of The Jazz Bakery was a little reminiscent of bagels, as the music of Marc Copland and John Abercrombie was served up good and hot.

The Jazz Bakery has been presenting world class jazz in Los Angeles for over five years, and with more of a focus on music than the ordinary night club is capable of maintaining. The music this evening was no exception. Normally you would review a club scene as separate from the music being presented, but at The Jazz Bakery the stories are as intertwined as the yeast and flour in the bagels previously mentioned.

Marc Copland is one of the great piano finds in jazz. His biography is well known and a tribute to the idea that you don't give up. He received some acclaim and released recording projects as an alto saxophonist early in his career, only to decide that he had not yet found his instrument. His switch to piano has been met with even more critical acclaim, an array of CDs that anyone would be proud to call their own, and sidemen duties including legend Joe Henderson, and many others. His popularity, however, has been limited to musicians and aficionados who read the backs of albums, and then buy the sideman's projects. Or, people following the radio charts.

Thus enters the intertwining of the "other" ingredient to an absolutely wonderful night of jazz. The Jazz Bakery, while avoiding the temptation to get a liquor license and go for the club thing, is a non-profit organization that supports the artistic end of life. The financial considerations of drawing a crowd are not as pressing for these fine musicians. The bottom line is great music, not the take at the door. For this the organization deserves support, and business. This is the key to everything going on meaningful today - putting your money where your heart is.

John Abercrombie's lovely, inventive and electric way of playing guitar was just the partner for Copland and a night that focused somewhere other than the typical mainstream. Abercrombie's playing reminded me of a younger George Freeman; very free in its expression and not limited to cliché, but definitely secure in the range of licks presented. They were joined by young lion bassist Drew Gress, and a hero of mine from my musical childhood of enjoying Stan Kenton - Peter Erskine on drums (come to think of it, it was his childhood as well). They were promoting the new Copland release *Second Look* on Savoy Jazz, and it turned out that Erskine was subbing for Billy Hart, the drummer on the CD and long time

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Baked, Goods, and Jazz (continued from page 11)

collaborator with Copland. Too badd. Yes, that is with two "ds." If there is anyone I would like to see step up to the bandstand with drumsticks in hand, it is Peter Erskine. Considering the inestimable talent of Billy Hart, there are really very few people who would have been able to fill his shoes. The nice part is that Erskine does this, as always, with his very own style. There was no way of knowing that he was not the drummer on the CD. This was heads-up playing and big ears were evident everywhere.

The Jazz Bakery is set up like a theater with lawn chairs in neat rows, a sizable stage, grand piano, and theatrical lighting. The backs of the dark green (and quite comfortable) Rubbermaid outdoor furniture have plaques commemorating the patron who dedicated that specific chair to the memory of a great musician. I was sitting behind Art Blakey's chair, and that alone made me notice the drummer. I would have anyway. Erskine's set-up is one he has really brought to straight-ahead jazz, with several drummers in other genres taking his cue (most recently Mick Fleetwood has played this set-up on the Fleetwood Mac reunion tour). The bass drum is set upright with drum heads on either end, and the top of the drum is played like a floor tom. The bottom of the drum has a bass pedal hitting it up "into it." the cymbals are spare, and there is only a lonely snare drum attached to the side of the floor kick tom. The range of expression found in a bare bones set like this can, with the right player, leave all kinds of room for onstage conversation between instruments. The right player being someone who can stand there (yes, stand) and tap out just about anything cascara (coming from the Spanish word meaning "egg shell") and all.

Rhythmic texturizing was a perfect foil for the type of chordal substitutions and polytonal combinations Copland loves to explore. His piano style has the left and right hand often playing something harmonically disassociated from one another, except that it is on purpose. This is music that sets moods in its delivery of theme and variation. There is never a sense that its just another tune, rather, that the movie will start any second, and the lovely tone poem in front of you will take you to some strange location. Copland's writing may be as exceptional as his playing. The ironic thing about going to see Marc Copland is that you know you've had a good time, and you know you've heard music, but the whole evening is more of an experience than it is a collection of songs. The odd occasional standard is done very differently, but the vast majority of the music was original, and either written by Copland, or Abercrombie.

Copland and Abercrombie, with years of playing together, provide an ease in soloing that makes you feel good. It is as if they are letting you in on the secret. Drew Gress didn't interfere with anything going on, and took several solos with nice riffs, but the show to my mind was more moody than his interpretations of the music. The real story of the evening was mood. The mood of The Jazz Bakery is that the music comes first; no matter what. The mood of the music was reflective and nothing less than

beautiful in a panoramic way. The mood of the crowd was a quiet "aah" at the end of every exploration. It was non-commercial and fulfilling, and only possible when musicians are presented by patrons committed to baking a better bread. It took a bakery to pull it off.

Marc Copland is not able to tour as much as he would like, due to the corporate decisions of the larger labels that facilitate the traveling of music. The Jazz Bakery is not able to support as many musicians as they would like, as the costs for transportation of musicians keep rising. Ruth Price, the founder of The Jazz Bakery, is dependent upon one other ingredient for the fire of these ovens being tended. The support of fans.

When you are in Los Angeles for business, family reunions, or that trip to Disneyland you've been promising the kids; do yourself, The Jazz Bakery and jazz in general, a favor - go hear some music. The coffee is freshly brewed, the pastries are light, the music is jammin', and the focus is right. It's all about the music.

Meet Susie Thorne

By Butch Berman

Thanks to my dear friend Cheryl Morton, while at an Excel (a long distance phone service) meeting awhile back, I was introduced to a lovely woman named Kathryn Thorne who had seen our newsletter and wanted me to meet her daughter.

I said sure, why not - have her call me - and she did with a simple but powerful demo to soon follow. I was floored. Having received many tapes and CDs since the Berman Music Foundation originated Ms. Susan Thorne caught my attention big time. With a jazzy, but bluesy voice and a sound I haven't heard before I felt my wish for a chance to showcase some local talent had come true.

Having spent the last three years paying her dues gigging in the Orient, Susie longed for her home shores, but uncertain of her musical aspirations. Thus, thanks to Cheryl's introduction to her mom a jam session ensued. Bingo, we're cookin'!

Backed by my first call of Lincoln musicians: Andy Hall on acoustic and electric bass, Bill Wimmer on saxes, John Carlini at the keys, and John Scofield on drums - get ready for the Susie Thorne Band, and in time, our first release on our Jazz Foundation label. Look for our first gig in early '98 at a venue to be named later.



Susie Thorne

Fingerpickin'

By Mark Dalton

WES MONTGOMERY

Fingerpickin'

Pacific Jazz/Blue Note

I'm sure all you readers out there have noticed that there is a lot of great jazz available these days, at very reasonable prices. Many of these fine sounds are available through CD reissue programs which are restoring to print some of the major jazz catalogs of the 50s and 60s. In fact, these programs are certainly encouraging the resurgence in interest in the classic small combo acoustic jazz of this era. A decade ago, these recordings were strictly on used vinyl and the exclusive province of cluttered jazz record shops, typically manned by aging, but extremely knowledgeable hipsters in the larger cities of the U.S.A. In addition to their great music, these albums were treasured for their cool cover photos (musicians in continental suits, women in sheath dresses, the cigarette smoke drifting languidly...), and their lengthy and informative liner notes. These discs were handled like delicate china, played only on the best of equipment (AR turntable, if you please!) and were passed from hand to hand among a dedicated group of collectors. No longer. I go into the Tower Records store here in Seattle, and I am dazzled by bins and bins full of lovingly remastered, thoroughly documented, and bargain priced reissues of classic Blue Note, Riverside, Prestige, and Pacific Jazz albums of yesteryear, to name just a few labels. I want to talk about one of these reissues here, but there is a longer story to this review.

The Montgomery Brothers, Buddy, Monk and Wes, were from Indiana. Buddy played vibes, and wrote a lot of nice tunes. Wes, of course, played electric guitar. He played with his thumb, because he liked the tone it got him. Playing with his thumb led him into playing octaves more frequently than most jazz guitarists (playing a melody line on two strings, simultaneously, an octave apart), which was to become a trademark, and, later in his career as a big money pop-jazz artist, a bit of a burden. Monk played bass. *Electric bass*. He was the first jazz player to pick up Leo Fender's then-new invention, the Precision Bass, in the early 1950s. And brother, was he *roasted* for it at the time!

I can recall reading about Monk's innovative step in the early sixties. One of the elder statesmen of jazz critics was completely mystified as to why an otherwise decent player would want to pick up such a worthless instrument. To "lose the warmth of the wood" in jazz seemed nothing short of criminal. Charles Mingus was still furious about this incursion some years later when an interviewer made the mistake of asking him about the changing role of the bass in jazz. "I'm not an electrician, man... a real bass player will tell you... once a microphone touches the wood, the wood is no longer wood. It's something beyond human control. Get rid of the steel strings if you want to hear good music, straight music. You must go back to gut."

I can appreciate Mr. Mingus's comments from a musician's perspective. Any player worth a nickel develops a strong love for, and bond with their instrument. You love the way it feels in your hands and you love the sounds you make together. Mr. Mingus spent years becoming an absolute master of the gut-stringed acoustic bass. That instrument, and the sound of that instrument is central to the music he made, and it defines the concept of "bass" for him.

But there have been other bass instruments used in jazz. If you go way back to the beginnings of jazz in New Orleans, the tuba was the bass instrument of choice, and to my ears, New Orleans jazz doesn't sound right without a tuba. There was musical progress made when jazz bands switched to the string bass, but something was lost as well.

Those kicking bass pedals in organ jazz are another example. When some players like Jimmy McGriff started adding electric bass to their tunes in the late 60s, to catch onto the funk thing happening then, the results were less than satisfying to many of us. Part of the attraction of the Hammond B3, and the jazz that has developed from it, is that deep surging pulse of *bass* from those pedals as an integral part of the sound. Without kicking pedals, the organ often seems to become just another instrument in the band.

The fact remains, however, that Mr. Fender's invention was not well received in jazz circles. In a 1977 interview published in Tom Mulhern's excellent book *Bass Heroes*, Montgomery states that when he picked it up "the electric bass was considered a bastard instrument - conventional players despised it." So why did he start playing it? Because Lionel Hampton told him to, according to Montgomery. It was 1951 and he had just been hired for a tour (which stretched into a two-year steady gig) with the Hampton band, hired on as an upright player, when Mr. Hampton approached him one night, handed him a Fender Bass (one of the first made - 1951 was the year they went into production), and said, "Play this - it has the sound I want."

Anyone who has heard recordings of the Hampton band around this time (I have a live album, recorded in Paris) knows they were one hell of a loud, rocking organization, often edging closer to the rhythm and blues bands of the period than the sophisticated swing of the Goodman band. Montgomery's initial misgivings about the Fender Bass evaporated over time, as he realized he could hold the bottom for this band, be heard clearly and with an even volume from top to bottom of the fretboard, no matter how raucous the action got around him. Aside from a brief flirtation with the standup during a gig with Cal Tjader in the mid-60s ("it just wasn't the same..."), Montgomery never looked back.

To bring us back to the review then, after 30-some years of reading fleeting references to Monk Montgomery, variously describing him as a pioneer on the electric bass, and a desecrator of jazz, I finally got a chance to hear the man play, for myself, with the CD release of some of Wes

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Fingerpickin' (continued from page 13)

Montgomery's first sessions in an album called "Fingerpickin'" on the Pacific Jazz/Blue Note label. The ten cuts on this album are culled from sessions recorded in Indianapolis on December 30, 1957, and at the Forum Theater in Los Angeles on April 22, 1958. There are lengthy liner notes with this set, copied from a 1975 double vinyl release, with additions for the CD.

The only comment about Monk Montgomery's playing in these liner notes, new or old, is that he "confines himself to time keeping," and a general observation that this is "a good bebop rhythm section." Perhaps the authors thought they were being kind in not bringing up the bottom-end instrumentation!

So, how is it, you ask? It's a good album. The music ranges from the solid "hard bop" of the period - energetic and feisty (the rollicking opening cut, "Sound Carrier," for example), to a tasty quartet arrangement of Hammerstein and Kern's classic ballad, "All The Things You Are." Wes Montgomery is a blast on guitar - his thumb-style playing does give him an unusual tone and a slightly dirty edge to the sound when he really bears down. His playing is inventive, fresh, and distinctive right out of the gate. The famous octaves are present as embellishments, and they work well.

Brother Buddy is all over this collection on the vibes as well writing several of the tunes. Indeed, if I were to pick a session leader just on the evidence of music in these tracks, Buddy would be the obvious choice. Other players (including a seventeen-year-old Freddie Hubbard making his recording debut) are fine, and the album hustles along in a well balanced set that any jazz lover will enjoy.

As for Brother Monk - steady as he goes! What you have here is mainstream jazz bass, walking all over the place, sliding notes, blasting along the fretboard highway on Charlie Parker's "Billie's Bounce," stepping up front for a "Fever"-type introductory riff on "Back To Back" - all with the sound, the tone of the Fender Bass... nice fat, well defined notes. No drop-off notes due to the peculiarities of a vibrating sound board. If "confining himself to keeping time" means Monk isn't dancing up to the front of the stage for a roaring electric solo a la Jaco Pastorius (that came later!), it's okay with me. If it means he isn't climbing on a battered "doghouse" upright to slap, thump and ride it across the stage as some of our crowd-pleasing rockabilly brethren are wont to do, that's okay. I listen to this music, and I can see Monk Montgomery up there on stage, with his Fender Bass well-polished, a dark continental suit and a skinny tie, button down collar and wing-tipped shoes. Seven and seven for sipping between tunes. Looking and sounding sharp. A modest revolutionary, perhaps. Cool, you know? But a revolutionary all the same. Committed to the sound and feel of the instrument he fell in love with, just like Charles Mingus. My hat is off to you, Monk, wherever you are!

Native Nebraskan Mark Dalton plays a Fender Precision Bass in Seattle, Washington.

Blues corner By Rich Hoover

Son Seals to appear in Lincoln Dec. 13th '97 at the Zoo Bar. I've never seen anything but great shows from this guy, and I have seen at least a dozen in the last 20 years. Also I haven't heard of any changes so "Red" Groetzinger should be the main ingredient in the horn section. "Red" was a long time Lincoln resident and musician and gained a wealth of fame and notoriety, if not cash, playing for numerous bands and orchestras in the Midwest, which is one of the reasons he has been with Son Seals' band for 10 years or more.

Son was scheduled to do a couple of shows in the area in January of this year but was shot in the face. The bullet broke his jaw and reportedly is still lodged below his right ear, but he was back performing by March. That's probably enough said about the tenacity of this top ranked bluesman.

The cover is \$12 for advance tickets and it is worth twice the price for this guy and the shows he puts on.

The **Zoo Bar** is putting on some fine blues and r & b shows for the "holidaze."

Magic Slim & Teardrops - - 12/15-20 - - International renown
Magic Slim w/ Heartmurmurs - - - - 12/22&25 - - - - Holiday fun
Baby Jason & Spankers - - - - 12/26-27 - - - - Hot shot blues
Indigenous - - - - - 12/29 - - - - - CD release party
Bossphilly - - - - 12/31 - - - - New Years R&B local rising stars
John Walker & Dan Newton - - - 01/05 - - - - CD release party
Indigenous - - 01/8-10 - - Power blues/presidential favorite
James Solberg Band - - 01/17 - - Luther Allison's road band
Bob Margolin - - - - - 01/29 - - - - - Steady rollin' bluesman
Duke Robillard - - - - - 02/05 - - - - - Guitar royalty

P.S. The FACs at the Zoo Bar are exceptionally entertaining this time of year, with people home for the holidays. FACs are Fridays 4p-7p with local bands well worth the \$1 cover. Peace and everything.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Magic Slim home for the holidaze

Blues on Disc

By Rich Hoover

BERNARD ALLISON

Keepin' The Blues Alive
Cannonball Records

From the first run of notes from Bernard's guitar, *Keepin' the Blues Alive* is just what Bernard Allison and his latest CD release are going to do. Bernard, son of the late Luther Allison, is successfully carrying the blues torch, and even more importantly has added his own colors to the flame.

In his early 30s Bernard has spent over fifteen years playing professionally with his father, Koko Taylor Blues Machine, and Willie Dixon's band. These formative years have been spent learnin' the blues created by the masters that led the way. To date, Bernard has released four CDs. This latest, his first American release, is an exciting test of his abilities and influences. Bernard has a wide and intriguing range of instrumental and vocal stylings which have strong, deep roots to the past while simultaneously reach to the future as a distinct sound that is all Bernard's.

In addition, Bernard is an accomplished lyricist penning six of the eleven tunes in the disc and showing his sense of honest, contemporary, and universally understandable feelings of the blues.

Bernard's band is a gathering of eagles including: Ray "Killer" Allison - drums (no relation); Greg Rzab - bass; Matthew Skoller - harmonica; Will Crosby - rhythm guitar; keyboard legend/CD producer Ron Levy; and Ray C. Drain doing the vocal on "Home Goin'."

I was also fortunate enough to catch a live show here in Lincoln at the Zoo Bar and was pleasantly entertained with the integrity of his showmanship; honest, upfront and talented.

My recommendation is to catch Bernard Allison when and where you can, live or recorded, this star shines.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Bernard Allison shows 'em how at the Zoo Bar

CATFISH KEITH

Twist It, Babe
Fishtail Records

Catfish Keith is a slide ridin', finger glidin' blues minstrel reflecting the original stock of acoustic artists.

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Photo by Rich Hoover

Catfish Keith @ LAFTA's show @ the Loft, Oct '96

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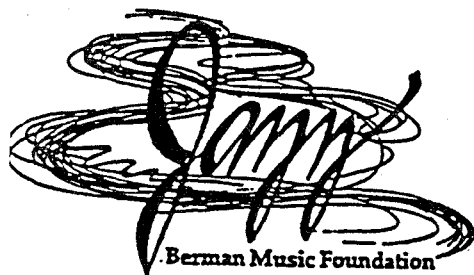
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