

MICHAEL BLAKE'S FREE ASSOCIATION



Photo: Ssiruz Pakzad

Lately I've been hearing a lot about "blogging" - people posting their diaries on the net to share their lives with the online world. I guess that's kind of how I feel when I'm writing my "words" for this newsletter!

This band recently recorded a disc called *Elevated*. That will get out to you folks sometime in the near future. I keep thinking I'm going to write from the saxophone but instead it always comes from the piano. It's been great to have Frank in Free Association and, after having a slew of remarkable guitarists, I finally get to be the loudest instrument on stage. Frank is all over the music in a symphonic manner, transforming the keyboard into a gamelan orchestra, a string section, or a zither. So even though I can't play my own tunes on piano the way I would like to, I can hear a real pianist do something with them. This music features my horns more than previous manifestations, so I can stretch out and let the band work out our angels and demons. Expletive-like blasts and saxophone calisthenics are to be expected. My thanks to Frank, Ben and Mike for their musicianship, inspiration and loyalty.

I've recently been getting heavily into Yusef Lateef and have been moved by his musical language and knowledge of the blues. The person who told me to check out Yusef Lateef was Steven Bernstein. It's going to be a fantastic experience to play this concert alongside my longtime associate and friend. After spending years on the road with the Lounge Lizards and racking in hours of recording and playing experience together, it's really a pleasure to premiere this music alongside him for the Collective. A warning though, when he pulls out the little trombone, if you're sitting in the front row . . . DUCK!

– MICHAEL BLAKE

Michael's new recording with Free Association, *Drift*, is now available in Europe and scheduled for release in the U.S. in January 2001 on Intuition Records. Free Association will perform the music of Yusef Lateef at Tonic (107 Norfolk Street, NYC, tel: 212-358-7501) on Saturday, November 25, at midnight.

STEVEN BERNSTEIN

The MILLENNIAL TERRITORY ORCHESTRA IS
A WORKING BAND, one year old.

The band was formed to examine the history and mystery of the territory orchestras of the 20s – a period in music that has the form growing as it's being codified. Combinations of instruments and styles were all starting points, with no blueprint to copy from. Woodwinds, cornets, trombone, violin(s), introductions, trio sections, banjo fantasies, modulations, devices that slipped away or became so orchestrated that they fulfilled other purposes. Our repertoire started with great bandleaders from the 20s: Tiny Parham, Lloyd Scott, Preston Jackson – early jazz bands that are often overlooked, as well as music from Ellington and Moten. As the band developed this music alongside conducted improvisations, we were able to add music from other pasts and play them in our style.

This style is not just orchestration – it's the sound and energy of nine unique individuals. On this concert we will be joined by Dan Block, who is the greatest Albert system clarinetist I have had the pleasure of playing with, as well as a fine Upper West-sider, and Mike Sarin, whose trap set is an orchestra. Orchestrating is a psychedelic fantasy. Combining colors to create new colors, movement, and space, creating new mysteries – that's the beauty of having an orchestra. Having Peter Apfelbaum, Erik Lawrence, Charlie Burnham, Clark Gayton, Doug Wamble, and Ben Allison as the sounds of that orchestra is a blessing and a party, not necessarily in that order.

In the year we have been together we have had the opportunity to develop this music in front of an audience. Unlike many orchestras that rehearse and refine their music before presenting it, we play the piece for the first time to an audience, and it is their reaction that shapes the music. The reasoning behind this process is both economic and aesthetic, though I would be willing to shift aesthetics to have a rehearsal budget. In fact, it would be nice to have a performance budget. Until then, music is its own reward. We did have one rehearsal, in my hotel room at the Northsea Jazz Festival, though I do not recommend this for a full-size big band, as most hotel rooms cannot accommodate ten spit valves. I do intend to rehearse this music before the concert, which is not intended as a slight to the audience, but a practical necessity of performing original music. I do not intend to make a habit of this.

Tonic has given us a home to create this music, and when they buy us uniforms and get us a weekly radio spot I will have to thank them. We are very lucky in this profit infested city to have places like Tonic and the Jazz Composers Collective to play music.

Ten years ago I asked Roy Nathanson how he wrote so much music. He told me he commissioned himself. Good advice.

– STEVEN BERNSTEIN

Steven's latest CD releases include *Solid Sender* with his band Sex Mob (Knitting Factory Works) and *Diaspora Soul* (Tzadik Records).

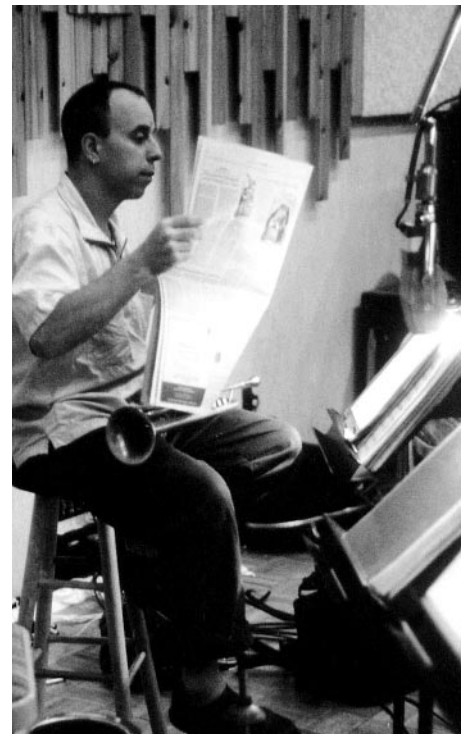


Photo: Wayne Goodman

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collective jazzfest

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collective notes

- The Jazz Composers Collective's 2000-2001 concert series is made possible with the support of the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust.
- The Collective would like to thank the following people for their recent contributions: Joe Vanderford, Jerry Roucher & the Jazz Club Of Sarasota, Morris Goldberg, Rufus Reid, and Ronald Tifosky. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Collective, please send a check to: The Jazz Composers Collective, 43 East 10th Street, Suite 4B, New York, NY, 10003. For more info about the Collective, visit www.jazzcollective.com.

THE JAZZ COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE
presents

MICHAEL BLAKE'S FREE ASSOCIATION

MICHAEL BLAKE saxophones • FRANK KIMBROUGH piano
BEN ALLISON bass • MIKE MAZOR drums

STEVEN BERNSTEIN'S
MILLENNIAL TERRITORY ORCHESTRA

STEVEN BERNSTEIN trumpet & slide trumpet • CLARK GAYTON trombone
PETER APFELBAUM tenor & soprano saxes • DAN BLOCK clarinet, tenor sax
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