

The Coast

By SAMUEL GRAHAM and SAM SUTHERLAND

■ **HOLLYWOOD SWINGIN'** By any standards, the Playboy Jazz Festival (June 15-16 at the Hollywood Bowl) was a major success. The weather was more than cooperative, the attendance was terrific (estimated at 31,000 over both days), and producer **George Wein** and the folks at Playboy put on a show that went every bit as smoothly as advertised. The gaps between sets, especially on Friday, were often literally just seconds long, courtesy of a circular, rotating stage; many was the time that one performance would finish and the next would be underway even before emcee **Bill Cosby** could complete his introduction. That kind of momentum played no small part in creating a phenomenon rarely seen at these marathon musical gatherings: a lot of the time, a great set was followed by an even better one, the spirits of both audience and players alike getting higher and higher as the evening progressed.

As for the music itself, much of it was truly inspired. On Friday, a huge contingent of **Joni Mitchell** fans was on hand for her fairly brief set, which included a few tunes from the new "Mingus" collection; we were a little bored by it, actually, but maybe that's because she was succeeded by three of the classiest, most swinging acts jazz has ever produced, **Benny Goodman**, **Count Basie** (with **Joe Williams**) and **Sarah Vaughan**. To say the least, the King of Swing and the Count tore it up.

It would be tough to pick out a single highlight from some 13 hours of music, but if pressed, we'd have to name **Weather Report's** Saturday set. This group, always superb on record but sometimes erratic in performance, seems to have found itself in its pared-down quartet form (**Joe Zawinul**, **Wayne Shorter**, **Jaco Pastorius** and **Peter Erskine**); if their Playboy show was any indication, and it probably was, **Weather Report's** forthcoming live album will be a masterpiece.

TALK TALK TALK: If we were to point out that listening to good jazz—or any good music, for that matter—is a whole lot more worthwhile than talking about it, you'd probably congratulate us on our keen sense of the obvious. Nevertheless, talk, and lots of it, was the order of the day at a "conference on jazz" held at Warner Bros. on the 15th. "What 'jazz' is will never be defined," said Goodphone's **Mike Harrison**, who chaired the conference, "because that's what it is . . ." Why, then, did Harrison and a host of other earnest panelists—who included radio programmers **Les Sarnoff** (KINK) and **Chuck Mitchell** (WRVR), Tower Records' **Artie Morehead**, promoters **Rod McGrew** and **Larry Magid**, Goodphone's **Jack Gold** and pianist **Chick Corea**—spend several hours in meaningless, semantic-laden (though obviously well-intentioned) discussions about the complexion of the "new jazz"? It seems to us that agonizing over what label to bestow on the kind of jazz-oriented music that is now garnering healthy sales and airplay—suggestions included "triple z jazz" and the laughable "beige music," both designed to show that jazz includes a wide spectrum of black and white styles—is simply a futile process. One of the best things that's happened recently, and the Playboy Festival is only the latest indication of it, is that the success of the fusion product that dominates the jazz charts has also sparked interest in more traditional artists, musicians playing the music that made fusion possible in the first place. People like **Woody Shaw**, **Ron Carter**, the **Heath Brothers** and **McCoy Tyner**, as well as the **Spyro Gyras**, **Grover Washingtons** et al., are selling records now without being burdened with tags like "jazz"—so why not stop talking about it, and just be glad it's happening? Listening's a lot more fun, anyway.

WAX: Due this summer from CBS are albums by **Mary Kay Place** (sigh), **Jim Messina**, **Karla Bonoff**, **Jules** and the **Polar Bears** and **Tom Scott** . . . Solar Records' **Shalamar** is in the studio, produced by **Leon Sylvers** and **Dick Griffey** . . . The flip side of the first single from the **Cars'** "Candy-O" album, a tune called "That's It" (the A side is "Let's Go" is not on the album—collectors are advised to move fast . . . Butterfly Records has a new act called the **J. T. Connection**, the brain child of producer **Jim Taylor**, known previously for his work with **Canned Heat**. The group's lead singer is former **Buckingham** (c'mon, we're talking history here) **Dennis Tufano**. With all of these rocks and rollers turning shamelessly to disco, sources close to this column fearlessly predict that **Freddy and the Dreamers** will soon reform with "Do the Freddy Eddy Eddy," while the legendary **?** and the **Mysterians** will come back with "(You're Going to Cry) 96 Beats
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JEM's 'Farm' Team (Continued from page 6)

'We're breaking a record for you and you can take it back.' We'd be foolish if we didn't get anything down the line. So if a record is taken back before it's taken its course, we'll get a remuneration. We don't own the records we'll be distributing. We have nothing to gain but the sale . . . and our credibility."

Scott stressed that Jem's contracts with labels will be on a label-to-label, or even a record-to-record basis. Jem may buy records as finished products, or they may take part in the manufacturing of the records. Jem will also involve itself in varying degrees with the actual marketing and promotion of a record. "A label may want an lp to be heavily marketed," said Scott, "or they may not want a lot of hype."

According to Ken Berry, president of Virgin Records America,

Virgin will be using the Jem system for "certain artists, that for one reason or another, we don't believe will sell a sufficient volume of records to use Atlantic's distribution. But these are artists that we feel have an audience here and their records should be made available. . . . And if an lp should grow through the Jem System, we can take it back and put it through Atlantic."

In order to make the major labels aware of the availability of Jem's FARM team, Scott hopes to let Jem's record be his selling card. "For a major label to (use Jem) it's a political, as well as a moral decision," he said. "A label will consider how it will affect their reputation—both within their company and with their artists. The first act we break will set a precedent, then the tide will change."

ASCAP Honors Stewart



The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) awarded Rod Stewart three plaques prior to his performance at Madison Square Garden. The plaques honor Stewart as ASCAP writer, artist and publisher of the worldwide hit song "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy." ASCAP also awarded two plaques to ASCAP writer Carmine Appice, who co-wrote and co-published "Da Ya Think . . ." Plaques also went to Henry Marks, executive of Warner Bros. Music, and Jerry Wexler, senior vice president of Warner Bros. Music. Pictured from left: Henry Marks; Carmine Appice; Karen Sherry; Rod Stewart; Jerry Wexler; and Ed Rosenblatt, senior VP of sales and promotion for Warner Bros. Records.

Lorimar/CBS Pact (Continued from page 10)

Pittsburgh." Ready for release in the fall are Sam Fuller's "The Big Red One" and the thriller "Avalanche Express" (20th Century Fox). Also being readied for release through United Artists are two films from director Hal Ashby, "The Hamster of Happi-

ness" and "Being There." "Carny," starring Gary Busey, Jodie Foster and Robbie Robertson (of the Band), is currently filming in Savannah, Georgia. "Saturday Night Knife and Gun Club" and "The Good Leviathan" are being readied for production.



Pictured at CBS Records' New York offices are, from left: Lee Rich, president, Lorimar Productions, Inc.; Jack Schwartzman, executive vice president, Lorimar Productions, Inc.; Walter Yetnikoff, president, CBS/Records Group; and Merv Adelson, chairman of the board, Lorimar Productions, Inc.