

Photo by Rich Hoover

*Smokin' Joe Kubek and B'Nois King at July Jamm*

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# July Jamm Jumps

By Rich Hoover

The time was right and the weather was ready for July Jamm this year. Flanked by an arts and crafts avenue and a well represented food lane, the blues took center stage. With a wide range of blues-based styles scheduled into thirty hours over three days, and over 40,000 in attendance, it was quite the weekend party.

Starting the party off Friday was the jazzy blues of local favorite Annette Murrell, fronting the Jim Williamson Trio. Later in the afternoon another local group, Honeyboy Turner, put down a fine groove of Chicago harmonica blues.

These local acts got the fire burnin' for the international touring bands of James Harman, with more excellent harmonica blues, followed by Jim Thackery and the Drivers, known for their special brand of soaring guitar blues. This made for a high energy end to the first day of July Jamm weekend.

On Saturday, the second day, the pump was well primed. The music poured and the attendance soared to over 23,000. Starting the day musically were local favorites Jimmy Valentine Band, Travis-Wagner Band, Alias Jane, and local hotshots Baby Jason and the Spankers. All made an excellent showing of their musical styles.

Next was a regional touring band that has generated quite the following over the last several years. A Native American group from South Dakota, Indigenous, showed the crowd a fine example of contemporary power blues in the vein of guitar icon Stevie Ray Vaughan. Then off to the deep south bayou, with sounds of Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band putting out a high energy Zydeco show for the ever-growing party. This was only to be topped off with the soul-filled tunes of Otis Clay bringing on the near full moon for the crowd of fans.

Starting off on Sunday, was a group of area musical

veterans, recently assembled, playing under the banner of Champaign Jerry and the Vegetarians, followed by the national acts of Smokin' Joe Kubek featuring B'nois King, with some great stylings from guitarist Joe and vocalist B'nois, followed by another solid sender, Coco Montoya, whose fine show finished the July Jamm festival for 1996.

It was a great three day social event put on by the Updowntowners, with co-chairs Kathy Carroll and Suzi Shugert heading the event, and the Journal-Star and KZUM radio topping the list of over 50 corporations supporting this year's event. The first meeting for next year's July Jamm has already happened, and at the top of the agenda, is: making it easier and faster to get food and drink tickets, and getting started on next years bigger and better entertainment package.

This is a not-for-profit event, so the monies generated go toward next years festival and numerous community needs through other not-for-profit organizations. Many thanks to Shugert, all the Updowntowners, volunteers, and corporate sponsors for this year's fest and many more to come.

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# The Prez Sez...

Dear Jazz Fans,

In your hands, our newsletter keeps getting bigger, and I hope you'll agree better - as the "J" Team continues to expand and shine - making jazz in Lincoln a reality and bridging the gap between here and Kansas City. There's swinging in dem dar hills - as a matter of fact, I'm dedicating the September issue of JAZZ to the city of Kansas City for keeping the true spirit and traditions of which we're all about...preserving and protecting jazz!

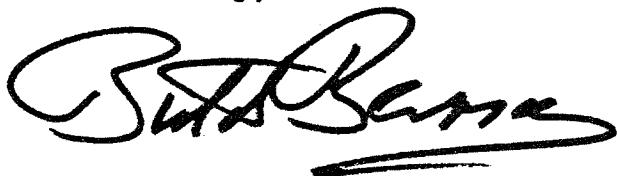
Besides my article on attending the world premiere of Robert Altman's wonderful new flick, "Kansas City," and Tom Ineck's insightful interview with KC jazz vet Claude "Fiddler" Williams (who still wowed them at the Zoo last month at the spry age of 88), look for Russ Dantzler's "Scrapple from the Apple" column to respond to his involvement with the NY debut of "Kansas City," with "Fiddler" as one of the featured performers in front of the star filled room at The Iridium. Hey, when it ain't happening here - it is three hours south, where it might as well be 1934 all over again.

I also am proud to add Andrew Vogt to our staff this issue to tell first hand of his experience at the Cognac-Hennessy Jazz Search. Andrew is a very fine musician, and for a "kid" more than half my age - I've learned more about playing jazz from him than anybody.

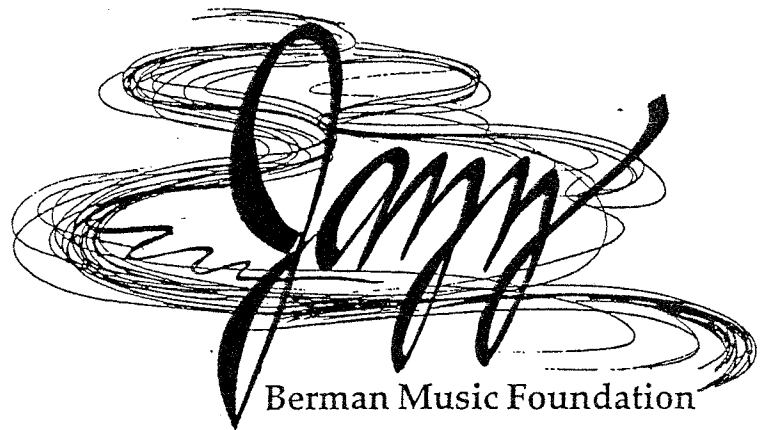
I hear there's talk of a new jazz spot opening downtown. Believe me, we're on it, and will report in full on this promising venture next issue.

Read on, friends, things are getting jazzier by the minute! Just in late August I was negotiating with Russ Dantzler (who also runs Hot Jazz Management in NYC) to bring 94 year young sax great Benny Waters and a dear friend of mine, pianist Jane Jarvis, to Lincoln. I will keep you posted about this Spring happening.

As for now...dig you later.



"Reboppin'" Butch Berman



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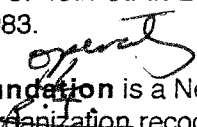
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# Claude Williams real King of Kansas City

By Tom Ineck

Just a week before the nationwide release of the new Robert Altman film "Kansas City," the real king of Kansas City jazz was out earning a living the way he's been doing it for more than 70 years.

Claude "Fiddler" Williams was on the road practicing his craft. This time the 88-year-old jazz fiddler was booked into Lincoln's Zoo Bar for a weekend gig with local musicians Steve Hanson, Jim Cidlik, Dave Morris and John Scofield.



Photo by Rich Hoover  
Claude Williams

Five days earlier, Williams had led "The Real Kansas City Band" during a special media preview of the Altman movie in New York City.

While in Lincoln for the two-day engagement, Claude and his wife, Blanche, stayed at a friend's home. When I arrived for the 1 p.m. interview, Blanche was in the kitchen getting an early start on a big batch of red beans and rice that was to feed the band and other guests after that night's show.

Taking in stride his prestigious place in jazz history, Claude gladly grants interviews. Although the volumes that have been written on Kansas City jazz must contain every imaginable detail, Williams still delights in telling the story his way, in his own words. What began as a planned 45-minute chat stretched to well over an hour.

Knowing I would be hard-pressed to discuss Williams' entire life in a single visit, I aimed for a more general overview of his career and the Kansas City scene. Ignoring my line of questioning, Claude insisted on starting at the beginning. It was obvious he had been through this routine before, and he wasn't about to let some young reporter (half his age) get the upper hand.

"I started in Oklahoma," he began.

While growing up in Muskogee, he played guitar, mandolin, banjo and cello, but it was a local performance by Joe Venuti that convinced him that the violin was the instrument for him.

"He was playing about a mile and a half from town, at a big open pavilion," recalls Williams as though it were yesterday. "I heard this fiddle. It was playin' up over all the other instruments. I said, 'That's what I want to play.' I had no idea it was the hardest damn instrument in the world."

Williams moved to Kansas City in 1928 and made his first recordings that year playing guitar and violin with

the Clouds of Joy, one of the hottest "territory" bands working out of Kansas City. After their New York City debut at the Roseland Ballroom and Harlem's Savoy in 1930, they returned to K.C.

It was the peak of Pendergast prosperity, a 14-year reign that was to end in 1938 with the imprisonment of Mayor Tom Pendergast for tax fraud. Some 50 clubs were offering live music along Vine Street between 12th and 18th streets.

"The joints were jumpin'," Williams remembers. "They would close up just long enough to sweep the place out, then open right back up."

But union scale still was only \$1.50 a night, not much to live off of, even in 1930. Williams tried his luck in Peoria, Ill., and Chicago, where Count Basie found him playing with the Eddie Cole band, which included Eddie's little brother, Nat "King" Cole, on piano.

Basie hired Williams to play guitar, and he can be heard on Basie's earliest Decca recordings. Freddie Green soon replaced him on guitar, but Claude doesn't regret leaving Basie. The fiddle, after all, is a lot more expressive than that steady "ching ching" rhythm pattern that Basie-style guitarists are expected to keep up.

Williams worked in Michigan, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles before moving back to Kansas City in 1953. He did brief stints in Denver and Las Vegas before returning to Kansas City for good in 1969.

But Claude is no homebody. He toured Europe repeatedly in the 1970s, often working with longtime Kansas City colleague, pianist Jay McShann. He recorded several sessions in the 1980s and continues to perform and record with the verve and vitality of a much younger man.

During the late '80s, Williams performed for 18 months as part of an 18-piece orchestra in both the Paris and Broadway productions of "Black and Blue," a revue of original black American art forms. Since 1990, he has played Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Chicago Jazz Festival and the Clinton Presidential Inauguration festivities.

The New York Times, in its review of Williams' performance last June at the JVC Jazz Festival, said "he made the instrument a smooth-talking tease, sly and ebullient, with phrases that sounded like classy, witty wolf whistles."

On Oct. 17, he returns to Carnegie Hall for an all-star concert, and in January he travels to Germany. His next CD, recorded in Kansas City and aptly titled "Claude Williams, King of Kansas City," will be released in November. It features KC musicians Kim Park, Bob Bowman, Rod Fleeman, Karrin Allyson and Lisa Henry.

So, what was it about Kansas City that made it one of the great breeding grounds of jazz?

"We used to tell musicians that came through Kansas City that after you come through Kansas City you get a stamp," Williams says. "You can make it anywhere. We used to screen them out when they would come through there."



Photo by Rich Hoover

*Claude "Fiddler" Williams swings the blues at the Zoo Bar*

## "Fiddler" Williams still swings the blues

By Tom Ineck

Claude "Fiddler" Williams, the reigning king of Kansas City swing, continues to defy the years.

After seven decades traveling and playing that most distinctive brand of bluesy Kansas City jazz, the 88-year-old Williams still thrills audiences with his youthful energy and effortless playing style.

When the venerable violinist returned to the Zoo Bar Aug. 9-10, he again had the joint jumpin', this time with help from guitarist and music director Steve Hanson, keyboardist-singer Jim Cidlik, bassist Dave Morris and drummer John Scofield. Four of Lincoln's finest musicians, they fit Williams' style like red beans fit rice.

Friday's show began with the quartet warming up on a slow cooking "Killer Joe." But it wasn't long before Williams was on the stage with the rest of the gang, swinging on the blues with boundless enthusiasm.

On a mid-tempo version of Ellington's "Satin Doll," Williams had a little trouble staying in tune, a difficult feat on the fiddle at any speed. His solo, however, was full of amazing, innovative fills on some very familiar chord changes.

Throughout the night, that seemed to be the secret to "Fiddler's" appeal, his ability to take a well-known tune and do wondrous things with it. Memories of singer Astrud Gilberto's version of "The Girl From Ipanema" were inescapable, but Williams made Ipanema sound like a Kansas City suburb where the blues meet Brazil.

Cidlik sang a spirited version of the classic "Jumpin'

the Blues" and turned in an excellent performance of Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind," with Claude, Hanson and Cidlik taking solos and Scofield lending sensitive support on brushes.

"C Jam Blues" was taken at a medium-fast tempo that was perfect for the first-set finale.

The band, driven by a furiously fiddling Williams, opened the second set with a version of "How High the Moon" that was swinging seriously from the first note. Cidlik contributed some Monkish chords before Hanson turned loose with a driving solo. Unable to contain himself, Williams jumped back in with the theme and closed the tune to a rousing ovation.

Claude, with a voice smooth and aged like fine wine, sang a sweet and tender "I Can't Give You Anything But Love." "On Green Dolphin Street" usually performed in a bop style, was an unexpected treat at the hands of Williams and company.

It was back to the blues with "Sweet Home Chicago," another showcase for Cidlik, who urged on the band with shouts of "Yeah! We're in the groove now!" Hanson soloed with churning guitar chords and Cidlik turned in an appropriately lively boogie woogie piano solo.



Photo by Tom Ineck

*Jim Cidlik, Steve Hanson, Claude Williams, Dave Morris*

Williams was all over the fiddle on "These Foolish Things," which shifted from ballad tempo to uptempo and back again. "Moonglow" was at its romantic best, then "Caldonia" took off at a bluesy clip with Cidlik at the helm, Williams and Hanson taking spirited solos and Scofield contributing some outstanding drum breaks.

The final set of the night began with a swinging "Lady Be Good," with Hanson and Williams carrying on a loquacious musical dialogue. For his wife, Blanche, who was in the audience, Williams sang his own composition "That Certain Someone," reminding her that "I'm your puppet, just pull the string."

As midnight came and went, the tempo picked up again with "Back Home in Indiana." And, as this reviewer was leaving, the beautiful strains of "Over the Rainbow" still filled the Zoo Bar, where once again Claude "Fiddler" Williams had worked his wizardry.

# Tomfoolery

By Tom Ineck

The Aug. 16 opening of Robert Altman's "Kansas City" received virtually no recognition from Lincoln's mainstream news media.

Just 200 miles from the city that forever influenced jazz history and that inspired the Altman film, we are forced to stand by while the rest of the United States pays tribute to Kansas City swing and the city that gave it birth. Meanwhile, we are fed a disgusting array of mindless summer movies.

Granted, those who have seen "Kansas City" are not exactly giving it masterpiece status. Peter Watrous, in a Sunday New York Times article appearing just a few days before the movie opened, writes that once again Hollywood missed an opportunity to do justice to jazz history.

"...One realizes that Hollywood has treated jazz the way it generally has in the past. It has turned the music and the musicians into servants of the plot and the film's ambiance. The music is there to add, and symbolize, excitement."

The film, Watrous argues, "treats the musicians as mutes, without a story to tell. As is so often the case in America, the makers of black art are separated from the art itself; they remain nameless, faces without a history or even much of a presence."

But no matter what the professional pundits say about the movie's pros and cons, the viewing public should have the right to decide for itself. You and I cannot do that in Lincoln, where a single company has a stranglehold on the city's movie houses, deciding -- often on the basis of anticipated revenues -- what you and I can and cannot see.

Robert Altman already has established a reputation significant enough to warrant showing the movie in a first-run theater, even in such a cultural backwater as Lincoln.

Apparently, "Kansas City" was made available to a limited number of theaters because there were not enough prints to open it simultaneously in every city, regardless of size. Even so, it seems unlikely that it will appear in Lincoln at all, unless it is brought to the city's art-film mecca, the Ross Film Theater.

Until then, we must be content to listen to the superb soundtrack on Verve Records, featuring the young jazz stars of today recreating the music of Kansas City, as first developed in the 1920s and 1930s by the likes of Count Basie, Lester Young and Charlie Parker.

Among the artists, young and old, portraying the original musicians are saxophonists Joshua Redman, James Carter, Craig Handy and David Murray, trumpeter Nicholas Payton, pianists Geri Allen and Cyrus Chestnut, guitarists Mark Whitfield and Russell Malone, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Victor Lewis of Omaha (as the symbolic sit-in for Basie drummer Jo Jones). The only Kansas City artist included in the cast is singer Kevin Mahogany.

# Jazz on disc

By Tom Ineck

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

## NEBRASKA JAZZ ORCHESTRA, Volume V, American Music Corporation. \*\*\*\*\*

With "Volume V," the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra continues to document its 20-year history with another superb studio recording showing the full range of the NJO's talents.

This is the best one yet, with no throw-away tunes and the powerhouse big band consistently firing on all cylinders. The nine tracks were laid down at Studio Q between 1992 and 1996.

Dave Sharp's arrangement of "Better Git It In Your Soul" captures all the driving, exultant gospel spirit of the Charles Mingus composition. Pushing themselves to new artistic heights are soloists Dutch Ode on trombone, Scott Vicroy, tenor sax; Bob Krueger, trumpet; Tom Clifton, alto sax; Ed Love, tenor sax; and Todd Smith on drums.

"The End of a Love Affair," also arranged by Sharp, brilliantly showcases the NJO's shimmering brass tones and disciplined section work. Krueger's trumpet solo is especially inspired.

Annette Murrell, an explosive blues and gospel singer who tends to drown out smaller combos with her powerful contralto, never sounded better than she does here, fronting the NJO in a freewheeling version of the Louis Jordan tune "Is You Is, Or Is You Ain't My Baby?" I was lucky enough to be in the studio when this was recorded, and I can tell you it raised the hairs on the back of my neck.

The NJO proves itself more than capable of performing contemporary jazz on Peter Bouffard's arrangement of "Oops!", a Mike Mainieri tune first recorded in the 1980s by the fusion group Steps Ahead. "Street Smarts" by NJO alumnus Rex Cadwallader is a tricky little tune featuring some sleight-of-hand dialogue in the reed section and a tasty Bouffard guitar solo.

Todd Smith, who is one of those rare drummers who has enough punch and snap to drive a big band, turns on the sprightly Latin rhythms in "Carnival," and Sharp's "On the Westside" is a nice showcase for Krueger, Chris Varga on vibes, Bouffard and Ed Love on tenor.

"Danny Boy" is an imaginative Bouffard arrangement of the timeless folk melody. The brass faithfully lays down the beautiful melody before the tempo accelerates to swing speed. Sharp's "New Samba" tops off the hourlong CD with another Latin twist.

A technical note: Recording engineer Tom Larson has helped to create a shining example of big band sound reproduction, from the sizzling cymbals to the deepest bass resonance and all the nuances of the brass and reed sections. However, the overall volume is lower than most recordings, so be sure to crank the dial for maximum listening pleasure.



# Scrapple from the Apple

By Russ Dantzer

## Superb Audition Too Late...For This Movie

Fifty minutes into the morning of August 6, "Kansas City" movie director Robert Altman, his gracious wife Kathryn, academy award winner Mira Sorvino, and others were still sitting in the center of the music room at Iridium in New York City. A wonderful evening of swinging music had just concluded, and they apparently would have stayed for more.

"Kansas City" had just been given its New York premiere screening a few blocks away. The celebrity-infested crowd then jammed into the "best new jazz club" in New York for the after-party. Harry and Julie Belafonte, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, and Kurt Vonnegut were upstairs, but I never left the music room, as the music was just too good. The Jazz V.I.P.'s, included respected author/critics Stanley Crouch, Ira Gitler, David Hajdu, and some hot "young lions" who kept the stage area crowded.

The "King of Kansas City." Claude Williams, had a hand-picked swing machine behind him; Junior Mance at the piano, Benny Powell on trombone, Earl May on bass, Jimmy Lovelace on drums, and one musician who played a colorful cigar-chomping character in the movie, guitarist Russell Malone. Malone is a significant part of Diana Krall's small group success, and someone to watch.

They opened the party with "Moten Swing." Then, "Body and Soul," "Cherokee," and "Indiana," were songs swung by this band during the evening in a way that the movie band could only attempt. The second set opened with "Kansas City," during which tenor saxist James Carter arrived and seemingly could not wait for the tune to end to sit in. Getting up with him were guitarist Mark Whitfield, trumpeter James Zollar, and one song later, Cyrus Chestnut, on very tasteful piano. All of these musicians can be seen and heard in the movie.

James Carter was dressed, as one patron described it, like the "Man from Glad," in a very bright white suit, apparently not afraid to be noticed. He honked and growled on tenor, as Whitfield blazed on guitar. Cameras flashed constantly during those "Hollywood" moments but I wished these two extremely talented musicians would just slow down and feel the music. Music fans were relieved when the house band was back in control twenty minutes later.

At about midnight, I was handed a note saying that Bob and Kathryn Altman should be wished a happy 37th wedding anniversary. We were again playing musical chairs on the bandstand, so I had time to do that after introducing the members of what I called the "Real Kansas City Band." The attentive audience heard that Claude's *second* visit to New York from Kansas City was in 1936 as Count Basie's *first* guitarist, that Benny Powell had been a Basie star decades ago, and that Jimmy Lovelace was

given his first touring job with "Fiddler" when just seventeen.

The music concluded, and many people departed, but the Altmans remained. When this movie was still in the planning stages, people had been trying to see to it that Claude would play a significant role. The result, sadly, was that he and his wife Blanche were used as extras, and ended up "on the cutting room floor." I asked Claude if he'd ever properly met Mr. Altman during that time, and he said he had not. After a formal introduction, Altman's rapid response was, "Oh, but I remember you," looking at Claude, "you were the man who was jamming with the musicians having so much fun (on the set of "Kansas City") when we had to start shooting. Then you just sat quietly off to one side, but the musicians played better because you were there." I asked him, only half joking, if we couldn't add Claude to the credits, and he said, "No, this one's done, but there is always the *next* movie."

\* \* \*

Responses or comments on this column are always welcome. Contact me to arrange master classes with "Fiddler," or to be a resource to New York visitors. Phone: (212) 586-8125. E-mail: hotjazz@soho.ios.com. Mailing address: 328 West 43rd Street, Suite 4F, New York, NY 10036.

*Our apologies go out to readers of JAZZ and Russ for unintentionally deleting a portion of the second sentence in the second paragraph of the last Scrapple. It should have read, "He (Claude Williams) wisely took his fiddle to "Doc" Cheatham's brunch on April 7, and good fortune allowed for Benny Powell to be there with his trombone."*

## A Jazz Search finalist's diary

By Andrew Vogt

I felt very fortunate to be selected to perform in the Cognac-Hennessy Jazz Search in Colorado this past July. Out of approximately 90 taped entries, six were selected to come to compete at an old renovated theater in Loveland. With John Carlini and Jason Varga, we departed Lincoln at 11 pm the night before the contest. This gave us just enough time to catch two hours of sleep Saturday morning before we were to meet my brother Adam. I was too pumped for the day's events to be tired from driving all night (but fatigue set in the next day on the long drive back).

All three of the lads that jammed with me played great. John Carlini tickled the ivories, Jason Varga pounded the drums, and Adam Vogt strummed away on the acoustic bass (to go along with my saxophone). John said that we played two or three notches better than he expected.

There were some really great bands at the festival. My personal favorite was a quartet called "Kat Unit." Led by pianist Sam Coffman, they played very sophisticated and intriguing original compositions with an enormous amount of energy. They also played a clever version of the well known Eddie Harris tune, "Freedom Jazz Dance."

The grand prize winner, who was awarded many hours of recording time, was Fort Collins pianist Marc Sabatella. He sounded to me like he was influenced by modern pianists McCoy Tyner and Don Pullen. He and his trio performed mostly originals like "Blue Honda a la Truck," which was similar to the Dave Brubeck tune "Blue Rondo a la Turk." On another tune he alternated between playing the piano and a wooden recorder.

There was also a food festival going on outside of the auditorium. I ate some of the best corn on the cob I've ever had and grooved to a line of a dozen African hand percussionists "bongo-ing" away. It was a great day and I was happy to be able to take part in it. Special thanks go out to John, Adam, and Jason for sacrificing their weekend for the event.

## Ten (sorta) jazzy questions

By Butch Berman

*This month the questions were posed to drummer Jason Varga. Varga is currently the percussion instructor at Lincoln Northeast High School and recently received his bachelor of music degree from UNL. He also performs locally as a jazz and classical musician.*



Photo by Butch Berman  
Jason Varga

**Q: Your older brother Chris, now residing in Chicago, is, as they say, "well on his way to making it in the big league jazz scene." how much of an influence was he in your musical development as you two were growing up?**

A: My brother has always been a large influence on me in one way or another. After high school at UNL, he became very serious about playing and achieved a high level of musicianship quickly. This helped me focus on my music and gave me a goal. In college, his attitude towards me was very positive. He encouraged me to get things done and (to) practice. He was helpful with both my music and my classes.

**Q: Is it a fact that ex-Charlie Burtonite, now Shit Hook rock 'n' roll drummer Dave "Rebel" Robel started both you and Chris in your drumming**

**careers?**

A: I will never forget Robel's influence on both my brother and me. I remember watching him with Charlie Burton's band (and you as well) when I was seven years old. Dave was always very kind to Chris and me, and he was fun to hang around. I think Dave's kindness made us look up to him, and, of course, we would want to do what he did.

**Q: To be a "pro," what percentage of experience is gained from university studies as opposed to actual live gigging?**

A: This is a difficult question to answer, because it depends on the university, and it depends on the town you live in. In general, I would say live gigging is better experience for the jazz musician. It is much different than a small group rehearsing at a university. You will learn much more from one live gig than you will from many rehearsals, but the university can be a good place to make connections and learn technical skill on your instrument. Both are important to be a well-rounded musician

**Q: I always idolized Gene Krupa as a kid, but now appreciate so many other fine percussionists. I probably don't have a special hero anymore, how 'bout you?**

A: I have never had one special hero. Soloing has always been my weakness, so lately I have been trying to listen to more Papa Jo Jones. He is very musical when it comes to fills and solos. You can clearly hear a melody, and if it is a common one, it is easy to pick out.

**Q: When we occasionally gig together with the Hob Nobs, you've shown me a lot on the piano. Do you feel that all aspiring musicians should start with the piano instead of, perhaps, their instrument of choice?**

A: There are, I'm sure, successful drummers that have not had any piano, but I would definitely say it is extremely helpful for all jazz musicians to know some piano. I don't think it is necessarily essential to start piano before your "choice" instrument, but at some point, jazz piano skills will help your jazz playing on your own instrument, even drums.

**Q: Your given name, Jason Varga, has a certain artistic quality. If for some reason you would want to change your name to a different "stage name," what would it be?**

A: Good question. I have no idea.

**Q: If music hadn't been your bag, what other career might you have chosen?**

A: I would like to have something to do with the martial arts. True martial artists would not only teach physical

movements and defense, but also peace and respect. I think more of that needs to be spread around in our society.

**Q: In your mind, how far do you hope to carry your talents?**

A: I hope to carry my talents to their extent. This is, of course, a lifetime commitment to continually improve. I often have periods of practicing very little, but I try to always get back into the music.

**Q: The last book you read was...?**

A: "Castle Roogna," by Piers Anthony.

**Q: If you decide to leave Lincoln, where to from here?**

A: I am planning a trip overseas for awhile, and when I get back, I would like to live near a large city (like) Chicago, Seattle, or possibly New York.

## Discorama By Butch Berman

### GREG ABATE, Bop Lives, Blue Chip Jazz.

When I first met Greg Abate, I wasn't sure if I liked him or not. Not the music either, Greg's simply fabulous. I just felt that during a radio interview on KZUM's Reboppin', we clashed a bit as "guys." However, after I got to know Greg in de flesh, I realized that he and I had many competitive similarities. We could be brash, over confident, and a little bit stubborn. Now, these are the exact qualities that make me love this cat. If Greg didn't live in Rhode Island (and wasn't constantly touring the globe), we'd be hanging a lot. But you see, what's really behind all that macho emotion is what makes him so great...passion. The soulful wails that pour through his heart to his horn and now to your ears, come to the forefront on his first release on Blue Chip Records - Greg Abate - Bop Lives.

It's a marvelous affair. Backed by a stellar frontline cast featuring Claudio Roditi on trumpet (he and Greg graced Lincoln last year with a fantastic weekend Berman Music Foundation concert at the Wagon Train Project), and the Kenny Barron Trio, with Kenny's brilliant piano stylings, Rufus Reid on bass, and Ben Riley on drums. A rhythm section par excellence.

Each cut is an epic adventure in improvisation. Greg's original works are equally as compelling as any of his well chosen standards. Featured compositions from Barron and Roditi round out a perfect jazz CD. Pick this one up and repeated listening will be required.

## 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, except for on Friday when Wagonmaster John Schmitz, plays western swing on "The KZUM Heyride" from 7:30 to 9 pm. Some other jazz programs are also sprinkled throughout the morning schedule as well. For more information, or to receive a free copy of their program guide Sound Alternatives, call 474-5086.

The Foundation is pleased to report that it has resumed underwriting on KZUM (underwriting is public broadcasting's version of commercial sponsorship of programs, i.e., commercials). Each Thursday afternoon from 12:30 to 2 pm on "Reboppin'," hosted by Foundation President Butch Berman, a short announcement telling about the foundation and its programs will be read at the beginning and end of the program. The Foundation feels that it is very important to financially support jazz on the radio.

Nebraska Public Radio at 90.9 FM in Lincoln, and at other frequencies around the state (except Omaha), 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 September

- 9-07 The Best of the Monterey Jazz Festival, Part One
- 9-14 The Best of the Monterey Jazz Festival, Part Two
- 9-21 Joe Lovano/Gonzalo Rubalcaba/Kenny Garrett Trio
- 9-28 "Gillespiana" from the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band

### PIANO JAZZ in September

- 9-07 Mose Allison
- 9-14 Claude Bolling
- 9-21 Joe Bushkin
- 9-28 Eubie Blake

The Foundation is also pleased to announce that it is underwriting some of the costs of Piano Jazz on NPRN. Again, a short announcement about the Foundation will be read at the beginning and end of the program.

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

After taking most of the Summer off, Liz Chadwick informed me that her jazz program, "Bohemia After Dark," on KRNU at 90.3 FM in Lincoln, resumed on Friday nights from 8-10 as soon as the Fall semester started at UNL.



# Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Nancy Marshall

Do you know the definition of a great musician? It's someone from out of town who charges a lot of money for a performance. The Wagon Train Project and ArtSpirit, with help from the Berman Music Foundation will dispel that definition by presenting Lincoln's finest musicians starting in September on the first Friday of every month at the 7th Street Loft (512 S. 7th St.). The concerts will be held in conjunction with First Fridays, when the art galleries in the Haymarket District regularly hold the openings for their new shows. They'll be from 8 to 11 pm with a cash bar, a no smoking atmosphere, open to people of all ages with a cover of five dollars.

So far, the line up is: September 6, Tom Larson, piano; Rusty White, bass; Peter Bouffard, guitar; and October 4, The Lightning Bugs. Several other groups have been contacted for the future, but aren't scheduled yet.

The Larson/White/Bouffard trio was enthusiastically received when they toured on the east coast last year as the UNL Jazz Trio, and they're in rehearsal now for another tour coming this Fall with Chris Varga on percussion. If you've heard any of these guys as individuals, you know what consummate musicians they are. All three play that tasty kind of jazz where just the right notes are played with the perfect balance of skill and soul. This will be a good example of Lincoln's jazz at it's finest played in a place where you can hear every note.



*Larson, White, and Bouffard*

The sounds of the big bands can still be heard at the Millard American Legion Building at 139th and L Streets in Omaha every Tuesday night from 8-11 pm, with complimentary ballroom dance instruction from 7-8 pm. You can hear Tommy Bishop on September 3, Mearl Lake Orchestra on September 10, Lou Arnold on September 17, and Lonny Lynn on September 24.

As far as I know, the jazz will continue on Sunday nights at 6 pm at The Oven at 201 N. 8th in Lincoln. I don't have any information about the schedule for the month of September, but you can call The Oven at 475-6118 for more information.

Don't forget the Kevin Mahogany and the Kenny Barron Trio show at Westbrook Recital Hall on Wednesday October 30th at 8 pm in Lincoln. The show is co-sponsored by the UNL School of Music and us!

## "Kansas City:" The Movie/The Weekend, A Retrospective

By Butch Berman

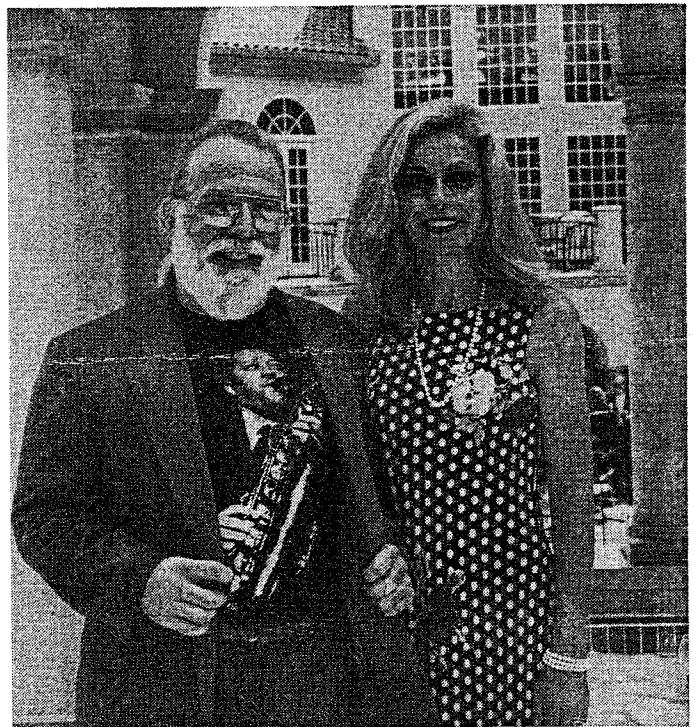


Photo by Butch Berman  
*Butch Berman and Pamela Davis in Kansas City*

I was a wild kid, rebellious enough to be sent to Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, MO, for my junior and senior years in high school from 1966-7. I attended two non-consecutive semesters in their junior college too, but that's another story.

Anyway, the major perks of this whole teenage experience was that it was only about 40 miles away from Kansas City, and after bonding with Lexington's immoral cab driver, Eddie, I was set. By the time I'd reached 17 I was hanging with the wrong crowd (any crowd in the military academy was the wrong crowd), I'd gotten more of an education than my parents had bargained for. Great music on the radio (WHD, remember Chicken Man?), frequenting The Paseo's illicit sepia house of ill repute, and in general, dancing in the streets. We're talking late '60s, ya know, so

hearing Jimi Hendrix, after ingesting something called "Strawberry Ripples," has never been the same since.

This leads up to my good fortune to get on a list to attend the world premiere of Robert Altman's fascinating new film, "Kansas City," which was due to my sponsorship of The Jazz Ambassadors and a subscription to JAM, their superb newsletter. The invitation was tempting, but pricey, but also deductible, and it seemed so cool to be in Kansas City to see the debut of "Kansas City," and with my Pendergast-esque KC background, I had to go. Plus, I just discovered an old friend from my San Francisco days that craved an immediate change of scene. So, after picking up Ms. Pamela Davis at the airport, and getting crushed and drenched at July Jamm, off we went to KC, with a myriad of expectations in tow.

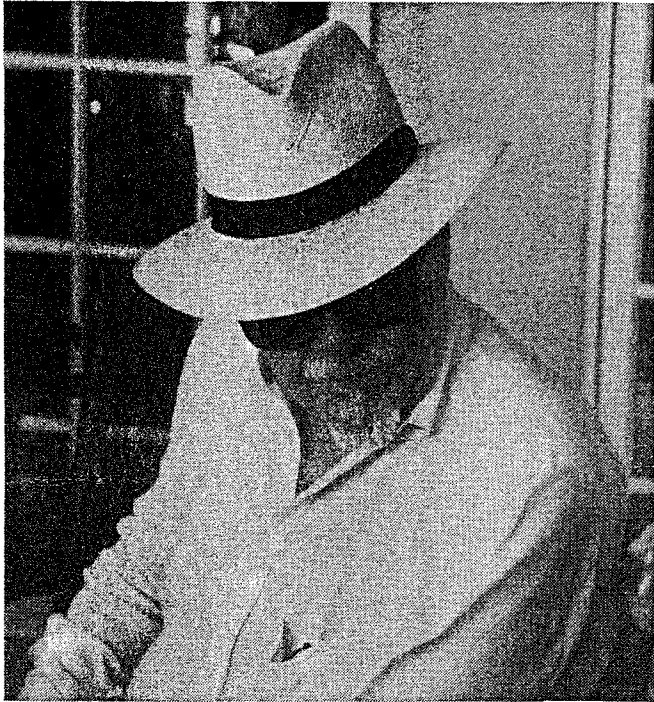


Photo by Butch Berman  
*Director Robert Altman in Kansas City*

Well...the expectations started becoming realities after we checked into the Savoy, my fave KC hotel, with three cool jazz venues within walking distance, including our first stop on the gala night - One Kansas City Place at 1200 Main.

### **Patrons and Benefactors Parties**

We arrived fashionably a tad bit late, and had to scramble to secure our tickets. The joint, as they say, was jumping. We caught glimpses of Altman and actor Harry Belafonte shaking hands and signing autographs as lines of people were forming to meet and greet them. Waiters literally forced you to sample the tasty fried chicken with honey mustard, and the champagne flowed freely. I managed to say "hi" to Joe Cartwright, who's trio was just tearing down after performing for the first of five phases of activities planned.

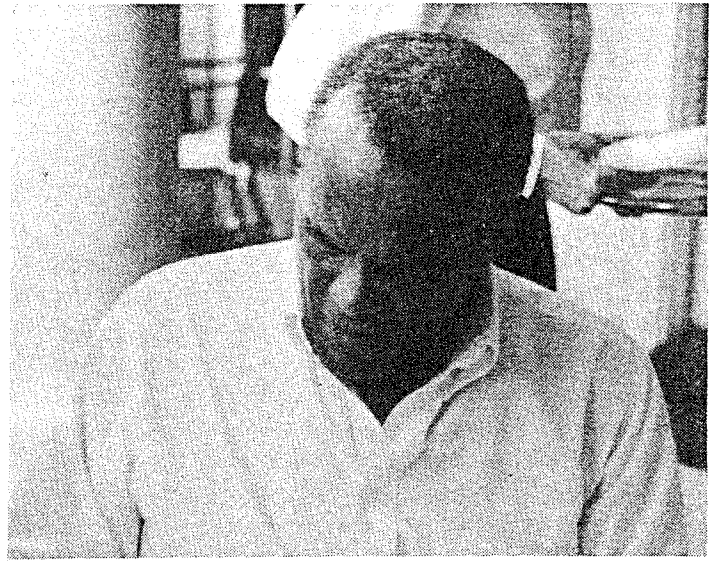


Photo by Butch Berman  
*Actor Harry Belafonte in Kansas City*

Next, a gong was sounded to line up the patrons to follow a red carpet (no kidding) down the block to the AMC Midland Theater, led by a lone "Pied Piper" saxophonist. The streets were lined with vintage cars from the '30s, and many of the partygoers were dressed in period style as well. The media intermingled with the street gawkers, as the happy throng seemed like a New Orleans funeral march dancing and bopping into the beautiful lobby, where the place was already swinging to the Horace Washington Trio. In all, eight different local jazz groups were hired to perform at the various happenings.

Pam and I found our seats and just happened to be sitting next to former Lincolnite and actress, Nancy Marcy, who had a small speaking role in the film. Our reminiscing was hushed as the lights dimmed, and a "rep" from Fine Line Cinema appeared and spoke a little about the film before introducing both the Altmans and the Belafontes. Altman spoke of the fab job all the KC extras did in making this film so true to life with genuine spontaneous energy. Many of the cast were present, enabling this debut to play for-a-fever pitched audience. Altman mused that he met his lovely wife, Kathryn, many years ago when she was one of his movie extras.

Watching the movie was like a live jazz and rock 'n' roll concert combined. The audience was wildly enthusiastic during all of the musical segments, and rose in mutual appreciation at the end of this wonderful film.

Upon exiting the theater, we were stopped and interviewed by Channel Nine News from Kansas City, during which I managed to get a plug in for the foundation. We all boarded three separate air conditioned scenic cruiser luxury buses to ride to the Charles Garney home, a magnificent mansion overlooking KC from his own development area, not far from the old North KC airport. Over 600 guests were present for this amazing barbecue tribute to Altman. Four bands played, including Lisa Henry, backed by the Kerry Strayer KC Seven, who had a whole ballroom like dance floor to lay their groove down in.



Photo by Butch Berman  
*Lisa Henry and the Kerry Strayer KC Seven*

I briefly met the auteur himself (Altman), but a drunk critic that wanted to tell him about this negative review he gave him, caused me to split the scene, for the time being, at least. We managed to spot Nancy Marcy again, and met her friends, Helen and Frank Wewer, who also had Lincoln ties.

We all hung around together until the last bus headed downtown 'round midnight. We were too beat to catch the jams at Club 427, and the all-nighter at the Mutual Musicians Foundation, at 1823 Highland, near the 18th and Vine strip where the action was filmed, and where it all really did happen in 1934.

We knew that the main event for us would be the intimate brunch hosted by the Applebee's Restaurant chain magnate, Ron Reck, and his wife, Johnye, the next morning, so we wanted to be rested and ready. And ready we were, after taking a long walk over looking the river to a seemingly deserted Sunday morning KC, and enjoying the splendid free brunch the Savoy offers - we headed out to find our final destination, another gorgeous home on Ward Parkway just off The Plaza.

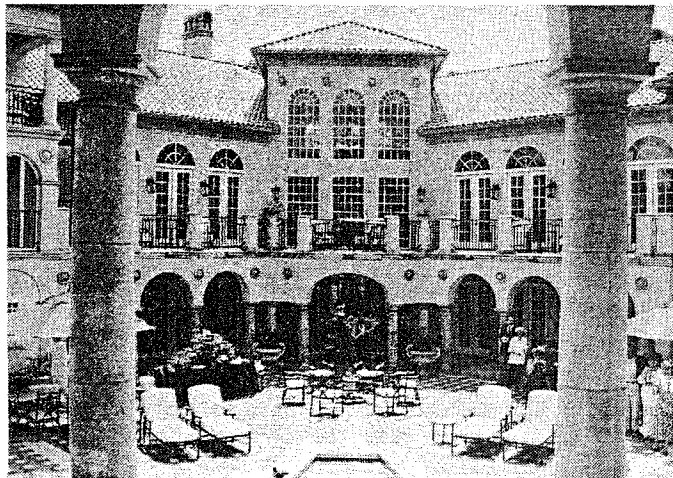


Photo by Butch Berman  
*The Reck home in Kansas City*

We were ushered through the private gate by a guard, charmed by the adorable daughter of the Reck's outside the front door, and then greeted warmly by the Reck's themselves. We truly felt welcome by the warmth of this fine family and their elegant surroundings. We wandered out into the back veranda to the lush jazz tones of the Milt Abel Trio.

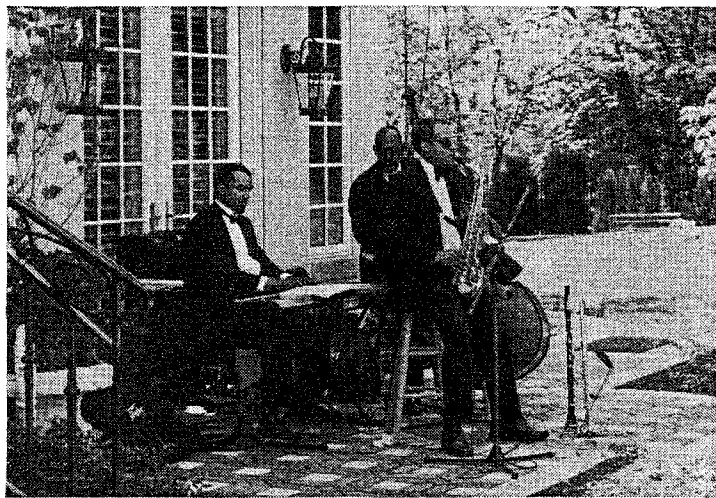


Photo by Butch Berman  
*The Milt Abel Trio*

We mingled - saw the Wewers again, and with Bloody Mary in hand, I finally got to meet and chat with both the Altmans and Harry Belafonte. Nothing revelatory was disclosed, but we got to share some tidbits on jazz, Victor Lewis, movie making, and the Midwest in general, as I offered my services to Robert if he ever decided to make a film in Lincoln. Who knows...?

## Homeward Bound

After bidding our adieus, we split to pick up some Gate's barbecue for the road (Pam even bought a case to take back to San Francisco), and gathered up our composure, as well as our belongings, and made the magical trip back towards Nebraska. The magic made by an unforgettable weekend in KC, about KC. Of course, the soundtrack from the film flowed from my car speakers the entire way home.

*Proceeds from this event went to help fund these organizations: Varsity Club - The KC Children's Charity, The 18th and Vine Heritage Jazz Festival (presented by the Black Economic Union of Greater Kansas City), and Union Station - Assistance Corporation.*



# July Jamm Pictorial

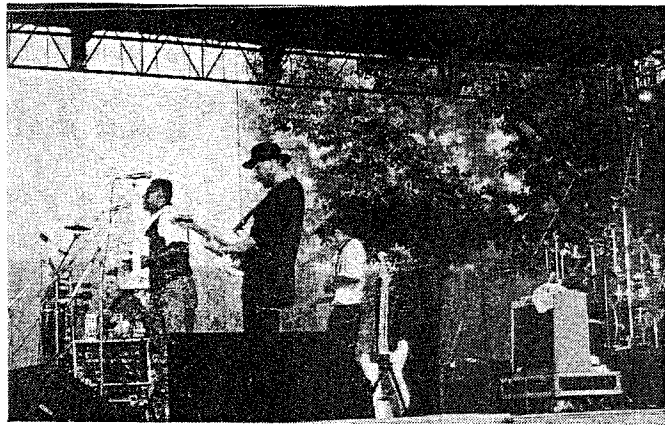
By Rich Hoover



*Baby Jason and the Spankers Sat. afternoon*



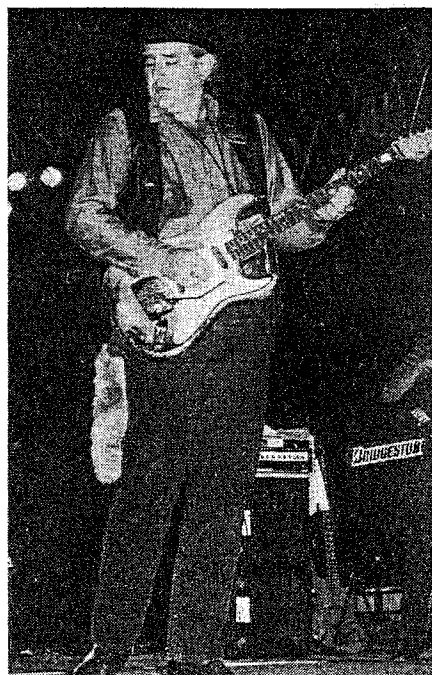
*Indigenous made for a rousing start on the evening*



*Chubby Carrier adds spice to Sat. evening*



*Smokin' Joe and B'nois put out fiery blues on Sun.*



*James Harman, then Jimmy Thackery, headlined Fri.*

*Otis Clay sweetens Sat. with Soul/Blues*

## Blues Corner By Rich Hoover

Still in the heat of blues festival season, I've selected a few of the continental fests I would attend if I could:

Sept. 5-7	Riverfront Blues Festival	Ft. Smith AR
	Box 8307	(501) 783-6353
Sept. 7	D. C. Blues Festival	Washington DC
	Box 77315	(202) 828-3028
Sept. 7	Reno Blues Festival	Reno NV
	3100 Mill St.	(800) 800-9255
Sept. 14	Mississippi Gulf Blues Fest	Biloxi MS
	Box 4576	(601) 388-8010
Sept. 13-15	Ann Arbor Jazz & Blues	Ann Arbor MI
	Box 8125	(313) 665-4755
Sept. 20-21	Boulder Blues Fest	Boulder CO
	Box 1726	(303) 443-5858
Sept. 21	Miss. Delta Blues Fest	Greenville MS
	119 So. Theobald	(800) 467-3582
Sept. 27-29	San Francisco Blues Fest	SF CA
	575 Hill St.	(415) 864-2333

If you want a complete listing, the best source I have found so far on the net is: [www.bluesfestivals.com](http://www.bluesfestivals.com).

## Upcoming local blues events

The Zoo Bar has its usual mix of both local and national acts in the coming month or so:

Sept. 3	Baby Jason and the Spankers
Sept. 9	Beste Boys/ Baby Jason and the Spankers
Sept. 11	Terrance Simien and the Mallet Playboys
Oct. 4	James Solberg
Oct. 8	Chubby Carrier and Bayou Swamp Band

Things seem to get a little slim for live blues this time of year, mainly because of the returning student population, which prefers types of music other than jazz or blues. The club and bar owners respond to this influx, but what goes around comes around.

For those that have information or suggestions of what should be in this column, send it to me in care of this newsletter, and write "ATTN:Blues Corner" on it.

## Blues on Disc By Rich Hoover

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

### **BYTHER SMITH, Mississippi Kid, Delmark. \*\*\*\*\***

He's been called an American original, a fighter, a working man, a bluesman, and Mississippi Kid. He most definitely is an artist both in the lyrical prose he writes, and in the deep-blues rhythm groove he creates in both his

live and recorded performances. It would be hard to find anyone any closer to his identity than Byther Smith. He gives and takes with life, with a one on one manner, then he writes, plays, and sings about how he feels, showing his feelings about family, friends, enemies, racism, poverty, love, God, and country.

Byther Smith is an artist that keeps the blues an American art form. "Mississippi Kid" is an excellent example of where Byther is now in his workin' man's struggle with life, identity, his art and times. With a solid backup band, this CD will fit easily into any blues collectors file.

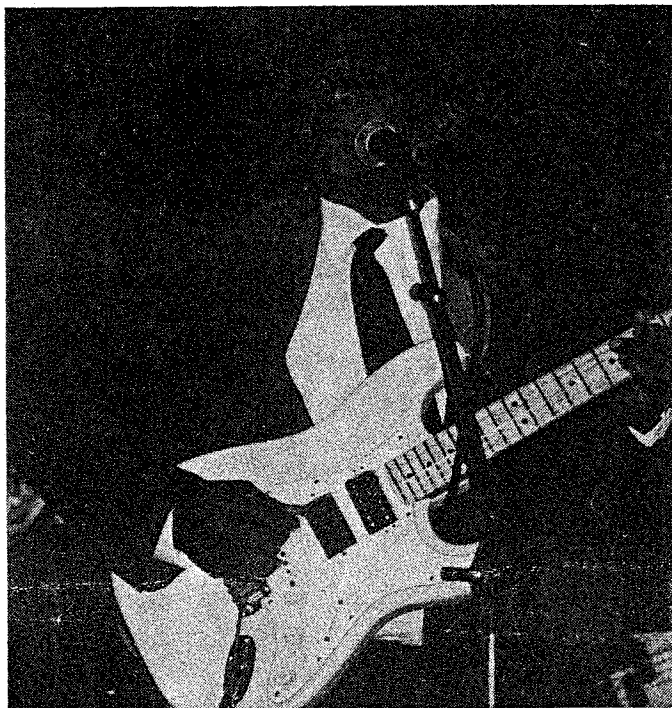


Photo by Rich Hoover

*Byther Smith at a recent Zoo Bar gig*

### **BARBARA DANE & LIGHTNING HOPKINS, Sometimes I Believe She Loves Me, Arhoolie. \*\*\*\*\***

This disc is a very pleasant surprise from Arhoolie with the reissue of this material. Both Barbara Dane and Lightning Hopkins excel at the artistry of improvisational blues, lyrically and musically. This approach makes every song new, with just enough of a feeling for the past to let you know that they have done this before.

Originally recorded in Berkeley, CA in 1964, only five tunes were released in 1966, with the remainder being unissued. That "oversight" has been corrected, and makes a musical benefit to anyone that has any interest or appreciation for the basics of blues music. With seventeen tunes and well over an hour of blues fun, it's hard not to try to pass on the joy of listening to this CD.

Barbara Dane has written an eight page liner note booklet that is informative in regards to the recording and to Ms. Dane's own feelings of how and what has happened over the 32 years it took to release this recording.

If you like acoustic blues, do what it takes to add this CD to your collection.



# JAZZ

## A HISTORY & APPRECIATION

Explore—experience—evolve.  
JAZZ, a seminar in three sessions, is hosted by David Sharp, UNL coordinator of Jazz Studies. You'll have the best seat in the house when Sharp is joined by well known Nebraska jazz musicians for scintillating discussion, performance and interactive Q&A with jazz aficionados across the state!

### Session I on September 19

Explore the roots of jazz, listening techniques and the jazz group combo.

### Session II on September 26

Track the evolution of jazz from New Orleans through Big Band.

### Session III on October 3

Trace the development of modern jazz—Bebop, Cool & Hard Bop, Jazz-Rock Fusion & eclectic.

The Lincoln site is the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center—with 11 downlinks across the state via NEB\*SAT satellite. Seminars start at 7:30 PM (6:30 MT) and wind down around 10 PM.

Ainsworth High School  
Alliance—Central Panhandle Cooperative Extension  
Chadron State College  
Columbus—Lakeview High School  
Grand Island College Park  
Hastings College  
Norfolk—Northeast Community College  
North Platte—Mid-Plains Community College  
Scottsbluff—Panhandle Extension Center  
University of Nebraska at Kearney  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Sax player and woodwind specialist Sharp is a working musician with national connections. He is a member of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra and director of the annual Nebraska Jazz Festival. He's appeared with numerous jazz, blues and pop recording artists such as Terance Blanchard, Freddie Hubbard, The Temptations, Rod Stewart, the Woody Herman Orchestra and the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

**Fee \$25 per person**—including handouts from Sharp's book *An Outline History of American Jazz*. Plus—each session includes drawings for CDs and tickets to jazz performances at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

**Deadline: September 5, 1996**

**Information & Registration:**  
Michele Peón-Casanova at  
(402) 472-9333 EXT 375.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee: \$25 per person. Registration Deadline: September 5**

Form of Payment:

Check to PRNF

Credit Card (Visa or MasterCard)

Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Be cool and return this to Michele Peón-Casanova at NPRN, Box 82003, Lincoln, NE 68501.

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# Letters to JAZZ

Dear JAZZ,

Thank you very much for the great coverage of the NJO's Prairie Jazz Fest. Everyone had a great day, and we hope to be able to make it an annual event. We were delighted to see so much attention given to the event in your newsletter - hopefully, it will make others in the Lincoln area excited about local jazz events in the future.

We really appreciate the foundation's efforts to help jazz survive in Lincoln. Jazz in Lincoln has always been a struggle, and we are very fortunate to have your organization helping the cause.

Dean Haist, Ed Love, and the NJO Staff  
Lincoln

Dear JAZZ,

Dean Haist (he and the guys in NJO are very special to me - as they were to my late husband, Orlin) sent me the August issue of JAZZ - along with other things from Jazz Fest. I am so sorry I was unable to be there to see my friends and hear great jazz! I'm happy you covered it. Your publication is very good, I think.

Beth Schwab  
Minnetonka, MN

Write us at: JAZZ, c/o The Berman Music Foundation, 719 P St., Studio G, Lincoln, NE 68508. Or, you can fax us at: 402-475-3136, or e-mail us at: bermanmf@inetnebr.com.

# How can I help the Foundation?

The Berman Music Foundation is a <sup>private</sup> 501(c)(3) foundation, and your tax deductible donation is needed to help offset the costs of this newsletter and its programs.

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

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Makes checks payable to The Berman Music Foundation, and send it to:

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Thank you for supporting jazz in the Lincoln area!

## In the next issue:

KEVIN MAHOGANY AND THE KENNY BARRON TRIO PREVIEW, AND MORE!

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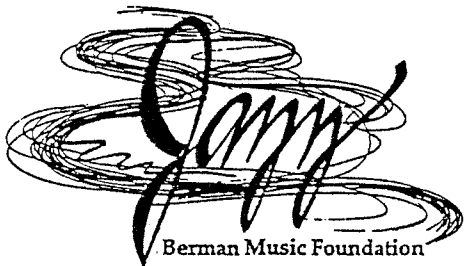
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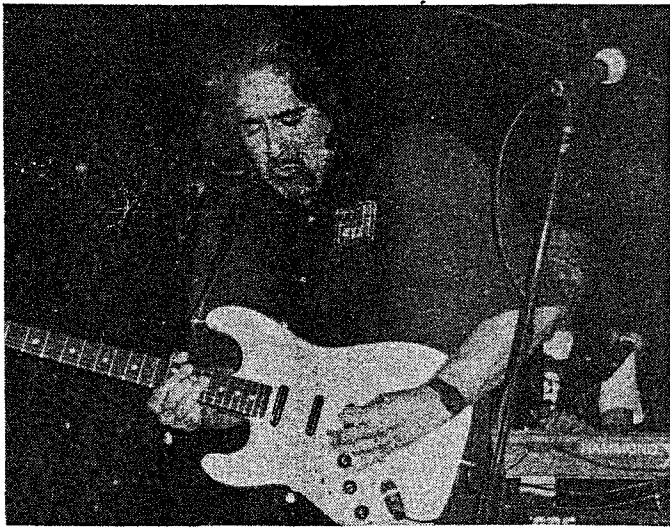


Photo by Rich Hoover  
*July Jammer Coco Montoya at a recent Zoo gig*



Photo by Tom Ineck  
*Claude Williams at The Zoo Bar*

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