

Harrison a T P L A y . . .

Harrison Goldberg stopped by the other day: 30-minutes max. When he left I felt consumed, yet energized, by the pulse of his everyday reality. And all I did was listen. As he talked about his life, I imagined the juggling act of The Brothers Karamazov: wild but focused. He is jazz musician and writer of music and stories. He is entrepreneurial as a wine consultant, graphics designer, and collage artist. Each endeavor holding to its own vitality and direction; yet all within the confluence of his being.

As musician, Harrison plays, with equal comfort, straight-ahead and experimental jazz sax in several Northern California groups. "I'm an improvisationalist; redefining musical landscapes according to my inner-visions. I use music as language. I paint with music, incorporating the tones and textures of other instruments. Music is the joyful voice of my imagination." Harrison's newest project is a collaboration with a composer/percussionist/friend performing progressive, improvisational, yet danceable, "space" music that fuses acoustic and electronic instruments into a jazzy New-Age style. It is his contribution to the expansion of musical frontiers into the 21st Century.

As writer, he reminisces about the multicultural ensemble groups he experienced as an undergraduate at the esteemed Berklee College of Music in Boston. Of particular pride is the story line for his opus "And Music Was King," that is drawn from those experiences. Fifteen years in making, he calls this work an "edutainment" piece, for it began, "as a children's educational workshop, then evolved into a multi-media fable treatment connecting cultures and mankind. A world-vision using jazz as a model for communicating the human condition of peaceful coexistence."

As wine consultant, he has, for the past ten years, worked for a Sonoma County winery that creates custom labels for its clients. Intrigued and motivated by the artistic possibilities of this process, Harrison tapped into his childhood love of art. Now he creates his own innovative and stylized label designs, posters, and CD covers, as well as book plates for a wine book editor.

As visual artist, he sculpts with paper, then embellishes with ink and paint; each collage refined with meticulous attention to detail. Cityscapes, landscapes, innerscapes, they are "a synthesis of impressions culled from the natural environment . . . urban settings . . . the land within . . . an unpredictable journey into the multi-layered treasure trove of the imagination." Five one-person shows this year tempt both time and talent into further explorations.

Harrison, New England born and bred, played the Newport, RI jazz scene for 12 years, enjoyed Caribbean cruise ship gigs, and was a major player in galvanizing Miami's arts community to restore the art and architecture of that city's now flourishing Art Deco district. But he has for the past 10 years called Northern California home; most recently at The Sea Ranch along California's rugged coast. "Inspiration comes to me from nature's dramatic palette."

Of his spirited life, he says, "The free play of the arts have an overlay of passion and discovery that leads me to places I've never been. To live always with the expectation of unfolding and unfolding; then sharing those encounters with others. For me, that's what life is all about."

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by Sandy Thompson, arts editor