Playboy Jazz Festival

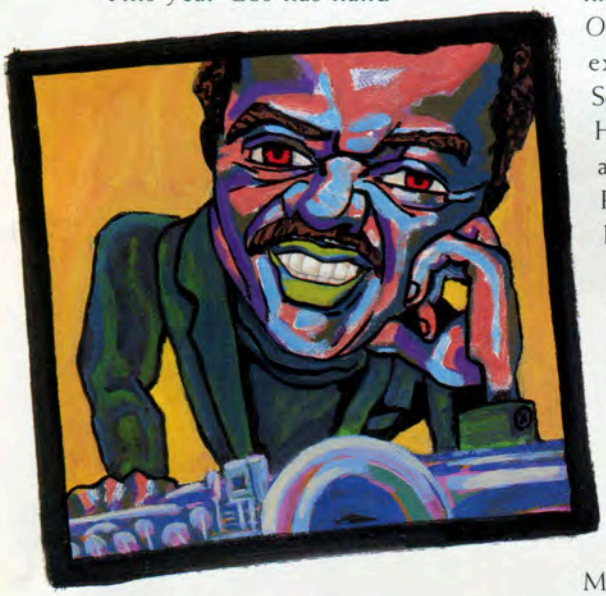
17TH ANNIVERSARY • JUNE 17-18, 1995

$5.00

THE COS OF GOOD MUSIC

OCTET

BILL COSBY is no stranger to good music, and over the years he has endeavored to present quality music in a number of venues—on television, on records and live, right here at the Playboy Jazz Festival. This year Cos has hand-



picked a group of jazz all-stars to join him in the Cos of Good Music.

Joining Cos as a special guest is veteran tenor saxophonist **Stanley Turrentine**, a man whose undeniably sensuous sound has graced jazz, pop, fusion and R&B recordings for more than thirty years.

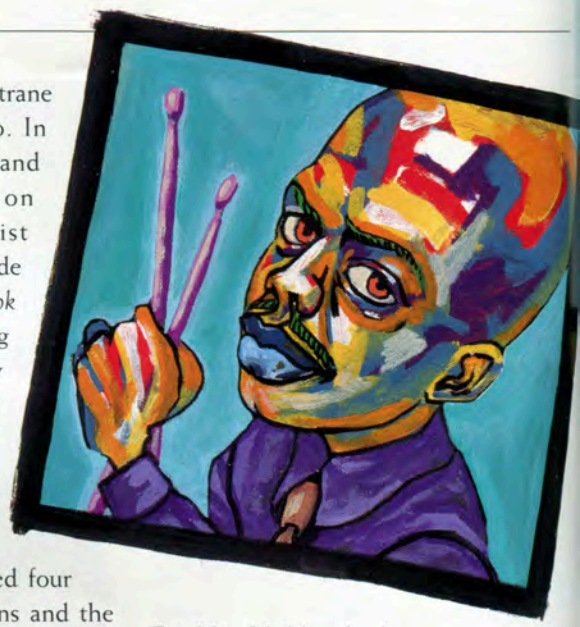
The 61-year-old Turrentine was born to a musical family in Pittsburgh. His father had played tenor and clarinet with Al Cooper's Savoy Sultans and took the time to introduce his son to the tenor sax, as well as to such neighbors as Errol Garner, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, Ray Brown and Ahmad Jamal, the latter of whom used to practice on the Turrentine family piano.

After touring with various R&B groups while still in his teens, Turrentine replaced John Coltrane in Earl Bostic's 1953 combo. In 1959 he joined Max Roach and made his recording debut on *Midnight Special* with organist Jimmy Smith. In 1960 he made his first record as a leader, *Look Out*, and began recording extensively with Shirley Scott, Oliver Nelson, Herbie Hancock, Kenny Burrell and Grady Tate on the Prestige and Blue Note labels.

Turrentine has received four Grammy Award nominations and the Latin Jazz USA award for his "Salsa Meets Jazz" series with Tito Puente and Ray Barretto. Last year he was granted an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.

Spurring The Cos of Good Music is the youthful and formidable rhythm section of bassist **Christian McBride**, drummer **Greg Hutchinson** and pianist **Benny Green**.

A veteran of groups led by Bobby Watson, Betty Carter, Art Blakey and

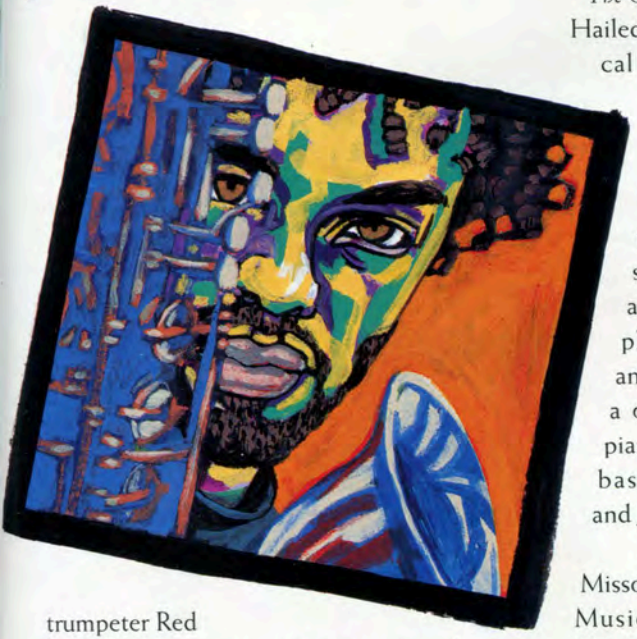


Freddie Hubbard, the redoubtable Green has led his own trios since his debut recording on Blue Note, *Lineage*, in 1990, and has toured extensively with bassist Ray Brown. Born in New York and raised in Berkeley, California, he started studying classical piano before being introduced to jazz by his father. The recipient of the 1993 Glenn Gould International Protege Prize in Music and Communication from the City of Toronto, Green also won first place in the 1993 *Jazz Times* Readers Poll.

At 23, Christian McBride is one of the most sought-after bassists in jazz. With more than seventy recordings as a sideman with such artists as Wynton Marsalis, Joe Henderson, Pat Metheny and Josh Redman, the Philadelphia native began his musical career on the electric bass and switched to the acoustic bass when he began classical studies at Philadelphia's High School for the Creative and Performing Arts. He turned down a scholarship to Juilliard when saxophonist Bobby Watson hired him for his band. He since has emerged

as a leader with his debut solo album, *Gettin' to It*, on the Verve label.

While still a teenager, drummer Greg Hutchinson made his professional debut touring the U.S. and Europe with

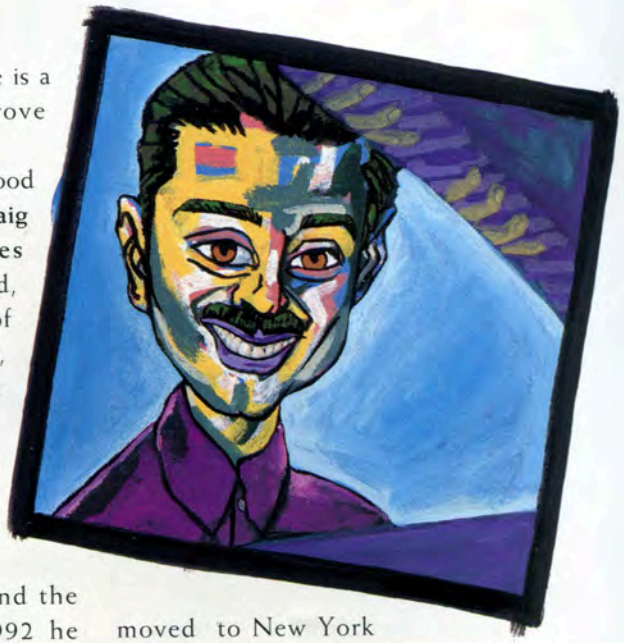


trumpeter Red Rodney. Still not out of his twenties, the Brooklyn-born Hutchinson has studied privately at the Manhattan School of Music and has worked with Betty Carter and Joe Henderson. Currently he is a member of the Roy Hargrove Quintet.

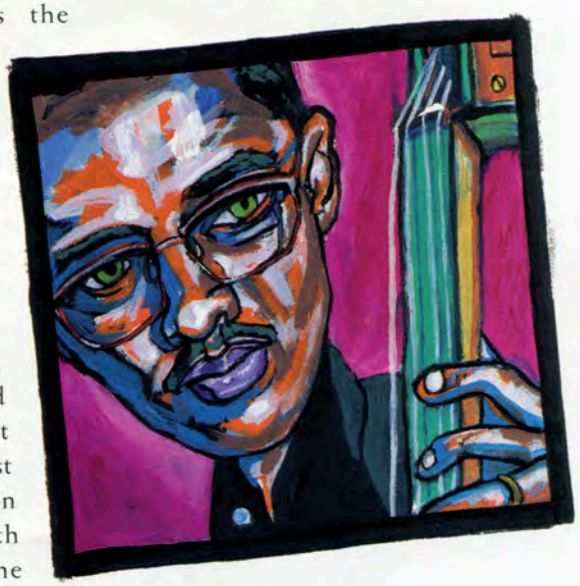
Helping out The Cos of Good Music are tenor saxophonist **Craig Handy** and reedman **James Carter**. A native of Oakland, California, and a graduate of North Texas State University, where he won the Charlie Parker Scholarship Award, Handy has distinguished himself as a sideman with Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Nat Adderley, Abdullah Ibrahim and the Mingus Dynasty. In 1992 he debuted as a leader on the Arabesque label and last year released *Epicure Jazz* on the Epic label. He also composed and scored the two-hour NBC movie, *The Cosby Mysteries*.

Hailed for his "all-embracing musical vision and volcanic tone," James Carter is a multi-talented reedman whose newest solo release, *The Real Quietstorm*, features the young player on soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, bass clarinet and bass flute. He leads a quartet that features pianist Craig Taborn and bassists Dave Holland and Jaribu Shahid.

A native of Joplin, Missouri, The Cos of Good Music's alto saxophonist **Charles McPherson** was first exposed to jazz as a teenager in Detroit, where he studied with pianist Barry Harris. At 19 he



moved to New York and began a twelve-year association with bassist Charles Mingus. As a leader, he has recorded a dozen best-selling albums and performed in concerts and festivals throughout the U.S., Canada, Japan, Europe, South America and Africa. A lifelong devotee of alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, McPherson attained one of his career highlights when he was asked to serve as soloist and composer for the film *Bird*.



YAMAHA

Playboy Jazz: Enjoyable Celebration of Sun, Good Music

JAZZ REVIEW

By DON HECKMAN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Bill Cosby has the key to the Playboy Jazz Festival: "Let the people enjoy the celebration," said the actor-comedian and longtime jazz fan, taking his 15th turn as host of the event.

And on Sunday, at the climax performance of the Hollywood Bowl jazz jubilee, Cosby was right on target. Enjoyment—widespread enjoyment—was the best way to describe the 10 hours of sunshine, picnicking and good sounds.

It's no mystery, of course, that this festival has as much to do with kick-off-the-summer, get-down-and-groove partying as it does with good music. But Sunday's program was an unusually well-put-together package, adeptly balancing commercial sounds and dance rhythms with high-level jazz improvisations and—in one case, in particular—some envelope-stretching performances.

Perhaps appropriately, the musical high point was generated by Cosby with a carefully assembled group of all-stars identified as the Cos of Good Music. By placing a powerful lineup of saxophonists—veterans Stanley Turrentine and Charles McPherson, and young hotshots James Carter and Craig Handy—in front of the steaming rhythm section of pianist Benny Green, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Greg Hutchinson, Cosby set the bait for a classic saxophone encounter.

And it worked. Carter, the wildest of today's young radicals, tore the place apart, ripping his way all over his tenor, double-tonguing, screeching and honking, while simultaneously managing to play some impressive, rapid-fire straight-ahead lines. Altoist McPherson, always the fastest of the fast, responded by contextualizing Carter's effusive outpourings, playing with a blend of style, substance and invention that was the best single musical aspect of the festival.

Two other highlights featured a pair of remarkable jazz perennials. Gerald Wilson proved there still is plenty of life in the large jazz ensemble with a time-stopping revival of Count Basie and Jimmie Lunceford. And Cachao, one of the key figures in the mingling of jazz and Cuban music, urged his 12-piece ensemble (with special guest, actor Andy Garcia) through a set of infectiously rhythmic numbers

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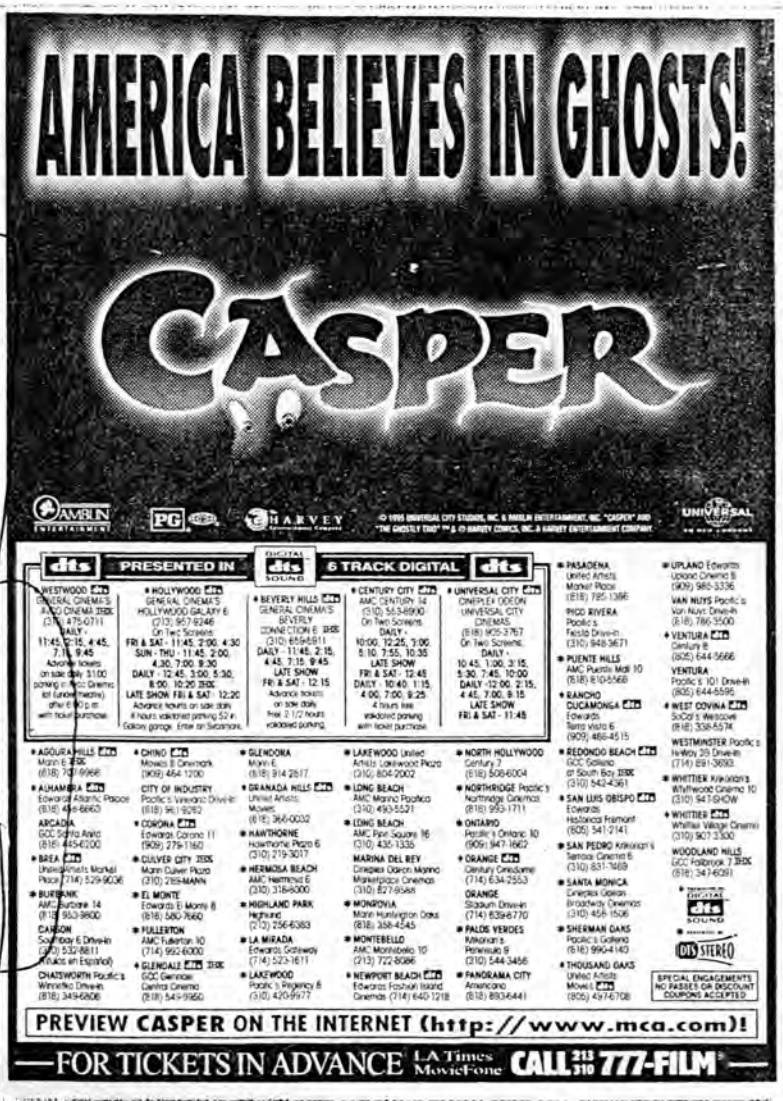
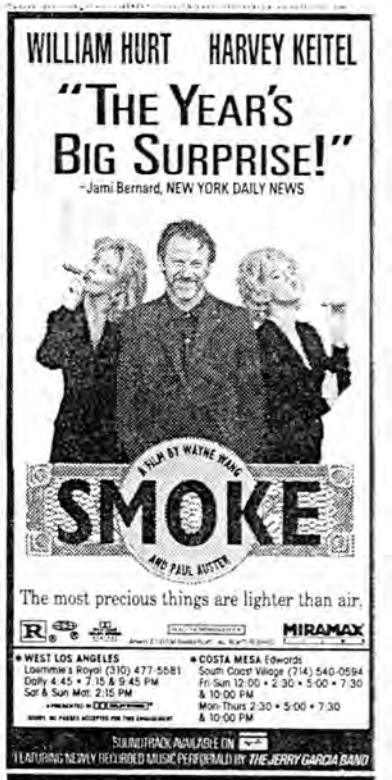
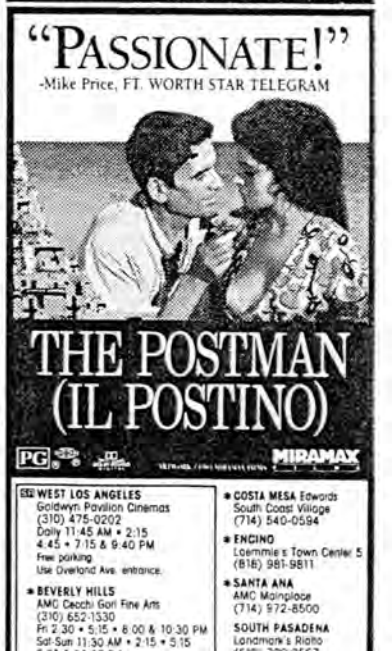
ROBERT GAUTHIER / Los Angeles Times

Charles McPherson, one of the powerhouse saxophone players in Bill Cosby's Cos of Good Music ensemble, performs at the jazz festival.