

For Contemporary Musicians

downbeat

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BROOKLYN BOP: Spike Lee's new movie, *Variations On The Mo' Better Blues*, stars Denzel Washington as trumpeter Bleek Gilliam and Cynda Williams as his lover. Jeff Watts plays the group's drummer and there are cameo appearances by Ruben Blades and Abbey Lincoln.

DRUMMING IN MUSIC CITY U.S.A.

NASHVILLE—From drum sticks to electronic drum pads, from classical marimbist Gordon Stout (DeMorrow clinician) to the marching bands competition, from Nashville cat Larrie Londin to jazz stalwart Louie Bellson, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention showcased the wide world of percussion. At this 28th annual meeting hosted by Bill Wiggins of Blaire College, tympanist with the Nashville Symphony, students had a chance to hear their favorite players, the leading manufacturers could meet potential customers, and educators had an opportunity to "audition" clinicians.

"This convention gives you the chance to meet all the drum stars you always wanted to meet," said Matt Chamberlin, drummer with Edie Brickell and The New Bohemians. "You can learn so much in a short amount of time and I like the fact that you can walk into any booth and test the products."

Dennis Chambers (Zildjian), Vinnie Colaiuta (Beyerdynamic), Larrie Londin (Sabian), and Omar Hakim (Pearl) explained drumset work in the pop field. "Dennis combined all the attributes of a good clinician in my opinion," said Brenda Myers of Fresno, Ca. "He played some amazing things, but was able to slow them down enough to show how the listener could play them, too."

Dan Dunavan, of Southeast Missouri State Univ., thought Londin's clinic was excellent because "he

articulated what he was trying to do with music, rather than just play a solo." Jim Snell, a student at the Univ. of Illinois, felt the same about Nexus percussionist Bob Becker. "He took the time to actually do a clinic, rather than just a performance."

For manufacturers and publishers—displaying everything from hand drums to instructional videos to MIDI percussion controllers—PASIC gave them a showplace for their newly developed wares. Among the many new products on display were Calato-Regal Tip's new Ed Thigpen model brush; Vic



Ludwig clinician Alan Dawson raps with students and educators.

BILL CUNLIFFE WINS MONK COMPETITION

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Bill Cunliffe, a 33-year-old pianist from Van Nuys, Cal., won first prize and a \$10,000 scholarship in the third annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. recently. Cunliffe was chosen from a field of 20 semifinalists from nine countries by a panel of judges that included jazz greats Walter Bishop, Jr., Hal Galper, Barry Harris, Ahmad Jamal, and Horace Silver. Contestants were required to prepare four Monk selections, "Nuttty," "Pannonica," "Reflections," and "Off-Minor" as well as two standards of their own choosing.

A Duke University and Eastman School of Music graduate, Cunliffe received several **db** Student Music Awards for composition and arranging. While at Duke, he studied with Mary Lou Williams and at the Eastman School of Music with Bill Dobbins. After Eastman, Cunliffe spent a year and a half on the road with Buddy Rich and wrote three charts for Rich's last album, *Live At King Street*. In 1985, Cunliffe moved to Cincinnati and played with Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Woody Shaw, James Moody, Art Blakey, and Ernie



MICHAEL WILDERMAN

Watts. Currently Cunliffe is writing music for several network daytime dramas, including *Another World*, *Guiding Light*, and *As the World Turns* and has just completed a second album with the group Bout Time.

Michael Weiss, a 31-year-old New Yorker, took a \$5,000 second prize, and Edward Hobizal, from Texas, the youngest contestant at age 16, won third prize and a \$3,000 scholarship. The competition was sponsored by The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and The Beethoven Society of America.

For further information contact Thomas Carter, Executive Director or Suzan Jenkins, Director of Operations (202) 895-1610. **db**

Firth's Omar Hakim and Dave Weckl signature sticks; Remo's Putty Pad; Yamaha's Peter Erskine model snare, and Latin Percussion's Spike Drum Trigger.

"The biggest advantage of PASIC is that 100 percent of the

people walking the convention floor are potential users," explained Mike Balter of Balter Mallets.

"This show gives us access to the end user—the kid who actually buys the product," said Pat Brown of ProMark. "We can take the consumers' input and come up with a better product."

In addition to nightly concerts—Dave Samuels and the Stuttgart Percussion Ensemble were just two—and jam sessions, dozens of college and high school marching bands strutted their stuff in competitions won by the Univ. of North Texas and Center Grove (Ind.) High school. The marching forum individuals competitions were won by Pat Fitzgerald, Univ. of North Texas, tenor; Richard Viano, Morehead State Univ., snare, and Bob Bolman, Univ. of Las Vegas, tympani.

Admitted to the PAS Hall of Fame were Bobby Christian, studio percussionist from the heyday of radio orchestras who leads a big band in Chicago, and Maurice Lishon, former owner of Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago.

—dave black

LISSA WALES