

Evolution deserves a listen

Review by
Cater Chamblee

Six weeks ago Evolution came to town, but until last night at Centennial College, only the fortunate folk who caught the two weeks at The Apartment had heard them. Hopefully this oversight is forever past, because the four man group blows jazz, America's premier music, a music hardly ever played in Lincoln.

Led by Vic Lewis, the quartet does jazz standards (Davis' "All Blues," Hubbard's "Red Clay," Monk's "Straight, No Chaser") and originals (Lewis' "Virginia" and pianist

Bill French's "Apple Cores") and did them well.

ITS PERSONNEL, Lewis on drums, French on piano, Steve Jensen on trumpet and Bruce Colim on acoustic and fender bass, are young conservatory trained musicians whose backgrounds include playing with Clark Terry, Lee Konitz, Sarah Vaughn and Lionel Hampton, and they hope to find a home here.

They play with fire and with occasional brilliance around town. Perhaps they will find that home.

Certainly they deserve hearing, and those who have missed them, will get another chance Friday afternoon at the

weekly Nebraska Union Jazz and Java concert.

FRIDAY AND Saturday night they play the Snack from 10 p.m. until everyone gets tired. Sunday night at 9 p.m. they work the Elms, just east of Emerald. The Elms gig is an open jam and any musician with an urge to stretch out is invited to bring his ax on by.

For years I've heard fellow unfortunates wail at the incredible death of live music in Nebraskaland, and the complaints were legitimate. But there's something to hear now, and if it goes away from lack of support, perhaps we really deserve that long, long silence.

Black is beautiful in Hollywood

by Trish Reilly and Vern E. Smith
Newsweek Feature Service

Nobody has to tell America's movie executives these days that black is beautiful. For in city after city across the country, when it comes to box office, black is boffo.

Films with black themes, black actors, producers and directors are drawing black audiences to downtown theaters in numbers that are ballooning like an Afro hair-do. Black movies are the phenomenon of the industry this year and everybody connected with them is making money.

TWO OF THE YEAR'S biggest film bonanzas, for instance, have been a pair of black productions—*Shaft*, which has grossed more than \$14 million nationally, and *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, which has done almost as well on an investment of only \$500,000.

"What we are seeing today is a black audience that is now able to financially support black movies," says *Shaft's* director, Gordon Parks. "There's no doubt that the studios are now shaping movies specifically for that audience." And if the current crop of successes is a guide, the shape will be in the mold of Richard Roundtree's swaggering portrayal of Shaft, the black detective who clobbers white gangsters, or Melvin Van Peebles's hustling *Sweetback* who makes it with a staggering number of ladies, both black and white, and clobbers white detectives.

ACCORDING TO PARKS, the main ingredient "is that you see blacks winning" and this element, lacking in James Earl Jones's performance as Jack Johnson in *The Great White Hope*, is "very exciting to the black community."

Neither *Shaft* nor *Sweetback*—nor, for that matter, *Cotton Comes to Harlem*, *Black Jesus*, *The Liberation of L.B. Jones* or the current big draw, *Soul to Soul*—got much critical praise but they were winners with black audiences. *The Great White Hope* was acclaimed but, like Johnson, was a loser.

All sorts of people, naturally, are scurrying to cash in on the black film boom. Pop star Diana Ross, for instance, will play the part of singer Billie Holiday in the upcoming *Lady Sings the Blues*. MGM is planning a sequel to *Shaft* called *The Big Bamboo*, plunging the black detective into intrigues in Jamaica.

SOME CRITICS FEAR that the current boom will produce a lot of trash and cynically exploit the appetite of black movie-goers. One critic notes that a good box office is guaranteed "with the black over the white, with lots of derogatory white gags. . . Any film that gives the black ego a shot in the arm." Parks, though, sees a big future for the black film. "It's not just having a black star that does it, nor is it dependent on the number of blacks in the cast," he says. "Black films are going to get better and say more and more, because blacks no longer take just anything they can get."

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Having recently fallen heir to several record albums, I decided that it might be good if I started earning my keep and review some of them. In this case, there are three lesser known artists, of which, hopefully, two will not remain lesser known.

Paul Williams, *Just An Old Fashioned Love Song* (A&M Records)

On the back of the record jacket is a quote, "There are those who listen, and those who wait to talk. This album is dedicated to the listeners." How true! You have to be a listener to appreciate this record.

THE FIRST TIME I listened to this record, I thought, "Gad, another commercial, Carpenters-type album. Nice for what it is, but so what?" Then I listened to it again the next day, and again the day after that, and suddenly I realized that as my moods changed, so did my opinion of the album.

Williams has written the music and/or lyrics for a majority of the songs that he sings on the album. Williams' voice has a strange irritating huskiness to it, but the more you listen to the record the less you notice it, perhaps because of the beautiful lyrics on many of the songs.

Backed mostly by piano, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass and drums, on some cuts Williams has added woodwinds, brass, strings and even kazoos on the title song.

ALTHOUGH WILLIAMS has included several songs which have been recorded by various groups, "We've Only Just Begun," "Let Me Be The One" and "An Old Fashioned Love Song," Williams' best cuts on the album are his lesser known originals, "I Never Had It So Good," "Waking Up Alone," "That's Enough For Me" and "When I Was All Alone."

As I said, if you're not a listener, don't buy the record, you won't like it; but if you like on occasion to turn the lights down low, and simply think . . . about something or someone . . . it's one hellofa nice record.

Ron Cornelius, *Tin Luck* (Polydor Records)

Cornelius is an accomplished guitarist, having backed such people as the Kingston Trio, Flatt and Scruggs, Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen on various records as a studio musician. Perhaps this is where he should have stayed.

Like Williams, Cornelius has written the majority of the songs on the album, but I'm left with sort of a blah feeling in my mouth after listening to it.

THE ONE REDEEMING factor of the album is Cornelius' guitar work. As I said, he is a good guitarist, but his lyrics (which sound very contrived) and his singing leave much to be desired. In fact, probably the best cut of the album is an instrumental, "Left Handed Lady," which showcases Cornelius' guitar talents.

Cornelius says his songs are "just songs, there is no gigantic crusade. The only things I'm trying to say is I've learned some things through my experiences, and at the same time I've hung onto my guitar." Fine, but I like a little more in a record.

If Cornelius records an instrumental album I might buy it, but a vocal one—sorry.

William Truckaway, *Breakaway* (Warner Bros./Reprise Records)

Backed by a passle of fine musicians (Charles Lloyd, Buddy Emmons, Richard Greene, Arcelio Garcia, Jr., Norman Mayell and Douglas Killmer, as well as others) Truckaway's first solo album comes across extremely well.

ANOTHER ARTIST who wrote most of the music and lyrics for the songs and who does his own vocals, Truckaway has a pleasing country-western/folkish style. The easy-going homey pattern that he sets down does much to reinforce this style.

Truckaway gives you a good, happy feeling. You know that he honestly enjoys his music, and even if you don't like country-western/folkish music, I'd damn-well bet that you couldn't listen to this album without slappin' a grin on your face, kickin' off your shoes and beginning to stamp your foot. The sound is that contagious.

THE WHOLE ALBUM is nice, but my favorites are "Breakaway," "Way To My Heart," "Send Me Some," "Be The One," "Where's My Baby" and an indescribable little song called "Bluegrass."

Keep on truckin', Truckaway!

The NU School of Music will give their annual presentation of George Frederick Handel's oratorio *Messiah* at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 5, in the NU Coliseum.

Conducted by Prof. Earl Jenkins, *Messiah* will feature four student soloists: soprano Sherri Allison, soprano Kathryn Harney, tenor Roger Benjamin and bass Michael Wiese.

The presentation is free and open to the public. **THE WINTER'S TALE** by William Shakespeare and directed by NU Theatre student, Mitch Tebo, will be presented Dec. 9-12, at 8 p.m. in Room 301 Temple Building. There will be a 50c admission charge for the full-length comedy.

The Mud Slim Slide Players will open their third review of the season, *The Gas Light Christmas Spectacular*, at the Gas Light Theatre on Friday and Saturday at 9 p.m.

The review will also run Dec. 10 and 11, 17 and 18 and Jan. 7, 8, 14 and 15.