

# ENTERTAINMENT



MY TUNE  
by  
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Writing articles for newspapers and other publications has many perks, one of which is the ability to indulge one's musical tastes. Last week I celebrated a birthday. My wife treated me to dinner at a restaurant featuring northern Italian cuisine and a concert featuring one of my favorite pianists, Horace Tapscott. Never heard of him, huh? Well, you missed it.

Thanks to the miracle of television, many not-so-well-known musicians are being discovered. One of the best of the unknowns is Horace Tapscott. He may also be one of the busiest. Like most musicians, he's a jack of all trades. In addition to his work with the trio, he leads the Pan-African People's Arkestra. What began in 1959 as an artistic outlet for musicians, poets and dancers, is now one of the most frequented instrumental preserves for composers.

The Houston-born pianist moved to Los Angeles when he was 10 years old. When other musicians moved to New York to "make their mark," Tapscott stayed home. If you like rich percussive piano, like Monk, like Cecil Taylor, like Mal Waldron, you'll love Horace Tapscott.

The concert by the Harold Tapscott Trio was so vivid you could close your eyes and practically see the scenes

envisioned by the composers of the pieces featured. The pianist, who is equally adept at playing trombone, glided effortlessly across keys that seemed ready for the exquisite workmanship that is characteristic of Harold Tapscott. The influence of alto saxophonists Frank Morgan and Eric Dolphy, trumpeter Don Cherry and drummer Cecil McBee are obvious. They were all classmates in high school.

Of course, in any trio there are three musicians. Tapscott was ably supported by bassist Roberto Miranda, whose compact bass more closely resembles a cello, and Andrew Cyrille, who is probably the most laid-back drummer I've seen in years. Cyrille plays drums. Most percussionists beat them.

One of the reasons Tapscott stays in L.A. is, of course, the Arkestra. He is very much into community activities. The Arkestra plays regularly at community and city-wide events. Many notable musicians, including Arthur Blythe, and David Murray of the World Saxophone Quartet, are alumni of the Arkestra.

Most of us are led to believe that trailblazers are natural swashbucklers. Not so. Some of us discover new worlds in pastel colors. Such is the nature of Horace Tapscott.

## Lisa Lisa Takes Real Life Experiences & Put Them To Work

Their fourth Columbia album, "Straight Outta Hell's Kitchen," finds Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam taking their real-life experiences and putting them to work on an exhilarating, uplifting album of future hits, with an eye and ear focused on conquering new territory.

To that end, Full Force and the group opened up production chores for the new album, and then invited the mega-platinum team of Robert Cliviles and David Cole (the C+C of C+V Music Factory) to write and produce half the album.

The album's other six tunes were produced by Full Force whose role in the Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam story goes back to jump street—and an unbroken string of hit singles starting with "I Wonder if I Take You Home" and "Can You Feel the Beat" in 1985; "All Cried Out" (1986); back-to-back No. 1 smashes "Head To Toe" and "Lost in Emotion," and "Someone to Love Me for Me" (1987); "Everything Will B-Fine" (1988); and, from "Straight To the Sky," "Little Jackie Wants to Be a Star," "Just Git It Together," and "Kiss Your Tears Away."

While continuing to broaden their interests in support of the youth community whose membership comprises their biggest group of loyal fans, Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam remain true to themselves. No matter what the obstacles, this is one group whose dedication to making people happy—on the physical and spiritual

levels—knows no boundaries.

Four years ago, when the epidemic of teen suicide first began to receive widespread international attention, it was Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam who stood up to the crisis in a way that made a difference. They agreed to serve as spokesgroup for the Youth Suicide National Center—who, in turn, used the group's top 10 R&B single, "Someone to Love Me for Me," as its theme song.

"Most people grow up with life all around them and move slowly toward death," explained Lisa, who was raised in New York's Hell's Kitchen and still calls the turf her home. "But I grew up with death around me, and now I'm moving rapidly toward life." This sense of positive, life-affirming community support has grown to be something of a trademark for Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam.

Following the release of "Straight To the Sky" (April 1989), their third RIAA gold Columbia album, and rigorous touring throughout North America, Europe and Japan—a schedule that would've taken its toll on many a band—Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam were not content to just sit back afterwards and watch the world go by.

Instead, they could be found speaking to high school students on behalf of continuing education across the country; or filming a commercial for seatbelt safety; or, in Lisa's case, becoming spokeswoman (with actor

Danny Glover) for the Coors Literacy "Pass It On" campaign. Meanwhile, they continued their association with the Chicago-based SUN (Solutions Unlimited Now), an organization devoted to alternative problem-solving and youth counseling.

New York City's Hell's Kitchen is the ultimate source of Lisa's Hispanic background, but she was never to be considered a neighborhood representative. She followed her own path and didn't succumb to the self-destructive urges of many of her peers.

"Singing gives me something to look forward to in life," the diminutive brunette explains. "My mother always told me, 'Think about what you're going to do before you do it.' That's what I was taught. I saw it all, the teenaged parents, the drug dealing and the killing, but I didn't like it. I liked singing, so I made something of myself."

She was after a singing career by age nine, when she began in her church choir, through high school at Julia Richmond where she studied musical theater. Lisa joined the school's traveling theater group and they performed at stores around Manhattan, old folks' homes, even Penn Station. Her life began to change in 1983, when she was introduced to Mike Hughes at the Fun House, one of New York's important hip-hop dance clubs.

Mike provided the fateful introduction of Lisa to the six-man singing,

songwriting, producing, and performing group of Full Force and their partner Steve Saleem. "I'd known Full Force for nine years," says Mike. "We practiced a lot together on box guitar, organ, and keyboards. I started playing congas and Brian (aka B-Fine of Full Force) taught me drums. But I was young so I got distracted by football and physical sports." Mike continued to help Full Force by posting fliers, setting up for the band, and occasionally playing drums.

Spanador (Alex Moseley) was a familiar face from Brooklyn, on the scene via frequent session playing. "Name something," he says, "and I did it, boat rides, bar mitzvahs, club dates, jazz, reggae, calypso sessions." Another pursuit shared by Mike and Spanador is capoeira, a Brazilian martial art that provided Spanador's nickname; literally, it means "feather duster," referring to the long tail of hair worn by Alex, aka Spanador. Capoeira is the source of the energetic choreography with which Mike and Spanador color the trio's live shows.

Meanwhile, Full Force and Saleem were hot with UTFO and the "Roxanne" phenomenon, and were looking for a lead singer to front a new group they'd be producing. They already had a completed song and rhythm track when Lisa took the D train late one night to East Flatbush for her audition in their basement rehearsal space.

### Workend Festival Starts With Fate

Fly in the face of fate on Friday the 13th. A sampling of jazz, blues and Latin sounds will start the festival weekend right.

Beginning at 6:30 p.m., Easy Street, the newest downtown nightclub in Raleigh, will be the site for "Hot Night... Soft Lights... and All That Jazz," presented with 88.9FM/WSHA.

Steve Hobbs and Friends (remember his "Escape" CD?); Blues with a Feeling (the hottest up-and-coming blues band in the Triangle); and the Ricardo Granillo Latin Jazz Band (Spicy—dance the night away) are on the bill. Cover for the three-band night is \$8, and a percentage of the proceeds will go to WSHA, Shaw University Radio.

Easy Street is located at 119 E. Hargett St., just up from Moore Square, where the Jazz and Blues Music Festival begins at 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14.

### Sounds Of Blackness Tour Along With Vandross

LOS ANGELES — A&M Perspective recording artists Sounds of Blackness are about to embark on a highly coveted 4-month tour with Luther Vandross, beginning on Sept. 11 in Hampton, Virginia, and ending Dec. 31 in Milwaukee, Wis. Sounds will be the opening act for the tour, which will also include actor/comedian Sinbad as emcee and a special performance by Lisa Fischer. They will also be the opening act for selected dates with Prince in England at the beginning of September.

The Sounds debut album, "Sounds of Blackness: The Evolution of Gospel," is an anthology of black music which portrays the essence of the African-American experience from the beauty of African melodies, to the complexity and depth of spirituals, gospel, jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and rap. Ebony magazine says, "The debut recording from Sounds of Blackness epitomizes the feel-good pop gospel music of the '90s." Since its release in May, the album has reached No. 8 with a bullet on Billboard's R&B album chart. The single "Optimistic" has reached the top 5 on the R&B charts.

Sounds of Blackness has been touring the country under the musical leadership of Gary Hines, who is the arranger and producer of the 40-member vocal and instrumental ensemble. Their dates have included performances at the IAAM convention in Philadelphia, the Black Expo in Chicago, the Apollo Theater in Harlem, and the Palladium in Los Angeles, among many others.



CAROUSEL FESTIVAL—As the Carousel Festival becomes bigger each year, the names of the headliners who perform are better known. This year's festival is no exception. Beach music fills the air on Saturday afternoon as The Original Tams take the main stage at 5:30. "Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy" is just one of the great hits you'll hear by The Original Tams Saturday of the festival. Finding stardom in the 60's and 70's as The Tams, the founding members suffered a break-up in 1989. But don't be fooled by any other names, The Original Tams are the heart and sound of the original group.

### Professional Showmen Gather At Athens High

More than 75 professional writers and Southeastern artists in dance, music, theater, folk arts, visual arts, language arts and history will gather at Athens Drive High School from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 7 for the 12th annual Cultural Arts Festival. Sponsored by the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, this annual event showcases and presents professional artists and writers to teachers, representatives from schools, PTAs and other booking organizations. The event is open to the public.

The festival artists and writers have been specially screened for participation in the Arts Education Program of the United Arts Council. Many of their credentials include national and international performances, and the programs they offer are specifically designed to supplement North Carolina's Basic Education Program and to enrich the already existing curriculum in the schools.

Twelve artist showcases will highlight the day and provide community and school representatives with the opportunity to sample the rich variety of talent available through the Arts Education Program this year. In the Resource Center, 75 artists and writers will set up informational booths and will be available throughout the day to discuss their programs, booking dates and fees with festival participants. A comprehensive, 90-page, bound Artist Directory will also be available to arts planners.

Last year the Arts Education Program of the United Arts Council helped to fund and place 67 artists and writers for 212 performances and residencies in Wake County schools. More than 60,000 pre-school through high school students were enriched



THE BEST!—On September 11 in Hampton, Virginia, Epic superstar Luther Vandross will begin a major U.S. tour celebrating "Power Of Love," the eight consecutive platinum album of his Epic career. The first leg of the tour runs through November 1, culminating in a spectacular two-night stand at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. Luther Vandross' new single "Don't Want To Be A Fool," the follow-up to Luther's Number One R&B/Top Five Pop single "Power Of Love/Love Power." Written and produced by Luther Vandross and Marcus Miller, "Don't Want To Be A Fool" is also an extravagant and moving new video directed by Julien Temple.

### Huey Lewis And The News Scheduled To Stop Here

The Huey Lewis and the News "Hard At Play" North American tour is scheduled to stop in Raleigh at the Walnut Creek Amphitheater on Saturday, Sept. 14, at 8 p.m. Budweiser, the "King of Beers," is the exclusive sponsor of the tour, which will visit more than 80 cities

through September 1992. Huey Lewis and the News have multiple grammy and American Music Awards to their credit along with 10 top-10 singles, including "The Heart of Rock and Roll," "Working for a Living," and "Hip to Be Square." This tour is performed in conjunction with the group's latest chart-topping album, "Hard at Play," which features the hit single, "Couple Days Off," and later release "Hit Me Like a Hammer."

"We are excited about our partnership with Huey Lewis and the News," said August A. Bush, IV, senior brand manager for Budweiser. "The group and their grassroots, classic rock and roll image is a natural extension of our contemporary adult marketing effort."

Budweiser has produced two 30-second television commercials to support, promote and "spread the news" of the Huey Lewis tour. The first commercial features the group performing their classic song, "Working for a Living." The second spot features their latest hit, "Couple Days Off." Both spots began airing nationwide on June 1.

Budweiser is not a stranger to major concert sponsorship. For years the brand has been a major sponsor of concerts and a wide variety of entertainment-related events throughout the United States; from grassroots programs to national tours.

Budweiser's association with the Huey Lewis and the News tour comes on the heels of last year's sponsorship of the highly successful North American and European tours by the Rolling Stones.



### Author Of Jackson Book Raps Lawsuit

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP)—The author of a best-selling Michael Jackson biography said a \$100 million libel lawsuit that Motown Records founder Berry Gordy filed against him is defamatory. Gordy filed the lawsuit in Superior Court last Thursday, claiming author J. Randy Taraborrelli's book, "Michael Jackson: The Magic and the Madness" falsely portrays Gordy as a former pimp and cheater.

The author, who has written about Motown artists for 20 years, said he hadn't seen a copy of the suit.

But, he said, "I have every confidence in my work. The fact that Motown mistreated its artists over the years is not news. I am just the messenger."

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