

Saxophonist Greg Abate returns to Lincoln April 11th at Ebenezer's

April/May 1997

Volume 2, Number 5

Prez sez, "Dig this!"

By Butch Berman

Hi ho jazz fiends - guess what? MAJOR NEWS AHEAD!!!

We peaked out last issue with a whopping 24 page blockbuster. We do take pride here at the BMF in trying to bridge the gap between both coasts and make a jazz scene here in Lincoln that WILL work because we are stuck here in the middle of the US - the perfect stop over for any jazz artists crisscrossing the country. It is a small world, and the jazz community is even smaller, very accessible and eager to entertain us Midwesterners. Where is this going, you may ask? Let me continue.

Since the acquisition of Michele Michaels with Freewill Artistry in Seattle, and Russ Dantzler of Hot Jazz Mgt. in NY to my Foundation/ newsletter staff - we've made Lincoln a superb potential jazz hot spot (and with the ever swinging KC only 3 and a half hours south - even better!) Maybe some of positive energy has rubbed off since our spring/summer jazz calendar really has something to say.

Still reeling from our fabulous concert/workshops with Benny Waters and Jane Jarvis last month - we sprung into spring a boppin'.

1st item: Now for the major news I promised ya. My good friend Greg Abate from Providence, R.I., who in my opinion is THE heir apparent to Art Pepper's throne on alto sax and flute, will be in Lincoln on Friday, April 11th for three workshops at UNL (thanks to Dave Sharp) and an evening concert at Ebenezer's backed by local heavies Andy Hall on bass, Tom Larson on piano, and Omahan Todd Smith on drums. A steal at seven dollars and not to be missed. Call our office for more information. Advance tickets are available at Ebenezer's, 2110 Winthrop Road.

2nd item: I've been blessed with the rare opportunity to handle a good deal of bringing more local, regional, and national talent to a new local jazz venue that

hopes to be as well known as a JAZZ CLUB as the Zoo was for blues in the '70s and the '80s. I'm talkin' 'bout Rogues Gallery - formerly Sandys on North 11th under the loving guise of its owners, Jody and Daryl Dickerson, and managers Dan Bauer and Bev Price. As soon as construction is complete we'll do a feature on all of the jazzy events that Rogues Gallery and the Foundation will offer. Mark your calendars now for the proposed grand opening June 28th, possibly featuring from Seattle and New York - Norman Hedman's Tropique '96 featuring vocalist/flutist Andrienne Wilson. An all-star band including George Cables on piano will be announced next issue with all of the details intact. Don't miss it.

3rd item: Seattle - including Andrienne Wilson's recording project, the famed Bud Young's Bud's Jazz Records, and the great New Orleans Restaurant run by Gaye Anderson who hosted our Valentine's Day spectacular. Onward!

After first meeting and merging with Michele Michaels on a personal level, I still had my doubts on how
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really cool Seattle might be, and how truly talented her partner, Andrienne Wilson of Freewill Artistry was in de flesh. This whole deal was in regards to the BMF and FA coming together to help further Anne's career and improve both our data bases, etc. Well, Michele was right all along. Seattle is a magnificent city and Andrienne is without a doubt a rising star soon to hopefully explode over this entire solar system with a big time "Hello, I've arrived!" Thus, we now plan to make her our first artist to record on my Jazz Foundation Records.

So we are all heading to NYC in the middle of May to record at Lou Holtzman's Eastside Sound Studio with Norman Hedman producing as well as contributing his excellent percussion work. Anne, of course showcasing her writing, arranging, singing and flute magic; and a stellar rhythm section consisting of my fave George Cables on piano; and fresh off an extended stint with Manhattan Transfer, bassman Alex Blake, and drummer Tommie Campbell. We've also been fortunate to obtain the services of altoist Bobby Watson. Wow, huh? Only minor setback is due to the budget of this project, not to mention the time needed, our newsmag is going to have to go back to being a newsletter, but a newsletter of quality and class. Outside of an issue to issue documentary of all the ins and outs of our recording venture, we are going to focus mostly on local events, but probably still covering as much of KC's jazz happenings as we can fit into our upcoming new schedule. Wish us luck, and we can all be winners. Tropique with Ms. Wilson will also be performing at the Wichita Jazz Festival on Sunday, April 27th and Jazz In June here in Lincoln on June 24th, directly preceding the proposed Rogues Gallery grand opening June 28th.

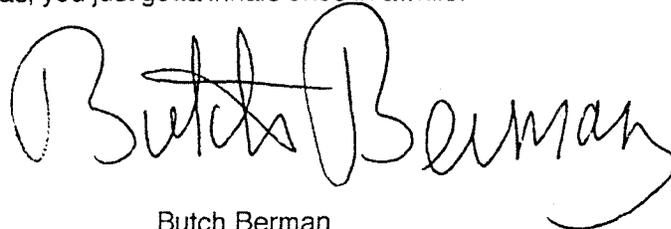
Before I completely run out of space - I do want to make closing comments on the aforementioned Bud's Jazz Records and The New Orleans Restaurant. Located only a couple blocks apart in Seattle's Pioneer Square, I highly recommend both of these swinging establs as not to be missed when in the Seattle area, especially if you dig great jazz and out of sight Creole cooking.

First, Bud's. Bud Young is a kind, jolly fellow so attuned to the history of jazz he'll make your head spin. You can feel his sheer excitement for the music when he plays something for you from his vast, ever so deep basement record store crammed to the brim with great jazz and only jazz in all forms; LPs, CDs and videos surround you including an amazing array of local heavyweights. One in particular, Don Lamphere, a former saxophone genius from Woody Herman's Fourth Herd, is simply astounding. Thanks again to Bud for turning me on to this great cat. Bud, you're an important hub in you city's proud jazz scene. You can write Bud, or visit this one of a kind record experience at 102 So. Jackson St. in downtown Seattle, Wa. 98104; or call him at: (206) 628-0445, or FAX: (206) 223-9559. Tell him the bebop man Butch Berman sent ya.

Last in this column, but certainly not least, is The New Orleans Restaurant located at 114 1st Ave. So. Originally created from the love, hopes, and dreams of

Jimmy and Gaye Anderson, not to mention Jimmy's incredible recipes, this beautiful authentic New Orleans style eatery makes for a night to remember. Plus, they adore and present jazz there, so what more could you ask for. Service? Oh yeah, a great crew of people that make you feel right at home (even if you're a stranger in town, like myself). Sadly, Jimmy passed away not to long ago, but his memory is revered by the charm of The New Orleans Restaurant whenever you step through their door.

I'm outta here. Dig the lovely weather and keep swinging. Like I say, when I close out my KZUM radio show "Reboppin'" each Thursday from 12:30 to 2:00pm, "Life's a gas, you just gotta inhale once in awhile!"



Butch Berman

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Trustee: Butch Berman

Consultants: Dave Hughes, Nancy Marshall, Wade Wright, Michele Michaels, and Russ Dantzler

Wilson and Cables: selling out (three shows) in Seattle

By Morgan Jones

The New Orleans Restaurant in Seattle's historic Pioneer Square, has long been known for its authentic Creole Cuisine. When you want great grits - that's the place to go. Until recently, the jazz that went along with the meal centered on good local bands. In the last several years owner, Gaye Anderson, has made an attempt to bring world-class music to her establishment. In this day and age of dwindling resources and budgets that only allow for record label supported artists to tour, the attempt is heroic. It was in this spirit that pianist George Cables, and vocalist/flutist Andrienne Wilson were presented for Valentine's Day in a romantic evening that the natives of Seattle are not likely to forget.

The night started off with a bang in a great instrumental Latin number, penned by Wilson, that brought cheers from the crowd as she wielded her flute in a way few would expect from a singer. Cables let everyone know from the first introductory salsa piano line that this was going to be an electric evening. Wilson announced the title as "I Don't Know," but admitted that often the song was referred to as "Whose On First?" to avoid confusion for the band. This was followed up with an African version of "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," that left you wondering what you'd been missing - that sucker swung! Infused throughout the evening, that consisted of many Wilson originals, were wonderful renditions of some of George's classic compositions; "Love Song" and "Helen's Song," suitably dedicated to his sweetheart Helen Wray (visiting from San Francisco), and offerings of well-known



Photo by Michele Michaels
Andrienne Wilson plays the flute for the first number

songs with truly inspired arrangements. One of the joys in listening to jazz is the take Cables has on songs such as "Who Can I Turn To?", and "All Or Nothing At All." George Cables reminds you that in great music there is no need to limit a performance with titles such as straight ahead or Latin, and that in fact, the best music defies labeling.



Photo by Michele Michaels
Wilson and George Cables together on stage

Blasting through people's preconceived boundaries seemed to be the theme of the evening, although the romanticism of Valentine's Day was far from ignored. There is no one to solo over a ballad more beautifully than Cables, and for anyone who has not yet heard the incredible richness in the velvet, and soulful voice of Ms. Wilson, well, they are in for a treat. She exhibits a control over her voice that truly speaks to the fact that she is an instrumentalist as well. This kind of unwavering tone is something that is still to be achieved by many of the singers now gaining accolades for being the next Sarah, or Ella. Her ability to control the speed of the vibrato to match the song is something you rarely hear, and the dynamic range from breathless whisper to belting phrases that rise with melodic intensity will change your expectation of singers. As a young singer on the rise, her pairing with Cables is an idea whose time has come. His past experience as Sarah Vaughan's accompanist, and the audition pianist for Duke Ellington's singers puts him in the position of knowing who is worth his time. The fact that she is capable of playing his instrumentals as well as her own, at the level we have come to expect from Cables, speaks to the bright future we will learn to expect from these two.

The band was rounded out by Seattle bassist Clipper Anderson, and drummer Brian Kirk, who recently left New York and road tours with such notables as Little Jimmy Scott, Lou Donaldson and The Pointer Sisters. If that wasn't enough, a 12 year old clarinetist, and African
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percussionist, named Jonathan Green wowed the crowd with his Imbiru contribution to the aforementioned "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." His sensitive delivery of "Imagination" on clarinet, coupled with Wilson's dulcet vocalization, transported listeners to the child-like imagination we all strive to maintain. It was pure magic. It is no wonder this young dynamo has been recognized nationally as the youngest of the "Young Lions."



Photo by Michele Michaels
Cables at the keyboard

The Berman Music Foundation needs to take bows, even in it's own publication, for its help in promoting the show, and its commitment to the preservation and advancement of jazz. The Valentine's Day Concert was a lifetime remembrance for those who attended. The studio CD that Wilson and Cables will be recording together for Foundation Records will, obviously, be a collectible from the outset.



Photo by Michele Michaels
Wilson singing in Seattle



At dinner in Seattle, from left to right: Helen Wray, George Cables, Butch Berman, Michele Michaels, Dan Stogsdill, Andrienne Wilson, and Dorothy Day

(Andrienne Wilson, in addition to performances, teaches at Seattle Central Community College whenever she is in town. Wilson is probably one of the best vocal instructors to be found anywhere, in large part because she is a musician first, and expects nothing less from her students.

Andrienne has been on an unprecedented four national releases in 1996, and in addition to the recording for Foundation Records, TBR (to be recorded) later this spring, she has just been asked to record on Diane Schuur's new CD. Andrienne will be playing flute, and helping lay down some gospel vocals in a song she wrote especially for the world-renown Schuur's wedding last year. "Through Your Eyes," is a show stopping number that the two West Coast Divas have been performing together for the last year and a half. This song has the ability to give Schuur the cross-over hit her career has long insinuated might be within grasp. We will certainly report more as this comes to fruition. When taken as a whole, this all adds to the concept that, where Andrienne Wilson is concerned, "critical mass" has been achieved. - M. J.)



Photo by Michele Michaels
Berman & Bud Young at Bud's Jazz Records in Seattle



Photo by Rich Hoover

Birthday boy Butch Berman with his "jazzy" cake

Waters and Jarvis mesmerize crowd at birthday bash

By Tom Ineck

At 48, Butch Berman was a relative youngster at his own March 9 birthday party, where 95-year-old saxophonist Benny Waters and 81-year-old pianist Jane Jarvis held the audience in thrall with an evening of familiar jazz tunes performed as only such seasoned veterans can.

The Berman Music Foundation sponsored the special Zoo Bar event, pairing the two jazz elders for a rare Midwest appearance.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Pianist Jane Jarvis at The Zoo Bar

Opening for her older colleague with expert backing from Kansas City stalwarts Bob Bowman and Todd Strait on drums, Jarvis launched into "I've Got You Under My Skin," complete with rococo filigrees on the Yamaha baby grand. Jarvis, casually elegant in a sequined jump suit, was in command from the start.

Lionel Hampton's ballad "Midnight Sun" followed, with nice brushwork by Strait and beautiful chords beautifully harmonized and embellished with flowing arpeggios by Jarvis.

Typical of the off-the-cuff banter among musicians was this exchange leading into "Stella By Starlight."

"How are we going to do it?" Jarvis asked.

"The way you did it earlier," answered Bowman.

"But I don't remember how I did it," Jarvis shot back, laughing. "Stella" was taken at mid-tempo and featured a stunning bass solo by Bowman. The lack of rehearsal time had little effect on these professionals.

"Snapper," a humorous Clark Terry tune, was taken at a jaunty, light-hearted tempo. Jarvis played two choruses before handing it over to Bowman for a driving bass solo and a drum solo full of polyrhythms.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Saxophonist Benny Waters at The Zoo Bar

Introduced by Jarvis as "the kid," Waters slowly ascended the stage to a chair, but the blind musician seldom sat down during his set, preferring to stand while he wailed on the alto sax or belted out a blues vocal at the microphone.

Waters achieves an unusually big tone on the alto horn. He also possesses a quavering pitch rarely heard since Lester Young dethroned Coleman Hawkins, and he maintains those rare qualities even at hot tempos, like the one he counted off for "Exactly Like Me." Waters was all over the horn, not afraid to show his wealth of ideas even on his opener.

Waters introduced bluesy growls and octave leaps on a mid-tempo, bossa nova-style "Autumn Leaves," lunging and darting through a ferocious alto solo. And, rather than disregard his much younger colleagues, he listened intently to Bowman's bowed bass solo, smiling at the bassist's inventiveness.

With "Hurry On Down to See Me, Baby," Waters showed that his voice still is deep and resonant at 95. Jarvis added two swinging choruses before Waters called for a bass solo. Whenever on stage, it was Waters who called the shots, from the key to the tempo to the order of solos.

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Photo by Rich Hoover
Waters and bassist Bob Bowman

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"Cool Waters," an original composition, is a slow blues instrumental that gives its composer plenty of opportunities to insert growls and bluesy slurs, often alternating the tempo from quickly scurrying lines to a slow crawl. The first set ended with "All of Me" at a double-fast tempo. Waters followed his breathtaking alto solo with a vocal chorus and some adroit scat-singing.

After everyone had loaded up on Berman birthday cake and socialized for awhile, Jarvis, Bowman and Strait a, opened the second set with "I Remember April" at mid-tempo, then followed with "Jitterbug Waltz," a perfect vehicle for Jarvis' freewheeling keyboard style. Bowman upped the ante with a swinging bass solo, and Strait's drum breaks called his bluff.

In rapid succession, there followed "I Should Care," "Where or When" and "Stardust," before Waters returned to the stage.



Photo by Rich Hoover
Bowman plays a solo

Waters immediately launched into a comic rendition of "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby." Waters occasionally transposed the lyrics accidentally, but they were so heartwarmingly delivered that it didn't matter. His alto solo was marvelous -- bouncy, rhythmically precise, constructed of neatly clipped phrases. In a spirited exchange with Strait, Waters bore down on the horn like a man one quarter his age.

"Blue Moon" was taken as a mid-tempo bossa nova, brilliantly paced and shrewdly assembled. During another outstanding alto solo, Waters showed he still is capable of hitting piercing high notes. "Them There Eyes" gave Waters another chance to show his vocal prowess, followed by a soaring alto solo.

The other Waters original played that night was the marvelous "Blue Waters," a gutbucket blues of the highest order, done in that greasy, down-home style. Jarvis proved her affinity for the blues, then Waters ripped off a powerful alto solo. After listening to these two elders of American music go at it, I simply scribbled in my notebook: "The human spirit never ceases to amaze."

As if to prove me right, Waters and Jarvis continued with a cool, swinging mid-tempo version of "Just Friends," Errol Garner's "Misty" and a very fast take on "When You're Smiling." Finally, Jarvis gently played "Thanks for the Memories" before Waters announced the finale, "Blues Walk."

The Waters-Jarvis appearance was a golden opportunity for many of us longtime Zoo Bar fans to introduce our parents to the world-famous blues club. My own parents, contemporaries of Jarvis, enjoyed the show immensely. Jarvis, when introduced to my mother, who is a month older than the pianist, said with typical good humor, "Well, I guess I'm the youngster here."

Thanks for the memories, Jane and Benny.



Photo by Rich Hoover
Drummer Todd Strait waits for his cue



Photo by Butch Berman
Jane Jarvis, Rusty White, and Benny Waters at UNL

Waters and Jarvis at UNL & Park

By Butch Berman

What a treat. Yeah, I'm talking about the ultra cool jazz workshops that were held at UNL under the direction of jazz professor/author Dave Sharp, at Milford High School (see Russ Dantzler's "Scrapple" in this issue), and one at Park Middle School (where special thanks go out to Dr. Richard Scott from Lincoln Public Schools, Principal Tim Carroll from Park, and an assist from Dantzler with Hot Jazz Management in NYC). Who were the featured artists, you're probably thinking? Well, just try 176 years of experience between them and you've got none other than sax legend Benny Waters and pianist/arranger extraordinaire Jane Jarvis.



Photo by Butch Berman
White and Waters at Westbrook

I arrived at UNL's Westbrook Music Building to a packed house of eager students, and a few adults, all getting ready for Benny and Jane's spot. I heard when I got there that both the early and mid morning classes also filled the room.



Photo by Russ Dantzler
Berman and Waters at UNL

Benny, showing no signs of fatigue after blowing the Zoo Bar crowd away at my 48th birthday party/Foundation bash, was in top form this morning recalling stories of yore and managing to crack up the audience with some pretty risqué repartee. I'll tell ya, at 95 this cat's got his wits about him. I closed my eyes while he was playing and his music is simply ageless and strong.

Performing "Blue Waters" and "Cool Waters" - Benny demonstrated the difference between cool blues and gut-bucket blues.



Photo by Russ Dantzler
Berman and Jarvis at UNL

Jane, every bit an equal of Benny's talent, not only shone brightly in her featured spot, but as the perfect accompanist along with bass wiz (and UNL music professor) Rusty White in backing up the wily Waters. An
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Photo by Butch Berman
Jarvis receiving Park t-shirt from Principal Tim Carroll

Scrapple from the Apple

By Russ Dantzler

Greg Olsen, Milford's Own Jazz Hero, Shares Benny Waters' Music and Wit with His School

Benny Waters has had such a rich life-time of experiences that it seems inappropriate to bring him into a community for a performance without presenting him to young people. I was determined to see that Benny Waters and Jane Jarvis could connect with students in the Lincoln area both jointly and separately. They presented three workshops together at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln on March 10, then ended up in different locations the next day.



Photo by Russ Dantzler
Benny Waters singing the blues at Milford High School

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autograph session and some personal introductions followed the 11:30 am educational experience.

The next morning at Lincoln's Park Middle School was Jarvis' turn to be the featured artist. And as a solo act, she was absolutely fabulous! Regardless of the fact that she's 81 years young - she glides over the keys with such grace and ability, covering the entire gamut of the history of jazz forms. She told me over lunch that she knew over 10,000 songs and could play the "top ten" hits from each year dating back to the '20s. Truly amazing!

Just let me close by stating that the best birthday gift I received was the look of love that shone between the kids at these workshops, and in the eyes of these two mighty musical masters.

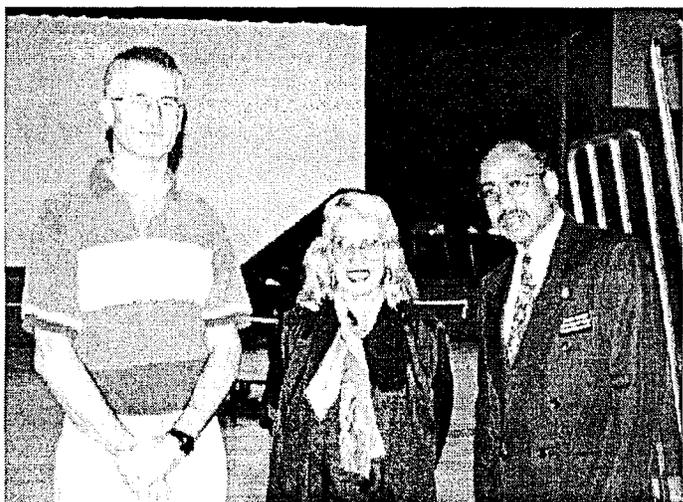


Photo by Butch Berman
Dave Hughes, Jarvis, and Dr. Richard Scott at Park

The generosity of the Berman Foundation had made it possible to get Waters from Queens to the Midwest, and the rest was up to me. I called a contact given to me by former Lincolnite Susan Berlowitz in Milford last February 10, only one month before a workshop might be offered. Late developments made it impossible for me to try to set this up earlier.

Greg Olsen is the instrumental music instructor at Milford High School, who I later found to also be president of the Nebraska Jazz Educators. In my first conversation with him, I heard what I expected. The school's budget was already allocated, it was a busy time with school events, and his superiors were likely to oppose this. But Olsen also said that he was honored that Milford High was being considered by this great artist, and that he would see what he could do.

After literally knocking on the doors of many businesses, Greg Olsen raised enough money to engage Benny Waters and a fine area rhythm section in just three days! Some of them added as little as ten dollars. It was a long list of sponsors that Greg read to the audience before introducing the band, and after wishing a happy birthday to a Mrs. Kunze.

Bassist Andy Hall, pianist Tom Larson, and drummer Todd Smith were very well prepared, and sounded like it. Before the main presentation, Benny and his new band conducted a master class for about 80 music students at 8:15 a.m. The entire student body of 300 was then joined by about 100 townspeople for an hour-long jazz lesson at 9:15 am.

Waters began the show with Charlie Shavers' "Undecided," followed by an engaging vocal on "Them There Eyes." Delighted with Larson's first solo, he turned to him and asked for "one more, daddy-o." He followed with what he described as a "gut bucket" version of his original "Blue Waters," which he had played a "cool" version of for the music students earlier, without having time to finish the comparison. After his first wide-vibrato, audience-stunning chorus on that blues had them cheering, Benny joked that he "kinda liked that myself."

Benny stopped the music to talk to one of the most respectful and attentive audiences he had ever been presented to. He explained that he did not know why jazz seemed to be an underdog, that it was just not reaching enough people today. He defined his own style as mainstream jazz, in the middle of the road between the extremes. He spoke of turning down an offer to replace Ben Webster in the Ellington Orchestra in the 1950s because he was under contract as a leader.

A student asked him what his most embarrassing moment on stage had been. He let loose a baritone belly-laugh before he answered. Waters said he was playing a show at the Harlem Opera House, before the Cotton Club



Photo by Russ Dantzier

A standing ovation for Waters performance at Milford

or Apollo Theatre existed. He was sustaining a high note at the end of a clarinet solo, which was not common then. "Now I used to drink then, you see," he added. He bent backwards as he held this note, to make it showy. "I fell right down on my fanny, still making that note with one hand." He said the show's producer came running afterward to tell him to "leave that in, leave that in the show."

Of his talents, Waters said that "age has nothing to do with it," and then proved his point playing "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone," with fluidity amazing for any saxophonist of any age. With 400 people standing and cheering, he added an encore, an extremely high-tempo version of "All of Me." Everyone rose to their feet again, and then had to rush off and start classes. The principal came up immediately to express gratitude for such high quality music being brought to his school. Benny packed up his beat up old silver horn and we headed for the door.

Two girls courteously waited for a moment to speak in the hallway. When invited, one said, "Mr. Waters, I was wondering if you ever met Scott Joplin." Benny said, "No, I never met him, but he sure was a great composer." The girl went on to say her grandfather had known Joplin. When asked how they liked the music, they answered in near-unison, "We *loved* it." I then asked, "What did the other students think of the music?" The quick response was, "Some of our friends don't even *like* jazz, but they liked *this!* "

That, to me, is the definition of a successful school jazz presentation. Thanks to Greg Olsen and the Berman Music Foundation for making it possible for Milford's students to broaden the horizons of their own artistic taste. Count them among Nebraska's jazz heroes.

* * *

Responses or comments: (212) 586-8125, 328 West 43rd St., Suite 4F, New York, NY 10036. Or by e-mail: hotjazz@soho.ios.com. Artist information web site: <http://soho.ios.com/~hotjazz/HOTJAZZ.html>.



Photo by Russ Dantzier

Tom Larson, Waters, Andy Hall, & Todd Smith at Milford

NJO and guest artists revisit "The Big Easy" in Mardi Gras tribute

By Tom Ineck

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra celebrated Mardi Gras a little late this year -- with a March 19 concert featuring a program largely consisting of Crescent City sounds.

Helping to set the festive New Orleans mood were guest soloists Joe Genovesi on clarinet, Mac McCune on trumpet and Jack Seckman on trombone. The threesome recreated the classic Dixieland front line during a special small-combo set, and Genovesi and McCune also took solo turns with the big band.

The full orchestra blew out the cobwebs with "Get Up and Go," an uptempo Sammy Nestico composition built on swirling brass lines and driven by the powerful drumming of Todd Smith, who remained firmly in the driver's seat all evening.

The trombone section, an important element in any New Orleans-style ensemble, strutted its stuff on a mid-tempo Randy Snyder arrangement of Lil Hardin Armstrong's "Struttin' with Some Barbecue." The old warhorse gets a new lease on life with Snyder's unique revamping, which is full of unusual brass voicings.

McCune, a Lincoln jazz veteran who has gained a regional reputation since moving to the Capital City in 1961, joined the NJO for "Back Home Again in Indiana." A consummate professional, McCune stood perfectly erect, firmly planted his feet and blew with brassy bravado. Randy Aldcroft's arrangement of W.C. Handy's "Basin Street Blues" began slowly, punctuated with a group glissando from the trombones, in the classic "tailgate" style. McCune took it uptempo, inserting blue notes in all the right places.

Genovesi, a versatile reed player from Omaha, last guest-starred with the NJO several years ago on tenor sax, but for this occasion he was spotlighted on clarinet, the instrument universally associated with New Orleans jazz. Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind" was the perfect vehicle for Genovesi's subtle playing. The NJO's metallic brass punctuation and power-packed rhythm section threatened to drown out his breathy, woody tone, but Genovesi managed to match the volume with grace and tasteful phrasing.

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee" built gradually on Tom Harvill's stark solo piano introduction -- adding Genovesi's clarinet, then the easy-swinging rhythm section, reeds, trombones and, finally, muted trumpets. Genovesi also showed his compatibility with the blues, finishing with some soulfully bent notes.

With "Samba de Orfeu," the NJO ended the first set with a Latin twist, aided and abetted by Bob Krueger's trenchant trumpet solo, Andy Hall's zesty electric bass solo and Dave Sharp's buoyant soprano sax solo.

McCune, Genovesi and Seckman, who drove from his home in Schuyler for the concert, fronted the NJO rhythm section for a set of more traditional, small-combo New Orleans music. "When You're Smiling" featured the trio in classic interplay, that group improvisation native to the Crescent City.

"When It's Sleepy Time Down South" had McCune paying tribute to the great Louis Armstrong, blowing a slow, impassioned lead line. Genovesi took the lead on "Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans?" and everyone swung out on "Bourbon Street Parade." Todd Smith set up the march beat, over which the front-line trio took turns soloing and playing in polyphonic ensemble.

The guest soloists surrendered the stage to the NJO saxophones and rhythm section for a supercharged, Supersax arrangement of Charlie Parker's "Cool Blues," a distinct contrast to the traditional good-time New Orleans sounds. Despite the dazzling technique of the five-piece reed section soloing in unison and the outstanding tenor solo by Ed Love, the bebop tune seemed inappropriate in the midst of Mardi Gras.

"The Last Great Georgia Extravaganza," a Tom Kubis variation on "Sweet Georgia Brown," featured fine solo work by Harvill, Tom Clifton on alto sax, Andy Hall on bass and Brian Grasmick on trumpet. Finishing with a New Orleans-style flourish, Love played clarinet, the trombones blared and drummer Smith took an extended solo that included everything from a press roll to adroit cymbal patterns and fancy footwork on the bass drum.

From the NJO songbook came "Pussywiggle Stomp," a typically complex tune by Don Ellis. Essentially a hoedown in 7/4 time, it is rhythmically challenging for musicians and listeners alike. For once, even Smith had difficulty finding and holding the metric anchor. A final fanfare took out the tune in New Orleans style.

McCune, Genovesi and Seckman returned for one last New Orleans-style sendup, on "When the Saints Go Marching In." McCune essayed the melody with the same calm assertiveness he showed all evening. Genovesi took the handoff with similar confidence, adding his own contributions to the well-worn theme. Although not the same caliber of soloist as McCune and Genovesi, Seckman showed taste and discretion in his trombone work.

Of all the musicians, McCune seemed the most at home in the New Orleans idiom, sustaining single notes to build creative tension among the three horns, alternating slow and fast phrases and generally projecting just the right celebrative tone.

Some 350 people attended the NJO show at the Ramada Hotel in downtown Lincoln, and the infectious rhythms and lively performances had many patrons shouting their approval, an unusual occurrence for the usually staid NJO audiences.

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra pays tribute to the late, great Ella Fitzgerald in its April concerts, with special guest singer Annette Murrell. The concerts, April 15 in Omaha and April 16 in Lincoln, also will feature the NJO Young Jazz Artist Competition Winner.

Tomfoolery

By Tom Ineck

The Berman Music Foundation's presentation of saxophonist Greg Abate on April 11 is only one of the many events that is beginning to put Ebenezer's on the map as one of Lincoln's best venues for live music.

On Thursday April 24 and Saturday April 26, KZUM Radio and Ebenezer's will collaborate for two nights of live jazz benefiting Lincoln's community radio station. The benefits will showcase the best of local jazz talent from 8 p.m. until midnight. The cost for each night is just \$5, with all proceeds going to KZUM.

Saxophonist Bill Wimmer starts things off at 8 p.m. April 24. A longtime Lincoln freelance musician who used to lead weekly jam sessions at the late, lamented McGuffey's Tavern, Wimmer later led bands at Julio's in downtown Lincoln. His sax style is straight-ahead and his choice of material is always interesting. Joining Wimmer on keyboards is John Carlini, whose unconventional style and offbeat sense of humor have created a strong following in bands like The Jazz Monks and The Fungis. On bass will be the unparalleled Andy Hall, the hardest-working bassist in town.

Pianist Tom Larson and guitarist Peter Bouffard will follow in a duo performance relying solely on the two musicians' rhythmic, melodic and harmonic instincts. Without the customary bass and drums, they create an improvisational dialogue that is both challenging and rewarding.

Closing the first evening of jazz at Ebenezer's is Group Sax, a saxophone quartet featuring four of the area's leading reedmen, including Dave Sharp, Scott Vicroy, Ed Love and a yet-unnamed fourth member. Patterned after the World Saxophone Quartet, the 29th Street Saxophone Quartet and Itchy Fingers, Group Sax performs tightly arranged compositions, creating a solid swinging tempo with contrapuntal harmonies and a pumping baritone-sax bass line.

Annette Murrell and the Jim Williamson Trio will open the Saturday evening show at 8 p.m. Lincoln's undisputed "Queen of Jazz and Blues," Murrell has earned the title since her arrival in the Capital City in the late 1980s. A native of Denver, she has been a professional singer for nearly 20 years, performing jazz, blues and gospel music in nightclubs, concert venues, churches and schools. She will be joined by Jim Williamson on a bank of keyboards, drummer John Scofield and, possibly, saxophonist Jon Hischke.

Following Murrell is the Jesse Becker Quartet, a group of young players who have been making waves at Ebenezer's since the club opened a few months ago. Saxophonist Jesse Becker is the nominal leader, although the group also has appeared as the James Valentine Quartet (after the band's guitarist).

A jam session will close the two nights of live jazz at Ebenezer's. Musicians, bring your axes and join the fun!

Jazz on disc

by Tom Ineck

Recordings rated * to *****

MOTION POETS, Standard of Living, IGMOD Records. ****

In 1995, this group of young Twin Cities-based musicians released the startlingly good debut record "Truth & Consequence." Then known as Little Big Band, the sextet also made an impressive appearance at Lincoln's Zoo Bar in support of the record.

Two years, a name change and hundreds of one-night stands later, Motion Poets is a well-polished, fiendishly funky outfit whose second release outdoes the first. "Standard of Living" is a diverse collection of 11 original compositions, ranging from free-style playing to straight-ahead swing, with funky backbeats emerging when you least expect them.

Then, there's the touching ballad "Change Must Come," proof that these guys appreciate melodic content, as well as harmonic complexity and rhythmic drive. "TM" is a showcase for drummer J.T. Bates, who plays with a soulful snap reminiscent of New Orleans.

"Dream" is a beautiful horn trio featuring the band's front line, reedman Doug Little, trombonist Mark Miller and trumpeter-flugelhornist Mark Sutton. In "E=mc2," it is readily apparent why this group once referred to itself as a little big band, with the horn section riding the rhythmic wave with brilliant phrasing and orchestral voicing.

Currently in the midst of a three-month tour that takes them from Appleton, Wis., to the Knitting Factory in New York City, Motion Poets will not play in Lincoln, which still is in dire need of a consistent jazz venue. Meanwhile, jazz fans in Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Kansas City and other Midwestern cities are getting a taste of one of the most exciting jazz combos on the scene.

TED PILTZECKER, Unicycle Man, Equilibrium Records. ****

Ted Piltzecker, a multitalented musician-educator, for several years has been an important key to the success of the Arts Are Basic program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He was commissioned by UNL to create "Fate's Play" with an actress and a dancer and has performed in Lincoln area schools and at Jazz in June.

"Unicycle Man" has Piltzecker fronting a stellar lineup, including saxophonist Bob Mintzer, pianist James Williams, bassist Harvie Swartz and drummer Dave Meade. With the exception of "There is No Greater Love," all nine tracks are original compositions by the vibraphonist.

The result is breezy, melodic magic, from the opening Latin piece "Buffalo Dance" to the gospel-tinged "Thea" to "Tango for an Elegant Man," played as a pianoless quartet. The upbeat music is consistently well written and superbly played.

Piltzecker plans to return to Lincoln for a short visit in June. Stay tuned to the Jazz newsletter for details on live performances in the area.

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Nancy Marshall

Greg Abate returns to Lincoln

Saxophonist Greg Abate from Providence, Rhode Island returns to Lincoln for three workshops and one performance on Friday, April 11th.

Abate will do the three workshops for Dave Sharp's jazz classes at UNL's Westbrook Music Building in Room 119 at 8:30, 9:30, and 11:30 am.

Then, Abate will join Lincolnites Tom Larson on piano and Andy Hall on bass, plus Omahan Todd Smith on drums for a concert at one of Lincoln's newest clubs. The site for the show is Ebenezer's at 2110 Winthrop Road (one block west of 33rd and South Streets) in Rathbone Village. The show starts at 9 pm and the cover charge is only \$7.00.

Tickets are available in advance from Ebenezer's, and you might want to consider buying tickets in advance for this show, because the club only seats about 100 people comfortably. For more information, call the foundation office at 476-3112.

NJO concludes its season

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra concludes its 1996-97 season with "A Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald," starring Lincoln jazz vocalist Annette Murrell. The band will also present its second NJO Young Jazz Artist Competition Winner as a featured soloist. The concerts will be held on Tuesday April 15th in Omaha and Wednesday April 16th in Lincoln.

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.

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.

Monday Night Big Band continues

The Monday Night Big Band is scheduled to perform from 7:30 to 10:30 pm every Monday night (except April 14th) until June 30th in the Riverside Room on the lower level of the Ramada Hotel, 141 N. 9th St., in downtown Lincoln. 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 doors open at 7 pm, and 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.

Gallery Walk Cabaret continues

The Gallery Walk Cabaret for May will be on Friday the 5th at the Seventh Street Loft. The time of this monthly event is usually from 8:00 to 11:00 pm, but because of a previous commitment of the loft space, the May Cabaret will be from 9:30 to 12:00.

The group for May is Braziliance, the same Latin sextet that packed the place in January. They are a really great new addition to the local jazz scene, having gotten lots of gigs since the January show because they were so popular. Stop in and check them out on May 5th at 9:30 at the Seventh Street Loft, 504 S. 7th Street. Admission is \$5.00, it's smoke free, and there are drinks you can buy. If the kids can stay up that late, this is a perfect venue for them. There's lots of space and it's a casual setting.

Jazz continues at The Oven

The Oven is still the place to be for jazz on Sunday nights from 6:00 to 9:00 pm in Lincoln. The restaurant at 201 N. 8th in Lincoln will feature the duos of Andy Hall & Dave Sharp on April 6; Dave Novak & Dennis Taylor on April 13; Peter Bouffard & John Carlini on April 20; and Nancy Marshall & Steve Hanson on April 27. It is not known yet what the schedule will be for May yet, but expect the same duos in approximately the same rotation. Call The Oven at 475-6118 for more information.

Jazz in Omaha

The First Friday jazz series continues at Joslyn Art Museum's atrium, 2200 Dodge St., in Omaha on Friday, April 4 as the Sons of Brasil perform. The Joe Cartwright Trio plays on Friday, May 2. Admission is \$5, \$3 for Joslyn members, and a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres are available.

The jazz also 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.

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 _____

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(W) _____

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

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

Thanks for supporting jazz in the Lincoln area!

Jazz on the radio

Compiled by Dave Hughes and Tom Ineck

KZUM to hold fund drive

KZUM Community Radio, at 89.3 FM in Lincoln, offers a wide variety of jazz programs every weekday afternoon from 12:30 until 4 p.m., except Monday when the jazz ends at 3 p.m. and doesn't pick up again until 8:30 p.m., and Friday when the jazz only runs from 2 until 4 p.m.

Jazz writer and KZUM Development Director Tom Ineck has resumed his duties as the "Mayor of Night Town" now on Tuesday evenings from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

KZUM continues to strengthen and expand its commitment to jazz music. Several new jazz programs recently were added to the KZUM lineup, including "Far Out! Jazz and News," with Ed Rumbaugh, from 10 a.m. to noon Mondays; "Diffusion," with Eli Rhodes, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Tuesdays; and "Groove Merchant," with Jay Pralle, from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursdays. Another new program, "Gumbo Radio," with Steve Petty, features a mix of jazz, folk and blues from 8:30 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays.

You can show your support for local jazz programming on KZUM by becoming a member of the community radio station or renewing your membership during KZUM's Spring Marathon, April 4 through April 18.

If you would like detailed information about the jazz programs on KZUM, or would like to receive a current copy of their program guide, give them a call at 474-5086.

Nebraska Public Radio has jazz, too

Nebraska Public Radio, KUCV at 90.9 FM in Lincoln, and at other frequencies around the state (except Omaha), offers two nights of jazz each week.

On Friday nights at 11 p.m. you can hear National Public Radio's "Jazz Profiles," an audio biography of jazz artists. Then, Liz Chadwick presents "Bohemia After Dark," an hour of locally programmed jazz from 12 midnight until sign off at 1 a.m.

JAZZ PROFILES in April and May

- 04-04 George Shearing
- 04-11 Les McCann
- 04-18 Charles Mingus Part I: A 75th Birthday Celebration
- 04-25 Charles Mingus Part II: A 75th Birthday Celebration
- 05-02 Toots Thielemans: 75th Birthday Celebration
- 05-09 Sidney Bechet
- 05-16 Mary Lou Williams
- 05-23 Bill Evans
- 05-30 Jimmy Witherspoon

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

JAZZSET in April and May

- 04-05 David Sanchez at the Village Vanguard
- 04-12 Bill Frisell Quartet & Kenny Barron and Mino Cinelu
- 04-19 Mingus Band
- 04-26 The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band
- 05-03 Michael Brecker Quartet
- 05-10 Highlights from the 39th Monterey Jazz Festival
- 05-17 More highlights from the 39th Monterey Jazz Fest
- 05-24 Highlights of the 1996 Newport Jazz Festival
- 05-31 TBA

PIANO JAZZ in April and May

- 04-05 Michael Abene
- 04-12 Lalo Schiffrin
- 04-19 Makoto Ozone
- 04-26 Bob James
- 05-03 Larry Goldings
- 05-10 Diana Krall
- 05-17 Willie Pickens
- 05-24 Grover Washington, Jr.
- 05-31 Carline Ray

For membership information (NPRN is also having a fund drive in April), or a free copy of NPRN's program guide "Members Only," call the studio line at 472-2200, or 1-800-290-6850.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's student station, KRNU at 90.3 in Lincoln, now has only one jazz related show. The program featuring beat poetry called "Words," hosted by Joe Krings, continues on Friday nights right from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. For more information about this program call KRNU at 472-5768.

KIOS in Omaha also has jazz

Mike Jacobs from KIOS-FM at 91.5 in Omaha, a station licensed to the Omaha Public Schools, recently called to ask that we include in this column their jazz programs. Well, here goes!

On weekdays the jazz starts at 1 p.m. in the afternoon and runs until their daily news block starts at 3:30 pm. On Mondays at 1 p.m., Jazz Smithsonian comes your way, then Jazz Classics in Stereo starts at 2 p.m. The afternoon finishes with Blues in the Afternoon. On Tuesdays the Brazilian Hour starts off the afternoon at 1 p.m., followed by Jazz in the Afternoon from 2 until 3:30 p.m. On Wednesdays at 1 p.m. the same Jazzset that was aired on Nebraska Public Radio the Saturday before is repeated, but at 2 p.m., the Marian McPartland Piano Jazz programs are a week ahead of NPRN's schedule. Wednesday concludes with a half hour of Jazz Revisited. On Thursdays, One Night Stand kicks off the afternoon of jazz at 1 p.m., followed by Jazz Junction at 2. On Fridays The Good Old Days starts it off at 1 p.m. followed by Jazz Night from Las Vegas, then another edition of Jazz in the Afternoon that lasts until 3:30 p.m.

On the weekends, Marian McPartland airs again at 8 pm on Saturday followed by Jazz Junction at 9 pm and Last Call at 11 pm. There are no jazz programs on Sundays.

Freewillin' By Michele Michaels

Interview with Bobby Shew

It was Butch Berman's interest in an in-depth article about Frank Rosolino that led me to Bobby Shew. In asking George Cables, the piano master, where to get the most accurate information on the trombone enigma, he said, "Talk to Bobby Shew." A few phone calls later I found myself speaking with this wonderful trumpeter, who was a close personal friend of Frank Rosolino. As things would have it, Butch finished his piece on Frank before I could interview such a great source. "Hold the presses, I got a hot one!" only works in the movies, no matter how good the subject matter. What was wonderful about interviewing Bobby Shew became evident with the conversation. He is a smart, warm, and informative individual, who has contributed greatly to the music of jazz, and is in every way a story in and of himself.

This "Pisces" horn blower was born and raised in Albuquerque, and is approaching 47 years of trumpet playing. Shew left New Mexico after high school and made the big move to New York, where he spent his summers during college. The Big Apple musical experience was cut short due to Uncle Sam and a little thing called the draft. Fortunately, for all of us, Shew served his country from the confines of an all-star big band formed to promote the NORAD project in Colorado Springs. Concerts were played all over the world promoting nuclear defense through jazz.

This "Airmen, Landmen and Seamen of Note" was an amazing amalgam of the best musicians from the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force. The colonel in charge hand-picked the instrumentalists from the Military School of Music in Washington DC, and ended up with a veritable "who's who" of the young lions of the '50s. Shew said the colonel would hear someone really blowing and just "pluck them outta there!" Shew said, "It was like, WOW, everybody around was recruited off of the Woody Herman Band, the Glen Miller Band or even Dorsey's band. They were all musicians like that. So I was fortunate to be around when lots and lots of really superb young players were drafted into the service."

After completing his military commitment, Shew joined the Tommy Dorsey Band. From there he was asked to join the bands of Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, Maynard Ferguson, Sy Zentner, and Buddy Rich. For years he traveled as the lead trumpet player with Della Reese's nine piece ensemble, which he recalls as "kickin'." His extensive experience as both a lead player and soloist led to years supporting major stars such as Paul Anka, Robert Goulet, Barbra Streisand, Elvis, Tom Jones, Steve Allen, and many, many more. He was the lead trumpet at the height of the Las Vegas Show band experience. His love for his wife, and their dislike of Las Vegas, coincided with the eventual demise of the great show band era, causing him to move on -- this time to Los Angeles.

The move to California brought with it a plethora of studio work. From 1972 to 1982 he recorded soundtracks



Bobby Shew

for many films and television shows. He was a regular contributor to *Sonny & Cher*, *Streets of San Francisco*, *Merv Griffin* and *Mork and Mindy*. Shew said, "Though this kind of work had me with world class musicians, like Henry Mancini, the writing that was called for was mediocre music. Music to back up a gun fight scene or a car chase, whatever, so even though you're sitting next to artistic genius, you're playing junk music". This drove him nuts, and the money became less important. He decided to move on to what he really enjoyed -- playing jazz and teaching.

Shew is now doing approximately 100 performances a year with various schools around the world teaching and performing for clinics, workshops, festivals, at the high school and college level. This keeps him on the road about 230 to 240 days out of the year.

Throughout all of these experiences and career moves, Bobby Shew has continued to record and produce some of the best albums in jazz. The next release is due out soon. Graphics were being finished as we spoke. Shew recorded this project 10 years ago with Tom Harrell, the often unheralded trumpet genius. He is very proud of a project that features two of the greatest trumpeters alive today, and the fact that the music and concept are so original. The project, although always brilliant and one of Shew's best, was caught up in a bankrupt label, and the legal hoopla that kept him from his own music. The MaMa Foundation heard it and absolutely loved it. As soon as he was able to legally own his music, they decided to release it. Many labels lack the vision required for the support of music that is genius. We congratulate the MaMa Foundation for showing such insight.

Shew told me enthusiastically that "This project, although done some years ago, sounds like it was recorded yesterday." The CD, *Playing With Fire*, features the two trumpets (Shew and Harrell), Kei Akagi on piano, John Patitucci on bass, and Roy McCurdy on drums. It seems that these trumpet players were showing vision with their choice of great young players, ten years later they have all hit the top of their form, and fame. This could be one for the collection. The CD will be reviewed in this newsletter once it is released and I, for one, can't wait. I'd also like to thank George Cables for being right, again.

For those who would like to know more about Frank Rosolino's extraordinarily, brief, and brilliant career, Double Time Jazz has produced a tape, and a book complete with pictures.

Ten (sorta) jazzy questions

By Butch Berman

This month's questions are posed to Lincoln pianist, and ex-bar owner Pat Glenn.

Q: I discovered rock 'n' roll through watching you on Wayne West's (I think) local TV show around 1956-7 even before Elvis, and you showed me my first Jerry Lee style 1-4-5 chord patterns on the piano as we were neighbors. Gimme a couple paragraphs of your recollections of those golden oldie daze.

A: Butch, I'd first like to congratulate you on the success of this publication and the myriad activities your foundation has involved itself with. About any sense of awareness regarding those days, I guess I'll have to plead ignorance. At the time, I really didn't know the days were "golden" or that the songs I was starting to play would be later referred to as "oldies." Don't you think it's notable that the term "golden oldies" has been almost exclusively reserved reserved for the music from the mid '50s to the early '60s. I only played it because I was there and so was it. When I started my first "combo" (does that word date me a little bit?) any group that wanted to work in the Lincoln area either played "standards," western (now called country), big band, which I didn't have, or the new stuff that was just starting to get played on a very few radio stations that people were calling "rock 'n' roll." Allen Freed was credited with coining that phrase, but you and I both know it was in the black lexicon before that. My first recollection of rock & roll was sometime in 1954; I think Bill Haley's version of *Shake, Rattle and Roll*. I don't remember screaming "Eureka!" or seeing light bulbs levitating overhead, but I realized that I liked it, other teenagers liked it, and most importantly I could play it pretty good. I still enjoy doing a running bass while using the three chords you mentioned, for example C, F and G, but I must confess that after a while I'm ready to hear something else, and I don't necessarily mean adding A minor. I'll admit that not just a few of my favorite '50's tunes used that four chord progression. *Teenagers in Love, Hushabye*, and also standards of course like *Blue Moon*. Doing the TV show called *Holiday Hotel* on Saturday mornings in '55 and '56 was exciting and gave my little group exposure to the point that by the time I was in high school I had all the weekend work I could play. Some of the best memories I have of those early days was playing college dances. It was really vicarious going to frat and sorority parties when I couldn't even drive a car. Plus, they paid me money for it. Butch, ain't this a great country?

Q: Who was or were your primary piano instructors when you were a boy and what age did you start playing?

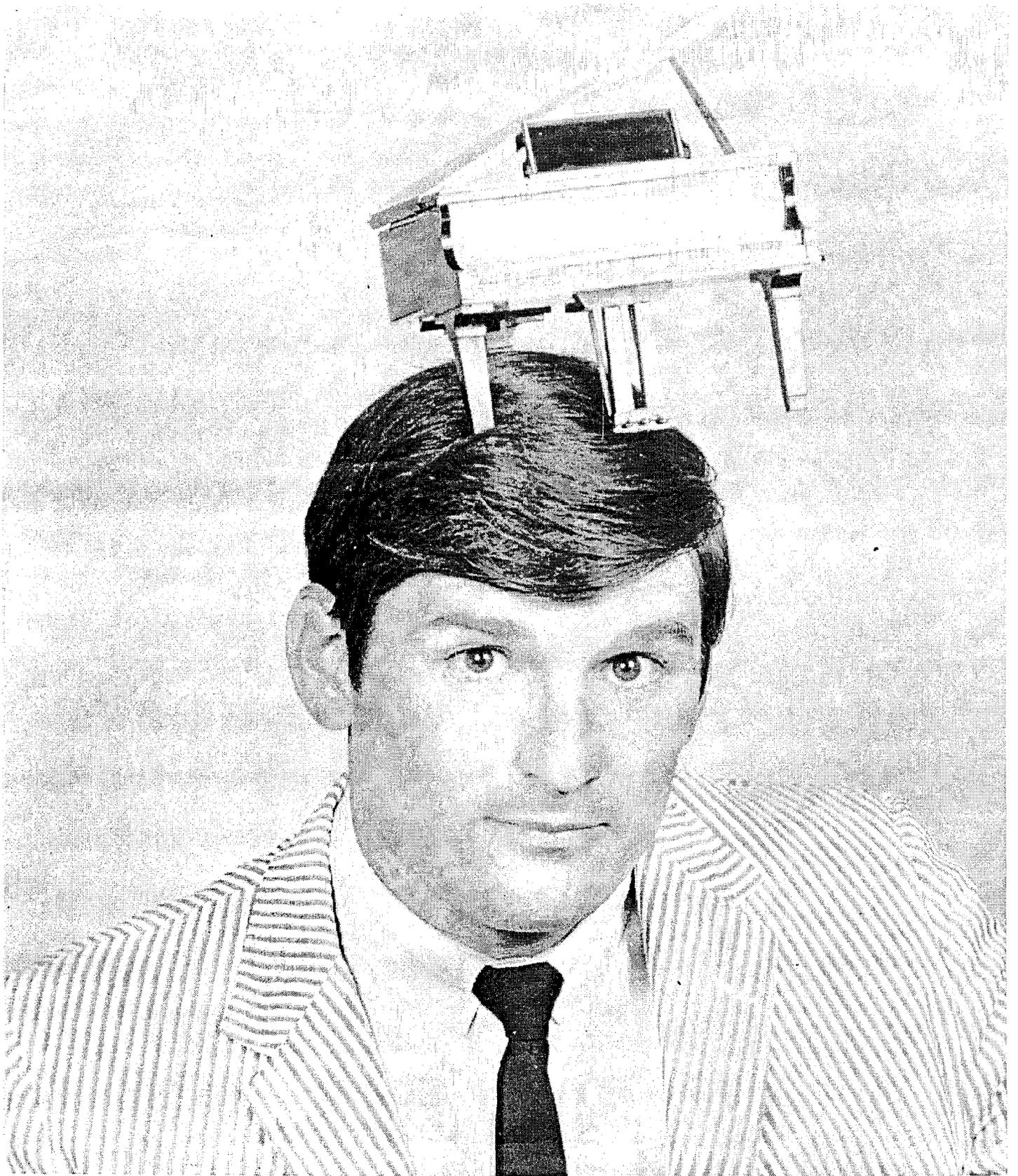
A: My parents picked up an old upright somewhere when I was just started pushing down keys that sounded good

together. The first song I remember teaching myself was the *Blacksmith Blues*. It was a vocal that started something like "Down in Old Kentucky where the Horseshoes are lucky," or was it "Where the farriers are plucky?" It doesn't matter because I did it as a boogie woogie instrumental. Keep in mind, there was no Elvis, Bill Haley, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, or Jerry Lee Lewis music around then. The hot sounds at the time were on the *Lucky Strike Hit Parade* TV show. They'd have their stable of vocalists do the top six or seven hit songs every week and you'd get a lot of Perry Como, Eddie Fisher, and Patti Page. Some I could stand -- most not. Naturally a lot of songs stayed on or near the top of the charts for several weeks. To my 13 year old ears, it was always the worst one, i.e., *How Much is that Doggie in the Window, Sweet Violets, I'm Walking Behind You*. Each tune was done in skit form, and when I was exposed to one of the worst attempts at music penned since the inception of the diatonic scale, namely, *The Shrimp Boats are A-Coming*, I forced myself with what I now recognize was perverse delight to see how they'd present this terrible ditty from one Saturday to the next. It seemed like it was up there forever, but no matter how bizarre the staging from week to week, i.e., Snookie Lanson dressed as a shrimp, they could not further degrade this song, as it was truly the personification of it's own insult. With all that said, I'll have to admit that shows like that and some radio, contributed to my early musical influences. People in radio were overly cautious back then, by the way...would you believe that in 1964 KFAB would only play Beatles' songs if they were not recorded by the Beatles. About my melodic mentors, which I think was originally the question, let's just say that regarding formal instruction, I've managed to lead a somewhat Bohemian existence, disencumbered from the heavy weight of musical education. I can, of course, read chord symbols and consider myself one of the better little augmenters and diminishes in my age bracket. Do you know what a hemi-demi-semi-quaver is? I do (a 64th note).

Q: It took me almost half a century to alter my stripes from rock/blues to jazz. How 'bout your conversion?

A: As mentioned, I played other things before R & R and blues, and still like all the tunes I heard as a kid. Jerome Kern, the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer...Mercer and Arlen's *Blues in the Night* is my mom's favorite song and one of mine. I used to play *Lazy River* for my dad, who thought the Mills Brothers were the greatest thing that ever happened to music. He might have been right. A lot of those songs referred to as "standards" or "cabaret" have transcended generations. What about a guy like Vernon Duke? He wrote both the words and music to *Autumn in New York*, a beautiful and haunting melody with some of the greatest chord changes in popular music. Then this 30 year old Russian immigrant, whose real name was Vladimir Dukelsky, added a wistful and brooding poem to go with it. Allow me to quote just a couple of lines:

(continued on page 17)



Pat Glenn (a while back)

"Autumn in New York,
Why does it seem so inviting,
Autumn in New York,
It spells the thrill of first nighting,
Glittering crowds and shimmering crowds,
In canyons of steel,
They're making me feel I'm home."

I love to perform songs like that, where and when they're appreciated. Maybe we could get ourselves booked at the Cafe Carlisle, Butch. Through the years I've derived immense pleasure from playing rock 'n' roll and also blues. I'll always want to play some of it, but quite honestly, my personal tastes lean toward songs with a few more chord changes. You know I'm not being a snob about it any more that I think you were when you got into other genres. I did learn long ago, however, that if you're not famous and want to keep working, some sacrifices and preference need be made. Care to hear my rendition of *Alley Cat* (sometime)? How about *Tie a Yellow Ribbon*? Butch! Don't fall asleep yet, ask me another question!

Q: You were in the bar biz for years. Where did you gig before you had your own joints?

A: I've played everywhere I can think of in Lincoln and surrounding towns -- also a lot of great times in Omaha years ago. One of the most memorable jobs was at the new Elks Club in Lincoln at 15th and P Streets before and after Nebraska football games. The building was finished about the time Coach Bob Devaney came to town and Husker football caught fire. The manager and I thought we'd try to get a crowd in before the game as well as after. To my recollection, no one else in town was starting music at 10 am, and it was wildly successful. I had a really talented and tight trio then which included bassist J.R. Wittstruck and drummer Meatball Johnson. The combination of Nebraska winning all those games while expanding and selling out the stadium every week made for a great and easy to please crowd, probably the most fun of anywhere I have worked. It was seven or eight years of great times and we did those jobs until I got into the bar business myself.

Q: What and when were your first bar ownership experiences?

A: I became friends with a popular entertainer name Joyce Durand who also sang and played piano. She and I both decided we were tired of moving equipment and should set up somewhere on a permanent basis. The result in 1977 was The Sidetrack on 7th and P Streets, which was an immediate success for us. Joyce and I "tag teamed 'em" for a couple of years or so until I moved south to 20th and Highway Two and opened Glenn's in 1980 with my baby grand Wurlitzer in the corner. The room was just the right size for the music I wanted to play and I did just that for 10 years until selling the establishment in 1990. The smoke and nightly vocals were starting to take a toll on my throat and I felt it was time to back off a little. Guess that's what I've been doing for the last six or seven years -- backing off a

little. Joyce, by the way, moved The Sidetrack to "O" Street and is still pleasing her rabid fans weekly.

Q: The old downstairs at the Clayton House used to present early jazz groups. Were you a part of their scene or were they competition for you during that era?

A: I sure was, Butch. The bar in the lower level was the Cattman Lounge. It was before liquor by the drink and everybody carried around little punch cards with pre-paid credits on them -- kind of silly but that's what Lincoln did for a few years. Many of these "bottle clubs" proliferated the area and I only mention it because such establishments operated pretty much like bars do today with one glaring exception -- a few of them were open virtually all night. I played a private club on the corner of 56th and "O" and didn't even go to work until 11:30 pm. Same with the Lincoln Air Force Base. The NCO Club hired two bands on Friday and Saturday nights. I think the late shift on that one started about 12:30 or 1:00 am. I'm sorry Butch, I got lost at the Air Base when you asked me about the Clayton House. My appearances there I felt worked real well for me and also for management. They started on Tuesday and Wednesday nights doing a single, going to a trio Thursdays and Fridays, and sometimes adding a fourth on Saturday nights...usually a sax or guitar. Occasionally a really classy lady named Jane Cunning would come in. Her main instrument was trumpet, but she also carried a valve trombone, which I've always loved the sound of. The first time I used her she asked me if I wanted her to bring the trumpet. She was great, and in adding an extra instrument when the money would justify it, always kept the music fresh for me, as a good fourth brought in a different personality and sound to the stage. I did at least two New Year's Eves there that I can think of. On one of those occasions a guy came to the stage and mentioned that he and his wife were celebrating a wedding anniversary and would I play their favorite song to dance to. As much as it pained me, I had to tell him that the particular number was not in my vast repertoire. We were going on break and I knew his song was on the jukebox, so I invited him to play it. God, how it warmed my heart as I sat at the bar some few minutes later cradling a scotch and soda while he and his lovely wife consulted the fore mentioned music machine, walked to center floor, and danced their little hearts out to...*The Ballad of the Green Beret*. Truly a Kodak moment, Butch. Not a dry eye in the house. You mentioned being part of the scene, which I think brings up an interesting point -- that being musicians (means we) miss a lot, too. There were good players in and out of town back in the 60s and 70s that I never got to hear because I was always working. Truth be known, people who like music probably get to hear more of it than people who play it. The Cattman Lounge, by the way, was not one of the places that stayed open late, and I agree with you that through the years it offered Lincoln a great musical venue. I'm glad I was a small part of it.

(continued on page 18)

(continued from page 17)

Q: I used to run into you at the old downtown "Y." Do you still keep a workout schedule?

A: I still try and play racquetball a couple times a week at the "Y," and ski and golf in season. As far as the golf game goes, for as much as I play you'd think I'd improve -- I don't.

Q: Did you manage to ever do any recording? And if so - please elaborate?

A: Somewhere I've got some old acetates and a few reel to reels lying around. I remember people taping a couple of evenings at East Hills in the early 70s and giving me copies. As I recall, the recording quality was quite good, and the trio didn't sound too bad.

Q: Do you consider yourself a singer that plays piano or a pianist that sings?

A: I don't know. I'd like to think through the years that I've balanced the two fairly well, and, honestly, I'm very comfortable backing other singers and would feel equally at ease singing a song with a good player, like you for instance, at the keyboard.

Q: Your fave all time jazz standard is... And what was the last CD/LP you've purchased?

A: *I'll Remember April* -- Hollywood must really like it, too. Anytime a man and woman are dining in a restaurant or dancing in a cabaret, the strains of *I'll Remember April* can be heard as the camera dollies in for a close-up to share their intimate conversations. I know the fact that I really like the song makes me aware of it, but I notice all music in all movies and can tell you that it's the most played song on the face of the earth. It's great that whenever I want to hear my song all I have to do is turn on the old movie channels. The best versions, by the way, are George Shearing or the Four Freshmen.

BONUS QUESTION: At this writing - what does your current aspirations for your musical career hold for you in comparison to the reality of where you stand today in show business?

A: I'm planning to play a little more this fall than in the last few years. In the meantime, as we discussed last month, let's get together this summer and do some music. As I am your link to your musical past, Butch, so you are to mine. I remember being at your house when you couldn't have been more than eight or nine years old. You wanted to play music as much as I did. It's been a great catharsis for both of us, hasn't it? By the way, I just remembered where the 10 or 12 hours of tapes from East Hills are. How about me running home and picking them up. I'll be back in 45 minutes. Butch? Butch?...Butch?...

Foundation puts money where mouths are

By Nancy Marshall

It was another dark and stormy night in Lincoln, Nebraska recently, but things were really hot at Southeast High School where Ars Nova, the vocal jazz group, sang and where their director, Mary Oestmann, accepted a \$500 donation from the Berman Music Foundation. The money is to go toward building a jazz vocal workshops at Southeast.

Ms. Oestmann said the money would be especially useful right now because the group is going to perform at Carnegie Hall in June and this would make it possible for them to buy new charts for the gig. They were recently in Creston, Iowa at a clinic where the four Freshman adjudicated and two of the students received special mention and scholarships to the summer camp at Creston this summer.

In spite of the weather, a large and appreciative audience had come out to hear all the jazz groups and to see singer and pianist Carol Comer perform with them. Carol had spent the day doing workshops with the jazz vocal and instrumental groups. She did improv workshops for the groups that don't study jazz.

Watching her work was a real pleasure. For those of you who may not remember who Carol Comer is, she and Dianne Gregg started the first women's jazz festival ever to occur. It was in Kansas City and lasted for eight consecutive years, bringing in great women players from all over the world. Carol has been nurturing new jazz players for years, among them Kevin Mahogany and Pat Metheny.

The students, teachers, and parents were pleased and surprised at the money from the Foundation. They sent their special thanks to Butch Berman for making it happen, especially in this time when arts are being cut back and eliminated in so many of the schools.

Blues Corner By Rich Hoover

Blues Festivals

Ah! The rites of spring, with the birds, the blooms, and a desire to actually go outside. This all combines to make the festivals abound.

For those who are web connected, a good address is www.bluesfestivals.com. Another broader address is www.festvalfinder.com.

The following is a short list from www.bluesaccess.com:

Traditional Bluesfest 4/12 Columbus, OH (614) 470-2222
New Orleans Jazz Festival 4/25-27, 5/1-4 (800) 488-5252
Bowie Street Blues Fest 4/27 San Antonio, TX
Beale St. Music Fest 5/2-4 Memphis, TN (901) 525-4611
Navasota Blues Fest 5/16-18 Navasota, TX (800) 252-6642
Silver City Blues Fest 5/24 Mimbres, NM (505) 538-2505
Chicago Blues Fest 6/5-8 Chicago, IL (312) 744-3370
Juneteenth Blues Fest 6/5-7 Houston, TX (713) 667-8000
Maryland BluesFest 6/6-8 Hagerstown, MD(301) 739-8577
Russian River Blues Fest 6/7-8 Guerneville, CA (707)779-1173

Upcoming events at The Zoo Bar

April 18 ----- Goodtime fun, **The Heartmurmurs/**
with opening act Self Righteous Brothers
22 ----- Houserockin', **Roomful of Blues**
28 ----- Handy award winner, **Coco Montoya**
30 ----- Seldom seen greats, **Paladins**
May 5 ----- Roadhouse slide, **Lil' Ed / Dave Weld**
7 ----- World class blues, **Luther Allison**
12 ----- Acoustic blues giant, **John Hammond**
23-24 ----- Westcoast blues, **Sonny Rhodes**
28 ----- New guys, **Lil' John and the Giants**
30-31 ----- Texas favorites, **Joe Kubek/Bnois King**
June 2 ----- Harmonica legend, **Charlie Musselwhite**

Also, the Zoo has opened Sunday afternoons/evenings to music. The bar hours are 4-10pm with live music 5-9pm. Hosted by **Not All There**, with an occasional guest artist/ jam session kind of format, and of course the possibility of catching a touring act from time to time. The SAC(Sunday Afternoon Club), or as I like to call it Sunday Action Central, is a place for musicians, fans, the curious and the cool.

Waters and Jarvis at The Zoo

Now forward to the past. The Berman Music Foundation's show at The Zoo Bar featuring Benny Waters and Jane Jarvis was a wonderful evening of jazz and blues classics. Both Waters and Jarvis are delightful ambassadors of the music and a wellspring of information with the knowledge of the music and times each has experienced. It was a privilege for me to be able to participate in the event. Also kudos to Bob Bowman - bass, and Todd Strait -

drums, for their excellent rhythm section work with Waters and Jarvis.

"Big Eyes" Smith

Good fortune continued when I was able to catch Willie "Big Eyes" Smith and John Primer back to back on a Friday and a Saturday night at The Zoo Bar. Both of these bluesmen do great Southside Chicago blues. Willie is a veteran of the foundation of this postwar blues sound, while John is a second generation veteran of the Southside Chicago sound.

Both have plenty of contemporary thoughts and feelings coupled with strong ties to the tradition of the Chicago sound.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Willie "Big Eyes" Smith playing at The Zoo Bar

Blues on Disc By Rich Hoover

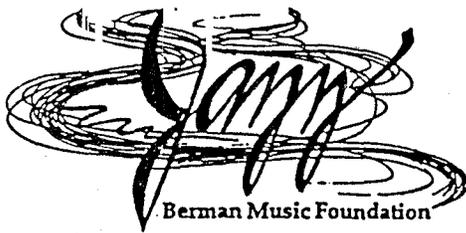
THE HOLMES BROTHERS, **Promised Land, Rounder.**

I love this stuff! Blues, gospel, r&b, soul, with lyrics that feel for contemporary and traditional situations. They have an excellent blend of strong vocal phrasings and harmonies linked to great complimentary instrumental arrangements. All the stuff you want for listening entertainment!

SEAN BENJAMIN, **Delta Blue Coffee, Palace Records.**

With five of the thirteen tunes credited to Sean Benjamin and the remainder written by greats of the acoustic blues past, it's a natural for Benjamin and his acoustic blues abilities. This guy is a master of the blues feeling and has a great musical ability to bring that feeling out through himself to the listeners. Being a resident of Lincoln and southeastern Nebraska for many years now, Benjamin is a musical gemstone and a treasure to the area.

This CD is locally produced by Bob Davis, Sean Benjamin, and Gary Williams. Another fine job by local talents, thanks to you all.



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