



GEORGE BENSON

George Benson instant success

They said it couldn't be done...and then came George Benson.

Ten years ago, jazz music and its finest interpreters were in the doldrums. There were little signs of progress, the musicians had minimal commercial visibility. Jazz music was catering to a sophisticated, almost esoteric cult audience. Only in the past two years has the music moved into the contemporary mainstream of popular music.

In fact, the sudden realization or revival of "jazz" music can basically be attributed to the singular accomplishments of a handful of the idiom's greatest talents.

In the past two years, a vocalist/guitarist from Pittsburgh emerged as somewhat of an across-the-board people's hero. He not only was responsible for the Biggest Selling Jazz album of all-time, "Breezin'," but he also captured three Grammys in 1976, and has been awarded just about every other accolade that is given in the industry for Best Jazz Artist, and Best Jazz Album in '76 and '77. More importantly, his own accomplishments helped to pave the way for his fellow musicians to be accepted and adulated as viable "superstars."

The foundation for that can easily be termed the "Benson executive," Bob Krasnow, who brought Benson into a musical environment that proved to be overwhelmingly successful. He was teamed with producer Tommy LiPuma, who he explained, "gave me the room to really cut loose."

Says Benson, "When we went into the studio to record tracks for 'Breezin',' I never thought it would become such a great album. Tommy was easy to work with because he was open for ideas. Since he knew I wanted to sing, it was easy when I mentioned doing some vocal tracks." He said, "Why not!"

Benson actually started his professional career when he landed his first recording contract with RCA at age ten, but it wasn't until ten years later, when he was invited to play with Jack McDuff's ensemble, that he was truly appreciated by his fellow musicians. Playing funky R&B was McDuff's forte, but Benson was looking to further horizons, and eventually left the group in 1965 to form his own group, with Lonnie Smith on organ,

Ronnie Cuber on bariton and drummer Phil Turner.

Undeniably, the release of "Breezin'" opened the door to Benson and jazz, a door that had long been jammed shut. The tumultuous response to "This Masquerade," not only made it a jazz classic, but also jettied it to number one in the pop singles charts. "Breezin'" went on to become the Biggest selling jazz album of all-time, collaring Double-Platinum recognition of over 2,000,000 in sales, and "This Masquerade" became "Record of the Year" in the Grammy Awards.

On the strength of "Breezin'," Benson then went to the concert circuit to reach audiences that would see him for the first time. In retrospect, America seemed almost miniscule in the uprising, as his popularity and record sales spread on an international scale to Europe, Japan and Australia.

The enormous impact of Benson as a live entertainer created the avenue for his third Warner Brothers album, "Weekend in L.A.," (January 1978), his first live album for the label. The double-record set was recorded live at the Roxy in Hollywood with a superb supportive cast including percussionist Ralph McDonald, drummer Harvey Mason, guitarist Phil Upchurch, pianist Jorge Dalto, keyboardist Ronnie Foster, and bassist Stanley Banks from his own band. The album was again produced by Tommy LiPuma, whose influences had contributed the crossover acceptance of Benson on "Breezin'" and "In Flight." Such tunes as the Drifters classic, "On Broadway," "Weekend in L.A." and Leon Russell's "Lady Blue," retained Benson's glittering qualities as a vocalist and guitarist.

This year Benson undertook a mammoth world tour of Japan, Europe and Australia, as well as performing at Midem, The International Music Conference held in Cannes, reconfirming that "the phenomenon" is continuing in 1978.

In less than three years, George Benson has matured as an artist of immense international significance, yet he remains a genuine human being, a man who's held onto an elusive commodity, integrity, throughout his career; this is the inescapable conclusion about George Benson, revealed through grooves that just plain ring true to life.



SHIRLEY NANETTE - PACKING EM IN ***

Portland songbird Shirley Nanette opened a three week engagement at the Jazz Quarry Friday night in front of a packed house. Nanette has appeared at many Portland nightclubs in the past and it appears that her following continues to grow, regardless of where she might happen to be gig-in at the time.

Nanette is backed-up by the very talented Sky Trio, who have brought quite a bit of stability to the Quarry in the few short months they've been there. When you change a club atmosphere from one type of music to another it can be a slow progression. But with the quality of entertainment that's been booked there, and the walk-in talent that just comes to sit in on a set or two - there's no question jazz has found another home in Portland town.

There are very few female singers who can match the talent of Shirley Nanette on a one-to-one basis, and even fewer that I think can match her talent. Nanette has all of the qualities that are essential to make a good entertainer - voice, style, personality, and determination - are all main ingredients, and she has them all.

Nanette prefers ballads which she does so effortlessly from selections like: "Feel Like Making Love," a Roberta Flack composition; to Nancy Wilson's "Guess Who I Saw Today"; all the way to some up-tempo things by Al Green. Her selections are varied but her performances add up to be super!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ENTERTAINMENT

- April 2nd - Stan Kenton - Civic Auditorium.
- April 2nd - England Dan and John Ford Coley - Paramount.
- April 5th - Rhythm Aces - Paramount.
- April 14th - Ebony Fashion Show - Paramount.
- April 15th - George Benson - Paramount.

Movie Review

by Don Fuller

Blue Collar

It's a foul, deathly sickness; a nausea, that sinks deeply into the psyche, destroying any value worthy of human aspiration, leaving only the biological animal among animals, vegetables and minerals. It's suicide and genocide.

Let's talk about being human and Black and Art. Images, imagination, spiritual inspiration and communication are vital to our human purpose. The art of Black people must do all of this within the context of our reality, and our struggle to change that reality by ourselves and for ourselves.

The film title comes from the storyline about automobile factory workers who are getting ripped off by their union. Dehumanization is a large part of *Blue Collar* and that may be the message of the movie on one level. But what are we as a people inspired to do? What movement can be built on the half truths that make the message of inhuman relationships into obscene self-destructive, self-hatred?

The sickness is in the half truth made acceptable in this "R" movie, reviews of this movie and distribution of this movie around the world. This is genocide.

No imagination and images of resistance or struggle against a correctly identified enemy and his agents, is presented to Black people because the purpose was not to clarify. Perversion of

reality to create a "working-class brotherhood" lie was the superficial purpose. Many layers below lies the pornographic dream of willing degradation and prostration of slaves before the omnipotent system of white supremacy. Each level of consciousness is more destructive than the next, to the spirit of Blackness.

The sickness is in the actors who are typecast for such images and perform the parts with "real gusto." This is suicide; step'n fetch it 1978, preaching white genocidal solutions to Black people.

No "art" here creates any sense of collective Black strength in discussion of Black solutions, because that direction would require Black control over the media. That direction would awaken enslaved Black people to their strengths, not cover them with their weaknesses.

The sickness in our watching the sickness because it is free or worse paying for the privilege of being showered with insult, degradation, humiliation, and perversion of ourselves, our very essence, our human identity. Creative things about Black people are not being filmed by white America. We are being recreated while we willingly view these hypnotic images of programmed sickness that incapacitate and enslave our minds and spirits. The sickness is participatory genocide.

Blue Collar is White "art" against Black people. *Blue Collar* is White Collar Crime against Black people, so dirty Whisk won't touch it. For Black people to pay to see this film is like paying America's gas bill before walking into the ovens.



PLANNING STAGES - Many young people from the Portland inner-city area are preparing for the spring International Fan-Fair, April 22nd, at Matt Dishman Center, 77 N.E. Knott Street. A kaliope of colors are going into costumes being created by (from left) Princess Funchess, Barbara Parks, volunteer 4-H leader, and Arnetta Allen, of the International Cultural Club. The outstanding spring event will feature clothes, customs, traditional items and displays from countries around the world. Further information about the program, which will continue from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. April 22nd, can be obtained by calling Ira Mumford, 287-1770, extension agent, Urban 4-H program.

NAACP awards community leaders

To kick-off the NAACP 69th Annual National Convention for 1978, the Portland Branch is hosting an awards dinner to honor local officials and activists of the NAACP. This elegant affair will take place at the Masonic Temple, 1119 S.W. Park, Portland, on Sunday, April 16th, 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. for \$12.50 per person.

Tickets can be purchased at the NAACP Convention Planning Office, Board of Trade Building, 310 S.W. Fourth Avenue, Suite 412, Portland (222-3255) and at the usual outlets - Stevens and Sons at the Lloyd Center, Meier and Frank and Lipman's.

"From the Pulpit - From the People"



Join Herb Cawthorne, Willa Dorsey and the New Hope Baptist Choir for a 90-minute Portland television special based on the life and spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr.

SUNDAY - APRIL 2
3-4:30PM



Theatre event benefits school

The Tucker-Maxon Performing Arts Benefit Series for 1978-79 opens with a performance of Lillian Helman's drama, "The Little Foxes" at the Portland Civic Theatre, 1530 S.W. Yamhill, Mainstage. "Godspell," a musical celebration will play in the Blue Room. Both stage productions will be presented Sunday, April 9th, at 7:00 p.m. "The Little Foxes," a turn of the century drama concerning a corrupt Southern family, is considered to be one of Miss Helman's finest works. "Godspell" is a modern musical version of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Songs include "Day By Day," "Prepare Ye," "All Good Gifts" and "By My Side."

Tickets for either stage play are \$6 and may be purchased as part of the entire series, or individually.

On Monday, June 5th, at 8:00 p.m., the Civic Choraliens will appear in concert at the Swann Auditorium in the Portland Art Museum, 1219 S.W. Park. Under the direction of Roger O. Doyle and accompanied by Charles E. Charnen, the Choraliens will present a program of Schubert's part songs for male and mixed choir; Brahms' "New Love Song Waltzes"; Vaughn Williams' folk song arrangements, and Cole Porter and George Gershwin medleys. Tickets are \$5.

SPORTS HOUR

JOE'S PLACE

1801 N.E. Alberta

WILL DRAFT YOU FOR ONLY 15¢

Days: Sat., Sun., & Mon.

Call: 288-87688 For more information

25% Off With This Coupon

THE BLUE PENGUIN

Emporium

"Grand Opening Sale"

Afro Statues
Dried Feather Plants
Vases Big and Small
Wall Plaques

Offer Expires April 30th

11:00 to 7:00 Tue - Sat. Closed Sun.-Mon. 281-8489

1601 N.E. Killingsworth

25% Off With This Coupon

FRED'S PLACE

Presents

Little Frankie Lee

Prince of Soul & Blues

Along With

BOBBIE

and his talking Guitar

Two shows Nightly .

Thursday thru Sunday

Also:

TALKING BOOK

from Tacoma Wash.

Starting March 30 April 1,2,3, 1978

FRED'S PLACE

2511 N.E. Union Ave.

284-3155