ALL THAT JAZZ

By Bob Matthews

The noose tightens—bit by bit jazz programming is being strangled—rapidly disappearing from the scene...alas, another venue bites the dust.

Tuesday night, we tuned into the Hopkins station, WJHU-FM for the usually 10 p.m. jazz show, hosted by Bob Young—instead, there was classical music.

"Ah well," we thought, "perhaps the classical program ran over...after all, we can understand cutting off a musical selection before it is completed."

This was not the case—the jazz programming usually heard in that time slot had disappeared...canceled...bit the dust...died. Later reports indicated a severe cutback in staffing at the station, and naturally—as is usually the case—jazz was the first thing to go.

* * *

On the bright side, we dropped into Blues Alley to catch the opening night performance of "the professor" **Tommy Flanagan**. In a word, it was so exquisite, we plan to go back to hear him at least one more time.

Tommy is one of the Detroit bebop pianists, who really demonstrate how that genre of music should be played. If you are curious as to some of the others, think of **Barry Harris, Hank Jones, Sir Roland Hanna** and you get the idea.

But Flanagan, who laughingly says he plays a lot of **Charlie Parker** compositions, because he knows more of them, demonstrated his proficiency with bop concepts with a demonstration of how Bird interpolated tunes.

He took the tune "Embraceable You," familiar to everyone, and showed how Bird turned it into "Quasimodo," a delightful contrapuntal exercise—that swung.

The appearance of the professor (Tommy's nickname) at the club is a part of the new policy of increased jazz and reasonable prices. Naturally, there are still some high-priced acts on the schedule — but they were booked a while ago.

With Tommy is **Tommy Cecil**, bass, and **Chuck Redd**, bass, both of whom are familiar names in this area. They'll be in place through Sunday night.

The Jazz Expressways newest experiment kicks off Sunday with what is being billed as "Uptown Sunday Night at the Forum."

The initial offering features **The Brenda Alford Trio**, with **Jeff Wilson**, piano; **Terry Battle**, bass; **Nate Reynolds**, drums, and guest soloist **Harold Adams**, reeds.

Ethel Ennis

Andy Ennis

It goes on from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. at the Forum, 4210 Primrose Ave., and the price of admission includes a drink and hors d'oeuvres buffet.

Lenny Yorke, president of Jazz Expressways, responded to our concern that another Sunday jazz outing might be in conflict with other jazz club offerings in the region, by indicating their planning department takes care to avoid scheduling event in conflict with their sister presenters.

Further information, 669-0963.

* * *

A special Mother's Day treat, May 14, is in store for area fans as **Ethel Ennis and Friends** will perform at the Meyerhoff Concert Hall at 8 p.m.

The concert is sponsored by the University of Baltimore Student Events Board, and this event will showcase a different side of Ethel.

Not that her usual material and presentation will be slighted, but it will be augmented with a new direction. It's being called a concert and contemporary performance.

Tommy Flannagan

We were told that there will be some dramatic surprises in this offering, and by the look at the lineup of the "friends," we can understand it.

With Ethel will be her brother **Andy Ennis**, tenor sax; **Gary Dailey**, trumpet; **Gaynelle Colburn**, percussion; **Paul Hildner**, drums; **Gary Grainger**, bass; **Nevitta Ruddy**, piano, and **Stef Scaggiari**, piano.

This one should be a goody. Further information: 333-29 0.

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BUNNY WAILER ENCHANTED CROWD

By Olive Vassell

Singer Bunny Wailer has long been labelled a mystic by followers of reggae music. And in his recent concert at the District's Warner Theatre, he bore his title well.

Wailer, one of the original members of "the Wailers" which included the Bob Marley and Pete Tosh, both of whom are now deceased, was in fine cosmic form as he enchanted an enthusiastic crowd.

Backed by a 20-piece band and dressed in a robe colored with the symbols of "Ras Tafari," red, gold, black and green, Wailer spoke and sang of freedom and liberty for all and the end of worldwide injustice.

Later having changed into leather and denims he switched to the popular "dance hall style," accompanied by the lively dance duo the "Switch Dance Troupe," whose gravity-defying movements matched the exuberance of the music's "raggamuffin style."

His current tour is named "Liberation" after his new album, which was released to coincide with the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Right.

Wailer said of the album, "it has a lot to do with my experiences traditions, different things that have been taking place over the past 10 to 15 years. It all adds up in that album."

Wailer's appearance — part of a U.S. tour — marks the first time the singer had left his native Jamaica in several years. And for fans of the old Wailers and the current Bunny Wailer, it was well worth the wait.

THE NIGHT LIFE

By Bonnie Matthews Butler
Entertainment Editor

After a three year absence from the entertainment scene (partly due to the birth of a new daughter), **Nick Ashford** and **Valerie Simpson** are back to support their latest album which spawned the "hot" single "I'll Be There For You."

This dynamic duo will perform at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. June 10 and the Lyric Opera House in Baltimore June 16 and 17.

For the Washington date, tickets are $22 (all seats reserved) and are on sale now. No word yet on the cost of tickets for the Baltimore gig.

One thing is certain though, this is one show you won't want to miss.

The last time I witnessed a live performance was at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. **Nick Ashford** told the ladies in the crowd, "Before you get any ideas ladies, I'm happily married."

Ashford and Simpson

Valerie Simpson gave him an admiring look as she rubbed and touched him in her "loving" way. (They seem to do this every time they are together.)

This couple is definitely in love or they are terrific actors. But, anyway, we vote for the loved part of the sentence. So, we send our congratulations to the happy couple and look forward to seeing them perform in the area. (Pardon us for this late message Nick and Val since new baby is at least 18 months old.)

Marie Henderson's showcase for **Gabrielle Bunn Goodman** at the 32nd Street Plahza recently was very classy. We hope it paid off.

The purpose of the event was to showcase Gabrielle's talents for **Dewayne Alexander,** director of A&R for EMI Records in New York. **April Washington,** former account exec. for the AFRO, is currently promotions manager for EMI and arranged for Dewayne to hear this talented lady and her group, (which included two dancers).

The performance, scheduled to begin at 8 p.m., didn't get underway until almost 9:30 p.m. Even though it was worth the wait, that isn't the point. If you advertise for 8 p.m., it should mean 8 p.m. Enough said.

We do, however, wish Gabrielle and her group the best and if Dewayne and EMI are smart, they'll grab her and sign her immediately. This lady's got talent.

* * *

Unfortunately, we had to leave before she finished her act in order to catch the performance of **Noel Pointer** at the Baltimore Fishmarket.

This is the first time we've seen him perform live and must say we were most impressed. Not only because of his music, backup band — **Michael Beardon,** keyboards; **Norbet Slowly,**

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SOUNDS

By Carl Matthews

M.C. RELL AND THE HOUSEROCKERS
"Into The Future" (Mercury)

"There's more to life than rappin' to the beat. That's where I'm coming from," says 20-year-old M.C. Rell, whose debut album on Mercury is titled "Into The Future."

Philadelphian Terell Davis (M.C. Rell) cites the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as one of his greatest influences. "He was such a catalyst for me," he says. "What he tried to do is still alive because history is repeating itself all over again." King's voice can be heard on "Common Knowledge," a rap in which he expresses his personal political views and presents himself as a "mind person."

M.C. Rell And The Houserockers serve up a variety of tempos and rap styles; reminiscent of such artists as Eric B. And Rakim, Public Enemy, and M.C. Hammer. Tracks include "Into The Future," "Soundwave Sermon," "My Vision," and "Hole In My Pocket."

M. C. Rell

Music Notes

I know there are a lot of you out there who still listen to Motown classics of the 60's and 70's. But most of you probably don't know the names of the session musicians behind those classic hits; many of Motown's early album covers gave no credit to the drummers, horn players, and guitarists who made the Motown sound memorable.

So thank goodness for a new book from Hal Leonard Publishing, "Standing In The Shadows Of Motown," a 200-page book (with two audio cassettes) on the life and music of one of Motown's legendary session musicians, bassist James Jamerson.

For real Motown buffs, this book gives a fascinating account on how Jamerson and his friends helped create the sound you remember on those great 45's by Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, and many others. So, next time you hear that classic bass introduction to The Temptations' "My Girl," you'll know a little about the man who played it: James Jamerson.

Jamerson played on nearly all the classic hits by the abovementioned artists and continued to make memorable music after he left Motown. And now, six years after his death, Philadelphia guitarist/author Allan Slutsky, under the name Dr. Licks, has created a worthwhile tribute to "the invisible entity whose bass playing inspired thousands of imitators."

The two cassettes included in the package contain some remakes of Jamerson's classic bass lines from the Motown days, performed by James Jamerson, Jr., John Entwistle, Chuck Rainey, Ready Freddy Washington, Jack Bruce, and other well-known bassists.

The book/cassette package will sell for $29.95. As part of the James Jamerson Memorial Project, some of the proceeds will go toward establishing a music fund at Jamerson's alma mater in Detroit, Northwestern High School.

By the way, some time ago a reader mentioned to me that dur-

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"WOW!"
—Richmond Times-Dispatch

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