The Chance Label
Nexus of Doowop and Jazz

BY ROBERT PRUTER AND ROBERT L. CAMPBELL

ike record labels Parrot, United, and Chess, Chance Records was an independent Chicago label that pioneered the recording of the new African-American sounds that swept the city after World War II—the electrified Mississippi blues and the doowop harmony groups. From September 1950 through October 1954, Chance recorded 358 known sides, purchased or licensed at least twenty-four sides, and released at least eighty-three records on its own label, in addition to nine records on Sabre, its tributary.

Although blues and doowop recordings earned Chance a place in history, the company also recorded pop, jazz, and gospel. The jazz record-
ings were by John “Schoolboy” Porter, the Jimmy Binkley Jazz Quintet, Chubby Jackson, Howard McGhee, and Conte Candoli. Only two of these sides have ever been reissued by anyone.

This article focuses on the doowop vocal groups recorded by Chance and the jazz accompaniment they received. The nexus of doowop, R&B, and jazz represented by this output reflected both the period and the Chance label itself. Jazz-style accompaniment would never again be as prominent in doowop as it was on the recordings reviewed here. One reason is that during that time, jazz combos and doowop groups appeared together in nightclubs, and the arrangements used in clubs were also used in the recording studio. Another reason is that the recording industry of 1950–1954 had yet to deal with rock ‘n’ roll. In 1955, when doowop groups emerged as rock ‘n’ roll entities, the record labels—notably Chess and Vee-Jay in Chicago—consciously worked with their session men, most of whom had jazz backgrounds, to change their accompaniment style from jazz to rock ‘n’ roll.

The bulk of Chance’s output was in the R&B field, which reflected the (continued on page 2)
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knowledge amassed by the label's founder and owner, Art Sheridan (born July 16, 1925, in Chicago). Sheridan had been running a distributorship and a pressing plant, where the bulk of his work was African-American–oriented product. Most Chance recordings were done at the city's premier independent recording studio, Universal Recording Corporation.

Begun in September 1950, the Chance label was headquartered in the offices of Sheridan's American Record Distributors (ARD) at 2011 South Michigan Avenue. The label started by recording a series of instrumentals by tenor saxophone player John “Schoolboy” Porter. Chance sputtered and almost closed in 1951. The company did record some titles during June and July by bluesman Henry Green, a gospel group called the Heavenly Wonders, plus more sides by Schoolboy Porter and Clyde Wright, but its total studio output during 1951 came to a meager twelve sides.

In June 1952, Billboard magazine reported on the rebirth of the Chance label. In August of the same year, Sheridan dissolved his distribution firm, ARD, reorganized the firm as Sheridan Distributing, and moved the headquarters to 1151 East 47th Street. Not long after Chance was reactivated, Ewart Abner Jr. joined the firm. Abner, the son of a minister, was born in Chicago on May 11, 1923. The last quarter of 1952 saw robust recording activity by Chance, starting with the eight-side session by Johnny Sellers and a Four Shades of Rhythm session in the early fall.

The Four Shades of Rhythm were a vocal and instrumental combo that originated in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1945. By the time the Four Shades of Rhythm recorded for Chance, the group consisted of Oscar Lindsay (vocals/drums), Adam Lambert (guitar), Booker Collins (bass), and Ernie Harper (piano), a veteran of the Four Blazes. Lindsay was the only member to have been with the group in Cleveland.

From October through December 1952, there was extensive session work using the Al Smith orchestra. For the session with Big Bertha, Smith brought along two of the top tenor saxophonists in town, James “Red” Holloway and Oett “Sax” Mallard. His rhythm section was filled out by Billy Wallace on piano, William “Lefty” Bates on guitar, and Leon Hooper on drums. For the Bobby Prince session, he brought back Red and Lefty, along with Eddie Johnson on tenor sax, the indispensable McKinley “Mac” Easton on baritone sax, and Clarence “Sleepy” Anderson on piano.

Al Smith also backed lounge singer Lou Blackwell, who made a few obscure appearances with Tab Smith for United Records. On this occasion, he put together a larger band, probably consisting of Paul King (trumpet), Red Holloway (alto sax), Sax Mallard (tenor sax), Mac Easton (baritone sax), Billy Wallace or Clarence “Sleepy” Anderson (piano), and Leon Hooper (drums).

Chance's First Vocal Group
Chance opened 1953 with an ambitious downhome blues recording program.

Project Stop-Time Advisory Committee and Ensemble

Project Stop-Time Advisory Committee members and Ensemble Stop-Time musicians each bring a singular expertise to the collective, and all share a proven commitment to the ideals of the CBMR, Project Stop-Time, and the preservation and promotion of black music culture.

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Maggie Brown, vocals
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Rodney A. Clark, trumpet
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Andy Goodrich, saxophone
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Project Stop-Time is funded in part by the generous support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, The Joyce Foundation, and WPWR-TV Channel 50 Foundation.
On January 12, 17, and 23, the label ran three marathon sessions with J. B. Lenoir, Sunnyland Slim, Johnny Shines, Big Boy Spires, Johnny Williams, and James Williamson (including his famed “Homesick Blues”). The company’s focus would soon broaden to include vocal groups.

In January, manager Ralph Leon brought to Chance its first vocal group, the Hammingos. The members were Sollie McElroy (lead), cousins Ezekiel “Zeke” Carey and Jacob “Jake” Carey, and cousins Johnny Carter and Paul Wilson. On their first session, the group was backed by the King Kolax Band, which had accompanied them during nightclub performances. Deep-toned tenor saxophonist Dick Davis solos with authority on “If I Can’t Have You,” “Someday, Someway,” and “Hurry Home Baby.” King Kolax, in his usual elusive style, slid his tightly muted trumpet into the riffs on “If I Can’t Have You.” His presence on “That’s My Desire” and “Hurry Home Baby” borders on the subliminal; however, he is fairly prominent on the jump “Someday, Someway.”

The company closed a very busy month with a lengthy session on January 29. Al Smith’s full band recorded instrumentals, then backed R&B singer Bobby Prince. Finally, Smith’s rhythm section worked behind the legendary Tampa Red, recording under the name the Jimmy Eager Trio because Tampa Red was still under contract with RCA Victor at the time. The Bobby Prince material was held until the label’s last months of operation, and four of the Al Smith instrumentals, despite exciting tenor sax work by Cliff Davis and Red Holloway, were dealt to Lester Bihari’s Meteor label.

The Sabre label was launched in August 1953, with separate headquarters at 1225 East 47th Street. That month, Chance relocated its main offices from 1151 to next door at 1153 to double the company’s space. Sheridan also began working with Vee-Jay Records, which had just set up shop and had two releases, one by the doowop group the Spaniels and one by the bluesman Jimmy Reed. The company was owned by neophytes Jimmy Bracken and Vivian Carter, who had no distribution and little knowledge of the business.

An August 1953 recording session brought the Flamingos into the studio again with the Red Holloway band (including Al Smith on bass, Horace (continued on page 4)
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Palm on piano, Al Duncan on drums, an unidentified trumpeter, and the ever reliable Mac Easton on baritone sax. The best of the four titles recorded at the session was “Golden Teardrops.” The beauty of this song is marvelously enhanced by the intricate harmonizing, especially the way the voices are dramatically split in the intro and the close. McElroy’s impassioned vocalizing helps immeasurably in giving “Golden Teardrops” its reputation as a legendary masterpiece.

Also in August, Chance recorded its second vocal group, the Five Echoes. The Echoes, from the city’s South Side, were teamed with the Fats Cole Band. The first record, “Lonely Mood,” backed with “Baby Come Back to Me,” was released on Sabre in September 1953. Solo artist Walter Spriggs sang lead on both sides but was considered a member of the group only for the session. Constant “Count” Sims sang baritone; Herbert Lewis, baritone; Tommy Hunt, second tenor; Earl Lewis, first tenor; and Jimmy Marshall, bass. Hunt was drafted into the Army after this session and would later sing with the Flamingos and develop a solo career in the early 1960s. In addition to Cole (piano), the band probably included Percy Payner (bass), Charlie Williams (drums), and an unidentified tenor saxophonist.

Moonglows Join Chance  

In September 1953, Alan Freed brought the Moonglows to Sheridan. Members of the group were Bobby Lester (tenor lead), Harvey Fuqua (tenor lead), Alexander “Pete” Graves (first tenor), and Prentiss Barnes (bass). For the first session, Chance teamed the group with another Red Holloway band, which included Al Smith and Al Duncan on drums. On piano and celesta was Willie Jones, Chicago’s most avant garde pianist prior to Sun Ra. The Moonglows recorded two secular titles, “Baby Please” and “Whistle My Love,” and two Christmas titles. For the group’s first release in October, Chance paired the secular titles. The A side, led by Harvey Fuqua, is a low-key bluesy ballad, and the B side, featuring a duet lead of Fuqua and Lester, is a steady, rocking jump. In December, Chance released “Just a Lonely Christmas,” backed with “Hey, Santa Claus.” “Lonely Christmas,” led by Fuqua, is an Orioles-style droopy ballad that appeals to the ear of today’s collector. “Hey, Santa Claus,” led by Barnes, is a routine jump heavily derived from the old rhythm and blues tune “Be Baba Leba,” which had been made famous by Helen Humes in 1945. The Moonglows’ debut proved inauspicious, as all four of the sides yielded meager sales for the company.

Chance continued a heavy recording schedule in October, recording bluesman Willie Nix, guitarist Rudolph Spencer “Rudy” Green with the King Kolax Band, and Lazy Bill. Also recorded in October was another new vocal group from the Washington, D.C., area—the Five Blue Notes. Original members were Andy Magruder (lead), Waymond Mooney (first tenor), Robert Stroud (second tenor), and Moise Vaughn (baritone/bass). They recorded four sides on October 21, and all were released on the Sabre subsidiary in 1954. The first release paired “My Gal Is Gone,” a typical 1954 deep, brooding ballad, which featured Magruder as lead, with “Ooh Baby,” a routine jump featuring new member Fleming Briscoe as the lead. The second release paired “The Beat of Our Hearts,” a more poppish and accessible ballad featuring Briscoe as lead, with a tuneful jump, “You Gotta Go, Baby,” with Vaughn on lead.

The Al Smith band supplies an uncharacteristic balance to these Five Blue Notes recordings. The guitar is very much to the forefront, and the
piano is recessed. In fact, the piano is completely absent from “The Beat of Our Hearts,” replaced with prominent guitar chording. Paul Gusman (drums) uses brushes. Red Holloway, who has a tenor sax solo on “Ooh Baby” and another one on “You Gotta Go, Baby,” is heard only on the final two bars of “The Beat of Our Hearts.”

Chance closed out 1953 with another Flamingos session on December 24. The group was backed by an Al Smith aggregation that included Red Holloway (tenor sax), Mac Easton (baritone sax), Norman Simmons (piano), the great Chicago drummer Vernell Fournier, and probably Sonny Cohn (trumpet). The company did not release the recordings, but two sides, “Blues in a Letter” and “Jump Children,” were on one of the very last records on Chance’s release schedule in October 1954. “Blues in a Letter” is a solid blues, and “Jump Children,” although a terrific number, did not excite the public in 1954.

“Jump Children,” as the alternate title “Vooit Vooit” would indicate, is too swing-oriented to suit vocal-group record collectors today, but it is most typical of the era, and the group used the number in their live performances for years after its release.

The year 1954 started off strongly enough in January, as the Moonglows waxed six presumably more commercially successful titles. On this occasion, the Al Smith band included Red Holloway on tenor sax, Willie Jones on piano, and Paul Gusman on drums. One recording was a cover of Doris Day’s “Secret Love,” which had been featured in the film Calamity Jane. Although the Smith band provided inappropriate doowop chord changes instead of what the song called for, the Moonglows’ version had a particularly effective harmonized intro with a falsetto top that segued into Lester’s emoting lead. “Secret Love,” as the Moonglows’ third Chance release, was paired with a spectacular jump, “Real Gone Mama,” featuring Harvey Fuqua as lead. The record, released in February 1954, attracted the most attention of all the Moonglows’ Chance sides, and in March, Sheridan pronounced it the company’s top seller for that month.

The company delayed release of two other titles from the session until June, which saw the release of “I Was Wrong,” backed with “Ooh Rockin’ Daddy.” “I Was Wrong,” featuring Fuqua as lead, has a nice “switch-off” approach, opening with Fuqua’s sultry low-key lead, then switching to high-powered chorusing and segueing into Lester’s screaming lead. “Ooh Rockin’ Daddy,” with Lester on lead, is an R&B jump, but, with the searing tenor sax break by Red Holloway and the aggressive approach to the “rock rock rock” refrain, one could call it a proto-rock ‘n’ roll number.

The Moonglows’ fifth and final Chance release, “219 Train,” backed with “My Gal,” debuted in October 1954 as the company was fading and the Moonglows were hunting for a new label deal. The recording was barely distributed and proved to be the group’s rarest record, fetching collector prices from $500 to $1,000. “My Gal,” led by Fuqua, is an uninteresting jump, partially saved by an excellent sax break by Red Holloway; but the bluesy “219 Train” is fantastic, featuring a great emotional melismatic lead by Lester.

The Five Echoes returned to the studio in January for their second session for the Sabre label. The recordings from this session were “So Lonesome,” which featured Count Sims on lead and Johnnie Taylor as second lead, and “Broke,” featuring Sims as the sole lead. Red Holloway accompanies Taylor’s stagey sobbing on “So Lonesome” and has a full-fledged solo on “Broke.” The two sides were released in February.

February 1954 saw the Flamingos go in the studio again to record “Cross over the Bridge,” backed with “Listen to My Plea.” They were accompanied by another Al Smith band, which from (continued on page 6)
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the aural evidence, appears to consist of Red Holloway, Mac Easton, Willie Jones, and Vernell Fournier. On subsequent release, neither the cover of the Patti Page hit nor the bluesy “Listen to My Plea” were appealing enough to sustain the Flamingos’ name with the public. “Cross over the Bridge” and “Listen to My Plea” feature solos by Red Holloway and prominent accompaniments by Mac Easton. The piano comping beneath the tenor solo on “Listen to My Plea” sounds like Willie Jones.

In early 1954, the Five Echoes had one more session with Sabre. Seemingly, in an attempt to steer the group away from the blues genre, the company bad them record a ballad, “Why Oh Why,” and a jump, “That’s My Baby.” Hunt, while AWOL from the Army, joined the group on this session, singing second lead on “Why Oh Why.”

The eponymous Five Chances were the last vocal group added to the label. At the time of signing, the members of the group were Darnell Austell (lead), his brother John Austell (bass), Reggie Smith (tenor), Howard Pitman (baritone), and Harold Jones (baritone/tenor). The Five Chances made four sides for Chance at a session in the spring of 1954: “I May Be Small,” “Nagasaki,” “California,” and “Make Love to Me.” All the leads were by Darnell, but on “Make Love to Me” and “Nagasaki,” Eddie Stillwell joined in as alternate lead. (Stillwell was only a part of the group for the session, which made them temporarily a six-man ensemble.) “I May Be Small,” written by McKay, was the strongest of the four. It is a bluesy ballad but retains its attractiveness as a vocal harmony vehicle. The song was paired with the old Mort Dixon and Harry Warren song, “Nagasaki,” which was introduced onto the charts in 1928. The record was released in August 1954 and garnered good regional sales.

The instrumentalists are identified by ear. Red Holloway has a brief tag in the introduction to “I May Be Small,” a solo on “California,” and a solo on “Nagasaki.” “Nagasaki” is really a bebop number. It opens with a “mop-mop” riff, and the central portion is a guitar solo by Lefty Bates (who captures Charlie Christian’s style perfectly), followed by a bebop solo by Red and a second guitar solo. The jazz accompaniment is unusually strong.

The End of Chance
When J. B. Hutto and His Hawks entered Universal Recording on October 19, 1954, little did Hutto know that his session represented the end of Chance Records. In previous histories, the closing of Chance in December 1954 has been characterized as a business failure. This view is incorrect. In actuality, Sheridan and Abner became deeply intertwined in the business dealings of James Bracken and Vivian Carter at Vee-Jay. Noted Sheridan, “I just got tired of it, and I was spending a lot of time with Vivian, Jimmy, and Abner, and didn’t want to be a producer” (Pruter 1996, 37–38).

Many Chance artists moved to Vee-Jay. Al Smith, who had been responsible for so many of the accompaniments for blues singers and doowop groups, defected to the new company in June 1954 (although he hedged his bets by handling accompaniments for United/States and Parrot/Blue Lake until those operations declined). For the next four and one-half years, he and guitarist Lefty Bates ran the Vee-Jay house band on most sessions. Red Holloway was the go-to guy on tenor sax through mid-1956, when he was replaced by the great blues player Lucius “Little Wash” Washington. Keyboardists Mac Easton, Horace Palm, and Norman Simmons became regulars at Vee-Jay, along with drummers Al Duncan, Paul Gusman, and Vernell Fournier. King Kolax cut two quintet sessions for Vee-Jay in 1954 and 1955. Even Willie Jones released a single in 1954, whose titles (“My Thing” and “My Other Thing”) and pianistic attack (roughly midway between Milt Buckner and Cecil Taylor) must have nonplussed record buyers at the time.

What Chance produced during its four years of existence does not rank with the output of its much larger Chicago counterparts, Chess or Vee-Jay. Still, there are a lot of vocal group collector items in the catalogue, and it remains one of the legendary labels of the golden age of rhythm and blues. Chance produced few, if any, rhythm and blues records that could be characterized as rock ‘n’ roll. Perhaps this is because the company merged its vocal groups with jazz musicians that had been working in clubs on the South and West sides, artists who were not thinking rock ‘n’ roll but jazz. When the company closed, the rock ‘n’ roll revolution was just being launched, and it was Chess that took Sheridan’s biggest vocal acts, the Moonglows and Flamingos, and turned them into rock ‘n’ roll stars.

Endnote

Robert Pruter, a member of the Project Stop-Time Advisory Committee, is the author of Chicago Soul (1991) and Doowop: The Chicago Scene.

Robert L. Campbell is a professor in the Psychology Department at Clemson University; author of The Earthly Recordings of Sun Ra (1994); and founder of the Red Saunders Research Foundation Web page (http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~campion/rsrf.html), dedicated to research on postwar jazz in Chicago.
Bibliography of Popular Music

BY MARCOS SUEIRO

The following selections are available in the CRMR Library and Archives, open Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.; telephone: (312) 344-7586.


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Bibliography
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Office of Community Arts Partnerships

Expanding the CBMR Family

With the assistance of the Joyce Foundation, the Center for Black Music Research has undertaken an audience-development initiative designed to significantly heighten the Center’s visibility in and its impact on the Chicago area. The primary component of this initiative is designed to utilize the expertise of and services offered by Columbia College Chicago’s Office of Community Arts Partnerships (OCAP).

The goal of this program is to develop an active and supportive committee of community and organization leaders, called the CBMR Community Culture Council, that will assist the Center in reaching communities and neighborhoods throughout Chicago. The OCAP office has been responsible for the remarkable popularity and growth of the college’s Dance Africa, which has become the largest such festival in the country. If you are interested in becoming involved in the CBMR Community Culture Council, please contact Kimberly Ransom at (312) 344-7198.

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CBMR is pleased to announce that, with the establishment of its online bookstore, the Center receives a portion of the proceeds for all purchases made by constituents who access Amazon.com through the CBMR Web site. Amazon.com is the source for high-quality monographs, journals, reference books, and sound recordings, as well as toys, software, and other products. To make purchases and benefit the CBMR, visit the CBMR Web site at www.colum.edu/cbmr and follow the “CBMR Bookstore” or “Online Bookstore” links. Please note that the price of items to the purchaser is not increased by the amount of the donation.

responding: Rhythm and blues, black consciousness, and race relations. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Members of Ensemble Stop-Time

"It's a dream come true for me to perform with a large ensemble such as Stop-Time. My work with educating about the history of black music makes my invitation to be a member of the EST a welcomed continuum." Maggie Brown

Chicago native Maggie Brown studied music, theater, and voice at Columbia College Chicago. She has performed both locally and nationally in her one-woman show, Legacy: Our Wealth of Music, a musical demonstration/lecture about the history and evolution of African-American music. Utilizing her knowledge of music history and entertainment education, Brown assisted the Chicago House of Blues in the development of its Blues Schoolhouse student outreach program. Brown's debut recording, From My Window, was nominated by the Chicago Music Awards for Best Jazz CD, and in 1997, she was nominated for Best Jazz Performer. Brown also can be heard in duets with Abbey Lincoln on Lincoln's CD, Wholly Earth (Verve 1999).

"My association with Ensemble Stop-Time has allowed me to widen my musical horizons, test my musical fortitude, and interact with some of the best musicians on earth." Kenneth Clark

Kenneth C. Clark is a multi-reed performer with a master's degree in music from Governor's State University. A native Chicagoan, Clark has performed with a number of area bands, among them Red Saunders, Frank Derrick, the Chicago Jazz Ensemble, and the Morris Ellis Band. He has toured with the Emotions, the Dells, and Chaka Khan. He is currently performing with Jackie Taylor's Black Ensemble production of Chicago's Golden Soul. Clark also serves as band director for the Chicago Board of Education.

"Stop-Time could be the most important educational venture to come out of Chicago." Rodney Clark

Rodney A. Clark's professional career as a trumpeter includes touring with the Broadway shows The Wiz, Ain't Misbehavin', and Your Arms Too Short to Box with God, and with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, Dinah Shore, the Spinners, Ben Vereen, Gladys Knight, and the Temptations. He has worked as a studio musician and recorded numerous radio and television commercials. Clark co-leads a seventeen-piece jazz band, Jazz Unlimited, which performs in the Chicago area.

"Ensemble Stop-Time is a phenomenal teaching institution for Americans to see and hear the origins of black music forms—all in one Dixielandin', swingin', boppin', gospelin', R&B-in', rappin' performance." Leon Joyce Jr.

Percussionist and drummer Leon Joyce Jr. is a former field band musician with the U.S. Marine Corps. He has toured in productions of Hair, Oklahoma, South Pacific, and Jesus Christ Superstar and performed with Von Freeman, Teddy Riley, Pete Fountain, Ellis Marsalis, and the Houston Jazz Ballet. Festival performances include the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the Gullah Festival (Beaufort, South Carolina), and the Classic Jazz Festivals (Los Angeles and Palm Springs, California). Joyce is a member of the American Federation of Musicians and serves as technical coach for the Goodman Theater.
Members of the Project Stop-Time Advisory Committee

In each Stop-Time!, members of the Project Stop-Time Advisory Committee are introduced. In this issue, Randall M. Johnson, Fred C. Matthews III, Sterling Plumpp, and Robert Pruter are featured.

Randall M. Johnson is Interim Dean of Career Programs at Malcolm X College in Chicago. For nearly twenty years prior to his appointment in 1996, Johnson held the position of Dean of Arts and Sciences at Kennedy-King College in Chicago, where he also founded, and continues to direct, the Kennedy-King Community Choir. He was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award from the National Association of Negro Musicians Chicago Chapter and is a member of the Chicago Federation of Musicians and the Chicago Musicians Association.

Fred C. Matthews III is Vice President of Community Relations for the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago and Executive Director of the Duncan YMCA in Chicago. His thirty-two-year dedication to community outreach at the YMCA is exemplified by the recent initiation of the Duncan YMCA Chemin's Center for the Arts. Courses in the visual arts, exhibitions, and concerts are all part of the Center's initiative to bring arts education and cultural programming to the surrounding Chicago neighborhoods. Matthews is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, the National Black Services Committee of the YMCA of the USA, and the Board of YMCA Association of Professional Directors. He is Chairman of the Youth Activity Committee of West Side Future.

Sterling Plumpp is professor of African-American Studies and English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he has taught since 1971. He is a poet whose published works include Ornate with Smoke (Third World Press, 1997), Hornman (Third World Press, 1995), Blues: The Story Always Untold (Another Chicago Press, 1989), and The Mojo Hands Call, I Must Go (Thunder's Mouth Press, 1982). He is the winner of the 1983 Carl Sandburg Literary Prize for Poetry. In addition, Plumpp edited Somehow We Survived (Thunder's Mouth Press, 1982), an anthology of South African literature, and he has published articles and reviews in numerous journals, including The Black Scholar, TriQuarterly, Jazz Hot, and The Southern Quarterly.

Robert Pruter is R&B editor of Goldmine magazine and has served as an advisory editor for Popular Music and Society since 1995. He is the author of two award-winning books on popular black music, Chicago Soul (University of Illinois Press, 1991) and Doowop: The Chicago Scene (University of Illinois Press, 1996). He is editor of The Blackwell Guide to Soul Recordings (Blackwell Publishers, 1993) and has written articles and liner note essays on black popular music. Pruter is a writer and reporter on employer benefit plans for Charles D. Spencer and Associates in Chicago.

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Review
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premiere of an extraordinary 20-minute composition by Coleridge-Taylor
Perkinson, principal conductor for the
Center for Black Music Research.
“Perk,” as he’s known in the jazz
world, unveiled his “Exercise (Dis’ Go
Dis’ Way) and Stretch,” an expanded
version of an earlier work.
Written for the massive, combined
forces of Ensemble Stop-Time and
Ensemble Kalinda Chicago, it’s one of
the most striking jazz works of the ’90s
and could become a signature piece for
Ensemble Stop-Time and the great
“Perk,” its guiding spirit.
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Ensemble Stop-Time
A Summary of the First Year

During its first year, Project Stop-Time
reached approximately 4,000 people
through Ensemble Stop-Time lecture-
demonstrations and performances and
an estimated 6,000 readers via the pub-
lication of the first two issues of Stop-
Time! newsletter. The performance
audiences were composed of elemen-
tary, junior high, and high school stu-
dents in the Chicago Public School sys-
tem and the Chicago Park District, as
well as adults from all over the city.
In addition to major performances at
the New Regal Theater on May 14 and
Navy Pier’s Skyline Stage on August
26, the Ensemble provided nine lec-
ture-performances.

Events to Date

October 26, 1998
Chicago Park District’s South Shore Cultural Center
December 7, 1998
Richard Crane High School
December 9, 1998
Duncan YMCA, Chernin’s Center for the Arts

February 11, 1999
John Marshall High School
March 11, 1999
Malcolm X College
May 2, 1999
Chicago Park District’s La Follette Park
May 5, 1999
Better Boys Foundation Family Services
May 13, 1999
Columbia College Chicago
July 9, 1999
Chicago Park District’s 63rd Street Beach

Student groups from St. Thomas the
Apostle School, Austin Community
High School, Leif Ericson Scholastic
Academy, and Herbert Spencer Math
and Science Academy also attended
some of the events.

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Chicago Park District’s 63rd Street
Beach
Columbia College Chicago Department
of Contemporary Music
Rhea Combs, Program Director,
Chicago Park District’s South Shore
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Pam Dickler, Managing Director,
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Ralph Flores, Special Program
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Chicago Park District’s La Follette
Park
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South Shore Cultural Center
Melver Scott, Principal, Richard Crane
High School
Renee Shepherd, Park Supervisor, 63rd
Street Beach and Promontory Point
Hazel B. Steward, Education Officer of
District Three, Chicago Public
Schools
George Williams, Music Department,
Malcolm X College
Ernest White, Assistant Principal, John
Marshall High School
Carl Winfrey, Music Department,
Richard Crane High School

Correction

Editor’s note: In the Spring 1999 issue of
Stop-Time!, the cultural space identified
as the Lincoln Gardens was incorrectly
labeled. The building in this photograph
is Dreamland, not Lincoln Gardens. The
Editors wish to thank the readers who
correctly identified the photo and apolo-
gize for the error.
Stompin’ at the Regal with Ensemble Stop-Time

The New Regal Theater on Chicago’s South Side was the venue for the closing public event of the first year of the Center’s Project Stop-Time. After providing nine lecture-performances throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, Ensemble Stop-Time gave an all-out performance that showed off the musical prowess of the group and earned the following review from Chicago Tribune arts critic Howard Reich. A schedule for the 1999–2000 lecture-performances and other public appearances by Ensemble Stop-Time will be forthcoming.

Surefooted Ensemble Ranges Far and Wide

BY HOWARD REICH, TRIBUNE ARTS CRITIC

With one audacious concert, an innovative group of Chicago musicians has transformed the meaning of the jazz repertory orchestra. In recent years, bands such as Wynton Marsalis’ Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and William Russo’s Chicago Jazz Ensemble (based at Columbia College Chicago) have demonstrated what a working jazz repertory ensemble ought to do. By performing historic scores of icons such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie, these bands have restored for the listening public nearly a century’s worth of jazz orchestral writing.

But the weekend performance by Ensemble Stop-Time at the New Regal Theatre, on East 79th Street, radically stretched the definition of the working repertory band. Based at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia, Ensemble Stop-Time and guest artists dared to take on jazz, avant-garde, musical traditions. Though the title of the program, “Stompin’ at the Regal,” may have suggested a dance-band performance of the 1930s, the evening amounted to something more.

How often does one encounter a program in which the band plays the same piece five times, each in a different historical context? Ensemble Stop-Time did exactly that with Jelly Roll Morton’s landmark “King Porter Stomp.”

By performing Morton’s original piano solo (1906), then playing the same piece in the style of New Orleans/Chicago jazz (1920s), the Teddy Hill swing band (1930s), the Gil Evans Orchestra (1950s) and the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (1960s), these instrumentalists demonstrated the progress of an art form—jazz. Their ebullient ensemble playing in the New Orleans/Chicago vignette and no-holds-barred dissonance in the AACM version attested to the musicians’ stylistic elan and to the deft leadership of ensemble director T.S. Galloway.

Ensemble Kalinda Chicago also appeared on the program, elegantly performing songs from the Afro-Caribbean repertoire. Their readings of Mario Bauza’s genre-defining “Mambo Inn” and the samba “Berimbau” represented nearly ideal performance style.

In addition, the evening included gospel, R&B and soul singing from the young vocalist Lucy Smith and characteristically suave showmanship from Jerry Butler. But the tour de force was the (continued on page 11)