

SHORT TAKES Philadelphia, PA

interest in fiddling with a laptop because, "That would give me endless possibilities and I like to play in a limited space." He uses feedback between the input and the output from his mixer for a narrow sound palette. Their set was preceded by **Eric Carbonara** on solo guitar ... Incoming hits: Ars Nova Workshop (arsnovaworkshop.org) presents: 7/7 **Nels Cline** Singers + **Richard Crandell** + **Good for Cows**; 7/14 **On Fillmore** w/ **Glenn Kotche** + **Rachel Grimes**; 7/26 **Sun Ra Arkestra** at 40th St. Field ... Chris' Jazz Café (chrisjazzcafe.com) presents: 8/20-21 **Jackie Ryan**, 9/24-25 25th Anniversary Celebration for Chris'. The club will present a band filled with musicians who have been regulars at the club—**Eric Alexander**, **Bootsie Barnes**, **Larry McKenna**, **Peter Bernstein**, **Dan Kostelnik** and **Ari Hoening** ... Lucky Old Souls (luckyoldsouls.com) presents at Moonstone Arts Center: 7/9 **Tony "Stickman" Wyatt** Trio + **Chico Huff** Band w/ **Jef Lee Johnson** and **John Swana**; 8/13 **Daniel Peterson's** Truth & Consequence + **Classical Revolution**; 9/10 **Maxfield Gast** Trio + **Oscuro** 5tet ... World Café Live (worldcafelive.com) presents: 8/5 **Orrin Evans'** Big Band; 8/8 **Meshell Ndegeocello**; 9/8 **Tortoise**; 9/27 **Avishai Cohen** (b) ... Keswick Theatre (keswicktheatre.com) presents: 7/7 **B.B. King**; 8/31 **Wynton Marsalis** Ensemble performing to the film *Louis* ... Sunset Jazz Series at Wiggins Park in Camden, NJ (ccparks.com) presents: 7/13 **Catherine Russell**; 8/2 **Buster Williams** 4; 8/17 **Bobby Caldwell**.

—Ken Weiss

And you've had an association with trumpeter Eddie Henderson.

When building a career its good to have a vision once in a while. Eddie Henderson came to me in a vision. He was present on the scene in San Francisco in the early eighties. I was forming my quintet which had guitar and tenor sax with the piano bass and drums. The guitarist left the band so I hired Eddie Henderson and, shortly after, Larry Hancock on drums. The bass players were many of the top in the Bay Area and David Schrader stayed on tenor sax. We did a couple of gigs and then landed Friday nights at Yoshi's Japanese restaurant and Jazz club. Yoshi liked shakuhachi—maybe that helped, although this quintet was piano only for me. Original compositions and some Woody Shaw and Wayne Shorter pieces. This was the band that led to the LP (1982), *Sufi Dancers*. After four or five months at Yoshi's Eddie had personal reasons to move on and I hired Warren Gale on trumpet for the Keystone Korner concert and studio that made *Sufi Dancers*. I was hired for a concert in one of Eddie's bands for his birthday celebration. At that time I also worked for Sonny Simmons in his quartet. We did some duet rehearsing as well. Eddie Henderson helped to catapult my group to a higher level both musically and politically. And although he was not there for the definitive recording for this genre of my music, his participation with it was critical to making it happen.

Would it be accurate to say that you did the usual sideman gigs then started out on your own while working on your own concepts?

I think somehow I was given too strong a personality to be a good sideman in the earlier years. Now I'm collaborating on some wonderful projects, not as a sideman but as a force in the creation. Sideman work in the mainstream Jazz or modern Jazz was geared to add creativity but also support the leader. Little by little as music became more ensemble or democratic, each person was a piece of one tapestry or one composition. I was composing Jazz pieces and they were strong representations of modern Jazz with changing time signatures and interesting harmonic and melodic concepts. So I liked being in charge. The few sideman things I did earlier were fun. I guess I always dreamt of being hired in some great band, but destiny took me into my own world.

As a leader I always stayed out of the way of the great musicians I hired. I tried to create direction while playing and an environment carefully chosen to explore in. After leaving the written music phase, my musicians typically asked for instruction or requested heads at the beginning and end. My most characteristic response was, "There will be a silence before we start and then we'll start." The music developed as a spontaneous storytelling with beginning, drama, and ending. One cycle. One canvas with an infinite amount of images or cycles within it, but all for the sake of expressing one complete lifetime or one complete walk around the block.

I became familiar with your playing from the LP Sufi Dancers on White Cow Records. Perhaps you can tell us about that date.

I was impressed with the feeling Keith Jarrett introduced to solo exploration. My harmonic concept became more abstract and I lost interest in standards and written tunes. For six months after *Sufi Dancers* was recorded I played and dealt with no written music. The quintet was hired once more but I was nervous because my playing had drifted so far away. Shortly after I moved to New York. Listening to players like Paul Bley, Warne Marsh, Coltrane, Bartok, Messiaen, Mal Waldron, McCoy Tyner, I met drummer Chuck Fertal.