

NJO 's Music Director Ed Love plays a tenor sax solo

# NJO'S 1st Prairie Jazz Fest a resounding success

By Tom Ineck

Twenty years in the making, the first annual Prairie Jazz Fest drew some 750 people to Pinewood Bowl on June 23, including nearly 40 musicians who took the stage to celebrate the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra's first two decades.

With a reporter and a photographer on the scene, the Berman Music Foundation gave the historic event exclusive coverage, as none of the area's major news organizations chose to attend.

Beginning at 5 p.m., an assortment of small jazz ensembles set the evening's informal mood, first with a group of polished veterans that included trumpeter Dennis Schneider, saxophonist Orville Voss, bassist Rusty White and drummer Wardell Smith. Pianist Tom Harvill, the youngest player of the group, easily bridged the generation gap and proved the agelessness of jazz.

Hornithology was up next. An imaginative horn-heavy octet with the muscle and versatility of a big band, it featured the saxophones of Scott Vicroy and Andrew Vogt, the trombone of Dutch Ode and the trumpet of L.J. McCormick, backed by the outstanding rhythm section of Tom Larson, piano; Peter Bouffard, guitar; White, bass; and Todd Smith, drums. Original arrangements of "Caravan," "Giant Steps," "Bright Mississippi" and "Yardbird Suite" showcased their ability to broaden and deepen familiar melody lines with lush brass harmonies.

Pianist-composer Rex Cadwallader, who has contributed many original tunes and arrangements to the NJO songbook over the years, came all the way from his Connecticut home to join the fun, playing piano in a small group that also featured reed players Barry McVinney of Arkansas, Mark Benson of Bellevue and Bill Wimmer,

musical renegade and a longtime Lincoln favorite.

The rhythm section brought together bassist Andy Hall and drummers Greg Ahl and JaMa Ahmose, in a very rhythmic set that included bebop standards by Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk and Charlie Parker.

Cadwallader wasn't the only NJO alumnus who traveled hundreds of miles to share the stage with his former colleagues. Saxophonist Jeff Newell, who now lives in New York City, enlivened the proceedings in a small-combo setting that also featured trombonist Ken Hoyne of San Diego and saxophonist Tom Hartig of Omaha. With Harvill, Hall and Ahmose creating the solid rhythmic base, they played imaginative renditions of "Perdido" and "Stella By Starlight" before inviting singer Annette Murrell to the stage for the original "Rocky Mountain Blues" and the standard "All of Me."

That marked the end of the first half of the show, and sent audience members looking for refreshments and a stretch of the legs before the current NJO took the stage.

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# The Prez Sez ...

Dear Readers,

Rolling right along here. This super staff is busy, busy, busy./ Two weeks ago I was wondering what I was going to report to you as we await such events as the KC Jazz & Blues Fest, July Jamm, and the upcoming winter blockbuster at the Lied with McBride and Lovano...now dig this.

FLASH #1: Just became a happening. Next weekend, myself, accompanied by Ms. Pamela Davis of San Francisco, will be covering the world premiere of the new Robert Altman film, "Kansas City." A two day event featuring private dinner and brunch at two separate KC homes with the stars plus three scheduled jazz jams including the flick. Director Altman and actor Harry Belafonte will be in attendance plus who knows who'll show up to play. LA and NY cats to jam with the KC players? Well, stay tuned, and you'll read all about it in the September issue of JAZZ.

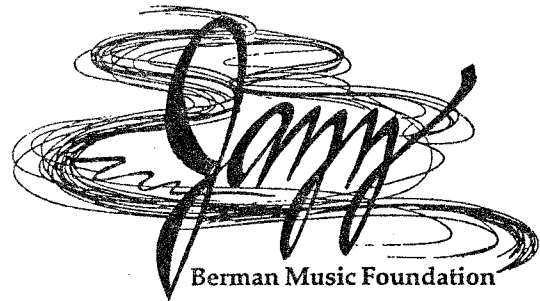
FLASH #2: 99% a reality...proposal sent and accepted...contracts pending...I'm betting it'll fly. When: October 30, 1996. Where: Westbrook Recital Hall on the UNL campus (thanks to the UNL School of Music, especially Dave Sharp). Event: Vocalist Kevin Mahogany backed by the Kenny Barron Trio (Ray Drummond and Ben Riley round out the group). We're keeping our fingers crossed on this one. Don't forget, you read it here first!

FLASH #3: Recently, rather on a whim, Lincoln reed whiz Andrew Vogt submitted two performances to the Cognac Hennessy National Jazz Contest. One original, "Easy Life, Easy," and the standard, "It Might AS Well Be Spring." Out of ninety submitted, six were chosen. Yup, one of them was Andrew's. So, along with pianist John Carlini and drummer Jason Varga off to Loveland, Colo., they go, meeting up with Andrew's brother Adam, who will play bass, to compete in this contest. We wish them the very best of luck and will report the outcome to you next issue.

I'm running out of time and space, so gotta close now.

Stay Cool,

Butch Berman



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**Trustee:** Butch Berman

**Consultants:** Dave Hughes, Nancy Marshall, Andrew Rowan, and Wade Wright

## Corrections

The picture of the **Dave Stryker Quintet** on page 4 of the July issue also includes **Dave Sharp**.

The article about **Jay McShann's** recent Brownville appearance on page 7 incorrectly identifies **Terry Hughs** as the bassist and **Gerald Spaits** as the drummer. Actually, Hughs is the drummer and Spaits is the bassist. The accompanying picture also misidentified the musicians. Spaits is on the left and Hughs is on the right.

We apologize for any errors in the last issue. If you see any errors in this issue of **JAZZ** please let us know.

# Prairie Jazz Fest from p. 1



*Saxophonist Jeff Newell, bassist Andy Hall, trombonist Ken Hoyne, & saxophonist Tom Hartig at Pinewood Bowl*

The NJO was in a nostalgic mood, playing a few tunes from the past, but it also showcased its latest release, simply called "Vol. V"

"The End of A Love Affair" led into Peter Bouffard's expert arrangement of "Danny Boy," and the upbeat "Carnival."

From the NJO's first recording (when the outfit still was known as the Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra) came the title track, "Prom Night in Center City," a Tom Larson composition that featured a beautiful Hall bass solo and a small army of saxophonists, including Hartig, Newell, Vicroy, McVinney, Benson, NJO music director Ed Love, Dave Sharp, Tom Clifton, Jon Hischke and Mike Murphy.

Sharp's festive "New Samba" featured a soprano sax solo by the composer and a flute solo by Love.

The most poignant moment of the entire evening was the entrance of trumpeter John Tavlin to center stage, where he gave a breathtaking reading of the classic ballad "There Is No Greater Love." Tavlin, an early member and longtime patron of the NJO, has been unable to play for several years due to a respiratory illness, but what he lacked in power and technique he more than made up with pure heart and soul.

Tavlin's support for the NJO was recognized with a special award presented during the concert.

Trombonist Ken Hoyne, having come all the way from San Diego, was given the spotlight on "A Time For Love." Mark Benson's composition "One More Time" got the royal treatment from trumpeter Brian Grasmick, Benson on alto sax and Dutch Ode on trombone.

Annette Murrell returned to the stage for a stunning rendition of the swaggering blues number "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?," which is also on the new NJO release. Jeff Newell turned in a lovely solo on the ballad "Infant Eyes" before Cadwallader led the band out with his bluesy composition "SOL," featuring solos Jon Hischke on tenor sax and Jeff Newell on alto.

According to NJO board members Bob Buethe and Roger Larson, the city parks department, food

vendors, musicians and festival-goers couldn't have been more pleased with the results, making it almost certain to be an annual event.

Much of that success can be attributed to the 60 volunteers who worked at the site to make everything run smoothly. NJO staff had been working for months before the jazz fest to contact NJO alumni who seemingly had scattered to the far corners of the earth.

The Berman Music Foundation newsletter will keep you posted as the second annual Prairie Jazz Fest begins to take shape.



*The Jeff Newell Quartet at Sheldon*

## Jazz in June finale

By Tom Ineck

Saxophonist Jeff Newell brought Jazz in June to a brilliant close with a combination of humor and expert musicianship.

Newell, who grew up in Bennington and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music, spent a decade struggling for jazz gigs in Chicago before moving to New York City, where he still struggles for work among the greatest players in the world.

Newell's composing and arranging skills alone elevate him far above those who are merely great instrumentalists. And, his playing bears the stamp of individuality that jazz musicians usually strive for all their lives.

For Jazz in June, Newell was joined by keyboardist Steve Million of Chicago, plus Lincoln's own Andy Hall on bass and drummer Chris Varga, now living and studying in the Windy City.

A New Orleans street beat launched the quartet on a rousing rendition of Lil Hardin's "Struttin' with Some Barbecue," with Newell playing the Louis Armstrong trumpet solo on alto sax. Horace Silver's easy swinging "Strollin'" had Newell sneaking up on the melody with oblique phrases and an edgy tone.

"Dex Mex," by drummer Victor Lewis of Omaha had one former Nebraskan performing the work of another former Nebraskan. Million's Monk-inspired arrangement of "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" was peppered with

Newell's allusions to familiar melodies. Newell's "Puffs" was based on the ever-popular "Cherokee."

Again, the weather on June 25 was ideal for the outdoor concert, making this season of jazz performances in the Sheldon Memorial Sculpture Garden the most successful yet.

## KC Blues & Jazz Fest a musical grab bag

By Tom Ineck

By the time fellow reporter and photographer Rich Hoover and I reached the site of the 1996 Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival on Saturday afternoon, the music was in full swing.

After picking up our press credentials, we parted company and headed for our respective assignments -- Rich covering the blues stage and yours truly covering the jazz stage. Up for grabs was the Heritage tent stage, midway between the two main stages, where an assortment of music, beat poetry and discussions were scheduled.

The T.S. Monk sextet dominated the jazz stage with its muscular brand of hard bop, even taking the ballad "Round Midnight" at a mid-tempo pace that quickly escalated when alto saxophonist Bobby Porcelli took off on an incredible solo that could have been called "The Parker Variations." Trumpeter Don Sickler and tenor saxophonist Don Braden took less virtuosic solos, but the bass work of young Gary Wang was exceptional.

Monk, the drummer son of the legendary Thelonious Sphere Monk, continues to lead one of the finest aggregations in jazz today, despite a couple of personnel changes and his own limitations on drums. Pianist Ronnie Mathews, Porcelli, Sickler and Braden are all in the top echelon of players on their respective instruments.

After a soulful tenor sax opener, Stanley Turrentine launched into a burning, up tempo rendition of John Coltrane's "Impressions." Guitarist Henry Johnson, in the position held for nine years by Omaha native Dave Stryker, blended perfectly with Turrentine's bluesy sound, drawing on Wes Montgomery and George Benson for some streamlined single-note runs and octave chordings.

With longtime band member Kai Akagi on keyboards, Gary Wang on bass (subbing for Charles Fambrough, who was unable to make it), and drummer Ernie Adams, Turrentine was just getting warmed up when an ugly storm front moved in, sending the temperature down and the wind up.

Sound and lighting systems were shut down, and Turrentine, only half joking, asked audience members to bow their heads in prayer that the storm would soon pass.

It didn't. By the time performances resumed nearly two hours later, almost everyone had fled the drenching downpour, which left several inches of rain.

Festival-goers already had been given a scare Friday evening, when a brief but threatening thunder shower sent many people home early and kept others from venturing out to Penn Valley Park at all. The weather accounts for the fact that attendance was down to just 90,000 this year, compared with 130,000 for the three-day event last year.

But those of us who ventured back to the festival on Sunday were rewarded with overcast skies, moderate temperatures and an entire day of worry-free music.

One of the highlights was the special appearance of saxophonist Eric Marienthal (formerly of the Chick Corea band) as guest soloist with the Boulevard Big Band, sort of KC's version of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra. Marienthal, who already has recorded a CD with the big band, seemed right at home in the five-man reed section, blowing along with the others on several original compositions by band members, including "Attack of the Tenor Titans," "Another Anchovy," "Sky Dance," and "The Cheese That Time Forgot," a mid-tempo swinger in the Count Basie tradition.

Marienthal showed great versatility and virtuosity on several standards, playing tenor sax on "The Meaning of the Blues," soprano and alto saxes on an up tempo version of "St. Thomas," and alto on a blazing-fast "Cherokee." It was the ballad "In Your Tender Care" that was a one-man showcase for his talents, including the lead melody line, an extended solo and an extraordinary cadenza.



*Guest soloist Eric Marienthal plays alto sax*

Denver guitarist Jerry Hahn, little known since his self-imposed sabbatical more than 20 years ago to raise a family and teach in Wichita, Kansas, performed in the Heritage tent Sunday evening, almost two hours after he was scheduled to appear. It was well worth the wait, with Hahn showing his incredible technique and his unique blend of blues, country and jazz licks.

Together with guitarists Tom Demasters (a former Hahn student) and Phil Miner (a Demasters student), Hahn led three generations of guitarists through a set of standards that included "All the Things You Are" and "Blue Monk." With only bass and drums backing him up, Hahn played "My Funny Valentine," "Stolen Moments" and two selections from his first recording in more than two

decades, "Time Changes."

Scheduling snafus kept the Heritage stage running late all day. Regretfully, I was forced to abandon the tent to catch Bob James on the main stage. I had wanted to hear more of pianist Red Richards and violinist Claude "Fiddler" Williams in a duet setting. I did hear Williams tear into an upbeat version of "Deed I Do," throwing caution to the wind and turning in a swinging solo.

James, on the heels of his latest release, "Straight Up," is fronting an acoustic trio for the first time in more than 30 years, and it was a revelation. No virtuoso jazz pianist, James is a superb, melodic composer and a sensitive player.

The trio tackled the funky Horace Silver number "The Jody Grind," then switched gears to play Pat Metheny's "James," a tribute to folksinger-songwriter James Taylor. The set also included the new James composition "Ambrosia," the ballad "Lost April," an updated version of the James fusion favorite "Nightcrawler," a mid-tempo take on "On Green Dolphin Street," and a movement from James' "Grand Canyon Suite."

## Jazz on disc By Tom Ineck

*Recordings rated \* to \*\*\*\*\**

### **KARRIN ALLYSON, Collage, Concord Jazz. \*\*\*\***

With her fourth release on Concord Records, Kansas City singer Karrin Allyson takes a bold, and only partially successful, leap into pop music, covering tunes by Billy Joel, Lennon and McCartney and Bonnie Raitt, in addition to more traditional jazz compositions by Cole Porter, Clifford Brown, Thelonious Monk and Ray Noble.



The results are mixed. Allyson's jazz talents are simply wasted on "Here, There and Everywhere," which is a beautiful pop ballad, but the Beatles just couldn't swing. On Raitt's "Give It Up or Let Me Go," she shows her blues chops, but it is the jazz tunes like the boppish "It Could Happen to You," the swinging "Autumn Leaves," "All of You," complete with a scat vocal, the breezy "Joy Spring" and the flag-waving "Cherokee" that make this CD most listenable.

And then there are the quirky, offbeat numbers like bassist Jay Leonhart's humorous "Robert Frost," a tune that Allyson has been performing for a couple of

years, and the Portuguese-language "Faltando Um Pedaco," featuring a chorus of 17 voices, including just about everyone who was in the studio at the time -- musicians, spouses, significant others and writer Frank Conroy, who penned the liner notes.

The best thing about "Collage" is the presence of Kansas City's finest jazz instrumentalists, including saxophonist Kim Park, bassist Bob Bowman, pianist Paul Smith and guitarists Rod Fleeman and Danny Embrey.

## Jazz notes By Tom Ineck

In the current 10th anniversary issue of JAM, the Jazz Ambassadors Magazine, trumpeter Mike Metheny has taken an in-depth look at the state of the jazz art in Kansas City.

Most of the news is good and most of the commentators on the subject are upbeat, though some are cautiously optimistic about the future of jazz in a city that virtually reeks of history. That history has long been ignored by city fathers and the general public alike, and live jazz may remain an endangered species subject to the whims of fashion.

Because Lincoln and Omaha share much of the history of Midwest "territory" jazz bands that used Kansas City as a hub for their travels in the 1920's and 1930's, an examination of Kansas City jazz in the '90's is pertinent even here.

So, did K.C. jazz end when Count Basie and Charlie "Bird" Parker left town and mayor Tom Pendergast was imprisoned on tax charges in the late 1930's? Or, are these the good old days, signaling a renaissance of jazz activity nationwide?

According to Metheny, nearly 30 different venues now feature live jazz in the Kansas City area. Nationally known jazz artists perform regularly at local festivals, workshops and selected clubs, and area musicians sometimes are booked months in advance. There also is evidence that the increase in activity has actually improved the playing of local musicians.

Now getting some of the respect that they deserve are such Kansas City jazz artists as singers Karrin Allyson, Kevin Mahogany and Angela Hagenbach, pianist Joe Cartwright and saxophonist Kim Park.

While most musicians agree that gigs are more plentiful, some complain that the pay remains lousy and that too much emphasis is placed on preserving history without nurturing the current artistic climate.

The Kansas City jazz scene "tends to run in five-year cycles, and the latest cycle peaked out a couple of years ago," trumpeter Stan Kessler says. "Things are now on a downward swing."

Club owners differ on the subject. Steve Pearce of The Point complains that patrons are unwilling to pay a cover charge for jazz and that the *Kansas City Star* does not support the music editorially. On the other hand, Ron Schoonover of The Phoenix Piano Bar & Grill says "jazz in

Kansas City right now is about as healthy as it can get."

Like many other club owners, Joe Wilcox of The Club at Plaza III hopes the upcoming Robert Altman film "Kansas City" will help strengthen the city's jazz profile.

One of Allyson's pet peeves is noisy patrons and insensitive club owners.

"I try to work in places that have as much consideration for the musicians as they do for their customers," she says. Hear! Hear!

## SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE

By Russ Dantzer

Claude "Fiddler" Williams was reunited with former Kansas City drummer Jimmy Lovelace for two weeks of playing Michael's Pub in New York during March and April. The quartet was filled out by Earl May, the bassist Claude last recorded with, and pianist Ted Rosenthal, an accomplished Concord recording artist in his own right. The band sounded great, but this was one of the least comfortable jazz rooms in New York. The club survived, in part, because Woody Allen was joining the traditional jazz band that played there every Monday night when he was in town, and that put it on the tourist map. The place closed permanently about one month after "Fiddler's" last night there.

Michael's overly restrained atmosphere left me hoping to find additional ways to enjoy Claude's music. He wisely took his fiddle to Benny Powell to be there with his trombone. Some of the best moments of the two week visit occurred when Claude stood in between "Doc's" trumpet and Benny's trombone. If you closed your eyes, you might have thought the "horn" in the middle was a rich toned tenor saxophone instead of a fiddle. This "horn" section delivered full bodied, swinging takes on "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," and "World On A String." A bit later Kendra Shank added a gorgeous vocal rendition of "The Man I Love." That was almost the best time I had with Claude during those two weeks.

As it turned out, the greatest performances of "Fiddler's" stay were for the smallest of audiences. Claude has been teaching swing violin master classes in his free time in New York for years. This visit included four different students, three of whom had something in common. Those three were all classically trained, but really wanted to know how to swing. They had come to the right person.

The formula works each time. The student arrives with a violin and a tape recorder, so that they can review their one-of-a-kind lesson as many times as desired later. This is not about a lot of talking or reading - - the student gets out the violin and demonstrates to Claude what they do and do not have. Claude answers with his violin, slowing down or dissecting his moves as needed to be sure the student can learn. It doesn't sound possible, but I have seen students who never could swing on fiddle learn

to do so in one session with the Master. Some of the violin duets I've heard toward the end of a lesson were astounding!

*Claude "Fiddler" Williams next visits Lincoln to play the Zoo Bar August 9th and 10th.*

## JAZZ ON THE RADIO

By Dave Hughes

**KZUM Community Radio** at 89.3 FM in Lincoln offers a wide variety of jazz programs every weekday afternoon from about 12:30 until 4 pm, and almost every weekday evening from 8:30 until 10 pm, plus one other times during the week. For more information, or to receive a free copy of their program guide **Sound Alternatives**, call 474-5086. KZUM was one of the co-sponsors of the July Jamm again this year.

**Nebraska Public Radio** at 90.9 FM in Lincoln, and at other frequencies around the state, offers two nights of jazz each week. On Friday night, **Prime Time Jazz** with Bill Watts, comes your way from 8-10 pm. Then, on Saturday nights Don Gill starts off another night of jazz with the sounds of the big bands on **Big Band Spotlight** at 8 pm. That's followed by two **National Public Radio** programs, **Jazzset** at 9 pm, hosted by Branford Marsalis, and **Piano Jazz**, hosted by Marian McPartland, at 10 pm.

### JAZZSET in August

- 8-03 Milt Jackson Quartet at Grant's Tomb
- 8-10 Branford and Ellis Marsalis at Jordan Hall
- 8-17 Count Basie Revisited at Carnegie Hall
- 8-24 Big Band Bird at the Folly Theater
- 8-31 Highlights from the 1995 Jazz Marathon in Holland

### PIANO JAZZ in August

- 8-03 Marcus Roberts, piano
- 8-10 Gerry Mulligan, baritone sax
- 8-17 Jane Jarvis, piano
- 8-24 Lionel Hampton, vibes and piano
- 8-31 Johnny Costa, piano

For more information, or for a free copy of NPRN's program guide, **Members Only**, call the studio line at 472-2200, or 1-800-290-6850.

**KRNU** at 90.3 FM in Lincoln, as one jazz show on Friday nights from 8-10 pm entitled **Bohemia After Dark**, hosted by Liz Chadwick. You can reach her at the station during those hours at 472-5768.

## JAZZ IN THE VENUES

By Dave Hughes

The **Joslyn Art Museum** in Omaha continues it

"Jazz on the Green" concert series in August at 7 pm on Thursday nights. The 12th edition of the series actually began in July with Kansas City singer **Angela Hagenbach** July 11th, **The Omaha Big Band** July 18th, and the "**Whad'Ya Know?**" Band on July 25th.

The series continues with **Ida McBeth** from Kansas City on August 1st, **Luigi Inc.** on August 8th, and **Dave Stryker** on August 15th.

The free two hour concerts will be on the museum's east lawn, with refreshments and light picnic food on sale. The museum gallery will be open and free to the public as well until after intermission.

Jazz continues on Sunday nights at 6 pm at **The Oven** at 201 N. 8th in Lincoln. You can hear the duos of **Nancy Marshall and Steve Hanson** on August 4, **Peter Bouffard and John Carlini** on August 11, **Dave Sharp and Andy Hall** on August 18, and **Dennis Taylor and Dave Novak** on August 25.

The sounds of the big bands can be heard and danced to at the **Millard American Legion Building** at 139th and L Streets in Omaha every Tuesday from 8-11 pm, with complimentary ballroom dance instruction from 7-8 pm. You can hear Jimmy B on August 6, Sounds of the Big Band on August 13, Greg Spevak on August 20, and Lonny Lynn on August 27. For more information, call 449-1793.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FOR AHMOSE NEEDED

Friends of the family of "**JaMa Kenyatta**" **Ahmoose**, formerly known as **Jeffrey Johnson**, are seeking help for the family because Ahmoose has been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.

Ahmoose, 46, is a musician locally known for his African drum playing. He also played regularly at Christ Temple Mission Church, has appeared in local entertainment venues, as well as provide presentations on black culture for the Lincoln Public Schools and has conducted the Full Moon Drumming at the Prairie Peace Park.

Physicians have determined the form of cancer to be esthesia neuroblastoma, a rare form of cancer of which only one thousand other cases are recorded. Ahmoose is currently undergoing radiation treatment and then will receive additional chemotherapy treatments in an effort to shrink the tumor.

The J. Johnson/Ahmoose Cancer Benefit Foundation was recently established to help the family defray medical expenses. This foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, and any gifts are tax deductible. You may send contributions to:

**The J. Johnson /Ahmoose Benefit Account**

**C/O Cornhusker Bank  
PO Box 80009  
Lincoln, NE 68501**

There are over eight million cancer survivors in America today. Cancer survivorship can be a catalyst for spiritual awakening, providing life with depth and poignancy. JaMa's life has recently been enriched by the blessed birth of his new son, JaMa, Jr., born in the midst of uncertainties about his future. Through your generosity, you can help JaMa build a financial foundation that will help sustain him through the long road ahead to his recovery.

## TEN SORTA JAZZY QUESTIONS

By Butch Berman

*This month, the questions were posed to saxophonist Andrew Vogt. Vogt, a UNL student, has performed with The Trillions, and was recently named one of the winners of Nebraska Public Radio's Young Musician Contest.*



*Andrew Vogt with Greg Abate*

Q: I know your younger brother Adam plays bass and guitar. Did you as siblings have a jazzy environment to grow up in?

A: While I was growing up in the Vogt family, we always had music playing during dinner. "Who's going to pick the dinner music?," was as common a question as "What are we eating?" My dad has a lot of great old jazz records. Kenton, Brubeck, and Mulligan make up a lot of the collection as well as guys like Oscar Peterson and Cannonball Adderly. My parents also took us to an occasional opera. But, I mostly listened to the Beach Boys and the Electric Light Orchestra.

Q: Did you choose sax as your first instrument?

A: The soundtrack to the film "Breakfast At Tiffany's" with music by Henry Mancini was where I probably first really got into the saxophone. It hooked me.

Q: Besides occasionally gigging with you in the Hob Nobs, I enjoy hearing you with your all saxophone group, Group

Sax. Do you have to change your mindset when you play without a rhythm section?

A: Group Sax has been a real treat to play in. Ed Love, Dave Sharp, and Scott Vicroy are really big influences on me because they are practically the only saxophonists that I hear live when I was in junior and senior high school. It's just us four saxophones in the group, so we all really have to feel the pulse of the tune to pull it off. Listening is really vital. To me, it's energetic, challenging, and a lot of fun. There are a lot of opportunities to stretch out and improvise. I've also written a few pieces for the group.

Q: You work with a wide variety of big bands. Regardless of talent, are these gigs ever fun and challenging, or just strictly to help pay the bills?

A: Many musicians call the less hip, less swinging big bands that still exist "Mickey Bands." A lot of times this sort of work is the only kind that is available, so good players often play these gigs. It makes it more enjoyable when good players do these gigs. In this day and age, it's hard to keep any band going, so I respect and appreciate the efforts of band leaders, regardless of how "hip" the book is. I do think, though, that an occasional eight bar solo for the players that want them, would keep the band happier and sounding better. The dancers wouldn't even trip up on their foxtrots.

Q: Can you dance?

A: Yup, (but) not with you. Nothing personal.

Q: It's great that you employ the clarinet at your performances. Who's the main "licorice stick man" for your taste and inspiration?

A: I started playing clarinet four years ago. I currently play in the Trillions with John Carlini, Mark Hinrichs, and on our louder gigs, Terence Pogge on bass and tuba. We play a lot of Klezmer/Turkish/polka-ish music, as well as jazz in that group, so it's fun to mix the clarinet up in that. There are a lot of great clarinetists that I've listened to on (some) recordings. I really like Art Pepper's jagged, crying style. Eddie Daniels is technically amazing. I also really dig the Bulgarian clarinetist, Ivo Papasov.

Q: And for the sax?

A: There are so many great saxophone players. Some of those that have been my personal favorites are Art Pepper, Richie Cole, Cannonball Adderly, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, and Bird, of course.

Q: We went to Jamey Aebersold's Jazz Camp together, and you also received a private lesson from (saxophonist) Greg Abate recently. Just curious, how do you compare the week at camp against the one-on-one lesson?

A: The Jamey Aebersold jazz workshop last summer that you and I went to was great because I got to listen to so many great musicians. I learned a lot from just one week with people like David Baker and Jerry Coker (just walking) around. These guys are reservoirs of knowledge. Greg

Abate was real relaxed and friendly. He had a lot of useful things to say when I had that lesson with him. When he plays, he has a real keen sense of the shapes of his phrases, it seems. Both of these experiences were a lot of fun and very inspiring.

Q: What do you think you'd be doing now if you weren't blessed with the gift of music?

A: My friend John Carlini once lived out on an avocado farm. Maybe I'd do that.

Q: What is your all time favorite jazz standard to hear and or play?

A: There are so many great standards out there that this is hard to answer. There seems to always be new Monk tunes popping up that I've never heard. I think, though, that I would have to say "Stella by Starlight" is my favorite. An improviser can really sink their teeth into that one. It's a haunting, plaintive tune. The melody notes land on interesting parts of the chords.

*Last month, one of the ten questions asked of bassist Andy Hall was left out. Here is that question that Butch Berman asked and the answer that Hall gave.*

Q: Have you ever played a six stringed guitar?

A: No, I have never been a guitar player.

## DISCORAMA

By Butch Berman

THE MICHAEL WOLF TRIO, 2 AM, Cabana Boy/WAP Records.

I don't necessarily rate all the music I take in with a mental five star treatment. It's usually "OK," or occasionally "great," and even sometimes "This sucks!" However, once in a while ever so rarely, a true gem emerges. Hence "2 AM."

I was captivated from the first note, and not let down at all throughout this thrilling piano trio. It feels so live, you could almost be catching the late set at Bradley's, at 2 am.

On paper, you can't go wrong. Mr. Wolff, who used to be an arranger for Nancy Wilson, the musical director for Arsenio Hall's late night talk show, and has worked with the likes of Cal Tjader and Cannonball Adderly, simply shines on all cuts. Backed by two stellar rhythm sections consisting of Christian McBride and Tony Williams on most selections, and John Williams and Terri Lynn Carrington on the others, this CD simply sparkles! Production and sound quality are first rate. The up tempo tunes are taut and propelling, while the ballads manage to smoke and soothe simultaneously.

If you're looking for a totally unpredictable stylist to latch on to, you can't go wrong with The Michael Wolff Trio's "2 AM."



# KC BLUES & JAZZ FEST PICTORIAL

By Rich Hoover



*Rev. Al Green had the crowd on its feet from start to finish*



*Rev. Al Green with some roses for the lovelier fans*



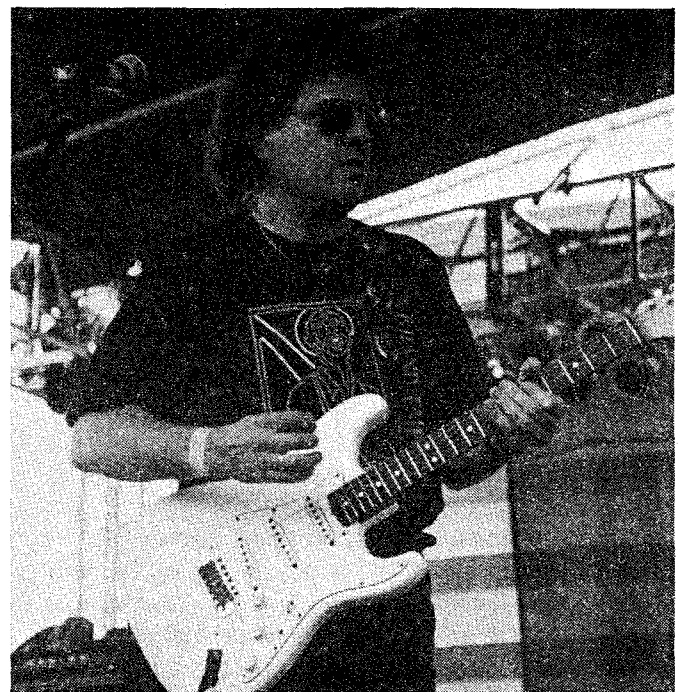
*Taj Mahal 's set during the day's only sunshine made a "sweatpopper" for everyone*



*"Cotton Candy" Washington at Blaney's Saturday night*



*Roomful of Blues put on a great show, then the rain came*



*Rudy Rotta, the Italian blues star, was havin' a ball with his turn on stage*

# BLUES CORNER

By Rich Hoover

With July being one of the peak months for music festivals I've been "busy with the blues." July started with a couple of nights at the Zoo Bar with Magic Slim and the Teardrops during their week long gig. Slim is still throwin' out that roarin' brand of Chicago blues that has drawn so many fans over the years. With Jake 'the snake' Dawson the new cog at the rythum guitar spot there is a different sound from John's but still deep in the Chicago genre.

Next, a short ride to Sioux City for this year's version of Saturday in the Park. Arriving at Grandview Park in time to catch the last half of Coco Montoya, there was a good crowd already in a party mood. Following Motoya, was Little Brian and the Zydeco Travelers. They did a fun show, with my favorite part being their Hip Hop Zydeco version of "Hooked, Hogtied and Collared." Up next, was a solo act by Taj Mahal, doing a couple of songs on the electronic keyboard followed by several more on a steel bodied National guitar. Taj did a solid, crowd interactive show, with one of my the favorite parts being a tune off his latest CD release, "Big Legged Women Are Back in Style." Taj was followed by Latin Jazz artist Tito Puente, whose show got folks jumpin' all over the festival area. I left the party before the Meters started, but the 4 hour round trip was well worth the 6 hours of good music, food and festival atmosphere.

The next week there were a couple of great acts at the Zoo Bar, with a mid-week first time visit from the Russell Jackson Band. They put down a fine show and will probably be back, based on their first showing. For a change of pace, it as the fun-lovin' sounds of Dave and Deke combo followed by Big Sandy and the Fly-rite Boys, which gave the Zoo Bar a full-flavored night of country-swing-western-hillbilly music. Then it was back to the Texas power blues of the Tracy Conover Trio at the Zoo Bar before I was off to the Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival.

I could only catch the Saturday and Sunday portions of the three day show, and even though it rained quite vigorously about two hours after I first arrived on Saturday, I did manage to catch a rousing set from Roomful of Blues before the storm chased Tom Ineck and myself to the club scene. We went to Blaney's where Mem Shannon and Cotton Candy Washington were alternating sets till the wee wee hours.

Sunday, a new day's dawn, we went back to the Penn Valley Park festival grounds somewhere around one o'clock. I was greeted by a set of great down-home blues from harpist-vocalist Little Hatch and his three piece band, followed by an uptown blues set by Marva Whitney and company, then Italian blues star Rudy Rotta and his band, who plays a style and sound reminiscent of Albert Collins, kept the crowd up and rollin. Next on the agenda was Taj Mahal, who made his K.C. set similar, but not identical to, the set in Sioux City. Taj's solo act was a real crowd pleaser, again similar to to his reception in Sioux City. By the time

the Rev. Al Green came on to do his show with a full horn section, female back-up vocalists, male back-up vocalists and a six piece band, the crowd was standing from beginning to end. It was a twilight show to remember. As a bonus treat, the Heritage Stage, which was running behind schedule had Mem Shannon and his band, The Membership, rolling right along with his blend of New Orleans Blues-Funk, groovin' right into the night.

At the time of this writing, it is time for July Jamm right here in beautiful downtown Lincoln. It's another gem dandy three day fest easily compared to K.C., Sioux City, or any other festival within five hundred miles.

I've been havin' my fun this summer, I hope you can say the same!



*Mem Shannon in Kansas City*

## UPCOMING LOCAL BLUES EVENTS

The upcoming schedule from the Zoo Bar has plenty of variety with several picks from me. First, it's Aug. 5 with Anson Funderburgh, featuring harpist Sam Myers. They have been putting on fine traditional blues shows for years.

Next, on Aug. 6-7, 16 yr. old Josh Smith will wow ya' with his blues stylings backed up by the Rhino Cats. The fun never stops this week 'cause on Aug. 8 it's Roomful of Blues and on Aug. 9-10 it's blues-swing-jazz legend Claude "Fiddler" Williams, a don't miss in my book.

Local blues heavyweight Baby Jason and the Spankers have got four nights on the upcoming calendar. They, along with several other local blues band will be sharpening their chops for all to see. A couple more hot spots in the Zoo calander are Tab Benoit on Aug. 15 and Chris Duarte on Aug. 18. And, for them zydeco blues, it's Terrance Simien and the Mallet Playboys on Sept. 11th.

A new consortium of blues vets has risen in the form of Tango Ray and the Tonics, a blues-based group with Jim Cidlik-vocals and keys, Bill Dye-guitar and pedal steel, Jeff Boehmer-guitar, Larry Boehmer-Bass, and Joe Gourley-drums. They are scheduled for a special Sunday show on Sept. 1, along with a couple of those famous FAC's on Aug. 23 and Sept. 6th. By the way, which one is Ray?

# Blues on disc

By Rich Hoover

Recordings rated \* to \*\*\*\*\*

## MAGIC SLIM, Alone & Unplugged, Wolf Records. \*\*\*\*\*

This is a fine collection of tunes showing elements of Slim's country roots. With a clean bare-bone production technique by Lincoln's own Phil Hammar, all of this material was recorded in Lincoln during 1986 at what was then MasterTrax studio, with the exception of track 10, which was recorded in Vienna, Austria.

The scenario of this session was that after a gig at Lincoln's Zoo Bar an acoustic guitar was rented, studio time was arranged, and Slim was asked to relax and imagine he was on a back porch back home in Mississippi. The recording captures that feel, and is a joy for me to listen to. Tunes like "A Thousand Miles from Nowhere," and "Nothin' for Nothin'," and the interview at the end of the CD, show the essential elements of character that has developed in and through Magic Slim.

The CD is an essential find for any blues collector, and will be a fine example of country blues for years to come. Thanks to Magic Slim, Phil Hammar, Larry Boehmer, and Wolf Records for getting this out to the public and fans who can appreciate it.

## JOHN PRIMER, The Real Deal, Atlantic/Code Blue. \*\*\*\*\*

This CD starts off with a shot from the hip titled "Stop Draggin' That Chain Around," penned by Bob Greenlee. Definitely Chicago blues in the straight ahead style of the 60's, reminiscent of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Otis Spann, and Willie Smith.

While this is based on the Southside sound, John, and all the band members each have their own mark of individuality. Half the tunes on this CD are penned by John, and with one listen, these tunes can be easily placed in the genre of classic blues lyrics. With the line-up of harpist Billy Branch, pianist Dave Maxwell, bassist Johnny B. Gayden, drummer Earl Howell and rhythm guitarist Jake Dawson, it is hard to think of a better selection of contemporary Chicago blues artists to back up John.

This CD is well worth owning, and will be a benchmark of Southside Chicago blues for many years to come. Many kudos to John Primer, Mike Vernon producer, the recording crew, and the fine hand-picked band. An excellent job done by all.

# HOW CAN I HELP THE FOUNDATION?

The Berman Music Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) foundation, and your money is needed to help offset the cost of this newsletter and to help pay for the costs of its programs.

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Thanks for supporting jazz in the Lincoln area!

The Foundation would once again like to thank Dan Stogsdill and Rich Hoover for placing business card sized ads in this issue.

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# CELEBRATE

Join us at **The March of Jazz '97**, the 1997 version of the all-star weekend jazz party described by Dan Morgenstern, the renowned jazz authority, as "one of the best run and most swinging affairs in jazz history," featuring the return of the fabled birthday honorees **Joe Bushkin, Bob Haggart, Dick Hyman, Red Norvo, Flip Phillips** and **Bob Wilber**, with this party's special honoree **Jerry Jerome** who will mark his 85th year.



## Planned lineup of jazz stars

### Trumpet:

Jackie Coon  
Jon-Erik Kellso  
Clark Terry (pending)  
Randy Sandke  
Joe Wilder

### Drums:

Joe Ascione  
Jeff Hamilton  
Jake Hanna  
Ed Metz Jr.  
Butch Miles

### Piano:

John Bunch  
Joe Bushkin  
Dave Frishberg  
Dick Hyman  
Ralph Sutton  
Johnny Varro

### Trombone:

John Allred  
Dan Barrett  
Al Grey  
George Masso

### Bass:

Phil Flanigan  
Joel Forbes  
Bob Haggart  
Milt Hinton  
Frank Tate

### Guitar:

Howard Alden  
Eddie Erickson  
Tal Farlow  
Bucky Pizzarelli

### Vocal:

Rebecca Kilgore  
Daryl Sherman

### Reeds:

Kenny Davern  
Rick Fay  
Bobby Gordon  
Jerry Jerome  
Tommy Newsom  
Brian Ogilvie  
Flip Phillips  
Bob Wilber

And on Saturday afternoon **Johnny Varro's Swing 7**

**Friday, March 21 to Sunday, March 23, 1997**

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**Write for our catalog featuring many of the musicians appearing at the March of Jazz '97.**

For hotel reservations please call the hotel at (813) 461-3222 for a special in-season rate of \$105 per night., plus tax. Profits will go to scholarship funds at the University of Miami. A 10% discount will be given for reservations of 12 when purchased together, in advance, in addition to priority seating. Presented by Arbors Records.

**Arbors Records is on the Internet at <http://www.arborsjazz.com> E-mail [mrd@gate.net](mailto:mrd@gate.net)**

# LETTERS TO JAZZ

# SYMPATHIES TO SHORTER & LUCIEN

We wish to extend sympathy to the families of saxophonist Wayne Shorter and singer Jon Lucien, who both lost love ones in the tragic crash of TWA Flight 800 on Wednesday, July 17, 1996. Shorter lost his wife, and Lucien lost his daughter in the crash.

Dear **JAZZ**,

I just wanted to drop you a note and thank you for the great newsletter! My company, Sterling Communications, Inc. had the good fortune of helping the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra in their 20th Anniversary Reunion concert in Pinewood Bowl. We look forward to working on this project in the future and hopefully building it into a two day event. Something to look forward to, anyway.

Again, wanted you to know you have some happy people out there enjoying your newsletter. Keep up the good work!!

David S. Polson  
Lincoln

Dear **JAZZ**,

Your new **JAZZ** staff is a great combination, and the first newsletter looks terrific. I'm glad to be on your mailing list, and look forward to future issues. Thanks for all the good work you're doing and your commitment to keeping jazz alive in Lincoln. I know it's a struggle, sometimes more than others. A collaboration with The Lied is sure a good sign and something to be proud of!

Mary Berry  
Lincoln

Dear **JAZZ**,

I want to say that the newsletter looks very good (kudos to the editor, Dave Hughes, I should think)!

Peter Hetlinger  
Lincoln

Dear **JAZZ**,

If you could add me to your newsletter mailing list, I would appreciate it. I'm currently playing piano in the Army Band over here in Japan. I played in an Army Band in Washington, D.C. before coming here, so I have kind of lost touch with Lincoln. Your newsletter always has names and places I recognize; it sure helps to feel closer to home.

Mike Williams  
Japan

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **JAZZ:**

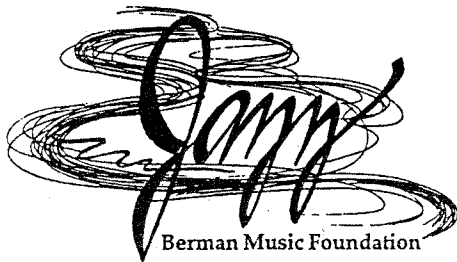
### COVERAGE OF THE JULY JAMM

### KEVIN MAHOGANY AND KENNY BARRON TRIO SHOW AT UNL

### THE PREMIERE OF THE NEW ROBERT ALTMAN FILM "KANSAS CITY"

### REVIEW OF CLAUDE WILLIAMS' ZOO GIGS

### AND MORE!

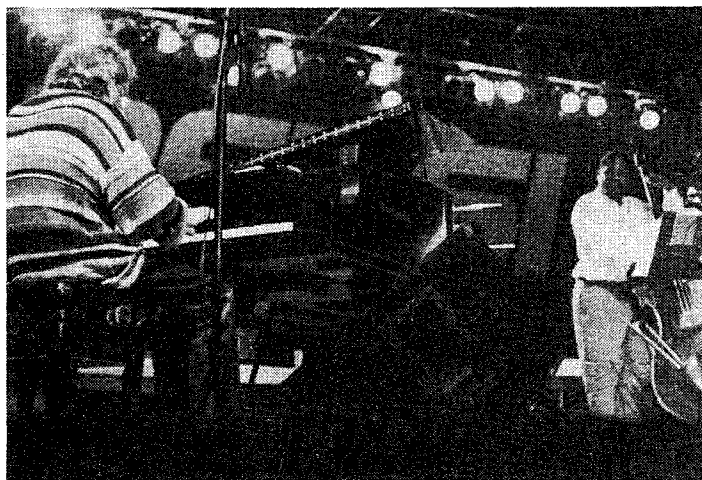


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