

File photo

Tito Puente plays at the Lied Center on January 31st at 8 p.m.

Volume 3, Number 3

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The Prez sez many things are going on

Happy New Year, my loyal jazz aficiandos!

Well, even though the post holiday jazz "haps" are in a bit of a down time - the BMF still has some cool deals afloat to pique our interests into next summer. Let me entice you.

Firstly, "Coretet" is now the official name of Lincoln's core of the four best jazz cats that I could have put together to produce. They consist of: Bill Wimmer, on tenor, alto, and soprano saxes and congas; Andy Hall, playing both the upright and electric bass guitar; John Scofield, fielding the drums; and John Carlini, doing a major chunk of the arranging and tickling the ivories. They're kicking major butt, and are currently accompanying Omaha's jazz/blues stylist/songstress Susie Thorne. This ensemble will be upon you soon. Get ready! Susie will remind you of the days of Kay Starr and Dinah Washington, with her velvet coated interpretations.

Secondly, our exciting upcoming involvement and sponsorship in the Mid-America Arts Alliance regional jazz conference to be held at the new Kansas City Jazz Museum, March 13-14. The foundation joins the M-AAA, the 18th & Vine Authority, the Folly Theater, and the Kansas City Jazz Museum as sponsors. The foundation will also help represent the state of Nebraska at this conference. The states of Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and Arkansas make up the other five states included in our region. Jazz presenters, artists, teachers, and students will be invited, but it is open to the public.

The conference was put together to help establish a regional network for the promotion of jazz. It will feature seminars and panel discussions on such topics as marketing, radio airplay, fundraising, and block booking. Special features will be keynote speaker Bobby Watson, showcases by regional jazz artists, a jam session, and a concert by Joe Henderson. We'll cover it en masse for you and you'll read it here first.

Thirdly, it's official - drummer Bill Stewart and his trio "a band in all hope," will be appearing at Westbrook Recital Hall for a drum filled extravaganza of a concert and a workshop to follow, and on April Fool's Day to boot! Bill's a Sioux City, Iowa product that not only backs guitarist John Scofield but has two great CDs out on his own, and is just starting to emerge as a name to remember. Pianist Bill Carrothers and saxophonist Anton Denner will join Bill. More info to follow.

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The Prez sez

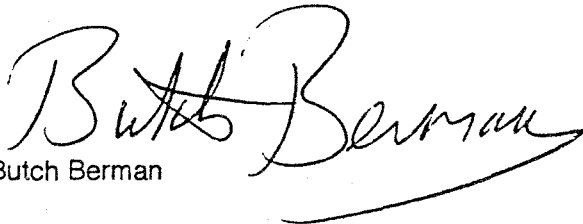
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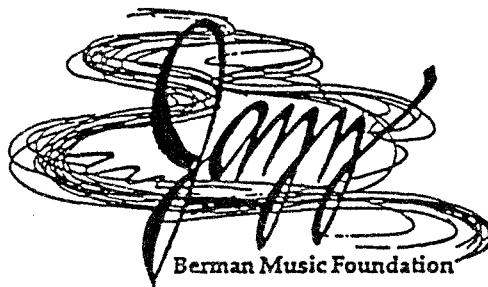
Fourthly, there's been a slight setback in our release date of Andrienne Wilson's "She's Dangerous," from February 1 to June 1 on Arabesque Jazz. We're hoping to bring Andrienne and her star studded band consisting of Tommie Campbell on drums, Alex Blake on bass, and George Cables on keyboards here for a CD release party sometime in June. Hope to announce details next issue.

And lastly, we're still negotiating on promoting and covering the first ever Topeka Jazz Festival at the Topeka Performing Arts Center in Topeka, Kansas over the Memorial Day weekend (May 23-25). Should be confirmed soon.

The BMF is thrilled to look upon our successes in '97 and hope to forge ahead stronger than ever, keeping jazz alive 'n' kickin' from coast to coast - and stopping along the way in Nebraska via the foundation - here to entertain and educate through '98 (and beyond).

With music, music, music in mind,


Butch Berman



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For inclusion of any jazz or blues related events, letters to the editor, or suggested articles, you can either mail them to the office, phone us at 402-476-3112, fax us at 402-475-3136, or e-mail us at bermanmf@inetnebr.com.

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Trustee: Butch Berman

Consultants: Dave Hughes, Nancy Marshall, Wade Wright, Andrienne Wilson, and Russ Dantzler

Tito Puente to add a little winter heat

By Tom Ineck

Timbales master and salsa legend Tito Puente should thoroughly dispel the mid-winter chills when he appears Jan. 31 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Considered by many the king of Latin music, Puente is almost reverently called "El Rey." For more than 50 years, his infectious rhythms have been keeping people dancing all around the world.

Born Ernesto Anthony Puente Jr. in New York City, to parents newly arrived from Puerto Rico, Tito grew up in the richly diverse environment of East Harlem. He originally wanted to be a dancer, but was sidetracked into a music career by a bicycle accident.

By the age of 13, Puente was a child prodigy in Spanish Harlem, having taken piano and drum lessons that taught him the foundations of music. Exposed to the surrounding urban sounds of South American and Cuban music, Puente was also heavily influenced by the popular big band jazz groups of the day, including Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa and, later, Stan Kenton.

One of Puente's first professional gigs was with the Ramon Olivero Orchestra, playing drums. By age 16, he was playing with the great pianist Noro Morales. After two years in high school, Puente asked his father's permission to leave school and pursue his career in music. Permission was granted, and Puente never looked back.

In the early 1940s, the great Machito Orchestra drafted Puente into the drummer's chair. While with Machito, Puente convinced musical director Mario Bauza to bring the timbale drums to the front of the orchestra and play standing rather than sitting in the back playing a conventional drum kit.

After serving three years in the Navy, he attended Juilliard School of Music on the G.I. Bill, eventually forming a nine-piece group called the Piccadilly Boys and performing regularly at the Palladium, the popular New York City dance club, from 1950 to 1964. Known then as the "mecca of Latin music," the Palladium attracted many of the great jazz musicians from the surrounding area including Birdland, the other nearby famous jazz club.

Much as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Max Roach adapted the mambo rhythms into bebop, Puente conversely incorporated jazz harmonies and extended improvisation into his music, helping to create what is now known as Latin jazz.

The Piccadilly Boys eventually became the Tito Puente Orchestra and went on to record several hit singles and records for Tico, and later RCA, in the late '40s and '50s. Puente's signature sound and style, a mix of spicy dance beats and red-hot jam sessions, are credited with helping create the mambo rage of the 1950s, as well as the



File photo

Tito Puente

rise of Cuban cha-cha-cha music.

Throughout his career, Puente's bands and recordings have always been considered the premier source for hearing the best Latin musicians and vocalists. Included among the stand-out personnel from his bands of the '50s, '60s and '70s are Mongo Santamaria, Willie Bobo, Johnny Pacheco, Ray Barretto, Manny Roman, Rolando Le Series and Celia Cruz.

Since signing with Concord Records in the early 1980s, Puente's consistently strong musical output has been a great contributing factor to the success and development of the Concord Picante label. In 1983, his record "On Broadway" won a Grammy for Best Tropical Latin Performance, and in 1985 he reclaimed the award with "Mambo Diablo." In 1990, he won again (his fourth Grammy) in the field of Best Tropical Latin Jazz for his performance of his own composition "Lambada Timbales," from the album "Goza Mi Timbal."

In all, Puente has 13 releases on Concord. His most recent is "Oye Como Va!: The Dance Collection," a stunning compilation of Puente's most danceable performances (CD review on page 5).

Puente has played for four U.S. presidents, appeared in such movies as "The Mambo Kings" (playing himself), "Woody Allen's "Radio Days" and "Armed and Dangerous" and been featured on "The Simpsons," "Sesame Street" and "The Bill Cosby Show."

A prolific composer and recording artist, Puente has written more than 500 compositions and recorded 114 albums.

Tito Puente and his orchestra will perform at 8 p.m. Jan. 31 at the Lied Center. Tickets are \$24, \$20 and \$16 (half price for students).

Bill Stewart and "a band in all hope" to play Lincoln



Bill Stewart

File photo

By Dave Hughes

Through the help of former Lincolnite Ray Gering, who is booking the tour, it looks like Sioux City, Iowa native Bill Stewart and his trio, a band in all hope, will be coming to Lincoln for a concert and a workshop Wednesday April 1 (April Fool's Day). But this is no foolin'!

Stewart, who also plays drums with jazz guitarist John Scofield's band, will be bringing a trio to town that includes pianist Bill Carrothers and saxophonist Anton Denner. In cooperation with the UNL School of Music they are slated to play at UNL's Westbrook Recital Hall at a time to be determined, and to do a workshop earlier in the day at a time and room to be determined.

From the band's website <http://www.carrothers.com/abiah/>, here is some info about each of the performers:

Bill Stewart

To people familiar with the modern jazz scene, drummer Bill Stewart needs no introduction. Originally from Iowa, his resume is impressive, including recordings and tours with John Scofield, Lee Konitz, Jim Hall, Maceo

Parker, James Moody, Larry Goldings, Marc Copland, and many others. His debut recording as a leader on Blue Note Records, "Snide Remarks", with Joe Lovano, Eddie Henderson, Bill Carrothers, and Larry Grenadier garnered rave reviews from all the major jazz publications and received "10 Best Jazz Records of 1995" honors in the New York Times. His latest release, "Telepathy", also on Blue Note, features Seamus Blake on tenor and Steve Wilson on alto. Bill currently resides in the Eighth Circle, Fourth Pouch, where Diviners, Astrologers, Magicians, all have their heads turned backward.

Anton Denner

Anton Denner is originally from NY. He has performed at local venues such as Birdland, Knitting Factory, Visiones, and the Village Gate. After early studies with Joe Lovano and Lee Konitz, he has gone on to perform with Mel Lewis, Ray Charles, Terrel Stafford, Clifford Jordan, and Warne Marsh. He has taught flute and improvisation at Stanford University and will be performing a series of concerts and clinics with drummer Eddie Marshall in the San Francisco area in early 1998. He currently resides in the Eighth circle, Tenth Pouch: Falsifiers of Metals, plagued by scabs, lying on the earth, scratching furiously.

Bill Carrothers

Bill Carrothers was born in Minneapolis in 1964. Over the years Bill's sideman credit have included some of the greatest names in jazz, including Gary Peacock, Joe Beck, Buddy DeFranco, Curtis Fuller, Eric Gravatt, Tim Hagans, Billy Higgins, James Moody, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, Prince, Dewey Redman, Bobby Rivkin, Charlie Rouse, James Spaulding, Terrell Stafford, Ira Sullivan, and Benny Wallace. Mr. Carrothers has recorded as a sideman for drummer Bill Stewart on two recordings, "Snide Remarks" and "Telepathy", on the Blue Note label. Mr. Carrothers resides in the Ninth Circle, Third Ring, Ptolomea, where Traitors against their Guests jut out from ice, their eyes sealed by frozen tears.

This looks to be an interesting event for area jazz students and patrons!

Tomfoolery

By Tom Ineck

When I reviewed the Lincoln-based, Latin jazz group Braziliance in this newsletter last summer, I called their performance at the Prairie Jazz Fest predictable and uninspired.

I also vowed to reserve my final judgment until I had heard them again, under better circumstances. Even members of the band knew the Prairie Jazz Fest performance was substandard.

Well, I can now safely say that Braziliance is capable of much more. The band's Jan. 9 appearance at the 7th Street Loft was all the evidence I needed to reassess their talents and restore my faith in their potential.

Performing to an audience of about 100, Braziliance turned up the heat with a variety of infectious Latin rhythms, many composed by the master of the Brazilian samba, Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Kicking off the show was Chick Corea's leaping, driving "Spain," a tour de force for the Braziliance instrumentalists. It set the pace for an evening of fine performances, despite muddled sound reproduction and a poorly tuned piano.

Singer Sylvia Bailey, who brings an effervescent, good-natured quality to the stage, entered with "One Note Samba," a Latin favorite featuring Dell Smith on flute. Smith's subtle, simple lines are perfect for this kind of music. His understated tenor sax solo on "The Girl from Ipanema" contained echoes of Stan Getz.

Bailey is at her most endearing when singing the breathy, romantic tunes in their original Portuguese, her voice dropping to a sultry near-whisper. But she also did justice to Jobim's mid-tempo "Wave," with 16-year-old Broc Hempel taking a bluesy piano solo.

The second set opened with another instrumental, this time with a breezy flute solo by Smith, great keyboard work by Hempel and a brief, but solid bass solo by young Cory Biggerstaff.

After a nice rendition of "Desafinado," Bailey introduced local dance instructor Shelley Brackhan to coach about 20 audience members through the finer points of the Argentine tango and the Brazilian samba. Each of the women who participated received a long-stemmed red rose, ideal for gripping between their teeth -- a nice touch.

Braziliance transcended the technical shortcomings of the sound system and the piano turn in a fine performance. Roses all around!

Braziliance is scheduled to play monthly Sunday night gigs at Misty's in Havelock through May. From 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. you can catch them on Feb. 22, March 29, April 19 and May 17.

Not a bad way to chase away the wintertime blues!

JUST A NOTE: Annette Murrell's CD Release Party was held Jan. 18 at the Ramada Hotel in downtown Lincoln. More on that event next time around. The CD, "My Shining Hour," is reviewed on page 6.

Jazz on disc

by Tom Ineck

TITO PUENTE

Oye Como Va: The Dance Collection
Concord Picante

The 13 tracks collected here were recorded between 1982 and 1996, throughout Tito Puente's sterling tenure on the Concord Picante label.

They provide a stunning sampler of dance tunes as only Puente can deliver them. The success of Latin jazz, after all, is largely due to his influence as composer and master timbales player.

The opener, "Mambo King," is a swinger that leaves no doubt whom the tune is named for. "Maria Cervantes," the oldest track here, has Tito on vibes paying tribute to the pianist/orchestra leader. He pays homage to other mentors on "Ode to Cachao" and "Machito Forever."

For some listeners, it may come as a shock that the title track, "Oye Como Va," was written by Puente and not rock guitarist Carlos Santana, who had a monster hit with the tune way back in 1969. It is offered here in a live version recorded in San Francisco (Santana's hometown) in 1984.

Another highlight is "Ran Kan Kan" in the only live recorded version of the tune that was a big hit for Puente in 1949. Eleven of the 13 tunes included were penned by Puente, quite a legacy!

MINGUS BIG BAND

Que Viva Mingus!
Dreyfus Records

If you attended the Mingus Big Band concert Nov. 18 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, you've already heard three of the tunes from the band's latest release, a Latin-tinged session recorded in September.

The rest of "Que Viva Mingus!" is just as stimulating as "Far Wells Mill Valley," "Tijuana Gift Shop" and the 17-minute "Cumbia & Jazz Fusion." There's also a brilliantly reorchestrated "Moods in Mambo," written by Mingus at age 27 in 1949.

"Dizzy Moods," originally inspired by Gillespie's chord changed for "Woody 'n' You," is arranged by Hilton Ruiz and swings with Afro-Cuban gusto. "Slippers" is an obscurity that gets a short but effectively swinging treatment, arranged by Chico O'Farrill and featuring Steve Berrios on timbales.

In keeping with the Mingus Big Band Collective way of doing things, "Que Viva Mingus!" features 27 different musicians in a variety of configurations, often dictated by musicians' availability and suitability. But, one thing remains consistent -- top-notch technique and a spirited interplay that evokes the band's namesake.

Among other stand-out soloists are Steve Slagle, John Stubblefield, David Kikoski, Randy Brecker, Chris Potter and Ryan Kisor.

NJO Christmas show a seasonal highlight

By Tom Ineck

Fans of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra have come to expect exciting, even inspiring Yuletide concerts, and they were not disappointed this year.

A capacity audience of 400 was on hand to witness the band's Dec. 11 performance at the Ramada Plaza Hotel.

Lincoln's foremost jazz and blues singer Annette Murrell was the featured vocalist whom everyone had come to hear, but NJO guitarist Peter Bouffard was the unofficial featured arranger of the evening, contributing at least six original charts, including the opener, "Little Drummer Boy."

Transformed into a swinging, mid-tempo blues number, it began with the smooth brushwork of drummer Todd Smith. Bouffard soloed with shimmering Wes Montgomery-style octaves, and the horn section threw in a slew of hip references to other seasonal melodies before Smith let loose a torrent of drum breaks to close the tune.

"Carol of the Bells" was arranged by NJO saxophonist Mark Benson and driven by the familiar four-note phrase -- repeated over and over, like a mantra. The effect was mesmerizing.

Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar," a seasonal tune only in the sense that much of it is consumed during the holidays, began with a loping, funky beat that suddenly broke into a soulful strut. Ed Love turned in a searing tenor sax solo, and the trumpet section cut loose with a unison passage on flugelhorn.

From last year's Christmastime concert rendition of Ellington's "Nutcracker Suite" variations, the NJO nicely reprised "Dance of the Floreodores," with solos by trumpeter Brad Obbink, trombonist Dutch Ode and Love on clarinet.

Listeners were able to contrast and compare two versions of "We Three Kings." The first, taken from the Stan Kenton songbook, used constantly shifting keys and a brass chorale to create sumptuous harmonies. The second, arranged by Bouffard, was darker, more propulsive. These three kings are some "bad" dudes.

Murrell began her set with a bluesy mid-tempo rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." A funky backbeat was the hallmark of Bouffard's "The Christmas Song."

With the rest of the NJO sitting out, the rhythm section and Murrell merrily bounced through "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow." Murrell's warm, playful style made the fireplace seem very inviting, indeed.

But, perhaps the most striking performance of the evening was the subtle, gospel-tinged Bouffard-Murrell duet on "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." Bouffard's lithe chord changes rang clear as a bell, and Murrell wrapped her silky voice around every twist and turn.



File photo

Annette Murrell

Murrell's debut CD a personal triumph

By Tom Ineck

"My Shining Hour," Lincoln singer Annette Murrell's debut CD, is aptly titled.

After 20 years of performing in smoky nightclubs, in concert halls, in community theaters and churches and at outdoor festivals, Murrell finally has a recording that reflects all of her diverse talents and influences.

Down and out in Denver, Murrell packed her bags 10 years ago and moved to Lincoln with a young son, Lathan, a passion for jazz and blues and not much else.

Slowly, she began to emerge, sitting in with local musicians whenever asked, but concentrating most of her time and energy on her family, a job in state government and her studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Since then, she has acquired a master's degree in English and creative writing and is working on a doctorate. Her reputation as a fine musical-comic actress has won her many roles in Lincoln and elsewhere.

While performing with most of Lincoln's top musicians, she has become the city's undisputed "Queen of Jazz and Blues." Which brings us back to "My Shining Hour," a project that required two years in the studio.

A consummate perfectionist, Murrell wanted just the right arrangements and musicians for each of the 12 tunes, using a total of 15 superb instrumentalists for this jazz and blues smorgasbord.

Among my personal favorites are the bluesy "Never Make Your Move Too Soon," her joyful rendition of "As Long As I Live," her Ella-inspired "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter" and her exquisite duet with bassist Rusty White on "Everytime We Say Goodbye."

Editor's note: Tom Ineck wrote the liner notes for "My Shining Hour."

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Nancy Marshall

Nebraska Jazz Orchestra to play Feb. 2 and 3

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra will play its third pair of concerts of the 1997-98 season on Feb. 2nd in Omaha and Feb. 3rd in Lincoln as usual.

This time around the NJO will feature the music of the great composer and trumpeter, Thad Jones, in a show called *One More For Thad*. To celebrate the music of this jazz legend the NJO will present many of Jones' compositions including: "One O'Clock Jump," "Big Dipper," "Little Pixie II," "Don't Get Sassy," Central Park North," "Four-Five-Six," "Us," and "A Child is Born."

The Omaha concert will be held at the Joslyn Art Museum-Witherspoon Auditorium, 60th & Dodge Street, at 7:30 p.m. And, the Lincoln concert will be held at the Ramada Hotel & Conference Center, 141 North 9th Street, also at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the door. For more information, contact the business office at 402-477-8446.

Monday Night Big Band

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

Gallery Walk Cabaret

In its second year the Gallery Walk Cabaret at the Seventh Street Loft, 504 S. 7th, is 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, run by the Wagon Train Project, is five blocks south of O St. on 7th. There's a sign in big red letters by the entrance, just off the parking lot.

Here's the dates for the rest of the cabaret season (dates tentative): Feb. 6, Nancy Marshall & The Nice Guys (Andy Hall, Steve Hanson, Tom Larson, & Del Smith, with surprise guests); March 6, Bill Wimmer; April 3, Joel Mabus (folk); May 1, Brazilliance; & June 5, Janet Lawson.

The shows run from 7:30 until 10:30 p.m. and the admission is only \$5.00. If you have any questions, call Nancy Marshall at 474-4080.

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 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 days and times.

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. At 12 midnight, "Bohemia After Dark" host Liz Chadwick features straight-ahead acoustic jazz, hard bop, a sprinkling of big bands, and a generous helping of the best current artists on the scene today at Cafe' Bohemia.

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 Feb. (Friday nights at 11 pm)

02-06 Ernestine Anderson
02-13 Buddy DeFranco 75th Birthday Tribute
02-20 Randy Weston: Out of Africa
02-27 Freddy Cole

(continued on page 8, column 1)

Jazz on the radio

(continued from page 7, column 2)

JAZZSET in Feb. (Saturday nights at 9 pm)

02-07 Dave Grusin conducts the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band
02-14 Diana Krall at Monterey
02-21 Don Byron's Bug Music and Jim Hall with Brass
02-28 Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival, Part One

PIANO JAZZ in Feb. (Saturday nights at 10 pm)

02-07 Dardanelle Hadley
02-14 Tony Monte
02-21 Dr. Valerie Capers
02-28 Ralph Sharon

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 p.m.

On Mondays at 1 p.m., "Riverwalk: Live from the Landing" featuring live jazz recorded in San Antonio, Texas comes your way. 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 Hazen 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 a new show entitled "Jazz From Studio 1" hosted by students of the Omaha Public Schools 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.

Arts Incorporated: new name for NJO and others

By Dave Hughes

Arts Incorporated is the new name for the management office of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra and the Monday Night Big Band and other related organizations.

The other organizations include: American Music Corporation, Dean Haist Enterprises, Lincoln Civic Choir, Lincoln Civic Orchestra, Lincoln Midwest Ballet Company, Lincoln Municipal Band, Nebraska Brass, and the Nebraska Symphony Chamber Orchestra (who with Lincoln Midwest Ballet Company puts on performances of "The Nutcracker" each December).

Dean Haist is the director of Arts Incorporated, located at 216 North 11th Street, Suite 202, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-1401.

The new phone numbers for the groups represented by this management company are:

Arts Incorporated, American Music Corporation, Dean Haist Enterprises, Monday Night Big Band, and Nebraska Symphony Chamber Orchestra - 402-477-8008;

Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, Lincoln Civic Orchestra, and Lincoln Midwest Ballet Company Business Office - 402-477-8446;

Lincoln Municipal Band, Nebraska Brass, and Lincoln Civic Choir - 402-477-7899;

The fax number for all of the groups is 402-477-8222.

Questions regarding performance schedules, season concert ticket sales, and press information can be answered by calling the above numbers for the appropriate group.

The public is invited to an open house at the new offices on Saturday, February 7th from 3 to 5 p.m.

The Berman Music Foundation welcomes this new organization and hopes that it will strengthen the arts in this community!

Nebraska Brass presents third pair of shows

By Dave Hughes

The Nebraska Brass will present its third pair of shows for this season on Tues., Feb. 17 at Berean Church, 6400 S. 70th in Lincoln and Wed., Feb. 18 at Joslyn Art Museum 2200 Dodge in Omaha. The "Nebraska Brass and Friends" concerts will include Lincoln percussionist John Scofield. For more information, call 402-477-7899.

The New Story Is How Many Watts?

By Andrienne Wilson

All puns aside, the big scoop on both music and electricity in Seattle for this month, and I suspect many more to come, was the trio "New Stories" substantiating the charged brilliance of saxophonist Ernie Watts. For a three day stint at The New Orleans in Pioneer Square this Seattle-based trio featuring pianist Marc Seales, bassist Doug Miller, and drummer John Bishop played the performances of their lives, side by side, not behind, one of the great musicians touring today. Accolades become a little hard to believe when they get too syrupy, but when the live performances that leave you smiling and humming are corroborated by stellar CD's you can take home, then you owe everyone you know the recommendation. This is the most important part of being a Jazz fan; telling everyone what is great, and making sure that the responsible parties stay in business.

My recommendation is "LISTEN" to Ernie Watts any chance you get. There are performers and artists who transcend the day to day striving to get along, both in Jazz and in life, and Ernie is one of them. When Ernie Watts shows up his job is accomplished, and several other things toward success are achieved, before anyone else has noticed what size glass their drink is being served in. He not only plays with a mastery of his instrument that is matched by few and topped by none, but he extends an artistic care and generosity to those sharing the spotlight that brings everyone to their best. Marc Seales, who would be a star several times over if he had ever insisted on the fast track outside of his teaching at the University of Washington, did something I have seen him do twice - rise to the level of whatever was going down - no matter how great. Doug Miller played the intricate lines Ernie Watts arranges on his originals as if he were another horn player in the band. His soloing was more reminiscent of great bass playing, which was effectively chosen. When melodic form goes beyond the mundane, with octave lines between tenor and bass, the substantial laying down of a great walking solo is truly appreciated, and Miller knew when to reel it in for contrast and textural change. John Bishop quite simply put himself on the map with a running rhythmic commentary throughout each song that informed everyone that drumming is the fire of music, not the time keeper.

Ernie Watts may be one of the best Jazz composers of our time. There is a sensibility that he carries throughout his work clearly indicating his understanding of the necessity for accessibility. If you can't follow the melody what is the point? No matter how far his technique may take the listener, it is never so far away that you cannot find the melody referred to somewhere in the firestorm of fast licks, empowering charges of sound, and mournful



Photo by Michele Michaels

Ernie Watts

wails of passion that he, very calmly, displays. Except for the occasional punctuation of his left knee jumping up into the air, you'd swear Ernie doesn't ever break a sweat. The same cannot be said for the musicians charged with keeping up with him, and keeping up they did. Songs from Ernie's "Long Road Home" and "Unity" CD's were mixed with occasion standards to tantalize you with what you thought you knew, and inform you of how much more there is to hear.

Mr. Watts writes songs that stay with you long after they are performed. His "River of Light," while inferring the groove of "All Blues" in it's background rhythmic and harmonic structure, is pure Ernie Watts when it comes to the melody. Haunting, bittersweet, tender, and so moving you almost don't want the solo to start, as you'd like to hear the tune one more time to let it sink in. The result is great solos that finally give way to the song you wanted to hear again. The very best kind of tension; very sensuous, very Ernie. His tribute to Charlie Parker, "Bird's Idea," featured that running bass/tenor melody in octaves. And, while the blistering lines sounded like the song Bird just didn't quite get to, the use of Ernie's uncompromising tenor tone and speed were all the more indicative of his own "stuff." Bird's idea - Watts' playing. The biggest thing you notice about New Stories in situations like this barn-burner, is that the band is groovin'. Beyond a simple theme/solo/theme structure, you realize that everyone is improvising at once, and that each instrument is never going to be played exactly like that moment again. It is what all rhythm sections should strive for, and it is what very few rhythm sections have the audacity to attempt, let alone accomplish.

"The Long Road Home," title track of Watts' latest CD, was as satisfying a Jazz blues as you'll find. Much like Monk's renditions of the classic song form, there is much more here than simple changes, and there is much less showboating in solos than is run by lesser players. The solos were slow developing, charged, ethereal and fluid with the art of a very tight rhythm section going wherever the soloist may want to roam. The title track off of the "Unity" CD was as much humor as I have ever witnessed at a jazz concert. I have loved this song for the two years it has been out, and always request it when I see Ernie - I didn't expect this horse race tempoed blaster to be

(continued on page 10, column 1)



Photo by Michele Michaels

Marc Seales

(continued from page 9, column 2)

accompanied by a young gentleman seductively slow dancing with a young woman in front of the band. The incongruity was grand. Torches were lit everywhere, and why not - the music was hot. You had to ask the question, though, if Ernie had ever had that kind of response to perhaps his fastest, most wild song. It was a unification, no doubt.

Three standards that brought the house down on both evenings that I attended were arrived at by such different methods than anyone would expect, that no one saw the set-up coming. A scathingly brilliant tour-de-force rundown of what a naked alto saxophone can do (the band came in later) was followed by the most supple version of "Skylark" I have ever heard. The altissimo range was flawless making you forget that this is Ernie's second instrument. In another set the same solo horn arranging device was used on Tenor in such an out-of-context manner, that you never heard the harmonies coming. Until the laying out of the actual melody, there was no clue that you were about to be hit by "Round Midnight." It just doesn't get any better. A tribute to Coltrane's version of "Body and Soul" left Trane's arrangement in tact, and Watts' originality in place. There were solos and soli moments that were everyone's best. Marc Seales came through with so many colors that you had to wonder how large a palette one can balance on a grand piano. And the final night's final tune left Ernie in a dueling duet with drummer John Bishop that lasted at least fifteen minutes - riveting the crowd, and notifying the world of an initiation. Ernie bowed with his sax to the drummer; the audience jumped to its feet.

The most exceptional part of the evening was the joy of sharing between talented younger players, and the famous master. This was not an international star holding court for wannabe's. This was a truly great musician showing everyone what truly great means. That everyone on stage capable of greatness has the permission to accomplish it, and the impetus to do so. That everyone in the audience ready for the time of their life, regardless of preconceived notions of who should and shouldn't be great, is going to get the time of their life.

"New Stories" will be a new idea to all of the readers in the Midwest. This is a wonderful trio that has

suffered from the regionalism that effects much of what is marketed in music. Without the "big" record deal you'll never hear of the band unless you travel to that region. Kansas City, St. Louis, Omaha, Lincoln, Atlanta, Houston, Minneapolis, Seattle and even San Francisco are in much the same situation. So why should we care about musicians so far from home? Why should we support music we may never see? Ask Ernie Watts, and New Stories. Ask any of the blown away Seattlites who didn't know that their own native sons were so good. Ask any musician who has labored to achieve greatness in their own life regardless of any level of real acclaim. If the people who can and do, include the people who can and want to - everything is possible.

Blues corner By Rich Hoover

Now that the post Christmas, pre-tax season is upon us there continues to be blues all around. A new addition to the venues scene is acoustic blues at a couple of places in Lincoln:

M&N Sandwich Shop at 27th and Randolph and Buster's BBQ at 48th and Normal these places have begun to book acoustic artists; such as Sean Benjamin, C.A. Waller, and John Walker. They usually play Sat. or Sun. in the early evenings. A welcome addition to new blues in town.

Annette Murrell is doing a show at the Wagon Train / Loft on sweethearts day Feb. 14. Annette will have had her CD release party at the Ramada Inn downtown by the time you read this I'll be there and report later. Annette has always been a winner in the past, continued success would be good.

Sean Benjamin gave the gift of his talent and time on Christmas Eve to the folks at the Lincoln General Independence Center. As part of organizing to do this he was joined by Magic Slim, Annette Murrell, Vic Medely, The Heavenly Duo, and Tom Hansen. The audience grew to over 50 when joined by folks from three other treatment programs and two halfway houses. Good job, Sean!!

For the blues traveler there are festivals in the warmer climes: Feb. 22, Blues Blast- Phoenix, AZ; Mar. 14-15, Treasure Coast Blues Fest - Ft. Pierce, FL; Apr. 24- May 3, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Fest - New Orleans, LA.

Back to the local scene, the Zoo Bar is bringing some fine blues and roots acts. My picks are:

- 1-29 ----- Bob Margolin ----- "steady rollin"
- 1-30/31 --- Charlie Burton -- fmr Lincoln rocker
- 2-5 ----- Duke Robillard -- blues and jazzman
- 2-9 ----- Bill Kirchen -- fmr Cmdr Cody LPA
- 2-14 ----- Heartmurmurs -- Valentine blues
- 2-19 ----- Blue House -- CD release party
- 2-26 ----- Josh Smith -- young man's blues
- 3-3 ----- Jimmy Thackery -- young man's idol
- 3-13 ----- Studebaker John -- harmonica blues
- 3-27 ----- Jimmy Johnson -- Chicago legend
- 3-28 ----- Joe Kubek/B'nois King -- "smokin"

Blues on Disc

By Rich Hoover

DADDY SQUEEZE AND THE DOCTOR (DR. JOHN WALKER AND DAN NEWTON)

Too Sweet to Die
Prairie Dog Music

An excellent homegrown production by John Walker, guitar and vocals; and Dan Newton, accordion and vocals. Recorded at Studio Q here in Lincoln in mid-January '97 and acquired at the Zoo Bar CD release party, which was frightfully short of many expected audience members, this past Jan. 5.

Dan and John give a solid, straight ahead, and easy listening performance of the CD's cuts. There are a dozen tunes representing country blues and American folk with an inspired spiritual to close the CD. John penned four of the tunes and arranged the lines of Mary Oliver's poem 'the journey' as part of his contribution to the CD. The CD is well done and well received by myself.

A bit about John and Dan for perspective: John was born in 1940 and grew up in a string of small town Methodist parsonages in Oklahoma. His early influences were gospel, rural blues and western swing music. He started playing gigs in college then short tours of coffee-houses and the like between Oklahoma and L.A., one culminating in an inspirational evening opening for Brownie McGee and Sonny Terry in L.A. John has been playing ever since. He finished his Doctorate at Brown and began teaching in St. Louis for a couple of years then in Lincoln in '70. I first saw, heard, and met John in the late '70s at the Zoo Bar right around his recording release debut "Okie Boy." John has continued to produce recorded material, eight releases before "Too Sweet to Die", I've always enjoyed John's work along with many other fans he has gained over the years.

Dan is a born and raised Lincoln native until '87 when he moved to Minnesota. During the '70s and '80s Dan worked on many instruments, some uncommon, with a wide range of groups and individuals working his chops on guitar, piano, penny whistles, concertina, and accordion. Doing songs of celtic, American folk, blues, cajun, and western swing. Since his move to Minnesota, Dan has worked with Jumbo Ya-Ya, swamp sextet, and Cafe Accordion Orchestra. He has made several appearances on "Prairie Home Companion," done several soundtracks for Garrison Keillor's talking books, various radio and TV commercials, and most recently produced two albums for Target stores *Lifescape* series. Dan has recorded with other artists Prudence Johnson, Bone-Tones, Dave Jarvi, Anne Reed, and Dakota Dave Hull. Dan is a full time musician performing in area nursing homes during the day and clubs, dances, coffee shops, and concerts at night. Dan also teaches accordion and has a book of original tunes for accordion to be released through Mel Bay Productions this year.

It's easy for me to see, and hear that these

gentlemen "Daddy Squeeze and the Doctor" are talented musical artists. I feel fortunate that this is so close to home.

For info on this CD:

Prairie Dog Music
3313 North 49th St.
Lincoln NE 68504
(402)466-7254

GUITAR SLIM (ALEX SEWARD) JELLY BELLY (LOUIS HAYES)

"Carolina Blues" New York 1944
Arhoolie

Top notch restoration and reissue of acoustic blues, East Coast style. New York was the natural magnet for East Coast and southeastern states rural migration for work at the factories and shipyards, especially during and after WWII. Alex Seward was born in Newport News, VA. on March 16, 1901. He began playing as a teenager, and at 21 moved to New York where he heard, met, and followed Lonnie Johnson. In the later '20s Alex heard and was impressed with Blind Lemon Jefferson. Alex had been playing with Louis Hayes for a couple of years on street corners and house parties and such when these records were made in 1944. All these songs were written by Alex and/or Louis during this time.

Louis Hayes was born in Asheville, NC around 1912. He met and began playing with Alex in 1944. They started writing, recording, and selling these records wherever they played. Little more is known about Hayes. Many of the recordings were released on their own True Blue label. They also recorded material for the Apollo and Decca labels.

Alex met Sonny Terry in 1945 when they got together and played and recorded two 10" LPs for Electra. Later, in 1965, Alex also recorded an album for Prestige. Hedied on May 11, 1972.

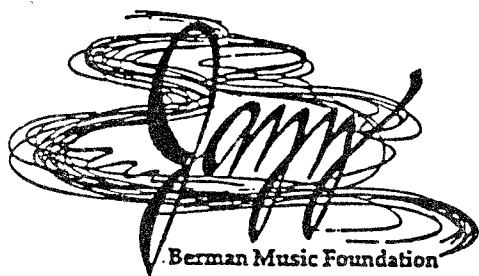
This CD release is perfect for the acoustic student because of the restoration of the clarity. The casual listener will appreciate the softer feel of the East Coast style. And for the collector, the reissue of 15 tunes not released since 1944 should be stimulating.

Pretext Quartet at Kimball March 10

By Dave Hughes

Newly appointed UNL assistant professor of trumpet, Darryl White will be doing a faculty recital on March 10 at Kimball Recital Hall. White will perform classical works in the first half of the program, but will be joined by Denver's Pretext Quartet for some jazz in the program's second half. Admission is free.

The quartet features White on trumpet, Jeff Jenkins on piano, Matt Houston on percussion, and Artie Moore on bass.



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