

Prez Sez BMF gears up for upcoming gigs

By Butch Berman



Yes, I knew it would feel different and it does. 9/11/01 means emergency numero uno in EVERY language...and nuthin' will ever seem as totally serene and secure as it once was. Some say – how could there be a God after this – nevertheless the U.S.



Russ Long gets into a mellow mood while visiting the BMF

has survived numerous abominations throughout its history...and always seemed to get stronger. Who are we to judge the magnitudes of God's lessons – yet in my span of 52+ years – I suffered and grew through the assassinations of the Kennedy's and Martin Luther King, dealt with such lunatics as Charlie Starkweather, the Manson clan, and Son of Sam, and was even in the earthquake of '89 in San Francisco, so the will to survive as shared by Oklahoma City and New York terrorist survivors – is a vibe I can recognize and feel a little bit to this day.

Let's hope that we, and you our readers can just live out our natural lives to dig a little more jazz, and not always have to focus on fear and loathing of

unknown events from either within or without ourselves and our government.

On the home front – we had to re-schedule our eager arrival of the Joe Cartwright Trio that will now appear at P.O. Pears on November 15th from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Big Red got the nod understandably over jazz as the game had to be bumped up to the same evening as our show. Thanks to the Joe Cartwright Trio, Dean Haist and his staff, and the folks from Pears in helping the BMF move it all around.

Speaking of P.O. Pears – what a treat it was to host the super-talented duo of bebop master pianist Hod O'Brien and his multi-voiced jazz singing wife – Stephanie Nakasian. Even though the crowds at Pears are building with baby steps, the cooperation of all involved has been most promising – and Hod and Steph were no exception (see Bill Wimmer's on the spot review to catch more of the swingin' details of a fine performance by two great folks that have never been to Nebraska before).

While on Pears – an extra added attraction added to Joe's gig will be my old buddy, conga man Norman Hedman. Norman will be in town doing some BMF work, so chances of a second set jam with Joe's tight trio and Hedman could be in the works. Please continue to support P.O. Pears and their admirable trek into becoming a solid jazz spot here in Lincoln.

Next gig news, of course, is Karrin Allyson at the Lied with strings November 9th, showcasing her current smash release of *Ballads – Remembering John Coltrane* this performance will truly mean something – be there or you know what.

In closing – I'm real excited to just have done the deal executive producing the long-awaited new CD release *Never Let Me Go* by Kansas City legend Russ

Long and his 20-year veteran trio featuring Gerald Spaits on bass and Ray DeMarchi on drums. The BMF, after hearing the demo, was so overwhelmed



Photo by Rich Hoover

Gerald Spaits has played bass with Russ Long for over 20 years

by its soulful contents that I knew I had to help get it out and into your hearts. The CD release party at KC's downtown Phoenix will be on December 4th and we'd like to schedule a release party here sometime in February. New York singer



Photo by Rich Hoover

Ray DeMarchi is also a 20-year vet pushin' the beat behind Russ Long

Kendra Shank, who worked with Russ's trio last year and still owes us a show, may be an extra added attraction if schedules permit. We're hoping for an in store release of Russ's CD before the first of the year.

Jazzy times ahead – let's live it while we can.

Hugs 'n' kisses,

Butch Berman
Butch Berman

(Allyson continued from pg. 1) the Blues," Bud Powell's "Parisian Thoroughfare" and Charlie Parker's "Yardbird Suite."

Of course, since that concert Allyson has released what is perhaps her strongest recording yet. We may, therefore, expect to hear a few selections from *Ballads: Remembering John Coltrane*, like "Say It (Over and Over Again)" or "I Wish I Knew" or "You Don't Know What Love Is" or "What's New" or "It's Easy to Remember." The many possibilities are enticing.

Her seventh Concord Records release, *Ballads* has been the subject of glowing – and well-deserved – reviews, feature stories, radio interviews and major airplay. A loving tribute to the 1962 Coltrane classic, it recreates the sequence of that recording but allows Allyson and her sidemen to expand on the themes, both lyrically and musically.

Whatever Allyson and her collaborators decide on, Nov. 9 is guaranteed to be an evening long remembered.

Last Chorus: Harold Land

By Bill Wimmer

Tenor master Harold Land, one of the great voices of the saxophone, passed away on July 22 in Los Angeles - a victim of a stroke.

Land was born in Houston, Texas on February 18, 1928 and moved to San Diego with his family at an early age. He moved to LA in the early '50s attracted by the local jazz scene which included many great musicians. Land was invited to join the famous Max Roach/Clifford Brown Quintet in 1954 after having met Roach at a jam session at Eric Dolphy's house. He stayed with this group until late 1955 just before Brown's tragic death. He returned to Los Angeles and worked with Curtis Counce, Red Mitchell, and others, as well as The Gerald Wilson Big Band.

Beginning in the '60s Land also began to play on movie soundtracks, working on many films. He also remained very active on the West Coast jazz circuit and played quite a few jazz festivals here and abroad. In 1969 he began an association with Bobby Hutcherson that would become one his best known groups. In the '70s Land co-lead a group with Blue Mitchell, did more film work, and even ended up on The Mike Douglas TV show, where the

host would introduce him as "The finest in the land, Harold Land, on the saxophone" after many solos. Land continued to be very active in the '80s and worked with an all-star group called The Timeless All-stars as well as with his son, pianist Harold Land, Jr. Land was a big supporter of students and the LA jazz community.

Harold Land left a recorded legacy that will live on forever. Some highlights include *Study In Brown*, with Brown/Roach Inc., *West Coast Blues*, with Wes Montgomery, and *The Fox*, with Dupree Bolton. *Total Eclipse* and *San Francisco* featured the group co-lead with Hutcherson, and Land later recorded with Bill Evans on *Quintessence*. One of the best later examples of his playing is on *Xocia's Dance*, a minor classic.

Though really only born in Texas, Land possessed a very rich, dark, deep sound and played such sinewy lines that many came to call him a "Texas Tenor." There was a lot of emotional depth to his playing and his groups were capable of evoking many different moods. He remained active until the last few years, and his soulful sound will always be remembered.

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Consultants: Dan Demuth, Norman Hedman, Dave Hughes, and Wade Wright

Stryker fronts NJO's Lied Center debut

By Tom Ineck

The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra's Oct. 5 debut at the Lied Center for Performing Arts was a stunning success.

More than 800 people came to Lincoln's premier performance venue to hear the NJO collaborate with guitarist Dave Stryker, a transplanted Omaha native now living and working in the New York City area.

The musicians were on equal footing, like old Midwest friends who simply picked up where they had left off years ago. Stryker's affinity for the blues and for the big band format suited the NJO to a tee, allowing everyone to swing with abandon.

A Peter Bouffard arrangement of Horace Silver's "Sister Sadie" got things off to a lively start, with the NJO featuring Bob Krueger on flugelhorn, Mark Benson on alto sax, Scott Vicroy on baritone sax and Ed Love on tenor sax. Krueger returned for some unison phrasing with two tenors and an alto. Cole Porter's "Easy To Love," as arranged by Dave Sharp, provided a vehicle for Rich Burrows on tenor sax, Doug Ahl on drums and Tom Harvill on piano.

Stryker came out burnin' on the uptempo swinger "Naked City," with Burrows delivering another splendid tenor solo. Stryker dedicated the tune to New York City in the aftermath of the devastating Sept. 11 attacks on that city, adding that music can create a positive, healing spirit.

There was no doubt of that assertion with the lovely Stryker original "Matthew's Waltz," written 10 years ago for his newborn son. In his solo guitar intro, Stryker subtly

quoted "God Bless America" as another reminder of the evening's special mood. The unique arrangement joined two flutes, two clarinets and bass clarinet in the front line, with solos by bassist Andy Hall, Harvill and Stryker.

"24 For Elvin" is Stryker's rollicking tribute to drummer Elvin Jones. It put the solo spotlight on Benson's soprano sax, Krueger's trumpet, Burrows' tenor sax and Vicroy's baritone sax before unleashing Stryker in a high-energy torrent of octaves and single-note runs that seemed to mimic Jones' own percussive intensity.

Employing a "second-line" rhythm, Stryker and the NJO marched through "Going to New Orleans," with slow, bluesy precision. Drawing on rock and blues influences, the tune invites flashy solo statements. Benson delivered on alto sax, followed by Stryker and some deft, front-line polyphony before the band returned to the infectious theme.

The NJO opened the second set with two Benson originals. "Zep" used some tricky counterpoint, offset by straight-ahead solos by Burrows on tenor, Bouffard on guitar, Jeff Patton on trumpet and Sharp on alto sax. "Skank 7" was a reggae-influenced rhythmic romp with Love delivering the lead melody on tenor sax and Harvill offering some tasteful fills on the electronic keys, then shifting to a wonderful piano solo.

Stryker returned with his composition "Victor Strikes," written years ago for fellow Omaha native and well-respected jazz drummer Victor Lewis. The very fast, exciting changes were lifted to new heights by Stryker's driving guitar

solo and subsequent solos by Harvill, Sharp on alto sax and Ahl on drums.

Stryker's ballad "Song For Leslie" began with a beautiful solo guitar intro. The band entered slowly and subtly, like a flower blossoming. A tender guitar solo was followed by Harvill and Hall also making solo statements. "Nomad" sounded like Stryker's answer to Ellington's "Caravan," an exotic aural adventure to the desert of your dreams. It featured another incisive solo by Stryker and an aptly atmospheric soprano sax solo by Sharp.

Years ago, Stryker wrote "Blues For Brother Jack" as a tribute to the great jazz organist and former Stryker employer "Brother" Jack McDuff. This evening it served as a moving memorial for the musician, who died earlier this year. Sharp offered an alto sax solo, followed by Bryant Scott's plunger-muted solo, before allowing the guitarist the final word on the subject.

Several of the big band arrangements for Stryker's tunes were by Bob Parsons, who rated a special mention by the guitarist.

The NJO's 26th season opener promises great things for this year, continuing with the band's annual Yuletide concert Dec. 11 at The Cornhusker Hotel. A Jan. 24 performance there will feature saxophone legend Don Menza and the Young Lions All-Star Band. The NJO's annual salute to the Big Bands is March 5, with a concluding season concert featuring special guest soloist pianist Eldar Djangirov on May 16, sponsored by the **Berman Music Foundation**.

KC ace pianist Cartwright gears up for Lincoln gig

By Tom Ineck

Forced to cancel a Lincoln appearance in September when the date suddenly conflicted with a reshuffled Big Red football game, Kansas City jazz piano great Joe Cartwright plans to compensate for his tardiness with a typically high-energy performance Nov. 15 at P.O. Pears.

The appearance is made possible by the **Berman Music Foundation**.

The Cornhusker gridiron match was hastily rescheduled to a Thursday night in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The owners of P.O. Pears, a popular downtown Lincoln watering hole, knew they would need all available space to serve the hordes of evening football fans, so the club shifted the Cartwright show to November.

In the wake of Sept. 11, it wasn't the only plan altered in Cartwright's busy career.

"I lost a few gigs as a result of it," he said in a phone interview from his home in Kansas City. "I was going to play solo piano for a convention that was scheduled to be here the following Tuesday, and that got canceled."

When he has played in recent weeks, Cartwright has noted some changes in listeners.

"For the first week after that, the audience size was definitely down, but people that made the decision to come out and be entertained all seemed to enjoy it. Since then, it seem like people have been wanting to get out, get away from the TV. Maybe they need a diversion."

Cartwright agreed with the as-

sertion that there is no better time for the healing power of music. He continues to keep his calendar full with appearances mostly in the Kansas City area.

"I have two steady engagements.



Courtesy photo

Joe Cartwright (left) will appear in Lincoln with a trio. Here he is shown with the quartet that recorded *Luna Negra*.

I play Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the Majestic Steakhouse. I use either Bob Bowman or Gerald Spaits on bass. I've been doing that for over three years. That's been a pretty consistent, long-running gig and one that I enjoy a lot."

In addition to the piano-bass duo format at the Majestic, Cartwright recently contracted with the Fairmont Hotel to perform every Friday and Saturday through January with his quartet, which emphasizes Latin jazz. At least for the next few months, visitors to Kansas City will know where they can

catch this popular keyboard master four nights a week. He also can be found occasionally at The Blue Room restaurant and jazz club in the restored 18th and Vine streets area.

Much more rare is a trip north to Lincoln, where listeners can expect a typically eclectic blend of tunes and tempos from Cartwright's trio, with bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi.

"It will be a mix of styles," Cartwright promised. "We'll do some straight-ahead stuff, Latin, blues, all kinds of stuff." The trio will undoubtedly draw some of its material from Cartwright's 1999 recording *La Luna Negra*, with its Afro-Cuban and Brazilian influence. The CD was long-overdue, released eight years after Cartwright's only other recording as a leader, his cassette-only trio date, the marvelous *Triplicity*.

"I just wanted to document what I'd been doing for the last several years," he said of *La Luna Negra*. "I've been getting airplay at radio stations from coast to coast."

Between *Triplicity* and *La Luna Negra*, Cartwright worked with several other artists in the studio and on stage, most notably as co-leader of the Latin ensemble *Musa Nova*, featuring singer Angela Hagenbach

The good news is that the pianist-composer already is looking ahead to his next recording project. Most likely a trio date, it will feature Cartwright's own compositions and is slated for release sometime next year.

Tomfoolery: NYC visit mixes great jazz and great sadness

By Tom Ineck

NEW YORK CITY – As they say, nothing will ever be the same after Sept. 11.

My recent visit to the vicinity of “ground zero” had been planned for months, but fell just three weeks after the sky fell in lower Manhattan, killing more than 5,000 people in the assault and subsequent collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Try as we might, my companion, Mary Jane Gruba, and I could not long shake the feeling of melancholy that seemed to hang over this great metropolis like a funeral shroud. Our four-day stay was an emotional roller-coaster ride, swinging wildly from the awesome grandeur and excitement of the Big Apple to the brutal realization of how many lives have been lost, and how many more lives have been shattered by grief.

Perhaps our palpable sense of being a party to this grieving process was due to the fact that we spent much of our stay in the company of Russ Dantzer, a Lincoln native and friend. A resident of midtown Manhattan for 14 years, Russ is a consummate New Yorker, at least in spirit. Energetic, resourceful, imaginative and somewhat of a hustler, he loves his adopted city with his whole heart and soul, and his sense of loss is contagious.

Even amid this sense of loss, we tried to go about our business, which was to experience what makes this city great – especially the jazz, the theater, the art and the cuisine.

Our first evening in town (Saturday Oct. 6) led us to The Blue Note club, which is celebrating its 20th year at 131 W. Third St., in the West Village. Our experience actually lived up to the club’s hyperbolic motto:

“Where jazz history is made nightly.”

Legendary bassist Ray Brown was holding court, celebrating his own 75th birthday and paying homage to a friend and contemporary who passed away last year, vibraphonist Milt



Photo by Tom Ineck

The Harlem Renaissance Orchestra is largely comprised of pit musicians who are free to jam on Mondays, when most Broadway theaters are closed.

Jackson. On hand for “To Bags With Love” were Brown’s regular trio mates, pianist Larry Fuller and drummer George Fludas, plus special guests pianist Monty Alexander, saxophonist Ron Blake and trumpeter Nicholas Payton.

The trio began with a typically bluesy and swinging set that included “Don’t Get Sassy,” Dizzy Gillespie’s “Con Alma,” and Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing.” With Blake and Payton aboard, they continued with the standards “The Way You Look Tonight,” “Just One of Those Things” and “Red Sails in the Sunset,” which featured some lovely flugelhorn work by Payton.

Alexander moved to the keyboard for a wonderful rendition of “Django,” written by pianist John Lewis for the Modern Jazz Quartet, of which Milt Jackson was a vital part for more than 40 years. “Reunion Blues” united Alexander with the returning Blake and Payton for a rousing finale, un-

der Brown’s strong leadership.

Sunday was spent in a daylong sojourn to Manhattan’s southern tip – to bear witness to the unimaginable devastation of the world’s foremost financial center. We stopped at the Empire State Building’s observation platform, only to see wisps of smoke and steam still rising from the void where the 220 floors of the World Trade Center towers once stood. In Union Square, we silently viewed memorial photos and messages crudely attached to a fence surrounding the statue of Lafayette by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty.

Boarding a subway train, we headed to the Heart of Darkness, or at least that’s what it felt like. We hoped to avoid the swarms of Sunday afternoon tourists by emerging from the subway near Battery Park, where we might get a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty before walking north to “ground zero.” For a while, it seemed to work.

Battery Park resembled a fenced military post, with pitched tents, armored vehicles and hundreds of gun-wielding National Guardsmen on duty. The water’s edge was off-limits, preventing us from getting a clear view of Lady Liberty.

It was near the intersection of Albany and Rector streets, a couple of blocks south of the site of destruction, that we finally saw the awesome remains, a woven network of steel beams looming over the smoking rubble like the ruins of a Gothic cathedral in bombed-out World War II Berlin. We joined a small, solemn group of onlookers, snapped a few (Tomfoolery continued on pg. 7)

(Tomfoolery continued from pg. 6)

photos and shuffled off, forever changed.

On Monday, Mary Jane and I visited Bryant Park, Grand Central Station, and the Chrysler Building. We then took the three-hour, 35-mile Circle Line tour, a circumnavigation of Manhattan Island on a small cruise ship, a great way to get a different perspective on this city of just 22 square miles, populated by 70,000 people per square mile!

Russ again led the way on a Monday night jaunt to Harlem, aboard the famous "A" Train. Our destination was Luci's Lounge, a tiny jazz club where the loosely knit Harlem Renaissance Orchestra gathers weekly to perform Big Band standards, leaning heavily on the bluesy swing of the Count Basie songbook. Many of the players are pit orchestra musicians, free to jam on Mondays, when most Broadway theaters are dark.

Swing dancers of all ages turned out later in the evening to show their stuff in friendly competition. A late night buffet featured fried chicken, macaroni and cheese casserole and salad. We strolled by the Apollo Theater and briefly visited the legendary Lenox Lounge before heading home.

There was no grander way to spend our last night in New York City than to take in the Tony Award-winning staging of "Kiss Me, Kate" at the historic, Byzantine-style Martin Beck Theatre. With music and lyrics by Cole Porter and book by Sam and Bella Spewak, the comical retelling of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" was a joy to behold.

All in all, it was a whirlwind tour of a city that deserves more time. It was simultaneously a profoundly sad and profoundly uplifting view of the human spirit and, especially, the indomitable spirit of New Yorkers.

Thanks, Russ!

Nakasian/O'Brien Review

By Bill Wimmer

On October 11 the **Berman Music Foundation** presented the Stephanie Nakasian/Hod O'Brien Duo at P.O. Pears. O'Brien is a very accomplished pianist, originally coming out of a pure bebop conception. He displayed all of that and a wealth of styles and sensitive accompaniment to his wife, Stephanie Nakasian.

Nakasian is a vocalist and educator who combines a great sound, good time, excellent pitch and a great sense of swing on a wide range of material. She is an accomplished scat singer and improviser, and she adds a lot to her performance by singing a lot of tributes and telling stories and anecdotes about each singer that she is saluting along the way.

Their first set kicked off with "All That Jazz" and then they played "How Little We Know," a seldom-heard song that was entirely appropriate for the diligent note-taking crowd from UN-L's Jazz History class. O'Brien showed off his bebop roots and his excellent harmonic sense on a Latin/Swing version of "Girl From Ipanema" and on the beautiful ballad "Midnight Sun." Nakasian saluted Ethel Waters on "Guess Who's In Town," which featured some very authentic stride piano from O'Brien. Autumn Leaves was unique with first French, then English verses. "Blue Moon" featured Nakasian do-

ing an incredible imitation of a plunger trombone that really was remarkable. The pair ended the set with a sumptuous Latin rhombi of "Autumn Serenade," and a shakin' version of "Shake That Blues Away."

As a favor, Hod O'Brien opened up the second set honoring Butch Berman's request for "Love Letters," which he dug into all by himself, at a lush ballad tempo. He stretched out and lent some beautiful harmonies backing Nakasian on "All The Things You Are."

Nakasian showed a strong Sarah Vaughn influence on the ballad "Moonlight In Vermont." Then, the duo attacked Charlie Parker's "Confirmation" at a breakneck tempo, and I would say that the attack was a success.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Stephanie Nakasian gets down soulfully at P.O. Pears



Photo by Rich Hoover

Hod O'Brien opens the set with a bebop flourish

Jazz on Disc

Hod O'Brien has piano, does swing

By Tom Ineck

THE HOD O'BRIEN TRIO
Have Piano... Will Swing!
Fresh Sound Records



It is evident from the opening bars of *Have Piano... Will Swing!* that Hod O'Brien is no newcomer. Neither is he content to rest on his laurels.

On this 1999 recording in Hollywood, O'Brien plays with the confident, driving swing of a veteran. No amount of technical expertise or sheer chutzpah could produce sounds this tasteful and convincing in a younger musician. At 65, O'Brien is among the great living swing pianists, though he is sadly unknown to a wider audience.

With bassist Tom Warrington and drummer Paul Kreibich, O'Brien doesn't merely recreate Errol Garner's "Passing Through," he infuses it with new energy and seemingly endless improvisational ideas. The same can be said of John Coltrane's "Lazy Bird," Horace Silver's difficult "Ecaroh" and Red Garland's bluesy "Red's Groove."

He also knows how to play subtly and to truly play *with* his bandmates, and he does so brilliantly on the standards "Dancing in the Dark," "While My Lady Sleeps," "Some Other Spring" and "By Myself."

This talented Chicago native is deserving of wider recognition. If

you're new to O'Brien, start by listening to "Have Piano... Will Swing!" You'll soon be coming back for more.

PBT TRIO
The Soundtrek Sessions
PBT Records



Recorded at Soundtrek Studios in Kansas City, Mo., this recent release features three of KC's finest – pianist Paul Smith, bassist Bob Bowman and drummer Todd Strait – hence, PBT Trio.

Smith takes the leadership role with his exuberant keyboard flair and sense of humor. But his longtime friends and associates aren't just along for the ride. Bowman and Strait play integral roles in this trio, lending valuable rhythmic support and improvisational zeal.

The trio gels from the get-go, seeming to anticipate every move on "I've Never Been in Love Before." Other musicians join the party along the way, with Rod Fleeman on acoustic guitar contributing to Pat Metheny's "All Pat's Things" and "Estate," with Danny Embrey on acoustic guitar on Metheny's "Knobtown" and Djavan's "Flor de Lis," and David Hungate on trombone and acoustic guitar on his own composition "Toley."

Karrin Allyson lends her familiar voice to "Do Nothing Till You

Hear From Me," Mike Metheny and Gary Sivils also contribute nice cornet statements on several tracks.

My favorites, however, are the trio performances, especially the exquisite rendition of "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," the mid-tempo swinger "Nobody Else But Me," and Cal Tjader's "Liz Anne." Smith, Bowman and Strait are as consistently tight as Swiss clockwork.

An obvious labor of love, *The Soundtrek Sessions* brings longtime friends together in a very productive setting.

PBT Jazz, P.O. Box 3161, Independence, MO 64055.

STEPHANIE NAKASIAN
Invitation to an Escapade
Chase Music Group (CMG)



Like her husband, pianist Hod O'Brien, singer Stephanie Nakasian deserves more attention by the jazz-listening public.

On *Invitation to an Escapade*, she displays a range of talents from the ballad to the uptempo swinger, from standard to lesser-known gems like "You Call It Madness (But I Call It Love)," the *Sesame Street* tune "Someone Nice" and the lyric version of Keith Jarrett's "Memories of Tomorrow."

"The Nearness of You," certainly (Jazz on Disc continued on pg. 9)

(Jazz on Disc continued from pg. 8) one of the most-recorded standards of all time, gets a tender, heart-breaking rendition, with pianist Bob Hallahan and bassist Paul Langosch providing sensitive support. On "This Heart of Mine," Nakasian gets similarly sterling accompaniment from Hallahan and drummer Joe LaBarbera on brushes. She and Hallahan team up for a wonderful duet on "What'll I Do?"

LaBarbera and guitarist Steve Brown contribute memorable moments throughout the recording, with Brown especially effective on "You Call It Madness" and the ballad "It's a Blue World."

Husband Hod creates the impression of synthesized vibes on "The Lamp is Low," his own composition "Escapade" and "Just For You," adding vocals on the latter.

Like a beautifully wrapped gift,

Nakasian's full, resonant voice brings these tunes to the listener, with confidence and a sense of style.

Chase Music Group, P.O. Box 11178, Glendale, CA 91226.

MIKE METHENY Close Enough For Love 3 Valve Music



Kansas City-based trumpeter Mike Metheny has wisely gathered some of the usual suspects for his latest outing.

The PBT Trio (see review on page 8) of pianist Paul Smith, bassist Bob Bowman and drummer Todd Strait are the most in-demand rhythm section in KC, and they prove their worth here. Bill Caldwell guests on tenor sax on the opener, "Pretty," and on flute for "3 For Boston."

I have never cared much for the synthesized toots and trills of the "electronic valve instrument" (EVI), which Metheny pioneered many years ago. He overuses it again here, along with something called the "clarinet d'amore."

Instead, give me the real thing, like Metheny's bluesy cornet on his composition "Attitude Blues," his warm flugelhorn work on the titular ballad and his haunting flugelhorn interplay with brother Pat Metheny's guitar on "Ta-Ta."

3 Valve Music, P.O. Box 7004, Lee's Summit, MO 64064.

Discorama

By Butch Berman

RONI BEN-HUR Anna's Dance Reservoir



Not having been east for a couple of years it was a nice surprise to receive a new CD from an old acquaintance. Bebop guitarist Roni Ben-Hur scores a complete total bullseye with his newest Reservoir release entitled *Anna's Dance*. To my ears, this is his greatest effort to date.

The title track, inspired by the

youngest of his two daughters (he previously penned "Sofia's Butterfly" for his eldest), that Roni and his lovely wife, singer Amy London raised together, is his only original. However, the outpouring of love shown on this cut seems to have permeated throughout this entirely enjoyable disc.

Not smooth jazz, nor laid back – but this excellent ensemble evokes an essence of comfortability for all the right reasons. If you're looking for a record that feels like cozying into your favorite chair in front of the fire with a drink, this is it...and it's swingin', too.

Roni's fluid chops are a study of my "less is best" theory, yet it's still in keeping with its bebop tradition. Whether he's trading licks with drummer Leroy Williams - dropping bombs with abandonment

a la Klook and Philly Jo – or working in sync with longtime Nat Adderley bandmate bassist Walter Booker, all hold their own most admirably. Tenor player Charlie Davis – new to me – whether out in front or in tandem with Roni, blows ever so tastefully and sweetly. It's Barry Harris – basically one of the early originators of bebop piano - that blew my mind on this effort. Like a first growth French Bordeaux, his advanced age only means advanced ability. Perfect solos - shading and comping with a warm, vibrant means of getting his point across. Sum of the parts at its best – this CD sways and soars, always cookin'.

Anna's always got a lot to be proud of in her Pop with her "Dance," his album, and you, the listener's pleasure.

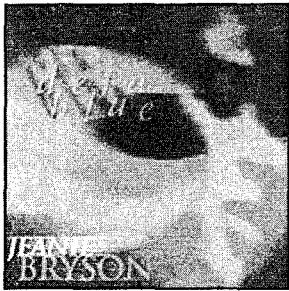
Unsung on Disc

By Bill Wimmer

JEANNIE BRYSON

Deja Blue

Koch Jazz



Summer always brings some beautiful memories, and there's usually one or two recordings that conjure up the perfect summer mood or provide a certain cool fresh breeze during the hot months. Just such a record is *Deja Blue* by Jeannie Bryson on the Koch Jazz label.

This is Bryson's first CD in five years, and it is definitely worth the wait. Admittedly, I was not that familiar with her singing before this, but upon hearing the title track on the radio I became a quick convert.

Her smoky, sensuous sound and soulful way of sliding up to the notes she sings perfectly fit this essay of various types of blue moods.

From the first notes of the seductive title track this singer and the group she's assembled create a groove that informs the music and invites you into this blue world.

Stellar players like Gerry Niewood, flute and alto flute; Steve Nelson, vibes; and bassist Christian McBride make beautiful contributions throughout the record in solo and ensemble playing of pianist Ted Brancato's incredibly tasteful arrangements. The title track (written by Jeannie's mother Connie, whom she thanks for inspiring the

concept for the whole CD), really does set the mood for things to come.

The group then kicks into a light Latin version of Pheobe Snow's hit "Poetry Man," reinventing it in a new light with guitar and congas keeping things much funkier than the original. "It's So Nice To Have A Man Around The House" is a highlight for its laid back groove, humor, and the inclusion of the great Etta Jones, who died just last week of cancer (we're all going to miss Etta Jones).

One of the many gems on the record is "I'd Like To Be A Baby To You." It features the mellow Niewood and a Fender Rhodes cushion from Brancato on the first chorus and alternates a delightful reggae boogaloo with a lightly stinging guitar by Coleman Mellet on the rest of the tune. "Sadness" showcases Mellet's versatility as he strums Brazilian and solos soulfully on acoustic for perfect support of the lingering lyrics.

Niewood plays the foil in a nice arrangement of the very funny "I Told You I Loved You, Now Get Out!". Bryson gets a little funky and free on Brancato's "Bittersweet Surrender," and when she and the band go into the harmonized bridge with its change-up feel, the tension and release is just right on this one with statements by Brancato and Millet. Another Connie Bryson contribution is "Do You Sometimes Think Of Us (From Long Ago)." The title says it all on this haunting waltz that asks a question that could be haunting for many, and a melody that showcases Bryson's easy swing.

Finally, a nice tribute and ballad feature of "Con Alma/Am I Blue," a mellow medley with nice bowing by Christian McBride on "Con Alma" and Bryson's plaintive expression on "Am I Blue."

This CD is remarkable not only for its vibe but for its consistency and seamless flow from one groove into the next. Although I didn't mention every tune here, there aren't any duds in the mix. The perfect combination of Bryson's voice and her band with Brancato's arrangements make this an exceptional CD and a nice addition to anyone's collection.

Jazz in the venues

Compiled by Dave Hughes

Monday Night Big Band

The Monday Night Big Band is still playing every Monday 7:30-10 p.m. at P.O. Pears, 322 S. 9th St. in Lincoln. The cover is \$4, \$3 for students.

Thursday Night Jazz Series

The Thursday Night Jazz Series, with much smaller groups, also continues at P.O. Pears from 7:30-10 p.m. The cover is \$5, \$4 for students. For more info on both nights of jazz, call 402-477-8008.

Jazz at The Oven

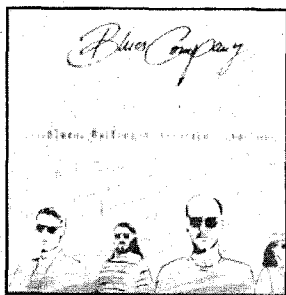
And, jazz duos continue on Sundays and Thursdays at The Oven, 201 8th St. in Lincoln. For more info, call 402-474-7474.

Blues on Disc

By Rich Hoover

BLUES COMPANY

Blues, Ballads & Assorted Love Songs
INAK



This is some blues from Germany, released in 1997, and is a tribute to Johnny Heartsman - who passed to the other side in 1997.

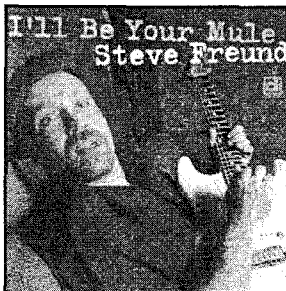
This band is in the premiere ranks of blues groups in Europe. Yugoslavian native Todor Todorovic, the lead vocalist/guitarist, formed the group in 1976. In 1977 they joined Billy Boy Arnold on his European tour. During the 1980s they continued to accompany blues greats like Sunnyland Slim, James Booker, Willie Mabon, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Johnny Heartsman, and a long list of others.

This is the 13th release in 25 years, and it shows in every aspect of this product. The boys in the band are: Todor Todorovic - lead vocal/guitar; Mike Titre - guitar/harp/bass; Martin Schmachtenberg - drums/vocal; and, Olli Gee, bass/organ.

This group is an excellent perpetuator of the blues art form.

STEVE FREUND

I'll Be Your Mule
Delmark Records



If you are ready fo' some original recipe blues, grab this bucket of tunes and enjoy.

Steve Freund has been hangin' around the edges of international notoriety for quite awhile and with this CD's roundup of masters and aspiring newcomers them "ol' time" Chicago blues are alive and well.

Seven of the baker's dozen of tunes were penned by Steve and show his love and experiences with the blues. "I'll Be Your Mule," "Fittin' to go," "Good old Ride," and "A Dollar a Mile" are classic from the gitgo. All are excellent stories of the blues, Chicago style.

The ensemble is a "Who's Who" of workin' bluesmen. Along with Steve on vocal and guitar are: Mark "Mr. B" Braun - piano; Bob Stroger and Harlan Terson - bass; Kenny Smith - drums; Steve Guyger - harmonica; Dave Specter - guitar; Pete Crawford - guitar; Clark Dean, Van Kelly, Dave Clark, & Ed Enright - saxophones; Brian Schwab - trumpet; and, Steve Horne - trombone.

So pick it up, lick it up and enjoy the flavors.

Blues Corner

By Rich Hoover

Well, let's do some history. Least we forget:

Oct 17, 1760 Celebration of Black Poetry Day in honor of the first Black poet to have his work published in America. He lived his whole life as a slave.

Oct 18, 1927 In Atlanta, Georgia the Victor Records field recording unit made the first recordings of Willie McTell.

Oct 24, 1942 *Billboard* magazine featured the first chart ever to report on Black music. It was called *Harlem Hit Parade*. Seven years later it was renamed *Rhythm & Blues*. In 1968 the chart was renamed again, this time to *Soul Music*.

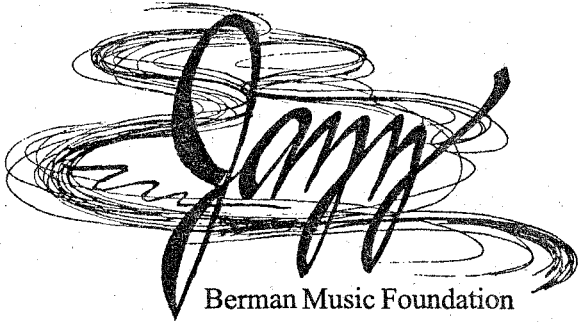
Now let's do some future stuff. The festival listings are slim but in warm places:

Nov 2-19 Festival Internacional de Blues Guadalajara, Guadalajara Mexico - Mexican and American blues bands, for more info: 01-523-853-2069.

Nov 2-4 15th annual Sound Advice Blues Festival, Ft Lauderdale FA - Pinetop Perkins, Deborah Coleman, Eddy Clearwater, for more info, 954-828-3255, tickets 1-866-337-8849.

Nov 16-18 Paso Robles Inn Blues Festival, Paso Robles CA - Festival pass \$115 includes meals, hotel packages, for more info, 805-238-2660, tickets 800-676-1713 x 2.

For the now, wishing all a happy, healthy, hardy holiday season.



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Signing the Deal



Photo by Rich Hoover

Butch seals the deal to serve as executive producer on Russ Long's new upcoming CD Never Let Me Go as bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi look on

"Rest in Peace"
 Harold Land 1928-2001



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