

James' jazz friends head for touchdown

By GREGORY CLAY
Staff Writer

With an album called *Paradise*, the new Grover Washington Jr. has surfaced again. The word "new" refers to the Bob James-less albums Washington has been producing of late.

Washington has ventured onto his own as a producer—a move which began with *Live at The Bijou and Reed Seed*. Gone are the tremendous orchestral arrangements and jazz-classical movement James incorporated when he was Washington's producer.

Washington has also developed his own traveling band. When he was with James, the band numbered about 40, but now there are only six. The group is so spontaneous, it seems as if the group could easily set up in someone's backyard with no problem.

Paradise encompasses more of the fundamentals of jazz music than have Washington's previous albums. "Shana" begins with a chill, but then transforms into something more mellow. (It's dedicated to G.W. Jr.'s daughter.) Washington's tenor sax is as bad as ever on "Tell Me About It Now." And to top it off, he even plays acoustic piano during one part.

Washington's ever-present percussionist Leonard "Doc" Gibbs is something else, especially on the title cut and "Feel It Comin'." Gibbs must have definitely felt it.

The best tune is the title cut—it's just

funky enough. "The Answer In Your Eyes" has the romantic guitar, the soft congas and the reeds which mean dine and wine time.

Paradise—a good album for Washington, the dude with the Super Sax.

It's Laws' time again. And Hubert Laws brought his siblings along again for the action on *Land of Passion*.

Jazz saxophonist Ronnie Laws composed "We Will Be." Debra and Johnny Laws are the featured soloists, and Eloise and Blanche Laws back them up.

The main Laws is Hubert. He won't get lost amidst his family because of a song entitled "Heartbeats." It's thumping, features no vocals and focuses on Hubert's flute. "The Key" is one vocalization when Hubert gets overcome by the sibling rivalry, but "Music Forever" offers a compromise—the sisters sing and Hubert plays.

The brothers' duo combined again on "We Will Be." Ronnie begins with his sax and Hubert cleans up with his flute. The brothers are good, individually as well as in collaboration.

Each cut on the album offers something different. The title cut features Debra and Johnny in unison with the lyrics and they eventually back up Hubert's flute with the vocal harmony of "doo-wahs" and "la-las."

Some people said Laws' previous album *Say It With Silence* was great. *Land of Passion* is at least that good.

Wilbert Longmire is a relative unknown among the jazz listening crowd. But he's alive and making some noise with his release, *Champagne*.

He's a Bob James protege. (Longmire plays on BJ's label) so he uses his orchestra and all that other contractual stuff. The important thing is that Longmire is a rising guitarist and is into the Bob James sound. "Diane's Dilemma" and "Ragtown" are two of BJ's compositions.

The usual people—Harvey Mason, Gary King, Eric Gale and the Brecker Brothers—perform for Longmire and BJ on this album. Earth, Wind & Fire "Love's Holiday" is a hit song that's adequately performed by Longmire—his vocals and all.

Jay Chattaway, Maynard Ferguson's producer, composed "Pleasure Island." It features good background vocal harmony, but the song itself is long and monotonous.

"Funshine" is a Longmire original—the only one. Without the background horns, it reminds one of George Benson just a bit. Even though the album lacks originality overall, "Funshine" shows potential.

The average jazz listener would probably assume *Champagne* is really a Bob James album with the name Wilbert Longmire on the cover. Although there is a little truth in that statement, Longmire deserves some credit for creating basically a fair album, even though he was under James' supervision.

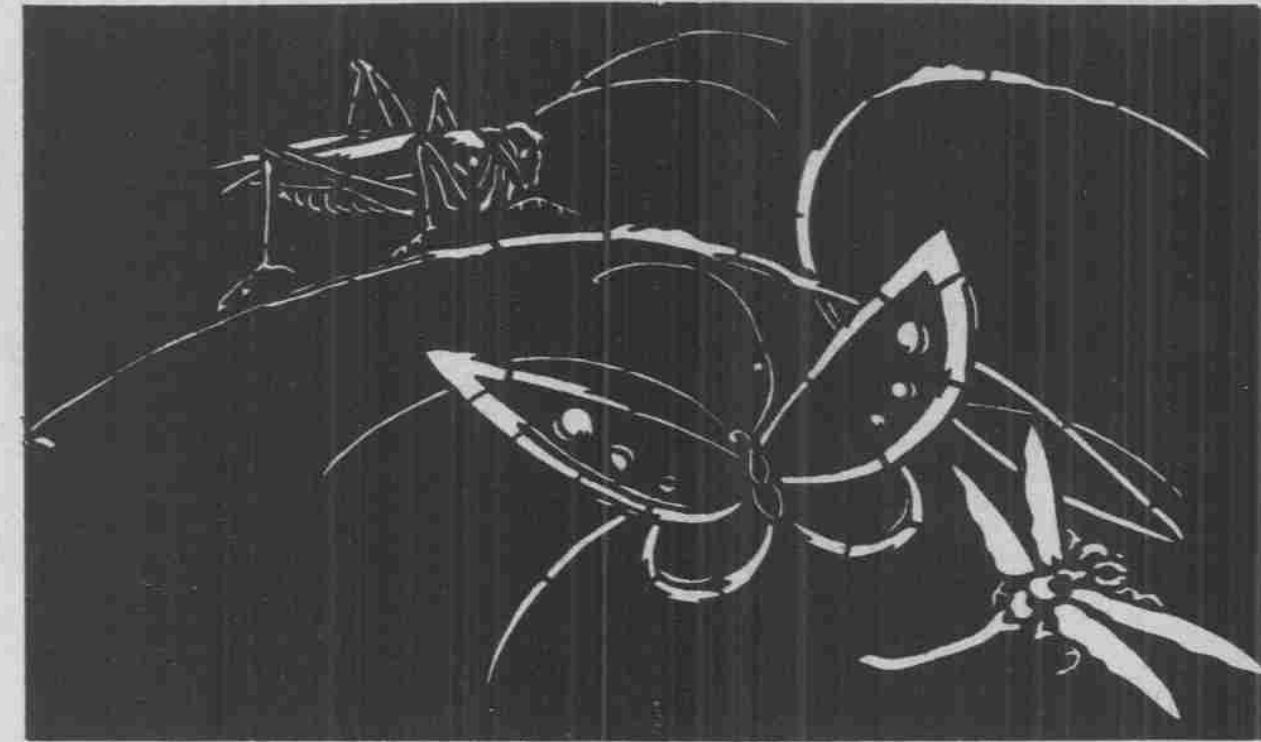


Hubert Laws and family

Like Grover Washington Jr., Longmire should soon be on his own with an album even better than *Champagne*.

Richard Tee is also one of Bob James' pupils. But on his first solo album, *Strokin'*, Tee is the man behind the keyboards. Unlike Wilbert Longmire, Tee uses a wider variety of composers on his album, although the band members are basically the same.

"Virginia Sunday," composed by Tee, brings forth memories of Lonnie Liston Smith's music. The keyboards are like bells into something quiet and innocent. But Stevie Wonder's song "Jesus Children of America," which found its way onto Tee's album, probably never should have taken that route.



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'2 Faced' on-target rock



2 Faced

I'm usually pretty wary when someone tells me an album is great, but I still insist the new album by No Dice, *2 Faced*, is excellent. It is the best rock and roll album I've heard this year—the best album since *Armed Forces*.

The guitarist on the cover may look punk, but this British band is rock and roll all the way. The first two tunes open the album with a charge. The loud vocals and guitars are the strength. They may not have much new ground, but this is an excellent rock and roll band—they're not heavy metal, and they actually have nice harmonies.

AM- and FM-style cuts are mixed (2 faced?), presumably for promotional and financial reasons. But *2 Faced* is a fine album that could become well-known if radio stations and record stores put it in the public ear.

—DOUG STONE

Fiddlers meet

Union Grove plays host

The 55th Annual World Championship Old Time Fiddler's Convention will be today through Saturday on the J. Pierce VanHoy farm in Union Grove.

This tradition in country music was first organized in 1924 and features bluegrass bands, fiddlers, banjo pickers, cloggers and other forms of down-home entertainment.

Band auditions begin at 6 p.m. today and at noon Friday and Saturday. The 50 bands judged best will then compete in the finals at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Competition will take place in the 12,000-seat VanHoy Coliseum.

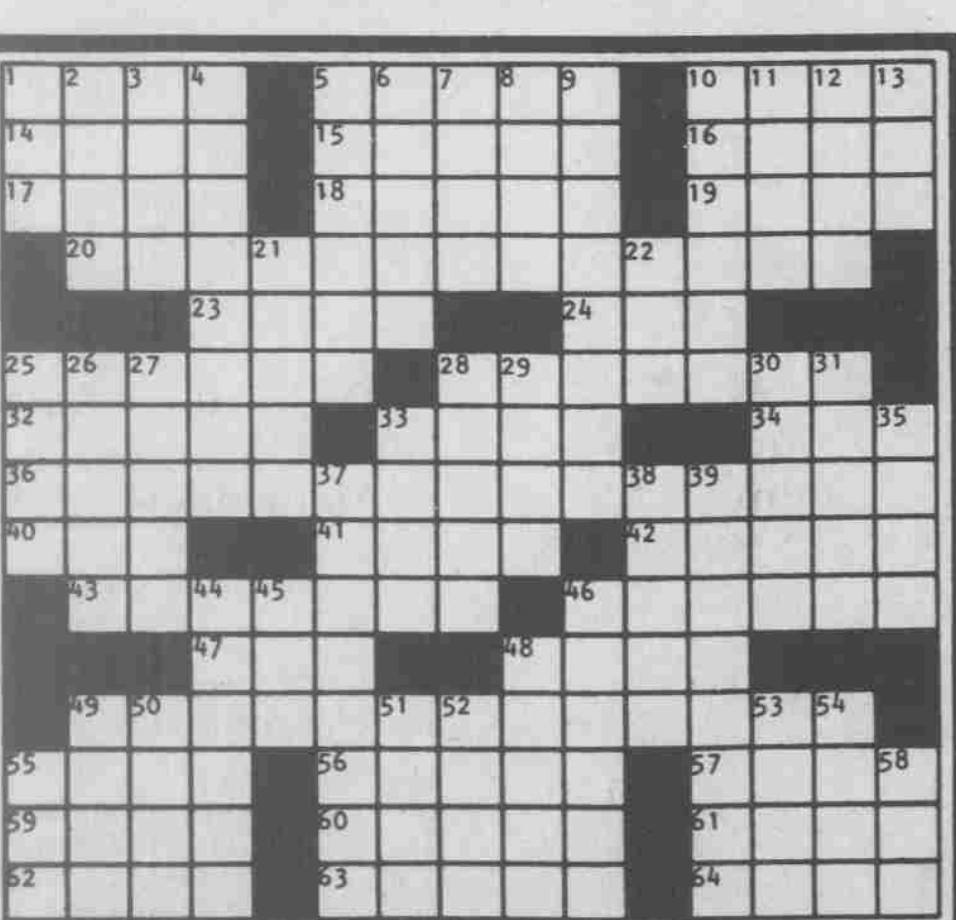
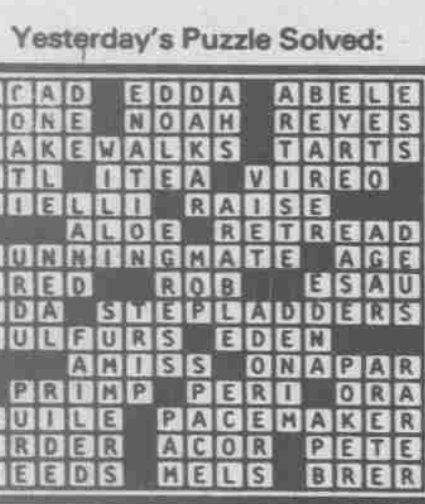
Prizes totaling \$10,000 in cash will be awarded to winners of the various categories of competition. A \$1,000 top prize goes to the best fiddler.

Admission price for all three days is \$25. For Friday and Saturday, the cost is \$20; for just Saturday, the charge is \$10.

The VanHoy farm is located off I-77 at N.C. 901. For more information, call 704/539-4934.

THE Daily Crossword by Jack L. Steinhardt

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| ACROSS | 24 Attach a label to | 47 Swiss river | 22 Snack |
| 1 Cinema's Beery | 25 Futile | 48 Maple genus | 25 "Miss — regrets" |
| 5 Rain and cough | 28 Kind of march | 55 Zest | 26 Concentrated pigment |
| 10 Become indistinct | 32 Musical Mel | 56 "Gigi" star | 27 Provoked |
| 14 Island near Corsica | 33 Letter from Arabia | 57 Ill-fated Italian | 28 New cadet |
| 15 Lexicographer | 34 With it | 58 statesman | 29 Rivers: Sp. |
| 16 Foreboding | 36 How to go | 59 Potpourri | 30 Rude push |
| 17 Adriatic seaport | 40 Harden | 60 Separated | 31 Spent |
| 18 Botanical sheath | 41 Attacks violently | 61 Covetous | 33 Russian sea |
| 19 Bread crust | 42 Rod from down under | 62 Sulking moods | 35 Funeral mound |
| 20 Advice to Gridley | 43 What some pitchers do | 63 Appoints | 37 Eagle or cheese |
| 23 Trial | 46 What the South tried to do | 64 Grant the use of | 38 Exaltations |
| | | | 39 Tearful kind of gland |
| | | DOWN | 44 Musical movements |
| | | 1 Beak | 45 A Fleming |
| | | 2 Norwegian ruler | 46 Essences |
| | | 3 Hillside shelter | 48 Esteem highly |
| | | 4 Coiffure | 49 Package of cotton |
| | | 5 Catnap | 50 Military division |
| | | 6 Mazo de la | 51 Begin California valley |
| | | 7 Bugbear | 52 Small weight |
| | | 8 Hammer part | 53 Wander |
| | | 9 Begin | 54 Shamrock isle |
| | | 10 Search for food | 55 Surpass |
| | | 11 In the thick of | 58 Singular |
| | | 12 Say it isn't so | |
| | | 13 Terminate | |
| | | 21 Studio stand | |



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| 153 | 100 | 11,896 | 915 | 458 | 15,300 |
| 327 | 50 | 5,566 | 428 | 214 | 16,350 |
| 666 | 25 | 2,733 | 210 | 105 | 16,650 |
| 1,667 | 10 | 1,092 | 84 | 42 | 16,870 |
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