

A CONCERT BY ANTHONY WILSON

featuring

Jeremy Harlos - bass  
Bill Dobrow - drums  
John Blum - keyboards

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Rachel Neill - soprano saxophone  
Jared Van Dongen - alto & baritone saxophones  
Marty Albion - tenor saxophone  
Tessa Chasteen - baritone saxophone  
Josh Kirsch - trombone  
Mark Pennington - percussion  
Nicola Furman - percussion

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My thanks to everyone who made this possible. To Madeleine Kromelow for the great poster. To Joel Fitzpatrick for the lights. To Bill Dixon, Arthur Brooks, and Allen Shawn. To Jeremy, John, and Doughbrow. To the "Anxieties" musicians. To Dd. And to the audience. Thanks.

Wednesday, December 7, 1988 -- 9:00 p.m., Carriage Barn, Bennington College

The Avant-Gardist project in Black Music is, with few exceptions, discredited. It also seems evident that much of the "Jazz/Rock Fusion" activity of the 1970's was a failure, leaving a big mess for the young musicians of the 1980's to clean up. Though the Avant-Garde movement has not affected our generation as sweepingly as the Fusion movement has, one thing can be said of both: their simultaneous existence has led at times to a corruption of the standards of jazz music, forcing today's serious young musicians to become ever more aware of their responsibilities and to articulate a clear position in relation to the ambiguous musical activity of the last twenty years. To many concerned with the preservation and maturation of this music, it slowly becomes clear that activity in Jazz over the last two decades has reflected the pervasive tendency in our culture either to embrace eccentric trends as innovations or to endorse the dilution of essentially pure forms to create something more palatable.

In this decade, which one can now look at almost in retrospect, we have been fortunate enough to see some indication that, at least in jazz music, this situation is improving. It has been especially inspiring to come of age at a time when musicians like Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Jeff Watts, Terence Blanchard, Kevin Eubanks, Steve Coleman, Cassandra Wilson, Lonnie Plaxico, Greg Osby, Geri Allen, Marvin Smith, Robin Eubanks, Mark Johnson (drums), and Mark Johnson (bass) have been given the respect and wide audience that musicians of that caliber deserve. In the 70's, they would have been written off with ease, never to be heard from again -- at least not until they Jhericurled their hair and wiggled their behinds all the way to the bank. The 80's have witnessed the production of two motion pictures that are (ignoring for the moment their lackadaisical approach to the biographical subject matter they claim to be tackling) admirable in their evocation of the jazz spirit and aesthetic as well as being great films: Bird, and 'Round Midnight.

Whatever we play this evening, we hope to make it clear that we are aware of the formidable achievements of the great musicians who have given jazz its vitality and indelibility. We have a model in their standards of excellence. It is our pleasure to share this work with you.

This concert is dedicated to Keith Jarrett.



## Two Responses by Keith Jarrett

Q: You once said, "I rarely see myself as a continuation of a pianistic tradition except to the extent that I use the piano." Could you elaborate?

A: The whole idea of influences is based on the egotism of the human race; man is so great that the obvious question to ask someone who does something very well is "Who?" It's never "What?" or "How?" and, anyway, none of those questions are really answerable except "Who?" if there is a "Who." But in my case there isn't. So what I meant was that if everything is continually in a state of change or things are in continuous process, then there are no "Whos." Then if you ask me who I was influenced by and I gave you an actual name, I would be making something solid out of something that is essentially fluid, and the poor guy that I had mentioned would be suddenly turned to stone. It doesn't make any sense. In fact, it's very related to the word eclectic. The word itself means something that could be interpreted in so many ways, but in the sense of a continuous process, everything is eclectic -- hopefully. But if I was afraid to sound a certain way because it made me sound a little like something that happened before, then I would no longer be an artist. Then I would be a politician. And that's what I think most artists think they have to do. They have to make sure they sound like themselves, as though they know who they are. So, for example, in the last few years, fourths on the piano are hip; if you play thirds you sound like too many other people and with sixths you sound like Chopin. If you play tenths on your left hand, you are playing old music; if you play a triad, you're Beethoven. I mean, it's unbelievable. I would say that ninety percent of the contemporary, so-called improvising artists that I know follow the rule that they think they are doing something positive, when they are actually doing something completely opposed to the process of creativity. They are eliminating everything that might sound like something other than themselves and ending up with what they think is them, when actually they have erased themselves. And yet, when they erase themselves, millions of other people who erase themselves all the time acclaim them because they always sound the same. It's a mutual "erase yourself" program.

Q: How do you relate to the changes you have noticed in your peers in regards to their musical directions?

A: Well, I would just consider it weakness, but I wouldn't say I'm mad at them. I am mad at a certain possibility that somebody who seemed to have potential sensitivities of a certain kind could go that crazy and just jump out of the process to somewhere else and expect to come back anytime, when they've made enough money or they feel like it, because it's possible to jump, but the streams don't just keep waiting for each other. You make that jump only when two streams are pretty close to each other, so that you can get to the other one. The chances of those two things getting close enough again to jump back is very, very small. Mostly, I think I feel sorry for the feelings they must have when they think about the way their music used to sound - if they still remember that feeling. It's got to be a sad thing to think about. They can't just go back and get it again.

The quotes were extracted from a full-length interview in Jazz-Rock Fusion: The people. The Music. By Julie Coryell and Laura Friedman.