

Jazz festival kicks off Black History celebration



By Casey McCabe

Ragtime influenced popular swing, blues gave birth to rock 'n' roll and jazz always has been an American staple.

The fact is that American music owes a great deal to the influence of the black musician.

But often the black music community receives only sparse public attention. The past weekend's Jazz Festival, as part of UNL's Black History celebration, helped showcase some of the area's fine talent which doesn't always have an outlet in the Lincoln area.

Featured were acts from the big band sound of the United Afro Arkestra, to the more traditional jazz of Omaha's Ice Quartet and the heavier soul of Betty Burrell.

Interspersed through the music during the four-hour show were performances by the Afro Academy Drama Ensemble, Fabian Hayden and Age Unlimited Dance Ensemble and comic Rig Brown.

Rich McCain, a senior at UNL, was responsible for much of the unity and diversity that surfaced in the program. The festival's coordinator, he also played organ for his group, 5th World Trip Ensemble, and backed up the powerful voice of soul/gospel singer Betty Burrell, a discovery of his that he said he is especially enthusiastic about.

Variety

Approached by the Afro-American Collegiate Society because of his knowledge of the local music community, McCain went about developing a variety that would best exhibit the black experience in jazz music.

"There is a cultural awareness in a jazz festival such as this," McCain said. "But it's really more of a celebration, where people come to enjoy. You don't have to be black

or white, it is entertainment in behalf of blacks, for everybody."

According to McCain, there is no one musical area that is the definitive black sound, though he pointed that you'd probably get a different answer on the question from as many people asked.

"This is one of the problems," McCain said. "People tend to categorize minorities into one musical bag, such as jazz or blues. There's Kiss, and then there's Buck Owens, you don't ask which is more valid, they're both part of the white experience. That's the difference in categorizing."

No 'pure music'

McCain said his main interest is in jazz. His personal favorites in the field are the late John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Miles Davis, and "or course" Herbie Hancock. But he sees the different areas of music as having a definite influence on each other. "You can't hear pure music in America

anymore. A song may be in a European key and yet have a strong African beat to it," he said.

"When the music is free enough to give each musician room for expression, that's what jazz is all about," McCain said.

"I don't think you'll find a real definition of jazz anywhere."

Jazz is experiencing its highest popularity since the 50s, due at least in part to the recent experimentation with jazz-rock fusion. McCain says jazz has always been "in" to the jazz cult, but commercially it goes through a series of ups and downs.

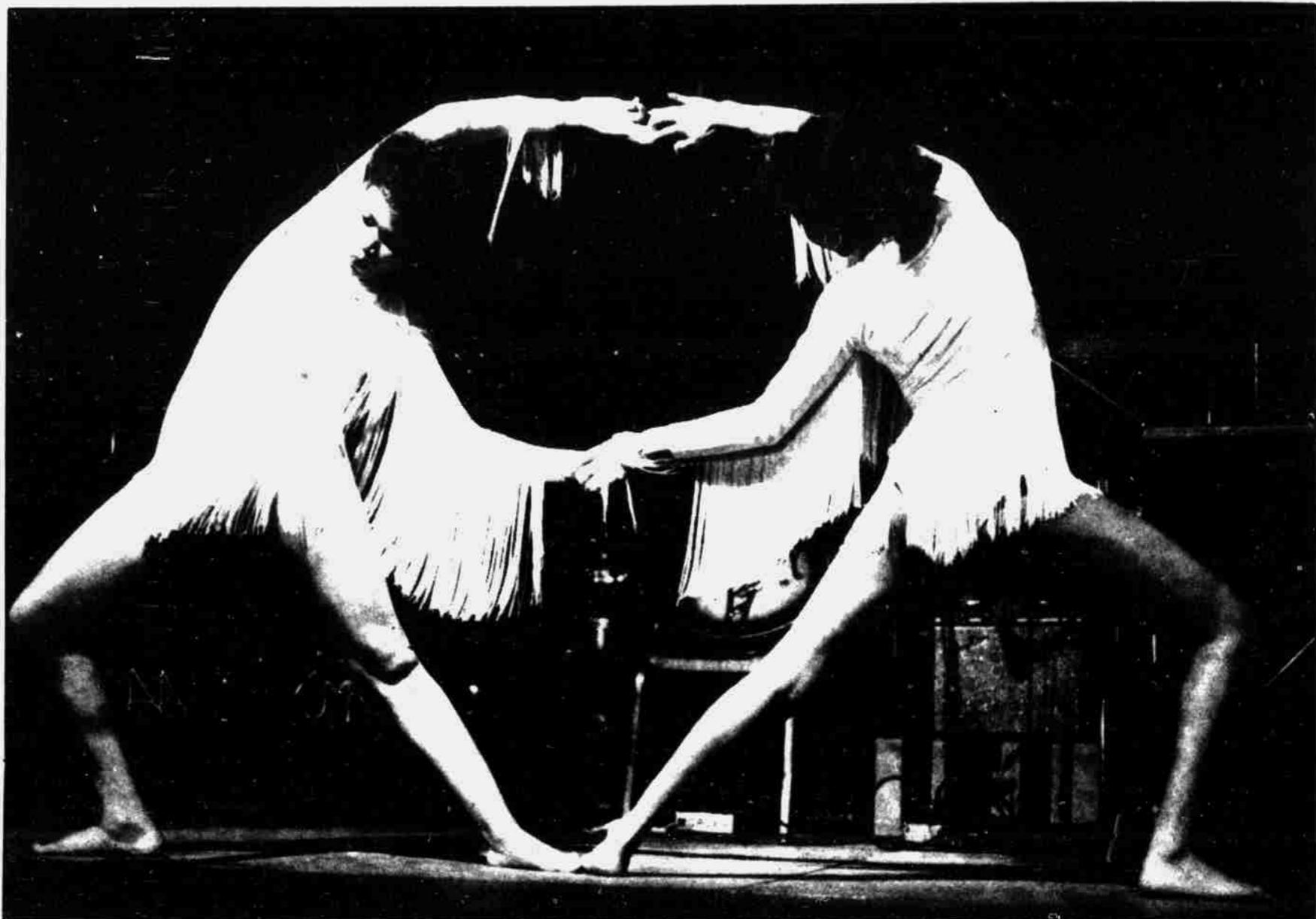
"Awareness of jazz often comes in the crossing over of fields," notes McCain. "Mick Jagger may choose to do a Miles Davis tune, and suddenly everybody wants to know where he got it."

A musician since three, McCain says he has written around 350 songs that he hopes to have a chance to use in the future.

One such song, "The Second Time Around" was recorded by Betty Burrell on McCain's own Highest Joy label, and received some national attention. But locally he said he sees the jazz market to be a bit bleak for the black artist.

"Job openings in jazz for blacks is hard to get," he says. "I don't know if it's an ego trip for white musicians to play black music, but a local place that advertises the best in jazz is constantly hiring white groups to play black jazz. An all-black group has an especially tough time."

"Most groups in Lincoln are integrated," says McCain. "There's a lot of pride and satisfaction in the community. My greatest satisfaction is simply being able to play jazz. I can get off playing by myself at home. I play for me as hard as for a million, and I'm sure that the rest of the group feels the same way. Jazz can vent a lot of frustrations. It's just beautiful."



Photos by Lisa Paulson

- THURS THRU WED MORNING**
- 6:00 BOZO
 - NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY
 - PTL PROGRAM
 - ANSWER IS LOVE (WED.)
 - CBS NEWS
 - 8:05 FARM AND RANCH REPORT
 - 8:10 NEWS
 - 8:15 UNO SCENE (WED.)
 - 8:30 ROMPER ROOM
 - LUCY SHOW
 - VARIOUS PROGRAMMING
 - BLINKY'S FUN CLUB
 - 7:00 ARCHIES
 - TODAY
 - CBS NEWS
 - GOOD MORNING AMERICA
 - I DREAM OF JEANNIE
 - MORNING SHOW
 - SESAME STREET
 - 7:30 FLINTSTONES
 - MCHALE'S NAVY
 - 8:00 POPEYE
 - GOOD MORNING AMERICA
 - CAPTAIN KANGAROO
 - FLINTSTONES
 - IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30) Nova (FRI.)
 - 8:30 LITTLE RASCALS
 - CARTOONS
 - 700 CLUB
 - SANFORD AND SON
 - ALL MY CHILDREN
 - TATTLETALES
 - PHIL DONAHUE SHOW
 - NEW ZOO REVUE
 - ROMPER ROOM
 - 9:30 HOLLYWOOD SQUARES
 - PRICE IS RIGHT
 - BEWITCHED
 - 10:00 WHEEL OF FORTUNE
 - HAPPY DAYS
 - HAPPY DAYS (EXC. FRI.)

- Martha's Kitchen (FRI.)
- LOVE AMERICAN STYLE
 - IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30)
 - RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING
 - KNOCKOUT
 - FAMILY FEUD
 - LOVE OF LIFE
 - NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY
 - NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY
 - TO SAY THE LEAST
 - \$20,000 PYRAMID
 - YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS
 - FATHER KNOWS BEST
 - 11:30 GONG SHOW
 - CONVERSATIONS
 - RYAN'S HOPE
 - SEARCH FOR TOMORROW
 - MAYBERRY R.F.D.
- AFTERNOON**
- 12:00 FOR RICHER, FOR POORER
 - NEWS
 - NOON SHOW
 - ALL MY CHILDREN
 - JIM NABORS SHOW
 - SESAME STREET
 - 12:15 FARM ACTION
 - 12:30 DICK VAN DYKE SHOW
 - DAYS OF OUR LIVES
 - CROSS WITS
 - AS THE WORLD TURNS
 - 1:00 LUCY SHOW
 - ONE LIFE TO LIVE
 - MOVIE "Song Of The Thin Man" (THUR.), "A Yank At Eton" (FRI.), "Son Of Samson" (MON.), "Betrayed Women" (TUE.), "The World Of Abbott And Costello" (WED.)
 - IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30)
 - 1:30 BEVERLY HILLBILLIES
 - DOCTORS

- 2:00 GUIDING LIGHT
- PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES
- ANOTHER WORLD
- GENERAL HOSPITAL
- GOMER PYLE
- 3:00 ALL IN THE FAMILY
- DENVER NOW
- MICKY MOUSE CLUB
- FOR RICHER, FOR POORER
- EDGE OF NIGHT
- MATCH GAME
- FLINTSTONES
- 3:30 TOM AND JERRY
- GILLIGAN'S ISLAND
- TATTLETALES
- PHIL DONAHUE SHOW
- I LOVE LUCY
- MERV GRIFFIN
- KALAMITY KATE'S CARTOONS
- 4:00 ELECTRIC COMPANY
- GILLIGAN'S ISLAND
- MY THREE SONS
- I DREAM OF JEANNIE
- DINAH
- SUPERMAN
- MIKE DOUGLAS
- MISTER ROGERS
- 4:30 LEAVE IT TO BEAVER
- BEWITCHED
- BRADY BUNCH
- BIG VALLEY
- FAMILY AFFAIR
- SESAME STREET
- 5:00 ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW
- ODD COUPLE
- ABC NEWS
- I LOVE LUCY
- 5:30 ROOKIES
- NBC NEWS
- BEWITCHED
- CBS NEWS
- NEWS
- ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW
- OVER EASY

BRANNIGANS

OMELETS
SEAFOOD
CREPES
STEAKS
QUICHE

1228 P Street Lincoln Nebraska 68508

Entertainment Editor: Pete Mason. Cover Design: Liz Beard. Layout: Kitty Policky

Ad lib is an entertainment supplement published by the Daily Nebraskan. Editor in Chief: Ron Ruggless. Advertising Manager: Gregg Wurdeman. Production Manager: Kitty Policky. Business Manager: Jerri Hcussler.

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Ad lib is distributed Thursdays with the Daily Nebraskan.

Cover Photos by Ted Kirk