

# BERMAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

## King Sunny Adé coming to Lincoln

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—The new decade has barely begun, and already we at the **Berman Music Foundation** look ahead with great excitement and anticipation to Sunday, April 18, when King Sunny Adé and His African Beats will bring their unique and infectious “juju music” to the Bourbon Theatre, 1415 O St. in downtown Lincoln.

*The 6 p.m. concert promises to be the music event of the year. Doors open at 5 p.m.*

The BMF is a principal sponsor of the benefit concert, which will raise funds to support programming at KZUM Radio (89.3 FM), Nebraska’s only non-profit community radio station. Local Cuban and salsa band Son Del Llano will perform as the opening act.

Born to a Nigerian royal family 63 years ago, Adé has been honored with titles like “Chairman of the Board” and “Minister of Enjoyment” in his home country, and his highly influential music and crossover popularity earned him billing as “the African Bob Marley.”

Adé is the undisputed king of juju music, a dance-inspiring hybrid of western pop and traditional African music with roots in the guitar tradition of Nigeria. Described by the Boston Globe as “mellow, shimmering, large-band

*King Sunny Adé and His African Beats will bring “juju music” to Lincoln.*

party music,” juju emerged in the 1970s from a combination of Yoruba drumming with elements of West African highlife music, calypso, and jazz. Juju is a hypnotic blend of electric guitars, pedal-steel guitar, synthesizers and multi-layered percussion.

Adé and His African Beats created a worldwide sensation in the early 1980s with three recordings on Mango Records—“Juju Music” (1982), “Syn-

*Sunny Ade continued on page 2*



Courtesy Photo

*King Sunny Adé popularized Nigerian folk music with his African Beats.*

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chro System” (1983), and “Aura” (1984). He was the first African to be nominated twice for a Grammy Award, first for “Synchro System” and most recently for “Odu,” a 1998 collection of traditional Yoruba songs. In July 2009 he was inducted into the Afropop Hall of Fame. He has recorded more than 100 albums.

In the mid-1990s, Adé founded the King Sunny Adé Foundation, an organization that includes a performing arts center, state of the art recording studio and housing for young musicians and performers on a five-acre tract donated by the Lagos state government. Adé

and His African Beats have been featured in three films—“Juju Music” in 1988, “Live at Montreux” in 1990 and “Roots of Rhythm” in 1997. His music also is featured in the 1983 film “Breathless,” starring Richard Gere, and the 1986 comedy “One More Saturday Night,” and he acted in Robert Altman’s 1987 comedy “O.C. and Stiggs.”

With 16 pieces, African Beats rarely tours on American soil, making the appearance in the heartland even more momentous. During its brief U.S. stay, the band will perform at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

The April 18 Lincoln concert is made possible by Star City Blog with generous support from the Berman

Music Foundation, Southeast Community College, Dietze Music, U.S. Bank, The Holiday Inn Downtown, and the Parthenon Greek Taverna and Grill. Net proceeds will be donated to KZUM.

Tickets went on sale Jan. 11. General admission is \$25 per person. Reserved seats are available for \$50 per person. Discounts are available for groups of five or more. To purchase tickets, visit Star City Blog at [www.starcityblog.com](http://www.starcityblog.com).

For the group rate, send an e-mail to [ksa2010@starcityblog.com](mailto:ksa2010@starcityblog.com), specifying the number in your party, a mailing address, and a daytime phone number.

## BMF helps to restore “Fiddler” session tapes

By Gerald Spaits

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—While working on a recent recording project at Soundtrek with guitarist Rod Fleeman, we learned of an old session we were involved in with Claude “Fiddler” Williams and Russ Long. Ron Ubel, head of Soundtrek, remembered the session and was confident he could locate this lost recording.

Russ Dantzler, Claude’s manager at the time, encouraged Claude to get in the studio and record on a regular basis. In 1992, Claude put together some of Kansas City’s finest jazz musicians and did a session at Soundtrek. Included on the session with Claude on violin and vocals are Russ Long, piano; Tommy Ruskin, drums; Rod Fleeman, guitar; and myself on bass. Claude also invited Tommy’s wife, Julie Turner, to join in with vocals on a couple to tunes. I do remember some rehearsals at Russ’s house and Russ doing nearly all of the arrangements.

Needless to say, I was encouraged to hear from Ron only a few days after learning about the session.

He had found the tapes from the session and was happy to make a copy for me to review. I had never heard the recording and barely remember what songs we had recorded. What I do remember was the efficiency of getting into the studio and accomplishing the entire project in one day, most of the tunes in a single take.

Upon listening to the CD from Ron, I was pleasantly surprised by what I heard. It brought back some great memories. What really knocked me out was the overall “feel.” That Kansas City swing that Claude and Russ played so well came through, and with Tommy and Rod the whole thing swung hard. I’m not sure why it was never released in the first place.

Together with Ron and his engineer, Justin Wilson, we spent several weeks in the studio mixing, mastering

and preparing a CD for future release. With blessings from Claude’s widow, Blanche, and assistance from the **Berman Music Foundation**, I feel fortunate to have discovered this historic recording.

It is historic because Claude and Russ are no longer with us. Claude and Russ played together in the early 1960s with the legendary Eddie

“Cleanhead” Vinson in Kansas City. Claude and Russ played numerous gigs together over the years, but this is the only recording I am aware of with the two together.

Claude Williams died in April 2004, and Russ Long died in December 2006.

Hopefully, this lost tape will be lost no more and materialize in the near future. Stay tuned.



*Claude Williams*

Photo by Russ Dantzler

# BMF grants further its mission

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—In keeping with its mission to promote American music, support artists' creativity and increase appreciation for music "in all its forms and hues," the Berman Music Foundation is embarking on several projects that will deliver on that promise with upcoming performances and educational opportunities for students, teachers and musicians of many different styles.

Little more than a year since Ember Schrag launched **Clawfoot House** as a performance venue in Lincoln's Near South neighborhood, it has become one of the most vibrant, imaginative and prolific presenters of artists who work on the edge, in media ranging from bluegrass to classical and avant-garde music, and from dance to performance art and the visual arts.

With a \$2,200 grant from the BMF, Schrag will present Seattle-based singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Amy Denio in a series of three appearances during Women's Week at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, March 10-11. A special edition of the monthly Clawfoot Salon will feature Denio in a lecture and performance 7-10 p.m. March 10 at the UNL Student Union, 1400 R St. The free salon will begin with a poetry reading by Sandra Hochman, followed by a jam session and time to share new work, with Denio participating.

Denio's leadership luncheon presentation from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 11 at the Student Union will focus on "Music and Social Change." Maggie's Veggie Wraps will provide a free vegetarian wrap for those who call the Women's Center (472-2597) in advance. At 9 p.m. that evening

Denio will headline a bill at Clawfoot House that also will include The New Music Agency and Seeded Plain. Clawfoot House is located at 1042 F St. Admission is \$7 at the door.

The Denio appearances are collaborations between Schrag and the UNL Women's Center in what promises to be a fruitful relationship for both parties.

The BMF continues its support of the **UNL Honor Jazz Weekend** with a \$7,000 grant. The second annual event, March 26-28, will gather Nebraska high school musicians for a comprehensive playing and learning experience, including master classes with UNL faculty and guests. This year's featured guest artists are the Matt Wilson Quartet, who will perform a free concert at 2 p.m. March 28 at Kimball Recital Hall. Drummer Wilson has gained a reputation as a leader in a series of recordings on Palmetto since his 1996 debut. The grant also will pay expenses for five Berman Music Foundation Jazz Fellows—high school educators who will participate in the entire weekend of activities. An additional \$5,000 will support the UNL Summer Jazz Camp.

A \$3,000 grant will provide support for the Northeast Family Center and its **Academy of Rock**, which provides Lincoln youth with the opportunity to explore their musical and artistic interests in the hope that they will become strong leaders and outstanding team members in the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or income. After Butch Berman's death in January 2008, the BMF awarded a \$1,000 grant and donated many of Butch's musical instruments to the Academy of Rock.



**The BMF Newsletter** is published online at: [www.bermanmusicfoundation.org](http://www.bermanmusicfoundation.org)  
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**The Butch Berman Charitable Music Foundation** is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)(3) private foundation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service and the Nebraska Department of Revenue. It was established in the spring of 1995 to protect and promote unique forms of American music.

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# Berman Foundation celebrates the holidays

By Grace Sankey-Berman

The recent holiday season was very special for us at Berman Music Foundation, because we got to celebrate it for the first time at our new office/museum. Dec. 4 was a First Friday opening for the public at The Burkholder Project, and it was also another opportunity for us to open the museum to the public.

It turned out to be a very cold and windy winter night in Lincoln, Neb. Despite the cold temperature, the turnout was good. The doors opened at 7 p.m., and the people slowly trickled in for the first 30 minutes. But for the next hour and a half there was a steady stream of people coming through.

There were music fans and musicians who wanted to look at the collection. I enjoyed listening to them talk about the vibrant music scene in the good old days. Some fondly remembered watching Butch play at the Zoo Bar and other local venues.

One woman, Beau “Jazzi” Searcey-Hudson, stopped to see the museum because she remembered Butch playing with her dad, Greg Searcey, when she was young. I was glad to see friends of Butch’s like Nancy Williamson, who had not seen the space, also stop by.

Other guests did not know about the BMF and wandered in, expecting to see artwork but were greeted with jazz Christmas carols that were playing. They asked questions about the posters and pictures on the wall, while snacking on hors d’oeuvres and beverages. Before long the museum was full.

My favorite moment was in the music room when Carmen Lundy’s “Live in Madrid” concert video was



Photos by Grace Sankey-Berman



Friends of the Berman Music Foundation celebrate the holidays.

playing and a lady asked me to turn the volume up. I did. Everyone was grooving to the music, some swayed from side to side. It was a scene that Butch would appreciate because he wanted not only for people to learn about great music but, most of all, to enjoy it.

It was also my pleasure to host a gathering of BMF friends on Dec. 11 at the museum. I got to see Daniel and Elizabeth Nelson—Daniel was a friend of Butch’s for nearly 30 years and they played Ping Pong almost every weekend. I was especially glad to see Al Lakaitis and Nancy Johnson. Nancy, a good friend, was instrumental in getting Butch’s house sold in this tough market.

At the BMF Christmas dinner Dec. 21 it was nice to see the Cronin Brothers, members of Butch’s last band.

Don Holmquist, the singing drummer of the band, and his lovely wife, Jill, were in attendance. Don has kept Butch’s memory alive by talking about Butch at all their gigs.

Craig Kingery, the bass player, was instrumental in making sure that some of Butch’s band equipment is being put to good use with Lincoln’s Academy of Rock. Bill Lohrberg, a monster on the guitar, was also there. We had a great time reminiscing about Butch and their band days together.

We also talked about Butch’s childhood and family with his good friends from junior high school Joyce Latrom, Catherine Sinclair and Monica Schwarz, with whom he went to college. Ruthann Nahorny was Butch’s assistant for many years, and she told some funny

stories, too.

Tony Rager, BMF trustee and adviser to Butch for many years, also shared some stories. My girlfriend from College, Ladi Kaneng, came all the way from Nigeria to spend Christmas with me. I know she could not relate to a lot of the stories that were being told, but she was a good sport all the same. It was a good way to remember Butch and to share with his friends what the foundation has been doing the last couple years.

We are looking forward to a great new year as we continue to do our part to keep music alive.

Happy New Year!

Concert Review

# Ziegler Quartet & Torres bring tango to Lied

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—In its 20-year history, the Lied Center for Performing Arts has presented few concerts as exhilarating, inspired and virtuosic as the Nov. 13 appearance of the Pablo Ziegler Quartet for New Tango, with special guest artist flutist Nestor Torres.

Pianist Ziegler earned his reputation as an interpreter of the Argentine song form during a decade-long stint with the master of Nuevo tango, composer and bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla. Since Piazzolla's death in 1992, Ziegler has continued to expand its scope and influence with worldwide touring and recording, adding his own compositions and arrangements to the growing canon of tango classics.

His current ensemble maintains the high level of technical proficiency, dramatic stage craft and exciting interplay



Pablo Ziegler



Nestor Torres

Courtesy Photos

the mix on the Piazzolla composition “Michelangelo 70,” a delicious blend of intricate and intense rhythms, often created by del Curto and Giraudo tapping out polyrhythmic passages on their instruments. Ziegler’s “Buenos Aires Report” surged with an insistently repetitive bandoneon riff and on “Blues Tango” Ragazzi churned out a stinging guitar solo on his hollow-bodied Gibson.

Torres warmly dedicated the classical tango “Fuga Y Misterio (Fugue and Mystery)” to John Bailey and the flute program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Ziegler and Ragazzi performed a duo rendition of “Elegante Canyebquito.” Piazzolla’s brilliant “La Muerte del Angel (Death of the Angel)” was simply stunning in its flawless execution (no pun intended). Ziegler introduced a new milonga with classical elements and dedicated to composer Alberto Ginastera, who mentored Piazzolla.

In a very personal vein, Ziegler introduced the achingly beautiful ballad “Muchacha de Boedo” by describing the young girl who inspired it. Torres returned for “Chin Chin,” a dazzling workout for the whole band. The second half of the concert also featured Torres stating the lovely melody of “Introduction to the Angel,” and the exquisite rendition of that most famous Piazzolla composition, “Libertango (Freedom Tango),” with Torres turning in an amazing flute solo of great skill and passion.

The audience of some 900 demanded—and received—an encore, which began as a stately Bach sonata before moving into the jazz realm with soaring flute improvisations by Torres.

essential to the music. Hector del Curto is an astounding bandoneon player, guitarist Claudio Ragazzi alternates between a percussive accompaniment and single-note forays, and bassist Pedro Giraudo anchors the whole group with effortless confidence. Ziegler, of course, directs the entire proceedings with consummate authority from the keyboard.

The quartet accomplished seamless transitions, from three-way unison passages through-written in classical style to free-form improvised solos, romantic runs on the piano and two-way dialogue between Ziegler and del Curto. The foursome warmed up the action with a couple of tunes, including “Just around the Corner” and “Milonga.”

Torres, a native of Puerto Rico and a relative newcomer to the tango es-



Pablo Ziegler and Hector del Curto

*Tomfoolery***Joy and Christmast spirit live in Kansas City**

By Tom Ineck

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Tempus fugit, as they say. The last time we were in this city was a spring-like weekend in March. Suddenly, it was December and we decided to head south again for a Christmas holiday, complete with live music at Jardine's, a stop at the American Jazz Museum and a concerted effort to stimulate the sluggish economy with shopping sprees in the Country Club Plaza and the quaint shops of the Brookside neighborhood.

Again, we booked a room for two nights at the conveniently located Hotel Phillips, 12<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore. Service there is always superb and prices remain reasonable for an historic hotel in downtown Kansas City, starting at \$119 for a double room. The lobby was all decked out in Yuletide trimmings, a huge lighted Christmas tree and even life-sized manikins dressed as carolers and perched in the balcony above the front desk. Nice touch.

With the day to ourselves, our first stop was World's Window, a Brookside store specializing in ethnic and contemporary folk art, clothing, and jewelry since 1984. Owners Jan and Lonnie Buerge purchase merchandise from fair-trade organizations and from wholesalers "invested in enhancing the lives of those who work with and for them." Its hand-crafted merchandise, casual ambiance, warm and inviting staff and sense of mission make this shop a great place for browsing and buying.

As always around this time of the year, the Plaza was strung with lights and bustling with holiday shoppers.

Our next destination was the area of 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine streets, where the American Jazz Museum had recently opened the John H. Baker Jazz Film Collection, a permanent exhibit celebrat-



*Angela Hagenbach Quintet with Stan Kessler, trumpet; Chris Clark, piano; Steve Rigazzi, bass; and Doug Auwarter, drums*



*Manikins dressed as carolers*



*The American Jazz Museum*

ing jazz on film with a collection of more than 5,000 titles totaling 700 hours and spanning the years 1927 to the early 1970s. Visitors can view many rare film clips and historic movie posters depicting three themes—"Big Bands," "African American Dance in Early Films" and "Women in Jazz Films."

Through Feb. 21, the museum also houses "Jam Session: America's



*Trumpeter Stan Kessler*

Jazz Ambassadors Embrace the World," a collection of photos and documents chronicling the tours of American jazz legends as they traveled on behalf of the U.S. State Department from the mid-1950s through the 1970s. Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and others are featured, and the exhibit is included in the admission.

We had already reserved a table for the evening of Dec. 12 at Jardine's, anticipating an early dinner and a 6 p.m. performance by the Angela Hagenbach Quintet. As the venerable jazz bistro at 4536 Main St. has limited seating, a reservation is always a good idea.

Our reason for wanting to see Hagenbach was two-fold. The sultry singer has an excellent new CD, "The Way They Make Me Feel," celebrating the music of Johnny Mandel, Henri Mancini and Michel Legrand, and her group will perform at the 2010 Jazz in June series in Lincoln. The Jardine's show was a good opportunity to hear her on her home turf.

Trumpeter Stan Kessler, pianist Chris Clark, bassist Steve Rigazzi and drummer Doug Auwarter kicked off the early show with a couple of instrumental, including Cedar Walton's "Bolivia," on which Kessler blew a lyrical, effortless flugelhorn. Hagenbach took the stage for "You Turned the Tables on Me" and a samba rendition of "The Street of Dreams," before turning to seasonal sounds with "Let It Snow."

Mandel's "Quietly There" was the sole tune from the new release and it was a stunner, with languorous phrasing and supple tones by Hagenbach and a gorgeous flugelhorn solo by Kessler. The mood turned to the blues with Bobby Troup's "Baby, Baby All the Time," allowing each musician a solo spotlight.

Hagenbach's improvised a cappella intro to "The Sweetest Sound" had her bandmates quizzically searching for their entrance cue. She introduced a yet-unrecorded original, "On the Road Eastward Into Dusk," on which Kessler cleverly interpolated "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen."

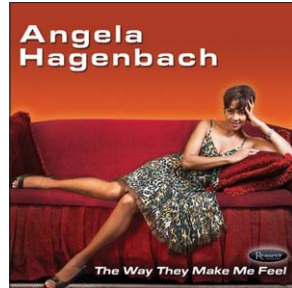
"Just You, Just Me" employed some tricky stop-time phrasing, expertly carried off by the whole band. Hagenbach finished the set with a breezy "I Thought About You," with Kessler again inserting a holiday snippet, this time from "Joy to the World."

Joy, indeed!

## Jazz on Disc

# Hagenbach CD is feel-good music

By Tom Ineck



### ANGELA HAGENBACH *The Way They Make Me Feel* Resonance Records

A lot of thought and talent went into the making of "The Way They Make Me Feel," and it has begun to pay off in increased nationwide recognition for Kansas City-based singer Angela Hagenbach. The CD has been hovering near the top of the jazz charts for weeks and is getting well-deserved radio airplay.

It's about time. Hagenbach has enjoyed an area following for more than a decade, but has had difficulty breaking through to a wider audience. With its superb production values, top-notch musicianship and obvious thematic approach "The Way They Make Me Feel" should change that.

From their position as lesser-known composers of the Great American Songbook, Johnny Mandel, Michel Legrand and Henry Mancini have received somewhat grudging respect from jazz musicians and singers. As such, they are perfect subjects for a tribute, and Hagenbach and company have done them proud. We get four tunes by Mandel, four by Legrand and three by Mancini, and the instrumentation alternates between small jazz combo—with arrangements by pianist Hendelman—and expanded treatment with strings, arranged by Kuno

Schmid.

Mandel's "Cinnamon and Clove" gets things off to a rousing start with an arrangement by Hendelman and incendiary playing by trumpeter Willie Murillo and saxophonist Steve Wilkerson. Mancini's "Slow Hot Wind" is a perfect vehicle for strings, creating a warm backdrop for Hagenbach's equally sultry vocals. The two combine again for "Summer Me, Winter Me," a gorgeous ballad from the Legrand songbook that also features an incisive guitar solo by Larry Koonse.

The accordion of Frank Marocco opens an unconventional rendition of Legrand's "I Will Wait for You," one of the most familiar tunes in the set. It is taken uptempo and is handled in swinging, scatting fashion by the husky-voiced Hagenbach, with Murillo and Wilkerson adding brassy accents. Mandel's "Quietly There" is given the full, lush string treatment, while his "Sure as You're Born" is taken at a brisk pace set by bassist Kevin Axt and drummer Bill Wysaske and urged on by Koonse's scurrying guitar.

Hendelman's arrangement of Mandel's "Close Enough for Love" evokes the French impressionism of Debussy and Ravel as it teams Marocco's accordion and Wilkerson's clarinet. Hagenbach opens "Charade" with some bluesy scatting and gradually unwinds the lyric with typically sensuous sonorities. The performance also is an excellent showcase for Hendelman's world-class playing.

Schmid's stirring arrangement for Legrand's "The Way He Makes Me Feel" creates a fitting close to this loving collection of love songs.

## Concert Review

# Los Lobos unplugs for most of Lied concert

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—As though a concession to the high-brow confines of the Lied Center for Performing Arts, the ordinarily rockin' Americana of Los Lobos was somewhat more subdued in the band's Oct. 30 appearance. After more than 30 years of recording and performing on the road, they have plenty of material for any occasion, so the largely unplugged, folk-heavy choice of tunes was actually a welcomed contrast.

The 90-minute, two-part program drew from the entire Los Lobos catalog and featured everyone in the band, beginning with a set of Spanish-language songs played on traditional Mexican instruments and including the title



*Los Lobos*

track from the band's 1988 release, "La Pistola y el Corazon," with Steve Berlin on tenor sax.

Louie Perez sang "Saint Behind

the Glass," from 1992's "Kiko," and Cesar Rosas delivered a heartfelt version of "Maricela" from "Colossal Head," the band's 1994 release. David Hidalgo showed his versatility, moving easily from accordion to various acoustic and electric guitars. Especially enjoyable was a fine treatment of the familiar Cuban folk song "Guantanamera," which appeared on the very first Los Lobos release in 1978. Bassist Conrad Lozano handled the vocals and Berlin switched to flute.

Opening the second half, the band dipped into its latest CD, "Los Lobos Goes Disney," for "I Wanna Be Like You (The Monkey Song)," from the animated film adaptation of "The Jungle Book." Yet another acoustic performance, this one featured Berlin on baritone sax. From their own extensive songbook came excellent versions of "Just a Matter of Time," "One Time One Night" and "Kiko and the Lavender Moon."

The night would not have been complete without "La Bamba," the only tune that has come close to hit status for Los Lobos. Never satisfied with a conventional take, they worked variations that included a long quote from The Rascals' "Good Lovin'" and infused the well-worn song with new energy.

The 15-minute encore alone was worth the price of admission. Beginning with the rockin' rave-up "I Got Loaded," it segued into the classic Buddy Holly tune "Not Fade Away," with a heavy emphasis on the infectious Bo Diddley beat. With Hidalgo, Rosas and Perez wailing on guitars, it expanded into a full-blown Grateful Dead jam. It was a grand finale worthy of the Los Lobos tradition.

## B.B. King & Buddy Guy to perform Feb. 22

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa—Blues guitar icons B.B. King and Buddy Guy will close out an extensive tour Feb. 22 at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluff, Iowa.

King isn't letting his recent 84th birthday slow him down as he continues a fall and winter itinerary featuring a mixture of solo shows and co-headlining dates with the younger Guy, who is 73. The legendary bluesman worked his way along the West Coast through early December, followed by a New Year's Eve performance in Tulsa, OK. After a month-long hiatus, he hit the road with Buddy Guy for a theater run that spans at least 13 cities.

King, a 14-time Grammy winner, scored the highest-debating solo album of his nearly 60-year career with his latest release, "One Kind Favor." The set, which was released in August 2008, debuted at No. 37 on The Billboard 200



*B.B. King and Buddy Guy on tour*

chart. Produced by T-Bone Burnett (Robert Plant & Alison Krauss, Roy Orbison), "One Kind Favor" features covers of old blues songs that inspired King as a young man.

Before their arrival in Iowa, King and Guy will perform together in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Washington, D.C., New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri and Minneapolis.

*Reserve tickets are available through Ticketmaster. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.*



## Concert Review

**Bergeron doubles the pleasure at NJO concert**

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—An audience of 400 got a two-for-one deal Oct. 29 at The Cornhusker hotel when featured trumpeter Wayne Bergeron brought along a “stunt double” to handle the high-note duties as guest soloist with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra.

Still nursing a recent lip injury, the Lost Angeles-based Bergeron enlisted former student Willie Murillo, a 10-year veteran of the swinging Brian Setzer Orchestra. Meanwhile, Bergeron conducted the NJO and entertained the crowd with one-liners, inside jokes and general hilarity.

The kick-off concert of the NJO’s 34<sup>th</sup> year began with several tunes featuring young trombonist Karl Lyden, winner of the NJO’s 2009 Young Jazz Artist Award, including the standard “Spring Is Here,” John Coltrane’s fast blues “Locomotion” and the Eric Richards samba “Noite de Tempestade (Evening Storm).”

The 16-piece NJO also ran through two typically difficult compositions by Rex Cadwallader, “Year of the Frog” and “Tactical Practicality,” which gave everyone a chance to work out, including another guest artist, Doug Hinrichs, on congas.

But Bergeron and Murillo were the night’s winning combination. Murillo immediately proved his chops with “Friend Like Me,” from the Disney movie “Aladdin,” a high-note extravaganza originally arranged for Arturo Sandoval. Bergeron briefly played the melody of a Tom Kubis tune written for him, the cleverly titled “High Clouds and a Good Chance of Wayne Tonight.”

A Kubis arrangement of the ballad standard “You Go to My Head” allowed Bergeron to play the melody on flugelhorn before turning to Murillo, who

delivered a piercing solo with the sax section.

Another favorite was a wonderful arrangement of “Besame Mucho” by Steve Wiest, dedicated to Maynard Ferguson and conducted by Bergeron. They also aced an odd, but very hip Bill Liston arrangement of Tchaikovsky’s “Waltz of the Flowers.”

“Rhythm Method,” by Tom Kubis, had Murillo, using a Harmon mute on his horn, going head-to-head with the entire saxophone section. Trumpeters Murillo and Bob Krueger teamed up for a bluesy finale, “Maynard & Waynard.”



Photo by Tom Ineck

Murillo and Bergeron

**Jazzocracy rules Tuesdays at Zoo Bar**

By Jesse Starita

LINCOLN, Neb.—When the door swings open at the Zoo Bar, there’s a certain feel, an elemental feeling. A dense air merges sound and smell: rollicking guitars, musty playbills, propulsive drums and stale paint. To my delight, as I pulled open the door on a recent Tuesday evening, a jazz twist pierced that dense air.

The Jazzocracy, the Zoo Bar’s Tuesday night jazz ensemble, were riding a December hot streak. A new, improved time slot, a slew of guest musicians and an ensemble of holiday visitors enlivened their second set, as they dug into the Miles Davis standard “All Blues.” Bryan Morrow, Jazzocracy’s commander-in-chief, barked and growled soulful lines on his tenor sax. Bassist Shawn Murphy and drummer Andrew Tyler secured the beat, while erstwhile Lincolnite and alto saxophonist Chris Steinke crafted vigorous high-register runs. Trombonist Tommy Van den

Berg employed rapid-fire slurs, tempered by bluesy embellishments. And Lincoln East High School senior Bryan Stewart turned in a shred-heavy, Yngwie Malmsteen-inspired solo.

Later numbers resembled the contents of a classic jazz jukebox—Sonny Rollins’ “St. Thomas,” Thelonious Monk’s “Well, You Needn’t,” and John Coltrane’s “Mr. P.C.” At times, the sheer familiarity was a detriment, the solos overly subservient to the beat. Perhaps it’s a mirror image of democracy, individual voices striving to cleave the steady drumbeat of the status quo. In any case, they succeeded in creating that certain *feel*. And for a moment during the peppy calypso “St. Thomas,” I left the dense, cold winter air of Lincoln for a warm, sultry Aruban beach.

*The Jazzocracy play every Tuesday night from 6-9 p.m. at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14<sup>th</sup> St. There is no cover charge, but tips are encouraged.*

## Colorado Correspondent

## Summit Jazz Festival swings in trad style

By Dan DeMuth

DENVER—Early October found us in Denver to attend another Summit Jazz Festival. Traditionally, these start on Friday evening with the finale on Sunday, and traditional as well is the style of jazz focused on for this event. There was the usual mix of name artists spotlighted for their solo efforts, along with some ensembles.

In no particular order, the name players would include cornetist Duke Heitger, pianist and vocalist Jeff Barnhart (who also fronts the Ivory and Gold Trio), drummer Joe Ascione, Jerry Krahn on guitar, bassist Paul Keller and Anat Cohen, known for her outstanding work on the clarinet but also capably doubling on tenor sax. The bands included the Jim Cullum group of San Antonio's Riverwalk fame, the Ivory and Gold Trio, the Titan Hot Seven out of Nashville, and the Toronto-based Climax Jazz Band, a personal favorite (more on that later).

The Denver area contributed the Alan Frederickson Jazz Ensemble, led by the gentleman of the same name, who also co-produces this event. Featured also were two local bands who painted some numbers in an excellent frame. Both the Univer-



Photos by Dan DeMuth

*The All-Stars*

sity of Colorado at Denver "Claim Jumpers" and the "Jazz Cookers" put on outstanding shows. The latter is a group of young musicians most of whom were classmates in a high school group and have continued to play together. Thankfully, youth groups continue to be an important mainstay at most festivals.

As expected, there was a polished performance by the Jim Cullum Jazz Band. A very knowledgeable friend in attendance, who has seen them before, expressed an opinion prior to their performance that they were almost too polished—no mistakes and very little improvisation. I found this to be an astute observation, akin to hearing the released cut

on a recording, and one might surmise Cullum's purpose is to authentically recreate the older numbers as a rehearsed band would have played them in their day. Give them credit that they do not focus on the same time-worn songs in which other Dixie or trad groups often tend to immerse themselves.

Anat Cohen's promo notes she is "idiomatically conversant with both modern and traditional jazz...." and having heard her perform in both environments it is certainly true (even if couched in language a bit highbrow for this old lowbrow). Her great talent belies her sometimes rather stiff stage presence and I guess that's what it is really all about.

One could certainly put Jeff Barnhart at the opposite end of that spectrum; at times allowing the exuberant persona to almost overshadow the excellent technical skills. Bassist Keller is not only extremely proficient but adds humorous banter perfectly timed. Krahn's playing and demeanor remind me of Bucky Pizzarelli—not ostentatious, just great.

Heitger definitely lives up to his reputation for diversity, blowing both

*Climax Jazz Band*

hot and cool numbers equally well. Further notes would have to include Ascione, who continues to courageously battle MS and yet performs flawlessly on any number called, an astute timekeeper who can also light 'em up when needed.

The Climax Jazz Band uses a free-swinging, hard-driving approach, with improvisation definitely allowed and a great stage presence with a dose of British humor thrown in. We had the opportunity of enjoying a libation or two with some of the members in

the hotel bar (not sure how that always seems to happen!) and were regaled with a few jokes and stories. Can you top this? Oscar Peterson politely asked if it was OK to sit in with them at a performance in Canada! The Titan Hot Seven (the "hot" aptly applied) feature some of the above artists, such as Barnhart and Krahn, as well as drummer Danny Coots providing inspiration.

A tip of the hat goes to all of the above musicians, who also perform well in other styles of jazz. The focus

of this event just happened to be traditional.

The entire event is well run and for that, credit rightfully goes to Juanita Greenwood and partner Alan Frederickson, who have been involved in producing these for 30 years. Juanita is very adept at recruiting volunteers to aid in the production and adds a personal touch in assisting attendees in any way. To persevere that long in any business means you have to be doing something right!

## Concert Review

# Winston brings "rural folk piano" style to Lied

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—The listener who expects to hear conventional blues rhythms or jazz improvisations from George Winston is apt to be flummoxed by his unusual approach to the keyboard, a style he accurately calls "rural folk piano."

It's a style steeped in tradition but pared down to its essence, as Winston proved Oct. 20 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. In a program oddly titled "The Summer Show," Winston ranged freely over a variety of his favorite influences, including New Orleans great Professor Longhair, jazz composer Vince Guaraldi and the rock group The Doors.

Taking the stage in his unassuming style, wearing a simple work shirt and blue jeans, Winston immediately went to work with an uptempo version of Professor Longhair's "Meet Me Tomorrow Night," a rollicking Crescent City rocker. Almost totally devoid of blues dynamics, Winston's approach is technically precise and to-tally original.

His composition "Spring," a pastoral piece with ringing chords, in-



George Winston

Courtesy Photo

cluded a section inspired by modernist Steve Reich that had Winston repeating a pattern with his left hand as he played variations with the right.

A Guaraldi medley included "It's Been a Short Summer, Charlie Brown," a typically lively, whimsical tune. Winston expertly alternated between bass and treble passages for dramatic effect. "Woods," inspired by early autumn, evoked that pastoral imagery inherent in rural folk piano.

As an example of the stride piano technique of Fats Waller and Teddy Wilson, Winston performed "Cat and Mouse," where his mechanical keyboard attack was appropriate. The right hand soared into the upper registers as the tempo went from fast to very fast.

To finish the first half, he switched to guitar for a lovely performance of the Hawaiian "slack-key" style, with complex chords and delicate finger-picking.

Winston opened the second half with "Fragrant Fields," a haunting tune by pianist Art Lande. He followed that with an equally compelling ballad called "Beverly" before launching into another New Orleans rocker, this time a tune by the legendary James Booker, a precursor to rock 'n' roll.

Again showing his versatility, Winston cupped a harmonica in his hands and played a long, old-timey piece, with variations, in a style all his own. The evening's crowd pleaser was his "Variations on Pachelbel's Canon," utilizing a resounding bass-note counterpoint.

Finally, Winston's attention turned to The Doors for a version of their "Riders on the Storm," complete with the falling-rain effect that Ray Manzarek played on the original recording. Winston returned for an encore on guitar, playing The Doors' sad ballad "You're Lost, Little Girl."

## Jazz on Disc

**Jeff Hamilton Trio continues to develop rapport**

By Tom Ineck



**THE JEFF HAMILTON TRIO**  
***Symbiosis***  
Capri Records

No matter how good he is, a drummer usually is relegated to obscurity at the back of the stage, hidden behind the cymbals and faithfully keeping time for a spotlighted singer or a blaring horn section.

Jeff Hamilton has done it all—literally taking a back seat to everyone from Monty Alexander, Ray Brown, Gene Harris and Oscar Peterson to Ella Fitzgerald, Rosemary Clooney, Ernestine Anderson and Diana Krall. In the last 15 years or so, he also has found time to create some beautiful recordings of his own. “Symbiosis” continues that trend.

Most recently, Hamilton has developed an incredible rapport with the wonderful bassist Christoph Luty and pianist Tamir Hendelman, a keyboard genius of under-recognized brilliance. Over the last six years or so, the three have achieved a level of interaction and virtuosity not heard since the days of the Harris/Brown/Hamilton triumvirate.

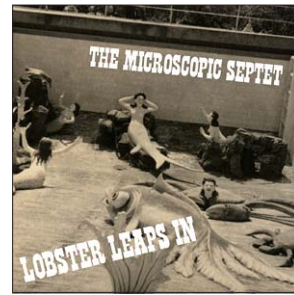
“You Make Me Feel So Young” is a superb example, with Hamilton conducting a workshop on brush technique, alternately slowing down and accelerating for dramatic effect, with Luty and Hendelman in lockstep. Throughout the

swinging opener, Hendelman ranges like a giant over the entire keyboard. A haunting “Midnight Sun” has Hamilton employing his bare hands on the snare, exchanging phrases with Luty’s lithe deep-throated bass and Hendelman’s delicate piano filigrees.

For an extraordinarily beautiful piano trio ballad, look no further than the title track. “Symbiosis” is a typically romantic composition by Claus Ogerman on which Luty shows his expertise with a bow as Hendelman carresses the lovely melody and Hamilton tastefully seasons the performance with his consummate brushwork. Piano and bass state get funky with the familiar theme of “Fascinating Rhythm” while Hamilton alternates between brushes and sticks for a tour de force drumming demonstration.

Ray Brown’s “Blues for Junior” pays homage to the late bassist with a typically soulful, swinging foray into the blues. Hendelman is especially impressive as he digs deeply into a relaxed, hesitation-style delivery. Luty opens “Polka Dots and Moonbeams” with a lovely arco solo before Hendelman states the melody and Hamilton creates a warm Latin groove, again on brushes. Remaining south of the border, the trio perform Hamilton’s snappy “Samba De Martelo.”

As arranged by Luty, “Blues in the Night” is taken at a very slow tempo, giving Hamilton and company plenty of opportunities for dramatic interaction. Luty takes another stunning bowed solo. Hamilton finally pulls out the stops on Miles Davis’ “Serpent’s Tooth,” driving the trio with authority, changing gears and tempos at will and making the sticks fairly crackle with electricity.



**THE MICROSCOPIC SEPTET**  
***Lobster Leaps In***  
Cuneiform Records

On the strength of four LPs released in the 1980s, The Microscopic Septet drew a small—but extremely astute and adventurous—cult of fans. Those of us who consider ourselves among that number rejoice in the return of the Micros with “Lobster Leaps In.”

Pianist Joel Forrester and soprano saxophonist Phillip Johnston remain the creative geniuses behind the music, each composing five of the numbers included here. Every tune takes full advantage of the unusual format—four saxophones, piano, bass/tuba and drums. In addition to Forrester and Johnston, the current lineup includes Don Davis, alto sax; Mike Hashim, tenor sax; Dave Sewelson, baritone sax; David Hofstra, bass; and Richard Dworkin, drums.

As some discerning critic once wrote, the Micros music combines elements of Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and Spike Jones. The result is a wacky blend of catchy melodies, complex brass harmonies and accessible rhythms that simply defy convention.

Former Micro Wayne Horvitz

composed the opener, “Night Train Express,” which aptly begins with the warning, “All aboard! Next stop, oblivion!” It has the horns alternately pumping in unison and snaking off in solo excursions. As the title implies, “Disconcerto for Donnie” is a bright and bouncy Latin number that eventually takes on some very disquieting characteristics. With the title track, the Micros continue their obsession with the clawed crustacean (“The Lobster Parade” and “Lobster in the Lime-light”) and—perhaps—parody the swing classic “Lester Leaps In.”

Offbeat tango rhythms infuse “Got Lucky” with a frantic mood that does, indeed, evoke the inspired lunacy of Spike Jones. “Lies” begins like a funeral dirge but eventually blossoms into an interesting bop tune first stated by Forrester on the piano. A mighty funk esthetic drives the bluesy “Life’s Other Mystery,” which gets a boost from Sewelson on baritone, Hashim on tenor and Dworkin’s powerhouse drumming.

Everyone sounds slightly askew on “Almost Right,” an exercise in discordant accord by Johnston, who acknowledges that the notion of error is a recurring theme of his. Sewelson and Hofstra are featured on “Money, Money, Money.” After the duo’s free-blowing intro, the band settles down to a soulful R&B groove. “Lt. Cassawary” is an infectious romp with insurgent horns seemingly breaking out of the section at will.

Unusual changes of chord and meter are the name of the game on “Twilight Time Zone.” The whole affair comes to a close with “The Big Squeeze,” a loping, atmospheric tune that gradually develops from a film noir stroll to a back-alley cat fight and finally into a raucous, brawling mix of horns and percussion.

There is more good news for fans of the Micros. Two double-disc anthologies of the band’s music were released in 2006 under the titles

“Seven Men in Neckties: History of the Micros, Vol. 1” and “Surrealistic Swing: History of the Micros, Vol. 2.” Together, they comprise everything they recorded in the 1980s, including bonus tracks. Also available on the Cuneiform label, they have lost none of their twisted charm over the years.



### JACKIE RYAN *Doozy* OpenArt Productions

Every now and then, one slips through the cracks. Such is the case with marvelous singer Jackie Ryan. Recording on minor, independent labels since at least 2000, she has managed to fly well under our radar. Gotta get that radar fixed one of these days!

Our former ignorance of Ryan makes her sixth and latest release, the double-disc “Doozy,” a particularly pleasant surprise. It contains 20 excellent performances spanning ballads, uptempo swingers, Latin numbers, standards and obscure tunes alike, and totaling about 100 minutes. It features top-flight accompaniment from pianist Cyrus Chestnut, saxophonist Eric Alexander, trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, guitarist Romero Lubambo, bassists Ray Drummond and Dezron Douglas and drummers Carl Allen and Neal Smith. To put things in perspective, it also has insightful liner notes by the esteemed Don Heckman.

The enormous breadth of this recording makes detailed commentary impossible here. Suffice it to say that it surprises and delights at every turn. The title track is a Benny Carter gem

that swings with clever vocalese lyrics penned by Ryan and great playing by Chestnut, Alexander and Pelt. A wonderfully tasteful and accomplished keyboard wizard, Chestnut is justifiably featured throughout this project, and his playing is a perfect foil for Ryan’s vocal excursions.

We luxuriate in the lush warmth of “You’ll See,” and the sunny Jobim standard “Caminhos Cruzados.” We smile knowingly at the scolding bopper “Do Something” and turn sentimental at the wistful “With the Wind and Rain in Your Hair.” Pelt’s brilliant flugelhorn, a light samba feel and Ryan’s crystal clarity bring new meaning to “Speak Low.”

You believe Ryan when she first whispers, then swaggers on “I Must Have That Man,” and she makes the bluesy “Dat Dere” both whimsical and convincingly instructive. Chestnut digs imaginatively into the rumba sway of “Beautiful Moons Ago,” a rarity by Nat Cole and Oscar Moore. Set one ends with the rockin’ blues shuffle of “My How the Time Goes By,” which illustrates Chestnut’s penchant for blues and gospel music.

Songwriter Oscar Brown Jr. gets his due with the clever second-half opener “Opportunity Please Knock.” Alexander is the featured soloist on that tune and the next, the ballad “I Haven’t Got Anything Better To Do,” an obscure but lovely song from the 1967 Sandra Dee movie “Doctor, You’ve Got to be Kidding!” Lubambo returns on guitar for the breezy bossa medley “Brigas Nunca Mais/A Felicidade.”

Among the handful of well-known standards included here is a tender, definitive reading of “Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most.” The Mexican love song “Solamente Una Vez” is a duo showpiece for Ryan and Lubambo and provides a nice segue to the bossa nova arrangement

*Jazz on Disc continued on page 14*

*Jazz on CD continued from page 15*

of “Summer Serenade,” another Benny Carter gem. “Get Rid of Monday” is a lesser-known, witty swinger from Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, with soulful statements by Chestnut and bassist Dezron Douglas.

Alexander’s sensuous horn imbues the slow, evocative “Midnight Sun” with the proper romantic ambience for Ryan’s virtuosic vocal excursions. The bold and brassy song stylist swaggers in the tradition of “St. James Infirmary” on Billie Holiday’s “Tell Me More and More and Then Some,” given a distinctive New Orleans flavor by Pelt’s plunger-muted trumpet solo. Leonard Bernstein’s timeless “Some Other Time,” with exquisite piano filigrees, makes a fitting close to this extraordinarily rich and satisfying “Doozy.”



**THE ERIC MUHLER QUARTET**  
***The Jury Is Out***  
**Slow Turn Records**

“The Jury Is Out,” his fifth recorded outing, captures pianist Eric Muhler with his tight quartet in a live setting at The Hillside Club, an intimate 150-seat venue in Berkeley, Calif. The tunes are challenging originals, the interplay is telepathic and the engineering is superb.

While Muhler’s solo piano style tends toward Keith Jarrett and Art Lande, his approach in this fearsome foursome sounds more like the hard-charging post-bop of McCoy Tyner or Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers, especially when fired by the

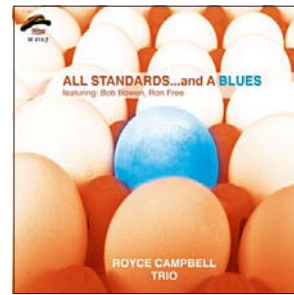
brawny tenor sax of Sheldon Brown, the booming electric bass of Michael Wilcox and the prodigious time-keeping of drummer Brian Andres.

“Punkly” opens the proceedings with an unusual 12-bar blues pattern. “Sand Castles” is a blatantly Tynesque exploration of modes and wide-ranging keyboard excursions. Brown switches to soprano sax to state the melodious theme of “Alexandra Cristina A.M.” before turning it over to Muhler, who brilliantly expands on the theme with a piano solo alternating deft single-note runs with lush arpeggios.

The title track is a complex, stop-time composition which shifts gears at a moment’s notice. All four players hold tight to the reins, even while galloping at breakneck speed. Brown turns in another exemplary tenor solo, followed by an equally inspired piano statement. As its title implies, “Sun & Clouds” allows many glimpses of sunny optimism between the darker chords. Indeed, Brown’s soprano sax positively beams, Wilcox’s bass solo soars in the virtuosic style of Stanley Clarke and Muhler expresses some Chick Corea inclinations as the tune stretches to almost 13 minutes.

Two compositions devoted to “Jane” close the CD, “1990 For Jane” and “Jane at Home.” The former is a Latin tune taken at a stately mid-tempo, with a melody first introduced by Wilcox on bass, then expanded on by Muhler and Brown on tenor. The latter slows the pace slightly as Brown’s tenor states the funky, catchy theme with gusto. The whole quartet reconvenes for a gospel-like testimonial, Muhler pounding out the chords and Brown wailing on the horn.

Late breaking news! The jury is in and the verdict is that The Eric Muhler Quartet has a winner on its hands.



**ROYCE CAMPBELL TRIO**  
***All Standards... and a Blues***  
**Philology Jazz**

Guitarist Royce Campbell is so prolific that his two latest projects were recorded just six weeks apart, in December 2008 and January 2009. Both feature Campbell’s current sidemen—bassist Bob Bowen and drummer Ron Free—in thematic programs directly alluded to in their titles.

“All Standards... and a Blues” and “Movie Songs Project” extend Campbell’s catalog to more than two dozen recordings in the last 20 years. Previous gems include a 1995 tribute to the music of Henry Mancini, a 1999 session with strings and Fred Hersch at the piano, and “Six By Six: A Jazz Guitar Celebration,” pairing Campbell with fret-masters John Abercrombie, Larry Coryell, Pat Martino, Bucky Pizzarelli and Dave Stryker.

“All Standards” pares nine familiar tunes to their essence as Campbell states the melodies on guitar, Bowen anchors the low end of the scale while suggesting harmonies and pulse, and Free establishes the tempo and strings ornate percussive arabesques throughout. This trio is the very definition of teamwork.

In the absence of a piano, Campbell’s string excursions ring crystal clear, effortlessly alternating between lush chords and single-note runs, especially given the subtle, unobtrusive accompaniment of bass and drums on ballads like “Round Midnight,” “I Thought About You,” “The Boy/Girl Next Door,” and “Damn That



**ROYCE CAMPBELL TRIO  
plus PHIL WOODS**  
*Movie Songs Project*  
Philology Jazz

Dream.”

But the trio chemistry is most evident as the three wend their way through more complex melodies and time signatures, such as “Out of Nowhere,” “Love For Sale,” “Have You Met Miss Jones?” the jazz waltz “All

the Things You Are” and “You’d Be So Nice to Come Home To.” Coming as it does halfway through the set, Campbell’s original “Trio Minor Blues” is a refreshing palate cleanser between two hearty helpings of chestnuts.

“Movie Songs” adds alto saxophone legend Phil Woods to the trio in a collection of film theme ranging from the obvious jazz standards—“You Must Believe in Spring,” “The Shadow of Your Smile,” “Laura,” and “Secret Love”—to the less obvious “Theme from Amarcord,” and Mancini’s “Baby Elephant Walk” and “Soldier in the Rain.”

Woods, age 77 at the time of this recording, still exhibits the sure-fingered dexterity and well-developed sense of swing that make his sound

so instantly recognizable. He heightens the excitement level every time he blows a figure on his horn. Campbell and company lend faithful accompaniment to the master, but also offer their own imaginative solo statements. Among the highlights are the waltz masterpiece “Amarcord,” the gentle samba “Manha de Carnaval” and Campbell’s Wes Montgomery-style, octave flights on the trio rendition of “Laura.”

On an updated reading of Charlie Chaplin’s “Smile,” Woods whimsically quotes from “When You’re Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You).” A bluesy R&B swagger pervades “Baby Elephant Walk.” Campbell’s guitar artistry is most evident as Woods sits out the closer, the heart-rending “Soldier in the Rain.”

## *Jazz Essentials, Part 2*

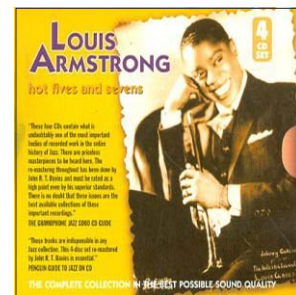
# Unearthing the very roots of jazz

By Tom Ineck

In our first offering of recordings essential to any jazz collection, we took a look at five releases from 1959, a logical choice in their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. But as the decade turns, 2010 calls for a more definitive, long-range perspective, a look at some worthy examples of the early development and refinement of a great American art form that is approaching a century of recorded history.

Several artists suggest themselves as important and influential architects of jazz in the 1920s and 1930s. Louis Armstrong was the seminal jazz improviser, putting the soloist in the spotlight and creating an exciting vocal technique that was part and parcel of that individual sound. Employing a larger ensemble, Duke Ellington used elegant and sophisticated melodies and orchestral arrangements as lush backdrops for his soloists. Count Basie took a simple, riff-based blues form and generated a mighty, horn-driven swing engine that was irresistibly popular among musicians and listeners. Benny Goodman broadened the scope of the swing movement by attracting a younger, whiter audience while continuing to feature some of the best jazz arrangers and soloists available. Django Reinhardt created a new swing vocabulary for stringed instruments, resulting in the effervescent “gypsy jazz.”

Because early jazz artists operated in the pre-LP era, their music was recorded in more piecemeal fashion, first on cylinders then on 78 rpm discs that usually contained two tunes on each side. In recommending some of the best of these classics in the current CD era, one need only point to the outstanding compilations, often available in multi-disc boxed sets.



**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**  
*The Hot Fives and Sevens*  
JPS Records

These definitive small-group recordings, made between 1925 and 1930, have been released in numerous configurations by many different labels, including Columbia. The four-CD, 90-track JSP edition, released in 1999, gets the nod for its sound fidelity, its more logical sequencing and the small, inde-

*Jazz Essentials continued on page 16*

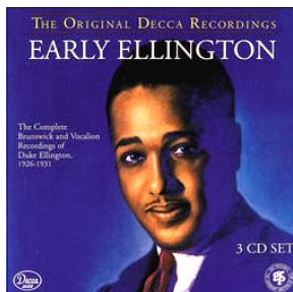
*Jazz Essentials continued from page 15*

pendent label's devotion to the music.

Armstrong formed the first all-star studio jazz band in history—the Hot Five—while still working as a featured big-band soloist. The band also included Johnny Dodds on clarinet, Kid Ory on trombone, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo and Armstrong's wife, Lil Hardin Armstrong, on piano. Together, they work their magic as a seamless whole, nearly bursting with enthusiasm and instrumental virtuosity in a broad range of material that encompasses both the direst blues and the most joyous stomps this side of paradise.

Expanding the ensemble to the Hot Seven, Armstrong included such brilliant collaborators as pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines, trombonist Jack Teagarden and guitarist Lonnie Johnson. Hines sophisticated style is especially noteworthy in his monumental duets with Armstrong.

These recordings are the equivalent of the Holy Grail of jazz history. Considering their age, the sound quality is excellent and JSP is to be commended for this reasonably priced package.



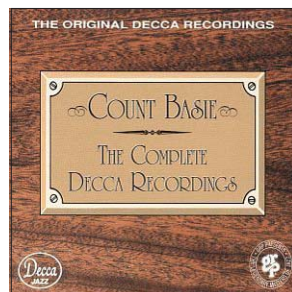
**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
**Early Ellington: Complete Brunswick and Vocalion Recordings**  
Verve Records

This three-disc package, released on Verve in 1994, documents Ellington's phenomenal artistic genius as his various ensembles emerged and developed from 1926 to 1931, in recordings on the

Brunswick and Vocalion labels. In guises ranging from the Kentucky Club Orchestra, the Cotton Club Orchestra and the Washingtonians to the Jungle Band, the Hotsy Totsy Gang and the Six Jolly Jesters, Ellington introduced such classics as "East St. Louis Toodle-oo," "Black and Tan Fantasy," "The Mooche," "Rockin' in Rhythm," "Creole Rhapsody" and "Mood Indigo."

Of course, it was Ellington's featured soloists who made his sound so personal. Emerging here with their own unique voices are trumpeters Bubber Miley and Cootie Williams, trombonist "Tricky" Sam Nanton, clarinetist Barney Bigard, alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges, and baritone saxophonist Harry Carney.

With 67 tracks and more than three hours of music, this set is an excellent overview of Ellington's early years, as he wrote his first, very important chapter in the history of jazz. Of course, he would go on to other significant contributions, but this is where it all began.



**COUNT BASIE**  
**The Complete Decca Recordings**  
Verve Records

Basie's early fame can be traced to these 63 classic recordings for Decca. Recorded between 1937 and 1939 and released in 1992 by GRP Records on three discs, they are now available on the Verve label. Every track swings with that special pumping exuberance that the Kansas City style epitomizes.

Like Ellington, Basie often took a

back seat to his remarkable soloists—among them, Lester Young and Herschel Evans on tenor saxes, and Harry "Sweets" Edison and Buck Clayton on trumpets. Driving the whole band, of course, is the extraordinary rhythm section of Basie, guitarist Freddie Green, bassist Walter Page and drummer Jo Jones. Singer Jimmy Rushing adds his uncanny blues vocals to several tracks, and Helen Humes is an elegant contrast with her more pristine vocal style.

Among the essential tunes of the Basie catalog included here are "One O'Clock Jump," "Time Out," "Good Morning Blues," "Boogie Woogie (I May Be Wrong)," "Swingin' the Blues," "Blue and Sentimental," "Jumpin' at the Woodside," and "Jive at Five."



**BENNY GOODMAN**  
**Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert**  
Columbia/Legacy Records

Rather than choose a broad retrospective of Goodman material, such as the excellent two-disc, 2007 Sony release "The Essential Benny Goodman" or the 1991 three-CD collection of early Bluebird recordings called "The Birth of Swing (1935-1936)," I recommend this somewhat flawed 1999 reissue of the famous Carnegie Hall concert of January 1938, which put Goodman on the map. Indeed, it is considered by many the single most important live recording in jazz history.

Originally released in 1950, its '30s vintage virtually assures poor sound quality, but the folks at Columbia/



Legacy have managed to re-master the original tapes without obscuring any of the excitement of the occasion. Some surface noise is still apparent, but the listener is advised to concentrate on the consistently high level of artistry and the momentousness of history-in-the-making. Despite its shortcomings, it offers us an excellent look at Goodman's big band and small-group talents.

With the entire concert spread across more than two hours on two CDs, we can appreciate not only lots of Goodman's note-perfect clarinet playing, but the top-notch arrangements of Fletcher Henderson and the outstanding performances of such featured musicians as pianist Teddy Wilson, vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, trumpeter Buck Clayton, baritone saxophonist Harry Carney and drummer Gene Krupa. Among the many highlights are "Sometimes I'm Happy," "One O'Clock Jump," "Honeysuckle Rose," "Body and Soul," "Avalon," "Dizzy Spells," "Stompin' at the Savoy," and, of course, "Sing, Sing, Sing."



**DJANGO REINHARDT**  
*The Very Best of 1934-1939*  
Stardust Records

There are literally hundreds of releases compiling the early recordings of Django Reinhardt and the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. They vary widely in sound quality, tune selection and sequencing, but the performances are pretty consistently fantastic. This 32-track, two-disc package on the Stardust label is a good introduction to what makes "gypsy jazz" so irresistibly

engaging.

For the uninitiated, Django was a Belgian gypsy born Jean Baptiste Reinhardt in 1910. At eighteen, he lost the use of two fingers on his left hand in a fire, forcing him to create a new guitar-fretting technique. Long before guitars were amplified, his unique acoustic sound and phrasing influenced Charlie Christian and Les Paul. Reinhardt and his longtime colleague, violinist Stephane Grappelli, were the most important jazz innovators to come from Europe.

In the earliest ground-breaking performances included here, you get

not only the virtuosic guitar playing of Reinhardt, but the equally amazing violin pyrotechnics of Grappelli, the flawless, chunka-chunka rhythm guitars of Joseph Reinhardt and Roger Chaput and the solid bass of Louis Vola. Later tracks also feature horns and piano, but the "gypsy" style remains intact.

Completists and purists will argue that many of the Hot Club's greatest tunes are missing, but among the classic tracks included are "Dinah," "Tiger Rag," "Lady Be Good," "I'm Confessin'," "Swanee River," "Ultrafox," "Avalon," "Djangology," and "Chasing Shadows."

## ***BMF library continues to expand***

The Berman Music Foundation continues to expand its library of music and music films, and we will occasionally update you on some of the most significant new acquisitions.

Butch Berman was a record collector with a penchant for early rock, rockabilly, rhythm & blues, soul and, of course, jazz. He knew what he liked—and what he didn't like. If he had a favorite artist, no matter how obscure, he bought everything he could find by that artist. On the other hand, if the music didn't move him personally he wasn't interested, even if that music was deemed historically important.

Butch occasionally obtained LPs or CDs at estate sales, garage sales or on E-bay, so his purchases were subject to chance and availability. In still other cases, new improved editions of great recordings were simply not available in his lifetime.

Of course, jazz record companies, publicists and artists send CDs for review, and the best of those eventually find their way into the collection. But we also are on the look out for essential items to fill some of the gaps in the archives. Here are a few of the latest acquisitions:

- "The Beatles: Stereo Box Set,"

is a long, long-overdue re-mastering of the entire Beatles catalog—their 14 LPs plus the "Past Masters" singles collection. These had remained available only in poor sonic transfers since first released on CD in 1987. This definitive package vastly improves the sound of the music, best exemplified in the spare, acoustic instrumentation on the final entry, 1970's "Let It Be." Each CD is packaged in a slick, cardboard sleeve with a booklet containing excellent liner notes and photographs.

- "Les Paul: Chasing Sound" is a wonderful DVD biography of the late guitar wizard, first produced in 2006 for the PBS series "American Masters." The 90-minute documentary includes classic TV appearances of Les Paul and Mary Ford recording at home, vintage duets with Chet Atkins, Merle Haggard, Keith Richards and Kay Starr, full-length performances from the Iridium Jazz Club with Les Paul and His Trio and extended conversations with the guitarist-inventor.

- BMF advisor Kay Davis recently donated some classic 45s from the 1950s and 1960s and LPs from the '60s and '70s. But, the real gem here is a 78-rpm copy of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender."

## Feedback

## Readers respond to newsletter stories &amp; website

Tom,

*It was interesting to hear about Johnny Smith's birthday. After he had moved to Colorado Springs, for what ever reason, I was going to Denver to test for my Colorado real estate license and found out that Friday and Saturday night Johnny came to a place in the tough part of town to Shaner's to play with his trio. It was a small crowd and most did not know that they were in the presence of greatness. I had learned of Johnny during the '50's when a late night AM station, WJR out of Detroit, used his "Moonlight in Vermont" for background music while the DJ talked. I never tired of the song. I was so delighted to find Johnny in Denver and went there several times and loved it.*

Don Hammel  
Omaha, Neb.

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Dear Tom Ineck,

*Just wanted to let you know how much I deeply appreciated your review of my new album, "Since Forever." Of course, I'm really glad you dug the music, but even more so I'm really grateful for your focus on distinguishing my music from "new age" and "fusion," a distinction that seems to completely escape all too many folks, very often critics. You really hit the veritable nail right on the head.*

*I also dug your ability to un-*

*derstand the essence of my music, which you eloquently described as a "profound, sadness-tinged celebration of life." That's it, exactly. It's all about the bittersweet dichotomy that is life itself, as is, in my opinion, all the best music.*

*Also, your ability to hear and comprehend a "subtle rhythmic change or some exquisite harmonic phrase" puts you way ahead of most critics, many of whom don't actually know much about music but for whatever reason write about it anyway. Bravo, and thank you.*

*Finally, I'm really glad you dug the version of "In A Silent Way," a rarely covered tune. I'm especially proud of it because it starts with Miles' harmonically stripped down modal approach, but ends with Zawinul's deep and beautiful original harmonic changes. I've never heard both approaches combined in one rendition before.*

*I'm just so happy to get feedback that confirms that my musical message was received intact ... I'm really proud of this album, I feel it's some of my best work ever, and I hope that people dig it as much as I do. And I'm one of the luckiest composers around to have musicians like McCandless, Rodby, and Walker bring my music to life.*

*And thanks for mentioning Patti McKenny ... she was a friend and fantastic lyricist with whom I collaborated. I wrote "More Often Than Not" after seeing the movie "Once," not so much to emulate the music in the film (although it did have its influence) but more just to celebrate the nature of deep artistic collaborations. Patti intended to*

*write a lyric for it, but sadly never did.*

*Thanks again for the great review; it's always heartening to know that the old, tired cliché that writing about music is like dancing about architecture ain't necessarily so (not to mention that, when you think about it, dancing actually is all about architecture!)*

All the best,

Fred Simon

<http://myspace.com/fredsimon>

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Dear Grace & Tom,

*I just read your new Berman Music Foundation news; a heartfelt 'thank you' for the incredible coverage on Alaadeen's new manual. Everyone on the team did a tremendous job. Dan's piece on Les Paul is also very interesting. We appreciate you so very much. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!*

Sincerely,

Dawn K. DeBlaze  
St Louis, Mo.

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Hello, Grace, Tony and Tom,

*Alaadeen and I would like to thank you all for your support and this fantastic write-up of the signing party and his manual. We appreciate all you have done and*

*commend you for carrying on with Butch's vision. I really can't express my gratitude enough for this help that you all have given Alaadeen and the dedication that you give to this music, jazz. We sincerely believe that you are contributing to the history of the music and we both thank you.*

*All the best,*

Fanny Dunfee  
Kansas City, Mo.

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*Hello,*

*First of all, I just wanted you to share my appreciation of your support and dedication to the Lincoln music scene. I was able to check-out the latest news letter and there is definitely a lot going on right now for the foundation.*

Andy Graham

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*Tom,*

*This is a much delayed response. We met you and your wife at the concert in Brownville. Please add our names to the mailing list so we can stay informed on the local jazz scene. We will probably cross paths again sometime.*

*Until then, take care.*

Alan and Debbie Kouri

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*Hi Tom,*

*I am among the Rotarians delivering FREE dictionaries to 4th graders at Lincoln Public Schools. I thought of a way to illustrate how*

*helpful a dictionary can be in my own experience when meeting at Prescott Elementary School with some 60 students.*

*Being a pianist myself, and attending the George Winston concert, I was naturally interested in your review in the Wednesday morning Lincoln Journal Star. I was surprised (and curious) to see a word unfamiliar to me — "flummoxed." Then I thought, "What a great example this could be to the 4th graders of how the dictionary can work for us." I looked up the word "flummox" and found it meant to confuse, perplex. So far, so good. Point made.*

*But what if some think-outside-the-box student asks, "If most readers of that review don't know the word "flummoxed" either, why not just use confuse or perplex?" This is not a frivolous question, and I am interested in your response, if you care to share it.*

*Thank you very much.*

Janet Danielson  
Lincoln, Neb.

**Editor's Response:** Hi, Janet! What a great thing you are doing, in spreading the word (literally) to Lincoln's elementary school students by delivering free dictionaries! There

is no better way for them to become acquainted with the rich English language, unless it is for them to see an unfamiliar word in a familiar setting (a concert review, etc.). When confronted with this dilemma, your natural impulse (and mine) is to pick up a dictionary and learn a new word. I hope every students of the English language has a similar impulse.

How boring our language and speech and writing would be if there were only one word to describe each emotion, each object, each thought process. And, as a writer, I'm also interested in the "sound" of words, not just their meaning. Although your dictionary (and my 40-year-old American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) defines "flummoxed" as "to confuse, perplex," the word I chose on that particular occasion seemed more appropriate, conveying a more dramatic sense of confusion or perplexity.

That's the only way I can explain it. I was allowed about 45 minutes to write that review. Given less time (or more) I may have gone for the more widely known "confused" or "perplexed." The fact that you wrote asking about my usage tells me I made the right decision, even on the spur of the moment.

Thanks for asking.

## BMF thanks JAM for recognition

The Berman Music Foundation wishes to thank JAM magazine, the long-time flagship publication of the KC Jazz Ambassadors in Kansas City, Mo., for its recent recognition of the BMF and its mission to "protect and promote unique forms of American music."

In its December/January edition, JAM noted that we honor the vision of late BMF founder Butch Berman by continuing to sponsor events and publish a website and quarterly online news-

letter in support of that mission.

"The October issue features a fine article on Ahmad Alaadeen and his new book, *The Rest of the Story*," JAM wrote. "It's worth checking out at [www.bermanmusicfoundation.org](http://www.bermanmusicfoundation.org)."

From one champion of jazz to another, thanks JAM!

For more information on becoming a member of the Jazz Ambassadors, visit [www.kcjazzambassadors.com](http://www.kcjazzambassadors.com).



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*From the Archives*

**BMF and Claude Williams  
 have a long relationship**



File Photo

*The Berman Music Foundation brought Claude "Fiddler" Williams and the New York All-Stars to the Zoo Bar in August 1995. The BMF is now helping to restore and release tapes of Williams that were once thought lost.*

**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 will help offset the costs of this newsletter and its programs.**

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***Thanks for supporting jazz!***