

What's Going On

WHO: STANLEY CLARKE W/ JAZZ EXPLOSION SUPERBAND
WHERE: GREEK THEATRE
WHEN: SAT., JULY 3

The summer of 1993 is shaping up to be a busy one for award-winning jazz bassist, Stanley Clarke. Clarke has won more than 60 awards and titles, including being named Jazz Bassist Of The Year in The Playboy Music Poll 10 times. The Philadelphia native was also given a Hall of Fame award by his hometown music foundation in 1989.

But don't think he is going to rest on his laurels. Despite the fact that many people think "end of career," when the phrase Hall of Fame is mentioned, Clarke is enjoying his most active summer to date. He has done the scores for two of the summer's most anticipated films, *John Singleton's Poetic Justice*, who Clarke worked with on *Boyz 'N' The Hood*, and *What's Love Got To Do With It*, the biopic of *Tina Turner*. But Clarke apparently still had a lot of music left in him, as he is also releasing his first new solo album in five years this July.

However, Clarke is not limiting himself to studio work, he is also part of a jazz combo currently on tour, who call themselves the *Jazz Explosion Superband*. It may sound arrogant, but when you have Clarke on bass, *Larry Carlton* on guitar, *Najee* on sax and flute and *Billy Cobham* on drums, who's going to argue with their name.

When I spoke to Clarke by phone from his Los Angeles home a few weeks ago, he was finishing up the score for *Poetic Justice* and was about to begin rehearsals for the tour. Clarke has played with Carlton and Cobham in the past, but said he is looking forward to jamming with this particular combo. As is often the case with big-name performers getting together to go on the road, the tour came about through a promoter, who suggested the band to each of the performers.



STANLEY CLARKE

COMING TO TOWN: STANLEY CLARKE, FOREIGNER

Steve Baltin w/ Stanley Clarke; Pat Kramer w/ Lou Gramm of Foreigner

WHO: FOREIGNER
WHERE: UNIVERSAL AMPITHEATRE
WHEN: MON., JUNE 28

Clarke is no stranger to playing with unfamiliar musicians. He has shown a unique chameleon like ability to adapt himself to all genres of music, having played jazz, his most recognized style, with *Dexter Gordon*, among others, and rock 'n' roll with *Jeff Beck*. In addition to his performing prowess, he has co-written music with *Paul McCartney* and produced records for *Natalie Cole* and *Brenda Russell*.

Clarke said, "I feel sorry for people who limit themselves musically." He added, in his travels he has come across fans who are unaware of anything beyond the one style of music they identify with and it frustrates him they are missing out on so much.

One thing that is clear about Clarke is that he loves the music. For him it goes beyond a job. He spoke almost as eloquently about today's new rap acts as the jazz giants of the past. By combining his love for all types of music with his desire for a challenge, it's easy to see why Clarke has not shied away from the opportunity to play with some of the biggest names in music, regardless of what genre.

It's his love of a challenge that prompted Clarke to get with film scores. In the relatively short time he has been involved with film scores, Clarke has done more than a dozen scores.

Among the hardships Clarke must overcome when working on a score he said are near impossible deadlines, "like only three days to do a score," and rising to the occasion of a particularly strong work. An example is the universally-acclaimed film, *Boyz N The Hood*.

Clarke said when working on that movie, "everybody involved with the film knew it would be something special and it created more pressure for me."

However, there don't appear to be many challenges Stanley Clarke can't meet. ■

After two years as a solo artist, singer Lou Gramm is back with *Foreigner*, a band that achieved commercial success in the late 70's and 80's with megahits "*Hot Blooded*," "*Double Vision*" and the rock love anthem "*I Want To Know What Love Is*." Backed by a brand new rhythm section, Gramm says the band has a vibrant and powerful feel. "There's a lot of spontaneity. In terms of the performance, we take the stage with a lot of confidence and the band really interacts."

This tour marks a reunion for Gramm with *Foreigner* founder and guitarist *Mick Jones* after a two-year split. Gramm left the band in 1990, after releasing two solo albums on Atlantic Records. The first album yielded the hit song "*Midnight Blue*" which brought Gramm success as a songwriter, a role which he felt was not



LOU GRAMM

being fulfilled toward the end of his career with *Foreigner*. "I was not happy just being a singer. I wanted more equity in the creative input." In addition, Gramm says his differences with *Mick Jones* extended to the direction the music was taking. "I've always thought that the priority and attention should be focused on 'Foreigner, the rock band.' I wanted to rock and the band was not rocking." Through his solo work, Gramm said he was able to establish himself as a singer and songwriter; a role that brought him visibility as a performer. Though he was achieving success on his own, Gramm says working with *Mick* was rewarding also. "I really enjoyed working with *Mick*. When we were on the same wavelength, it was really terrific. We've always had a really intense creative relationship." So in 1992, the two agreed to test the creative waters again as a songwriting team. The songs "*Soul Doctor*,"

"*Prisoner of Love*" and "*With Heaven on Our Side*" are the by-products of their work and are featured on their new album: *Foreigner: The Very Best... And Beyond*

In terms of *Foreigner's* new sound, Gramm foresees a return to a more stripped down rock sound.

"I like what we've done in the past, as long as we stay true to what we're good at, which is roots rock and roll. I think our music goes from one extreme to another: borderline metal, really hard rock

to kind of soft, melodic feel with rock elements."

The show features full-on arrangements of all their "big" songs with lots of jamming. Gramm said, "It's a very loose in your face rock and roll show." Supporting Gramm and Jones are bass player, *Bruce Turgeon*, drummer *Mark Schulman*, keyboardist *Jeff Jacobs*, sax, guitar and keyboard player *Scott Gilman*, and sax player *Mark Rivera*. As far as whether this is a nostalgia tour, Gramm said it really is a new effort on all fronts, as evidenced by the new band. "I think it's really important *Mick* and I surround ourselves with people who are really confident and aggressive players. It's their role in the band to bring a new attitude to the old and the new songs. With the old band, I felt we had reached a plateau. In spite of what *Mick* and I did it was a little complacent." Gramm said the new *Foreigner* is alive and well. ■