

Photo by Serge Vincent

Monty Alexander

Pianist's March 9 appearance blends jazz, reggae
**Monty Alexander to play
 Lincoln's Royal Grove**

By Tom Ineck

No stranger to the irresistible rhythms of reggae, Jamaica-born jazz pianist Monty Alexander has sown and cultivated a common ground by creating a popular musical fusion on his last three Telarc Jazz recordings.

It began with the 1999 release *Stir It Up: The Music of Bob Marley* and continued in 2000 with *Monty Meets Sly and Robbie*, a collaboration with reggae pioneers Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare. With last year's *Goin' Yard*, Alexander documented the brave new sound in live performance at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh.

Alexander will perform with his current trio March 9 at Lincoln's Royal Grove, a concert appearance made possible by the **Berman Music Foundation**.

His recent commercial crossover success is no surprise to Alexander. In a recent phone interview from his New York City home, he described the music's allure.

"It's a flavor. It's a reality that is so infectious to regular people. I don't mean, necessarily, sophisticated people who are well-read on the ins and outs of jazz as we love it, brought to us by the masters. This is comin' from a different source, altogether," said

Alexander, warming to the subject.

"It's somethin' that is about dancin' and feelin' good. People like to feel a rhythm, and when you apply a different approach, it is a happy marriage for the listener, and certainly for me playin' it, because even though it's different from gettin' on the bandstand with a straight-ahead jazz musician, I find the value in it. To me, it's a whole world of culture. It's my life as a young Jamaican and keepin' in touch with what's come out of Jamaica."

Alexander was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1944. He developed his keyboard technique by working with some of the country's best ska musicians, then moved to America in 1961, at age 17. For the next four decades, he would build a solid jazz reputation by forming musical relationships with Milt Jackson, Ray Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Sonny Rollins and Les McCann. He has recorded more than 50 albums, including more than a dozen on Concord Records.

The reggae-jazz fusion of Alexander's recent recordings reaches a much younger audience than his more conventional jazz outings, receiving radio airplay on reggae programs and hip jazz programs alike. Comparing it with (Alexander continued on pg. 3)

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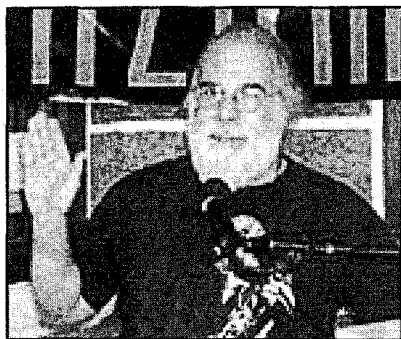
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In this issue of Jazz....

Alexander.....	1
Prez Sez.....	2
Allyson.....	4
Russ Long.....	6
Tomfoolery.....	7
Rufus Thomas.....	7
Cartwright.....	8
Last Chorus.....	9
Jazz on Disc.....	10
Discorama.....	12
Unsung on Disc.....	13
Scrapple from the Apple.....	14
Etta Jones	15
Last Chorus.....	16
Duke Ellington.....	16
Jazz in the Venues.....	17
Mile High Musings.....	17
Boogie Kings.....	18
Rockin' with Charlie.....	22
Blues on Disc.....	23
Blues Corner.....	23

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Prez Sez Love is in the Air

By Butch Berman



Happy New Year Everyone,

If 9-11 was THE day of hell on earth...then 12-12 was the total antithesis for me. By the grace of God on that very day I finally met...yes, her name IS Grace (Gandu). The girl of my dreams/love of my life (mega-thankx to my good buddy and chef - Jimmy Akpen - for this important intro). You may ask yourselves - why am I sharing this personal essay of good fortune with y'all? Well, for one, I can, and secondly, I haven't felt this free and happy for many a year - and like our newsletter now having to go quarterly, due to last year's lousy stock market trade - it'll be fun to keep you abreast of my own hopefully forever evolving relationship from season to season as well as the "what's haps" in jazz as 2002 unfolds. I wish us all Godspeed on all accounts.

As for jazz - 2001 went out on several positive notes for the BMF. Karrin Allyson's lovely show with strings (with partner Bill McLaughlin conducting his magnificent arrangements) at the Lied was voted one of the ten best entertainment nights of the year sez Jeff Korbelick of the Lincoln Journal Star.

Even though the crowd for the city of Lincoln's size is too small

by my standards - P.O. Pears' Thursday Night Jazz series is getting off the ground nicely. We had two grand performances by first - Hod O'Brien and Stephanie Nakasian, followed by the Joe Cartwright Trio from Kansas City, and had decent turnouts for both shows. I've also caught a couple of shows featuring Chris Steinke on one occasion and Bill Wimmer on another. We're doing a CD release party for my new project, a new outing by the Russ Long Trio called *Never Let Me Go*. Backed by local KC stalwarts Gerald Spaits on bass and Ray DeMarchi at the drum helm - this album is taking off with a flourish. The date will be February 28th - the last Thursday of the month. Mark it on your calendars and don't miss it. Russ is an incredibly bluesy jazz artist that will make you want to dance one minute and dab your eyes the next with his sensitive stylings backed by a knockout rhythm section.

Another fab trio not to miss is my 53rd birthday party bash at the Royal Grove with legendary pianist extraordinaire - Monty Alexander and his band. His talented, beautiful wife Caterina will also perform. The date is, Saturday, March 9th (my actual birthday is 3-10). I think the Grove will surprise many as a potential venue for jazz with its great stage, sound and lights, sightlines, and parking space.

There's lots of great news and picks galore, so I'll get out of here shortly. A quick rock 'n' roll reminder for any of you local Rockin' Fossils fans - pick up their new CD. I had a ball backing Charlie Burton

at the Zoo over the holidays along with, Dave Robel, Bob Letheby, and Bill Dye. I am the "bebop man" but still love to rock - and Charlie Burton is one of the best in the biz. More on all dis by the next issue.

May 2002 be the swingiest, jazziest, and rockin' year we had in a long time. My heartfelt prayer to us all.

Butch Berman

Butch Berman

P.S. My dear friend Glennda Magner is redesigning the new website along with Tom Ineck and Rich Hoover. Norman Hedman took a small break from his busy schedule with his Latin ensemble Tropique from New York to add his brilliant percussion work to the soundbites of our site. Check us out at <bermanmusicfoundation.org> in a few weeks and enjoy our development.



Butch Berman and his lovely lady Grace Gandu bring in the new year at KC's Fairmont Hotel with the Joe Cartwright Quartet.

Photo by Unknown

(Alexander continued from pg. 1) rhythm and blues and early rock 'n' roll, Alexander uses a witty epigram to distinguish between the cerebral nature of jazz and the pelvic instinct of reggae.

"Jazz, as we like it, is music for the waist up," he said. "This sort of music is for the waist down."

Gospel music and spirituals also have influenced the pianist. His 1990 Concord release *The River* is a celebration of those African-American traditions, and *Goin' Yard* contains profoundly beautiful live versions of his compositions "Trust" and "Hope," which draw on those roots.

For his Lincoln appearance, Alexander will be accompanied by bassist Ira Coleman and drummer Mark Taylor. While Coleman has worked extensively with the pianist and with other jazz greats, Taylor is less well known.

"He's British born, but probably more than anyone else I've met who's not a Jamaican, he's gotten a hold of our rhythms, but he's a true straight-ahead player," Alexander said. "We'll come groovin' there." The trio will perform a mix of mainstream jazz and the new reggae-jazz hybrid.

"To tell you the truth, I just go by inspiration and spontaneity," he said. "It's up to me to present a program that we all feel good about. The real point of reference is straight-ahead jazz. However, I do bring in some of what I've done in recent years."

Also scheduled to join the trio for a few numbers is the lovely chanteuse Caterina Zapponi, Alexander's wife, who made a brief appearance with the Alexander trio last year at the Topeka Jazz Festival.

"She's goin' put her beautiful tones on some songs. We go places, and even when she isn't on the program I invite her up. She's got this pure and sweet thing that she can give to a song, whether she's singin' in French or Italian."

Lacking a full complement of Jamaican musicians and an arsenal of electronic keyboards, guitar and bass, he will rely on the fundamentals of acoustic

jazz, but Alexander said he taps into the same emotions for both styles.

"It's all the same feelin' in the music for me when I present it. Whenever I play these songs, such as an original that has a Jamaican flavor to it, or a reggae or a ska rhythm, I don't sense that anything is missin', because I feel the music inside my bones."

Somewhat of a music historian, Alexander noted the evolutionary connections among African music, New Orleans jazz and the island rhythms of Cuba and Trinidad, which combined with rhythm and blues in Jamaica in the 1950s and 1960s to become ska and reggae. Bob Marley, the great reggae popularizer of the 1970s, receives special praise from Alexander.

"It's a distillation of all these influences, and it happened so honestly. It's unmanufactured. It happened in a natural way. It was so real and honest in itself that a whole hybrid, new kind of form came. It connects to jazz. It connects to blues. It connects to the doo-wop thing. It's all of this stuff blended so beautifully, and it comes out in Bob Marley's music."

It is not unusual, he noted, for a jazz fan to have a Bob Marley record sharing the same shelf with a John Coltrane record. As the reggae-jazz fusion begins to attract a wider audience, Alexander's relationship with Telarc Jazz continues to grow, he said.

"It's blossomed. It's matured. It's better than ever. It's personal, and I delight in going in the studio and comin' up with different stories to tell, a different theme. That's what we're going to try to do in the next few albums." Alexander promises to return to the studio soon for "some more fun and games. The jazz scene is so filled with great musicians and talented people, but it's so saturated. I'm so glad that I can put a different twist on playin' some music."

Tickets for the Monty Alexander Trio performance March 9 at the Royal Grove are \$20 in advance, \$25 day of show and can be obtained by calling Ticketmaster at 475-1212.

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Editor: Dave Hughes
Newsletter and computer consultant: Rebecca Kaiser

Contributing writers: Butch Berman, Russ Dantzler, Dan Demuth, Rich Hoover, Dave Hughes, Tom Ineck, Dylan Nelson, Ned Theall, & Bill Wimmer.

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Allyson concert at Lied enhanced by strings

By Tom Ineck

Karrin Allyson's voice, a supple and soaring instrument capable of a wonderful dynamic and emotional range, requires little enhancement. It leaps in spontaneous pop vocalise one minute and modulates to the tenderest whisper the next.

But for her Nov. 9 debut at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, Allyson received the ideal treatment, as a string ensemble and a small jazz group alternately added new sparkle and splendor to her vocal gems. With special string arrangements written and conducted by Bill McGlaughlin, Allyson was in her element and the near-capacity audience showed its appreciation. The **Berman Music Foundation** funded the concert.



Karrin, flanked by her manager Mary O'Keefe and her husband Steve.

As though physically straddling the two musical styles — high-brow classical and middle-brow jazz — Allyson had cleverly donned a pseudo-formal faux tuxedo with



Karrin and Butch take in the reception after her fine performance.

matching miniskirt and jacket and black spike-heeled boots. The grand illusion was complete without being pretentious.

Opening with the eminently compatible combo of Kansas City favorites pianist Paul Smith, guitarist Rod Fleeman, bassist Bob Bowman and drummer Todd Strait, Allyson loosened her vocal chords on the lyrically challenging uptempo waltz "Show Me," featuring virtuosic solos by Smith and Fleeman. Bowman's prodigious chops were put to the test on "My Little Boat," with Smith and Fleeman also trading licks.

Turning to her latest, most critically acclaimed and best-selling CD, the tribute to John Coltrane's *Ballads*, Allyson sang

the heart-wrenching "What's New," beginning with a lush string introduction and Bowman's powerful bowed bass and also featuring a sensitive piano solo. Also from the *Ballads* CD, "All or Nothing at All" had the combo demonstrating its ability to swing at mid-tempo. Rod Fleeman, who has developed a very distinctive sound playing

only nylon-stringed guitars, took a deft and imaginative solo, followed by another tasteful solo statement from Smith.

Allyson's musical sensitivity and pianistic prowess were evident in her brilliant rendition of



Rod Fleeman, Paul Smith, and Karrin Allyson enjoy dessert after a sweet show.

Coltrane's "Naima." Rather than attempt a contrived lyrical treatment, she simply sang a wordless vocal line while playing the beautiful melody, which Coltrane wrote for his first wife. Fleeman's unison guitar line and Bowman's breathtaking bass solo made it one (Allyson continued on pg. 5)

Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

(Allyson continued from pg. 4) of the evening's highlights.

For a change of pace, Allyson

Martini's "Plaisir D'Amour (Pleasures of Love)." Singing in French without piano accompaniment,

showcased with "It Could Happen to You." Smith's block-chorded piano solo and Fleeman's solo were followed by a voice-guitar trade that reaffirmed how well these musicians work together.

The singer returned to the piano for Billy Joel's "And So it Goes," accompanied by Lincoln cellist Tracy Sands. The duo blended beautifully, bringing out the full melancholy meaning of Joel's song.

Saving the best for last, however, the entire string section rejoined Allyson for Ennio Morricone's sad, haunting theme from the film "Cinema Paradiso," with lyrics by Stan Dunn. Allyson sang and

played the melody on piano, and Fleeman's guitar blended phrases with the classical strings for a stunning finale.

But, so as not to leave the audience in tears, Allyson and the combo added a rousing, two-part



Photo by Rich Hoover

The coffee finally kicked in after Nebraska Public Radio's "Live from the Lied" broadcast. Left to right: Rod Fleeman, Karrin Allyson, Bill McLaughlin, Butch Berman, Nancy Finken, Charles Bethea, and William Stibor.

turned to Oscar Brown Jr.'s "Hum Drum Blues," a lesser-known standard that proved an excellent vehicle for the singer, a longtime blues fan who can turn a blue phrase with the best of them. She brought the tune to a stunning conclusion by deftly trading vocal phrases with Fleeman's guitar.

The string ensemble returned for a gorgeous take on Giovanni

a chamber music ambiance. In an unlikely, but well-executed segue, Allyson launched into Bud Powell's "Parisian Thoroughfare," a scat-singing vehicle with solos by Smith and Fleeman and a funny attempt by Allyson to elicit audience participation on an incredibly tricky melody line.

The second set began with several tunes that have an exalted place in the Allyson repertoire, beginning with "O Pato (The Duck)," a Portuguese tune that is a good example of her multilingual vocal talents. Clifford Brown's bebop standard "Joy Spring" has been in the Allyson songbook for many years, and here it received an uptempo treatment with drum-vocal trades and a fiery drum solo by Strait. Allyson also gave an affectionate reading of another old favorite, Jay Leonhart's quirky, wistful "Robert Frost."

Allyson's breezy, exhilarating scat-singing technique was



Photo by Rich Hoover

NPR's William Stibor and James Duchesneau prepare for Karrin Allyson's radio interview.

coda consisting of "Stompin' at the Savoy" and "Some of My Best Friends Are the Blues." After that bit of musical therapy, the lingering mood was anything but tearful.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Website designer Glennda Magner and Butch's Girl Friday Ruthann Nahorny shake it up at Allyson's Lied reception.

Russ Long Trio packs Phoenix for CD release

By Tom Ineck

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Pianist Russ Long, bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi showed why they are beloved by their fans and by their musical peers when they appeared Dec. 4 for a CD



Russ Long, deserving of his accolades he received at his CD release party.

release party at the Phoenix Bar and Grill in downtown Kansas City.

The trio was officially introducing its sumptuous, 16-track recording *Never Let Me Go*, with executive production and liner notes by Butch Berman and funding by the **Berman Music Foundation**. The intimate club was jammed with Long fans and supportive musicians, and the foundation was well represented by Berman, photographer Rich Hoover, legal council from Cline Williams Tony Rager, writer Bill Wimmer, this reporter and a number of other Lincoln friends and colleagues, making for a memorable celebration.

It is no coincidence that, like this event, Long's style also is celebrative, joyous and always

swinging, from his performance of the Broadway chestnut "Surrey With the Fringe on Top" and the bop classic "Groovin' High" to the Gershwin standard "The Man I Love" and the irresistible "I'm Beginning to See the Light."

Long's original "Save That Time" already has received the ultimate compliment of being covered by vocalists Karrin Allyson, Joe Williams and Kevin Mahogany. A capable singer in his own right, Long put his own unique twist to the beautiful tune at the Phoenix.

The evening's set list ranged far and wide, including vocal renditions of "Never Let Me Go," "All of You," "Wildest Gal in

Town" and "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To." Long paid homage to George Harrison with "Here Comes the Sun," and recognized the presence of Kansas City legend Claude "Fiddler" Williams with "Robbins Nest." He showed his penchant for the blues with the uptempo Cleanhead Vinson tune "Kidney Stew," and got funky on Cole Porter's "Love For Sale."

Long's engaging sense of humor emerged repeatedly, on "It Was a Dream," Mose Allison's "Fool's Paradise"

and his own composition "Meatloaf." Never one to monopolize the spotlight, he featured bassist Spaits on several tunes, including "Don't Go Away Mad" and "The Man I Love," and allowed DeMarchi to amply demonstrate his solid time-keeping and inventive percussion technique, especially on "Delilah."

The keyboard talents of Long himself shone through during a solo piano rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Crepuscle With Nellie," as well as on Bud Powell's "Un Poco Loco" and "How High the Moon." Perhaps the most touching moment of the evening was his gorgeous playing and vocalizing on Fred Neil's "The Dolphins."

With a similar CD release party planned for Feb. 28 at P.O. Pears in Lincoln, jazz fans will have another opportunity to hear and celebrate the music of the talented and swinging Russ Long Trio. The Lincoln appearance also is made possible by the **Berman Music Foundation**.



Butch hangs with his friend, sax legend Alaadeen and his wife Fanny at Russ Long's party in KC.

Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

Tomfoolery: KC musicians give lesson in community support

By Tom Ineck

A significant number of people who turned out for pianist Russ Long's CD release party Dec. 4 at the Phoenix Bar and Grill were fellow musicians, a very visible demonstration of respect and mutual support for Long and his band mates, bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi.

Spotted in the audience throughout the evening were such prominent Kansas City jazz giants as pianist Paul Smith, trumpeters Mike Metheny and Stan Kessler, saxophonist Ahmad Alaadeen, bassist Bob Bowman, drummers Tommy Ruskin and Doug Auwarter and singer Julie Turner.

Husband and wife, Ruskin and Turner held down seats at the piano bar throughout the evening, obviously enjoying the special occasion and the presence of so many friends and colleagues.

Pianist Joe Cartwright made an appearance after finishing his own gig at another club a few blocks away. Cartwright is well known for his compatibility with other musicians and for his ability to stay up late, having anchored the after-hours jam sessions at Jardine's jazz club for many years.

The legendary Claude "Fiddler" Williams was there most of the evening. As we approached the club on foot from the Savoy Hotel a block away, Williams was being dropped off in front of the Phoenix, just in time for the first set. He and his wife sat at a high-topped table for most of the

evening, eventually getting seats directly behind the piano. Long acknowledged his presence with a special dedication later in the program.

Many of the musicians also purchased copies of Long's new CD, *Never Let Me Go*. They were quickly snapped up for \$15 each at a table near the door, graciously attended by Spaits' and DeMarchi's wives. The spirit among fans, bandmates and family was generous and social, with conversations among total strangers feeling like a reunion of dear friends. As the Phoenix filled to overflowing, some revelers moved outdoors on the unseasonably warm December night.

If nothing else, the presence of one's peers and colleagues is symbolic of community. Kansas City's jazz community always has been a pretty friendly fraternity, but that level of involvement and commitment is possible even in Lincoln.

When jazz musicians have more gigs to divide up, they also have more opportunities to share the stage and establish friendships that will endure off the stage. Seeking success in the fickle music business can be just one struggle after another, so relationships among musicians gradually evolve into camaraderie, not unlike that of soldiers battling shoulder-to-shoulder against a common foe.

Lincoln jazz musicians and fans alike can take a lesson from Kansas City.

Rufus Thomas dead at 84

By Rich Hoover

Rufus Thomas, one of the great leader/mentors of southern blues, died last year at 84.

Thomas began leading the way in 1941 as a WDIA deejay in Memphis where he showcased newcomers B. B. King, Bobby Bland, Junior Parker, Ike Turner, and Roscoe Gordon. His first hit was "Bear Cat" in 1953, a humorous response to Big Mama Thornton's "Hound Dog." "Bear Cat" made it to #3 on the R&B charts and was the first national hit for Sun Records. He then moved to Satellite Records, soon to become Stax, and through the remainder of the 1950s he issued a string of dance/novelty tunes, musically introducing a thing called the "funk groove" to the music scene. His most notable offering came in 1963 when "Walking the Dog" was a top ten hit which was immediately covered by **The Rolling Stones** on their first album.

Since then thousands upon thousands of bands have performed the tune. In the early 1970s Thomas's "funk groove" took hold and his tunes "Do the Funky Chicken," "Push and Pull," "The Breakdown" made the R&B top five. With his songwriting and arranging matched with his onstage dance footwork and his good time persona, he gained his highest level of commercial success.

The demise of the Stax label in the late 1970s, when Rufus was in his sixties, meant the end of his career. In 2001 Rufus Thomas was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame. On Dec. 15, 2001, he died at St. Francis Hospital in Memphis. A great soul gone to the other side of life.

Cartwright makes belated Lincoln date count

By Tom Ineck

After nearly two months of anticipation, Kansas City jazz piano great Joe Cartwright and his trio finally made an appearance Nov. 15 at P.O. Pears in Lincoln, and it was well worth the wait.

Cartwright was forced to cancel his Sept. 20 performance after a Cornhusker football game was moved to that night in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The popular downtown Lincoln pub would cater to Husker fans that night, and jazz would have to wait.

When Cartwright finally arrived at the club with bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi, dozens of jazz fans arrived with high expectations. They were not to be disappointed. Known for his two-fisted keyboard attack and a repertoire ranging from bebop and blues to soul and Brazilian jazz, Cartwright played the full gamut with consummate skill. The **Berman Music Foundation** underwrote Cartwright's appearance.



Joe Cartwright dazzled the crowd at P.O. Pears.

On "I Never Fall in Love," Cartwright employed bluesy block-chord progressions, setting a high standard of musicianship early in the show. His version of the keyboard classic "Poinciana" was absolutely rhapsodic, with bold improvisation and deft passing phrases demonstrat-

ing his unerring grasp of harmony and rhythm.

The mid-tempo Walter Booker composition "Saudade," which opens Cartwright's latest recording, *La Luna*



Bassist Gerald Spaits, a true pro at his instrument.

Negra, was followed by the Ellington blues "Things Ain't What They Used to Be." Cartwright then launched into "Cold Duck Time," the Eddie Harris funk classic that is rife with tension-and-release passages, hand-over-fist keyboard antics and a driving rhythm. It also is one of the strongest tracks on *La Luna Negra*.

One highlight followed another, as Cartwright eased into "Georgia on My Mind" with a gospel-style solo piano introduction, tossing off trills and slowly building the excitement with dramatic pauses, before moving uptempo ala Gene Harris. Like Harris, Cartwright is capable of creating a spirit of boundless energy and joy with his playing.

Dipping into the bebop book, Cartwright drew out Bud Powell's little-known "So Sorry, Please." Returning to *La Luna Negra*, he played "Samba Feliz" by fellow jazz pianist Bill Cunliffe. "Too Close For Comfort" featured Spaits playing the melody on bass, followed by a piano-bass exchange.

Another highlight was Cartwright's clever solo piano interpolation of "If I Only Had a Brain" and "Ding! Dong! The Witch is Dead" in the introduction to "Over the Rainbow." When the trio finally stated the melody, it was delivered with a decidedly funky, mid-tempo edge. From there, they veered to an even funkier rendition of the Meters' "Something You Got," complete with the original New Orleans-style flair. Again, the spirited soul-gospel mood was reminiscent of the late Gene Harris.

Mal Waldron's exquisite ballad "Soul Eyes" was achingly beautiful, with drummer DeMarchi demonstrating his sensitive brushwork and Spaits taking a well-structured solo.

Cartwright's latest passion is Latin jazz, which is most evident on



Ray DeMarchi showed off his wide array of drum techniques.

La Luna Negra, and also emerges on other tunes in performance, including "Close Your Eyes." But the same could be said of Cartwright's playing on music that falls outside the realm of Latin jazz. As the pianist writes in the CD's liner notes, "It is my sincere hope that the joy I experience when performing this music can be transmuted to you, the listener."

That is exactly what happened Nov. 15 at P.O. Pears in Lincoln. Thanks, Joe.

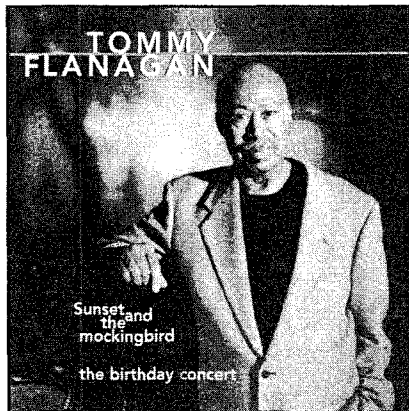
Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

Photo by Rich Hoover

Last Chorus: Tommy Flanagan

By Bill Wimmer



Tommy Flanagan, one of the great voices of the piano, died November 16, 2001 in New York City. His wife Diane reported he suffered from an arterianeurysm.

Tommy Lee Flanagan was born in Detroit on March 16, 1930. He was interested in music from early on, and after losing the battle on clarinet, he began to play piano at 11. Tommy attended Northern High School, and also started to hang out at The Bluebird Inn, a west side club quite famous in its time. Soon, Flanagan went from listening from the street to performing and becoming the regular pianist. Detroit was a hotbed of musical activity at the time and produced the likes of Hank, Thad and Elvin Jones, Roland Hanna, Barry Harris, Donald Byrd, Pepper Adams, Kenny Burrell, Yusef Lateef, Louis Hayes, Paul Chambers, and others who became jazz greats.

With that level of local players and many visiting stars coming through and sitting in at The Bluebird, Flanagan was more than ready for a move to New York City in 1956. While visiting that year he found himself sitting in on short notice for idol Bud Powell for two weeks at Birdland. Soon he was playing and recording with Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, J.J. Johnson and virtually all of the mainstream jazzmen on the New

York scene. Flanagan quickly developed a reputation as a supportive, sensitive accompanist as well as a great soloist with his own bluesy lyricism. Early on he would find himself on classic dates like Sonny Rollins' *Saxophone Colossus* and John Coltrane's epic *Giant Steps*.

While Flanagan excelled at playing with many of the more modern players of the time, he also worked quite a lot with some of the swing-era stars like Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge and Jimmy Hamilton. He also cut his first sessions as a leader in the late '50s, one of which was the legendary *The Cats*, featuring John Coltrane and Kenny Burrell and some fine playing and writing by Flanagan.

In 1963, Flanagan began an association with Ella Fitzgerald that lasted on and off until 1978. Touring with Fitzgerald, one of the most popular singers in jazz, was both a financially and musically rewarding time for Tommy, although many missed his more featured role in small groups.

Playing with Fitzgerald gave Flanagan the chance to play for royalty at the kind of places most jazzmen or any person would never experience, and her musicianship was always first rate. He left to start his own group in 1978, after all the touring brought on heart problems and a yearning to go out on his own.

While recording many sideman dates throughout his career, from this time on Flanagan began working mostly with his own trio. He also began recording some wonderful trio albums for the German Enja label that announced he'd lost nothing of his earlier intensity or inventiveness during his tenure with Fitzgerald. He began using George Mraz on bass and often old pal Elvin Jones on these dates that gave flight to

Flanagan with the support of Mraz's precision and Jones' heat.

Sadly, there is about a seven year void between the Enja sides and documentation of the longest steady groups of Flanagan's leadership. First Mraz and then Peter Washington occupied the bass chair, while Kenny Washington, known for his work with Betty Carter and Johnny Griffin, and the wonderful Lewis Nash played drums in the last groups of Flanagan's career.

These were tight, completely emphatic groups that set a new standard for piano trio as much with its virtuosity as with its ability to breathe as one with the leader. Flanagan's last record date as a leader was recorded live at The Village Vanguard, and his playing is still fantastic, especially for someone celebrating their 67th year. Just this last year, Flanagan was the first act to play at the Vanguard just a few days after September 11. Owner Lorraine Gordon felt that Tommy was the Most logical choice to follow the worst tragedy to ever hit New York.

There is an incredible legacy of what I call the three phases of Tommy Flanagan's career, a career in which he recorded over 250 albums over almost 50 years. The first part consists of his incredible early sideman dates.

Some of the many highlights and personal favorites are; Sonny Rollins, *Saxophone Colossus*; John Coltrane, *Giant Steps*; Wes Montgomery, *The Incredible Jazz Guitar*; Gene Ammons, *Boss Tenor*; Blue Mitchell, *Smooth As The Wind*; J.J. Johnson, *First Place* and *Dial J.J.*; Philly Joe Jones, *Blues For Dracula*; Wilber Hardin, *Jazz Way Out*; Art Farmer, *Modern Art*; Kenny Dorham, *Quiet Kenny* and *Trompeta Toccata*; Roy Haynes, *Out Of The Afternoon*; Dexter Gordon, *The Panther*; (Last Chorus continued on pg. 11)

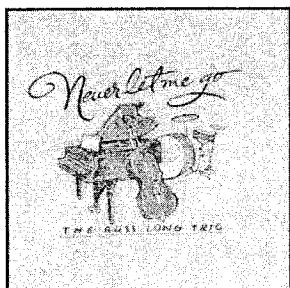
Jazz on Disc

Long and Talley add chapters to KC jazz history

By Tom Ineck

THE RUSS LONG TRIO

Never Let Me Go
Passit Productions



It's hard to imagine a more satisfying blend of attributes than those on *Never Let Me Go*, the generous 16-track release by Kansas City stalwarts Russ Long on piano, Gerald Spaits on bass and Ray DeMarchi on drums, the same veteran trio that will grace the stage of P.O. Pears Feb. 28 in Lincoln.

If the trio's performance Dec. 4 at the Phoenix Bar and Grill in Kansas City is any indication – and it is – listeners are in for a treat. But whether or not you make it to the Lincoln gig, give this CD a listen.

Long, Spaits and DeMarchi have a swinging, clockwork compatibility, and Long is gifted with a sure sense of dynamics in his playing and in his programming. This CD is a good example, progressing from the too-rarely-heard Rodgers and Hammerstein tune “We Kiss In a Shadow” to the bluesy Long original “Can City,” a slangy contraction of his home town name. Long applies his warm, relaxed and supple voice to his own masterpiece, “Save That Time,” which already has been covered by Karrin Allyson, Kevin Mahogany and

Joe Williams.

He returns to the blues on “It Was a Dream,” a quirky tune that betrays Long's Southern twang. “Fascinatin' Rhythm” moves things uptempo, where all three musicians are confident and comfortable. Long sings the title track with heartfelt emotion and a whiskey tone, then returns to the Gershwin songbook for a Gerald Spaits feature on “The Man I Love.”

Long breezily vocalizes again on Cole Porter's “All of You,” playfully playing a unison passage that matches his voice to the piano. “Bebedo,” a Long original, has an odd, Monkish quality in its construction. “Whatever Happened to You” is another wonderful choice for Long's casual vocal approach and wit. “Meatloaf” is another knockoff of the “I Got Rhythm” changes, one that Long penned back in 1959.

“Wildest Gal in Town” is another highlight, a story-song lovingly told by Long on piano and vocal. “Surrey With the Fringe on Top” gallops along with joyous abandon, resting only for an inventive bass solo by Spaits and a lesson in percussion from DeMarchi. “Opus in Chartreuse” is an elegant instrumental, followed by the greasy blues of “Kidney Stew.” The slow, bluesy “Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere” is the perfect nightcap to a perfect set of tunes.

DOUG TALLEY QUARTET
Kansas City Suite
SerpentineRecords



On their ambitious new project, Kansas City saxophonist Doug Talley and band mates Wayne Hawkins on piano, Tim Brewer on bass and Keith Kavanaugh on drums take the listener on an historic tour of the Midwest “City of Fountains.”

Recorded live last year at Valley View United Methodist Church in Overland Park, Kan., *Kansas City Suite* captures this original music in the immediacy of the moment, complete with appreciative applause from the audience.

Kansas City, of course, had a profound influence on jazz history. Under the control of corrupt mayor and political boss Tom Pendergast, it was one of the original hotbeds of swing music throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Talley primarily pays tribute to that fabulous era and some of its most prominent artists.

Kansas City Suite begins with a geography lesson called “1600 E. 18th St.,” where the Blue Room jazz club now occupies the famous corner of 18th and Vine. Talley bops along on alto sax in the style of Charlie “Bird” Parker, who got his start as a teenager playing in the area's clubs.

(Jazz on Disc continued on pg. 9)

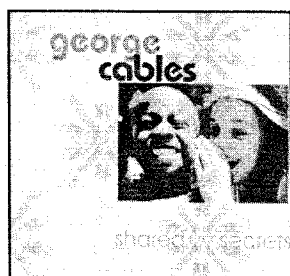
(Jazz on Disc continued from pg. 8)

"City of Fountains" has a more pastoral mood, like a stroll through one of Kansas City's many parks on a warm, sunny afternoon. Hawkins delivers a soul-stirring piano solo. The beautiful ballad "The Sleeping Child" refers to one of the many sculptures in the Country Club Plaza, while the frantic-paced "The Buck Stops Here," refers to the famous pledge by Harry S. Truman, a native Missourian still revered in Kansas City.

Along the way we also taste the city's legendary barbecue on "Stockyard Blues (KC Strip)" and stop into another imaginary club of long ago to listen to "Basie and Prez." We view controversial artworks at Bartle Hall on "Sky Stations" and at the Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art on "Shuttlecocks (Badminton, Anyone?)." We visit the illuminated Country Club area during the Christmas holiday for "Plaza Lights (Plaza Nights)."

Finally, with "Pendergast," we are reminded again of how the city became a mecca for jazz. Talley, Hawkins, Brewer and Kavanaugh work well together. They also are superb tour guides, making *Kansas City Suite* a pleasant outing.

GEORGE CABLES
Shared Secrets
MuseFX Records



Pianist George Cables himself is a *Shared Secret*, of sorts. Too infre-

quently recorded on a major label, Cables is a master musician and composer deserving of much wider recognition. In the 1990s, he recorded primarily for SteepleChase Records, a Swedish label with erratic distribution in the United States. This 10-track, hour-long collection of Cables originals does a lot to correct the lack of domestically released recorded material.

Shared Secrets is an sprightly and funky fusion project with a world-class ensemble featuring Bennie Maupin on bass clarinet, Ralf Rickert on trumpet, Gary Bartz and Larry Klimas on saxophones and flute, Abraham Laboriel and Alphonso Johnson bass, Peter Erskine and Vinnie Coliauta on drums and Luis Conte and Pat Murphy on percussion. In these capable hands, the playing is never less than accomplished and the improvised passages are always imaginative.

Cables recorded several of these tunes during his tenure with SteepleChase, including "Blackfoot," "Beyond Forever," "Phantom of the City" and "Why Not?" Infectious Latin rhythms assert their magic spell on "5 Will Get Ya 10" and "S.F.C.B."

The only tune not composed by Cables is the closer, the traditional spiritual "Go Down Moses," here given a funky rendition with Cables on acoustic and electric piano and emulator synthesizer. Gary Bartz plays the soulful lead on alto sax.

To my ears, Cables is best appreciated in a trio setting where the listener can bask in the full heat and glory of his piano playing. I recommend "By George," a 1987 tribute to the music of George Gershwin with bassist John Heard and drummer Ralph Penland.

(Last Chorus continued from pg. 9)

Clifford Jordan, *The Adventurer*; Hank Jones/Tommy Flanagan, *Our Delights*; Wayman Reed, *46th and 8th*; and his own *The Cats*.

The next set of music comprises just about any Ella Fitzgerald date from 1962 to 1965 and 1968 to 1978. Most of these are to be found on the Verve and Pablo labels, and I must confess I'm not an expert on what the best of these are. This is considered by critics to be a time when Ella was performing at a high standard.

The last group of recordings feature Flanagan at the helm of his own trios. My own personal favorites include *Eclypso*, *Confirmation*, *Giant Steps*, *Thelonica*, *The Jazz Poet*, *Beyond The Bluebird*, *Sea Changes*, and *Sunset And The Mockingbird*.

Whether in support of others, taking his own solo flights or leading a Tasteful trio, Tommy Flanagan always maintained the highest standard of excellence. He was in such demand for recordings and performances because he always fit in so well with so many different musicians. He always seemed to add just the right feel to the music and it seems impossible to imagine all of the classic dates he was on with any other pianist. Flanagan's elegant touch gave the kind of solid, unobtrusive support that many musicians enjoyed. He was also a master in his approach of Monk, Powell, Coltrane, and the blues, and his playing continued to be refined over the years. He also championed great jazz composers like Tom McIntosh and Thad Jones.

Tommy Flanagan became so much a part of jazz that he will never truly be gone. I only regret the cancellation of a Kansas City concert last year took away a chance for me to hear him live, but that's a little selfish. We will celebrate Tommy Flanagan, one of the great people in jazz, and I feel so lucky to have enjoyed so much of his music over the years.

Discorama

By Butch Berman

BOB KINDRED WITH LARRY WILLIS

Gentle Giant of the Tenor Sax Mapleshade



Considering deadlines, etc., I pretty much had my current faves to present to you all, when in the mail today came – *Gentle Giant of the Tenor Sax* – Bob Kindred with Larry Willis. Just the vague thought of these two musical monsters collaborating on a project gave me premature chills and goose bumps. Two of the heaviest, deepest cats in the biz, whose chops and soulfulness combine to produce jazz so sublime and rich with a gritty tenderness that transcends you, the listener, into grooveland.

Mapleshade has a lot to be proud of in this new release. Kindred – whose lush lyrical style and eclectic choice of material all come off with pizzazz. I've seen Bob's extremely passionate rendition of Billy Strayhorn's "Blood Count" practically bring the audience to its knees with his mournful, exquisite tone and delivery.

Willis, a master of many jazz forms, accompanies Kindred like they have been playing together since childhood. Tight, playful, and seductive. I'll be listening to this

for a few days before returning it to my collection. Each repeated spin takes me to different places. A truly moving experience.

STAN KESSLAR

Jazz Meets Chant: Jazz Adaptations of Gregorian Chants Standing Bear



Dig this – only in my slightly wacky and jazzy world could an old Jewish hippie like myself review another Hebrew brother (in a Renaissance man sort of way) on recording a CD of the jazz interpretations of Gregorian Chants...yet the last time I saw this cat blow his magnificent horn he was wearing a straw hat and playing Dixieland for the Topeka Jazz Festival breakfast crowd. Yes – enter the world of Mr. Stan Kessler and marvel as I did of his new Standing Bear release, *Jazz Meets Chant, Jazz Adaptations of Gregorian Chants*.

I first met Stan when with reed phenom Kim Parks was added to Karrin Allyson's spiffy homeboy all-star band to perform at the now defunct Huey's. His on the money techniques and superb frontline work with Parks tore me up. His expertise and brilliance on this new work of art further emphasizes the point.

This sacred work, commissioned by John Winkles – who also chose the singers along with the perfect acoustic yet inspirational venue – The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception laid down a potentially impenetrable obstacle for Stan, who completed this project with perfection when recorded in September of '99.

Backed by KC's top notch vets consisting of tenor man Doug Talley, keyboardist Wayne Hawkins, first call drummer Todd Strait, and a bass player new to me Bill McKerny – Kessler came to the forefront and delivered a variety of jazz melodies and time signatures to augment an amazing interwoven musical quilt of the original chants. Then, this talented band's clever jazzy takes on each – occasionally light hearted, but always reverent – solidified it all. The "Dies Irae (Shuffle)" showcases the rhythm section's bluesy abilities that equal any current blues band on the scene. Soloists Kessler, Talley, and Hawkins soar to great heights throughout this entire CD.

A major accomplishment done first class all the way. *Jazz Meets Chant* = another successful creative outing for the boys, and another great CD for your collection. I'll pray for you to grab this gem.

Look for a review of Don Lanphere and New Stories latest release *Home at Last* along with other new Origin outpourings from the great Northwest in the next issue of *Jazz*.

Unsung on Disc

By Bill Wimmer

ANTHONY WILSON TRIO

Our Gang

Groove Note Records



Anthony Wilson's latest release, *Our Gang*, on Groove Note Records, really focuses this fine guitarist's playing talents with a dynamite organ trio on one of the biggest surprise releases of the last year.

Wilson is best known for his excellent Nonet records that featured a range of great soloists and Wilson's fine writing and arranging more than his guitar playing. He steps out on this one and helps redefine the possibilities of the organ trio with Joe Bagg on Hammond B-3 and drummer Mark Ferber, both of which appeared on Wilson's last larger ensemble recording. To be honest, I begged Butch Berman to listen to and let me review this one, and he liked it more and more as each new number played and quickly approved of my wish.

This one really sneaks up on you from the start with the title track intro, with some of the most subtle use of the organ I've ever encountered.

"Our Gang" is an intriguing melody with a logical hook that will

stay with you for a long time. Bagg and Ferber lay down the light Latin beat and react to every nuance of the song and to each other. Bagg gets a particularly warm sound on this one and solos with great taste, able to pop off the occasional hot lick, but more likely to pull juicy, choice notes that are plucked out of the air and an uncanny use of space.

"Chitlin's Con Carne" is an old Kenny Burrell blues tune that lets every member of the group lay into a funky groove. This track also focuses attention on the clarity and presence of this recording itself, which employs the Sony Direct Stream Digital System. When Ferber plays it heavy with his insistent snare rhythm you begin to feel like you're sitting right next to that snare drum, and after a while you might feel almost like you're inside the snare drum. The whole record sounds incredible thanks to engineer Michael C. Ross. "Britta's Blues" is a slow, loping blues waltz and the next tune, "Time Flies," shows these guys really can fly when they choose.

Ferber, who's studied with Billy Higgins, has a lot of freedom and the ability to swing really hard without ever overplaying. "Road Trip," a Bagg original has funky overtones that shift from blues to a climbing, arching bridge that seems to imply the stress of that road journey.

Wilson opens up "Luck Be A Lady" alone with a pretty statement that segues into a lively 3/4 version of this old Broadway warhorse. With all of its changes and one sec-

tion arranged in straight ahead swing, this one would do Frank Sinatra proud (he sang it in the movie).

"I Want You (She's So Heavy)" is yes, the same song from The Beatles' *Abbey Road*, is given a new sense of urgency and swing from the trio's virtuosity. The guitar and organ play hot and cool off of each other and the trio's heightened sense of dynamics again come into play. A beautiful reading of Ellington's *Prelude To A Kiss* follows. Wilson's singing tone, Bagg's sensitive support and Ferber's deft brushwork all keep this one another keeper.

I would highly recommend this record to anyone who likes jazz organ. I think it stands strong enough on its own merit for anyone who enjoys nice, swinging jazz and I think it is one of the best sounding recordings I've bought in a long time. Just be forewarned, because this band is not out of the Jimmy Smith or the funky school of organ groups he's spawned over the years. These guys are capable of a lot more diverse and subtle colors more in the Larry Goldings or Sam Yahel mode, and I think you will enjoy the change of pace. This record bears repeated listening and will please with its surprises, and it is a job well done on the music and in the recording booth.

Scrapple from the Apple

What Every Jazz Lover Can Do Now

© Russ Dantzler 2002

It never was easy to make a living by presenting or performing jazz. Things got worse when our foundations were ravaged on September 11. Clubs had to deal with artists who couldn't or wouldn't travel — if those clubs were even able to open their doors. Some performers were asked to take less money than they had agreed to long ago. Clubs may now close, some artists may seek day jobs.

Living and working a little less than three and a half miles from Ground Zero, I felt at once very near and extremely far from the tragedy. Not a single person I know associated with jazz was lost or injured on that clear, blue day. But this business of music was bombed just as surely as the Towers, at least in the short term.

Live music has always been an addiction of mine. I've needed a fix at least twice a week ever since my teens to prevent withdrawal symptoms. After "that day," it took a full two weeks for me to *want* to go out again. Now the music and lyrics mean more to me than ever. Music certainly have healing powers. As Art Blakey said, "Jazz wipes away the dust of everyday life."

"You can't take away our song — music is in the forefront of all of these benefits," said Reverend Dale Lind, the Pastor to the Jazz Community in New York City. Lind was optimistic, citing a turnout of 500

people for the 31st annual "All Night Soul" on October 7 at his ministry's Saint Peter's Church. "A Great Night in Harlem," the Apollo benefit for the Jazz Foundation of America on September 24, and Veritas, the annual benefit to aid victims of substance abuse held in Charlie Parker's name on October 1 were also very well-attended.

The Blue Note, the Village Vanguard, the Knitting Factory and smaller clubs within sight of the Towers were not so fortunate. They are located south of 14th Street, the "off limits" or closed for a time to all-but-residents section of the city. The Vanguard, a small room in the same location since 1935, is north of the others mentioned. This institution commonly sells out — but it took until Saturday, October 13 for them to do so after the disaster. "The Japanese are noticeable by their absence," said owner Lorraine Gordon. She added that New Yorkers were coming out in force.

The Blue Note, with 60% tourist business and normal covers of \$30 to \$50 and up, opened its doors to emergency workers and local jazz organization members just to fill the room for a while. "We want to give tickets away just to get back to life," said Blue Note president Sal Haries. In a clear demonstration of hard times, the club dismissed its very effective, long-term publicist six weeks after the attacks.

The Knitting Factory, about a mile and a half south of 14th Street

and a half mile from the site, overcame impossible difficulties to open on September 19. They rely heavily on internet bookings, but had no phone lines working whatsoever. So they hacked into their own site elsewhere, and each employee got a cell phone. Reservations were put on all police checkpoint lists, and fifty people attended the re-opening.

In mid-June, 1998, back in our age of innocence, I had booked my favorite living vocalist into a spectacular private party for Microsoft. The location was "Windows on the World," the 107th floor of World Trade Tower One. Etta Jones, who lost her second long battle with cancer on October 16 at the age of 72, was the performer.

Etta was not accustomed to corporate events, where a singer can be in the background as people socialize. She came directly to me after the first set with a sad look and said, "They aren't listening, I don't think they like me." I asked her to turn around. A line of people wanting to meet this great lady had formed behind her!

Etta Jones never became as famous as her talent justified. She was also too much of a friend to act the diva role. Divas remain detached and "above" the fans. Etta couldn't be close enough to them. She remembered every person's name, no matter how long it had been since she'd seen them.

(Scrapple continued on pg. 13)

(Scrapple continued from pg. 12)

All of the great jazz musicians I know wanted to play with Ms. Jones. This is certainly not true with most female vocalists. But Etta was the ultimate, team-playing musician, always interacting.

Etta sang as beautifully as ever with her musical partner, the great tenorman Houston Person, at the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival in



Photo by Russ Dantzler

Etta Jones (1928-2001)

Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park last August 25. She concluded with her trademark "Don't Go To Strangers." Typically, adoring fans swarmed around her afterward, as she smiled radiantly. She went on to perform without compromise until two weeks prior to her death.

Those of us who had gone listening to music with Etta knew that she kept her friends out until the last note was played. People would try to get her to go home, and she'd respond, "This ain't no dress rehearsal." That was her approach to living life to the fullest. In 1996

she threw a birthday party in the Bronx with other childhood friends, including Gloria Lynne. Shortly after the microphones were put away, Etta was leading a dozen dancers doing the Electric Slide at 4:00 a.m.!

Etta Jones was born in Akron, Ohio, on November 25, 1928. In 1994, she spoke with me of beating supposedly-fatal cancer, having just been informed by her doctor that she was then "clean" for five years. Cancer returned to a lobe of her left lung late last year. It never prevented her from performing with a smile.

Since Etta's passing we have also sadly lost drummer David "Panama" Francis, and The Poet of the Piano, Tommy Flanagan (see Bill Wimmer's obit in this issue).

In just a blink of history's eye, the jazz world lost its complacency and three of its master performers. Did we need to be reminded that life for everybody and every place is temporary?

Your favorite artists and the venues in which they perform won't be around forever. But if you support them, you *may* extend their lives.

Go out and enjoy the healing power of jazz — be a part of the extraordinary community that it brings. Get it while you can, because as Etta Jones would say, "Life ain't no dress rehearsal."

Russ Dantzler can be reached at Hot Jazz Management 212.586.8125 or Russ@HotJazzNYC.com

Etta Jones Dead at 73

By Russ Dantzler

Etta Jones was dogged by the confusion between herself and Ms. Etta James all of her life. Her long-time drummer (and poet) got mad when (again) an announcer introduced her as "Etta James" years ago. He took out his anger on paper, and wrote a poem about it.

JONES THAT IS

She sings the music
more better
unmistakably it's Miss Etta
Jones that is
she really belts the blues
and has paid her dues
Jones that is

She's fluid on the stand
and swings like
no one else can

like the way she'll
interpret a ballad
until it becomes
personally valid

Her flair,
style and class
make the memory
of each note
last and last

and of course there's
many singers
but none can make
you pop your fingers
like Miss Etta
Jones that is

by Chip White, from "I'm Just the Drummer in the Band" (c) Bright Colors Music

Last Chorus: Manny Albam and Scott Ihms

Duke Ellington

By Bill Wimmer

Manny Albam

Manny Albam, a major composer, arranger and educator died of cancer in early December in Croton, New York. He was 79. Albam, Born in the Dominican Republic, was active as an arranger from the early 1940s, and he was also an early proponent of jazz education and spent many years at the Eastman School Of Music in New York.

Albam arranged and composed for Count Basie, Woody Herman, Buddy Rich, Stan Kenton and other big bands. He also wrote arrangements for soloists and singers, including Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Jerry Mulligan, Coleman Hawkins, Carmen McRea, Dakota Staton and Sarah Vaughn.

Albam was in demand as an arranger even into the 90's, with commissioned work with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. His arranging skills, writing and his vision for jazz education carved out a piece of jazz history for this gifted man.

Scott Ihms

Scott Ihms, guitarist, composer and friend of The Berman Foundation died on January 25 at his Lincoln home. He was 45 years old and spent the last 7 months of his life bravely fighting cancer. Scotty was a sensi-

tive, supportive player who enjoyed all kinds of music, and played pop, rock, funk, fusion, jazz and original music with groups like Fidelity. He had perfect pitch, could compose and arrange and had the kind of talent for getting along with people that was unparalleled. You could always depend on Scotty in and out of music and he was always helping somebody out.

Scotty will be sorely missed for his contributions as a man and a player. He was a kind person who was universally liked by those who knew him, and he spent much of the last few years taking care of his parents. Scotty spoke softly but he had great insight, and he played in much the same way. When he played the only thing he was asked occasionally was to turn it up, so we could hear a little more.

He was one of the best friends I've ever had, and no one could ask for one better. From the day I heard he was sick last summer I started to miss him. In the end, I just couldn't get over the feeling that no one could do enough for this wonderful man who spent so much of his life giving help to others, and never asking anything in return. If you're playing right now, Scotty, wherever you are, please, go ahead and turn it up.

By Dylan Nelson

This article is by Dylan Nelson, an 11 year old 5th grader at Beattie Elementary. He has been playing piano since he was four and loves jazz. This article was written for a school project on famous people and we thought you might enjoy it too.

Edward Kennedy Ellington's life started when he was born on April 29th, 1899, in Washington D.C. Edward was spoiled by the women in his family while he was a child. His mother, Daisy, was very protective of him, and did not want to lose her only child.

Edward loved baseball, and when his mother heard that he had been hit by a bat, she started him on piano lessons. When he was six years old, with Mrs. Clinkscales as his teacher, piano was the last thing on his mind—baseball was what he wanted. So soon he quit his piano for childhood fun.

At 15 he first heard "Ragtime" piano. He started up on piano again because of the new beat and all the attention he got with his new talent. Duke's grades dropped as he spent more and more time on piano and less on schoolwork. As friend nicknamed Edward "Duke." This name fit Duke because of his proud and elegant manner.

His sister was born when Duke was 16. Now his mother stopped pampering Duke and gave them both equal attention. His family lived in first class style. His father James Edward, usually known as JE, worked as a butler in the White House when Theodore Roosevelt was [resident. JE and his family dined on fine china because the presidential family would give staff sets of dinnerware if pieces were broken or missing.

His professional piano life started, (Ellington continued on pg. 17)

(Ellington continued from pg. 16)

in 1916, when Duke was 17 with his first performance at a high school dance. In the 1920s, he was one of the first people to compose and play jazz.

He started writing songs and was hired first at the Kentucky Club, then at the Cotton Club in 1927. The cotton Club, famous for its live music was located in the middle of black Harlem, New York, and was for whites only. Eventually a few richer African Americans were allowed to enter. Once, during his years at the Cotton Club, Al Capone threatened to kidnap Duke and the famous dancer Bill "Bojangles" Robertson, but Chicago got too dangerous and Capone left.

In 1943 he became the first African American to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City. He premiered his first long piece, "Black, Brown, and Beige."

He composed many songs but was best known as the performer of "Take the A Train," a song written by his long-

time collaborator Billy Strayhorn.

In 1956 Duke had a breakthrough at the Newport Jazz Festival. At the end of the festival while people were leaving, he was playing a song he had recently composed and people started pouring back in. Because of this he ended up on the cover of Time magazine and was recognized as the best musician in his time. Whenever someone asked Duke how old he was, he'd insist that he was born at the Newport Jazz Festival.

In 1958 he returned to England and performed a special group of songs for Queen Elizabeth II. A year later he won three Grammys for songs he composed for *Anatomy of a Murder*.

On Ellington's 70th birthday, President Richard Nixon awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian medal.

On May 24th, 1974 Duke died of cancer. But his music has left an impression on the world forever.

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.

Mile High Musings

By Dan Demuth

Hello to all of my friends in Lincoln (both of you!) Butch has asked for an inclusion in this issue of the newsletter of some of the happenings here in colorful Colorado. Jazz venues are alive and well, both locally and as we like to say "up in Denver". The Colorado Springs based Pikes Peak Jazz and Swing Society (PPJASS) recently celebrated its 17th birthday. This organization started out with 35 jazz fans who put together a constitution with bylaws, elected officers who serve on a rotating basis, and now boasts some 540 members. Very affordable annual dues, and a monthly 3 hour live jazz session at the same spot which usually features local musicians but occasionally name players. PPJASS sponsors weekly "jazz in the parks" throughout the summer and award scholarships to young

promising musicians. Diverse programs such as a recent jazz film festival hosted by the dean of jazz film archivists - Mark Cantor - round out the programs. Hey out there in Lincolnland, anyone listening?

To celebrate a wedding anniversary (I thought it was 84 years but my wife says its 34) we headed "up to Denver" the last weekend in January. A little sadness with the passing of Ralph Sutton who we had the pleasure of seeing there just one year prior, but life and jazz do go on, both the better because of the Suttons and the alarming number of greats we lost in 2001. Back on track, this concert featured Bucky Pizzarelli, Ken Peplowski, Jay Leonhart, John Bunch and Jackie Williams. In a one word review, "Great"! (Personal note to Squire Berman - Jackie said to tell

you he will be in contact with you and enjoys getting the newsletter). It was a first time for us to see John Bunch who is as good in person as his recordings promised. The others we have seen at Topeka, but once is never enough. The irrepressible Mr. Leonhart told me he is writing a song that involves Baltimore and a potato carved in the shape of a man's uh - well I don't want to give it away here, buy the CD when it comes out and remember you read it here first. Buy any of his CD's and see if you can keep your mind on his great playing ability while listening to the lyrics. This event and others like it are sponsored throughout the year by the Summit Jazz Organization. If anyone plans a trip west and would like a schedule of their upcoming concerts, contact me through Butch.

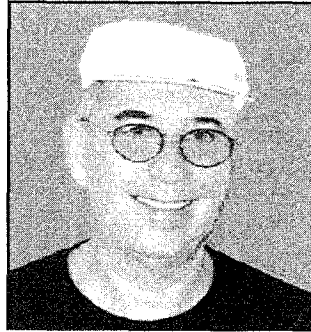
The Fabulous Boogie Kings: Part 1

By Ned Theall

I probably would have never gotten into "the combo scene" if I hadn't seen the Fabulous Flippers at about age 15 or 16 between '64 and '65 at Lincoln's Keen Time - at the Auld Pavilion in Antelope Park. I thought that the Flips had invented Blue-Eyed Soul. Well, wrong. Thanks to Charlie Burton twice - I discovered the true innovators of this genre - The Fabulous Boogie Kings - Louisiana's R&B legends, while playing with Charlie Burton and Rock Therapy in Minneapolis. While there, I visited their famed record store The Oarfolkjokeopus (The Oar) and found my first Boogie Kings LP - and to excuse the pun - totally flipped. This year when reforming the old Charlie Burton band for a special holiday gig at the Zoo Bar - he brought me a used copy of their '92 reunion video that he found while living in Austin. Now the search was really on...through the net and several changed addresses and phone numbers, I finally located the first, or at least one of the very first leaders (these guys date back to 1956-58 as their origin) of this fine outfit - Mr. Ned Theall.

So with pride, I am running a series from the pen of Mr. Theall on the story of this incredible musician's band - The Fabulous Boogie Kings. Read on and dig it, daddy-o!

--Butch



Ned Theall

The Early Years

It all began in Mama Ardoin's kitchen in Eunice, Louisiana in 1955. When Doug Ardoin opened his Christmas presents, he found the one thing that he was wishing for - a brand new electric guitar. When Doug put his hands on that guitar, he felt ten feet tall. He knew he could play it, even though he had never had a lesson. Rock 'n' roll music was beginning to emerge as the music of the teenager, and all of the kids in the USA were being mesmerized by this new sound and new beat.

As soon as Doug could play a few tunes, he got together with a couple of friends and decided to form a band. He found a drummer that could sing, Bert Miller, and another guitar player, Harris Miller, and they began to jam in Mama Ardoin's kitchen. Not exactly the perfect ingredients for a rock band, but it was all there was. It was not too damn long before the trio jelled into a hot little jam group. After a while, Mama Ardoin's kitchen was overrun by enthusiastic teenage friends of the guys, so the trio had to find a new place to practice.

Pretty soon, they decided to name the band, "The Boogie Kings," and they began playing teen dances. They

eventually added a bass player, Skip Stewart, and a sax man, Byron Launie, and the band was beginning to sound pretty darn good. The kids were going nuts over this new caucasian group playing black rock 'n' roll. In 1955, the closest thing to live rock music for Louisiana kids was a few black groups from New Orleans that sounded like dog shit.

The Boogie Kings had the "magic" from the getgo. It was like God had picked this group to bless and that's all there was to it. They could do no wrong. The band decided to concentrate on black soul music and bypass the Anka's and Sedaka's type of rock. In the late '50s, the band added two more saxophone players, Norris Badeaux and Bryan Leger, then a trumpet player, Willie Harmon, was added and this completed big horn section sound that they were looking for. Even with a horn section, the band never read a note of music. They would just listen to the records that they wanted to learn, and then play them. Why waste time with rehearsals?

By the end of the decade of the '50s, the Boogie Kings had acquired Tommy McLain on bass and Clint West on drums. They were both proficient vocalists of the day, and this allowed Bert Miller to be a stand up front man vocalist.

The popularity of the Boogie Kings in Louisiana and East Texas, and the talk was that they were the band that could burn all other bands. Not only the fans were overwhelmed with the fantastic sound of this brilliant white rhythm 'n' blues band, but (Boogie Kings continued on pg. 19)

(Boogie Kings continued from pg. 18) musicians would come from all over the state to get a lesson in the art of rhythm 'n blues performance. One must remember that the popular music scene in the country was going through a complete metamorphosis in the '50s. On the Billboard music charts, Fats Domino, Little Richard and Chuck Berry recordings were beginning to appear alongside of Bing Crosby and Patti Page recordings. The nation was splitting in two because of the new music invasion. It was young against old. The older generation wanted to keep the status quo, but the young set was determined to have their own music, geared to the freedom of the times.

Alcohol and drugs were beginning to cause some problems at this time, but the whole country was in a kind of denial about the consequences of these substances. This would come to play a major part in the future of this great band at a later time.

After several years of tremendous success, the Boogie Kings began to develop a "macho" attitude about themselves and their music. It was like they began to feel invincible. They were convinced that they were in a class all by themselves. And they were: It hardly mattered where the Boogie Kings performed, they were always admired by fans and musicians alike, and they became very comfortable with their status.

It is so sad that the early Boogie Kings were never recorded live, and only did a few bad 45 RPM recordings in the '50s. I would give anything to have a tape of the early performances, but alas, no one had any

equipment back in those days. I shudder to think of what may have happened if the band would have achieved the one thing that has always eluded them, namely a hit recording. It was fairly easy to get a record played on a radio station in your home town, and not that difficult to get airplay in a few major markets, but the big boys on the East Coast and the West Coast were in the process of setting up controls on the distribution of these fast selling items.

Most of the musicians of the '50s were never to see any money to speak of from their million sellers. Unscrupulous music labels and publishers



had realized early on that a fortune could be made very quickly in the music business without the knowledge or consent of the artists. All that the artist was interested in was to simply have a record release, - that was validation enough. We were never taught about the business end of the music business. They wanted to keep us ignorant. Why not? They were getting rich.

In my own personal opinion, a hit record would have destroyed this great legend of the Boogie Kings. It would have made enemies out of friends. The very fact that this band, which is still performing today, was

able to achieve such a high level of success without the benefit of a hit, is probably the greatest piece of dumb luck that we ever had by all rights, the great Boogie Kings band should have had a hit record. The band was as great as anything else out there at the time. But, even as tight as the band was, with all of the success coming their way in the '50 and early '60, it was only a prelude of things to come.

Creation of a Legend

There was a major change in the Boogie Kings band in the '60s that was to have an effect on the future of the band forever. Some key moves were made then that propelled what was already a super group into a zone of musical excellence that the music industry has rarely ever witnessed.

Here is how the change came about. I was playing with a "weekend warriors" type of band making ten bucks a gig, and working a very boring day gig for seventy-five bucks a week. I was already twenty-six years old and I was sure that my dreams of being a rock star had all but vanished. One day my good friend, Dan Silas (a bari sax player) stopped by my office and told me that he was going to Lake Charles to audition for the Boogie Kings. He told me that they were re-organizing and looking for horn players and singers, and asked me if I would like to tag along.

At that moment, my whole outlook in life changed. My chops were great, and I was about as ready as a musician could be to take on a new challenge. There was no doubt in (Boogie Kings continued on pg. 20)

(Boogie Kings continued from pg. 19) my mind that I could get the job as lead trumpet player. The band was working a gig at the Bamboo Club in Lake Charles, so Dan and I went and sat in and we both got hired that night. The band was so popular at that time that half of the players decided to quit and stay in college, and the other half decided to re-organize. Clint West eventually became the leader, the position that I really wanted.

From the first day, I realized that this was going to be a very great band, but they had no direction, no organization, no promo, and very little of anything else except talent. I made it my goal to get Clint's job and drive this band to the very top. Whatever the top was. This was to happen about a year later, when I took over the band and Clint left. My first move was to hire GG Shinn and Jerry "Count Jackson" Lacroix. My next move was to get this band into the studio and record a hit album. Little did we know at the time that we recorded the first album that it would become an all-time classic that would sell for generations to come. My next move was to dress up the band and make a show out of it. I convinced the guys that we needed seven different tuxedos, one for every night of the week. I told them that we needed to crack the two major markets of Houston and New Orleans before we could even dream about the pie in the sky.

I didn't know a soul in Houston or New Orleans, but that didn't stop me. I drove to Houston and found the biggest club I could which was Van's Ballroom. When I walked in, I asked for the owner, who just happened to be the person that I asked the question to. I said, "I'm Ned Theall with the Boogie Kings and I want to book my band in your club.

Van said, "I've heard of you guys, but I'm booked six nights a week." So I said, "Well, there are seven nights in a week." Van replied, "Well, Ned, Monday nights are all that is open and to be perfectly frank with you, no one can draw a crowd in Houston on a Monday night." I told Van that I'd take anything that I could get and I booked us on a Monday night. To make a long story short, we drew over a thousand people on the first Monday that we played, and Monday night gigs became the best night of the week for Van. God was with us once again.

I then went to New Orleans to the Sands nightclub with the same pitch. The first person I met in the Sands was Jim Stewart, New Orleans's top DJ. What luck, would wonders never cease? Jim sponsored us at the Sands every Wednesday night and we drew such huge crowds that they had to enlarge the club three times. We were truly blessed at that time for some reason.

Then, by some odd quirk of fate, I went to Shreveport to listen to a drummer that we were looking at to replace Clint West and stumbled into a booking agent from Nevada who had heard rave reviews about the band. He offered to book us sight unseen in Reno and Lake Tahoe. I, of course, thought that he was full of it, but I humored him nonetheless. To my stark amazement, I received contracts in the mail two weeks later from Reno with confirmed bookings. We were on a roll that wouldn't quit.

In the next three years, we were to play in Hollywood, Vegas, San Francisco and Lake Tahoe again. We would go on tour out west and come home to Cajun country bigger heroes than when we had left. We did two more albums, but still could not come

up with that hit record.

The greatest gig that we ever played was in Hollywood. We were invited to play a concert for the "Hullabaloo" people. There were some great bands at the auditorium, including the Righteous Brothers, who were big fans of ours. We had been told that California fans only got off to fast music, and we had dropped all of our dramatic, slow, soulful tunes. We got on stage, played three songs and bombed. I called Duane over and whispered in his ear, "Get down and dirty!" So we played the slowest, most soulful tune that we had in the book. You could have heard a pin drop in that jampacked auditorium. I looked at Duane as he was singing and we both shrugged our shoulders as if to say, "What does it take?" When we finished getting as bluesy as a band could get, the whole place stood up and cheered for what seemed a good five minutes. Great Scott, we had done it again! Every song we played after that was cheered enthusiastically by that huge crowd of California kids. After the gig, the Righteous Brothers came up and hugged us and congratulated us. Oh what a night!

We were all living the life that we had always dreamed of and it looked like there was no end in sight. Rock 'n' roll, sex and drugs, day after day, night after night. We couldn't wait to wake up in the morning, knowing that there would be a new adventure each and every day. By this time, most of the guys in the band were smoking herb and the incentive was beginning to wane.

And then it happened. Two nights before we left Vegas for the last time, I was notified that there would be a band meeting after the gig. It was at

(Boogie Kings continued on pg. 21)



Dan Silas, Norris Badeaux, Mike Pollard, Brian Leger, Gary Walker, Murphy Buford, GG Shinn, Jerry (Count Jackson) Lacroix, Jack Hall, Ned Theall, Bubba Marks, Johnny Giordano

(Boogie Kings continued from pg. 20) this gig that I was notified that the band had decided to become a co-op band with no leader. I was shocked and deeply hurt to be taken down after I had busted my ass for so many years, but I had to accept my fate. I asked the guys one by one to give me a reason why, after such a string of success that I was being taken down, and one by one, I didn't get an answer. When I came to the last guy, he

looked me dead in the eye and said, "It's because you're an asshole!" I must say that remark cracked me up and put me on the floor in a fit of laughter. I stood up, brushed myself off, and replied, "Gary, I'm glad you said that because that is the only reason I could accept!" And with that, I walked out of the meeting, and formed another band the very next day. I ended up taking with me the nuts of the Boogie Kings band, including the

three lead singers, Duane Yates, Gary Walker, and Linda Clark); and the lead sax player, Jon Smith. I also hired Bobby Rameriz, an ace young monster drummer. We had a very successful run for two years and gave the Boogie Kings a run for their money, but in the year of 1968, both groups had to disband because of the new style of Beatles type music. It would never be the same again.

(Part 2 will be in the next issue of Jazz.)

Rockin' with Charlie



Photo by Rich Hoover

Charlie Burton and the Dorothy Lynch Mob. Left to right: Butch Berman, Charlie Burton, Dave Robel, and Bob Letheby.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Lincoln's answer to the Glimmer Twins? Butch Berman and Charlie Burton.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Ironman drummer Dave Robel still going strong after all these years.



Photo by Rich Hoover

Lap steel guitarist Bill Dye struts his stuff as always.

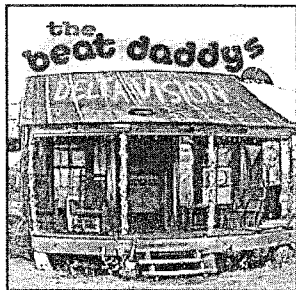


Photo by Rich Hoover

Charlie and the boys practice at Butch's pad prior to the performance at the Zoo. Left to right: Charlie, Butch, Bob, and Dave.

Blues on Disc

By Rich Hoover



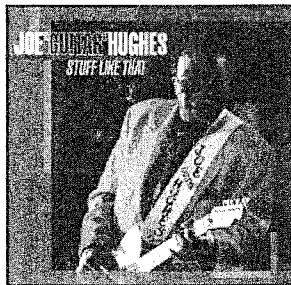
the beat daddys
Delta Vision
Waldoxy Records

The beat daddys continue to keep it up for southern blues/rock fans. This latest release covers the Delta styles from folksy to sweet ballads, swing, jump, R&B, and raucous rock.

A dozen of the 13 tunes are written by Larry Grisham, the vocalist and harmonica player of the band, and his lyrics are top notch and cover as wide a range as the musical arrangements.

There are a couple of guest artists as well; Bob Greenlee plays bass and acoustic guitar on a tune from his own pen titled "Ten pounds of Love," which has bluesman, Sonny Rhodes doin' the vocals.

The rest of the boys in the band are: Britt Meacham, guitars, percussion; Johnny Neel, keyboards, percussion; Ronnie "Byrd" Foster, drums. From checking out the www.beatdaddys.com page, I find that these are growing middle-age musician/friends who enjoy what they are doing and want to do some more. Watch for them in your area.



JOE "GUITAR" HUGHES
Stuff Like That
Blues Express Inc.

There's some great Texas blues on this live performance by Joe "Guitar" Hughes recorded in San Francisco. There are well placed horns scattered throughout the CD with the occasional horn lead, and the remainder of the band are all excellent musicians with solid rhythm tempos, impeccable placement of accents including inspirational lifts from each and every one.

However, there is no doubt that Joe Hughes is the bluesman at the front of the group. His last fifty years in the blues biz internationally have allowed Hughes to become the master of the blues show. He became so popular he had to stay closer to home to be with his wife and three kids.

He originally worked in several regional bands to the great enjoyment of all those south Texas fans. In the mid-80s Joe went back on tour and has since made eight recordings and two documentaries, one about Joe and Pete Mayes entitled *Battle of the Guitars* and another about the hot entertainment area of Houston that Joe was influential in creating titled *Third Ward Blues*.

There are 11 tunes, all written by Hughes, and an interview with him on the CD. The band members are:

Bobby Murray, guitar; Leonard Gill, bass; Tim Brockett, organ; Dave Mathews, keyboards; Tony Coleman, drums; George Brooks, saxophone; Mic Gillette, trombone; and, Marvin McFadden, trumpet.

Blues Corner

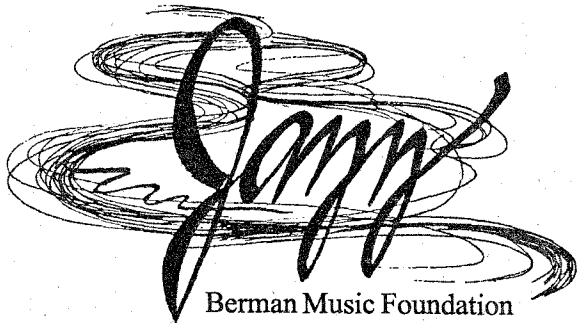
By Rich Hoover

Good Blues, and Good Brews, For a Good Cause

On July 5th and 6th Lincoln will host one of the Midwest's prime summer music festivals. The Zoo Bar, along with Lincoln's Emphyrean Ales Brewery and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) is organizing "The Zoo Bar Rhythm and Brews 2002" with event proceeds to benefit the JDRF. The two-day outdoor festival will be a mix of local, regional and national acts doing blues, rock, jazz and reggae.

July 5th is The Zoo Bar's 29th anniversary, and the band lineup will be every bit as exceptional as the Zoo's legendary 1998 25th Anniversary Festival. In addition to the great music the event will feature the hometown flavor of Lazlo's Brewery and Grill's famous burgers, barbecue, and superb handcrafted beer from Emphyrean Ales.

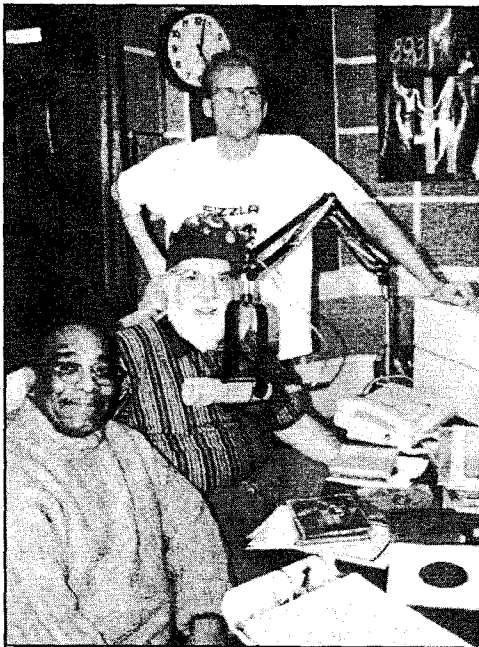
For updated info check www.zoobar.com or www.telesis-inc.com



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**Hedman and Berman
 on "400 Years"**



File Photo

Norman Hedman and Butch Berman pose with deejay Carter Van Pelt during his KZUM radio show "400 Years."

How can you help the foundation?

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