

# jazz composers collective

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CONCERT DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2001

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Our upcoming concert on October 18th marks the beginning of Jazz Composers Collective's tenth season. When we formed this non-profit, musician-run organization in 1992, we set out to provide artists with the opportunity to develop and present their music on their own terms and, at the same time, work to build new audiences for jazz – a fairly simple mandate based on collaboration and self-empowerment. At the heart of this effort was our desire to carve out one corner of our musical lives in which we could be idealistic. At a Collective concert, it's always about the music.

Creating such an environment takes a lot of work. But one of the things we've discovered along the way is that concentrated creative efforts tend to bring together people with similar ideals. Whatever we've managed to accomplish as an organization over the past nine years is due in large part to the efforts of a wide range of people. In this sense, the Collective has provided us with a way to meet people who are in the "field of our bliss" — to borrow a phrase from Joseph Campbell, the great scholar of mythology. Without question, this is one of the most gratifying aspects of our undertaking.

Since 1996, through our partnership with Martin Mueller and the New School University's Contemporary Music Program, we have been presenting our annual concert series in their performance space. Entrepreneurs Steve Holt and Rolando Cohen have provided financial support for our series since the beginning. And, without the benefit of their business expertise, we might never have gotten the Collective off the ground. With the pro bono counsel of attorney Scott Stone, we gained our non-profit 501c(3) status, which enables us to receive tax-deductible contributions and grants. Donations from countless individuals over the years (see page 3 for a list of recent contributors) and grants from various foundations, especially the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, have made it possible for us to sustain our series. Jon Rosenberg, our resident engineer, has recorded almost all of our concerts (that's nearly 100 CDs worth of music!). Sid Whelan has done a great job helping us spread the word about our activities. And, many others have volunteered their time, providing assistance with everything from folding and stamping newsletters to taking tickets at our concerts.

In addition to new music presented by the Collective's composers-in-residence – Michael Blake, Ron Horton, Frank Kimbrough, Ted Nash, and Ben Allison – last season included the participation guest composers Mark Helias, Scott Robinson and Ethan Iverson. To date, the Collective has produced 90 concerts, featuring the works of 45 composers, the performances of more than 160 musicians (see page 3) and, perhaps most notably, the premiere of over 300 compositions. The composers and musicians who participate in our series define who and what we are as an organization. And this definition is as broad and changeable as the music we present.

Earlier this year we produced our first "Jazz Composers Collective Festival" in collaboration with Seth Abramson and the Jazz Standard in New York City. Over the course of six nights, we presented ten ensembles featuring many of the Collective's working bands as well as the debuts of several new ensembles. Prior to evening performances, we conducted two educational activities: the first was aimed at area high school students to raise the awareness and appreciation of jazz; and the second was a music publishing seminar for musicians and composers that included the participation of Trevor Gale of SESAC. We look forward to bringing the Festival back to the Standard in March 2002.

We have been working to extend the Collective's new music message to audiences in other cities in the U.S. and abroad. A recent highlight was a collaboration with Bob Rizzo and the Department of Cultural Affairs in Providence, Rhode Island, which brought together Collective artists with musicians from Mali as part of the Convergence International Arts Festival. An important part of our future mission is to continue to develop similar creative partnerships with like-minded organizations that share our approach to adventurous programming.

As we begin our tenth season, the Collective remains committed to continuing its efforts to foster the creation, development, and presentation of new music. We hope to see you at one of our upcoming concerts.

— BEN ALLISON

# the herbie nichols project

CD release concert: **STRANGE CITY**

**Herbie Nichols spent much of his brief professional life quietly struggling to scrape together a living, often backing up impersonators, stand-up**



Photo: Andrei Petrov

**The Herbie Nichols Project: Ron Horton, Ted Nash, Frank Kimbrough, Wycliffe Gordon, Ben Allison, Michael Blake and Matt Wilson**

comics, and strippers in New York City dives. Despite the lack of opportunities to perform and record his music, and without the benefit of a working band, he managed to find a personal voice and develop a strikingly original body of work. He died from leukemia in 1963 at the age of 44, impoverished, never having received the recognition he deserved.

New York City is a strange city in the best and worst sense. The anonymity one encounters here brings with it an element of freedom that can be found nowhere else, and the sheer volume of creative talent densely packed into such a small area generates energy that is at once boundless and contagious. Judging by his compositional output, Herbie drew a great deal of inspiration from this city (the titles of many of his tunes, such as 2300 Skiddoo, 117<sup>th</sup> Street and Hangover Triangle, suggest so). But the downside to life in this city is

that it's easy to get lost in the crowd. And if you're an artist without a shtick, it's all the more difficult to distinguish yourself. By all accounts, Herbie Nichols was a soft-spoken person, a gentleman free of pretense and gimmickry. Drawing attention to himself was at odds with his unassuming nature. Fortunately, some of the people that heard him — Alfred Lion (founder of Blue Note Records) and Charles Mingus in particular — championed his music on his behalf. If not for them, it is likely that Herbie's music would never have been documented at all. Nearly 40 years after his death, Herbie Nichols is finally beginning to be recognized for his musicianship and artistic achievements. This is heartening. It was bound to happen because his music is undeniable.

The Herbie Nichols Project is a work in progress. Frank started working on Herbie's music in 1985, and introduced it to Ben in 1991, and later to Ron and others through sessions and informal rehearsals. With the formation of the Jazz Composers Collective in 1992, the Herbie Nichols Project became one of the Collective's ongoing working bands. Since that time, we have had the good fortune to perform Herbie's music for audiences across the U.S. and abroad and to record three albums along the way: *Strange City* — our latest, and first for Palmetto Records — and *Dr. Cyclops' Dream* (1999) and *Love Is Proximity* (1996) — both on Soul Note Records.

Work began on this CD when Ron, Frank and Ben got together in the fall of 2000 to play through nearly 30 unrecorded Nichols compositions that Ron had tracked down at the Library of Congress in 1995. After a few rehearsals, a couple of performances at the Jazz Standard in New York City in February 2001 with the septet heard on this disc, and a European tour quintet-style in the spring, we recorded *Strange City* at Maggie's Farm — Matt Balitsaris' recording studio — in late May. Nichols himself never recorded the compositions on this album, with the exception of Shuffle Montgomery and Moments Magical (the latter was never commercially released). A few arrangements were worked out in advance, but most of the music heard here evolved in performance and/or in the studio.

We are grateful to the many people who have helped make this recording a reality. We would especially like to thank: Ron, Ted, Michael, Wycliffe and Matt, Matt Balitsaris, Pat Rustici, Terry Coen, Mark Edwards, Michael Sarin, Jeff Ballard, Tim Horner, Roswell Rudd, Michael Cuscuna, Sid Whelan, Luigi Santosuosso, A.T. Michael MacDonald, Gayle Morgan and the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Flavio Bonandrini, Martin Mueller and the New School University, Seth Abramson, Margaret Balitsaris, James Harrigan, Melissa Richard, Andrei Petrov, Suzanne DiMaggio, and friends and supporters of the Jazz Composers Collective. This album is dedicated in remembrance of Charlie Lourie.

— FRANK KIMBROUGH & BEN ALLISON

From the liner notes of *Strange City*

**FRANK KIMBROUGH** has two forthcoming CDs on Omnitone Records: *The Willow* (a duo recording with Joe Locke) and *Quickening* (a trio featuring Ben Allison and Jeff Ballard recorded live at a Jazz Composers Collective concert). **BEN ALLISON's** latest recording with his band Medicine Wheel, *Riding the Nuclear Tiger*, is available on Palmetto Records. For more information, visit Ben's website at [www.benallison.com](http://www.benallison.com).

**ALL PROCEEDS FROM TICKET SALES ON OCTOBER 18TH  
WILL BE DONATED TO THE NEW YORK STATE WORLD  
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## Composers-in-Residence

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Ben Allison      Frank Kimbrough  
Michael Blake    Ted Nash  
Ron Horton

## Guest Composers

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Ralph Alessi      Dave Liebman  
Franck Amsallem    Joe Locke  
Steven Bernstein    Pete Malinverni  
Dave Binney      Rick Margitza  
Andy Biskin      Phil Markowitz  
Jane Ira Bloom      Bill Mays  
Chris Dahlgren      Ed Neumeister  
Ellery Eskelin      Tim Otto  
Eddie Gale      Tim Ries  
Jon Gordon      Scott Robinson  
Wycliffe Gordon    John Schroeder  
Kevin Hays      Judi Silvano  
Mark Helias      Peggy Stern  
Ron Horton      David Tronzo  
Ethan Iverson      Tom Varner  
Adam Kolker      Jeff Williams  
Steve LaSpina      Matt Wilson  
Andy Laster      Pat Zimmerli  
Mike Lee

## Musicians

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Ralph Alessi      Dave Ballou  
Carl Allen      Andy Barbera  
Ben Allison      Miri Ben Ari  
Peck Allmond      Steve Bernstein  
David Amado      Dave Binney  
Franck Amsallem    Andy Biskin  
Reid Anderson      Jim Black  
Peter Apfelbaum    Brian Blade  
Jeff Ballard      Michael Blake

## Musicians (continued)

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Dan Block  
Jane Ira Bloom  
Luis Bonilla  
Jay Brandford  
Cameron Brown  
Charles Burnham  
Mike Cain  
Uri Caine  
Erik Charlston  
Jay Clayton  
Rich Cohen  
Michelle Coletta  
Scott Colley  
Ravi Coltrane  
Marc Copeland  
Chris Dahlgren  
Joseph Daley  
Anne DeMarinis  
Ara Dinkjian  
Billy Drewes  
Billy Drummond  
Jon Dryden  
Nathan Durham  
Bruce Eidam  
Peter Epstein  
Ellery Eskelin  
Mike Fahn  
Joe Fiedler  
Melissa Fogarty  
Curtis Fowlkes  
Joel Frahm  
Eric Friedlander  
Laurie Frink  
Ian Froman  
Eddie Gale  
Clark Gayton  
Gerry Gibbs  
Dave Gibson  
Karen Goldfeder  
Wayne Goodman  
Charles Gordon  
Jon Gordon  
Wycliffe Gordon  
Jackie Grasso  
Drew Gress  
Joyce Hamman  
Billy Hart  
John Hart  
Kevin Hays  
Mark Helias  
Carlos Henriquez  
Jeff Hirshfield  
John Hollenbeck  
Tim Horner  
Ron Horton  
Yosuke Inoue  
Dennis Irwin  
Ethan Iverson  
Ingrid Jensen  
John Kass  
Julie Kay  
Frank Kimbrough  
Adam Kolker  
Lee Konitz  
Briggan Krauss  
Rick Kriska  
Jen Krupa  
Vic Juris  
Sam Kephart  
Steve LaSpina  
Andy Laster  
Erik Lawrence  
Dave Liebman  
Joe Locke  
Joe Lovano  
Dennis Mackrel  
Tony Malaby  
Pete Malinverni  
Rick Margitza  
Phil Markowitz  
Wynton Marsalis  
Bill Mays  
Mike Mazor  
Pete McCann  
Donny McCaslin  
John McKenna  
Bill Mobley  
Ben Monder  
Tony Moreno  
Matt Munisteri  
Ted Nash  
Scott Neumann  
Ed Neumeister  
Sam Newsome  
Oscar Noriega  
Kevin Norton  
John O'Gallagher  
Tim Otto  
Dave Panichi  
Andrea Parkins  
Roberta Piket  
Bobby Previte  
Doug Purviance  
Tom Rainey  
Matt Ray  
Mark Rebol  
Eric Reed  
Mauro Reforsco  
Tim Ries  
Scott Robinson  
Adam Rogers  
Marcus Rojas  
Ted Rosenthal  
Rich Rosenzweig  
Randy Sandke  
Michael Sarin  
Tony Scherr  
Bill Schimmel  
John Schroeder  
Judi Silvano  
Kathy Sinsabaugh  
Bruce Staelens  
Marvin Stamm  
Lisa Steinberg  
Andrew Serman  
Peggy Stern  
Bill Stewart  
Scoby Stroman  
Satoshi Takeishi  
Stomu Takeishi  
Ron Tooley  
David Tronzo  
Mark Turner  
Tomas Ulrich  
Tom Varner  
Mark Vinci  
Cuong Vu  
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Pat Zimmerli

## collective notes

**The Collective would like to thank the following people for contributing so generously to our 2001 fund drive:** Alexandria Adler • Roger Aldridge • Millie & Joel Allison • Bob Belden • Butch Berman • Andy Biskin • Joyce Bizot • Bob Brookmeyer • Hollis Burrigge • Yasemin Celik & Doug Levine • Erik Charlston • Randy Chauss • Colin Cigarran • Todd Coolman • Madeleine Crouch • Irene Curran • Mamadou Diabate • Mary Ann DiMaggio • David & Deborah Dressler • Barbara Duffy • David Epstein • Fannie Mae Foundation • Jamie Fox • Roy & Gillian Frasier • Eric Furfine • Glaxo Wellcome, Inc. • Maria Granquist • Adrian Halpern • Kevin Hays • Steve Holt, Rolando Cohen & Yak Imports • Tim & Nitza Horner • Ken Jablonski • Jazz Club of Sarasota • Richard Kamins • Peter Katz & Claudia Wagner • Matt King • Terry Knickerbocker • Dale Lesh • Dave Liebman • Paul Liebowitz

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**THE JAZZ COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE**

p r e s e n t s

**THE HERBIE NICHOLS PROJECT**

celebrating the release of *STRANGE CITY*

**FRANK KIMBROUGH** piano

**BEN ALLISON** bass

**RON HORTON** trumpet

**TED NASH** tenor saxophone

**MICHAEL BLAKE** soprano saxophone

**WYCLIFFE GORDON** trombone

**MATT WILSON** drums

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