



Courtesy Photo

Andrew Vogt is featured on page 6.

The lost art of album covers

By Dan Demuth

While one sure as hell can't stop technology, it's still OK to lament the loss of the more personal side of what it replaced. *Miniaturization is the thing, of thee I sing. Don't want practicality, just give me the bling.* Can we be far away from speaking into a cellular receiver, and having it convert to a text message to avoid meaningful conversation? Wouldn't that be full circle? Can electronic gadgets be made with buttons any smaller as to be more useless than they now are?

I am straying somewhat here, but my point is the loss of a type of connectivity we had with the musician and the musical theme with the demise of



"Bud Powell Piano," cover by David Stone Martin

record albums and their cover artwork. Forget for a moment the continuing debate between the purists, those who lament the 'harsher or clearer' sound of a CD versus the 'softer more pliable' sound of vinyl and the techies who snort in derision. Technology has given us cleaner sounds, especially with re-mastered older recordings, so there is a trade-off. And yes, the smaller unit is easier to store, both for the listener and the retailer and can be taken places and



"Ben Webster with Strings," cover by David Stone Martin

Album covers continued on page 4

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Prez Sez

Summer brings some jazzy bright moments

By Butch Berman

Go Giants!

Ooops, wrong mindset to greet you all is a no-no. When summer sets it, I get the baseball fever, and my poor SF Giants are in the cellar again, so I was just rootin' for 'em. Steroids or not, if Barry beats Hank's homer record, he's the man. They used to ask the late, great sax-man Zoot Sims how he could always play so well while loaded. "I practice loaded," he replied. Same diff...when you're good, you're good. Speaking of good...

There were some sparkling, bright moments in our occasional jazzy environment since I last reported to you folks. It all started at Barrymore's, in downtown Lincoln, when former Nebraskan, now Denver-based pianist Jeff Jenkins got together with University of Nebraska-Lincoln music prof and trumpeter Darryl White, among others, to debut his new CD. I never received one to review, nor got the title, but the band cooked in a Latin-tinged Milesesque, Weather Report kind of groove.

I was the most gassed by the drummer from Salina, Kan., now residing in KC named Brandon Draper. What a monster! He's truly one of the best, NATURAL percussionists I've ever heard, and this kid is still in his late 20s or early 30s. Sax pro Rob Scheps alerted a lot of us in the Midwest that this cat was loaded for bear. My dear friend and BMF consultant and bassist Gerald Spaits confirmed how "into it" this young lion was after giggling with him.

I loved the sound of the room at Barrymore's. Like the former Melting Spot, this basement lounge has great sound and reminds me somewhat of the



Barrymore's was the scene for Jeff Jenkins, piano; Brandon Draper, drums; and Darryl White, trumpet.



Photos by Rich Hoover

ambience of NYC's Village Vanguard. I spoke with their manager, John, on putting together a "back-to-school" KC jazz show featuring Brandon and some of the other top-notch players from KCMO. For a variety of reasons, a proposed date was scratched so Barrymore's won't work. I still hope to be able to bring this group and others into town sometime this fall when the proper venue presents itself. Bottom line...Brandon Draper's a must-see and must-hear, at all costs. Try to catch him before he ends up in New York, which he's ready for now.

Next...Jazz in June. It warmed my heart when upon their 16th year, the powers that be (my good pal, and ever-so-competent Doug Campbell, along with Martha Florence, who chaired the committee) chose to book three bands

that the BMF originally brought to Lincoln, allowed me to interview them on my KZUM-FM jazz show "Reboppin' Revisited," and gave me and my foundation VIP treatment at this year's festival. A hearty thank-you from all of us at the BMF to all of you that made this years festival a smashing success all over again.

The bands in question: New York's Kendra Shank Quartet; San Francisco's Quintet of the Hot Club of San Francisco and, from Kansas City, Mo., Stan Kessler's Sons of Brasil. All were stellar, as were Lincoln's own NJO along with KC songstress



Kendra Shank

Photo by Rich Hoover

Angela Hagenbach, who headlined the last performance. Elsewhere in this issue, see Tom Ineck's in-depth reviews of them all and enjoy the great pictures that our photog Rich Hoover snapped at all four shows.

My favorite highlight of the whole

season was the after-hour jam at my home between the Hot Club of San Francisco and our own Hot Club of Lincoln, featuring

Photo by Butch Berman



Dave Fowler and Greg Gunter at the BMF digs

Dave Fowler on violin, Greg Gunter on lead guitar and Mike Herres on rhythm. Neither local bass player Brian "Pickle" Gerkenmeier nor the SF Hot Club bassist were able to make it, so everybody took turns on the upright. Paul Mehling and Greg Gunter traded their Django chops, a protégée of Dr. Dave's, violinist Sam Packard (also of the Charlie Burton and the Dorothy Lynch Mob band) and the ever-so-distinguished and talented Englishman Julian Smedley exchanged fiddle concepts, and the other two Hot Club of SF rhythm guitarists, Jason Vanderford and Jeff Magidson, strummed their butts off even after their sizzling two sets earlier in the evening.

My wife Grace celebrated her birthday June 25 (the same date as my late mother...go figure), and we, along with my webmaster and editor Tom Ineck and his wife, Mary Jane, took a Sunday drive to Brownville, Neb., to catch Billy Stritch. Billy's a wonderful, talented singer, pianist and arranger who, besides doing his gigs, also has been the main accompanist for both Marilyn Maye and Liza Minnelli. Brownville is a beautiful, quaint little burg nestled in the hills surrounded by the Missouri River. It's the oldest city in the state and has become an artist-based

community that houses this lovely little church, which has been turned into an acoustically perfect concert hall (somewhat reminiscent to the famed Maybeck Concert Hall in California) and has been doing variety concerts there for 17 years. Cabaret was the genre this day, featuring the Ethel Merman-style vocals of Klea Blackhurst, along with Billy, KC's Gerald Spaits on bass and Ray DeMarchi on drums, doing the music of Hoagy Carmichael. Check out Tom's review of this splendid show in this issue.

Better bug out of here. One last note of interest is that the BMF is getting ready to publish all of the music of the recently departed KC icon Russ Long. I showed a prototype copy to Lincoln saxophonist Ed Long when he was visiting recently.



Butch and Grace at Jazz in June

Photo by Rich Hoover

After hearing the great "Time To Go" CD that we did for Russ before he passed, and seeing all of the music, I suggested perhaps the NJO might want to do his songbook sometime in 2008, using the same KC rhythm section and all of the NJO horns. Ed liked the idea, and so we are working on the possibility. I'll fill you all in on this and other special stuff in our fall *Jazz* newsletter.

Have a great summer, everyone. Stay cool, let your music be hot and as I say at the end of my weekly KZUM "Tuesday Morning Soul Stew" radio shows..."Life's a gas. You just got to inhale once in awhile."

Later,

Butch Berman



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Album covers continued from page 1



"Boogie Woogie," on 78-rpm set, cover by Burt Goldblatt

played that would be impossible with vinyl. But in the process we have lost the opportunity to easily read large liner notes, view detailed photos and gaze upon beautiful, innovative and creative artwork. Even some seven-inch, 45 rpm jazz EPs still offered a decent look of the matching, larger 12-inch LP from which they were culled. Anything smaller (CD, cassette, etc.) is virtually a lost cause. Finding great art on a CD cover is like going to the Louvre to look at postage stamps.

Some of the best-known contributors to album art were author and photographer Burt Goldblatt, who was responsible for more than 3,000 covers; David Stone Martin, to whom more than 250 covers are attributed; Tracy Sugarman, who contributed to more than 100 covers; and perhaps to a lesser



"After Hours," cover by Arthur Shilstone

degree, Arthur Shilstone. The latter two had very distinguished military careers in WWII. Shilstone went on to become a noted illustrator for many magazines and even NASA, his contributions illustrating LP covers being a little-known facet of his career.

These artists named are but a few who contributed to this era. Great album art was not limited to jazz, and didn't start with the LP issues. Some 78 rpm album sets were graced with covers relating to what could be found inside. Some bore artwork relevant to the musicians to be heard and the instruments featured. As an example, David Stone Martin created a 78 rpm cover, circa 1950, which depicts Art



"Lonesome Echo," cover by Salvador Dali

Tatum at the piano, with only drawings of the guitar of Tiny Grimes and the bass of Slam Stewart, the obvious analogy being that legally blind Tatum needed only to hear the other two trio members.

Classical LPs would occasionally depict a perhaps avant-garde persona of the theme to be heard, and often sported reproductions of famous works of art on the covers.

In the jazz idiom labels such as Bethlehem, Clef, Grand Award, Norgran, Prestige and Verve were the more frequent users of this art, but occasionally even a mainstream company such as Capitol would venture into the



"He Really Digs Jazz," from the "Music for the Boy Friend" series on Decca, cover by George Petty

surreal, such as the 1955 cover of "Lonesome Echo," a Jackie Gleason album with Salvador Dali artwork.

The Decca label released a series of LPs with the covers graced with the curvaceous feminine artwork of George Petty, he of Esquire Magazine fame for his "Petty Girls" series. To my knowledge the old adage of "suitable for framing" was never used but would certainly have been apropos.

So what's the tradeoff? Better sound but with the need of a magnifying glass just to read the liner notes? No artwork to stir up the gray matter? Things are supposed to get better with age, but hell, it's hard to find a bartender anymore who knows how to make a decent Manhattan. Ain't progress grand?



Schubert's "Death and the Maiden," as performed by Juilliard String Quartet, cover reproduction of famous artwork

Photo Gallery

Some more great album covers...

Photos by Dan Demuth



*"The Music of Buddy DeFranco,"
cover by David Stone Martin*



*"The Ink Spots," cover
by Arthur Shilstone*



*"The Swingin' '30s,"
cover by Tracy Sugarman*



*"Jazz at the Philharmonic, Vol. 15,"
cover by David Stone Martin*



*"He Like to Go Dancing,"
cover by George Petty*



*"Jazz at the Philharmonic, Vol. 9,"
cover by David Stone Martin*



*"Beethoven Trios," cover
reproduction of famous artwork*



*"Progressive Jazz," cover
by David Stone Martin*



*Sarah Vaughan's "Hot Jazz,"
cover by unknown artist*

Artist Interview

Former prairie boy turns mountain man

By Tom Ineck

In his lifetime, Andrew Vogt has evolved quite naturally—and without a plan—from a child of the Plains to a man of the Rocky Mountains, with a three-year detour to the Caribbean aboard a series of Carnival cruise ships.

The multi-talented saxophonist got his start in music as a child in Lincoln, Neb., where he was influenced by his jazz-loving father and his many teachers, mentors and musician friends. During his three-year stint playing the cruise ships, he honed his playing technique and broadened his knowledge of the bedrock standards that every jazz musician worth his salt must learn. Since 2000, he has called Fort Collins, Colo., his home base, making frequent forays to gigs in the surrounding towns and nearby ski resorts.

Vogt came up through the Lincoln Public Schools system, which has a long history of high-quality music education. But his earliest influence was closer to home.

“My dad has been a jazz fan for many, many years,” Vogt recalled in a recent phone interview from his home. “I think he went to see Dave Brubeck live way back when, and he had a really nice record collection of Cannonball Adderley, Brubeck, Stan Getz. He has the soundtrack, on vinyl, to ‘Breakfast at Tiffany’s,’ by Henry Mancini. It’s a sweet album. I have it on cassette, and I cherish that record. I loved it back then, when I didn’t know what the heck they were doing, and I still love it. I listened to it the other day.” He also ranks the recordings of saxophonists Art Pepper and Zoot Sims among his favorites.

Several longtime Lincoln jazz musicians and educators had an early im-



Andrew Vogt blowing tenor saxophone during a gig.

pact, including saxophonists Ed Love and Scott Vicroy and the early version of the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, then called the Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra. When he entered the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music, he came under the influence of saxophonist Dave Sharp, who helped him land some of his first commercial gigs. Vogt feels especially close to Lincoln keyboard whiz, teacher and friend John Carlini.

Vogt, too, is an educator, running instrumental programs for a few hours a week at local Catholic and Lutheran schools and maintaining a studio for individual instruction.

Cruise ship life can have its ups and downs—including officers who show little respect and audiences who all but ignore you—but Vogt considers himself luckier than most jazz musicians

during his own maritime period.

“My review of my experience is much more positive than most musicians,” he said. “I was fortunate to be able to work on ships that were more jazz-oriented, and I was fortunate to work with this piano player named Murray Jackman, who was a retired five-star admiral. He had hands the size of elephants and sounded like three Oscar Petersons in one. He knew a million tunes, and we got to be good friends.”

Besides, the snorkeling was good and the Hungarian barmaids were beautiful. Even so, Vogt decided after three years at sea that he had had enough.

“You do your stint. It’s time to move on. It’s sort of like not reality out there.”

In retrospect, his career moves seem logical, even calculated, but Vogt insists he doesn’t make plans.

“It wasn’t really like a plan of mine or anything,” he says, laughing. “Most times, when I seem to make a plan, it doesn’t really work out that way.”

Vogt’s parents first made the move from Nebraska to Colorado quite a few years ago, so between cruise ship jobs, Andrew would visit his family. He soon grew very fond of the natural setting and the jazz-friendly climate.

“I just love it out here,” Vogt said. “I’m kind of a mountain boy, really. I love to go hiking. I love Colorado and the Front Range and living in Fort Collins. You’ve got Boulder and Denver nearby and other areas and all these resort towns, up in the mountains. There are gigs flying all over the place!”

“It just kind of happened this way, you know!” he tries to explain, as though

Courtesy Photo

his good fortune—absent a plan—surprises even him. “It’s a nice blend. I’m not really a coast kind of kind. I’m a little bit of a hick. I just love the Midwest, but yet I also like getting up into these higher elevations, where the humidity isn’t so heavy. It’s just a ball out here, and I’m having a great time.”

Some of the fun is in being able to play with world-class musicians, some who are natives of the area and some, like Vogt, who have migrated to the mountains from other parts of the country. The area seems especially fertile ground for keyboard players.

“There are some fantastic players in this Boulder-Fort Collins-Denver area, particularly piano players, and I’ve always had a real connection with piano players,” Vogt said. Many of the best players are products of the area’s music schools, both teachers and students. The University of Northern Colorado at Greeley has produced the best big band in the country for the last couple of years, he said, and there also are significant jazz music programs at the University of Denver, the University of Colorado at Boulder and Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

With more than 40 summer gigs scheduled for a wide array of venues and bands, Vogt says his dog-eared playing calendar is second only to the Bible in his esteem. His busy schedule ranges from regular performances at clubs like Jay’s Bistro in Fort Collins’ Old Town section to dance parties at the local swimming pool and private affairs at the country club to venues farther afield, like Finnegan’s Wake in Avon, the Blue River Bistro in Breckenridge, the Culture Club in Steamboat Springs, Spendido’s in Beaver Creek, the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, and Snowville in Vail.

The names of bands and styles of music shift almost as frequently as the venues. Depending on the occasion, Vogt might take the stage with Mark Sloniker and friends, the funk-rock Jonny Mogambo Band, the Swing Es-

sence Quartet, Big Black Cadillac or fronting his own trio or quartet.

“There are half a dozen regular groups that I’m first-call for, and there are other things that come up, too,” he said, describing the typical frenetic pace of a versatile, sought-after saxophonist. Vogt keeps track of his upcoming performances with regular updates on his website at www.drewsblues.com, which contains the requisite biography, discography, news coverage, media photographs and contact information.

Most exciting for Vogt’s creative side is the recent formation of a quartet featuring Vogt’s horns, in addition to



Rich Chiaraluce and Andrew Vogt recorded together on “Action Plan.”

guitar, bass and drums and tentatively called ZARO, after the first names of the players. They have been rehearsing new tunes in the hopes of establishing a long-term relationship, every jazz musician’s dream.

“There are so many gigs that I play where I just step in and do it right now,” Vogt said. “You’ve got to hit it right on the spot. That’s how it is with a lot of jazz players.” Unlike that off-the-cuff, impromptu performance ethic, the more democratic and dedicated ZARO presents a clearer path for artistic growth.

“We rehearse Sundays, early in the afternoon. We’re trying to put together a whole bunch of unusual stuff, progressive stuff, tricky stuff that you

wouldn’t call on a gig. That requires rehearsal. It’s an opportunity for me to work with more original material. We’re putting together all kinds of crazy stuff.”

That is not to say that Vogt doesn’t appreciate the jazz standards and blues progressions that form the core of every professional jazz musician’s play list.

“I love the doing the standards. At the same time, it’s just great to get together with some guys and just rehearse, put together our dream music.” The band already has a couple of bookings in August, including the three-day NewWestFest, which annually draws more than 100,000 people to downtown Fort Collins.

“It’s a gradual work-in-progress, but the idea is that we’re going to be playing a lot, hopefully doing more festivals. There are a lot of festivals in the mountains that we can take advantage of.”

Vogt is featured on several recordings, including the excellent 2003 release by the Jason Hollar Jazz Quartet. Hollar, a bassist, wrote some of the tunes, but it was Vogt who dominated the proceedings on alto, tenor and baritone saxes and clarinet. A review of the CD is in the October 2003 edition of *Jazz*.

Vogt claims that his latest release and his first as a leader, “Action Plan,” is the only plan he’s ever had that came to fruition as imagined. It features other Rocky Mountain greats Rich Chiaraluce on reeds, pianist Mark Sloniker, bassist Eric Applegate and drummer Mark Raynes, in addition to trumpeter Kevin Whalen on two tracks. For a review of the CD, see the January 2007 edition of *Jazz*.

He’s already at work on the next recording.

“I’m sitting down at the piano and working out ideas quite a bit,” Vogt said. “I hope to be in the studio this fall to do some more stuff and get the next disc out.”

That sounds suspiciously like a plan.

Courtesy Photo

Concert Review

Hagenbach and NJO cap 2007 Jazz in June

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—When asked to front a big band, a jazz vocalist must summon everything she's got to establish a commanding stage presence. Despite her stunning physical beauty and impressive lower range, Angela Hagenbach occasionally failed to project the requisite vocal power in her June 26 appearance with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra.

For the final Jazz in June concert of the 2007 season, Hagenbach traveled from her home in Kansas City, Mo., bringing along versatile K.C. keyboardist Roger Wilder, who had performed on the same stage a week earlier with Stan Kessler and the Sons of Brasil.

Some of the best moments of the concert were in a more intimate setting of a small combo, with Hagenbach backed by Wilder and special guest trumpeter Darryl White, along with NJO bassist Andy Hall and drummer Greg Ahl. Hagenbach did a nice job on “You Turned the Tables on Me,” caressing the lyric with her smoky mid-range voice. Wilder launched into the Chick Corea-Neville Potter collaboration, “You’re Everything,” with a wonderful piano solo introduction, then doubling with Hagenbach at a ballad tempo before the band joined in an uptempo Latin groove, led by White on flugelhorn.

Hagenbach again resorted to the quartet format in the second set, which featured the bluesy “Never Make Your



Photos by Rich Hoover

Angela Hagenbach is accompanied by Darryl White, flugelhorn, Roger Wilder, piano; Andy Hall, bass; and Greg Ahl, drums.



Saxophonist Dave Sharp takes a solo with the NJO.

Move Too Soon” and the ballad “Angel Eyes.”

Among the tunes she performed with the full band was Harold Arlen’s “I’ve Got the World on a String,” featuring solos by Bob Krueger on trumpet and Paul Haar on tenor sax. They also did technically challenging “Bittersweet,” a mid-tempo tune composed by Hagenbach with lyrics by a poet friend. The arrangement effectively employed flutes and clarinet, with White soloing on flugelhorn.

Before re-introducing Hagenbach for the second set, the NJO performed “Let’s Fall in Love” in an old arrangement by longtime NJO collaborator and



Angela Hagenbach soars.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln music professor Randy Snyder, and “Tell Me Again,” a new composition by NJO saxophonist Dave Sharp. The beautiful ballad featured Sharp on alto sax and a piano solo by Chuck Penington, who turned in an admirable performance considering how little stage time he received.

Again the audience at the free, outdoor concert was estimated in the neighborhood of 7,000 people, a very high-class neighborhood, indeed.

Concert Review

Sons of Brasil evoke a tropical paradise

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—The lush lilt of the Portuguese language and the care-free exuberance and passion of Brazilian jazz evoke the tropical nature of their home land. So it seemed appropriate music for the June 19 edition of the popular summer concert series known as Jazz in June, which celebrates its 16th year with the 2007 season.

Among artists who were asked to return this year after popular acclaim in the past were trumpeter Stan Kessler and his Sons of Brasil, a group that remains true to the music's South American origin, despite hailing from Kansas City, Mo. The group also performed for the 2002 Jazz in June series.

With his astounding technique on both trumpet and flugelhorn, Kessler has been the group's guiding light since its inception in 1991. Drummer Doug Auwarter plays the genial emcee, introducing the tunes with an admirable knowledge of Portuguese. On this occasion, the Sons also featured keyboardist Roger Wilder, guitarist Danny Embrey, percussionist Gary Helm and bassist Greg Whitfield.

The diverse repertoire consisted of tunes familiar and unfamiliar. Among the former was "Aquarela do Brasil (Watercolor of Brazil)," by Ary Barroso, but known to most of us as simply "Brazil." It was taken at mid-tempo and featured Helm on the exotic guica, or "friction drum." Guinga's "Chade Panela" is a rambunctiously percussive homage to legendary composer Hermeto Pascoal. Taking its inspiration from a bridal shower or wedding reception attended by Guinga and Pascoal, the tune depicts the guests banging on pots, pans and other kitchen items. It ends with Guinga's epiphany acknowledging that music is in every-



Gary Helm, Stan Kessler and Doug Auwarter



Greg Whitfield and Danny Embrey

thing. The Sons of Brasil, aided by Kessler's enthusiastic trumpet solo, got that point across with a joyful flair.

Kessler's arrangement of the popular "Garota de Ipanema (Girl from Ipanema)" reharmonized the familiar melody and assigned extended solo statements to Embrey on acoustic guitar and Wilder on electronic keys, as well as Kessler's work on flugelhorn. The aptly titled "Demons," a Kessler original, was a rhythmically infectious tune with suitably demonic forays by Wilder, Embrey, Helm on kettle drum and Auwarter on assorted percussion. "Bala com Bala," by João Bosco, which loosely translates as "Bullet for Bullet," had Kessler on flugelhorn pairing up with Embrey for a unison melody line and a wonderful Wilder piano solo. All three briefly traded statements on their respective instruments.

The second half of the show began with Embrey's "Rosinha (Little

Rose).” The guitarist struggled briefly with an amplifier malfunction before recovering with a fine solo. Kessler also soloed on flugelhorn. Kessler again displayed his technical mastery on “Creek,” using a high, bright trumpet tone while negotiating the melody’s difficult fingering. Embrey, Wilder and Auwarter also delivered great solos.



Roger Wilder

“Partido Alto,” which describes a particular type of hot rhythm pattern, is a popular song title, and the version that Sons of Brasil performed may have been written by Victor Assis Brasil, but others have been penned by Chico Buarque and the team of Chico Adnet and Duduka da Fonseca. Kessler employed a triple-tonguing technique on trumpet to heighten the excitement. Returning to the more familiar, the Sons of Brasil concluded with the timeless “Mas Que Nada,” by Jorge Ben, again giving ample solo space to Wilder, Embrey and Kessler on trumpet.

The audience at the free outdoor concert was estimated at more than 7,000 people, probably a record for the 16-year series.

Editor's note: For help with Portuguese song titles and other background, we thank Randy Morse, host of “The Best of Brazil,” a weekly program devoted to Brazilian jazz, 1-3 p.m. Wednesdays on KZUM Community Radio, 89.3 FM in Lincoln and streaming live at www.kzum.org. Muito obrigado, Randy!

Concert Review

San Fran Hot Club keeps things cooking

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—The Hot Club of San Francisco returned to the Jazz in June stage June 12, with its distinctive and popular brand of “gypsy jazz” fully intact, despite several changes in personnel since its 2002 appearance.

The quintet has a long history with the **Berman Music Foundation**, first appearing at Lincoln’s Zoo Bar with singer Barbara Dane in 1995. The band also performed at the 2005 Topeka Jazz Festival, which was booked by BMF founder and president Butch Berman.

Hot Club lead guitarist and vocalist Paul Mehling is the sole constant in the ensemble’s lineup, and his presence is the essence. Not only does he provide the amazing string technique needed to do justice to the devilishly difficult music associated with Belgian gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, he also introduces the program and acts the witty host, frequently at his own expense.

This touring edition of the Hot Club also featured violinist Julian Smedley, rhythm guitarists Jason Vanderford and Jeff Magidson and bassist Clint Baker.

They began the first set with “Tchavolo Swing,” which has been in the band’s songbook for many years, and immediately followed with Gershwin’s “The Man I Love” and the easy-swinging Reinhardt composition “The Oriental Shuffle.” Adhering to the classics, they continued with Reinhardt’s “Black and White” and “Nuages (Clouds),” with Mehling taking his first vocal.

Gus Viseur’s “Flambée Montalbanese,” with its intricate changes, was a classic example of the



musette waltz from the so-called “belle epoch” of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By contrast, Reinhardt’s mournful ballad “Tears” was especially poignant. Return-

ing to a more upbeat mood, the Hot Club turned to the familiar melody of “Dark Eyes,” known in its Russian version as “Ochi chyornye.” After some marvelous playing by Smedley and Baker, Mehling essayed the lyric with Louis Armstrong-style gruffness and good-humored wordplay.

The second set began with “Not So Fast,” a not-so-fast tune from the band’s splendid 2005 release “Postcards from Gypsyland.” They dipped into the Ellington songbook for “The Mouche.” Then, in a total departure from the jazz classics, the band deliv-



Photos by Rich Hoover

Members of the Hot Club of San Francisco (clockwise, from bottom left) are violinist Julian Smedley, lead guitarist and singer Paul Mehling, bassist Clint Baker, and rhythm guitarists Jason Vanderford and Jeff Magidson.

ered a slow-and-easy take on the Lennon-McCartney chestnut “I’m Happy Just to Dance with You,” proving that just about any popular melody can be delivered swing style.

Thelonious Monk’s “Round Midnight,” which appeared on the band’s self-titled 1994 release, got an unconventionally uptempo reading, and Fats Waller’s “Jitterbug Waltz,” from the same recording, illustrated the band’s ability to weave beautiful harmonies.

To showcase rhythm guitarists Vanderford and Magidson, Mehling introduced “I’ll See You in My Dreams,” referring to the guitarists as “the gasoline brothers” for their high-octane playing. Magidson took a dazzling solo and Mehling handled the vocal chores.

As an encore, the Hot Club finished with “Don’t Panic,” the band’s frantically uptempo theme song. Going out on a high note, the San Franciscans received a standing ovation from the crowd, estimated at nearly 7,000 people.

Concert Review

Shank brings Lincoln tribute to Lincoln

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—Kendra Shank brought her tribute to singer-songwriter Abbey Lincoln to town June 5 for the first concert of the 2007 Jazz in June series, now in its 16th year.

As featured in an interview and review of her new CD in the April edition of *Jazz*, Shank has long been devoted to the music and lyrics of the underrated composer. In performance, she and her long-time quartet—pianist Frank Kimbrough, bassist Dean Johnson and drummer Tony Moreno—made that abundantly clear.

It was the quartet's second appearance at Jazz in June, the first being a 2004 concert sponsored by the **Berman Music Foundation**.

"Throw It Away," from the new CD, "A Spirit Free: Abbey Lincoln Songbook," is an old favorite of Shank, who first recorded it on her 2000 release, "Reflections." In its new incarnation, it features Shank's introductory chanted prelude, "Incantation," impressive vocal improvisations and a nifty voice-and-drum dialogue, with Moreno expressing himself organically with hands on tom-toms. "I've Got Thunder (and It Rings)," is Lincoln's (and Shank's) declaration of independence, and was aptly performed with self-assuredness and boundless energy.

In the hindsight of nearly six years since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, "The World is Falling Down" is at once a sad depiction of a hopelessly misguided human race and a glimmer of hope in the healing power of love, with the simple repeated refrain "hold my hand." That emotional dichotomy was not lost on Shank, who infused her performance with both passion and optimism. Kimbrough emphasized the bluesy, gospel nature of the tune with a piano solo that echoed the soulful keyboard style of Ray Charles.

Shank accompanied herself on the



Photo by Tom Ineck

The Kendra Shank Quartet performs June 5 at opening concert of Jazz in June.

kalimba, or African thumb piano, for Lincoln's "The Music is the Magic," while Moreno painted the rhythmic picture with broad brush strokes and Kimbrough strummed the piano strings for effect. A gentle waltz time was introduced on "Not to Worry," Lincoln's reminder that "it wasn't you invented sin" and "everything imagined is you." Both Kimbrough and Johnson delivered inspired solos. "The Whole Wide World is Round," another of Lincoln's optimistic worldviews, was executed with joyous, uplifting verve.

The song list, however, was not entirely comprised of Lincoln's compositions. Among the other tunes performed were Cole Porter's "All of You," Irving Berlin's "Blues Skies," and Bob Dorough's "Devil May Care," but even the familiar standards were done in new and intriguing ways. Moreno is the ultimate percussionist, roving freely over the drums and cymbals with equal parts instinct and rhythmic invention, switching from sticks and brushes to soft mallets and even hand-



Photos by Rich Hoover

Frank Kimbrough



Kendra Shank

drumming. Likewise, Kimbrough's dazzling keyboard style is cliché-free and rife with bold harmonies and unconventional technique.

"The Eighth Deadly Sin," written by pianist Fred Hersch and lyricist Norma Winstone, bemoaned the inevitable outcome of procrastination. Another highlight was Shank's unique take on the traditional folk song, "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair," which has been recorded by everyone from Joan Baez, Judy Collins and Burl Ives to Nina Simone, Nnenna Freelon and Sinead O'Connor. Shank recorded it for her 1998 release "Wish." Cupping her hands over her mouth and expertly employing the microphone, Shank created haunting echo effects to heighten the emotional impact.

For an encore, the Kendra Shank Quartet delivered a stunning performance of "Let it Be," with the vocalist doing justice to the Beatles classic with heartfelt emotion. The record audience of 7,000 people responded with a well-deserved standing ovation.

Concert Review

Guest trumpeter Terell Stafford inspires NJO

By Tom Ineck

LINCOLN, Neb.—The Nebraska Jazz Orchestra was unusually inspired by its guest artist May 25 at the Embassy Suites. When trumpeter Terell Stafford took the stage, the standard was raised and the NJO rose to the occasion.

An alumnus of Bobby Watson's legendary quintet, Horizon, and a director of jazz studies at Temple University, Stafford has the rare ability to instill his enthusiasm in fellow musicians, as well as the listening audience. Stylistically, his playing ranges from the bravura blasts of Louis Armstrong to the emotive quality of Miles Davis to the bluesy brashness of Duke Ellington's trademark trumpeters—Cootie Williams, Bubber Miley and Rex Stewart.

He displayed all of that range during a lengthy set that began with the bombastic "Portrait of Louis Armstrong," an Ellington composition transcribed by David Berger. Paying tribute to fellow Horizon alum Victor Lewis, the famed drummer and Omaha native, Stafford then launched into Lewis' spicy "Hey, It's Me You're Talkin' To," a stop-time thriller deftly arranged for the big band by NJO saxophonist Dave Sharp. The up-tempo cooker also featured a fine tenor sax solo by Ed Love.

Frank Loesser wrote the standard "If I Were a Bell," but as arranged by John Clayton, it also becomes a tribute to the classic interpretation by Miles Davis. Using a Harmon mute, Stafford duplicated the Davis solo with the other horns accompanying in unison harmony. He then made his own solo statement on open horn, before returning to the muted trumpet. Stafford switched to flugelhorn for Charles Gray's



Photos by Tom Ineck



Trumpeter Terell Stafford raised the standard in a guest appearance May 25 with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra.

"Lucy," an easy swinging Latin number.

The trumpeter wrote "Berda's Bounce" for his wife. The Bill Cunliffe arrangement is a rhythmically complex workout for the rest of the band, leaving Stafford to soar during brief solo passages. The NJO succeeded in navigating the tune's dangerous twists and turns with aplomb.

A masterful storyteller and charming guest artist, Stafford made a special connection with the audience in the introduction to his composition "Dear Rudy." The gospel-tinged ballad is dedicated to his grandmother, who warned him against playing jazz, "the devil's music." She told him he would be OK if he learned a spiritual for every jazz tune he learned. As performed by Stafford on flugelhorn, "Dear Rudy" is rife with references to such

timeless religious tunes as "Amazing Grace," "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" and "Down by the Riverside." Sharp also contributed a wonderful soprano sax solo.

Returning to the bluesy essence of jazz, Stafford and the NJO finished with "Tutti for Cootie," a showpiece for trumpeter Cootie Williams, written by Ellington and Jimmy Hamilton and arranged by David Berger. Using a plunger and pixie mute to maximum effect, Stafford then switched to open horn for a dramatic contrast that was bluesy as hell.

Earlier in the evening, the NJO also featured three tunes performed by Gabriela Praetzel, a German native studying saxophone at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The winner of this year's Young Jazz Artist Competition, Praetzel showed great promise on alto sax, playing "There Will Never Be Another You" and "Summertime" with the full band and Ellington's ballad "All Too Soon" with a reduced ensemble featuring four additional saxophones and the rhythm section.

Tomfoolery

Musical treasure awaits at end of the road

By Tom Ineck

BROWNVILLE, Neb.—The 80-mile road trip from Lincoln to this quaint Missouri River town in southeast Nebraska is always an adventure, especially when it involves compatible travel companions and a world-class concert at the end of the road.

Such was the case June 24, when Butch and Grace Berman, my wife, Mary Jane, and I headed to the Brownville Concert Hall for a 2 p.m. performance featuring Klea Blackhurst and Billy Stritch in “Dreaming of a Song,” their collaborative tribute to the music of Hoagy Carmichael.

As arranged by Stritch, the music was not jazz in the strict sense of the word, but the type of well-staged musical theater presentation that you might expect in an intimate Broadway theater, a classy New York City supper club or an upscale hotel lounge. Throughout their three-day booking—with evening cabaret shows on Friday and Saturday, in addition to the Sunday matinee—Blackhurst and Stritch delivered the goods with thorough professionalism, despite the incongruity of performing in a quiet backwater burg like Brownville, Nebraska’s oldest town.

Certainly the musical professionalism was aided by bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Ray DeMarchi, who drove up from their homes in Kansas City, Mo., to accompany the duo. Stritch, a brilliant pianist, singer, musical supervisor and arranger who has worked with Liza Minnelli, Charles Aznavour and others, had written the charts with little room for improvisational forays, and Spaits and DeMarchi delivered note-perfect performances



Brownville Concert Hall

throughout the 90-minute show.

Many listeners were familiar with such Carmichael classics as “Georgia on My Mind,” “Stardust,” “Skylark,” “The Nearness of You,” “I Get Along

pecially on jazzy numbers like “Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief,” “Riverboat Shuffle” and “Ain’t There Anyone Here for Love.” Stritch kept a firm grasp on the harmonic helm at the grand piano, while also harmonizing vocally and occasionally taking the spotlight, such as a lively take on “Georgia,” a lovely “Stardust” and a rocking rendition of “The Old Music Master,” where he also displayed his considerable piano chops.

On “Lazy River,” Stritch did the vocalizing while Blackhurst showed her instrumental prowess by providing rhythm accompaniment on the ukulele, giving the tune an appropriately old-time quality.

Blackhurst and Stritch still are developing the thematic Carmichael program and plan to record a well-honed version this fall. Those lucky enough to catch one of the Brownville performances witnessed a stunning work-in-progress.

Now in its 17th season, the Brownville Concert Series continues to offer world-class artists in an attractive venue that respects their artistry. I have attended several superb performances at the concert hall (formerly a church) over the years, including appearances by jazz pianist Joe Cartwright in 1992, classical pianist Ian Hobson in 1993, jazz trumpeter Warren Vache in 1994, jazz saxophonist Bobby Watson in 1997 and jazz singer Tierney Sutton in 2005. The room’s excellent acoustics make it ideal for jazz and classical music and guarantee a memorable listening experience. Bravo!



Klea Blackhurst and Billy Stritch

Courtesy Photos

Without You Very Well,” and “In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening,” but the 22-song play list also contained little-known gems like “One Morning in May,” “When Love Goes Wrong,” and “My Resistance is Low.” In their informal introductions, Blackhurst and Stritch also provided interesting, often humorous background on the composer and his tunes.

Both Blackhurst and Stritch are excellent singers and complement each other’s styles. Known for her Ethel Merman tributes, Blackhurst can belt it out with a verve and gusto reminiscent of that iconic songstress, es-

*Jazz on Disc***Bill Charlap Trio works its magic live at the Vanguard**

By Tom Ineck


THE BILL CHARLAP TRIO
Live at the Village Vanguard
 Blue Note Records

Bill Charlap's first live recording is long overdue. The trio of pianist Charlap, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington is one of the great threesomes of modern jazz history, and this release finally makes that unmistakably clear.

Taped nearly four years ago, in September 2003 at the famed jazz club in lower Manhattan, the performance is a faithful document of the Charlap trio at its finest. Already together for several years at the time of this recording, the trio works its magic on a set of nine tunes, carefully chosen for their melodic and harmonic potential.

Gerry Mulligan's uptempo "Rocker," best known for its inclusion in Miles Davis' "Birth of the Cool" sessions, is an excellent opportunity for the trio to flex their musical muscles. The timely ballad "Autumn in New York" gets an absolutely gorgeous, restrained reading, exemplifying the trio's measured gait and mutual sensitivity. As performed by the trio, it is an emotionally devastating expression of the turning of the seasons, but also of aging, lost love and wistful regret.

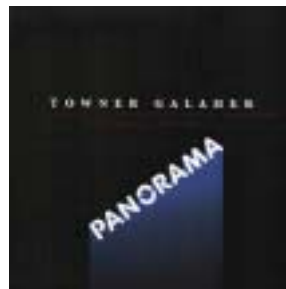
Returning to the "Birth of the Cool" songbook, the trio essays the rhythmically challenging "Godchild" by

George Wallington. Aided and abetted by a driving bass line and sizzling brushwork on the snare drum, Charlap turns in a dazzling piano foray. It's back to ballad tempo for "It's Only a Paper Moon," which is taken at a snail's pace, allowing Charlap to ruminate and pause and generally "feel" his way through the changes, adding bluesy flourishes and unexpected modulations. He always remains true to the original melody and always seems to choose the perfect harmonic variations.

On the other hand, it is not unusual for Charlap to choose a tempo that defies convention—and sheer technical capability. Such is the case on "My Shining Hour," taken at a headlong, mind-boggling pace. It is a workout for all. After Charlap states the melody and soars through variations, Peter Washington leaps through the changes and Kenny Washington keeps time with rim shots before taking an astounding solo of his own.

The tempo shifts downward again for Jim Hall's lovely ballad "All Across the City," an underappreciated gem which was most notably covered in versions by pianist Bill Evans and alto saxophonist Paul Desmond. Charlap caresses the keys, emphasizing the beauty of each chord change with tender, often dissonant harmonic touches as bassist and drummer offer subdued support.

"While We're Young," by Alec Wilder, is taken at a fast waltz tempo that aptly inspires all to freewheeling displays of playful experimentation. Harold Arlen's "Last Night When We Were Young" closes the performance on another wistful note, reverberating with faded memories of youthful passions and hints of regret.


TOWNER GALAHER
Panorama
 Towner Galaher Music

In his debut recording as a leader, drummer Towner Galaher fronts a classic hard-bop quintet, often in the style of Art Blakey's hard-driving Jazz Messengers. But this outfit also is capable of more subtle performances.

Galaher penned all but three of the eight tunes. The opener, "Midtown Shuffle," is a swaggering workout for the band, which also consists of relative veterans Onaje Allen Gumbs on piano, Charles Fambrough on bass and Mark Shim on tenor sax, as well as the young trumpeter Maurice Brown. Their take on "Have You Met Miss Jones?" delves into the Latin mood, with added percussion by Johnny Almendra and Frank Colon.

"I'm All Smiles" is a breezy jazz waltz with outstanding contributions by Gumbs, a master of harmonic variations, and Shim, whose solo brilliantly weaves a sound tapestry around the changes. On "Legba," Galaher taps into a funky, New Orleans-style beat that inspires Brown to a heated trumpet solo, and a brief interlude by the percussionists leads into a smoldering tenor solo by Shim, all in less than four minutes. There is an economy of scale throughout this session, with most tracks clocking in at around five or six minutes.

Galaher drives the title track with a sharp, crackling drum attack and well-timed cymbal flourishes. Shim turns in another blustery tenor solo. "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," the classic Charles Mingus threnody to Lester Young, begins with a nice plunger-muted trumpet statement before Shim states the familiar melody on tenor. But it is Gumbs whose lovely piano solo captures the essence of this heart-wrenching ballad.

Fambrough delivers some ominous walking bass lines on "Charisma," which also features another well-constructed Shim solo and a searching, bluesy solo by Gumbs. "East 104th St." is an urban, hard-bop burner in the Blakey mold, but under Galaher's direction it is given a Latin flair with added percussion and fiery solos by Shim and Brown. "Panorama" is an impressive debut that establishes Galaher and company as an exciting and formidable hard-bop ensemble.



THE STRYKER/SLAGLE BAND
Latest Outlook
Zoho Music

Aptly titled, "Latest Outlook" is a state-of-the-art excursion in playing "outside" the changes. It challenges the listener to imagine the alternatives, the unexpected and the unconventional. Its insistence on avoiding the easy resolution may be agonizing to some ears. The trick, as with all progressive jazz experiences, is to abandon your preconceptions and go with the flow.

Under those conditions, "Latest Outlook" is a joyous rollercoaster ride, commandeered by co-leaders and long-time colleagues Dave Stryker on guitar

and Steve Slagle on alto and soprano saxes. Also along for the ride are bassist Jay Anderson and legendary drummer Billy Hart. The quartet maintains clockwork compatibility, regardless of odd time signatures or that confounded irresolution.

Slagle's tunes are especially compelling. The opener, "Knew Hold," has Slagle and Stryker pairing up on the complex changes in unison. Anderson keeps the ominously pulsing time while Hart ranges far and wide over the drum kit, a true percussionist. Likewise on the funky title track, another Slagle composition, the leaders state the odd melody in tandem before the composer is set loose to explore solo variations. Stryker's solo deftly alternates between chords and single-note runs. Hart makes a sly reference to James Brown.

Tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano appears on two tracks, including the Charlie Parker tribute "Bird Flew," based on the changes to "Confirmation." As always, Lovano digs in with gusto, urging on everyone else in the band, especially Hart. The wordplay of Stryker's "Hartland," refers not only to the drummer but to the composer's Nebraska home. Its open feel is achieved rhythmically by Stryker on steel-stringed acoustic guitar with Anderson and Slagle, on soprano, jointly stating the breezy theme. Stryker switches to electric guitar for a solo on what is the most accessible and tuneful tune on the session.

The centerpiece of the entire project, however, is "Dear Mr. Hicks," Slagle's memorial to the late pianist John Hicks. Stretching to nearly 12 minutes, its opening elegiac mood quickly shifts to swing time. Lovano returns with an extended, soulful flight on the bluesy changes, as Stryker expertly comps in chiming rhythm. The guitarist's own brief solo is inspired.

Charles Mingus' "Self-Portrait in Three Colors" is the sole ballad and sole "cover tune," an appropriate choice considering Slagle's long association

with the Mingus Big Band. Stryker and Slagle handle the beautiful interweaving lines with grace and soul. Stryker's "Turning Point" features some nice Wes Montgomery-style chording and is a wonderful vehicle for Hart's shimmering cymbal work, Slagle's plaintive alto and Anderson's lyrical and resonant solo. It is perhaps the ultimate example of how well this quartet works together. The CD ends with the uptempo romp "In Just Time," another clever updating. In this case "Just in Time" is not just "outside" but inside out.



NORDIC CONNECT
Flurry
ArtistShare Records

In an attempt to explain the group concept of Nordic Connect in the liner notes of the ensemble's debut recording, "Flurry," trumpeter Ingrid Jensen whimsically says, "We are fair-skinned, blond and tall (some of us) and very much into good cheese and 'happy-sad' music that invokes the many influences we have all had in our lives."

Well, Nordic Connect is more than that. Personally, it is a group spirit that draws on elements of family and protection from the often-cold world beyond the hearth. It is an expression of camaraderie, the kind of group empathy that is achieved only by giving as much as receiving. Jazz is a sharing enterprise and Nordic Connect is a group of musicians who share a worldview and a musical vision.

The Nordic mix consists of Ingrid Jensen and her sister, saxophonist

Jazz on Disc continued on page 16

Jazz on Disc continued from page 15

Christine Jensen—Canadians of Danish ancestry—joined by Swedes Maggi Olin on keyboards and Mattias Welin on bass and Alaskan-born Norwegian Jon Wikan on drums and percussion.

While there is some truth to the stereotype that Nordic or north European music is cerebral or devoid of soul or “warmth,” Nordic Connect belies the conventional truth with passionate playing and intense group interplay. The opening title track by Olin bears this out with alternating passages of introspection and surging energy. The Jensen sisters are especially effective in their duo statements. Christine Jensen’s gentle “Sweet Adelphi,” with the composer on soprano sax, also showcases Welin on an extended solo and Olin creating a luscious understated keyboard tapestry.

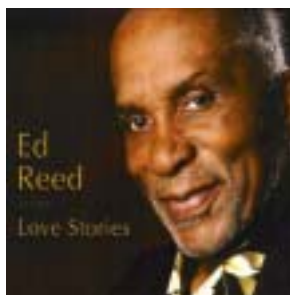
Ingrid Jensen’s slow-building “Things I Love” delves into her fusion side, with Harmon-muted trumpet, electric piano and funky backbeat reminiscent of later-period Miles Davis. The tune eventually opens up as Jensen switches to flugelhorn and sister Christine ups the ante with a brooding alto sax solo. The rhythm section of Welin and Wikan prove their sensitivity and expertise as the tempo continually shifts and slides on Olin’s “Sweet Dream.”

Perhaps the most lovely and accessible tune here is Christine Jensen’s “Garden Hour,” a lovely three-minute ballad featuring the Jensens going head-to-head on the stately folk-like melody. Ingrid Jensen’s “Seascape” is a brief, but tender melodic statement that acts as an introduction to her sister’s composition “Seafever.” Olin again acts as perfect harmonic foil to the two sisters’ brass interplay. Here and elsewhere, Wikan employs a unique “clip-clopping” technique in his timekeeping.

“Cowboy” gallops along at a furious pace, aided by Olin on electronic keys, multi-percussionist Wikan and Ingrid Jensen turning up the trumpet’s electronic effects. Composer Olin sets

up the 11-minute “Breathe/Quadr” with a haunting introduction utilizing repeated notes and a shifting tempo. The front-line horns breathe as one until Christine Jensen steps forward for a measured solo statement on sax. Olin contributes another great piano solo before turning it over to Ingrid Jensen for a flugelhorn solo. Eventually, as if by natural osmosis, the quintet reunites for the theme and conclusion.

Seven of the nine tracks go beyond seven minutes and three tracks extend to nine minutes or more, so everyone in the quintet is given room to express their ideas and “connect” with the others. All three women prove to be exemplary composers, again emphasizing the shared nature of this project.



ED REED
Sings Love Stories
Blue Shorts Records

On hearing “Ed Reed Sings Love Stories” for the first time is, a listener’s most appropriate response is, “Where the heck has this guy been all these years?”

Even jazz singer Sheila Jordan exclaims, “Where have you been hiding Ed Reed? The whole jazz world needs to hear you.” Well, like so many talented black artists who grew up urban America in the 1930s and 1940s, Reed encountered social barriers, drifted into drug use and heroin addiction, and eventually served several terms in prison, in Reed’s case San Quentin and Folsom.

A native of southern California, Reed sang with saxophonist Art Pepper while in prison and with saxophon-

ist Dexter Gordon, trumpeter Art Farmer, pianist Hampton Hawes and saxophonist Wardell Gray in “open mike” situations while he was out. After 40 years of addiction, he finally began a successful recovery program in 1986. With this debut recording, Reed finally declares his liberation.

Reed’s reedy voice has an impressive range and is especially effective in the bass-baritone register, which he exhibits to good effect on “Bye Bye Blackbird.” He is capable of some nice vibrato and passages of extended phrasing on tunes like “A Sleepin’ Bee” and the Gordon Jenkins weeper “Goodbye.” Tonally, he is sometimes reminiscent of trumpeter-singer Jack Sheldon, especially when he goes for the upper registers. The two also are similar in their horn-like quality.

Lending very sensitive support is the backing rhythm section of pianist Gary Fisher, bassist John Wiitala and drummer Eddie Marshall. Most of all, the very versatile Peck Almond contributes a host of instrumental flavoring on trumpet, tenor sax, flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, trombone and kalimbas.

The songlist is largely comprised of tried-and-true romantic standards, most of them taken at a relaxed ballad tempo, including “Ghost of a Chance,” “A Flower is a Lovesome Thing,” “Where Do You Start,” and “Daydream.”

Less well known but equally effective are Thelonious Monk’s “Ask Me Now,” with lyrics by Jon Hendricks, and “If the Moon Turns Green.” An apt closer is the folk and gospel classic “Motherless Child,” which Reed sings a cappella with great conviction.

Reed deserves to be heard, and perhaps with “Ed Reed Sings Love Stories” he will begin to receive that long-delayed recognition.



FRANCOIS INGOLD TRIO
Song Garden
 Altrisuoni Records

"Song Garden," the recent debut by 30-year-old Swiss pianist Francois Ingold, further extends the impressionist keyboard school founded by Bill Evans and later developed by Keith Jarrett, Fred Hersch, Ivan Paduart, Brad Mehldau and others. It is poetry in motion, truly a "garden" of colorful musical delights.

Like the others mentioned above, Ingold excels in the trio format, here with bassist Diego Imbert and drummer Fred Bintner. Recorded last year in France and mastered in Switzerland, "Song Garden" reverberates with European romanticism, especially on the gentle "Children's Song (To Denis)" and "Love Song."

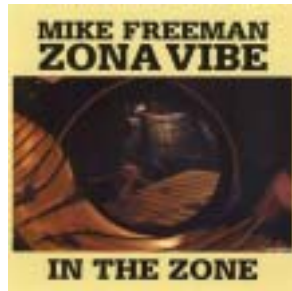
Even "Premiere Dent," with its pulsing Latin rhythm and brief drum solo, maintains its stateliness in Ingold's flowing lines and Imbert's subtle accompaniment. The bassist steps out a bit more on the lyrical "Il n'y a pas d'amour heureux," by Georges Brassens, a popular French singer-songwriter who died in 1981. Imbert provides a beautiful bass counterpoint to Ingold's keyboard flights.

Ingold composed five of the eight tracks. "Black Trombone" is a haunting tune by French composer and cult figure Serge Gainsbourg. But, undoubtedly, the oddest choice here is "A Forest," a 1980 hit by the British rockers The Cure. Like Mehldau, Ingold is capable of provocatively transforming a familiar pop tune while remaining true to its spirit. He repeatedly states the theme and creates dark variations, with Bintner eventually escalating to rock drumming pyrotechnics.

The apt closer, "Hymne au Revoir,"

is a gorgeous ballad of farewell that again places Ingold solidly in the romantic camp of Evans and his spiritual descendants.

Actually, "Hymne" is not the end of "Song Garden," which contains a hidden track with the most animated playing on the entire recording. It has a Monkish flavor and features some very uninhibited drumming by Bintner.



MIKE FREEMAN ZONAVIBE
In the Zone
 VOF Recordings

Omaha native Mike Freeman, now living in NYC, is a competent vibe player who has gathered some like-minded musicians under the banner of Zona Vibe for his latest release, "In the Zone," under his own VOF Recordings moniker.

"In the Zone" has a distinctly Latin groove, aided by Ricardo Rodriguez on bass, Little Johnny Rivero on congas, Harry Adorno on timbales and Bruce Saunders occasionally joining in on guitars. There is little that is challenging or new here, from "Mr. 2000" to "There Ya Go" to "Horse's Run" and "A Las Seis," but the melodies are pleasant and it is all played with a light swinging feel that shouldn't offend anyone.

As the only other soloist, Saunders does manage to infuse the proceedings with some soul, especially on "Cha Cha Mama," "Red Thunder" and "Afriman." He also adds sonic depth by doubling some of the melody lines with Freeman's vibes.

Freeman evokes the blues during a solo on the lovely "The Fallen," and his switch to marimba on the Peruvian standard "Todos Vuelven" is a nice change, but his playing generally lacks the risk-taking that makes jazz so exciting.



THE BOULEVARD BIG BAND
"Live" at Harlings Upstairs
 BRC Music Productions

Nineteen years on, the Kansas City-based Boulevard Big Band has released a live recording at Harlings Upstairs lounge that admirably captures the excitement of big-band performance, though the recording quality is uneven.

Like the band's 2004 Sea Breeze release "Take Only for Pain," the new CD features tenor saxophonist Pete Christlieb, a longtime first-call soloist from Southern California. Christlieb's thoroughly professional style and burly, burnished tone are definite assets. Whenever he enters the fray, such as on the opener, "Peeve," Wayne Shorter's "Black Nile," and the closer, "It's Not About You," the temperature noticeably rises.

Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek," arranged by Hal Melia, is taken at a breakneck speed, but the arranger's lively alto saxophone solo is virtually buried in the mix. Other standout musicians who help keep the kettle boiling are trombonist Paul McKee on "Black Nile," flugelhornist Jay Sollenberger on "If I Only Had a Brain," trombonist Steve Dekker on Lou Marini's funky "Alone," trumpeter Dave Aaberg on "It's Not About You," and members of the rhythm section, especially drummer Todd Strait and bassist Tim Brewer.

Throughout the show, stage announcements and audience response suffer from poor miking, creating the impression that the performance got a lukewarm reception.

The listener who can disregard the many shortcomings, however, will be rewarded with a solid performance by Kansas City's veteran big band.

Discorama

DeGreg is showcased with two of the best

By Butch Berman



PHIL DEGREG TRIO
Down the Middle
 Prevenient Music

Every one who knows me accepts my baseball mania. In the big leagues, almost every team has at least one “star” player. However, to make it to the World Series, you need the sum of the parts of all his teammates, as each “utility” player becomes equally important, but not necessarily “famous.” The same seems to be true in the world of jazz.

I’m listening to the always-stunning piano work of Phil DeGreg’s newest CD, “Down the Middle,” while I write this review and think to myself, “This is his 10th recording, all excellent, and it seems only the ‘ones in the know’ truly know who this genius is.”

If you’re from Cincinnati and heard Phil’s ultra-sophisticated brilliance at the famed jazz club, the Blue Wisp, for the last 13 years, or while studying under him at the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, you probably think of him as the second coming of Bill Evans. Ask any of the greats Phil’s played with, such as trumpeter Claudio Roditi or saxophonist Greg Abate or drummer Todd Strait, to name just a few, and they’ll all tell ya the same. Phil’s a true gentleman and a complete monster of a player.

I first met him when he was on

the staff of Jamey Aebersold’s jazz camp workshop near Chicago that I attended about the time I first started my Berman Music Foundation in 1995. I was so taken by his teaching abilities, his kind demeanor and, of course, his amazing chops that I hired him on the spot for one of our first concerts here in Lincoln, Neb., and a few times and locations since.

This new Prevenient Music release showcases the piano trio format backing Phil with two of the best in the biz. Drummer Joe LaBarbera, formally with Bill Evans and Tony Bennett, has always been one of my faves with his sparkling, crackling driving style. Add L.A.’s Tom Warrington’s delicate, astute bass lines to the mix to provide the perfect rhythm section for the beautiful outpourings from Mr. DeGreg.

Phil composed four intriguing tunes along with some delightful choices from a variety of other jazz artists, including Diz’s “Con Alma,” Jerome Kern’s “Pick Yourself Up,” and a rare Jobim number called “Bonita,” which gives his fans a full display of all the different elements that Phil possesses and performs with such elegance, grace and, when needed, unbridled power. I’ve been lucky enough to have heard many great piano trios over the years, both live and on records. The Phil DeGreg Trio is one of them, and one of the best.

Available at CDbaby.com, I’d advise you to grab “Down the Middle” in a flash, and grab a few for your other jazz friends while you’re at it. Also, if you’re a player yourself, you’d do yourself a favor to read Phil’s wonderful jazz textbook entitled “Jazz Keyboard Harmony” and perhaps I’ll be reviewing your CD someday, as well.



TERAESA VINSON WITH TOM DEMPSEY
Next to You
 AMP 102

When I visited New York City a few years ago, I visited Lou Holtzman, the best “ears” in the recording biz, at his new, incredible Eastside Sound. That day Lou was recording the first CD for a new female vocalist named Teraesa Vinson.

She and her hand-picked band of some of the Big Apple’s best, young lions put out a fine album entitled “Opportunity Please Knock” that I was able to help her put out. When she recently sent her newest offering, “Next To You,” much to my surprise a duo album, I was a little taken aback. However, upon the first and second listening to her rich, supple voice, backed by one of the top young guitarists on the scene today, Tom Dempsey, I was very much entertained.

Teraesa’s interpretation of a wide, eclectic choice of songwriters makes this a record for all ears, young and old. Steve Perry’s “Foolish Heart” and Stevie Wonder’s “Ribbon in the Sky” somehow fit well into a mix of Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, Jobim, and McCoy Tyner standards, to name just a few.

Dempsey, the other “voice,” is not only a cookin’ guitar player but a mas-

ter accompanist with terrific chops. Tom, along with drummer Dion Parsons creates a CD full of tasty arrangements that transpose a lot of old favorites into nifty, refreshing statements that define what jazz is really all about. They even take a chance reprising the title track from their first recording effort and give Oscar Brown's "Opportunity Please

Knock" a whole other identity. I really dig her rendition of Cy Coleman/Carolyn Leigh's "My How the Time Goes By," turning it into a swell blues number, and a different stab at Johnny Mercer's "I Remember You" that also works like a charm.

And speaking of charming, who ever decided to put the lovely Ms.

Vinson in a dynamite pink mini-skirt on the inner sleeve should be nominated for a Grammy for his or her foresight. Yup, pretty to look at and a pleasure to hear makes this AMP release a must for all of us who love hearing a great song sung well, as well as appreciating one hot guitar picker. Get next to "Next To You" and feel the love.

Rock and Roll

Planned book proves that "Louisiana Rocks"

By Tom Aswell

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from "Louisiana Rocks: The True Genesis of Rock and Roll," an unpublished 560-page manuscript by Tom Aswell of Denham Springs, La. As the writer shops the manuscript to prospective publishers, he has suggested that the Berman Music Foundation feature pieces from the book. We begin in this edition of *Jazz* with part of the entry on the Boogie Kings, a band that was featured several years ago in this newsletter with writings submitted by Boogie Kings member Ned Theall. The entire entry is posted on the BMF website at www.bermanmusicfoundation.org. Readers who wish to correspond with Aswell can reach him by e-mail at azspeak@bellsouth.net.

The Boogie Kings began as a group back in the mid-fifties in the little seventies town of Eunice. Little did anyone know then that the band would endure despite changes in personnel and musical tastes as well as internal turmoil and lawsuits over the band's name. But as the new millennium dawned, they were still rocking, bigger than ever as one of the greatest bands never to have a hit record. From the beginning the band built a following in seventies and the Texas



The Boogie Kings

Golden Triangle area of Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange—a following that remains loyal to their music.

Band members comprised an honor roll of Louisiana swamp pop, some of whom had major hits as solo artists: Bert Miller, Tommy McLain ("Sweet Dreams"), Clint West ("Big Blue Diamonds," "Try To Find Another Man"), G.G. Shinn, Ned Theall, Dwayne Yates, Jerry Lacroix, Linda Clark, Norris Badeaux, Mike Pollard, Murphy Buford, Dan Silas, and Doug Ardoin. The horn section alone was nothing short of spectacular.

The band, which had never played outside Acadiana, purchased

seven different tuxedos for each band member—one for each day of the week—and began seeking bookings in Houston and New Orleans. While they were packing the houses in those two markets, a Las Vegas agent booked them into Reno, Tahoe, Vegas, Hollywood and San Francisco.

In Hollywood, The Righteous Brothers were in the audience and after the show Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield approached the band members and congratulated them for their show.

On another occasion, the band was booked into Ball's Auditorium in Houston before an all-black audience. B.B. King did the first show and stayed around to hear the Boogie Kings before a packed house. After the band had played a few songs, Reginald Ball, owner of the auditorium, came onstage to say that King wanted to join the band for a few songs. The crowd was already going crazy for the Boogie Kings and when B.B. joined them, pandemonium reigned and the more enthusiastic the crowd got, the better the band played and the better the band played, the more enthusiastic the crowd became. Afterwards, King told them they were the blackest band he'd ever heard.

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Getting tough for Charlie Brown's Kids



Tawnya Douglas and Butch Berman flex their muscles at Bujoun hair salon and day spa. Besides being Butch's stylist, Tawnya is a devoted volunteer, helping to raise funds for Charlie Brown's Kids, a grief support group for children and teens.

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