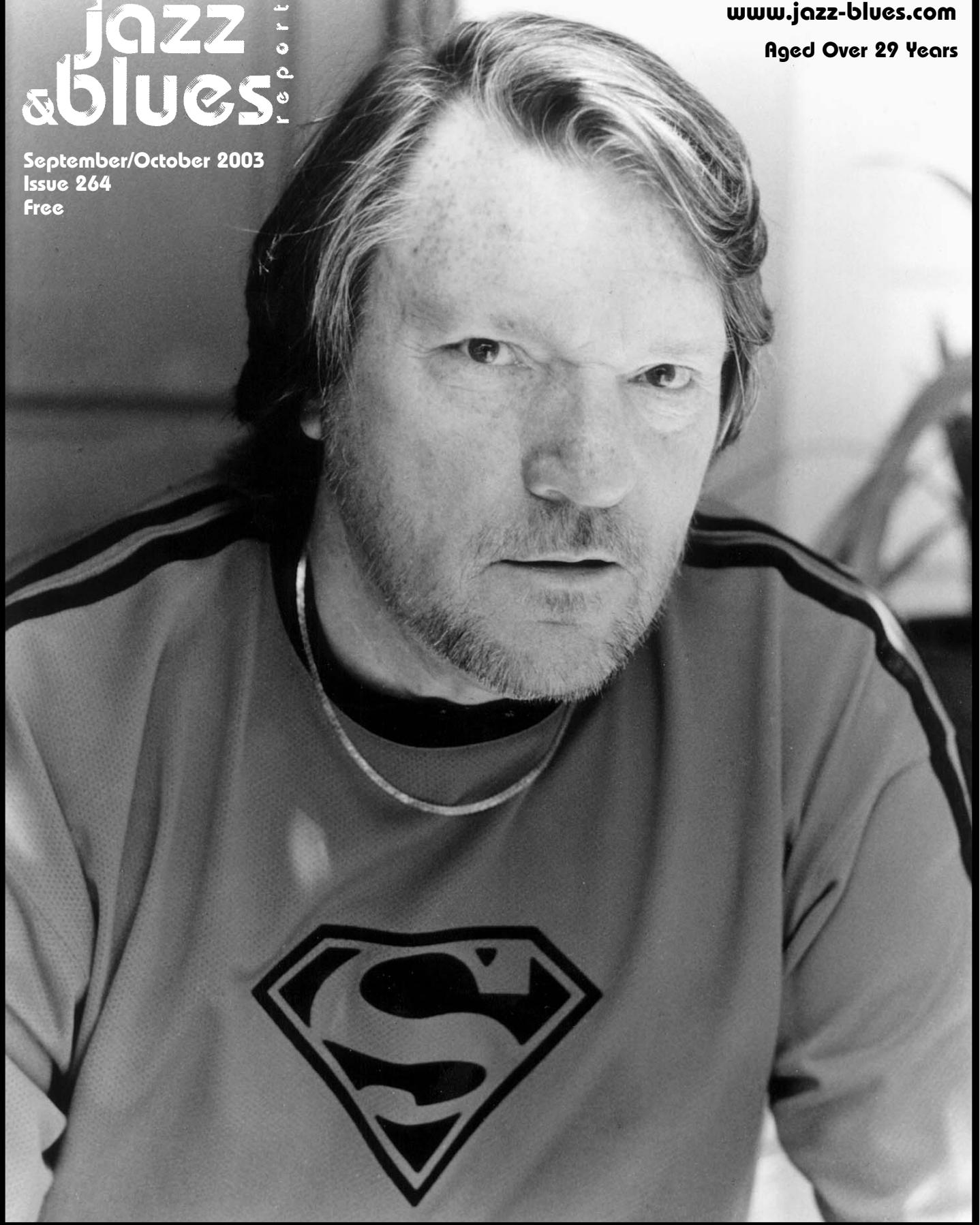


jazz
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Issue 264
Free

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Aged Over 29 Years



Brian Auger Brings His Oblivion Express To Night Town

jazz & blues report

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Check out our new, updated website. Now you can search for CD reviews by artists, titles, record companies or JBR writers. Nine years of reviews are currently up, and we'll be going all the way back to 1974! The site is now compatible with both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer as well as AOL. We apologize to all of you who were unable to navigate the site in the past.

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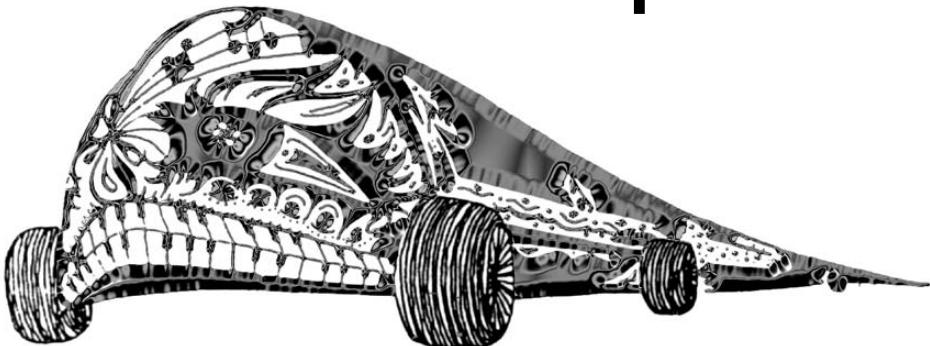
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jazz & blues

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Brian Auger's Oblivion Express



Brian Auger's Oblivion Express will roll into Night Town for the third time on Monday and Tuesday, October 6 & 7 for two shows nightly at 7 & 9 p.m. You might want to buy your tickets in advance for this one—you don't want to miss this train.

The Oblivion Express released its first, self-titled album in 1970, but the group's leader, Brian Auger, goes back way before that.

Auger had been playing piano since he was a young child in London. His older brother had a large collection of American jazz recordings by Ellington, Fats Waller, Nat King Cole, George Shearing and many others, and young Brian listened to them all. In his teens he'd be found playing jazz at parties and other gatherings. Soon thereafter, he'd be found playing in some of the top clubs in London with some of that city's finest. In

1964, Auger won first place in two categories in the prestigious *Melody Maker* magazine's musicians poll—"Jazz Piano" and "New Star."

Sometime in the early 60s, Brian was in a record store where they were playing Jimmy Smith's **Back at the Chicken Shack** album. He was hooked...he bought a Hammond B-3 organ and his life was changed. Inspired by Smith and Mose Allison, he started the first Brian Auger Trinity as a jazz-blues trio.

Sonny Boy Williamson was living in

London at the time and used to drop by to see the trio's shows and would often sit in from time to time. Auger arranged a recording session shortly before Williamson's return to the States to document the rapport the great bluesman had with the trio, and some other musicians were asked to join in on the recording - saxophonists Joe Harriott and guitarist Jimmy Page. The resulting album, **Don't Send Me No Flowers**, was released just a short time before Sonny Boy died. He then put together a band called Steampacket with Long John Baldry, Rod Stewart and Julie Driscoll - three singers on the front line.

"After playing with Steampacket," Auger stated "I wanted to put my own band together again to combine numerous elements—the jazz sounds I had always loved, the newly-emerging rock 'n roll, the kind of blues I had

learned about from Williamson and Baldry, and soulful funk which goes so well with the organ. I was trying to build a bridge between all these diverse elements and after a while they started calling it 'jazz-rock' or 'fusion.' But you have to remember, this was still several years before Miles put out **Bitches Brew**, so we were treading in unknown waters."

The new band went by the name of the Brian Auger Trinity with Julie Driscoll, and their first album in 1967, **Open**, featured their classic (especially if you were



Brian Auger & Julie Driscoll

of the late sixties hippie variety) organ-driven version of Donovan's "Season of the Witch." In 1968 The Trinity became the first fusion group to headline at the Montreaux and Berlin Jazz Festivals. After another album, **Streetnoise**, and a tour of the U.S., the group broke up due to typical band problems.

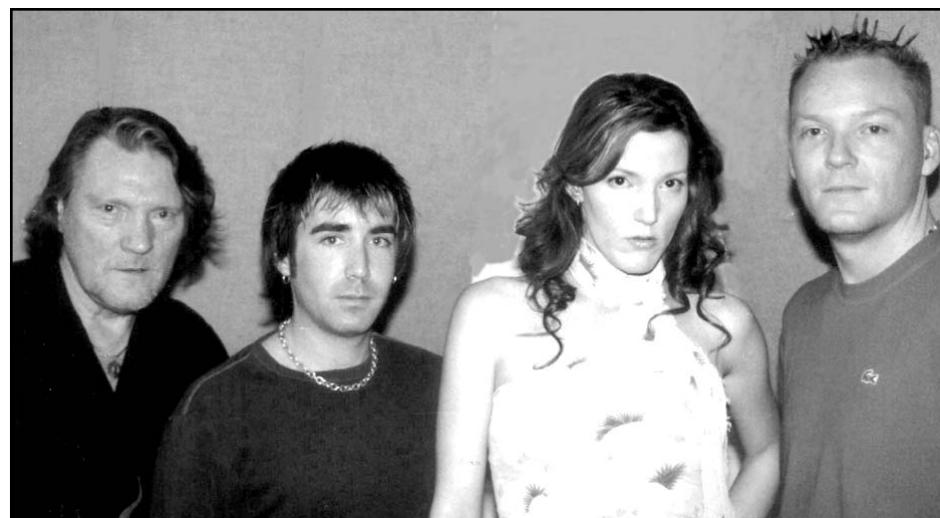
Auger relates, "After the shambles of Trinity, I was in a cynical mood. I encouraged everyone in the new band to be creative as possible, and not to worry about what the record company or the public might want. This seemed to be going against the commercial tide and I thought we might be headed the quickest way toward oblivion, so tongue-in-cheek, I called the band the Oblivion Express."

But the public did like their albums. Sarah Vaughan liked them too, and recorded three of Brian's songs. The same year Auger was the first to take first place in both the Jazz and Rock categories in the major European **Rock & Folk** magazine. Their breakthrough album was the very jazzy **Closer to It** – of which Auger says "We called it that because we got the exact sound I was looking for, and it went on **Billboard's** Rock, Jazz and R&B charts and really established me in the U.S." The Oblivion Express toured with jazz, rock and R&B acts such as Herbie Hancock & the Headhunters, Chick Corea and Return to Forever, Weather Report, The Crusaders, Earth Wind & Fire, Blue Oyster Cult and ZZ Top.

In 1977 Brian had a wonderful reunion with Julie Driscoll (now married and known as Julie Tippets) for the album **Encore** on (I believe) Warner Bros. Records. It offered very memorable versions of classics from The Animals and Traffic – "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" and "No Time To Live."

As the nineties began, Auger got together with Eric Burdon and their band toured for four years. Brian's son, Karma, played drums for the band for their last year. In the mid-nineties, Auger got the rights to re-release many of his catalogue albums worldwide and they appeared on CD for the first time. The new Oblivion Express was formed, and Auger was surprised to find the media hailing him as the "Godfather of Acid Jazz" as he was touring Europe.

The latest addition of Oblivion Express is a family-oriented affair bringing some youthful spunk into the equation. Brian still plays the Hammond B-3 which he bought in 1968, his son Karma is on drums, his daughter Savannah is on vocals, Don Lutz plays bass and Chris Clermont is on guitar. The new band has an album titled **Voices Of Other Times**



The Oblivion Express Today

on Marimar Records which features both vocals and instrumentals. There are brand new versions of songs from previous Auger albums – "Isola Natale" (previously on **Open**), the title track which was first heard on **Closer To It**, Richie Haven's "Indian Rope Man" (originally on **Streetnoise**) and "Never Gonna Come Down" (first heard on **Happiness Heartaches**).

I first became familiar with Auger from the Trinity albums when I was a bit younger and wilder. Luckily I lived through that period in time and am still able to enjoy his music today, as I have been a fan ever since.

I'll be on that train for sure.

Bill Wahl

Some Notable Quotes

"Brian Auger is one of the best B-3 artists I have ever heard in my life. This technique is awesome and the amount of energy he generates is unparalleled and relentless. He is a tremendous talent with a wonderfully warm and compassionate personality, a combination that is hard to beat. He deserves all the accolades."

-Herbie Hancock

"Those who remain oblivious to the obvious delights of Brian Auger's Oblivion Express do so at their own risk." **-The Beastie Boys**

My favorite rock artists are Van Morrison, Bonnie Raitt, Brian Auger and Loudon Wainwright." **-Mose Allison**

"When I first heard Brian's album 'Definitely What' I could not believe how ahead of its time it was. A visionary in his own time with music that still comes over fresh today – and he's still doing it just as great – keep up the good work mate!"

**-Simon Bartholomew
(The Brand New Heavies)**

"Brian – Brian Man, You're Crazy!"

-Jimmy Smith

"His power and love for the music was the foundation for one of the most memorable tours I have ever done. With his great solid foundation it made it possible for us to blow free. Brian is true inspiration to work with despite the fact that he is an Englishman! Brian is a bad mutha!!!"

-Les McCann

"Brian Auger is a superb technician on his instrument but he also plays with feeling that is a rarity. I am looking forward to recording with him in the near future."

-Eddie Harris

"Mr. Brian Auger is a personal friend and a great artist. I have had the opportunity to work with Brian just as a trio. He made his keyboard sound like a big band! He is a composer, arranger, complete keyboard player and a great accompanist. I enjoy playing with Brian – he can really make it happen."

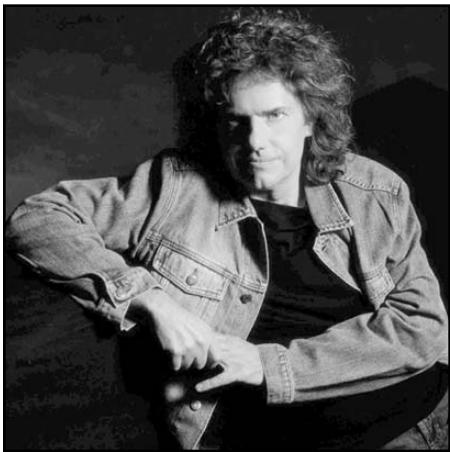
-Louis Bellson

"Brian is one of the originators of the high energy Hammond organ style along with Larry Young in the tradition of Jimmy Smith. I remember in the late sixties when Brian and I were in London together. Our paths crossed at different times both socially and also playing with the likes of Jimi Hendrix and the guys from Cream. I consider Brian a great friend and musician."

-Tony Williams

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Pat Metheny

**JazzFest presents
The Pat Metheny Trio
November 9 at Severance Hall**

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland and Jazz on the Circle present an evening with The Pat Metheny Trio at Severance Hall, 11001 Euclid Avenue, on Sunday, November 9 at 7:30 p.m. The award-winning guitarist will be joined by bassist Christian McBride and drummer Antonio Sanchez in a special acoustic trio concert.

Pat Metheny has achieved acclaim from critics and peers, winning countless polls as "Best Jazz Guitarist" and numerous gold records and Grammy awards for work in rock and jazz. Pat Metheny's body of work, as part of a writing team with keyboardist Lyle Mays, includes compositions for solo guitar, small ensembles, electric and acoustic instruments, large orchestras, and ballet pieces, with settings ranging from modern jazz to rock to classical.

In just the last decade, Christian McBride has arguably become the most acclaimed acoustic and electric bassist to emerge from the jazz world. In addition to his many solo recordings, McBride has been featured on over 200 recordings and has toured and/or recorded with artists such as David Sanborn, Chaka Khan, Ray Brown, George Benson, Diana Krall and Sting.

Drummer Antonio Sanchez, a native of Mexico, is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston. At the New England Conservatory in Boston, he studied with George Garzone and Danilo Perez. Sanchez has played with the late Dizzy Gillespie's United Nation Orchestra, John Patitucci's Quartet and Victor Mendoza, among others. He was first noticed by Pat Metheny while playing on a double bill in Europe with the Danilo Perez Trio.

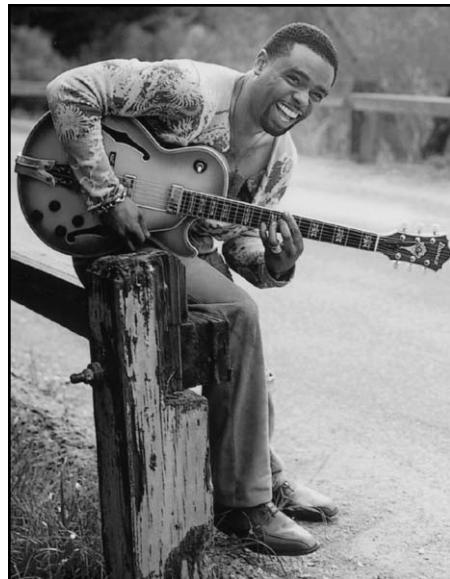
Tickets are on sale now for \$50/42.50/37.50, at the Severance Hall box office, or can be charged by phone by calling 216/231-1111 (toll free 800-686-1141). Order online at www.clevelandorchestra.com

BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

New Release blues.... Wrap up your summer with these hot new releases: Joe Krown- *Down & Dirty*; Various Artists- *Genuine Houserockin' Christmas*; Eric Bibb- *Natural Light*; Scott Ellison- *Bad Case of the Blues*; Tony Furtado- *Live Gypsy*; Los Straitjackets- *Supersonic Guitars in 3-D*; North Mississippi Allstars- *Polaris*; James "Blood" Ulmer- *No Escape from the Blues: The Electric Lady Sessions*; ZZ Top- *Mescalero*; Various Artists- *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues (Original Soundtrack recordings including : Feel Like Goin' Home; Piano Blues; The Soul of a Man; Warming By the Devil's Fire, Godfathers & Sons; Red, White & The Blues and The Road to Memphis)*; Blind Boys of Alabama- *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; Renee Austin- *Sweet Talk*; Big Dave- *Blues From the Middle*; Rory Block- *Last Fair Deal Gone Down*; Jay McShann- *Goin' to Kansas City*; Johnny B. Moore- *Rockin' in the Same Old Boat*; Big Bill Morganfield- *Blues in the Blood*; Duke Robillard- *Exalted Lover*; Bobby Rush- *Live at Ground Zero*; Muddy Waters- *Muddy "Mississippi" Waters- Legacy Edition*; Martin Scorsese presents the blues- single disc collections by *The Allman Brothers Band; Eric Clapton; Son House; Robert Johnson; Keb' Mo'; B.B. King; J.B. Lenoir; Taj Mahal; Stevie Ray Vaughan; Muddy Waters; Bessie Smith; Jimi Hendrix; Mississippi Fred McDowell- Heroes of the Blues: The Very Best of; Sonny Boy Williamson- Bluebird Blues: The Secret History of Rock & Roll; Various Artists- The Blues Came from Memphis; Various Artists- The Blues Came from Texas; Various Artists- Blues Guitar Heroes; Sister Rosetta Tharpe- The Gospel of the Blues; Dr. John- All By Himself: Live at the Lone Star '86; Albert King- Live '69; Robert Lockwood Jr- The Complete Trix Recordings; John Mayall- A hard Road- Blues Breakers with Peter Green; Maria Muldaur- The Very Best of; Joe Louis Walker- Heritage of the Blues; John Lee Hooker- End of the World Blues and, finally, Triple Trouble (Tommy Castro, Jimmy Hall and Lloyd Jones- backed by Reese Wynans, Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton of Double Trouble); Delbert McClinton- Live (two disc release recorded April 03).... That's it for this month. I need to squeeze those last couple of drops of sunshine out of summer!! See ya.*

September • October 2003 • Issue 264



Norman Brown

**Norman Brown
& Brian Culbertson
to play Allen Theatre September 18**

An enduring presence on the jazz charts and a bounty of industry awards characterize the careers of Norman Brown and Brian Culbertson, two smooth jazz artists who exemplify the mindset that musical adventure is as much about the journey as the destination. The Warner Bros. labelmates have teamed for a concert tour that will spotlight them at Playhouse Square's Allen Theatre, Thursday, September 18 for one 8 p.m. performance, where the hits of both artists will be showcased, as well as numbers from their latest albums: *Just Chillin'* (Brown) and *Come On Up* (Culbertson).

Guitarist Norman Brown is well known for powerful live performances that create a party-vibe, both onstage and in the audience. The fact his name is often mentioned in the same sentence as master guitarists Wes Montgomery and George Benson is ironic for Brown, who, at age eight, vowed to make the guitar his life after hearing the mind-exploding brilliance of Jimi Hendrix. It took Brown's steelworker father to steer his son to the equally life-changing influence of Wes Montgomery, which turned the boy's musical direction from rock to jazz.

On his way to becoming one of today's freshest and most innovative jazz/urban virtuosos, Brown added George Benson to his list of seminal influences. Motown Records liked what they heard, signed him, and his resulting three albums between 1992 & '96 all met with critical acclaim. A recording "lull" ensued until 2000 due to the guitarist's in-demand touring schedule... the same happy rea-



**September
5, 6, & 7, 2003**
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**Friday 3-11 PM, Saturday 10 AM - 11 PM,
Sunday 10 AM - 6 PM.**

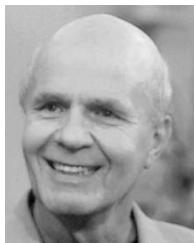


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Dr. Wayne Dyer



Neale Donald Walsch



Dr. William Glasser



Music & Chants by Wah!



Earnie Larsen

son a three-year recording hiatus preceded 2003's Just Chillin' CD.

Brian Culbertson's meteoric rise should not be mistaken for overnight success. Like Brown, Music 101 also began at age eight for Brian, first on piano. At age nine it was drums. Next came trombone at 10, followed by bass at 12.

As early as junior high, his talents as a writer were evident when his 7th grade piano recital consisted entirely of Brian's original compositions. A trumpet-playing, award-winning high school jazz band director was so impressed with Brian's music prowess, he allowed the pre-teen to build a recording studio in the director's basement. Never mind that the band director was also Brian's dad... he knew a rising star when he saw one. (The senior Culbertson was eventually rewarded twofold: by his son's success, and with a job...as one of the musicians in Brian's touring band)

Merging his enthusiasm for music with the emerging technology of computers, Brian became a high school student by day and a composer/producer by night, garnering a list of prestigious Downbeat student awards for trombone, piano and composition. By the time he was a 20-year-old college student, Brian was authoring commercial jingles for corporate giants the likes of McDonald's, Sears, United Airlines and Oldsmobile.

In 1994, he recorded his smooth jazz debut CD in a bedroom of the Chicago apartment he shared with three college buddies. Self-produced and unencumbered by industry expectations, Long Night Out was an instant sensation, spending 10 consecutive weeks in the Top 5 on the Contemporary Jazz Charts (two of those weeks at #2). That debut release spawned a run of chart-topping CDs and #1 singles. Seven album later, Brian enjoys success and stature as one of the most in-demand artists in the business for production and writing collaborations.

Tickets for the Brown/Culbertson concert are \$25 & \$30, on sale at Playhouse Square's Box Office; online at www.playhousesquare.com; tickets.com outlets at Tops Friendly Markets; by phone at 216 241-6000 or toll-free at 800-766-6048.)

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Back By Popular Demand! "The Song Is You" Presented by Tri-C JazzFest

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, with the support of WMRM 1420 Classic Pops AM and The Andrews Foundation, presents a second season of "The Song Is You". The five-part series will begin on Sunday, October 5th at 3 p.m., at the CCC Metro Campus Mainstage Theatre. Hosted by radio personality Bill Rudman and pianist Joe Hunter, the sessions will feature live music, recordings, videos and guest vocalists Susan Hesse, Barbara Knight, Erin Kufel, Vince Mastro and Evelyn Wright.

Admission is only \$10 at the door – no advance reservations necessary.

The Song Is You Program

SESSION 1: October 5 (3 PM)

Irving Berlin: The Proud Father of 20th Century Song Featuring vocalists Erin Kufel and Vince Mastro

SESSION 2: November 30 (3 PM)

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart:

It's Smooth, It's Smart, It's Rodgers and Hart Vocalist Barbara Knight

SESSION 3: January 11, 2004 (3 PM) Peggy Lee: The Art of the Singer

Up-close-and-personal look at the 50-year career of a legendary American singer, featuring rare film and interview clips

SESSION 4: March 4 (3 PM)

Cole Porter: Mr. Sophisticate

Featuring vocalist Susan Hesse

SESSION 5: April 18, (3 PM)

I Love The Blues – She Heard My Cry: The Impact of the Blues on American Popular Song Featuring vocalist Evelyn Wright

Directions and Parking: The CCC Metro Main Stage Theatre is located at 2900 Community College Avenue in downtown Cleveland. At Woodland Avenue, near East 30th, turn right into Entrance #6 for underground parking. Fifty cents (two quarters) will be needed to exit.

For more information, call 216/987-4400 or visit us online at www.tricjazzfest.com

About The Hosts

BILL RUDMAN is a music historian and broadcaster who specializes in classic American song. His radio program, "Life Is a Song" is heard on WMRM 1420 AM and his nationally syndicated "Footlight Parade" is carried locally both on WMRM and WCLV 104.9 FM.

JOE HUNTER is a versatile pianist who has performed with many national artists, including Ernestine Anderson, Buddy DeFranco and Scott Hamilton. He currently serves on the Jazz Studies Faculty of Cuyahoga Community College.

Jazz on the Circle

The ninth season of the award-winning Jazz on the Circle concert series will kick off in October. A collaboration between Severance Hall, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Northeast Ohio Jazz Society and Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, the seven-concert season features internationally-acclaimed guest artists.

Jazz on the Circle concerts are presented in Reinberger Chamber Hall and the Concert Hall at Severance Hall and in Gartner Auditorium at the Cleveland Museum of Art

The 2003-2004 season begins on October 12 with the Benny Green and Russell Malone Duo in Reinberger Chamber Hall at Severance Hall. Pianist Benny Green and guitarist Russell Malone have brought together a recording and touring project dedicated to the memory of the late jazz bassist Ray Brown. Compositions being performed include standard jazz tunes as Thelonious Monk's "Ask Me Now," Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low," Cannonball Adderley's "Wabash," Billy Strayhorn's "The Intimacy of the Blues," and John Coltrane's "Moment's Notice"/"Lazy Bird."

On November 9 Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland will present the Pat Metheny Trio with Christian McBride and Antonio Sanchez in Severance Hall's Concert Hall. Winner of countless polls as "Best Jazz Guitarist" and 14 Grammy Awards, Pat Metheny has performed with artists as diverse as Steve Reich, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Hancock and David Bowie. Metheny's body of work includes compositions for solo guitar, small ensembles, electric and acoustic instruments, large orchestras, and ballet pieces, with settings ranging from modern jazz to rock to classical.

On December 6 Paquito D'Rivera and New York Voices will present "Brazilian Dreams" in Gartner Auditorium at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Paquito D'Rivera's interest in vocal quartet music began in the 1960s in Havana, listening to radio programs on Miami's WQAM that featured wonderful vocal quartet harmony for commercials and station IDs. His fascination with Brazilian music also began around this time, coinciding with the Bossa Nova movement. D'Rivera had dreamed of one day incorporating his love of American vocal quartet music with the melodies and harmonies of his favorite Brazilian composers. With the help of the vocal stylings of New York Voices, D'Rivera's "Brazilian Dreams" have come true.

On January 17, 2004, Terence Blanchard will perform in Gartner Auditorium. One of the most important musicians, composers, and bandleaders of his generation, and winner of Down Beat magazine's Readers Poll in the Artist of the Year, Trumpeter of the Year, and Album of the Year (2000) categories, Terence Blanchard has also enjoyed success at the top of the Billboard jazz charts. He is a multi-Grammy Award nominee, most recently in 2002 for "Lost in a Fog" from his album Let's Get Lost. His latest release on Blue Note, entitled Bounce, consists of all original music.

On February 29 the Uri Caine Trio will perform in Reinberger Chamber Hall at Severance Hall. Uri Caine is a pre-eminent "straight ahead" jazz pianist and a "cutting edge" innovative pianist, musician, and composer who is not afraid to experiment with new forms. Utilizing instrumentalists, vocalists, assorted street sounds, and digital recording effects, Caine makes well-disciplined and well-thought-out music that cuts across all categories, encompassing jazz, classical, synthesizer, ethnic and religious music. In addition to his Jazz on the Circle performance, Uri Caine will make his Cleveland Orchestra debut as soloist in concerts on February 26, 28, and March 2, 2004,

when Franz Welser-Möst will conduct the United States premiere of Beethoven's Diabelli Variations in an arrangement for piano and orchestra by Uri Caine.

On March 13 the Caribbean Jazz Project will present a concert in the Art Museum's Gartner Auditorium. One of the most refreshingly innovative groups in Latin jazz today, the Caribbean Jazz Project never fails to surprise and delight listeners with their inspired melding of jazz and Latin music. Whether putting a fresh, Latin spin on jazz standards or bringing their compelling original compositions to life with distinctive artistry and virtuosity, the Caribbean Jazz Project has created a signature sound unlike any other group in Latin jazz.

The ninth season of Jazz on the Circle concludes on May 2 with the Jazz Across The Americas concert in the Reinberger Recital Hall at Severance Hall. The Jazz Across the Americas Concert is being co-curated by the Chicago Jazz Series, the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, Detroit Jazz Festival, Kuumbwa Jazz Center (Santa Cruz, CA), MCG Jazz, Monterey Jazz Festival, Syracuse JazzFest, Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, Vancouver International Jazz Festival/Coastal Jazz & Blues Society (Vancouver, B.C.), and "We

Always Swing" Jazz Series (Columbia, MO). The project will bring together artists from each region, forming an "all-star" ensemble to celebrate North America's rich musical history. The ensemble's repertoire will represent each region's connection and heritage to jazz. Jazz Across The Americas will premiere in Pittsburgh and will then appear in Cleveland for one day on the Jazz on the Circle series.

Series subscriptions for Jazz on the Circle 2003-2004 are currently on sale.

Single tickets for all Jazz on the Circle concerts go on sale Tuesday, September 2.

Tickets are available in person at the Severance Hall Ticket Office, by phone at (216) 231-1111 or 1-800-686-1141 or online at www.clevelandorchestra.com.

There are no added service charges for tickets purchased through the Severance Hall Ticket Office.

Jazz on the Circle is a collaboration between the Musical Arts Association, Cleveland Museum of Art, Northeast Ohio Jazz Society and Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland. Funding is provided by the Kulas Foundation and John P. Murphy Foundation.

Promotional support is provided by WCPN.

THE LEGEND continues

WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING ABOUT "The Music of Ernie Krivda" ON CADENCE JAZZ RECORDS

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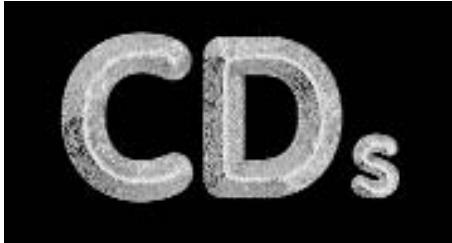
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TRUMPET

Bob Fraser
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BASS

Carmen Intorre
DRUMS



We Only Bring You
The Cream of the Crop

JOE LOVANO NONET On This Day...At the Vanguard BLUE NOTE

Captured in live performance on the final night of a week-long engagement at Manhattan's Village Vanguard, saxophonist Joe Lovano's Nonet delivers a sophisticated set of seven tunes by Tadd Dameron, John Coltrane, David Arksin, Billy Strayhorn and two Lovano originals. This is a communal effort with each player contributing top licks.

Three years after Lovano's first nonet album (the Grammy winner 52nd Street Themes), the leader and his cohorts pick up where they left off, expressing bebop, swing and boundary-stretching themes on arrangements by Lovano, Willie "Face" Smith and Steve Slagle.

The superb rhythm section of pianist John Hicks, bassist Dennis Irwin and drummer Lewis Nash, provides plenty of punch and artistry.

Horn players include trumpeter Barry Ries, trombonist Larry Farrell, alto saxist Steve Slagle, tenor saxophonists George Garzone and Ralph Lalama, and baritone sax man Scott Robinson, all solid innovators and/or leaders on the New York City scene.

One of Lovano's best performances is his expressive, dreamy solo on Coltrane's "After the Rain," arranged by Slagle. Smith's smooth, tight arrangements and Lovano's prime solos on Dameron's "Focus" and "Good Bait" rank among the best highlights.

Throughout, Lovano solos with finesse but doesn't hog the spotlight. Rather, he (and the other soloists) enhance well-chosen tunes and attractive arrangements to make this a pleasurable listen from start to finish.

Nancy Ann Lee

EDDY "THE CHIEF" CLEARWATER FEATURING LOS STRAITJACKETS Rock 'N' Roll City BULLSEYE BLUES & JAZZ

Eddy Clearwater came upon his name playing upon the stage name of Chicago superstar, and local 1960's competitor, Muddy Waters.

Any one with a knack like this could be expected to have a light-hearted nature, and the blues-meets-country guitarist/singer usually delivers this nature on disc, *Rock 'N' Roll City* is no exception.

A couple of nicely done minor-key tracks aside, this is an easy-goin' set of party rock with deep roots overtones. Residing somewhere between Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Gatemouth Brown, Clearwater's playfulness and throwback sensibilities mesh well with the roots instrumentalist Straitjackets.

No brilliant moments, perhaps, but fun and entertaining.

Duane Verh

JACO PASTORIUS BIG BAND Word of Mouth Revisited HEADS UP

The Peter Graves Orchestra, renamed "the Jaco Pastorius Big Band" for this venture, invites some of the finest electric bass players on the contemporary jazz scene as guest artists to perform Jaco Pastorius' music. Bassists Victor Bailey, Richard Bona, Jeff Carswell, Jimmy Haslip, Christian McBride, Marcus Miller, David Pastorius (Jaco's nephew), Gerald Veasley and Victor Wooten are backed by a noteworthy orchestra and additional guests.

This 14-musician tribute band devoted to the legacy of the legendary bassist is the life-long project of trombonist/conductor Graves, who first hired the late Jaco Pastorius in 1971 for a five-year stint as bassist with his orchestra, then the house band at Bachelors III in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Graves' orchestra served as the foundation for Pastorius to explore his brilliance and talents as writer and arranger.

The 13 tracks featured span most of Pastorius' diverse and prolific

career, from his early years with Graves' orchestra, to reformist forays with Weather report and his own Word of Mouth Band. One of Jaco's favorite Herbie Hancock tunes, "Wiggle Waggle," features Graves' current lineup playing around a bass track originally live-recorded by Pastorius at a Sanibel Island gig in the late 1970s. Other selections are "Teen Town," featuring Wooten; "Punk Jazz" starring Bona; "Barbary Coast" and "Elegant People" spotlighting Veasley; "Continuum" highlighting Haslip; and more. While all of the bass soloists satisfy listener expectations, other highlights include an awesome tenor sax solo by Ed Calle on the brisk-paced "Domingo" and solos by Mike Levine (piano) and Billy Ross (piccolo) on the racing "(Used to Be A) Cha Cha."

An added bonus to this exciting album is that it's an enhanced CD which also contains videos, artist profile and more. The liner booklet contains photos and extensive biographical notes, comments from Graves and Sound Consultant Larry Warrilow (Graves' first guitarist who wrote arrangements in synergistic collaboration with Jaco), and historical details about each tune. Seven interlude tracks feature Jaco's actual spoken comments.

This is an exceptionally appealing album. One can only hope The Jaco Pastorius Big Band will continue on (much like the Mingus Big Band) to perform Pastorius's charts and to write new compositions in the spirit of the legendary bassist. For more information on Jaco, visit the official website, www.jacopastorius.com.

Nancy Ann Lee

CLASSIC BLUES ON A BUDGET 50th Anniversary Super Savers DELMARK

In its continuing celebration of a half-century of blues and jazz recording, this sturdy Chicago-based label has released several budget-priced discs highlighting specific genres and styles contained in their venerable catalog. Each one covered here provides nice glimpses into its specialty and makes for a nice gateway to the specific turf they cover.

For those who got caught up in the 90's "swing" scene- actually a "jump" movement- the fare on *For Jumpers*

Only may frame that sound in a smoother, less frenetic setting than that of last decade's revivalists. In addition, jazz fans may figure out how many a solid post-WW II jazzman made a living playing for dance crowds in between "real" jazz gigs. There's plenty of quality blowing from the likes of Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb and others. The eventual transit of jump to r&b is indicated on vocalist Erline Harris's track.

The second full generation of Chicago blues flourished on that town's West Side in the 1960's and Delmark was well-represented with the likes of the splendid late guitarist/vocalists Magic Sam and Luther Allison. Also notable on *West Side Chicago Blues* is a raucous live track from Otis Rush and some nonsense instrumental work from guitarist Jimmy Dawkins.

Blues From Up The Country features nice sides by Robert Nighthawk and Big Joe Williams and a couple of spirited takes from the trio of Sleepy John Estes, mandolinist Yank Rachell and harmonica player Hammie Nixon. While not definitive anthologies of these diverse styles, these discs are great samplers and, perhaps most importantly, very listenable stand-alone sets.

Duane Verh

PAT METHENY One Quiet Night Solo Baritone Guitar WARNER BROS.

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Element 1, the baritone guitar, originally made in the late 50s by Danelectro. It differs from a standard guitar in that it is tuned a fifth lower,. This allows you to play bass and chords on the same instrument giving the player a wide range of harmonic possibilities.

Element 2, Pat Metheny, made in the early 50s by Dave and Lois. He differs from the standard guitar player in that he possess superior skills, imagination, and knows how to make use of a wide range of harmonic possibilities.

It all happened in late November of 2002 in his home studio in New York. The recording, not intended for release, was just an evening of playing for himself and experimenting around. Remembering a low Nashville tuning that he had worked with years ago on the tune "The Search", and his newly acquired baritone guitar, made by Canadian luthier Linda Manzer. The

recording was simply one of those... gee I wonder what this will do. So with one mic, one guitar and one guitar player, and little-to-no studio effects or processing, One Quiet Night Solo Baritone Guitar was born, and is quite the peaceful journey exploring the rich, natural tones and subtones of the instrument.

Consisting of some new compositions and familiar Metheny tunes including a cool version of Last Train Home, he also includes the Keith Jarrett tune My Song, the very popular Don't Know Why written by Jesse Harris and popularized by Norah Jones, as well a classic golden oldie of Gerry and the Pacemakers, Ferry Cross the Mersey – probably my favorite on the disc.

Metheny said "There are occasional flaws in the tuning and the recording itself - it was intended for nothing more than my own research and the pleasure of playing at home one night," which is kind of one of the things I like about it. You can hear him working through the tunes and get a bit if a glimpse into the musical thought process. It's also like having your friend Pat come over to your house and just start noodling around on his guitar, and you just sit there and drift away.....

Jim Martin

ANSON FUNDERBURGH AND THE ROCKETS

Which Way Is Texas? BULLSEYE BLUES AND JAZZ

After a four year recording hiatus, Anson Funderburgh and crew deliver the raw boned Texas blues and fifties style rock that have kept them on the road for twenty five years. True to form, the band relies on substance and finesse rather than instrumental flash to make its point.

While Funderburgh can bend the strings with the best of them he's content to fill in the spaces around vocalist Sam Myers' harmonica, Gentleman John Street's stinging piano and the brassy horn charts laid down by The Texas Horns (Mark Kazanoff on tenor and alto sax, John Mills on baritone sax and Gary Slechta on trumpet). That's not to say that he's a mere rhythm player here- cuts like *Can We Get Together* and *Toss and Turn* prove to the contrary.

It's simply that that this is a band, not a guitar solo project where the other musicians simply provide a backdrop for endless soloing. With echos of Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker fueling much of the sound, Myers regales listen-

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ers with tales about getting rid of a no good woman, *Some Sunny Day* which features some fine single string soloing by Funderburg, the celebration the ladies throw when he's back in town, *Hoodoo Party*, which is driven by New Orleans style piano, and the time that is wasted if growing up means all you have left to do is get old, *Don't Turn the Child away from Heaven*.

As an added treat for longtime fans

the disc features Funderburg's first recorded vocals on *one Woman I Need* and *Toss and Turn* both of which reveal that he could keep the Rockets in flight should Myers be unable to suit up for a gig.

Overall, another fine release from this veteran band. **Mark Smith**

SHIRLEY HORN May the Music Never End VERVE

Vocalist/pianist Shirley Horn recently faced major surgery that prevents her from playing the piano on this (her seventh) Verve recording. Hence, Horn focuses on singing with piano support from George Mesterhazy (9 tracks) and guest Ahmad Jamal (2 tracks). Bassist Ed Howard and drummer Steve Williams round out the rhythm team and Roy Hargrove guests on flugelhorn on two tracks.

Horn has a distinctive vocal style that's been lauded by critics and other vocalists as "the personification of the word 'cool,'" "the preeminent jazz vocalist of her generation," and "the sexiest voice alive." Indeed, whether Horn's singing a ballad or a swinging blues number, she delicately shapes each song for peak emotional impact.

Spanning the decades, she's select-

ed all-time favorites such as John Lennon's "Yesterday," Duke Ellington's "Take Love Easy," the Ray Evans-Jay Livingston standard, "Never Let Me Go," and more. Alone worth the album price is her near-whispered, impassioned interpretation of the familiar Jacques Brel tune, "If You Go Away." Horn totally reinvents the standard, "Everything Must Change," which features her nearly spoken lyrics against pulsing rhythms. Hargrove's warm flugelhorn fills and solo on Harold Arlen's "I'll Wind" add beautifully to Horn's heartfelt lyrics.

Horn and colleagues turn each song into a treasure. These musicians are pros who never disturb the steamy, torchy moods of Horn's songs, especially Mesterhazy who plays softly and sensitively (as Horn would have supported herself). This is a gorgeous, laid-back album.

Nancy Ann Lee

CHRIS CAIN Hall Of Shame BLUE ROCKIT

Like Robben Ford, Chris Cain is a guitarist that successfully straddles between blues and fusion music. Cain, especially, has shown a knack for blending both in the same tune both as player and composer. *Hall Of Shame* finds Cain at the top of his game. It might be

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his best solo effort to date.

With a laid-back keys & rhythm trio in tow, Cain consistently maintains a breezy groove while keeping the "blues" aspect credible with solid, inventive solo choruses. Anchoring the proceedings also are his savvy, usually "noir"-shaded lyrics. This is truly *contemporary blues*.

Cain's voice has reached a nice, mature point as well. Strong tracks here include the leadoff "First Time For Everything", a tribute to Albert King—"The World Got The Blues before Sunrise" and the very Ray Charles-like title track, which also features nice piano from Tony Lufrano. Nice job.

Duane Verh

KURT ELLING

Man in the Air BLUE NOTE

Vocalist Kurt Elling maintains his edge of excellence, writing and singing lyrics to tunes by an array of jazz artists, and contributing one original. On his sixth Blue Note recording, he performs with Laurence Hobgood (piano, Rhodes electric piano), Rob Amster (bass), Frank Parker, Jr. (drums, percussion) and guests Stefon Harris (vibes), Jim Gailloro (soprano sax). Drummer Paul Wertico and Brad Wheeler sit in on the mood-shifting opener, "Minuano," a Pat Metheny/Lyle Mays tune.

Elling's aim for this project was "to address a broad array of experiences...like a walk through an aural art gallery." One of the best tunes is the William Eaton piece, "In the Winelight," a romantic number enhanced by Harris's solo and a funky backbeat. Expressing spirituality, Elling sings hornlike lines, meeting the challenge of Coltrane's powerful, winding tune, "Resolution," which also spotlights a fine piano solo from Hobgood. Elling's original, "The More I Have You," with vocalese sections, captures the essence of his unique style.

There are plenty of highlights as Elling adds flair to other delectable tunes by Josef Zawinul, Herbie Hancock, Courtney F. Pine, Bobby Watson, Bob Mintzer and others, including the title tune by Hobgood.

Elling's a true poet and you'll want to absorb his lyrics through repeated play.

You may also want to check out his official website, www.kurtelling.com, to read his lyrics.

Nancy Ann Lee

Jazz & Blues Report

CANDYE KANE

Whole Lotta Love RUF RECORDS

On her debut Ruf Records release(after a long stint on the Bullseye label) blues belter Candy Kane rips and roars her way through 13 cuts about the joys of both quick carnal pleasure and longer term emotional attachment. As with her prior efforts Kane uses blues, rock, gospel and soul as the musical vehicles for her tales. While some of the tales have been told before such as the seemingly mandatory tale about the virtues of her plus size *Fit, Fat & Fine*, and *Going Back Where I Belong*, a quick reminder of her bi-sexuality, everything here is delivered with Kane's typical passion and wit.

What sets this disc apart from some of its predecessors is her inclusion of cuts that stretch her stylistic boundaries even more than usual. Ragtime piano fuels *I'm Not Getting Older* with funk finding its way into the mix on *I Got A Secret*, a tale about one sided love driven by scratch guitar and horns.

What's That I Smell is another well executed excursion into new territory with its piedmont style acoustic blues about cheatin' delivered as a duet with Charlie Musselwhite. Kane even picks up the late night torch on the slow, sultry *When the Hangover Strikes* which sounds like something off a Dinah Washington disc but with lyrics that only Candy would pen.. More typical of her prior discs are the rocking *I'm A Sucker* and the cheater's tale, *27 Times*, the straight blues of *A Lion In My House* and the slinky harmonica driven *Put It All In There*, a song about males of, well, various sizes. The title cut is a straight out rock and roll reading of the Led Zeppelin classic. Wrapping up the stylistic journey are the wonderful Memphis gospel meets Philly soul of *Wrap Around Joy* and *Something's Got a Hold on Me*. Overall, this is another fine release by an artist that deserves wider attention in the blues world.

Mark Smith

ROSA PASSOS & RON CARTER Entre Amigos (Among Friends) CHESKY

Singer Rosa Passos, bassist Ron Carter, guitarist Lula Galvao, percussionist Paulo Braga and Billy Drewes (tenor sax and clarinet) serve up 11 Brazilian jazz tunes for a mellow, intimate set reminiscent of Astrud Gilberto performance-

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es.

Passos is the star and, with the exception of Drewes who solos on a couple of tracks, the other musicians mostly provide accompaniment on this recital-like performance featuring vocals, guitar and bass.

Compositions by Brazilian singer/songwriter Antonio Carlos Jobim predominate and include all-time favorites such as "Desafinado," "Insensatez," and "Garota de Ipanema." Most tunes were arranged by Galvao, as he's the one who mainly takes the melody lead. Passos arranged four songs. One of the prettiest Jobim numbers, "Eu Sei Que Vou Te Amar," is gracefully enhanced by Drewes' clarinet playing.

There's not much new happening here yet Passos's soft vocals, backed with guitar, bass and percussion (and tenor sax or clarinet on some tracks), provide an alluring and pleasant listen. Liner notes by Chip Stern reveal no biographical information about this lovely singer or how the session came about. So you'll have to just kick back, listen, and let the music speak for itself.

Nancy Ann Lee



BIG BILL MORGANFIELD

Blues In The Blood

BLIND PIG

Big Bill's lineage must be both blessing and curse. Being Muddy's progeny obviously gained him attention, but the inevitable comparisons to his dad must be a load as well. If anything, Big Bill as a composer these days probably bears more similarity to John Lee Hooker than Muddy. The single-riff motifs of most of *Blues In The Blood* bear this out and, whatever his actual influences are, it's refreshing to hear Big Bill reaching for his own voice.

Much of the success of this disc, and it is a good one, is to the variety of backdrops Bill's band provides. Thanks in great measure to multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Vivino (guitar, keyboards and mandolin), the sound moves from classic Chicago to Delta and back, which keeps things consistently fresh. Check it out.

Duane Verh

GATO BARBIERI

THE SHADOW OF THE CAT

PEAK/CONCORD

Released in 2002, this one slipped through the cracks somehow and finally surfaced. Oh well, it happens.

Gato certainly has changed since his early days playing avant-garde in the tradition of Pharoah and Coltrane. Unless one is really into honking and screeching, his best work is still on the Impulse! and Flying Dutchman labels from the early seventies. In 1976 he released Caliente, crossing over into commercial territories. That album included his version of Carlos Santana's "Europa," which those who listen to Wave stations around the country might think is the only song Barbieri ever recorded. He kept recording discs in the same vein, but could never really top Caliente for a crossover venture. Many of his albums since, in fact, have been downright lame.

The Shadow of the Cat is still mellow Gato indeed, but it is very tastefully done without the overproduction we've become accustomed to. You might call it Latin jazz for lovers (or those trying to head in that direction on a particular night) as most of the cuts are ballads and very listenable. One is kind of R&B-ish, with Cassandra Reed singing vocals. Sheila E plays congas and percussion on much of the disc (that is a good thing) and you actually hear real drummers and percussionists throughout, except

for Last Tango (Theme from Last Tango in Paris) which has the programmed machine stuff, though I must admit - it is well done. Gato is his passionate Latin-self throughout no matter what the groove might be.

In short, still on the more commercial side of things, but a good listen for the casual or light jazz fan and very nicely done.

Bill Wahl

JANIVA MAGNESS

Use What You Got

BLUES LEAF RECORDS3

As on her prior release, West Coast blues chanteuse, Janiva Magness, has assembled an enjoyable collection of tunes that cover a broad range of styles. With a stellar band including husband Jeff Turmes on bass on saxophone, Zach Zunis on guitar, David Kida on drums, Andy Kaulkin on piano and organ and David Woodford on saxophone, she takes on fifties style rock and roll ballads, *I'm Not Ashamed and Who Will the Next Fool Be?*, rumba, *I'm Lost Without You*, slow, seamy grinders, *Stormy Blues*, Memphis style R & B, *All Night Worker*, rocking blues, *Find a Fool* and *Matchbox* and horn drenched big band style blues, *Who's Gonna Help a Brother Get Further*.

Her strong voice, which occasionally recalls Angela Strehli, is a fitting vehicle for this broad array of styles and she delivers each cut with enough conviction to make the tunes her own. A fine release worthy of your attention.

Mark Smith

JAMES BLOOD ULMER

No Escape From The Blues: The Electric Lady Sessions

HYENA

In late summer 2001, this one-time Ornette Coleman sideman released one of the most exciting blues records of the past several years. Produced by Living Colour guitarist/bandleader Vernon Reid, *Memphis Blood: The Sun Sessions* was a collection of vintage blues standards running the spectrum from the Delta to Chicago. The energy and intensity of that set was nothing short of phenomenal, owing as much it seemed to freewheeling free-jazz roots as blues; two genres that share more than a little attitudinal kinship.

Ulmer and Reid are back with a worthy follow-up. The earthy, hoodoo-rich atmosphere of *No Escape* is sometimes

light, as on classics such as Jimmy Reed's "Bright Lights, Big City", sometimes brooding, such as on Ulmer's "Are You Glad To Be In America?" and always most original in character. Ulmer is establishing himself as a truly individual interpreter of blues, both as a gritty vocalist and a roots-conscious guitar improviser. Collaborator Reid adds fiery instrumental contrast as does the edgy, ferocious work of electric fiddler Charlie Burnham. This is not gimmicky stuff. In order to keep the genre from dissolving entirely into blues-rock, Ulmer's is the type of jolt blues can use. Run this one down.

Duane Verh

RENEE ROSNES/DANISH RADIO BIG BAND BLUE NOTE

An exciting journey for listeners, this seems to be a giant leap for Rosnes, the composer. Her piano chops have long been established in small groups and she possesses a confident style that's always full of surprises. Throughout her career, Rosnes has recorded with small groups. Her most significant experience with a large band developed in the early 1990s when she became the pianist for the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band for the next decade.

Jim McNeely directs the Danish Radio Big Band on this first recording featuring pianist Rosnes performing six of her own compositions and two other tunes. Her eighth Blue Note release, the CD launches with "Ancestors," an energetic foray for the full orchestra as well as Rosnes's gutsy improvisations spiked with the driving percussive artistry of Ethan Weisgaard. The fun-filled "Bulldog Chicken Run," a homage to bassist Ray Drummond (AKA "Bulldog") known for his food runs during set breaks, was originally a small group recording. These two pieces were arranged by Michael Mossman. McNeely arranged "Black Holes," a piece that begins eerily then shifts to brisk bopping tempos. Recorded by Rosnes on her CD, As We Are Now, the tune is mastered beautifully here. Two other Rosnes compositions, "Orion's Belt" and "The Quiet Earth" are equally enticing. "Lament" by J. J. Johnson is given a Latin flavor and "Early One Morning" is a reinvented traditional English melody Rosnes heard while growing up in Canada.

These are some of the most haunting and extraordinary big band arrangements you'll ever hear. McNeely evokes plenty of emotion from the band musicians and Rosnes's compositions will touch your heart.

Nancy Ann Lee

ROD PIAZZA Modern Master The Best Of Rod Piazza 1968-2003 TONE COOL

To say that Rod Piazza knows his way around the harmonica is like saying that B.B. King is a pretty good blues guitarist. In both cases the understatement is so far off the mark as to be insulting. Simply put, Piazza, like King, is one of the preeminent forces on his instrument of choice and will long be cited as the inspiration for the next several generations of players.

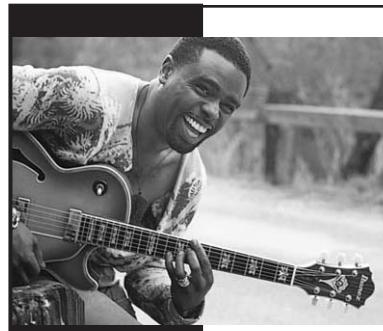
This two disc, 29 track, release traces Piazza's development from early Chicago blues disciple to his present status as West Coast blues legend. Those that are late to the game will find the cuts from his early releases with the Dirty Blues Band, Bacon Fat and the Chicago Flying Saucer Band, where he performed under names like *Lightnin' Rod*, *Record Party Ron* and *Rod Gingerman* Piazza, to be particularly interesting with their focus on the straight Chicago blues of Willie Dixon, Little Walter and

Sonny Boy Williamson.

Given Piazza's current rich catalog of self-penned numbers it is interested in hear him breaking into the blues following the same cover tune route as virtually every artist that has picked up an instrument. Sentimental favorites from this early period include his duets with mentor George "Harmonica" Smith who appears on the Bacon Fat tune *Up the Line*, the Chicago Flying Saucer Band tune, *Talk to Your Daughter* and on his own release *Help Me*. Proving that Smith taught him well, Piazza soon found his way into the featured harmonica slot on recordings by the likes of the legendary Jimmy Rogers, Pee Wee Crayton and Shakey Jake some of which are included here.

Also of note from the early days are the cuts credited to the Mighty Flyers including *Shot From the Saddle*, *Blues For Honey*, *P.S. I Love You* and *Texas Twister* which feature Junior Watson on guitar and show flashes of originality but with a harder Chicago edge than the swinging upbeat West Coast sound that would come to mark the work of the band after it was renamed Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers. The second disc showcases the various incarnations of the Piazza led Mighty Flyers. Fans will rejoice at the inclusion of cuts from the hard to find Murray Brothers releases, Harpburn and So Glad to Have the Blues. Also included is an unreleased live cut from the W.C. Handy Awards as well as a smoking version of *Chicken Shack Boogie* recorded at the same show that produced the band's sadly out of print, *Live at B.B. King's*.

Working through the striking original material on disc two, it is easy to see why Piazza individually and the Mighty Flyers



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as a band have won countless blues awards over the past few years. The tunes are well written and the band is simply top notch. While Piazza would sound great fronting anyone, the fact is that he has always had one of the best blues bands around including his wife, Honey Piazza, who channels Otis Spann into her piano, rock steady bassist Bill Stuve and a host of first call guitarists and drummers including Junior Watson, Hollywood Fats, Alex Schultz, Rick Holmstrom, Jimi Bott and Steve Mugalian.

This release is a must have for any fan of harmonica blues. *Mark Smith*

GREG OSBY St. Louis Shoes BLUE NOTE

On his latest recording for Blue Note, alto saxophonist Greg Osby reinvents nine tunes by other composers rather than introducing originals as he has in the past.

In the latter 1970s, then teenage Osby played after-hours weekend jobs in St. Louis, and after the sets ended in the wee hours of the morning, they'd cross the bridge into East St. Louis, Illinois and jam from 2 to 6 a.m. This period contributed to his education about Mississippi River blues culture, from which he draws minimally for this project featuring performances with sidemen Nicholas Payton (trumpet, flugelhorn),

Harold O'Neal (Piano), Robert Hurst (bass) and Rodney Green (drums).

Don't be misled by the album title to expect bluesy expressions and down-home beats. The leader has "heavily rearranged" familiar tunes. Osby is a modernist whose interpretations lean to a heady, urban side despite selected tunes by Duke Ellington ("East St. Louis Toodle-Oo"), Gillespie-Parker ("Shaw Nuff") and others. Gershwin's "Summertime" receives a restless, edgy re-invention that loses most of its original flavor. The finale, "St. Louis Blues," is given a slow, drawling treatment with an ultra modern edge.

Osby's talented and inventive, as are his cohorts. Yet, there's something missing from this cerebral session – perhaps warm accessibility or a stronger essence of the St. Louis spirit he claims as inspiration.

Nancy Ann Lee

EDDIE PALMIERI Ritmo Caliente CONCORD PICANTE

A master of Latin and Afro-cuban jazz and salsa, pianist Eddie Palmieri delivers 11 tracks of "hot rhythms" on his second recording for Concord. Seven of the eleven tunes are written by Palmieri and most of the tracks are delightful, harmonious mambos. Palmieri leads from the piano and takes confident, sturdy solos. Some are old tunes revisited and performed with a full complement of

musicians.

Outstanding musicianship is really what makes this album. Among name players are Brian Lynch (first trumpet), Conrad Herwig and Chris Washburne (trombones). Flutists Karen Joseph and Eddy Zervigon serve up appealing solos on some tunes. Lead vocals by Herman Olivera dress up "La Voz del Caribe," "Lazaro y su Microfono," "Ritmo Caliente II," "Dime," and "Lo Que Triago es Sabroso II." The rousing "Billie," a homage to Billie Holiday, features horn-section layering much like the Tito Puente band. One of the tunes that best demonstrates Palmieri's breadth is "Tema para Renee," a strings-laced, languorous piece dedicated to Palmieri's eldest daughter (who was named after composer Rene Hernandez, the genius of Machito's band). Another enterprising showpiece is Palmieri's "Gigue (Bach goes Bata)" which comfortably shifts back and forth between European classical and Afro-Cuban beats.

With the exception of a couple of tracks, this is a beat-driven party album that should have you up and dancing.

Nancy Ann Lee

BLUES SHORTS

BY MARK A. COLE

Sonny Landreth The Road We're On Sugar Hill Records

The slide master, Sonny Landreth, is at it again. The Louisiana bluesman was born in Mississippi, but he's called the "King of Slydeco". The cd boasts special guests, including Bonnie Raitt. The cajun songlist is comprised of a bunch of gems. "All About You" is a mover, so is "Gemini Blues." You'll enjoy this, especially if you're a slide fanatic.

WALKIN' CANE 702 UNION AVE. LAZY-EYE RECORDS

One of Cleveland's classy bluesmen, Austin Charanghat /Walkin' Cane is promoting one helluva album. The disc is acoustic, and the artist really stretches the strings. On loan from his band, the Cane plucks and oozes the blues. Songs are culled from Robert Johnson, Big Arthur Crudup, Snooks Eaglin, and Walkin' own. His baritone voice will knock you out!

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Lou Pride
The Memphis/El Paso Sessions
Severn Records

The soulster Lou Pride is revised and revived. Vibrant horns and the voice of Pride make a potent mix. These sessions are subtitled; The Memphis/El Paso Sessions 1970-73. Lou's take on James Brown's "It's A Man's Man's Man's World" is astounding, as is the following "Work For Love." Kudos to Severn Records for unearthing these treasures.

Phillip Walker
The Best Of Phillip Walker
Hightone Records

One of swingingest guitars that you are gonna hear in blues, Phillip Walker was born in Louisiana and moved on to Texas. Phillip was employed by Clifford Chenier and he's been recorded by numerous labels – to name a few; Playboy, Vault, Fantasy, Joliet, Rounder, and now Hightone. Betcha you don't know he wrote "Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark," popularized by Robert Cray; yep, Phillip Walker. Special guests include Jimmy Vaughan and the Memphis Horns.

Michael Hill's Blues Mob
Electric Storyland Live
Ruf Records

Electric Storyland Live is indeed absolutely live. The Blues Mob is a crackin' ensemble that is a trio now. This cd is a double threat in that it's a double cd. The successive shows were a weekend treat for the respective audiences. Many of Michael's songs have become classics before their time. You couldn't forget "Monticello Night," or "New York State Of The Blues." Hill's a contemporary bluesman that's mowing down the competition.

Jessie Mae Hemphill
Shake It Baby
Hightone Records

With musicologist Dr. David Evans at the helm, Jesse Mae Hemphill had a great release but it got lost by the wayside. These sessions are from 1980 to 1988. The woo-ful "Shame On You" sparkles. Jessie Mae, Dr. Evans, and band recorded this at various locales in Mississippi. Her music is almost hypnotic with a droning beat. See for yourself; rant and rave!


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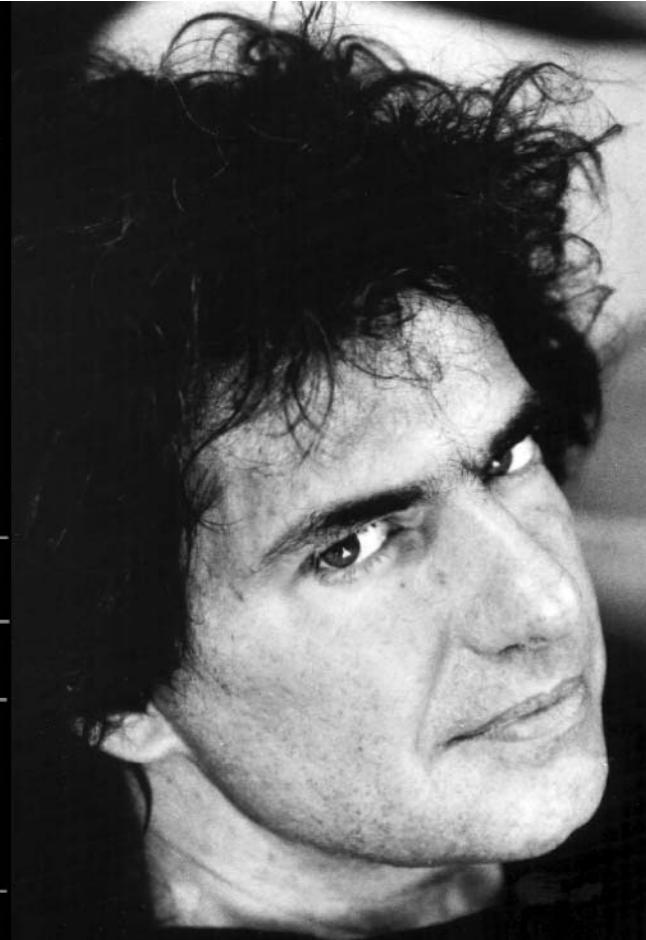
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