Donnie Matthews Butler

Meanderings and Meditation

He's gentle, polite and interesting. He's not pretentious although his designer clothes are made of silk.

He loves his fans and shows it by taking time to chit-chat and sign autographs after his performance. he's also tops on the charts.

Who is this near-perfect specimen?

None other than Freddie Jackson, the hotter than hot Capitol Records recording star.

I met Freddie this past summer when he was on tour with Melba Moore, and the O'Jays.

Freddie didn't have to carry the whole show during those outings for he was actually being "introduced" and the onus fell on Melba.

This Sunday, November 17, at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall however, Freddie Jackson will get a chance to step out front and let the whole world see why he is a star.

At the summer concerts, Freddie, dressed in a royal blue silk suit with the most exquisite pendant I've seen in a long time, joined Melba in song and sang two hits off of his debut album 'Rock Me Tonight."

Sunday, Baltimore will have a chance to see what the media has already discovered. Freddie Jackson's a force to be reckoned with.

Melba, who hopes to have her new CBS sitcom "Melba" on the air as a mid-season replacement, is currently ill and won't be on the bill.

Therefore, Freddie Jackson will now have to fill the over 50 minutes usually allotted to a major star.

He could do just that off of "Rock Me Tonight" for every cut on this album is worth hearing and hearing him in person will be the straw that broke the camel's back!.....Heaven!

So, for those of you who love to listen to soft, mellow and romantic tunes sung to you by a handsome man, look no further.

Check out the Meyerhoff Sunday, I am. You won't be disappointed.

ON THE OTHER NIGHTLY NEWS....Seems the 32nd STREET PLAHZA is complaining about the neighborhood and police harrassment they are receiving. Seems the Police Department is injecting them with harassment not done when the club was owned by whites or for the crowd parking wildly for games at Memorial Stadium. I've patronized this establishment on many occasions and have never seen the rowdiness or crazy parking preclaimed. Sure hope they straighten out this mess for this is definitely one exciting nightclub that has come down the pike in a long time and we need it. . . Went to the grand opening of a new night club in Landover, Maryland and let me tell you, this place is gorgeous. Owned by Norman Patterson and another gentleman who's name I didn't get, "UTOPIA", has a sound system and decor that reminds one of New York. With the pulsating lights and the beautiful people, this place is surely a winner. More on this new club in a later column....Comptroller Louis L. Goldstein reports that tax revenue collected from the sales of distilled spirits in October jumped 52.4 percent and he attributed the rise to the new federal excise tax. "The $1,726,643 in Maryland distilled spirits tax revenue collected during October 1985 showed a substantial increase because of the increased federal excise tax on distilled spirits," Goldstein said. What this means, folks, is that you haven't consumed more beverages, they just cost more and the Federal Government makes more. Interesting!

. . . . .If you remember "Duke of Earl" or "La La Means I Love You," then you'll want to check out the 50's and 60's Musical Revue's tribute to the Royal Theatre on Saturday, November 23 at the Omni International Hotel. Slated to appear are the "Duke of Earl," — Gene Chandler, the Delfonics and Baltimore's shining stars, the Softones. Call Billy Taylor at 366-1400 or 366-5373 for more information . . . . . GENTLEMEN TEN SOCIAL CLUB on Edmondson Ave. is featuring John Lamkin on Sunday, November 17 from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. . . . . If you're stillloking for some place to dine, be sure to check out MACEO's on Monroe St., you won't regret it. That's all folks See you next week.

Jazz guitarist Christopher Brooks will be performing double duty this weekend. On Saturday, November 16, you can hear him at Hamilton's Landing in Fells Point and on Sunday, November 17 at 3 p.m. at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center, 409 N. Charles St.

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Bob Matthews

. . .AND ALL THAT JAZZ

Well, we goofed last week in saying that Eddie Lockjaw Davis would be here on Sunday, November 17 — actually, he will be the featured performer for the Left Bank Jazz Society on Sunday, November 24 at the Omni International Hotel.

This will be the final concert of the year for LBJS, which has really resurged in its efforts at re-establishment. No word yet on plans for next season, which is expected to start in February 1986, but keeping the music alive is the name of the game.

The devoted coterie of piano afficionados can take heart that one of their favorites, Reuben Brown, will be in the rhythm section backing Jaws.

In addition, Steve Novosel, bass; and Keith Kilgo, drums, complete the backup group. All of them have been playing together for quite some time, so add in Jaws, and you have got to have a swinging set.

It all happens beginning at 5 p.m., at the Omni on Sunday, November 24, 1985.

* * *

Wasn't able to attend the opening of Toots Thieleman at Ethel's Wednesday night, so called on a good friend who was there to clue me in.

Just so you can understand that jazz critics and music reviewers do respect each other's opinion, can let you know that Jack Dawson of Sun, is the person we talked with.

Toots is a jazz harmonica player, who also dabbles in guitar, vocals and assorted other instruments, but he carved his niche in the jazz world, and has been associated with Quincy Jones since 1969.

Actually, he whistles as a part of his attributes, and can be heard on movie soundtracks of such pix as "Midnight Cowboy," "Sugarland Express," and on the theme music for "Sesame Street."

According to Jack, Toots' appearance at Ethel's is an exercise in a laidback style of jazz, accompanied by an exquisite trio. Am told also that Ethel joined in, and sang a few tunes with the group.

Don't know if this is a regular part of the presentation, but we are rushing to meet a deadline, and really don't have time to check with Ethel. But, if it happened on opening night — it can happen again — and probably will:

* * *

Got word from a reliable source — after all, they told me that Buck Hill would be in town last week — that Gary Bartz will be appearing with Raschid Yahya et al at Hamilton's Landing.

It all will happen Sunday night, and we are happy to know that Gary will be in town for a while. This is almost a standard procedure, for he always makes it a point to be in Baltimore for the holidays.

After all, it is traditional to spend Thanksgiving holidays with your family — and Gary always does. Am certainly glad that Raschid is able to attract top musicians to appear at the club, and just wish they could improve the music-listening area.

But then, the place is a restaurant, with the music an incidental part of the accoutrement.

* * *

Over in D.C. at the Baird Auditorium of the Smithsonian, the Great Jazz Composers Series, the music of Ferdinand (Jelly Roll) Morton will highlight the opening of a series of concerts.

The pianoworks of Morton will be interpreted by pianist James Dapogny, along with Vince Giordani and the New York Nighthawks. Vocals will be handled by Linda Taylor Gatling.

Narration will be provided by Martin Williams, one of the top jazz writers of the world. The series is dedicated to pianists ranging from Jelly Roll to Thelonious Monk.

The lineup includes, Jan. 12: Fats Waller and the Harlem School; March 9, Horace Silver and Tadd Dameron, and May 11, Thelonious Monk. We'll bring you more details as the time nears.

Continued on page 8

Carl Matthews

SOUNDS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Go Go Crankin' " (D.D.E.T.)

Years ago, "go go" to me was something that The Miracles were going to in their 1965 top-10 hit.

I've been told that today's "go go" music is "full bodied-funk that leads with the bass drums, heavy percussion, cowbells and congas with brassy horns; a non-stop form of dance music where there are no breaks between songs, based on African rhythms with street/inner-city life interpretation."

When you drop the needle on this compilation LP, released on T.T.E.D. Records (headed by 20-year music veteran Maxx Kidd), it's party time. This is the sound of D.C., made by such popular D.C. go go bands as Trouble Funk and Experience Unlimited.

And a rockin' release this is. Although the true spirit of live go go cannot be fully captured on record, you may still have fun with this.

You may already be familiar with "Drop The Bomb," a song released in various lengths on several labels by Trouble Funk, who appear three times on this album. The version of "Drop The Bomb" on this album is different than the familiar previously-released version. "Go Go Crankin' " also includes "Let's Get Small" and "Say What?"

These cuts are okay, but if you ask me, I would much rather have had 'E-Flat Boogie," "Pump Me Up" and "Trouble Funk Express" on one album.

Chuck Brown And The Soul Searchers, who emerged as one of the first go go bands in the late 60's, and who hit the pop top-40 in 1979 with "Bustin' Loose," appears on this album with their top-30 R&B single "We Need Some Money ('Bout Money)." Notice the James Brown influence on this track.

Trouble Funk

Slim, a Soul Searchers soundalike, performs "Good To Go" and "In The Mix." On this album, you get the last 4:25 of the instrumental version of "It's In The Mix" that was 10:07 on the original 12-inch. It still has that horn riff hook repeated over and over throughout the song, those "Hey! Hey!" chants, but not that ridiculous rap. I don't know why I enjoy the thing.

The album also features a taste of Redds And The Boys (with their first national single release), Mass Extension, and Experience Unlimited.

Remember, if it don't make you dance, it ain't go go.

ARTISTS UNITED AGAINST APARTHEID
"Sun City" (Manhattan)

This is the album that features "Sun City," an anti-apartheid song written by Little Steven about a Las Vegas-type resort in South Africa.

Among the Artists United Against Apartheid, which I'll call AUAA from now on, are Afrika Bambaataa, Kurtis Blow, Run-D.M.C., David Ruffin, Pat Benatar, Bruce Springsteen, George Clinton, Darlene Love, Bobby Womack, Duke Bootee, Gil Scott-Heron, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Ringo Starr and many others.

Arthur Baker, along with Little Steven, produced this album, royalties from which will be donated to The Africa Fund to help political prisoners and their families, anti-apartheid groups, etc.

On the hard-edged funk track called "Sun City," the various artists do their individual rap lines with plenty of feeling, and with the dense synthesized mix it is fortunate that the lyrics are printed on the inside sleeve of the record so you can know exactly what they're saying.

Musically speaking, this is a far cry from "We Are The World," for while the USA For Africa tune was gospelly and was basically about survival, "Sun City" is considerably louder and has a more "political" message.

Another version of the track is on side two of the album. In "Revolutionary Situation," we hear various sounds and voices, compiled and edited by Keith LeBlanc and The News Dissector. Melle Mel is the lead-off rapper on "Let Me See Your I.D.," which is fast and furious rap. A bit of Miles Davis is on the fusion-like "The Struggle Continues," and the folk-song-like "Silver And Gold" by Bono, Keith Richards, and Ron Wood, is also interesting.

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