

Marlin McClain explains Pleasure split

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

The word is around town that Marlin McClain, former vocalist/guitarist for Portland's own Pleasure, left the group because he was a "sell-out, a Black Jew, a traitor," and out for individual gain only. But after a recent conversation and lunch with McClain at the "Last Hurrah," there is something the community should know about his departure from the group. Let him explain.

"There are a few reasons why I decided to leave," he said firmly. "First, we started to have musical differences and each of us had a different perspective on which way we should go. I wanted to stay in the direction of the 'Future Now' LP because we sold 300,000 albums and there were some positive things on it. Then there were some differences in how the band's business should be handled which caused some problems.

"All of this was happening while we were away in California recording our 'Special Things' album. When we should have been concentrating on cutting the album, we were too busy trying to take care of other matters. People fail to realize it but I didn't finish the album. I left and headed back to Portland. If those problems could have been worked out, I would still be with the group today."

McClain also pointed out that "Special Things" was a total heart-break since "Future Now" represented the largest number (300,000) of albums sold by the group. It sold only 50,000 copies.

"I could have left the group a long time ago," said McClain. "Fantasy Records had been asking me to do a solo album for three years before I accepted their offer. The only reason I stayed was because I wanted to wait until the group got successful and I didn't want to take anything from them."

Were there very bad vibrations after you decided to go?

"Not on my part," he said quickly. "They resented me and we haven't been on the best of terms. I haven't seen any of the guys. I don't know how they feel either, only

what I hear through other people in the business and around town. The group thought that I was leaving to better myself which really hurt me because I did not. All we had to do was work out our problems and things would have been cool."

Specifically, what was the biggest problem confronting the group at the time you left?

"Some of the guys in the group didn't get involved and didn't understand the business aspects of the recording industry," said McClain. "That's an important part of the industry and I pay very close attention to it because a lot of good groups fall victim to mismanagement."

"A guy like Roy Ayers has built a sound business foundation over the years and he does well with his music. He can come out with an average album and still do good because he knows how to market his product. If you are to be successful in this business, you must take care of the business end of it. It can make or break you."

"Changes," McClain's debut solo album brings his talents to light as a guitarist and a composer. He co-produced the LP with engineer Phil Kaffel; handled lead and background vocals; wrote most of the material; and, throughout, displayed the masterful technique that has established him as one of the most impressive and versatile young artists today.

Marlon uses a variety of guitars on "Changes." He utilizes the Gibson 335 most of the time, but he makes great contributions to the album with his Fender Stratocaster, Schecter Telecaster, two Ovation, a six string and a 12-string guitar.

"Changes" can best be described as a cross between Pleasure's Progressive Funk and Jeff Lorber's Jazz Fusion. In less than two months, the album has sold twenty-thousand copies and the heavy marketing has yet to come.

"There's not a huge difference in being a solo artist," he said. "With Pleasure, I was always involved in the production and business aspects and it's the same now. What I miss the most is the non-verbal communications with the guys in the



MARLIN McCLAIN

group. I have the same kind of vibes playing with Jeff Lorber but I was with those guys all of my life. We were like a family. I still wish Pleasure the best of luck and I want them to be successful."

McClain's advice to young artists is very simple and direct.

"A career in the recording industry is a worthwhile dream to chase but it must be kept within reality. Dedication and extra hard work will get you there. Most young

artists get frustrated because they don't see immediate results. You have to really stick it out if success is what you desire. Another mistake the younger artist makes is that he or she looks at their music making them a star instead of looking at the music in terms of fulfillment. Lastly, you must understand the legal and business of the industry."

McClain is managed by David Leiken, (503) 221-0288.



Dick Bogle

The topics of the last several columns have been pretty heavy with the crisis of the 80s Blacks are facing, changes in the police department here and the disregard for the poor of the Third World by the U.S.

So this week its going to be lighter and more fun.

The dearth of good nightclub jazz has ended as my favorite lady and I found out why this past weekend.

No longer are we going to have to go to Bourbon Street or, do without...good Black music.

I refer to Bourbon Street as the "Headless Horseman" because no one ever seems to be in charge, no one seats customers and it takes

forever to get a drink.

Actually there are two breakthroughs.

First and foremost, the best quintet jazz I've heard in at least five years is happening each Friday and Saturday at Brasserie Montmartre at 626 S.W. Park.

It's the Danny Osborn Group and features Osborn on electric piano; Jarvis Christmas, drums; Kenny Dew, electric bass; Michael York, tenor; and Thara Memory on trumpet, cornet or flugelhorn.

Osborn is a local musician who has been gone for about four years gigging in the Mid-west. The Jefferson High graduate says during those four years, he played all kinds of

music including jazz, country, rock and rhythm and blues. He also toured with Jan and Dean in 1979.

His varied experience shows and tells at Brasserie as the quintet takes off on an Art Blakeyish jazz tune with strong solos by Memory and York and shifts quickly into a Mongo Santamaria sounding Latin tune.

They handle the standards with a jazz flavor and then get down with some fine examples of Gospel-Funk contemporary sounds.

It was my first time to hear bassist Dew, who is from Detroit, Michigan. He is badd and I would have to hear both him and Nathaniel Phillips on the same night

to determine who is the baadest electric bassist in town.

Tenorman York is from Seattle and is very good but his tone is not quite as full as for example, Pat De Hart's, but then again it could have been where I was sitting or the sound system.

Pianist Osborn is there five nights a week, playing solo piano on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He is joined by the tenor, bass and drums on Thursdays, and on weekends Memory adds the piece de resistance with his horn and showmanship.

Don't miss them...it's the best jazz act in town.

On the other side of the river at a place called The Vintage, Robbie Robinson and Jazz Train are holding down the fort on weekends.

It's almost the same Jazz Train which worked at Bourbon Street and the Greenwood Inn with Robinson on tenor, Cleve Williams, trombone, but drummer Billy Joe Newman is no longer with the group, so Bobby Bradford who is a superior trumpeter shares the drumming with Robinson. One addition is pianist Bud Young and another is vocalist Paul Huff who sings standards and soul tunes in a refreshing manner.

The group has an interesting schedule. They are at Carmens in the Hollywood district Mondays and Tuesdays, off on Wednesdays and back to the Vintage on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Sundays they anchor a jam session beginning at six.

It's your turn to talk again.

This time we're asking you to comment on wholesale power contracts currently being negotiated with Bonneville Power Administration customers.

Information concerning draft contracts will be sent to you upon request. You can comment orally at a public meeting or submit written comments.

Our customers include public and private electric utilities, Federal agencies and direct-service industrial customers. All are to be offered new long-term contracts by September 8, 1981, in accordance with the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act.

Negotiations have been under way since January, with interested members of the public participating. Additional information on the concerns of individuals and groups was received at public meetings held in May and was made available to those involved in the negotiations.

Public comments on the draft contracts are requested at this time so they can be considered during the final stages of negotiations.

Public meetings will begin at 7:30 p.m. following registration at 7 p.m. Locations and dates are:

Seattle - Tuesday, June 23
Seattle Center, Fidalgo Room
First North and Republican Street

Spokane - Wednesday, June 24
Sheraton Hotel, South B Ballroom
Spokane Falls Boulevard

Portland - Wednesday, June 24
BPA Auditorium
1002 N.E. Holladay Street

Boise - Thursday, June 25
Hall of Mirrors, East Conference Room
Capital Mall

To request information concerning draft contracts, contact the nearest Bonneville Power Administration area or district office or call toll-free: in Oregon, 1-800-452-8429; in other Northwest states, 1-800-547-6048

Written comments on the draft contracts will be accepted through July 13, 1981, by:

Public Involvement Coordinator
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