

# Local jazz favorite Joe Robinson is 'Movin On'

## Winston-Salem native shines on second outing

BY S.I. LYNCH  
THE CHRONICLE

It would be a novel idea to be a gifted and talented musician and have all the recording deals coming in requesting your wares. For a jazz artist, that's an even greater feat to accomplish. Unfortunately, the one true form of music that is ours (America's) is so underappreciated. So once reality sets in and you feel compelled to be expressive on a larger scale, what do you do? You produce, package and market your own material on your own label. The results: I did it my way.

When you speak to Joe Robinson you get the impression that here is a man who loves music. Maybe it's the vocal intonation that leads one to visualize Robinson wearing a smile as he speaks of Miles Davis and Lee Morgan as some of his influences. Or maybe it's the increase in pitch as he speaks of "Movin On" and the fans who were the impetus for his creating this follow-up to his first album, "Better Late Than Never."

"The title 'Movin On' was a tune that kept going around in my head," Robinson said. "As we were in the midst of developing the album the tragedy on Sept. 11 occurred. It was then that we knew the title of the album should be 'Movin On.' It was what we as a country were trying to do. There was (a) reason that the title stayed around. It also means a lot, as the co-writers are my wife and daughter. It was a family affair, because all of us had the opportunity to put in a line or two. It was also what I was trying to do with my music."

For as long as Robinson can remember,

music has been an integral part of his life. Although 58 years young, he has committed most of his life to the trumpet, which he plays with extreme ease, as evidenced by the new album. Robinson feels he is playing better than ever. This album includes his interpretations of such classics as "My Funny Valentine," "Master Blaster" and "Greensleeves," which is also known as jazz's version of "What Child Is This."

He spoke of the difficulty of playing and staying with the trumpet. At a time when many of his contemporaries have stopped playing, he still is and feels blessed to be doing what he loves. Robinson described the trumpet as a jealous woman. He said, "If you lay off too long, it will not be there when you return. Your mouth goes, then the fingers and then you find it hard to get it all back together. That's why it is perceived as one of the most difficult instruments to stick with."

Robinson and his band may be familiar to many in Winston-Salem. They were a mainstay at a local downtown club for nearly 10 years. "Movin On" is for the number of loyal fans who have supported our group at the various venues over the years," Robinson said. "I am known to do covers, and on this project I ventured out and did more of my own stuff. So many of the people that would attend my shows were used to hearing me do covers, but I had some original material that I wanted to get out there. On this project it all came together. The musicians were friends and colleagues that I worked with over the years. In the studio, we produced this album, like they used to do. We were all in there at the same time.

This helped us to vibe off of one another."

One of my personal favorites besides the covers on this album is "Love Dot Com," which came about when Robinson's mother-in-law asked what all the fuss was about dot com this and dot com that. She probably never knew that there would be song about that simple question. The result is a cool and driven tune that bridges the musical gap. "Runnin' Woman" is the most blues-influenced track on the CD and sounds like something you'd hear B.B. King do. I must mention Robinson not only blows a mean horn, but his vocal capabilities are quite impressive too.

"Theme for Alfreda" was written in dedication to his wife, Alfreda. "Movin On" is actually enjoyable from beginning to end. Despite the lack of a major label or really big-name musicians, the album has garnered a great deal of radio airplay around the area. I don't profess to be a jazz or blues aficionado, but I surely did find myself embracing this CD. It would be a marvelous thing to have all those who love pure, uncluttered, tastily produced and musically nourishing tunes to go out and support one of the city's most talented native sons. This is worth a real listen even without all the hoopla!

On Jan. 15 Robinson will have the CD release party for "Movin On" at Thea's House of Blues & Jazz, 521 N. Liberty Street. The doors will open at 7 p.m. You can get an up-close-and-personal listen to this Winston-Salem native and the band who recorded "Movin On" with him doing their thing.



Photo courtesy of Joe Robinson  
Joe Robinson is excited about the release of his new CD. "Movin On" contains lots of original material.

### EAC

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minorities. Many members of the East Area Council complained that they were not told that the chamber was considering replacing the group.

The McCarters are not members of the chamber and have not been for more than a decade. Miriam McCarter said she canceled her membership after the chamber held an awards banquet at a country club that she says refused her entry. She said that black businesspeople who never showed interest in the chamber are excited about the possibility of the new group.

"Some people did not want to be a part of the chamber because they knew that all we were getting were crumbs from the chamber's table," she said.

Anderson is planning a meeting of her own next week

during which she'll try to convince members of the former EAC that there is a place at the chamber's table for them and for their ideas and concerns.



Belton-Brown

on their part as well," Anderson said.

Members of the former EAC sent an open letter to Anderson late last month in which they laid out their frustrations about the way the council was dismantled. Some of the people that signed the letter also have made

public their intentions not to renew their chamber memberships as a form of protest. Anderson said she has officially received notices from four black chamber members that they will not renew their memberships.

She said she has been contacting all letter signers to invite them to meet with her to come up with a "compromise."

"I would like to keep all of (black chamber members)," she said. "I would like to find a way that we can satisfy the East Area Council and reach out more broadly to other minority businesses."

The last president of the EAC believes the goals of the EAC and the goals of the new Minority Business Council could have been consolidated without replacing one group with the other.

"What happened with the East Area Council could have

been avoided with a name change and a restating of the mission statement," said Mosé Belton-Brown. "One group did not have to be disassembled to form another group to do what the first group was doing all along."

Belton-Brown was one of the first EAC members to cry foul over the move to replace the council, but she is sticking with the chamber and has even decided to serve on the planning

board for the Minority Business Council.

"I believe in the chamber and what it has to offer," Belton-Brown said.

She added that she also wants to stick around so that she can tout some of the goals that EAC members strived toward.

Belton-Brown said she has been calling her colleagues to urge them to stay in the chamber and fight for improvements from the inside, although she

freely admits that black chamber members are "dropping out like flies."

The brainstorming meeting for the proposed independent black business group will be held Tuesday, Jan. 15, at the East Winston Heritage Center (the East Winston Branch Library). The meeting will be held from 7-9 p.m. For more information about the meeting, call the McCarters at 724-0334.

### Shelters

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"Warm weather makes it hard to get the public consciousness (to focus on homelessness); it increases when weather gets bad, but it is something that is a societal problem we address every day."

Samaritan works closely with other area shelters to find overnight lodging in the event of overflow problems to at least place people on couches somewhere if need be. Kurosky said that financial donations coupled with her dedicated staff and band of volunteers make it possible for Samaritan to operate and provide for the homeless.

"We don't know what to expect as winter proceeds. The number of people coming through the shelter will get higher and that is why all of the shelters will work together to meet the needs of these people," Kurosky said.

Bethesda Center Ministries, like Samaritan Ministries, operates year-round regardless of inclement weather. Charles Ford, shelter director, said that once the weather changes and walking becomes limited for people who are homeless, the shelter quickly becomes full.

Bethesda Center, which is used more as a lodging facility and day shelter, is also located on Patterson Avenue and is the only one of its kind in Forsyth County. Ford said that he and his staff prepare for weather and everything that comes along with any kind of bad weather. The building is always open, so they are "always prepared," Ford said. Although there is not a great deal to be done to prepare for the cold, Ford says that donations of blankets, adult clothing, outerwear and personal hygiene products are always helpful and needed at the center.

"(Bethesda Center) is open 24 hours, and we really rely on some kind of break during the day to at

least tidy up and get ready for more people to stay overnight," Ford said.

Lighthouse Ministries, on Eighth Street, is another men's shelter that is open 24 hours a day all year long. Shelter Director Philip Hale said the shelter's only plan for the weather is to simply "roll with the flow." Hale says there really is no way to plan ahead for times like these, so he and his staff learn to expect more men to seek lodging.

Hale said that once the weather turned cold the shelter was operating at capacity. Even though the number of men utilizing the shelter is down from last year, the number of "over-nighters" increased slightly with the snow, Hale said.

If you would like to make a donation of money or items to the above shelters, call Samaritan Ministries at 748-1962, Bethesda Center Ministries at 722-9951 and Lighthouse Ministries at 723-7884.

### Diggs

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legal hurdles. It might take a change in current state law for the local school system to form the partnership with the arts-based charter school board.

Don Martin, superintendent of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, said he believes that won't be a problem if the parent groups support the proposal. The wheels have already begun to turn in that direction. Martin has put out feelers in the N.C. Attorney General's Office to find out if the plan would be legal. If it isn't, Martin said, he believes lawmakers would support a change in the law to allow the merger to take place.

"If we can get that (support) and feel it's positive, then get the teachers' vote, I don't see a problem," he said.

Hal Johnson, chairman of the arts-based charter board, said he wants to meet with his parents and supporters to find out where they stand on the issue.

"We have an ABES family

meeting set for next Monday," he said. "They will have a chance to express themselves and get the answers they want. The people on the board want to know that we have the support of the parents."

One of the key elements in the whole issue is the amount of support that would come to the arts-based charter school if it merges with the local school system. The proposal would provide the physical plant, which would significantly cut down on the school's operating expenses. It would also bring with it the resources of the local school system. The charter school board would retain autonomy relative to the school's educational program, however. That would create a win-win situation, according to Johnson.

"For us, it's all about curriculum and the opportunity to do it and do it right," he said. "Going it alone in this environment, and with the economy the way it is, is a real difficult road."

Diggs is set to become a countywide arts magnet school regardless of the vote

and proposal for the merger. The local school system has received a \$1 million federal grant that is designed to promote diversity in schools that are predominantly populated by one race. Martin and officials from the local school system approached the arts-based school board with the merger proposal because they believed it would attract more white students.

Jim Sanders, a member of the arts-based charter board, raised a concern. "Is the funding relative to the charter?" he asked. "Will the commitment be the same if we don't do the charter route?"

Parents expressed concern about the proposal because they felt left out in the early stages.

The school board has tried to convince Diggs parents that the arts-based charter school would benefit their children and community.

"This has been a leap of faith from the beginning," Martin said. "But we have somewhat of a mentality of you build it and they will come."



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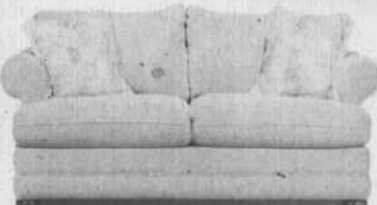


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