



File Photo

Claudio Roditi

Trumpeter Roditi returns for another BMF concert

By Tom Ineck

Early in its history, the **Berman Music Foundation** took an interest in trumpeter Claudio Roditi, bringing him to Lincoln for a performance with saxophonist Greg Abate in February 1996. The concert at the now-defunct 7th Street Loft also featured pianist Phil DeGreg, bassist Bob Bowman and drummer Todd Strait, all of whom have maintained close ties with the BMF.

Roditi returns to Lincoln March 16 as guest soloist with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra at the Cornhusker Hotel ballroom, a performance again sponsored by the BMF. Roditi may not receive the worldwide recognition he so richly deserves, but he has friends and supporters in the Heartland.

Referred to as the Kenny Dorham of the 1990s, Roditi has an exciting edge in his neo hardbop approach. Born in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, in 1946, he began playing piano as a child, but turned to the trumpet at the age of 12. Listening to records by Harry James, Louis Armstrong, Red Nichols and others,

he began mixing jazz with his native music, during the 1960s bossa nova boom.

He moved to the United States in 1970 to study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he picked up an occasional gig until moving to New York in 1976.

Among other leaders who called on him were saxophonists Charlie Rouse and Joe Henderson, flutist Herbie Mann, percussionist Tito Puente and pianist McCoy Tyner, but it was his relationship with Cuban saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera beginning in the early 1980s that best showcased his fiery Latin-tinged style. A versatile player on both trumpet and flugelhorn, he has recorded in numerous jazz settings and was a valuable member of Dizzy Gillespie’s United Nation Orchestra.

As a leader, Roditi has recorded for various labels, including Green Street (1984’s “Red on Red”), Uptown (“Claudio”), Milestone (“Gemini Man” and “Slow Fire”), Candid (“Two of Swords” and the live “Milestones”), Reser-

Claudio Roditi continued on page 3

.
 Winter 2004
 Vol. 9, Number 1

In this issue of *Jazz*....

Prez Sez.....	2
Rob Scheps/Zach Brock Review.....	5
Tomfoolery (T.S. Monk).....	7
Johnny Smith Interview.....	9
Friends of Jazz (Ted Eschliman).....	12
Jazz on Disc.....	14
Discorama.....	16
Sam Furnace Memorial.....	17
Jim Jacobi CD Release Party.....	18

.

*Prez Sez***Looking ahead to a happy new jazz year**By *Butch Berman*

Happy New Year, my friends. Well, let's see... Saddam was sunk, Britney oopsed again, the good ole Cornhuskers found another coach (sorry, Bo) and, for me, the best of it was celebrating two years with my fabulous wife and soulmate Grace. Glory Hallelujah! You'd think with all this that all was groovy—but I must get one beef (mad-cow, perhaps) off my hairy chest.

Our local newspaper coverage of the "best of 2003" hardly mentioned our beloved jazz. By now I'm used to the BMF not always being recognized as a major mover and shaker of the arts around these parts, but to omit most of the great artists who graced our stages last year was a real travesty. I guess when one reviewer includes only the "red-hat" acts that the national media proclaims as hip, the other scribe forever revels in his second childhood, and their editor simply bides her time waiting for retirement—we the public never get the true scope of what is presented here at various venues. No wonder so many of these marvelous shows go unattended.

At least we can be thankful that our University of Nebraska-Lincoln rag, *The Daily Nebraskan*, did an admirable job of covering our incredible Jazz in June series of concerts. Still, unforgettable players like Norman Hedman, Greg Abate, Billy Hart, Harvie S, Bobby Watson, Karrin Allyson and Kansas City's wonderful array of talented cats—the members of The Westport Art Ensemble and Interstring to name a few—were almost totally ignored.

Ah yes...I feel better now. So, let's move forward with the real stories.

Speaking of Jazz in June, under

*Butch Berman*

the excellent leadership of the most astute Doug Campbell and other able colleagues, such as Tom Range, a true jazz fan; Dietze Music House's Ted Eschliman; and musician Darryl White, to single out a few along with moi, met several times the fall to organize another superb lineup for 2004's upcoming major festival. Dig this...

Leading off this year, now a young man of 16—the Russian phenom Eldar Djangirov returns to Lincoln to wow the many fans he blew away three years. BMF consultant bassist Gerald Spaits and another one of KC's most resilient mainstays, drummer Tommy Ruskin, will back him again. Eldar's new CD, "handprints," is a killer (see review in the next edition of *Jazz*). And he promises to bring enough CDs to sell and autograph this year. His show will be sponsored entirely by the BMF.

Jazz's distaff side will be represented tour de force with another returnee and a newcomer, to boot. The BMF brought vocalist Kendra Shank to the Zoo Bar for one of our first presentations back in '95. Now more than

just a rising star, Ms. Shank is recognized around the world as a stylist to contend with. Her many kudos during the past decade are richly deserved. We're very fortunate to be able to see and hear this most amazing chanteuse and her East Coast-based band (featuring one of my favorite pianists and composers, Frank Kimbrough) the second Tuesday in June.

Batting third—and I'm very excited to hear her live for the first time—is trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. I've only listened to her Miles-inspired work on CDs, but if you trust my taste, this show is a must. A Hammond B-3 organist also is expected to be in her entourage.

The aforementioned Mr. Eschliman scored huge with a bullet last season, bringing in the most talented Don Stiernberg, a vastly underrated jazz mandolinist, and his Chicago based band. Well this year he's back, this time

*Kendra Shank*

as a member of a band featuring John Carlini, an amazing bluegrass and jazz

Continued on page 4

Claudio Roditi continued from page 1

voir ("Free Wheelin': The Music of Lee Morgan," "Samba Manhattan Style" and "Double Standards"), Mons (with the Metropole Orchestra) and RTE ("Jazz Turns Samba" and "Claudio, Rio and Friends").

His solo work "Symphonic Bossa Nova" with Ettore Stratta and the Royal Philharmonic, earned Roditi a Grammy nomination in 1995.

Roditi plans to continue to blend the two musical forms he loves. As he told Stan Woolley in *Jazz Journal International*, "I am a Gemini. I was born in one country and live in another but I love them both, and both kinds of music, too".

The following excerpts are from an interview by Gregory F. Pappas April 7, 2001, in San Antonio, Texas:

Pappas: If you had to choose a few bars or a cut representative of your music which would it be?

Roditi: A tune that I wrote called "Gemini Man" represents best the way I feel about samba mixed with jazz. It is from an album I also did by that name.

Pappas: What musicians would you like to play with (alive or dead) and have not had a chance?

Roditi: I guess I have been very fortunate to play with most of them: Raul De Souza (living now in France), Slide Hampton, Edsel Machado (I was in his band before coming to the U.S.), Dom Um Romao, McCoy Tyner (who even recorded some of my tunes) and Horace Silver. I really wanted to play with Art Blakey and I talked with him once. He asked me for my phone number but nothing came about.

Pappas: Are there any particular young musicians that you think deserve wider recognition?

Roditi: There is a Brazilian pi-

ano player called Helio Alves. He plays fantastic. Another one of the few that knows both the Brazilian and Afro-Cuban tradition.

Pappas: You do travel a lot.

Claudio: Yes! You cannot survive if you stay put. I go to Europe quite a bit. I have different groups that I play with, sometimes in Holland but mostly in Germany. I wish I did not have to travel so far and had more opportunities in the USA.

Pappas: Historically the most famous combination of Brazilian with jazz is bossa nova. But are there other combinations worth mentioning? I notice that there is something "harder" about the approach to Brazilian jazz of musicians like Dom Um Romao, Airta Moreira, Hermeto Pascoal and you.

Roditi: Let me explain to you what happen in Brazil in the late '50s and early '60s. When I moved to Rio in 1964 (from a town in the interior) it was the height of the bossa nova period. A record label from Brazil called Musidisc issued in Brazil the entire Pacific Jazz catalog, with artists like Chet Baker, Bud Shank and Gerry Mulligan. Their LPs were available and cost much less than the imported records. That is why cool jazz had such a direct influence in that period, at least on bossa nova. Bossa was music that belonged primarily to singers, guitar players, piano players and composers. But at that time something else happened that I saw first hand but you never hear about in the US. The guys that were playing saxophone, trumpet, drums and trombone were mostly playing what we called samba jazz. In other words, what you are calling a harder approach was played there in the '60s. There were musicians that grew up near the Favelas, like Edison Machado, that also loved Elvin Jones and Art Blakey. They had to play hard!



Jazz is published online at: www.bermanmusicfoundation.org
The office of **The Berman Music Foundation** is at 719 P St., Studio G, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Editor and Designer:
Tom Ineck

Contributing writers:
Butch Berman and Tom Ineck

Photographers: Butch Berman, Rich Hoover and Tom Ineck

For inclusion of any jazz or blues related events, letters to the editor or suggested articles, either mail them to the office, phone (402) 476-3112, fax (402) 475-3136 or e-mail bmusicfoundtn@neb.rr.com.

Our website address is: www.bermanmusicfoundation.org

If you want to be added to our mailing list, call (402) 476-3112, fax (402) 475-3136, or e-mail bmusicfoundtn@neb.rr.com.

The Butch Berman Charitable Music Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)(3) private foundation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service and the Nebraska Department of Revenue. It was established in the spring of 1995 to protect and promote unique forms of jazz music.

Trustee: Butch Berman
Consultants: Dan Demuth, Norman Hedman, Steve Irwin, Gerald Spaits and Wade Wright

Continued from page 2

guitarist. Don't miss this act for our fourth week.

We have five Tuesdays next June, and rounding out this incredible season will be Lincoln's own jazzy big band, the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra (NJO), under the leadership of Ed Love and Dean Haist.

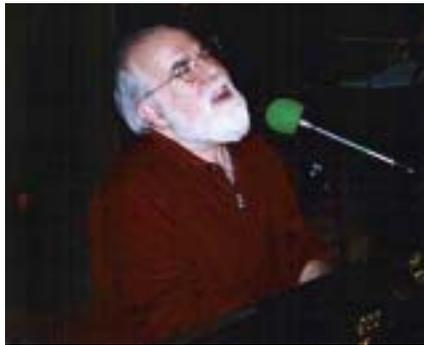
Now onward to some new jazzy happenings to entice you interested readers.

The last show we did at P.O.Pears was a bit bittersweet. Kansas City's incredible Interstring put on their usual dynamite show, but sadly to an almost empty house as we had the World Series to compete with.

This time around, on Jan. 22, the BMF along with Dean Haist's Arts Incorporated debuted a new act based in Portland, Ore., the swinging sounds of my new pal, saxophonist Rob Scheps and his quintet, featuring violinist Zach Brock (see the review elsewhere in this issue). Rob was doing a residency at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center in Nebraska City, organized by Kathy Puzey and Julie Fisher, when he rang me up for a dinner meeting, and we had a ball. Hence, our P.O. Pears concert.

After the T.S. Monk show at the Rococo was pulled due to lack of advance ticket sales, let's hope this isn't becoming a trend. The Rococo people never did much pre-advertising, nor did they contact us to help promote, so maybe that snafu was just a fluke. By the time you read this, hopefully the tide will have turned in favor of more jazz in Lincoln.

Guitarist and vocalist Richard Sullivan and myself, AKA The Lounge Hounds, are still doing most Thursday nights at the DelRay Lounge at 817 R St. Turnout for their weekly shows has also been slim, which is a shame, as the venue is a beautiful, smokeless and acoustically perfect set-up sans much of an audience. Come on folks, your chances and choices to hear cool jazz



Butch Berman

sounds in these parts are dwindling. Check us out, and tell your friends if you like what you hear so the DelRay won't just be another memory of what could have been.

Another great night of music (this time we're talkin' bout rock 'n' roll) also fell victim to poor attendance at the Zoo Bar. Veteran "punk rocker" Jim Jacobi had his CD release party to celebrate his brand new endeavor, "Get Out." All the top-notch players on the disc showed up to cameo their recording performances. Besides Jim's usual rhythm section, consisting of drummer Dave Robel and bassist Craig Kingery, I played piano, along with Dr. Dave Fowler, fiddle; Steve "Fuzzy" Blazek, lap steel; and Charlie Burton and Carole Zacek, vocals. Also in attendance were Rick Petty, congas; Phil Shoemaker, guitar; and Brad Krieger, trumpet.

All turned out to back up Jacobi and put on a great night of manic music delivered in Jim's inimitable style. Not a mention of the show appeared in the entertainment section of Lincoln's daily paper, even after I called ahead to report such. You can still catch a glimpse of what went on by viewing BMF photog Rich Hoover's swell pictorial in this issue of Jazz.

In closing, we were proud to lend a hand in our contribution to jazz education by lending some of our past works and selections from my vast record and CD collections to two separate projects. A Mr. Paul Smith requested our past files from the artist John Falter to help complete his re-



Richard Sullivan

search, as well as lending and recording some of my stuff on a paper about modal jazz for Lincoln guitarist and educator Peter Bouffard. I feel that as a reference source for music, the BMF is in a class by itself, and we are glad to assist.

Also, my dear friend New York percussionist Norman Hedman's new recording, "Because I Can" is nearing completion. Norman's a terrific composer, and the previews I've received lately are simply sensational. He's employing several new vocalists to enhance his already infectious musical creations. Stay tuned, and get ready for the return of master trumpeter Claudio Roditi, who will appear with the NJO in late March (see the story on page 1). That's all, folks, until next time. I leave you all with high hopes for a safe, healthy and happy jazzy New Year.

Ciao,

Butch Berman

Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

Concert Review

Scheps-Brock Quintet sets house on fire

By Tom Ineck

It is unfortunate that the Rob Scheps/Zach Brock Quintet is not a household name because they play like a house on fire!

The quintet made its Lincoln debut Jan. 22 at P.O. Pears, which has been the scene of many a fiery jazz performance in the last couple of years, thanks to the underwriting support of the **Berman Music Foundation** and the weekly jazz programming managed by Arts Incorporated.

There is nothing conventional about Scheps' approach to jazz, and that makes his music very exciting. The oldest member of the quintet by nearly a decade, he shepherds his younger sidemen through the complex changes while allowing them ample freedom to improvise. What results is a captivating performance capable of riveting the attention of even the most jaded jazz fan and holding spellbound the dozens of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln jazz history students who



Photo by Tom Ineck

Rob Scheps

frequent P.O. Pears, notebooks in hand.

An Oregon native, Scheps has lived and worked in Boston and New York City, as well as performing worldwide with artists as diverse

There is nothing conventional about Scheps' approach to jazz, and that makes his music very exciting.

as the Gil Evans Orchestra, trumpeters Clark Terry, Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Henderson and Terumasa Hino, trombonist Roswell Rudd, singers Mel Torme, Dianne Reeves and Nancy King, bandleaders Buddy Rich and Mel Lewis, organist Jack McDuff and avant jazz legends Sam Rivers, Muhal Richard Abrams, Henry Threadgill and Julius Hemphill.

Co-leader Brock, 29, draws on a broad tradition of jazz violin, from Johnny Frigo to Stephane Grappelli and even fusion pioneers Jean-Luc Ponty and Jerry Goodman. Born in Lexington, Ky., he pursued his musical training in Chicago. For the band's Lincoln appearance, he brought along a couple of talented young Windy City musicians, pianist Jordan Baskin, 24, and bassist Matt Ulery, 22. Rounding out the quintet was drummer Morgan Childs, also 22, whom Scheps recruited in Vancouver, B.C.

Brock's piece "Mr. Shah" kicked off the proceedings with an irresistibly clever funk riff, over which Scheps superimposed an extended tenor sax solo, with the rhythm section comping like veterans. The composer also took a solo on his five-stringed instrument, a physical display of pyrotechnics that was, at the same time, disciplined



Photo by Tom Ineck

Pianist Jordan Baskin, violinist Zach Brock and bassist Matt Ulery at P.O. Pears

Continued on page 6

Scheps continued from page 5

in its clean lines and melodic ideas.

“First Morning at the Tower” was composed by bassist Ulery, inspired by a visit to Italy. It was constructed on a complex melody line that worked well as a basis for solos statements by Scheps on tenor, Baskin on keys and Brock on violin. “Olivia’s Arrival” had the familiar sound of a standard, but was in fact a little-known tune by baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan. Scheps and Brock displayed a fine sensitivity in their harmonized lines, the two instruments blending surprisingly well.

For his composition “New Homes,” Scheps switched to flute, an instrument closer to the violin’s range. Beginning at mid-tempo, the tune accelerated as Scheps and Brock joined in a unison line, leading to a flute solo with Baskin first comping on keys then segueing into a full-blown solo. Brock also took another masterful, confident solo.

Scheps again introduced an obscure tune with much merit. It was Joel Weskopf’s blazing “Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting,” a subtle reference to the Charles Mingus swinger “Wednesday Night Prayer



Pianist Jordan Baskin, bassist Matt Ulery and drummer Morgan Childs

Photo by Tom Ineck

Meeting.” It was a tightrope-walking showcase for Scheps on tenor and Brock on violin, first locked in unison and then in successive solos. Baskin joined the fray as all three took solos behind Childs’ skillful drum breaks.

During the break between sets, Scheps told me they like to keep the audience guessing, sometimes alternating between the music of Cole Porter and Nirvana. Neither of those extremes was heard that evening, but the quintet did launch into the second set with Ornette Coleman’s “Happy House,” a tune not heard every day. It allowed Schep to play “outside” on tenor sax and for Brock to show his pizzicato skill, plucking the violin like a rock guitar.

Baskin contributed the lovely “Searching for Solace,” which had a waltz-like lilt. Scheps, on flute, again joined harmonies with Brock. Scheps introduced the ballad “Crestfallen,” saying that he wrote it in Nebraska City, where the band had played the previous night. Brock took the lead, and turned in a gorgeous reading of the tune. “Little Jewel,” also by Scheps, featured a soulful piano introduction and another great tenor solo by the composer.

“Common Ground,” a track from Brock’s CD “The Coffee Achievers,” was another twin-voiced piece featuring Scheps on tenor and Brock on violin. Finally, Scheps pulled out all the stops for “The Cougar,” first working out on the tenor sax, then combining the flute mouthpiece and the sax body to take a soaring solo on the “saxaflute.”

It was the kind of over-the-top antic that few musicians could pull off convincingly. Judging from the response, the Scheps-Brock quintet convinced everyone in the audi-



Zach Brock

Photo by Tom Ineck



Jordan Baskin

Photo by Tom Ineck

Tomfoolery

T.S. Monk champions jazz as popular music

By Tom Ineck

There is no more articulate and passionate advocate of jazz as popular music than T.S. Monk, the distinguished drummer and son of Thelonious Monk. As chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, he also is the keeper of the flame, a responsibility that he takes very seriously.

When Monk and his band were scheduled to appear in Lincoln a couple of months ago, I arranged a live radio interview to take place during "NightTown," my weekly jazz program on KZUM Community Radio. Despite slow ticket sales that forced the concert's cancellation, Monk wanted to go ahead with the phone interview. Familiar with his eloquence from an interview we had done for publication in the Lincoln Journal Star more than a decade ago, I jumped at the chance to chat with him again.

Several recent developments in Monk's career, including the new CD "Higher Ground" and the launch of Thelonious Records (and the website www.monkzone.com) for his own recordings and those of his father, provided plenty of subject matter for our 45-minute, on-air conversation. Monk, as always, proved an easy interview.

On his fresh approach to Ray Bryant's "Cubano Chant" (from "Higher Ground") and other standards that he has recorded: "The great thing about the standard compositions is that they really provide a framework that's intergenerational, that's chronologically neutral in many, many ways, so it allows you to revisit a composition and really bend it and twist it.



T.S. Monk

File Photo

Because it's a standard, it generally means that it has some fundamental, bedrock elements that you really can't do without. As long as they're incorporated, you still have the same tune."

On the timeless accessibility of good music: "That doesn't change from genre to genre or era to era. Those elements that make a hit tune, so to speak, are the same for everyone. It boils down to a haunting melody that you will always remember, a great groove, and generally, some harmonics that make you think and give you some texture."

On the importance of knowing jazz history and developing a jazz vocabulary: "Jazz is a continuum, but in order for it to continue, one must constantly revisit what's gone before you, so that you know that you're in some sort of new territory, or at least in a new region. Often, at least to my ear, a lot of the younger jazz musicians don't learn tunes the way we used to have to learn tunes. You had to know 300 tunes, and what that does for the jazz musician is to increase

your vocabulary. You have to revisit the music that's preceded you in order to maximize your vocabulary, so you can then go into the future and have something new to say."

On the importance of working in the consistent context of a band: "That's key, in terms of finding your creative center. A jazz musician's only true home is in a band, and if you look at the great musicians throughout the history of jazz, every single one came from a great band. You can trace them back, whether it's Bird and Miles back to the Jimmie Lunceford band or you're tracing Coltrane back to the Miles Davis or the Monk band or you're tracing Monk back to the Coleman Hawkins band. We develop a vocabulary, and that vocabulary is developed in order for us to converse. If one is to truly converse properly, you have to talk to each other on a continuous basis. You can't have brief, intermittent conversations. As you have those conversations, you develop ideas. It's the same as it is for the man on the street. It's the same as it is in all the other quarters of society. So, if you listen to what is played by Miles with Red Garland, Jimmy Cobb and Paul Chambers, those records were the result of many, many conversations over many, many nights. The only way you can do that is by keeping a band together. The great entrepreneurs in the recording industry years ago, people like Alfred Lion, understood this clearly. That's why you saw those bands stick together. You saw Monk and (Charlie)

Continued on page 8

Rouse together for years and years. You saw Miles and Coltrane. You saw Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul in Weather Report. You saw Miles and Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams and Wayne Shorter and Ron Carter. Those are all creative cauldrons. It does make a strong case for the continuum of a creative process when musicians can play together regularly. When you look at the (current) landscape of jazz, there aren't many bands that stick together. That's had a negative effect on the overall creative movement in the music."

On the emergence of Wynton Marsalis in the early 1980s and the "jazz star:" "The jazz recording industry got a little enamored with the concept of what they might have misconstrued as 'instant stardom.' As a consequence of that, we saw the jazz labels go on a quest for about 15 years to see who could find the youngest, most unknown 'next,' and it didn't quite work out that way because that's a blueprint that we've taken from pop music and overlaid it on jazz. It doesn't work for jazz because it restricts the concept of artist development, and artist development is the most critical factor in the development of a jazz recording artist. In today's recording environment, my father, Charles Mingus, Eric Dolphy and maybe even John Coltrane in his latter years would not have gotten a recording deal. They were too different. They were doing exactly what they were supposed to do, and right now the industry has gotten an attitude of sameness. The bedrock of the music is individuality."

On Thelonious Records and its mission: "It's originally my father's dream, in that he recorded himself at home and other people recorded him in all kinds of clan-

destine ways. Jazz musicians pioneered the concept of the home production, the self-contained production vehicle—I wrote the music, I played the music, I recorded the music. Thelonious Records is about two things. It's about the Monk family, the branding of the Monk family, that is myself and my father and our music. It's also about new ideas. I can tell you realistically that I'm two years away from the first new ideas, in terms of signing an artist because getting up and running is the critical thing."

On the importance of marketing and promoting jazz: "I'm very old-school, and very P.T. Barnum-oriented and I say, 'Listen, I've got this six-piece band and it's baaaaaaad. It will blow you out. We will kick your you-know-what.' That's how I feel about my band, and that's how I feel about jazz in general. Jazz is the one area in music that has enormous room for growth, and we have to take advantage of that. We have to learn how to sell our products. We have a product that has a shelf life that, we now know, can be as long as 50 or 60 years. We know that we have a marketplace that is international in scope. The concept of how you actually sell this music is a little bit of a mystery, even though it seems to sell year in and year out, at a slow pace. I don't believe that slow pace is a function of the art form. I think that slow pace is a function of the industry, and so I'm looking to change it. If a few other people get involved, we get that shift in the industry the way country music had its shift in the '80s, the way r&b had its shift in the '90s. I have been offended over the years. First, I was offended by people who said that you couldn't teach jazz in an institution. We've been very successful, and in our 18th year, with the

Monk Institute. I got doubly offended by the people who said you can't really market jazz because it's really not for the mainstream. I think that's absolutely ridiculous."

On his concept of "cross-talking" and blending jazz styles: "The umbrella of jazz is really quite vast, as far as I'm concerned. Even though every jazz musician that I know is extraordinarily versatile, I don't see a lot of versatility being reflected in the bands. Bands tend to stay in one little niche. Perhaps because I'm a drummer, and I don't have a melodic instrument to rest on, I like to give you a lot of different looks. Although we change genres or change idiomatically, we don't change the instruments. That's what allows us to cross-talk, so we can please all of the people all of the time."

On his father, who died in 1984, and his mother, Nellie, who died in 2002: "Without Nellie, we would have had no Thelonious Monk. Nellie and Monk met when he was 17 and she was 12 years old, and they started dating when she was 17 and he was 22. She understood his artistry from day one, and she became all things that one human being can be to another—a lover, a friend, a confidant, a brother, a sister. Although I miss her incredibly, because not only was she my mom but I was born on her birthday, I know that she and Thelonious are together now. That's the Romeo and Juliet of jazz. That's one of the great hookups that you ever had."

On "Monk in Paris: Live at the Olympia," a CD and bonus DVD recently released on Thelonious Records: "Thelonious was really a live artist. When you speak to people who had the oppor-

Colorado Correspondent

Guitarist Johnny Smith talks of illustrious career

By Dan Demuth

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Master guitarist Johnny Smith was kind enough to grant me an interview at his home on Jan. 25. He has lived in Colorado Springs since leaving New York in the late 1950s, a move dictated by the loss of his wife, his determination to raise their four-year-old daughter in a better environment, and a growing distaste for the requirements to remain a headliner in the music scene. A difficult decision for someone of his stature at that time? In an interview in the Colorado Springs Independent he was quoted as saying, “The greatest view I ever had of New York City was when I emerged from the Lincoln Tunnel on the New Jersey side and watched the Manhattan skyline recede in my rearview mirror.”

Perhaps most people remember him from the “Moonlight in Vermont” recording of 1952 on Roost which garnered Downbeat’s “Jazz Record of the Year” award and led to a meteoric rise to fame, but this was not an overnight happening. A little background is in order at this point.

His first “professional” gigs were as a teen in a self descriptive band, Uncle Lem and His Mountain Boys. Into the Army as WWII escalated, he aspired to be a pilot in the Air Corps but failed on a vision test. He was assigned to a band unit whose patriotism-inspired chart requirements did not include a guitarist but rather a trumpeter. With no prior experience but a ton of due diligence, he mastered the trumpet and later was assigned to a unit that allowed him to play his

first love, jazz. Returning to Vermont after the war, his job as a staff musician at a local NBC affiliate offered the chance of getting a demo tape auditioned at NBC headquarters in New York. The door had been opened.

“Sitting in” with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and Dimitri Mitropoulis and the New York Philharmonic. Studio work with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini, who he describes as a tyrannical genius, and for network shows including Sullivan, Godfrey, Garroway and Fireside Theater. Nightly gigs on 52nd Street with virtually every musician of note.

For the interview I had some prepared questions, but also had brought along some of his recordings for points of discussion, the liner notes providing somewhat of a retrospective look at his career.

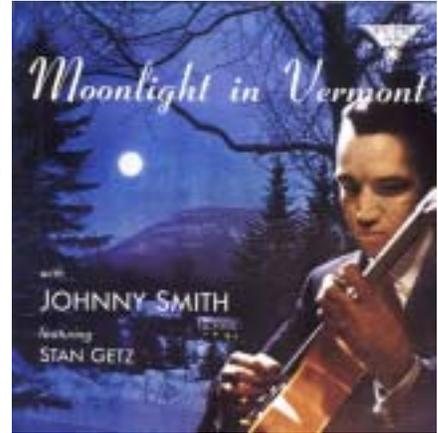
Dan Demuth: Artie Shaw’s career somewhat paralleled yours in that he was working ‘round the clock, studio work in the daytime, gigs every night and then he eventually walked away from it all. How did you survive these types of schedules, was it youth, the adrenalin, both?

Johnny Smith: (Chuckling) I don’t know. One of my favorite things I have mentioned, I was playing an engagement in Birdland, and



Johnny Smith, circa 1976

Photo by Mark Reis



Johnny Smith’s 1952 recording “Moonlight in Vermont,” was Downbeat’s “Jazz Record of the Year.”

I also was doing a thing with the New York Philharmonic under Mitropoulis. I finished Birdland at 4 a.m. and at 9 o’clock that morning I was sitting in the middle of the Philharmonic Orchestra. At the time I left New York I was doing studio, television, recording, night clubs. I was working around the clock.

DD: The reason for leaving all of this—perhaps a combination of the grueling schedules and a personal situation?

JS: It was a tragic situation. My wife died. Our daughter was four years old. No way could I take care of her, working around the clock. I would have to hire nursemaids. I had family here in Colorado Springs, so I figured that was the best excuse I would ever have to get the hell out of New York.

DD: Why Colorado Springs?

JS: I had been out here once. I had two brothers who were out here, and they had moved our par-

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

ents out here from New York City. I came out to see my father for the last time, who had terminal cancer. It was within a month or so back in New York that my wife died.

DD: Over the years you had recorded and toured with the likes of Kenton, Goodman and Basie. The Basie tour makes me ask, where was Freddie Green? Was he away at that time?

JS: No, No. I tell people that Freddie Green was with Count Basie longer than Count Basie. Freddie Green was strictly a rhythm guitar player, I was a soloist. He was there on the tour. He was one of my very favorite people.

DD: I had mentioned Artie Shaw earlier. Did you ever record with Shaw?

JS: No, I never did. I was too busy. He had formed a group called the Gramercy Five. I never worked with them, as I was too busy doing studios and everything else. If I remember correctly, he used Tal Farlow. But, I knew Artie. We used to hang out after hours.

DD: Was he as irascible as everyone said? He has always seemed to have a penchant for saying what was on his mind.

JS: Well I only knew him on a personal basis. It's when you work with somebody that the truth comes out, but I never worked with Artie.

DD: I have brought along some of my collection of your recordings to help me with the notes. (Producing the Royal Roost 78 "Moonlight in Vermont") Am I correct, is this your first recording?

JS: Yes, this is the original one. "Tabu" is on the other side.

DD: The story goes that you felt "Tabu" might be the side that had a chance to succeed?

JS: Yes, it was kind of an

uptempo flashy type of thing. And what happened was "Moonlight in Vermont" was really kind of a fluke. The jazz disc jockeys started using it as a background while they talked, and that's how that caught on.

DD: The group with you on that recording—Stan Getz, Eddie Safranski, Don Lamond and Sanford Gold. I admit I am not all that familiar with Gold. Not being a musician, I have always been interested in how a group comes together for a recording.

JS: Back in the '40s, for the radio shows, I formed a little trio. I had heard about Sanford, and I was able to get NBC to hire him as a piano player for my trio. This went on for several years, and the contractor who was hiring the musicians, Dr. Roy Shields, formed this big orchestra for a weekly radio show. He asked me to form a small group within the orchestra, and to write weekly arrangements to perform during the show. I met Stan Getz at a party. He knew I was with NBC and expressed a desire to get off the road and get some studio work. I was able to get NBC to hire him and I formed this quintet. Don Lamond, Eddie Safranski and Sanford Gold were all on staff. Sanford had a friend, Teddy Reig, who owned Roost Records and gave him an air check tape. Teddy said, "Heck, we'll do a couple of tunes," and that's how that original thing happened.

DD: Amazing! (Producing Roost 10" LP "Johnny Smith Quintet") I believe this is your first LP?

JS: That's correct. As a result of the success of "Moonlight in Vermont," we recorded other things which they put together for this LP.

DD: Two of these, "Tabu" and "Jaguar," are credited to you. Were these some of your first efforts which you wanted on this LP?

JS: Well, prior to that I did arranging for Benny Goodman and other people. Knowing this, the record labels would always try to get the artist to come up with some originals so they wouldn't have to pay copyright fees. As a matter of fact, "Jaguar" was a song I wrote that we performed with the small group within the big orchestra I mentioned earlier.

DD: (Producing the Roost 10" LP, "In A Sentimental Mood," with a shaded green cover, obviously a photo of Johnnie, guitar in lap, hands over his face as in a funk). Would you say this photo is of a pensive, perhaps moody guitarist? I think he looks familiar!

JS: Gosh, I don't even remember this. Maybe I was hiding my face in shame!

DD: I doubt that. My question is regarding the amount of input you had as an artist as to what went on the cover of the LPs, as they offered so much more physical space than modern CDs.

JS: Virtually none. I did on one of the string albums. I had a photographer take a picture of some of the score I was doing.

DD: This LP has "Walk Don't Run" on it. It must have been quite a thrill when some years later the Ventures had a huge hit with it.

JS: Well, Chet Atkins had recorded it. The Ventures covered his recording, which then became the big hit. I really had very little to do with it. I didn't even name the song. I just called it "Opus," and the record company owner came up with "Walk Don't Run".

DD: (Producing the Roost LP "Easy Listening"). OK, on this cover there is a photo of a guitarist and a very attractive young lady reclining in front of a fireplace, but I don't think that gentleman is you.

JS: No, no, sorry it isn't!

DD: (Producing the Roost LP “Designed for You,” which features four guitars superimposed over each other to form a clover effect). The Guild brand is very prominent on the guitars. Is this just happenstance?

JS: I had designed a guitar for Guild. I think they just borrowed one of them and used it for the cover design.

DD: (Producing the Forum LP “Jeri Southern meets Johnny Smith”). Perhaps of interest to Nebraska newsletter readers as Jeri is from Royal, Neb. Have you done other recordings with Jeri? How does a session such as this come about?

JS: No, this was the only one. I had worked on the same bill before with Jeri at Birdland on quite a few occasions. When this LP was done, she was not at her peak—bless her heart, her voice was kind of gone—and they asked me if I would do the arrangements, which is kind of a hidden thought, because they knew I would do them, and wouldn’t charge them. And if you notice, it’s never mentioned, “Arrangements by Johnny Smith.”

DD: (Producing a copy of Decca recording “Jazz Studio”). There is a guitarist listed on here as Sir John Gasser, someone I think you know very well. Can you tell me the story behind this recording?

JS: Stan Getz had gone back on the road, and to satisfy recording requests we were to add Paul Quinichette. Paul didn’t want Decca (a competing label) to use my name, so I was listed as Sir Jonathan Gasser, a terrible thing!

DD: Mosaic recently issued an eight-CD set limited edition containing 178 of your Roost sessions. Are you able to share in the royalties on this?

JS: Unfortunately no. I did

most of the arranging on all of those sessions, but if you don’t have a song copyrighted to you, there is nothing to collect.

DD: Your peers have all been very complimentary of your playing through the years. Did you have any guitarists that you particularly enjoyed?

JS: Oh gosh yes. Starting before WWII, I practically worshiped Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and of course Les Paul. I was so heavily involved in studio work that afterwards I would go around listening to such fine players like Chuck Wayne, Jimmy Raney. I keenly appreciated all of these good players.

DD: Several years back you and Chet Atkins played together at a Dick Gibson Jazz Party, at the Paramount in Denver. Attendees have told me it was great, that you two appeared as if you had played together forever.

JS: We were very dear friends, all through the years. I went down to Nashville on a couple of occasions to record things for Chet. (One with) Don Gibson. I did some arranging for other people. We were very close friends.

DD: I have several Atkins and Gibson LPs. Anything in particular I could seek out that you arranged?

JS: One thing in particular I did with Don Gibson, called “Gibson, Guitars & Girls.” I don’t think I even have it.

DD: I will check mine to see if I have it. (I did, and have given Johnny a tape). Is there any definitive book or discography on your life and recordings?

JS: No, I have had several people want to do this, but I tell them they’re wasting their time. I’ve never been busted for pot or arrested or anything, so my biography would be very dull reading.

There have been quite a few things put out regarding a discography, but not a biography.

DD: Have you kept copies of all your recordings?

JS: My wife kind of keeps the recordings in tow. I think with all of the reissues I probably do. I really don’t keep track of it.

DD: Have you ever looked back and thought to yourself, if you hadn’t quit the business, what might have been?

JS: No. I tell everybody—which is really true—I have got to be one of the most fortunate people in the world because everything that I ever dreamed of doing, really wanted to do, well all those dreams came true. Fortunately, making huge amounts of money wasn’t one of them. Now I’m at peace with everything. I’ve often felt sorry for the people who were on the way out saying, “Gee, I wish I would have done this or that.” I’m not one of them.

After the interview, Johnny invited me into his “room” for a libation. We continued discussing things (not taped). He has a modest amount of memorabilia on the walls, fully retaining what really counts, the memories in his mind. Photos of Rosie Clooney and her sons flying in here to get mountain flying lessons from Johnny (his failed Air Corps ambition later realized by being a long time private pilot and teacher). He spoke of his great love of fishing—he and friends go twice a year deep sea fishing off of Mexico. He toured several times with Bing Crosby, relating how on the last tour’s end he bid Bing goodbye in England on a Monday, and Bing died on the golf course in Spain four days later.

All interviews must end somewhere, but I did not feel as if I had been part of an interview. It was more of a conversation with an old friend I had never met before.

*Friends of Jazz***Eschliman champions jazz mandolin***By Tom Ineck*

Ted Eschliman frequently and casually refers to himself as a “hack.” In the broadest sense, the word is short for “hackney” and usually refers to someone who does something in a banal, routine or commercial manner.

Eschliman is just being modest. A talented multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer and arranger with a degree in music education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he is part owner and marketing director of Dietze Music House, where he’s been employed for more than 23 years.

Most recently his far-ranging interest in music has made him a devotee of the jazz mandolin, as a player and collector of mandolins, as well as a dogged promoter of the instruments and the people who play them. He was largely responsible for bringing the Don Stiernberg Quartet to Lincoln for last summer’s Jazz in June concert series, and in 2003 he started his own website to preach the gospel of jazz mandolin: www.jazzmando.com. He now sits on the Jazz in June board of directors and was instrumental in adding guitarist John Carlini (with guest artist Stiernberg) to the 2004 lineup.

“I picked up the mandolin about 5½ years ago,” Eschliman recalls. “It was an intriguing instrument and different from guitar. What surprised me was how little was known about what this instrument could do. As I got into it, I discovered that there is a really rich tradition. My 96-year-old grandmother talked about the mandolin clubs at

*Ted Eschliman*

Photo Courtesy Ted Eschliman

the University of Nebraska back in the teens, almost a hundred years ago.”

With the advent of the banjo, the electric guitar, and swing bands, the mandolin literally began to recede into the background of popular music because its more delicate, high-register sound could not be heard. There were few innovators outside the Smoky Mountains, where mandolins still were figured prominently in bluegrass bands, especially those of Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers.

He says he was so enchanted by “the perfect symmetry and jazz potential” of his first mandolin in 1998 that he became “very passionate about bringing this genre to the front. People are familiar with jazz guitar, with Joe Pass and Pat Metheny and George Benson. I’m a little bit of a hack guitar player, but I’ve discovered in picking up the mandolin that there’s a whole world out there that has yet to be developed.”

It is unfortunate, says Eschliman, the small, four-stringed instrument has gotten itself a bad rap, as it is usually associated with “toothless codgers sitting on the back porch in bib overalls.” The stereotypical mandolin players are either hillbillies or schmaltzy Italian troubadours, limiting the instrument’s appeal for a larger audience.

Unlike the structural freedom of jazz, tunes traditionally associated with the fiddle and mandolin are constricted to a diatonic scale that is very limiting for more adventurous players. But to Eschliman’s educated ears, the mandolin seems ideal for jazz.

“The acoustics of the instrument lends itself so well to the genre that I’m amazed it hasn’t been tapped into sooner by more people.” By nature, jazz broadens the palette from which the mandolin artist can work.

“Jazz gets you into not only a richer harmonic vocabulary; it also pulls in multiple keys. If you listen to a good, jazzy Broadway show tune, you’re going to have eight or nine different tonal centers there, so harmonically it’s a lot more engaging. To some bluegrass players, it’s frightening.” Eschliman is quick to point out exceptions to this rule, virtuosos who have blended their bluegrass roots with jazz dabbling, most notably Jethro Burns and David Grisman.

Eschliman and his wife have a five-year-old daughter, and he has nothing but praise for his wife’s patience and understanding.

“She’s gotten used to the fact that she never knows what I’m going to be doing and what I’m going to get deeply into and passionate about. Lately, it’s been this whole jazz mandolin thing. It’s been my ticket to the world.”

Eschliman launched the website as a way to journal the things he was learning about his new instrument. He began transcribing exercises from the keyboard to the mandolin fret board to share with others online, first in music notation, then in tablature.

Through his website, Eschliman corresponds with mandolin students, musicians and fellow “hacks” from around the globe, including Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and France. Jazz mandolin, it seems, is growing in popularity and awareness, especially in Europe, he said.

Searching the Web a couple of years ago, he came up with Don Stiernberg, the Chicago-based jazz

mandolinist whose quartet performed in Lincoln last June.

“Coincidentally, I had gone to a mandolin festival in Lawrence, Kansas, 2½ years ago, and he was doing a clinic there. I got to meet him there, and we got to be pretty good friends. Our dream is that our kids will think of the mandolin as just as much a jazz instrument as a trombone or a sax. That’s a pretty tall dream.”

Part of that dream may be realized soon. The popular Mel Bay Publishing company has asked Eschliman to write a book on jazz mandolin. He already has written a couple of instructional articles for mandolinsessions.com, another way of expanding interest in the instrument.

“That’s just such virgin territory right now that a hack like me can come up with stuff like that. It’s funny that I could be an expert when there are people who are more qualified. The thing I’ve known in being involved in the arts is that there are plenty of

professional players that are just monster virtuosos and technicians, but they couldn’t tell you anything about what they’re doing. They couldn’t explain it.”

Eschliman’s own collection of mandolins includes an Ovation for plugged-in acoustic playing; a blue, custom-made Rigel; a traditional Gibson for bluegrass playing; an Epiphone that used to belong to bluegrass legend Jethro Burns; and a miniature gypsy-style Djangolin.

The market for mandolins and acoustic string music in general has grown, perhaps due to the phenomenal success of the recent film “Oh Brother, Where art Thou?” Eschliman thinks it also may be a reaction to the deluge of electric guitars and guitar players in pop music.

To help counter the emphasis on guitars and other more traditional jazz instruments, Eschliman currently is touting jazz mandolinists Michael Lampert and Will Patton; and similarly flavored French gypsy jazz.

Tomfoolery (radio interview with T.S. Monk)

Continued from page 8

tunity to see Thelonious perform live most of them say, ‘I went back and saw him every night for two weeks,’ because he was the real thing. Thelonious could play you 20 different solos on the same tune over 20 nights. On these recordings that I have now that we’re going to be releasing over the next several years, the band is thumpin’. The band is really swingin’. A lot of listeners are most familiar with the CBS recordings that he did because those are the clearest, those are the best recordings, and those probably have the highest visibility, even more so than the Blue Note and Prestige recordings. But even on those recordings, you don’t get the energy

level that Thelonious projected. In many ways, you could misconstrue Thelonious as sort of a laid-back guy. But the reality is that this is the guy who influenced John Coltrane and Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie and a whole generation of the greatest who ever lived. And, it was because he was very exciting. In these recordings that we have with Thelonious Records, that’s what’s going to come out—how much fun Thelonious was live. And, when you see Thelonious (on the DVD), then a lot of the things he played make even more sense.”

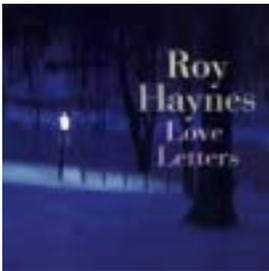
On Thelonious Monk’s piano-playing style and philosophy of “practice”: “Thelonious was a

great player. The great piano player Barry Harris once said to me that there were two players he knew that he never heard ‘practice.’ They only played. They ‘practiced’ playing. That was Thelonious and his main protégé, Bud Powell. When I think back, I say, ‘You know what, I never heard my father play a scale. I never heard him do any of those exercises that you always hear piano players doing, two-hand scales and all that kind of stuff. What he would do was sit down at the piano at 10 o’clock in the morning and not stop until 8 o’clock, before he went to the club at night to play his gig. He would be absolutely performing.”

Jazz on Disc

Roy Haynes delivers with all-star session

By Tom Ineck



ROY HAYNES
Love Letters
Columbia Records

“Love Letters” is among the most exciting jazz CDs of the last year. Actually released in late 2002, it features a sterling group of musicians in various combinations fronted by bebop-era master Roy Haynes on drums. Unlike so many overly hyped “all-star” recordings that turn out dull as dirt, this session virtually leaps with joy and camaraderie. Let there be no mistake, Haynes is in charge here, but he readily acknowledges the top-drawer musicianship of his younger comrades-in-arms.

Blazing from the get-go, “The Best Thing for You” places tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman front and center. Guitarist John Scofield gets the spotlight on “That Old Feeling,” with bassist Dave Holland and pianist David Kikoski taking short solos and Haynes comping tastefully on brushes.

The trio of Haynes, Scofield and Holland create a brilliant new interpretation of “Afro Blue.” Pianist Kenny Barron lends haunting harmonies to Redman’s lead tenor line on “Que Pasa,” as Haynes and bassist Christian McBride keep a furious tempo. Haynes, Barron and McBride skip lightly through a mid-tempo ver-

sion of “How Deep is the Ocean,” with Haynes again showing his consummate skill on brushes.

Scofield takes up the torch again on the title track, urged on by Holland and Haynes, whose virtuosic drum work is submerged just enough to give Scofield the spotlight while remaining a powerful element in the mix. An up-tempo rendition of “My Shining Hour” is barely out of the gate before McBride turns in a stunning solo, followed by Redman and Barron trading fours and Haynes going into his bottomless bag of tricks for some pure percussion magic.

The Benny Goodman rave-up “Stompin’ at the Savoy” gets a subdued treatment by Scofield with Kikoski and Holland comping. The final statement is the percussion solo “Shades of Senegal 2,” in which Haynes slowly builds the polyrhythmic structure.

It’s good to hear a venerable master of Haynes’ stature back on a major label, with sidemen and material worthy of his esteemed company.



SANDY GRAHAM
...By Request
Jazz Link Enterprises

Singer Sandy Graham justifiably gets the star treatment here, backed by a team of veterans that

includes pianist Gerald Wiggins, guitarist Ron Anthony and drummer Ralph Penland. On three tracks, a six-piece string section creates a lush backdrop for Graham’s vocals. She also acquired the liner note-writing skills of the prolific Scott Yanow.

Graham has a swinging, lilting voice with a strong vibrato, a great combination for tunes like the clever opening title track, which also benefits from the tenor sax work of Herman Riley and Richard Simon’s walking bass line. Her expressive phrasing works well on “Here’s that Rainy Day/It’s Nice Weather for Ducks,” “My Heart Tells Me,” “Close Enough for Love,” “Love for Sale” and “Good Morning Heartache/Lover Man.”

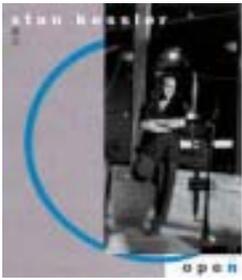
The standard song list is wisely balanced with lesser-known tunes like Alec Wilder’s “Trouble is a Man,” the beautiful but obscure Melba Liston composition “Coat of Laughter,” Teri Thornton’s “Los Angeles,” and Ellington’s “The Brown Skin Gal in the Calico Dress.”

The strings warmly wrap Graham’s voice in a blanket of sound on the romantic ballads “Something I Dreamed Last Night,” “Love Story” and “Through a Long and Sleepless Night.”

Only Graham’s occasional tendency to waver off key prevents this from being a superb recording.

To purchase CDs, write Graham & Associates, P.O. Box 241725, Los Angeles, CA 90024, or visit Jazz Link Enterprises at:

www.jazzlinkenterprises.com.



STAN KESSLER

Open

Fans of Kansas City jazz trumpeter Stan Kessler who yearn for a straight-ahead recording, apart from his more tropical Sons of Brasil project, are advised to check out his new release, "Open." It is Kessler in his most adventurous and creative mood, on a set of standards and originals designed to captivate the most jaded listener.

There is no doubt about his intentions, from the unique arrangement of the evergreen opener "It Could Happen to You" to the bluesy grit of Sonny Clark's "Cool Struttin'" to the more conventional reading of "Detour Ahead." Kessler is flexing his chops and proving his versatility with every lick.

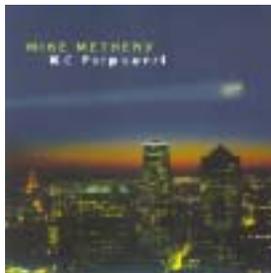
To help make his point, Kessler has chosen a stellar crew to round out his sextet, and all but one of the musicians hails from KC. Cincinnati pianist Phil DeGreg is the ringer, a powerful addition to an already potent musical brew consisting of guitarist Danny Embrey, bassist Bob Bowman, drummer Todd Strait and percussionist Gary Helm.

"Open" certainly exhibits an occasional Latin tinge, such as the lilt of "Journey," featuring some nice guitar work by Embrey and a whole battery of percussion by Strait and Helm. Their version of "Close Your Eyes" has Kessler soaring on trumpeter over a pulsing hotbed of Afro-Cuban polyrhythm. But the lion's share of "Open" remains close to the jazz mainstream.

On Wayne Shorter's ballad "Infant Eyes," Kessler tastefully demonstrates the deep warmth and tonal beauty that the flugelhorn is capable of expressing in the right hands. With the same horn, he goes uptempo for "I Hear a Rhapsody," with some inventive counterpoint by DeGreg. The pianist is featured front and center on the aptly titled shuffle "Blue Man," which also gives Bowman a chance to show his stuff in a well-constructed bass solo.

Kessler and company get funky on "Sacred Cow," Strait popping the snare drum and Embrey digging it with riffing rhythm guitar lines and a slithering solo statement. "Squall Line" pits Kessler and Strait in feisty head-to-head combat, intricate trumpet lines weaving boldly around snare, tom-toms and cymbals.

The jazz waltz "Berlin November" is another showcase for the flugelhorn. Kessler hands it off to DeGreg for a spirited piano solo, which gives way to Bowman's bass before returning to Kessler's exquisite melody line. It perfectly symbolizes the sustained sense of camaraderie and musical rapport of "Open."



MIKE METHENY

KC Potpourri

3 Valve Music

As editor of Kansas City's *Jazz Ambassadors Magazine* (JAM) for the last decade, Mike Metheny already has established himself as a skilled and insightful journalist. Even before that, the trumpeter had several recordings under his belt, including a pair in the late

1980s on the MCA/Impulse label.

Suffice it to say that the Lee's Summit, Mo., native has proven himself well beyond the blood relationship with brother Pat, the wildly popular jazz and fusion fretmeister who virtually defined the direction of jazz guitar over the last 25 years.

And now trumpeter Metheny returns with "KC Potpourri," a showcase not only for his own playing (on cornet, flugelhorn and electronic wind instrument) but the world-class musicianship of more than a score of Kansas City area players, in small-group and big-band settings. In its embarrassment of riches and in Metheny's generosity with his esteemed fellow sidemen, this CD amounts to a KC love fest.

It kicks off with a killer rendition of "The Flintstones Theme," featuring the swinging Soundtrek Big Band, named for the KC studio where this CD was "waxed." It serves as a paean to the classic Basie riffs on which the legend of Kansas City jazz was founded. On muted cornet, Metheny cleverly punctuates the powerful brass and reed onslaught.

But it is Metheny's beautiful phrasing and tone on the flugelhorn, especially on brother Pat's ballad "Always and Forever" that most impresses this listener. He brings new warmth to this familiar romantic refrain, and the big band tastefully paints a shimmering backdrop for Metheny's solo statements. The flugelhorn also figures prominently on the classic closer, "We'll be Together Again."

The well-chosen play list includes John Lewis' "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West."

Wisely, flugelhorn is the instrument of choice here, with six of the nine tracks featuring the larger, warmer brass instrument. Muted cornet appears on two tracks, and the EVI is plugged in only once. This is a blessing to those of us who have always thought of the instrument as a poorly synthesized equivalent of the real thing.

Discorama**Cables release is one of his most personal**

By Butch Berman

**GEORGE CABLES
Looking for the Light
Muse Records**

I got chills the first time I heard George Cables with Dexter Gordon. I got fever the first time I heard George Cables with Art Pepper. I got goose bumps when George played my piano for nearly an hour, rearranging and arrangement of “Body and Soul” prior to a Lincoln, Neb., Jazz In June concert.

I didn’t even know “Looking for the Light” existed until my wife, Grace, heard something about a new George Cables release on NPR. I’m thinking to myself, “I know I haven’t spoken with George for awhile, but how did I miss out on one of the loveliest and swinging releases of 2003?”

Nevertheless, “Looking for the Light” evoked all the aforementioned emotions...and then some!

I first met George at a recording session for a CD I helped put out on a Seattle, Wash., songstress named Andrienne Wilson. This project was produced by my true “soul brother,” Norman Hedman, about seven or eight years ago. I’ve been most fortunate to have experienced mucho quality hang time with Mr. C. and have drunk in his exquisite, magical musical expressions from coast to coast.

Reading George’s poignant liner

notes regarding his noble struggles with health problems touched me deeply and inspired me to realize that even though our bodies age and become more unpredictable, our eternal spirits and creative juices still remain intact, vital and evolving. It’s all ‘bout faith, passion and surrender.

Even if George had left the inner pages blank, these eight magnificent creations would still spread the message. As far as “covers” go, his spellbinding rendition of the Goffin/King tune “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?” tells all you’ll ever need to know on the lessons of love, loving, sometimes losing and simple living. Bravo, George. You really tore me up on this one.

George is backed by the crème de la crème of today’s jazz world, saxophonist Gary Bartz, bassist Peter Washington and another dear old



Photo by Butch Berman

George Cables sits at Butch Berman’s piano with Grace Sankey Berman.

friend of mine whose career I’ve followed since our University of Nebraska-Lincoln days back in the early ‘70s, the Monet of jazz drumming, Victor Lewis.

“Looking for the Light” is one of George Cables’ most personal endeavors. Dash out and find it soon to make it one of yours too. God bless you, George.

Letter to the editor

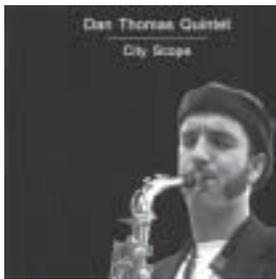
With office work very demanding and time consuming, I felt badly about not signing up for IAJE (International Association of Jazz Educators conference). It looked better attended than ever, well capitalized and organized. But I took yesterday off instead of my normal Tuesday to get jazzed a bit.

I started with a JJA (Jazz Journalists Association) party at a great new club, which will open in February with Dee Dee Bridgewater. Then I walked to the NEA (National Education Association) Jazz Masters Awards Concert. Aside from a heartwarming acceptance speeches by recipients, in particular Nancy Wilson, in performance during the three-plus hours were Jimmy,

Tootie and Percy Heath, Paquito D’Rivera, Rufus Reid, Hubert Laws, Billy Taylor, Winard Harper, Dave Brubeck, Clark Terry, Jon Hendricks, Mark Murphy, Kevin Mahogany, Kurt Elling, James Williams, Ben Riley and Ray Drummond.

Afterwards, I walked over to Birdland to hear Branford Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., and more, all without being more than 20 minutes from home, all without paying a cover or other entrance charge. It was one of those evenings that reminds my why I live where I do.

*Russ Dantzer
New York City, N.Y.*



DAN THOMAS QUINTET CityScope

I get a lotta mail, and I'm getting older (maybe wiser, too), so it's not like I forget... but sometimes I just can't remember. So...that what haps yesterday when I received "City Scope," the debut of Dan Thomas and his quintet.

It all came back to me after the first spin, and again today when I shared by first steamin' cup of joe with this mighty fine piece of work. I will now always remember Dan Thomas.

Yea, I get stuff sent to me daily,

and I probably wouldn't have gotten to it so soon if I hadn't noticed that the liner notes were written by one of my very favorite musicians... let alone his saxual magic, I'm talkin' 'bout Bobby Watson, of course.

I couldn't help draw parallels in recognizing a similar projection of fluidity within their hallowed tones, shapes and phrases, but this story is about Dan Thomas. Of Canadian origin, Dan displays ample chops and composing skills on both the alto and soprano saxes. His spirit, his obvious driving leadership and his passion surge to the forefront throughout this solid effort.

Either Thomas or drummer Jim Erikson penned all the selections. His ballad numbers are as lovely in their romantic leanings as the upbeat tunes reflect their infectious stylings. This CD represents a showcase of some classic jazz, and superlative playing.

My friend Roger Wilder plays his piano parts as creatively and smartly as I've ever heard him live, and he's always on the money. Pianist Bram Wijnands is no slouch on the bass either, in blending comfortably with Erikson and in his "bright moments" solos, as well. Trumpeter and University of Missouri-Kansas City educator Joe Parisi, along with Thomas, demonstrates some great front-line excursions and blows most admirably.

"City Scope" is both hot and cool in the right places, and should be received well and played in EVERY city. Check this one out, and spread the word. Dan Thomas is on the move.

For all you may need, contact Dan Thomas on the web at:

www.danthomas.info.

Memorial

Tropique saxophonist Sam Furnace dies

A longtime member of Norman Hedman's Tropique and a friend of the **Berman Music Foundation**, saxophonist Sam Furnace died recently of liver cancer at age 48.

Furnace last appeared in Lincoln with Hedman's tropical jazz ensemble for a BMF-sponsored Jazz in June performance last summer. His accomplishments, however, went far beyond his tenure with Hedman.

Furnace was a multi-reedist, composer and arranger and had performed with Jaki Byard, Art Blakey, Abdullah Ibrahim, McCoy Tyner, Randy Weston, Al Hibbler, Tito Puente, Machito, Charlie Persip, Chico O'Farrill and Bernard Purdie. He can be heard on recordings with Mongo Santamaria, Milt Hinton, Craig Harris, Johnny Copeland, Elliot Sharp, The Julius Hemphill Saxophone Sextet, The New York Jazz



Photo by Rich Hoover

Sam Furnace at Jazz in June.

Composer Orchestra, the Jazz Passengers, and Wayne Gorbea, as well as Tropique.

One of his longtime associations was as alto and baritone saxophonist with the Brooklyn Sax Quartet, which also included Fred Ho (baritone and alto sax), David Bindman (tenor sax),

and Chris Jonas (soprano sax). The quartet's debut recording is "The Way Of the Saxophone" (Innova, 2000).

Bindman and Ho formed the group in 1995, associating the project with the members' home base, the borough of Brooklyn.

With a fiery and sharp sound, Furnace, came out of the r&b camp of Johnny "Clyde" Copeland's "Texas Twister" and the Cuban bandleader Mongo Santamaria in the '80s. In the '90s he worked extensively with Julius Hemphill; including in the all-sax Julius Hemphill Sextet, which teamed him with Marty Ehrlich, Andrew White, James Carter, Fred Ho, and (in Hemphill's absence) Tim Berne.

Furnace played alto sax and flute on five tracks from Tropique's release of 2000, "Taken By Surprise."

CD Release Party

Jim Jacobi celebrates release of “Get Out”

Veteran “punk rocker” Jim Jacobi had his CD release party Dec. 16 at the Zoo Bar in Lincoln to celebrate his brand new endeavor, “Get Out.” All the players on the disc were there to cameo their recorded performances. Jacobi’s rhythm section, drummer Dave Robel and bassist Craig Kingery, was joined by Butch Berman, piano; Dr. Dave Fowler, fiddle; Steve “Fuzzy” Blazek, lap steel; and Charlie Burton and Carole Zacek, vocals. Also in attendance were Rick Petty, congas; Phil Shoemaker, guitar; and Brad Krieger, trumpet.



Jim Jacobi, guitar; Craig Kingery, bass; Dave Robel, drums; and Butch Berman, keyboard.



Jim Jacobo, Craig Kingery and Rick Petty, congas.



Carole Zacek and Jim Jacobi.

Photo by Butch Berman



Phil Shoemaker and Butch Berman.



Jim Jacobi, guitar; Brad Krieger, trumpet; Craig Kingery, bass.

**All Photos By
Rich Hoover**
(except where noted)



Dave Fowler takes a break.



Photo by Butch Berman

Jim Jacobi and Dave Robel visit during a break.



Jim Jacobi, guitar; Steve Blazek, lap steel; Dave Fowler, fiddle; Charlie Burton, vocals; Craig Kingery, bass.



Non Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Permit No. 1359
 Lincoln, NE

Butch Berman Charitable Music Foundation
 719 P St. Studio G
 Lincoln, NE 68508

Return Service Requested

Sam Furnace (R.I.P.)



Photo by Rich Hoover

Sam Furnace plays alto saxophone with Norman Hedman's Tropique during a Jazz in June performance in Lincoln.

How can you help the foundation?

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

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

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Fax _____
 E-mail _____

Make check payable to Berman Music Foundation at:
 Berman Music Foundation
 719 P St., Studio G
 Lincoln, NE 68508

Thanks for supporting jazz!