

JAZZ PROFILE

JAZZ BLUES R&B CONTEMPORARY STYLE

December 2008
Complimentary Copy

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& THE
FINER
THINGS

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COVER SHOT

Clipper Anderson

INTERVIEW BY DAVID KEYS
PHOTOS BY STEVE KORN



What's so special about jazz?

The improvisation, freedom, conversation and interaction...the rush you get from a group of musicians intuitively going in the same direction spontaneously.

Which styles of jazz are you most and least connected with?

My tastes are rather eclectic. I'm known as a straight-ahead player, but I have trouble with labels. In reality, I've played, recorded and enjoyed different styles ranging from outside and free jazz to mainstream and smooth jazz.

Tell us about some of the international jazz legends have you worked with.

Since 1990 I've had the privilege and honor of playing what's now known as the Buddy DeFranco Festival at the University of Montana. In addition to playing with Buddy, I've played with Phil Woods, Bucky Pizzarelli, Bob Mintzer, Paquito D'Rivera, New York Voices, Michael and Randy Brecker, Eddie Daniels, Peter Erskine, Bob Berg, James Moody and Terry Gibbs, to name a few. Coming up this season I'll be playing with Benny Golson, David Samuels, Randy Sandke and Steve Smith.

You are known as a supreme soloist. How did you develop your unique style?

Of course, it's a combination of things, but I guess I was drawn to bass players who didn't necessarily solo like bass players—people like Nils Peterson, Stanley Clarke, Eddie Gomez and Scott LaFaro, and, of course, Jaco. As a result, when I'm soloing, I don't even consider that I'm playing a bass at that moment. I'm playing the voice I hear in my head at the time. It could be an influence from another instrument entirely or even a voice. In other words, I was not interested in limiting my soloing to what a "bass solo" is commonly expected to sound like. If you're going to push the boundaries of the bass as a solo instrument you have to think outside the stereotype.

Who is your favorite living vocalist?

Well, that's tough question. A lot of my favorites are gone. It's hard to replace Frank. I work with a lot of my favorite vocalists right now.

Tell us about your latest recording.

The latest release that I'm a part of and feel very proud of is pianist/composer Darin Clendenin's CD, *Revenir*, on Jazzproject.com, featuring Darin, Mark Ivester on drums and myself. And Greta's new CD will be coming out in May 2009 on Resonance Records. I will also be recording two CDs of my own this next year, one vocal and one instrumental.

What was your academic/musical background like?

I had about a year of piano lessons in third grade, which ended abruptly because the teacher couldn't handle a student who played by ear. I started on trumpet in fifth grade, switched to French horn in

sixth grade and started on electric bass my senior year in high school. I went to the University of Montana to study French horn and came out as a bass player.

Are you teaching?

Yes, I do teach privately and am currently on the faculty of PLU.

Are you using any cutting-edge techniques in your approach to teaching music? What is the most unique aspect of your teaching method?

Sometimes, without the use of an accompaniment recording, I will sing along with my students to have them understand the intricacies of working on the bandstand in such a situation. That requires them to construct an intro and an ending and to hear the missing harmonies and rhythms without the crutch of piano, guitar and drums—to make a complete performance out of it. This makes them less dependent on their fellow musicians and requires that they really know the piece.

Why is music so important in the human experience?

It's a universal language and is as powerful as the senses in imprinting memory. I believe it has healing and cathartic powers.

Have you ever been put down by a teacher or other musicians?

I don't really have any stories of that nature. The general fickleness of the scene gets to me sometimes. I'm sure there are some incidents, but I've never seen the value in rehashing them.

Do you have perfect pitch? If so, how may a person develop it?

Well according to my second year theory teacher, I do have perfect pitch. However, I think I have very good relative pitch. Perfect pitch seems to me to be a possibly uncomfortable gift to have.

How important is having perfect pitch when it comes to total freedom during improvisation?

I don't think it has much bearing on or is necessary for improvisation.

How can jazz grow a new fan base?

If an audience sees nothing else, if they see the joy

in what you're playing, that is a triumph!

Why does Ray Brown occupy an important position in the history of jazz?

Ray was an innovator on all aspects of the bass. He set the "walking" standard. He is the reference for the walking bass-line today. He's a part of all jazz bass players.

Tell us something special about jazz vocalist Greta Matassa that most people don't know. She warms up to Barbra Streisand and Frank Sinatra while she lifts free-weights. And she likes fly-fishing, David Attenborough, Charles Dickens and Agatha Christie.

Are you and Greta planning on getting married?

You mean we're not? We will, sometime when the mood strikes us both. We're very happy as we are.

What do you do to refresh your mind, body and soul?

I run, play basketball, take vitamins and occasionally go fishing when I can.

Finish this statement: The only way I would quit performing is if...

I stopped using a metronome when I warm up!

What do you want people to remember about you and your music?

That I never "mailed in" a gig.

Give us your performance schedule for the next two months.

Dec. 2-6, 7 p.m., The Group Get's into the Act, the Act Theater

Sunday, Dec. 7, 6-9 p.m., Greta Matassa Quartet featuring saxophonist Gary Scott, Dockside Bistro, 501 Columbia Street NW, Olympia, Washington, (360) 956-1928, docksidebistro@msn.com

Dec. 8, 7:30-11:30 p.m., Darin Clendenin vocal jam, Tula's, 2214 2nd Ave., Seattle WA, (206) 443-2441, tulas.com, \$10

Dec. 12, 8 p.m., Clockwork at Bakesplace, 4135 Providence Point Dr. SE, Issaquah WA, 98029, (425) 391-3335

Dec. 13, 8 p.m., Clockwork, The Chapel on the Bay, Fox Island WA

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7:30-11:30 p.m., Greta Matassa's December student workshop performance, Tula's, 2214 2nd Ave., Seattle WA, (206) 443-2441, tulas.com, \$10

Friday, Dec. 19, 8 p.m.-midnight, Greta Matassa Quartet, Tula's, 2214 2nd Ave., Seattle WA, (206) 443-2441, tulas.com, \$15

Saturday, Dec. 20, Greta Matassa Quartet's special holiday show with featured guest, Susan Pascal on vibraphone, Bakesplace, 4135 Providence Point Dr. SE, Issaquah, WA 98029, (425) 391-3335. Dinner, 6-7:15 p.m.; performance, 7:45-10 p.m.; dinner/show, \$59.50 (includes dinner salad, entrée, and gourmet dessert); show only, \$32.

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Lance Buller

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Have you ever had to perform with a busted lip?

I've been pretty lucky over the years when it comes to damaged chops. I'll credit that to good training, excellent teachers, and luck. But there was a day on one of my first "pro" gigs when I was 18. I was working in a strolling band at Busch Gardens in L.A. I woke up with a nice pimple in the middle of my top lip. Well, the show must go on, so I had to play. But every time I played, my sound would cut out randomly. One of the cool things about the Busch gig was that TV and movie celebs would be hanging out with their families, and we always wanted to play great. So, on this day, a noted trumpet player showed up, listened to the band, handed me his card, and told me I should buy his book on how to play the trumpet. Ouch!

What do you want people to remember about you and your music?

How to pronounce my last name—it's Bull-er, not like that Ferris cat from the movie. Seriously? As a nice guy who played a little, sang a little, joked a little, and loved a lot. And any success I may have obtained is because of all the great people that have helped me along the way.

Give us your performance schedule for the next few months.

Steady Friday nights at the 13 Coins downtown. A bunch of private parties over the holidays. A couple of jazz festival dates in Canada in the first part of 2009. And I'm producing the second run of the musical *Swing Daze*. But what's really cool is, after being involved with KPLU's fantastic School of Jazz project for the last couple of years, I've really got turned on to teaching. It makes me a better performer, and I feel it's the best way to thank the people who helped me.

Clipper Anderson

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DISCOGRAPHY

Revenir, Darin Clendenin, The Jazz Project, 2008
The Smiling Hour, Greta Matassa, Origin Records, 2008
I'll Just Close Me Eyes,
Todd Hymas, Pony Boy Records, 2008
Letting Go,
Karin Kajita, Karin Kajita Publishing, 2007
May I Come In, Gail Pettis, OA2, 2007
Have Yourself a Jazzy Little Christmas, Micheal Strickland w/ Greta Matassa, MSP Records, 2007
So This is Love,
Leah Stillwell, Pony Boy Records, 2007
Groove for Thought, Groove for Thought, 2006
Favorites From a Long Walk,
Greta Matassa, Origin Records 2005
Triskaidekaphobia,
Ben Thomas, Origin Records, 2005
Back on Track,
Robert Vaughn, robertvaughnmsic.com, 2005
Two for the Road, Greta Matassa and Mimi Fox, Origin Records, 2003
All This and Heaven Too,
Greta Matassa, Origin Records, 2001
The Mystagogue,
Ben Thomas, Origin Records, 2000
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Jazz Quiz

BY DAVE ANDERSON

Recordings Released in 2008

1. Lionel Loueke's debut album *Karibu* featured world music touches and which notable guests?
 - a. John Scofield and Marc Ribot
 - b. Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock
 - c. Joe Lovano & Hank Jones
 - d. Donnie McCaslin and Dave Holland
2. Wynton Marsalis released a CD with which musical icon?
 - a. McCoy Tyner
 - b. Sonny Rollins
 - c. Bob Dylan
 - d. Willie Nelson
3. This keyboardist's release, *Missing Floor*, features several tracks of organ-drum only, as well as electronica.
 - a. Joey DeFrancesco
 - b. Wayne Horvitz
 - c. Brian Charette
 - d. Larry Goldings
4. Trumpeter Dave Douglas released a groovy new album called *Moonshine*, his second from this project.
 - a. Keystone
 - b. Tiny Bell Trio
 - c. Parallel Worlds
 - d. Golden Heart Trio
5. Miles Davis alumni and musicians from this country collaborated on this double-album.
 - a. *Miles from China*
 - b. *Miles from India*
 - c. *Miles from Australia*
 - d. *Miles from Mexico*
6. The new release *Gently Disturbed* from this Israeli-born musician included a lead track called "Seattle."
 - a. Gilad Hekselman
 - b. Omer Avital
 - c. Avishai Cohen
 - d. Anat Fort

7. This vocalist released a collection of Cole Porter songs.
 - a. Patricia Barber
 - b. Kurt Elling
 - c. Diane Reeves
 - d. Diana Krall



8. This musician, who is scheduled to appear at the upcoming Portland Jazz Festival, released a recording called "Guitars."

- a. Pat Martino
 - b. Pat Metheny
 - c. McCoy Tyner
 - d. Adam Rogers
9. This pianist issued an album called *January* before appearing at the Earshot and San Francisco jazz festivals.
 - a. Marcin Wasilewski
 - b. Aaron Parks
 - c. Brad Mehldau
 - d. Keith Jarrett

10. Seattle-based saxophonist Hadley Caliman released his first recording in over 30 years, along with talented area musicians and this visiting guest artist.
 - a. Joey Calderazzo
 - b. Harold Mabern
 - c. Randy Brecker
 - d. Joe Locke

Answers

1. b.; 2. d.; 3. c.; 4. a.; 5. b.; 6. c.; 7. a.; 8. c.; 9. a.; 10. d.
Seattle jazz saxophonist and composer Dave Anderson contributes a quiz each month for Jazz Profile. You can learn more about Dave's music performances and projects at www.daveandersonjazz.com, or contact him via davean@comcast.net.