

Bassist Christian McBride and Saxophonist Joe Lovano to be at Lied

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Lovano & McBride to share a double bill at Lied Center

By Tom Ineck

Saxophonist Joe Lovano and bassist Christian McBride are undisputed leaders on their respective instruments.

They also lead two of the most dynamic quartets on today's jazz scene. The Lovano and McBride bands will share the stage Feb. 8 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, a concert underwritten by the Berman Music Foundation.

In a rare case where critics and fans agree, Lovano was voted jazz artist of the year in Down Beat's 1995 and 1996 critics poll and named tenor saxophonist of the year in Down Beat's 1995 readers poll. "Quartets: Live at the Village Vanguard" was album of the year in the 1996 readers poll and "Rush Hour" was album of the year in both the critics and readers polls in 1995.

Lovano's latest recording is "Celebrating Sinatra," a tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes scheduled for release in mid-January. He also is on the current release by Branford Marsalis, "The Dark Keys."

McBride, at 24, is on everyone's first-call list, appearing on more than 100 recordings in the last six years. Since serving formative apprenticeships with Betty Carter, Wynton Marsalis, Freddie Hubbard, Benny Green and Joshua Redman, the young bassist has released a pair of discs as a leader on the Verve label, most recently "Number Two Express."

Lovano and McBride have shared double bills before, including appearances this summer at Tanglewood and at the Warsaw Jazz Festival in Poland. They are booked together at several venues in February.

Both quartets have exactly the same

instrumentation. Accompanying Lovano are pianist Kenny Werner, bassist Dennis Irwin and drummer Yoron Israel. McBride's band features tenor saxophonist Tim Warfield, pianist Charles Craig and drummer Carl Allen.

In a recent phone interview, Lovano promised that the Lied audience will hear material from the Sinatra tribute, as well as from "Quartets," a two-disc set recorded live at the Village Vanguard in New York City and released in late 1995.

"The quartet has a lot of magic happening in it because we're exploring different ways of playing together, different combinations," Lovano said.

Listeners can expect musical magic from both quartets, and maybe even a jam session at concert's end.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. concert are \$24, \$20 and \$16; half price for students. For more information, call the Lied Center Box Office at 472-4747 or 1-800-432-3231.

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The Prez sez...

Holiday Greetings Jazz Buffs,

Happy New Year, my faithful readers. I'm writing this pre-97, but as we're going to run our (ever increasing in volume) newsletter every six weeks instead of monthly - you'll be reading this in early January. Hopefully, bigger sometimes is better, as we seem to have more to say regarding the jazz scene from a wider array of areas and venues - especially as of late...Kansas City. This not only pleases our legal counsel, who really tries to keep us on a budget, but lets our staff of writers give you more complete coverage of events not always accomplished within a 3-4 week deadline. We've appreciated your feedback on this too, readers.

Starting with this issue - expect more jazz info from the Seattle, Washington scene, as my once professional acquaintance with Michele Michaels from Freewill Artistry has turned entirely too personal for just biz - so a "mini-merge" between our concerns can only mean more cool sights and sounds for you all - enjoy the ride! You'll be able to meet Michele as she'll be in Lincoln co-hosting with me the Berman Music Foundation's co-sponsorship of the Christian McBride and Joe Lovano show at the Lied Center on February 8. More details within as you read on.

The usual crappy winter driving conditions prevented me from attending the Terrence Blanchard concert at the Folly Theater in KC. With better luck - the next couple of weeks could be a jazz lovers dream. Starting January 31-February 2 at the Concert Hall in Brownville, will be Bobby Watson and Friends. Every time I've seen him live the electricity envelopes the entire room with magic. Bobby's work never fails to thrill me - a true jazz experience. But then...a fabulous show at the new Station Casino in KC features a benefit for the storm stricken KC Jazz and Blues Festival from last year, with an unbelievable cast of stars. Charlie Haden and Quartet West with Ernie Watts; Joe Henderson Trio with Al Foster and George Mraz; and the entire band (almost) used for the Robert Altman film "Kansas City" (see the September issue of JAZZ). Then to top it off - our great show at the Lied! Jazz is happening right here and all around us. Let's all work together to make '97 a continuation of this superb beginning.

Also, in closing I want to recognize new friends in the jazz world I've been lucky enough to deal with. One's Lee Kavanaugh, who while living near KC, plays bass trombone with the NY all woman big band - Diva - and is the editor of the Mid-America Arts Alliance own magazine. Lee's the wife of drummer Keith Kavanaugh, the beat behind the Doug Talley Quartet (who I reviewed last issue). Talley's wife, Elena, has also extended her kindness towards me in getting the BMF more connected with the KC jazz cats. It's people like this who make this gig a blast. Last, but not least is Andrienne Wilson. Michele works for and with this very talented lady as their Freewill Artistry has a roster of talent that consists of the likes of George Cables

(one of my jazz piano idols I get to meet in Seattle next February), Reggie Workman, and Norman Hedman to name a few. Andrienne herself is an incredible musician, singer, arranger and songwriter, whose CDs are reviewed by Tom Ineck in this issue and are totally worth checking out. '96 ended on the up-beat, here's to '97!

With a song in my heart,



Butch Berman

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Joe Lovano tips hat to Sinatra on new CD

By Tom Ineck

Saxophonist Joe Lovano is by no means the first jazz musician to celebrate the music of Frank Sinatra.

Most recently, singer Carol Sloane and multi-reed legend James Moody released tributes to Ol' Blue Eyes (both are reviewed in this issue). Singer Tony Bennett and Danish baritone saxophonist Per Goldschmidt also have weighed in with Sinatra-inspired discs.

But Lovano's entry, "Celebrating Sinatra," takes a different approach, while remaining true to the singer's lyrical spirit and to Lovano's own concept of musical diversity.

That concept has taken shape in recordings and in performance over the last few years, but it really came to fruition on "Rush Hour," Lovano's acclaimed 1995 collaboration with composer-arranger Gunther Schuller. On that CD, original compositions and standards are performed in a variety of formats using small groups, large jazz ensembles, a string section and the soprano voice of Judi Silvano, Lovano's wife.

In a phone interview from his home in upstate New York, Lovano said the new record is the logical next step.

"The Sinatra project is a continuation of that sound, with the woodwinds and strings and voice and rhythm section. It's just adding music to my repertoire from my ensemble sound."

Lovano, 44, had always wanted to record an album of standards from the Great American Songbook. What better inspiration than Frank Sinatra, who knew how to pick a great tune? As young Joe was growing up in Cleveland, the son of tenor saxophonist Tony "Big T" Lovano, Sinatra's voice was ubiquitous in the Lovano household.

"I grew up hearing him all my life," he recalls. "Hearing his tone, his interpretation, was like listening to Miles or Bird play a tune. Once you hear them play it, that's it. That's what inspires you to try to learn that tune. Sinatra had that same effect on me."

So, how do you choose 13 tunes to represent Sinatra's entire output?

"He recorded about 750 tunes and I picked all those tunes talking to my mom and my aunt Rose," Lovano said. "They gave me lists of tunes they loved, and they were all tunes that I heard my dad play and tunes that I had studied myself."

The challenge was to give each tune a distinctive Lovano flavor, since most of them had either been played by everyone or, in the case of "Chicago," no one.

"I'd never heard anybody even play it," Lovano said. "Sonny (Rollins) hadn't even recorded 'Chicago.'"

So Lovano opened up the melody, added a few bars, reharmonized the tune a little and, finally, set it in a duo format with drummer Al Foster.

Lovano called on old friends to help out, including



Joe Lovano

fellow reed players Dick Oatts, Ted Nash and Billy Drewes. He first worked with orchestrator and conductor Manny Albam in the early 1980s, when Albam asked him to substitute for Phil Woods in a performance with a string orchestra.

"It was the first time I ever played live with a string orchestra and a rhythm section and no horns," Lovano said of Albam. "So, when I was putting this project together, he was at the top of the list to do orchestrations. He just wrote magnificently for the whole date."

All of the ensemble music was recorded in one day, an immense undertaking for such an ambitious session.

"To play six ballads in one session, I had never done that," Lovano said. "It was really challenging, but each piece was so different, each piece had so many different things that were happening throughout that it was a lot to feed from."

To allow for rhythmic spontaneity, Lovano told Albam to write no drum charts for Al Foster, who was then free to improvise around the more formal ensembles.

Interpreting vocal music instrumentally is not as contradictory as it sounds. The lyricism inherent in Sinatra songs is second nature to Lovano.

"My sound and my whole concept is coming from that lyrical point of view, as it's developing today," he said. "I'm just kind of reaching back down deeper inside who I am. That whole approach is natural for me. And, the players I like to listen to, whether it's Bill Evans on piano or Charlie Parker or Miles, they all play with that real songlike quality, that lyrical quality."

During a three-year tour with Woody Herman in the late 1970s and a 12-year stint with the Mel Lewis Orchestra in the '80s and early '90s, Lovano played behind some of the great jazz vocal stylists, including Sarah Vaughan, Tony Bennett, Mel Torme and Joe Williams.

Lovano's appreciation for diverse musical settings began even earlier, as a child at his father's side.

"He used to bring me around to sit in with groups,

(continued on next page, column one)

with organ trios and rhythm sections and let me listen to him rehearse with a big band. So, by the time I was a teenager, I was starting to sit in and actually play within a saxophone section and try to blend in with other horns. I was learning to experience playing with different ensembles."

Jazz history also teaches a lesson about musical diversity, he said.

"If you look back at the history of the great players -- Ben Webster, Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins -- they played in all kinds of ensembles, a lot of big bands, a lot of environments that gave them confidence to develop their tone and explore music."

After graduating from the Berklee School of Music, Lovano joined organist Lonnie Smith's band and performed with organist Jack McDuff. By the time he settled in New York City in 1980, he was a veteran.

Since then, Lovano has worked with Elvin Jones, Carla Bley, Lee Konitz and Charlie Haden. His reputation as a player broadened during his three years with guitarist John Scofield and has continued to grow in a 15-year partnership with drummer Paul Motian.

"Celebrating Sinatra" is Lovano's seventh release as a leader on Blue Note. The label has given him ample artistic freedom to pursue his muse wherever it leads him, he said.

"I'm drawing from all those experiences that I've had and trying to put some new environments together to improvise in. I have the ideas, and I'm actually able to execute them."

When asked to compare the more facile players of today with the true innovators of modern jazz, Lovano dove into the subject with all the intensity of one of his solos.

"Those cats were daring improvisers, that dared to explore music," he said. "They went beyond their knowledge of chords. They played from a more inner, inspired place. That's a world that I'm trying to reach into. But, when you're doing it, you're involved so you can't look around you. You're in the heat of the music."

What gives a player an individual sound?

"That comes from your unique personal history, as a player -- who you study, what you study, how you play, who you play with. And, a lot of the cats we're hearing today haven't played with anybody and they haven't played any music.

"A lot of the players today have developed through the Mike Brecker school of playing, which is a very technical approach. It didn't have anything to do with actually developing solos and creating ideas within the ensemble. It was real cut-and-dried. Mike doesn't play like that. He's very creative, but all those cats who copied him sound exactly the same."

Lovano, on the other hand, is always looking for a new context, new tonal colors, a new form of expression. Most recently, he and Gunther Schuller collaborated on the film score for a Showtime movie called "Face Down," which stars Joe Mantegna and is scheduled to air next fall.

Joe Lovano does Sinatra with imagination & taste

By Tom Ineck

JOE LOVANO, Celebrating Sinatra, Blue Note Records. *****

When musicians pay tribute to jazz greats, the conventional approach is to slavishly try to recreate the original sound, usually without even coming close.

But there is nothing conventional or slavish about tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano's interpretation of 13 tunes associated with singer Frank Sinatra.



Joe Lovano

Rather, "Celebrating Sinatra" takes a refreshing look at familiar melodies by applying different rules.

Orchestrator Manny Albam worked his magic on eight of the pieces, painting the tonal colors with a group of reed players and adding occasional splashes of bassoon, French horn, violin, viola, cello and harp on the ballads "I'll Never Smile Again," "All the Way," "In Other Words" and "One For My Baby." Soaring high above everything else on all eight orchestrated tracks is the angelic, soprano voice of Judi Silvano.

In the liner notes, Albam says some of his ideas came from memories of early Sinatra, when arrangers Axel Stordahl and Gordon Jenkins gave shape and substance to the singer's innate sense of swing and drama.

Then there are Lovano's stripped-down, small-group arrangements of "Imagination," "South of the Border," "The Song Is You" and "Chicago," which gets a tantalizing duo treatment with Al Foster providing the drum breaks around Lovano's horn.

Foster's contributions to the recording are legion, since he is the only musician other than the leader who is on all tunes. And, without the constraints of written drum parts, he is free to roam and give heat to the formal orchestrations and the small-group improvisation.

Of course, it is Lovano's brilliant playing throughout that makes this tribute so memorable. Though often referred to as a John Coltrane disciple, he never resorts to mere formula, and his angular lines are never predictable. Like Sinatra, his sense of phrasing and swing are impeccable.

Despite the vast diversity of instrumentation, settings, tempos and tone, there is an organic wholeness about this recording, as though it were conceived and executed as a single suite. Every transition from slow to fast or from bare bones to lush orchestration is perfectly charted out. Ol' Blue Eyes should be flattered.

Christian McBride is a veteran at age 24

By Tom Ineck

I was lucky to catch Christian McBride by phone at his Manhattan home during a three-day break between engagements with opera diva Kathleen Battle.

Perhaps the most popular bass player on the scene, McBride has been on more than 100 recordings and recently has appeared with McCoy Tyner, David Sanborn and Dave Brubeck. He is featured in the Robert Altman movie "Kansas City" and toured last summer with Chick Corea's All Star Quintet, which included Joshua Redman, Wallace Roney and Roy Haynes.

But what excites him most now is having his own band. "You grow as a group," he said. "It becomes an individual sound. You can't do that with pickup bands."

At age 24, McBride still has reservations about his leadership position.

"Sometimes it feels weird to be leading a band because everyone in the band is older than me." The other members are pianist Charles Craig, tenor saxophonist Tim Warfield and drummer Carl Allen.

Craig joined the band just a few months ago, after moving to New York from Boston. Warfield lives in York, Pa., and joins the rest of the band wherever they happen to be booked.

Allen and McBride have worked together a lot, most notably as the other two-thirds in pianist Benny Green's trio. What does McBride look for in sidemen?

"The main thing is to make sure the music is on the highest level possible. The relationship off the stage certainly has a lot to do with what happens on the stage, but I don't think it's absolutely a necessity that you get along off the bandstand. For me, I always like the vibe pretty easy off the bandstand, also.

"Musically, I look for guys that are pretty diverse, ones that don't like to stay in one particular bag, and when we do go off into other areas, to do them well, with conviction."

McBride said the audience at the Lied Center for Performing Arts will hear selections from his two Verve releases, plus "some odds and ends." He likes to keep his audiences guessing and his musical reflexes sharp by alternating standards and original compositions, acoustic bass and electric, pizzicato and arco style.

"I don't want to be random about it. But we like to stretch out and kind of mix it up a little bit. I have my five-string and my fretless and the acoustic, so we're having fun trying to figure out some new things."

McBride's bowing technique is influenced by the legendary jazz bassist Paul Chambers, but also by his background in classical music at Philadelphia's High School for the Performing Arts and with bassist Neil Courtney of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

"Since I had been trained to use the bow, I figured



Christian McBride

that I would never stop," he said. "Just because I'm playing jazz, I wouldn't want to forsake my bow usage."

Awarded a scholarship to the Julliard School of Music in Manhattan, McBride was instead recruited by Bobby Watson, and the young bassist has been in New York City ever since.

But McBride, son of bass player Lee Smith, hasn't forgotten his Philadelphia roots. Philly soul clearly emanates from all of his music.

"It's not just with me," he said. "It's with everyone of my generation. It's the same with Roy Hargrove and Joshua Redman and Cyrus Chestnut. All of us have that r&b fixed in there. I think that may be the thing about this generation that may stick out, the fact that we're starting to let the r&b thing get in there a little more obviously."

It's especially obvious on the title track of his first Verve album as leader, 1995's "Gettin' To It," which was inspired by The Godfather of Soul.

"I borrowed that from James Brown," he said, laughing. "He's the greatest performer in the whole world. I get most of my stage performance from him, and Dizzy. Dizzy Gillespie was another hero of mine. As far as a jazz musician is concerned, he was probably one of the few that I saw that was a showman. He always connected with the audience."

McBride will have plenty of chances to connect with his audience in the next few months. He tours with his quartet through February, then rejoins Chick Corea for a tour beginning in late March.

He also is in the early stages of planning his next recording, which he calls "a huge, super huge top-secret project. It's something really special, and I don't want to jinx it, so just know that it's going to be huge."

All we know is that McBride's idol, James Brown, invited the bassist to play at his Christmas party in Augusta, Ga., and McBride was planning to attend.



Photo by Rich Hoover

The Gentlemen of Jive

Tomfoolery By Tom Ineck

Fiddler Dave Fowler says the Gentlemen of Jive is sort of like "Bill Monroe meets Thelonious Monk."

The new all-string quartet consists of longtime Lincoln favorites Fowler on violin, Steve Hanson on guitar and mandolin, Steve Blakeslee on guitar and Dave Morris on bass. The result, as recorded on their first CD, "Night and Dazed," is more Monroe than Monk, but it does have its jazzy moments.

Jazz classics "Minor Swing," "Lullaby of Birdland," "A Night in Tunisia," "Lady Be Good," "Limehouse Blues" and Monk's "Round Midnight" all appear on the disc, and the string instrumentation begs comparison with swing giants Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli.

Unfortunately, the Gentlemen of Jive offer too much "newgrass"-style precision picking and not enough spontaneity and swing, at least on record. In other words, there is too much gentlemanly behavior and not enough jive.

The Gentlemen's Dec. 1 CD release party at the Zoo Bar was considerably more lively, probably because it also included such goodtime tunes as "Turkey in the Straw," "Willie the Weeper," "Lonesome Hearted Blues," "I'm Going to Cadillac Home in My Model A," and Charlie Burton's hilarious "I For One Just Don't Care."

It also featured Blakeslee's deft fingerpicking intro to "Midnight in Moscow," a great Fowler solo on "Lady Be Good" that quoted "I Got Plenty of Nothin'" and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," Hanson and Fowler trading licks on "How High the Moon" and Blakeslee elaborating on the joys of the bottle in "Gimme That Wine" ("I can't get laid without chardonnay").

The point is that the Gentlemen of Jive, for all their technique, should have more fun. Perhaps their models should be neither Monroe nor Monk, but the more outrageously "jivey" gentlemen Louis Jordan and Cab Calloway. After all, one of the best tunes on their CD is the classic anthem to reefer-smoking, "If You're a Viper."

For the next recording, I nominate "Five Guys Named Moe," "Saturday Night Fish Fry," "What's the Use of Getting Sober (When You Gonna Get Drunk Again)," "The Hi De Ho Man" and "Minnie the Moocher."

Jazz on disc by Tom Ineck

*Recordings rated * to ******

JOE LOVANO, Quartets: Live at the Village Vanguard, Blue Note Records. *****

Saxophonist Joe Lovano is in his element here, improvising breezily in two different quartet settings recorded live at the Village Vanguard in New York City in 1994 and 1995.

Song structures are loose, the audience is attentive, and the musicians urge each other on in a mutual musical quest. Lines converge and diverge in seemingly free-form style, forming an intricate pattern and a purpose.

Disc one features Tom Harrell on trumpet and flugelhorn, Anthony Cox on bass and Billy Hart on drums. Lovano thrives in this open format, with no piano to thwart the harmonic imaginations of the players. Among the highlights are the Harrell ballad "Sail Away," the standard "I Can't Get Started" and Lovano's volcanic "Uprising." In his free-spirited dialogue with Harrell's horns, Lovano switches from tenor sax to soprano sax to C melody sax during the course of the set. Especially inspired is the brooding, nine-minute exploration of "Blues Not to Lose."

Disc two features pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash, three of the most sought-after rhythm players in the business. This time Lovano stays with the tenor sax, and the songlist adheres more closely to the standard jazz repertoire, with tunes by Coltrane, Monk, Miles and Mingus.

Straight-ahead blowing predominates on "Lonnie's Lament" and "Little Willie Leaps," while the playing is lush and soulful on the ballads "This is All I Ask" and "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love."

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE, Number Two Express, Verve Records. ****

With his second Verve release as a leader, the ubiquitous bassist Christian McBride reveals his own talent for composition, penning six of the 10 tracks here. For variety, he alternates instrumental settings, ranging from duos and trios to quartets and quintets.

The eight musicians are well deployed, with McBride the only constant. "Whirling Dervish" is aptly named, powered as it is by the swirling pianistics of Chick Corea, the thunderous drumming of Jack DeJohnette and the insinuating lines of alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett. Gary Bartz on alto, Steve Nelson on vibes and Kenny Barron on piano are the keys to "Youthful Bliss," and percussionist Mino Cinelu lends sensitive coloration to Freddie Hubbard's "Sunflower," with McBride doubling on acoustic and fretless electric basses.

It's great to hear Corea perform a stunning solo on his own "Tones for Joan's Bones," with McBride and DeJohnette giving him ample support without overplaying. But perhaps the best track is the beautiful McBride-Barron duet on Wayne Shorter's love song "Miyako." McBride's arco playing ranks among the most lovely in jazz history.

ANDRIENNE WILSON, The Buoyancy Factor, AHM Records. ***

Wilson is a multi-talented San Francisco native now living in the Seattle area. Her 1992 recording "The Buoyancy Factor," is a good showcase for her composing, lyric writing, arranging, flute playing and singing skills, not to mention her work as producer.



Andrienne Wilson

Whether probing her own emotions or the universal plight of romantic relationships, Wilson's lyrics can leave a listener feeling a little uneasy, as though he's eavesdropping on something very private, and even painful. For example, her observation in "I Fall In Love With Men" that "I fall in love with men, who don't really care about me, To create angst in an otherwise perfect life."

But then, such personal revelations often are the stuff of great art. While this may not be great art, it is heartfelt and superbly accompanied by a group of fine musicians, including Denney Goodhew on soprano, alto and baritone saxes. My favorites are the lighter, uptempo tunes "More Than Just A Fool" and "Beboppin' Baby."

NORMAN HEDMAN & TROPIQUE '96, Healing Hands, Monad Records. ***

"Healing Hands" is the aptly spirited followup to Norman Hedman's 1994 release, "Flight of the Spirit," introducing Hedman's new Latin jazz band, Tropique '96.

The spirit is distinctly Latin, combining Puerto Rican and Afro-Cuban influences and driven by the rhythm section, consisting of Hedman, Willie Martinez and Joe Gonzalez on percussion and Mario Rodriguez on bass.

But most of the improvisational genius here comes from the frontline, especially soloists George Cables on piano, Glen Pearson on piano and synthesizer, reedman Chico Freeman and Ronnie Buttacavoli on trumpet and flugelhorn. Pearson plays piano with fire and imagination on his opener, "One For Ahmad," and Cables' arrangement of "Blue n' Boogie" places the Dizzy Gillespie composition firmly in the Latin world where Gillespie was so much at home. Cables also contributed the lovely composition "Camel Rise."

Near the end of "Chickadee & Guajira Medley," Buttacavoli brings a new level of warmth and intensity to an otherwise tepid performance. As always, Freeman blows shimmering blasts in a wonderful, free-style manner, most notably on the charming "Snake in the Grass."

Flutist, singer and composer Andrienne Wilson also plays an important role on "Healing Hands." She wrote four of the tunes ("Snake in the Grass" being one of them), including a collaboration with Freeman on the title track. As a vocalist, she is equally adept in Spanish and English.

Tropique '96 captures the Latin jazz flavor as well as any outfit today. Considering the number of ensembles now specializing in tropical rhythms, that is saying a lot.



"Kansas City" All-Star Band

Verve Jazz Fest visits KC

By Tom Ineck

Members of the all-star band featured in Robert Altman's film "Kansas City" will headline the Verve Jazz Fest Feb. 2 in Kansas City.

Also appearing at the festival are Charlie Haden's Quartet West and the Joe Henderson Trio. The event will be the first major music concert at the new Station Casino, near Worlds of Fun.

"This is the jazz event of the year," said Peter Horak, executive director of the Kansas City Blues & Jazz Festival, which is sponsoring the concert as a benefit to help the organization recover from the financial hit it took at last summer's storm-plagued festival.

The concert begins at 5 p.m. in the casino's 1,300 seat grand ballroom.

"The people who are in charge of entertainment out there have years of experience with Harrah's, with Disney, you name it. So, I think that the show and the location and the presentation are going to be top-notch," Horak said.

The event also will prove that the Kansas City Blues & Jazz Festival still is serious about straight-ahead jazz, Horak said. In recent years, the scope of the summer festival has been broadened to include more commercially viable fusion, funk, new age and world music acts, often at the expense of traditional jazz styles.

Members of the "Kansas City" all-star band will include Don Byron, James Carter, Jesse Davis, Craig Handy and David "Fathead" Newman on reeds, trumpeter Nicholas Payton, trombonist Curtis Fowkes, guitarist Mark Whitfield, pianist Henry Butler and singer Kevin Mahogany.

Kansas City is the last date on the Verve Jazz Fest tour, which was to begin January 8 in San Francisco. Horak said Verve Records was especially interested in booking the fest in Kansas City because more copies of the "Kansas City" soundtrack have been sold there than any other city outside the Big Apple.

Tickets for the concert are \$35, \$27.50 and \$20 and are available through Ticketmaster. For more information, check out Verve's web site at www.verveinteractive.com.



Steve Turre

Turre's Lied concert was no "shell game"

By Tom Ineck

Steve Turre's passion for the musical and spiritual qualities of the conch shell is no gimmick. During a three-hour Nov. 15 concert at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, Turre and his 10-piece ensemble Sanctified Shells proved to 1,200 people just how effective those mysterious, primal instruments can be in a modern jazz context.

Along with animal horns, seashells were among the first musical instruments - they were readily available and easy to carry. But in the era of highly calibrated and mass-produced instruments, few people know how to play them. Enter Steve Turre, a master trombonist who taught bandmates how to extend the range and harmonic possibilities of the shells in a "choir" of haunting beauty.

Take "Exploration," the concert opener in which the shell ensemble created sophisticated harmonies. Turre, a Mexican-American, revealed his Latin roots in "Toreador," switching from shell to trombone.

Surprise guests Mulgrew Miller on piano and Antonio Hart on alto sax helped put the fun in "Funky-T," which also featured a fine solo by trumpeter Eddie Allen. "Body and Soul" received a very expressive treatment with Turre stating the melody on plunger-muted trombone in the classic "vocal" style of New Orleans. Hart responded with a quavering, spirited solo.

Turre's tune "Macho," dedicated to the great Cuban conga player and bandleader Machito, opened the second set with typical Latin brio. "Rhythm Within," the title track of the latest Turre recording, builds on a droning rhythmic phrase that allowed Miller and Hart (on soprano sax) to solo freely.

The concert concluded with the infectious Latin rhythm of Turre's "Happiness," on which Miller delivered a truly "sanctified," gospel-tinged piano solo.

Turre is an outstanding bandleader, setting the pace and the dynamics, mapping out difficult changes in meter, designating soloists and generally keeping order in the large ensemble, all while apparently having lots of fun.

NJO cracks "The Nut" in Ellingtonian style

By Tom Ineck

Duke Ellington and Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky met, metaphorically speaking, in a Las Vegas recording studio while Ellington's band was setting attendance records at the Riviera Hotel in the summer of 1960.

Thirty-six years later, Ellington's masterful reorchestration of the "Nutcracker Suite" finally made its way to Lincoln, where it was performed Dec. 12 as part of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra's annual Christmas concert at the Ramada Hotel. Fortunately, this NJO milestone was witnessed by an overflow audience of 470.

In typical fashion, Ellington and Billy Strayhorn made the "Nutcracker Suite" their own by arranging it to fit the distinctive characteristics of the 1960 Ellington orchestra, which included Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Paul Gonzalves, Russell Procope and Jimmy Hamilton on reeds, Ray Nance, Willie Cook, Andres Meringuito and Eddie Mullins on trumpets, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown, Britt Woodman and "Booty" Wood on trombones, Sam Woodyard on drums, Aaron Bell on bass and Ellington taking a minimalist role at the piano.

Any band would be hard-pressed to meet those standards, but the NJO turned in a superb performance of the difficult nine-movement, 30-minute work. It is classic Ellingtonia, with brilliant section work punctuated by brief, bluesy solos, bits of irreverent humor, wild contrasts in dynamics and lots of plunger-muted trombones and trumpets. It is a perfect example of Ellington as painter using his orchestra as a palette.

From the "Overture" through "Toot Toot Tootie Toot" ("Dance of the Reed-Pipes") to "Peanut Brittle Brigade" ("March") and "Sugar Rum Cherry" ("Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy"), it is evident that Ellington and Strayhorn took some wonderful liberties with Tchaikovsky's memorable melodies. The NJO made the most of it, hamming it up while still swinging.

"Entr'acte," traditionally the intermission music of the Tchaikovsky suite, returns to the themes of the overture in a freer form. The NJO continued with "The Vodka Vouty," sometimes printed as "The Volga Vouty," a takeoff on "Russian Dance." "Chinoiserie" ("Chinese Dance"), a clever call-and-response, leads to "Dance of the Floreadores" ("Waltz of the Flowers"), a swinging finale that is not in waltz time, but straight 4/4.

Because of the intense teamwork required throughout this work, it would be unfair to praise only soloists, but among the most impressive players were Scott Vicroy on tenor sax, Tom Clifton on alto sax, clarinet and flute, Ed Love on tenor sax and clarinet, Dave Sharp on alto sax, Mike Murphy on baritone sax and bass clarinet, Bob Krueger and Jeff Patton on trumpets, Todd Thatcher and Dutch Ode on trombones, Rusty White on bass and, setting the swinging pace, drummer Todd Smith.



Photo by Russ Dantzler

Doc Cheatham at Sweet Basil with Chuck Folds on piano

Scrapple from the Apple

By Russ Dantzler

Doc's Church

Every Sunday at Sweet Basil in the west Village of New York City, a faithful following gathers for a religious experience. For sixteen years they have filed in, greeting each other as they take seats and anticipate the day's sermon. There are new faces as well, all coming to hear that which a very wise man chooses to share. The man enters front and center in a hushed room, and softly greets them, somehow making everyone smile with contentment in just moments.

This leader of men then points a trumpet towards heaven, and his disciples join him in making joyful noises that surely please the gods. Adolphus "Doc" Cheatham, at 91 years of age, with the help of Chuck Folds on piano, Earl May on acoustic bass, and Jackie Williams on drums, charms the socks off his audience as he shares graceful jazz delivered in elegant style for four hours each Sunday. As people depart, they seem to glow.

Doc Cheatham's style has an interesting history, relatively uninfluenced by the distant sounds of the Midwest. He has always played refined, melodic jazz with broad appeal. Born in Nashville June 13, 1905, he spent most of his life as a trumpet section leader for the likes of Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club. His first recording was on soprano sax with Ma Rainey in 1926. By 1945 he had recorded on trumpet with McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra, Benny Carter and his Orchestra, and several important Commodore sides with Billy Holiday.

His next Verve recording set for April release is with young co-leader and trumpeter Nicholas Payton, who Doc openly admires. In the middle of the past 50 years of his development, at about 65, Doc started working on solo chops. He began to make his best recordings after the age of 70. Today his clarity of tone and charming delivery are undiminished, if not improving. A trademark of his

performance has remained the same, however. A singer once told him to hold his head up to breathe and project better, so he always plays his horn pointed skyward.

Doc's new autobiography, *I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home*, became available on the Cassell imprint this year. It's worth the price just to read about eight years with Cab Calloway. It tells of a mutual respect between Doc and Duke Ellington, each of whom were frustrated that they never recorded together. A third of the 147 pages are devoted to a carefully researched chronological listing of his recordings, which I will be cross-referencing for a long time.

Mr. Cheatham plays a Vincent Bach trumpet with a medium large bore. He lost a good mouthpiece last year and is still looking for the perfect replacement, but isn't every horn player?

Harry "Sweets" Edison just finished a four-nighter a block from my home at the new mid-town Birdland. We spoke a little about the fact that both he and Doc are masters of trumpet playing subtlety. He said, "you don't have to make a lot of noise to make good music."



Photo by Russ Dantzler

"Sweets" Edison at the new Birdland Nov. 7

Who Put the "Swing" Back in Swing Street?

When I moved to the west side of midtown Manhattan over nine years ago, there was no jazz in my immediate neighborhood at all. Within the last several months alone, three of the best new live performance venues have opened, all within a half mile from this location. "Swing Street" was the name for West 52nd street in the 1930s and 40s when speakeasies returned to legitimacy, and became a great concentration of jazz bars.

In an upcoming column, I will write about the swinging new joints. Just as I thought I was about to start writing about this, I found there were two more performance spots that I have not yet checked out, one of which now has Etta Jones singing with Mike LeDonne on Hammond B-3 organ each Thursday. So, I have a lot of "work" to do, but will report on new clubs in this space soon.

(continued on next page, column one)

Surf's Up

After about a year of attempting to work with a web page, the "Hot Jazz" web site is now starting to be current and useful. If you would like to know about who will be touring northern Europe with "Fiddler" and where this January, who Benny Waters will be recording with as he performs on his 95th birthday the same month, or what "Fiddler" will be doing at the Smithsonian for his birthday in February, check out my web page. It also gives biographical material, current available recording information and has links to other fantastic jazz-related sites. The address: <http://soho.ios.com/~hotjazz/HOTJAZZ.html>

Responses or comments: (212) 586-8125, 328 West 43rd St., Suite 4F, New York, NY 10036 E-mail: hotjazz@soho.ios.com.



Photo by Russ Dantzier

Benny Waters, Claude Williams & Doc Cheatham in 1994

Considered Opinions (Recording & Performance Reviews)

By Andrew Rowan

CAROL SLOANE, In Performance at Catch A Rising Star.

Carol Sloane, the golden-throated jazz singer with a sterling reputation, came on at the end of a long night of comedy at this beautifully appointed Chelsea night spot. With pianist Bill Charlapp, bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Ron Vincent in tow, she wowed a capacity audience, including actor Danny Aiello, already in a good mood from what had come before.

From the start, it was apparent that recordings only capture part of her personality and prowess. She is a far more exuberant performer than many of the CDs reveal. Opening with the Billie Holiday favorite, "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart (And Throw Away the Key)," she sailed through a

program that displayed the timeless art of classic American songwriting.

"The More I See You," "Memories of You" and "In a Sentimental Mood" glistened anew, as she portrayed these time-honored stories. A tribute to Lee Wiley, "A Woman's Intuition," reached deep inside, a beautiful performance of a neglected song. Likewise, she personalized the rarefied air of "The Night We Called It Day" in a moving, calmly expressed exposition on the pain of dying love.

And when it was time to swing, she did. On "They All Laughed," "Hello, Young Lovers," "Old Devil Moon," "Stompin' at the Savoy" (dedicated to Ella Fitzgerald) and Duke Ellington's "Cottontail," she ranged from light jaunty swing to blazing scat, all the while buoyed and prodded by the finely tuned precision of her rhythm section, especially the almost prescient work of Charlapp.

Of special note, especially when considering aspects that make a performance special, Sloane sang verses: a small detail perhaps, but in such details emerge great art. Not many singers bother with these seeming trifles, and it's not required. But, gee, what a delight to hear a great song set up by its delectable verse.

CAROL SLOANE, The Songs Carmen Sang, Concord Jazz.

Quite wisely, Sloane hews to her own persona on this session, assaying the more "romantic" side of Carmen McRae, an artist she obviously revered. This 1995 tribute, although a couple of songs too long, strikes the right balance between homage and self-expression. Sloane has selected well, concentrating on songs that McRae drew from, among others, the Billie Holiday and Nat Cole "songbooks," as well as overlooked songs thought of by no one else but Carmen.

The addition of Phil Woods is perfect (as on "The Real Thing," Contemporary). A proven virtuoso on both alto saxophone and clarinet, he never confuses technique with passion. His presence reminds us that during all phases of her long, storied career McRae loved to mix it up with the best players on the scene: Dizzy Gillespie, Ben Webster, Zoot Sims, Clifford Jordan, Joe Pass, Ray Brown, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Nat Adderley, to name a few.

Singer and horn hit their stride on a thrilling "Autumn Nocturne," featuring Woods' limpid clarinet and Sloane's graceful negotiation of this stately, but serpentine, melody. Then there are the "moon" songs, all popularized by Lady Day: the ballads, "If The Moon Turns Green," and "It's Like Reaching for the Moon," and the bracing, uptempo "What a Little Moonlight Can Do." In a different mood, one of McRae's flagwavers, "Sunday," a paean to conjugal bliss, struts itself into the gutbucket.

Most of all, Sloane's touching readings of "Cloudy Morning" and "The Folks Who Live on the Hill" remind us that these songs survived because Carmen McRae sang them, and their afterglow is sustained because Sloane won't let them be forgotten.

CAROL SLOANE, *The Songs Sinatra Sang, Concord Jazz.*

On this latest project, Sloane takes a different conceptual tack than on the McRae session, employing on many tracks, most appropriately, a larger ensemble. With the band, as well as in smaller settings, she pays homage to Sinatra's lifelong allegiance to the American standard, while maintaining her own jazz persona. Using the fine arrangements of Scott Robinson, Mike Abene, Bill Charlap and Frank Wess as points-of-departure rather than blueprints, Sloane emerges from Sinatra's shadow to lend her imprimatur to the material.

This well-planned and well placed excursion, however, takes a decisive turn on a trilogy of ballads - - "The Night We Called It a Day," "You Go To My Head" and "I Fall in Love Too Easily" - - as the singer transcends mere words and notes, journeying into the rarefied air of pure expression. These cuts turn a fine record into an event.

JAMES MOODY, *Young At Heart, Warner Bros.*

Moody's take on Sinatra's work offers a contrast to Sloane's, showcasing the leader's multiple horns (alto, tenor, soprano and flute) in orchestral settings fashioned by Gil Goldstein. And, as usual, Moody is unimpeachable. When there is trouble here - - and there is smoke - - the fault lies in the arrangements. This homage to the rich, orchestral tradition of Sinatra's original recordings at times veers into the overblown.

The ruffles and flourishes that adorn "The Song is You," while obviously inspired by Billy May's wonderful arrangement (from "Come Dance With Me," Capitol), eventually get in the way and inhibit the song from really taking off. The deliberately off-center horn riffs on "Love and Marriage" and the heavy backbeat on "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)" vitiate the solid offerings from Moody and, on the former, trombonist Slide Hampton, himself a master arranger whose pen should have also been employed on this session. At these moments, there is just too much orchestral traffic.

Conversely, "That Old Black Magic" really moves. Brilliantly complying the theme from Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso," the quartet (pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Todd Coolman and drummer Billy Drummond, who is on fire throughout the recording) burns. Hear how Miller picks up the Monk motif to begin his solo before taking off, spinning long, flowing lines. Likewise, "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" is equally affecting, showcasing the leader's impeccable, blue-hued flute.

To be sure, there are orchestral highlights: Ervin Drake's melancholy ode, "It Was A Very Good Year," both rueful and funky, sets off Moody's soprano perfectly. The exposition of "Only the Lonely" is simply beautiful, the orchestra swooning and sighing behind Moody's heartfelt theme statement. Curiously, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning," with a restrained Moody and Miller and the most conservative Goldstein arrangement, never really reaches an emotional peak.

The jaunty "Come Fly with Me," however, proves

to be a perfect marriage of song, arrangement and soloists, one that might even make Billy May smile. Moody takes wing on alto, reveling in the mood and tossing off some acid-dripped, bebop lines as the horns riff behind him. Larry Goldings also gets a chance to show his moxie.

Thanks to Warner Brothers for signing James Moody, a player who rarely puts a wrong foot forward. His career is not only a model for musical consistency but for improvisational brilliance. While this session is a good showcase, if former confreres like Slide Hampton (both as player and arranger), Kenny Barron and Tom McIntosh can be brought in, the days will be even brighter.

LARRY GOLDINGS, *Big Stuff, Warner Brothers.*

Larry Goldings' name has been mentioned in this column before. His work with Kevin Mahogany has been praised in these pages; and I come before you with more of the same.

Goldings' regular trio forms the core of this session: master guitarists Peter Bernstein and fire-and-brimstone drummer Bill Stewart continue to amaze. As usual, the leader has also invited others to share the spotlight. Most notable are guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkle, who offers a more electronic, Hendrix-inflected sound and approach than Bernstein, and veteran drummer Idris Muhammad.

But, the focus here is on Goldings' organ playing, although his piano and the Hohner melodies, as well as his writing, received favorable exposure.

"The Grinning Song" is an infectious romp for the core trio, ending with the most delightful churchy cadence. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Goldings revels in the blues and jazz traditions, creating fresh, new ways to present them, while creating his own sound-world. "Jim Jam," a tribute to his former employer, guitarist Jim Hall, features Bernstein. Hot on the heels of the guitarist's solo, Goldings opens up by paraphrasing Peter's closing phrase. Other highlights include Leonard Bernstein's "Big Stuff" (inspired by the 1946 Billie Holiday version as well as Gil Evans' 1957 offering), which hits a relaxed groove, one that brings out the beautifully nuanced melody and changes. This tune just plain feels good. Likewise, "Dandelion Years" showcases the trio's ballad case, never rushing, never cloying, never boring. Just undiluted emotion expressed with depth and clarity. Opening with a slightly ominous theme, "Subtle Digs" soon bursts into sun-drenched swing.

Shifting away from the core trio, Carla Bley's "Ida Lupino" showcases Rosenwinkle's stinging guitar work. He also has romps on Ellington's Caribbean-flavored "Purple Gazelle," whose island swagger brings Sonny Rollins to mind. The intricate, yet floating "Where You've Been" and the funk-filled "(I'm Your) Jellyman," reminiscent of the material on Goldings' previous Warner Brothers outing, "Whatever It Takes," close the door on a beautifully conceived and brilliantly conceived and brilliantly executed recital.

(continued on next page, column one)

LARRY GOLDINGS, In Performance at Cleopatra's Needle.

This Larry Goldings gig might have been unnerving, for there is no organ at Cleopatra's Needle, and no room for one, at that. Since, most of his work centers on the Hammond B-3, how he would fare at the piano loomed large, especially since the piano work of many organ greats is pallid. One thinks of Don Pullen as one of the few whose touch could cover both instruments equally well. Now, add Goldings to that list.

Working with Andy Bey's rhythm section -- bassist Neal Miner and drummer Vito Lesczak -- Goldings swings into "I'm in the Mood for Love" with authority. Even though he had never worked with this band before, they were attentive and attuned to his groove. Hand signals, eye signals or a brief verbal command, and they were off. Key changes proved to be no problem; pedal points arose and vanished at the appropriate times; eights and fours were exchanged smoothly.

A rubato "Somewhere" preceded Bernstein's "Big Stuff," the latter using the arrangement discussed above, but finding its own voice in this particular setting, as did Ellington's "Purple Gazelle," "For You, For Me, Forever More," a rarely heard Gershwin gem, and "(I Don't Stand A) Ghost of a Chance" were treated to incisive, pensive readings, the latter alternating between richly pealed chords and Monkish dissonance.

Before the night was over, Andy Bey, who had dropped by to listen, was called upon to sing. Before it was over, Goldings, Bey and company had sanctified "But Not for Me," setting the club on fire. Bey, who found all of the blues cracks between the notes of the written melody, inspired Goldings to reach way back into the blues.

After Bey, Goldings decided to end the set and the night. But all present knew that something special had happened and that its author was Larry Goldings, an extraordinary musician.

ANDY BEY, Ballads, Blues & Bey, Evidence.

His voice plangent, ancestral and dripping with emotion, jazz vocalist and pianist Andy Bey essays an intimate, after-hours masterpiece. With not a 12-bar blues in sight, he blows a blue zephyr through "Willow Weep for Me," "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Embraceable You" -- to cite my favorites. Bey's rhythmically acute and harmonically bracing playing, at times down home and at times visionary, shapes the discourse subtly. With Bey back in business, the gods are surely smiling on us now.

DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER WITH THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL ORCHESTRA, Prelude to a Kiss: The Duke Ellington Album, Philips.

Duke Ellington's sound-world remains a preeminent force in 20th-century American music, as this release shows. Eschewing the usual "let's find some well-worn Ellington and do it" attitude, the program mixes Ellington standards with several rarities, including the

wondrous suite, "Night Creature." Producer Robert Sadin, conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, leads the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, as well as jazz vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater and a coterie of jazz greats, including alto saxophonists Charles McPherson and Babby Watson, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and trombonist Steve Turre, through gorgeous arrangements that he and Slide Hampton, Luther Henderson, Alan Broadbent and Clare Fischer have crafted. Stunning performances of "Midnight Indigo" (from Ellington's score for "Anatomy of a Murder") and "Fleurette Africaine" feature Babby Watson and the orchestra. The orchestra, showcased on "Solitude," supports Bridgewater on "Come Sunday." A highlight among the small-group performances is Bridgewater's percussion-driven "Caravan." This is an elegant, unusual look at Ellingtonia.

NNENNA FREELON, Shaking Free, Concord.

Freelon has enjoyed considerable commercial success since her debut several years ago, and I am puzzled. She remains an enigma, since she possesses little feeling for or authority in the jazz idiom. "Shaking Free" provides only isolated moments of jazz grit.

CLAIRE MARTIN, The Waiting Game, Linn Records.

Although recorded before the masterful "Old Boyfriends," (Linn Records, see September 1996 Cabaret Hotline), this release is cut from the same cloth. Standards, jazz compositions, off-beat contemporary songs and recent popular tunes commingle with ease. Standouts include Joni Mitchell's "Be Cool," Betty Carter's "Tight," Rodgers and Hart's "This Funny World" and Sammy Cahn's "It's Always Four A.M." Best of all, however, is Rupert Holmes' "The People That You Never Get to Love," one of the blue stories of regret that Martin savors.

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Nancy Marshall

Starting Jan. 20 there is going to be some big band jazz Monday nights in the Riverside Room at the Ramada Hotel in downtown Lincoln.

The Monday Night Big Band will perform from 7:30 to 10:30 pm every Monday night. The mission of the band is "to provide a regular outlet for area musicians to read and perform challenging new and existing big band music in a musical and professional setting."

The band will be run by a board of directors that include Scott Vicroy, Bob Krueger, Brad Obbink, and Dean Haist. Vicroy, Krueger, and Dave Sharp will also function as music directors with other area musicians.

The board asks that, "if you are a performer, try to fit the band into your schedule when called to play; if you are a jazz enthusiast, come hear us play and spread the word to other jazz fans; and, if you are a supporter of the arts, help sponsor the band by pledging some financial support."

The group will play three sets a night for a cost of \$3/\$2 for students. For more information, call Joel Nielson at 477-8222 or Bob Krueger at 423-5305.

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra continues its 21st Anniversary Season for 1996/7 with a Tuesday, February 25 (Lincoln)/Wednesday, Feb. 26 (Omaha) concert, "The Music of Count Basie," including the NJO All-Star Student Big Band, comprised of this area's finest jazz musicians under the age of 21. This group was selected through auditions and will have received coaching from the NJO musicians in advance of the concerts. The Omaha concerts will be held at Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St., and the Lincoln concerts will be held at the Ramada Hotel & Conference Center, 141 N. Ninth St. The concert in each city begins at 7:30 pm with priority seating for season members only from 7:00-7:15, and general admission beginning at 7:15 for tickets purchased at the door.

Season membership for admission to the five concert series was (and may be pro-rated now): \$20 for students, \$36 for senior citizens (65 & over), \$48 for adults, and \$110 for family memberships (two adults maximum). Tickets at the door for the concerts are: \$5 for students, \$9 for senior citizens, and \$12 for adults. Tickets may be purchased at the door or ordered in advance by contacting the business office at (402) 477-8222, 216 N. 11th St., Suite 302, Lincoln, NE 68508-1401.

Jazz continues on Sunday nights at 6 pm at The Oven at 201 N. Eighth in Lincoln. Hear the duos of Dave Novak & Dennis Taylor on Jan. 5; Andy Hall & Dave Sharp on Jan. 12; John Carlini & Peter Bouffard on Jan. 19; Nancy Marshall & Steve Hanson on Jan. 26 and Feb. 2; Andy Hall & Dave Sharp on Feb. 9; Peter Bouffard & John Carlini on Feb. 16; and Dave Novak & Dennis Taylor on Feb. 23.

Also, jazz continues at Kiki's Crab House at 120 Regency Parkway in Omaha on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 8:00-11:00 pm. The local performers include Jorge Nila, Tom Larson, Mason Prince, Peter Bouffard, Bill Ritchie, and Liz Westphalen.

The Gallery Walk Cabaret Jan. 3 features some hot music to celebrate Carnival with Braziliance. The audience is invited to bring percussion instruments to the performance so they can play in a group celebration of Carnival. The Walk on Feb. 7 features the Ed Love Trio with straight ahead jazz tunes. The Walks are held at the Seventh Street Loft at 504 S. Seventh St. from 8 to 11 pm. Admission is \$5 at the door with a cash bar available. It is a smoke free environment, and children are welcome.

The Fabtones will be playing at the Pla-Mor Ballroom from 8-12 midnight on Friday, Jan. 31 for a Villa Marie Fund Raiser. Also look for the Fabtones 10-piece show band at the Zoo Bar at the end of March.

And, The Lightning Bugs will be doing a Nebraska Arts Council Concert at the David City Opera House in David City (just northwest of Lincoln about an hour away) on Saturday, Feb. 15 at 7:30 pm.

Finally, a new club, Ebenezer's has opened in

Rathbone Village at 2110 Winthrop Rd. in Lincoln. It will feature both live and recorded blues and jazz. More information about this club will appear in future issues.

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 12:30 until 4 pm, except Monday when the jazz ends at 3 pm and doesn't pick up again until 8:30 pm, and Friday when the jazz only runs from 2 until 4 pm.

A faithful listener to Herb Thomas' jazz program, "Zero Street," which can be heard every Tuesday afternoon from 2:30 until 4 pm, called to ask me why I didn't mention Thomas' program in the last issue of JAZZ. The reason is that this column makes no attempt to mention every single jazz program on the air in Lincoln in every column, but exists to give the reader the highlights of jazz on the air in Lincoln. Even though Thomas does a fine program, it was not the subject of last issue's column. If you would like detailed information about the jazz programs on KZUM give them a call at 474-5086. Also, to receive a free copy of their program guide "Sound Alternatives," call the same number.

Nebraska Public Radio at 90.9 FM in Lincoln, and at other frequencies around the state (except Omaha), has offered two nights of early evening jazz each week for the past several years. However, due to the recent death of the host of "Prime Time Jazz," Bill Watts, jazz will no longer be heard on Friday nights between 8 and 10 pm. Watts was a long time jazz programmer on KVNO in Omaha. He programmed jazz there on Friday and Saturday nights from 7-10 pm for quite a few years. KVNO has decided, unfortunately, not to continue with jazz on those nights, and has decided to replace the six hours of jazz with classical music.

Tentatively, Nebraska Public Radio is set to return a "live symphony" broadcast to 7 pm on Friday nights, return "Selected Shorts" to its old time slot of 9 pm, continue with "Masur On Music" at 10 pm, start National Public Radio's "Jazz Profiles," an audio biography of jazz artists, on all stations of the network at 11 pm, and have fill-in announcer Liz Chadwick, formerly of KRNU's "Bohemia After Dark," program an hour of jazz from 12 midnight until sign off at 1 am.

JAZZ PROFILES in January and February

01-03-96 Mose Allison
01-10-96 James Moody
01-17-96 Jay McShann
01-24-96 Gerry Mulligan
01-31-96 Thelonious Monk
02-07-96 Abbey Lincoln
02-14-96 Horace Shaw
02-21-96 Clark Terry
02-28-96 Erroll Garner

(continued on next page, column one)

Saturday nights on Nebraska Public Radio continue with Don Gill and the sounds of the big bands on "Big Band Spotlight" at 8 pm. That's followed by two other National Public Radio programs, "Jazzset" at 9 pm, hosted by Branford Marsalis, and "Piano Jazz," hosted by Marian McPartland, at 10 pm.

JAZZSET in January and February

- 01-04-97 Dorothy Donegan and Diva ("No Man's Band" at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC
01-11-97 McCoy Tyner at the Gilmore Festival in Kalamazoo
01-18-97 The Marcus Belgrave Quintet, the Ellis Marsalis Quartet and guest artist Nicholas Payton Trumpeters
01-25-97 "Ellington: A New Take" from the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band
02-01-97 Herbie Hancock Quartet at Washington Square Park
02-08-97 Dee Dee Bridgewater and Eliane Elias at the Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival
02-15-97 Trio Three at Discover Jazz in Burlington, Vermont
02-22-97 Michel Camilo and Giovanni Hidalgo: "Mano a Mano

PIANO JAZZ in January and February

- 01-04-97 Connie Crothers
01-11-97 J. J. Johnson
01-18-96 Dave Grusin
01-25-97 Dave Brubeck
02-01-97 Jeanie Bryson
02-08-97 Phil Markowitz
02-15-97 Clark Terry
02-22-97 Michael Weiss

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.

Since it looks like Chadwick is leaving "Bohemia After Dark," formerly heard from 9-11 pm on KRNU, 90.3 in Lincoln, it is not known what will replace the jazz there. However, the program featuring beat poetry called "Words," hosted by Joe Krings, continues on Friday nights right from 11 pm to 1 am. For more information about this program call KRNU at 472-5768.

Ten (sorta) jazzy questions

By Butch Berman

This month's questions are posed to local keyboardist Jim Williamson.

Q: Do you consider yourself an organist first or a pianist? I feel there is a distinct difference as opposed to being labeled "just" a keyboardist.

A: I would consider myself an organist more than a pianist. There is a big difference between piano and organ. The fact that the keyboards look similar in appearance makes people think that you can play one if you play the other. Not true. The style in playing an organ is completely different than piano. I've heard people play organ that are pianists and it just doesn't work. In order to bring out the character and feeling that makes a Hammond B-3 sound so popular, the player has to interact with it and know how to use the drawbars and Leslie effect. Percussion is another characteristic of the B-3 that must be used properly for the right effect. There is much more technical input on a B-3 than there is on a piano. Of course one of the biggest differences is that the organ has bass pedals. I know not everyone uses them, but I much prefer to use pedals if I can't find a bass player I'm comfortable with.

Q: You and I (as well as Tom Larson and Kip Murphy) all took piano/organ lessons from the late genius Roger Ellsworth. Gimme a paragraph on ole Rog.

A: Many local players took lessons from Roger Ellsworth. I enjoyed his talent for many years not only in lessons, but I played drums for quite a while for him. He was a talent that is missed every day. Some of my favorite players studied with Roger, most well known locally is Tom Larson. Roger must have done something right to not only teach but inspire someone of that caliber.

Q: At lunch last month you informed me you also gigged as a bass player (in a country band, no less) and just bought yourself a new set of tubs. I'm impressed! How do you rate yourself on each, and does that reflect on individual practice time for each instrument?

A: I play a few other rhythm section instruments. I enjoy electric bass and drums or percussion in general. I play vibraphone occasionally for small groups and enjoy that very much. I don't feel as competent on other instruments as I do keyboards, but the knowledge is invaluable in understanding the bigger picture of music. I enjoy working with talented rhythm section players like Andy Hall or John Scofield. I especially appreciate a drummer who is also a well rounded musician. That's not to take away from drummers, but I feel it's better as a drummer to know some keyboard skills and basic chord structure. This allows the drummer or percussionist to be a better all around player

Q: Besides being multi-talented on a variety of instruments and styles...you by day manage a large auto dealership (Williamson's). How or when does the car angle confer with the music?

A: Many people ask me now the music business mixes with cars. Well, at first glance it might seem they don't, but as I make my way around the area playing different venues, I see a large number of business associates at functions I'm playing for. It's great fun to know people in more than one environment, and music certainly allows that. I believe my

music work allows me the outlet I need to keep my day to day work exciting. After playing a four hour job, I feel refreshed and ready to take on the world, which is what seems to happen on some days.



Jim Williamson at the piano

Q: You resemble a daddy longlegs spider with your wild organ pedal bass work. Elaborate on your style and how it differs from electric or acoustic bass teaching methods.

A: People comment on the fact that they don't very often see musicians playing pedal bass. In fact, usually the only time an organist plays pedals is for "legitimate" organ work. I would much rather play pedal bass because while working with singers I can switch keys as needed and the bass player always follows. I don't usually use charts, so unless the player is someone like Andy Hall, Keith Heckman or Rusty White, someone you've worked with, it can become difficult as a rhythm section to keep it together. Also the fact that I play electric bass gives me the knowledge of where the bass line should go if a bass player were playing it. The physical requirements of playing synth, B-3 and pedals, plus the fact that I usually run the sound from behind me, causes me to be quite busy physically while playing. The fact that pedals are on one side, while one of the keyboards is on the other side necessitates that I become turned almost 90 degrees just to reach everything. People also comment on the fact that I take my shoes off to play pedals. I've always felt it was better to not play with gloves on my hands or shoes on my feet.

Q: Who's your fave B-3 hero?

A: My favorite B-3 player is still Jimmy Smith. His style is unmistakable and the musicians he works with are top notch. I love to listen to CDs of Oscar Peterson playing piano. He also surrounds himself with rhythm section players I admire.

Q: Speaking of B-3s, do you still own one with Leslies? Also, please describe your current road gear.

A: Yes. I own an A100, a B-3, a Porta B-3, and an XB3000, the portable, one manual B-3. I have numerous Leslie speakers for all except the XB, which has a great built in

rotary speaker sound. I don't ever haul around the big equipment if my XB can do the job, which is most of the time. For my other keyboards I generally use a Roland JV1000 as a synth and still use my Yamaha DX&. The Yamaha is probably my favorite synth because of it's size, keyboard action, and its "trademark" sounds. For bass I use Roland Midi bass pedal set to trigger a Roland S330 sample of an upright bass sample.

Q: Lay a winter car tip on me that most people don't know.

A: A good winter car tip is to keep your windows clean on the inside of the car. This helps prevent frost buildup on the inside of the car and just plain makes it easier to see out.

Q: Do you have any recorded work available? And/or in the near future?

A: I have one recording project just finishing up. It is with Annette Murrell, my favorite jazz singer. I work quite regularly with her, and we are excited about getting this CD finished. I also have some products coming out of my studio, Jimmick Studios, being sold all over the country with a party theme, including games, recipes and other party needs aimed not only at children but adults, too. These packages will be available across the country in major department stores by spring.

Q: Do you have a jazzy resolution for '97?

A: My New Year's resolution would be to make sure when I leave my house to go play keyboard and pedals, I check to be sure I don't have holes in my socks. Such an embarrassing situation when you're wearing a tux and you must remove your shoes to play.

Discorama By Butch Berman

TAJA (TALIB KIBWE/JAMES WEIDMAN), A Night at Birdland, Rise Up Productions.

There's no smaller world than the jazz world...and I'll tell you a little story before I introduce you to Taja's (Talib Kibwe/James Weidman) simply wonderful new CD on Rise Up Productions entitled "A Night at Birdland."

The first time I came into contact with James Weidman (we have yet to meet, but know a bit about each other - but I'm getting ahead of myself) was in covering the 1st Annual Kansas City International Jazz Festival when James was pianist/arranger for Kevin Mahogany. I remember his classy, dapper appearance and his emotional, yet swinging piano stylings behind Mahogany's fine gift of a voice. Now...about half a year later I discover James is currently writing music with Andrienne Wilson, my lady friend's partner in crime with a Seattle talent agency, Freewill Artistry. So, what else is new?

I'll tell you what's new - and ever so hot - and that is "A Night at Birdland." This is a thrilling collection of mostly original jazz nuggets penned by Weidman, who along with
(continued on next page, column one)

his collaborator, Talib Kibwe on alto saxophone, and with a crackerjack rhythm section consisting of George Grey on drums and Belden Bullock on bass, make this CD feel like the last set at any top NY nightspot every time you flip on your sound system and experience this special blend of, yes - freewill artistry and a truly righteous musicianship.

This quartet ignites a fire on this disc only equaled by perhaps Bobby Watson or Kenny Garrett, but with a sound of their own that features the superior writing skills of Kibwe and Weidman.

The covers of Monk's "Well You Needn't" and the lovely standard "I Didn't Know About You" makes me yearn for a solo piano project from Weidman in the near future.

But for now - as you'll recognize from the opening cut's startling interplay between sax and piano on "Jack the Riffer" - this entire piece of work is a near masterpiece. A genuine gasser.

Blues Corner By Rich Hoover



Photo by Rich Hoover

Jimmy Dawkins

A rare treat at the Zoo Bar

On Dec. 6 & 7, a last minute fill-in for a flu-ridden Byther Smith band turned out to be Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins. What a treat! I haven't caught a live Jimmy Dawkins performance since the early/mid 80s.

Jimmy has been playing for a living since '57. One of the creators and standard bearers of the "Westside" sound, Jimmy worked diligently on his sound, while putting out about a dozen albums through the 70s and 80s, while hanging on to the very edge of his musical existence. In the early 70s, after most of 20 years in the Chicago scene, Jimmy started going on tours to Europe where he became a hit, especially in France. Now his sound, both guitar and vocal, are known by blues fans throughout the world, his earlier LPs are being re-released on CD, and he is putting out even more stuff.

P.S. For Jimmy's recorded material, check on the Delmark label, and if you find any stuff on the Isabel label, give me a call!

Upcoming events at the Zoo Bar, and the Grand Emporium in KC

The Zoo Bar at 136 N. 14th in Lincoln has some winter-time treats for blues fans:

- Jan 8-- -Jumpin' Kate and Laurie McClain, bon voyage and good fortune (a going away party)
- Jan 9 & 10----- Big Jack Johnson (hot delta bluesman)
- Jan 10 & 17----- Heartmurmurs (local heat)
- Jan 20-----Tinsley Ellis
- Feb 3-8----- Matt "Guitar" Murphy (blues bro')
- Feb 13-15----- The Bel-Airs
- Feb 20----- Kenny Neal (bayou blood)
- Feb 21----- Eddy Clearwater (The Chief)

Or you can find more Zoo info at:

<http://members.gnn.com/frguitar/zoo.htm>

The Grand Emporium in Kansas City at 3832 Main has many blues shows. A special treat Jan 10-11: Chicago blues giant SON SEALS. Advance tickets available. For more info on shows call, (816) 531-1504.

Blues on disc By Rich Hoover



Joe Houston

JOE HOUSTON, *The Blues and Nothin' Else, Shattered Music.*

The folks at Shattered Music have done a wonderful thing with the release of this CD. Joe Houston is a Texas jump-blues saxman of legendary status. Joe began his career working with and being influenced by King Kolax, Arnette Cobb, Charlie Parker, Amos Milburn, and with his biggest influence, and friend for over forty years, Big Joe Turner.

The band is solid and versatile with L. A. Jones doing some really fine guitar work on both rhythm and lead parts. Mike Malone does excellent work on the keys and harmonica, with a couple of organ parts that are mighty refreshing to hear.

This CD is loaded with classic blues by Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Chester Burnette, Willie Dixon, Robert Parker, Lou Turner, and Big Joe Turner. With five tunes credited to Joe himself, the CD is poppin', boppin', rollin' and strollin'. Don't miss the sax solo trailer. Over 40 years in the making, Joe Houston, a multi-faceted gem.

SOUNDTRACK ANTHOLOGY, Heaven's Prisoners, Atlantic/Code Blue.

I've never heard of the movie, but they have put out a great compilation of classic blues tunes with legendary artists doing premiere versions. We're talkin' blues here: "Good Mornin' Little School Girl," Junior Wells;"Born Under a Bad Sign," Albert King; "Red House,"Buddy Guy; "Baby Bee," Kenny Neal; "I Never Loved a Man," Aretha Franklin; "The Thrill is Gone ," B. B. King; "Bo's Bounce," C. C. Adcock;"Twenty Ton Weight," The Hoax;"Things I Used To Do," Stevie Ray Vaughan; "I Ain't Gonna Suffer," John Lee Hooker; "Don't Answer the Door," B. B. King; "Good Moanin' Blues," Walter "Shakey" Horton; and "It Hurts to Love Someone," Guitar Slim. I like this collection, and I recommend it to anyone looking for good blues by great artists.

TOMMY CASTRO, Exception to the Rule, Blind Pig.

A group of blues "up and comers" from the bay area the band includes: Tommy Castro, guitars and vocal; Keith Crossan, sax; Randy McDonald, bass; and Shad Harris, drums.

These guys have been honing their chops for years in the Bay area. They have developed a tight fluidity that makes the group shine on all facets of their blues/r&b grooves.

This CD release has 10 tunes with about 40 minutes of playtime, and I do mean playtime. Seven of the tunes are penned by Tommy and various band members and solo credit to Keith Crossan for the tune "Hard luck Case." This CD is the first in probably a long line of fine contemporary blues music from these gentlemen.



Photo by Rich Hoover
Tommy Castro Band

SMOKIN' JOE KUBEK BAND, Got My Mind Back, Bullseye Blues.

These guys are great! They cruise, jump, twist, turn, and dive through the Texas blues as if they invented it. In actuality, they are inventing it from the present to beyond. With all that inventiveness, and a musical and lyrical charm that touches every nerve they pass by, Joe and Bnois are the cream of today's Texas blues. The combination of the lyrical content pushed by the vocal stylings of Bnois King (reminds me of Junior Parker), along with the smooth ride of Mr. King's rhythm and lead guitar parts, are a perfect compliment to the cutting edge of Smokin' Joe's guitar, which runs from razor's edge distinction to full "chain saw" power.

This front force is backed up by a groove-perfect rhythm section featuring Paul Jenkins on bass and Mark Hays on drums, with an occasional appearance by Ron Levy, producer and B-3 artist. All songs are original material by Joe and Bnois, with Levy helping on one of the tunes.

This band is a top-notch front runner in the contemporary blues scene. We are fortunate in the Lincoln area in that these guys show up about three to four times a year at the Zoo Bar.

Need I say more? Get it and enjoy.

JOHNNY ADAMS, One Foot in the Blues, Rounder.

For me this CD is "easy time" music. With blues-soul-R&B-pop love ballads, all with a jazzy feel, it's good stuff for the ages.

With Johnny covering the vocal artistry, Dr. Lonnis Smith making the Hammond B-3 talk in tongues, Jimmy Ponder threading the guitar through many styles showing versatility and grace, Shannon Powell creating fluid perfection on drums, and Ed Petersen and Jamil Sharif performing the horn section duties with taste and flair, it's the right sound for that casual "lets enjoy" kind of time. An excellent addition to Johnny's growing list of sounds to hear.

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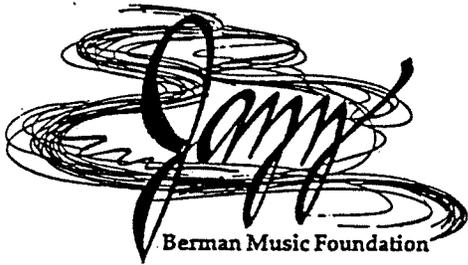
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