

"JOHN KLEMMER BIOGRAPHY" (& Addendum)

John Klemmer is an enigma to many. He seems to be a "different artist" to "different people" depending on which musical direction & time period of Klemmer's music they are attached to, are aware of & prefer.

John Klemmer began playing guitar at age 5. After interests in graphics and visual art studying at The Art Institute of Chicago & with ambitions of being Dancer, Puppeteer, Painter, Sculptor, Writer, & Poet. He began Alto Sax at age 11, switching to Tenor Sax when entering High School. He spent years of extensive private lessons in Piano, Conducting, Harmony & Theory, Composition, Arranging, Clarinet, Flute, & Classical & Jazz Saxophone that continued through all his years in Chicago. He also attended Interlochen's National Music Camp immersed in the study of Classical Music & "Legitimate Classical" Saxophone etc. He turned down an offer of a four scholarship there to return to "study" in the jazz clubs etc. of Chicago.

Immediately upon graduating from High School, noted jazz producer, Esmond Edwards, signed Klemmer to Cadet/Chess Records for five plus albums, his first 2 recordings being "straight ahead jazz", and then, abruptly & surprisingly if not confusing to many, of which would eventually become a trademark of his career, changed musical directions, recording the innovative hit album of the first, slightly preceding the release of Miles Davis "Bitches Brew", of the "jazz/rock fusion" genre, "Blowin' Gold", co-produced by ex Rolling Stones Records producer, Marshall Chess, for the new Cadet Concept label on Chess Records. Here John introduced his use with electronics, primarily the "delay effect", which would become his life long "trademark sound", as well as, uses of the "wah wah" pedal & "ring modulator" etc. never before used on sax at that time as well as "vocal effects". At Chess Records he had access & exposure to recording sessions & relationships with Artists & their sidemen such as, Muddy Waters, Donny Hathaway, Minnie Riperton, Ramsey Lewis, Maurice White & many others expanding his knowledge of R&B, Blues & Pop music. Klemmer led his own groups in Chicago & touring using the greatest of Chicago sideman. He did his first PBS special for WTTTV Chicago. When not primarily performing with his own groups he was busy as a sideman exploring every genre of Music with Big Bands, Blues Bands, Dixieland Groups, Jazz Groups, the Avant Garde & Experimental, Classical & Church Music, R&B, Pop & Rock groups such as with musician friend James Guercio who was to move to L.A., preceding Klemmer, to Produce & Manage Rock groups Blood, Sweat & Tears & Chicago.

Upon moving to Los Angeles, continuing leading & touring with his own group & still recording for Cadet/Chess Records, he took a brief break recording, arranging & toured as key soloist & arranger with The Don Ellis innovative big band for 2 months & then toured Africa, as a key soloist, for half a summer, with Oliver Nelson for the State Dept. All while also working with such diverse L.A. based Artists as Tim Buckley & Steely Dan etc. & being opening act for diverse Artists such as Janis Joplin & Miles Davis. He studied Film Composing with Albert Harris & vocal lessons with Seth Riggs.

He still primarily focused on performing with his own groups & recording for the Chess/Cadet/Concept label continuing his experimentation's & innovations in the "jazz rock genre" including being one of the first Artists to use various Production Techniques such as Ambient Sound Effects of "children playing" & "oceans & forests" etc. SFX, and also with new combinations of instrumentation & new overdubbing concepts. He performed as quest soloist at the Newport, Monterey Antibes & Montreux Jazz Festivals as well as Carnegie Hall & Tanglewood etc. while also being an occasional quest soloist on recordings with Artists of a variety of musical genres such as, Steely Dan, Nancy Wilson, John Lee Hooker, Roy Haynes, Dan Siegal, Tom Snow, Gloria Lynn, Lauren Wood, Ray Manzerek & Osamu etc also being featured quest soloist for Movies such as Lipstick etc.

The success of the "Blowin Gold" series of recordings were constantly breaking new musical ground & broadening & increasing critical interest & acclaim & steadily garnering a larger & more diverse jazz, rock, r&b & even country music etc. fan base.

Klemmer then signed with legendary Impulse! Records for 5 plus recordings returning to & exploring more direct & even some "avant garde" jazz genres. While, like most saxophonists in that era being influenced by saxophonist John Coltrane's sound & styles to varying degrees, Coltrane was only a partial influence & Klemmer signed with Impulse! as he knew Coltrane's catalog of recordings would last forever at Impulse! and John hoped all his hard work might have a similar fate. Plus John knew that ABC/MCA Records was "just up the hall" availing him the room to grow & move on to new & different genres of Music if he choose to. Some part of Klemmer, while always experimenting, learning & exploring, if even unconscious to himself, always instinctually knew where he was going.

After 4 records for Impulse! he then moved on to ABC/MCA Records for 1 record pursuing a different musical direction combining all of his early blues, r&b & pop roots. At this time he also returned to his early ambitions as Pop Song Writer, co-writing with many songwriters including Danny O'keefe & with David Batteau, penning the Manhattan Transfer UK hit, "Walk In Love", with more "cover" recordings by Freda Payne etc.

He then took what was to become another one of his many reflective and controversial sabbaticals for 2 years & decided to completely change, again, musical direction. This sabbatical became to be even yet more serious, productive & his most profound, with much time & great energy, observing, exploring & reflecting upon all aspects of himself, his music & career, his personal life up until then, observing & dissecting society, the world & people in general & the musical directions of the time. Voraciously reading & contemplating the very basics of life, nature, human existence & music, while staying quiet & reflective, he allowed himself time to discover & refine himself & his music to what he truly loved most, what he felt people liked best of his music up until then & what he felt he truly did best. He reflected on all of his total personal & musical experiences & observations & what he thought he could express the best & most honestly out of himself to bring to a listening audience. He stared out the

window at the night's sky for hours mentally putting together all the things he had been contemplating & studying, all to come to his bottom line; Who was he musically & personally & what did he truly love to do the most? After a few years of carefully building & re-arranging his personal & musical life, he recorded the now classic "Touch" series of albums using the greatest of the L.A. & N.Y. studio & live performance musicians. During the initial recording sessions no one knew or could really understand what Klemmer was doing or what his goal was. Klemmer reflects; "It was an exhausting battle literally everyday & with everyone to get the Music recorded & released". Klemmer stuck to his vision he put together in his mind all those quiet reflective years. Klemmer remembers; "When the record was released they ran out of covers & it seemed there wasn't a radio station or anywhere else that wasn't playing the Music." Klemmer goes on; "People must remember that I have no control of how people perceive a Music & Concept I create nor what they believe, usually falsely, to be my motivations, nor what they use the Music for. I know this though. It struck an unconscious human subliminal nerve in people probably as a result of all that quiet reflective time contemplating the basics of human existence where ultimately the Music & Concept came as an "Epiphany" for me & perhaps, if not obviously, to many others as well."

"Touch" & the series of recordings to follow gained massive world wide appeal to fans of all styles of music & all ages with these now landmark classic recordings now considered by many to be one of, if not "the first" so-called "Smooth Jazz" genre recordings. Support from ex-The Doors manager, Bill Siddons, and, Faith Hill, Keith Urban & James Taylor manager, Gary Borman, helped Klemmer to further expose his music to a consistently ever growing wider number of pop & all genres of music listeners. This seemed to cause some great confusion, controversy & criticisms by the "jazz elite" & fans of his past musical styles, assuming, that, all untrue & incorrectly, this new direction was, because of its massive popular success, somehow commercially motivated. Nothing was further from the truth. "The Music & Concept of "Touch" etc. was never commercially intended. But it is a great example of what can happen when you are truly honest & do what you do best & love the most"; Klemmer relates. Despite the "jazz critics" etc. the vast new audience appreciated the great emotional depth, musical dexterity & the profound, "less is more" approach, with the deceptive seeming simplicity of the music, continued to propel his career & popularity to ever more listeners.

He toured extensively primarily as headliner, with many of the "stars" of today as his opening acts, and toured occasionally with "package tours" with George Benson, Herbie Hancock & Al Jarreau etc. plus numerous T.V. appearances arranged by The William Morris Agency.

At this time he further developed his innovative "Solo Sax Concept", started many years earlier in Chicago, by recording the successful & now classic "Cry" [Solo Sax I] & "Life" [Solo Sax II] recordings & his many innovative Solo Sax Concerts, helping to, many say, usher in the New Age phenomenon.

Klemmer remains an enigma & misunderstood by many. John observes; "I believe that I most likely moved to fast in changing musical directions throughout my career, not affording people appropriate time to absorb what I was doing at that time, before moving on to a new musical direction, creating confusion as to, "who & what John Klemmer is". Therefore Klemmer is considered a "different artist" to "different people" depending on which direction & time period of Klemmer's music they are attached to, aware of & prefer, and, thusly. attributing false & incorrect assumptions of John's motivations for these changes in musical directions.

John considers himself to be primarily a Composer & Conceptulizer & then a Saxophone Player etc. Once a Concept is conceived he then has to learn how to play what he just created, keeping him always challenged, and then comes the task of executing his musical, personal & social visions of the Concept. "You have to cut through the Music Business to reach the people which is no easy task"; Klemmer explains.

He took a brief departure during the "Touch" time to record the now considered Classic "straight ahead jazz" offering, "Nexus for Duo & Trio", at the personal request of Clive Davis, followed by occasional special recording projects with Joe Sample etc. Such special projects continued to confuse many about "who & what" John Klemmer "is".

After his lengthy stay at MCA/UNIVERSAL Records he then, upon the urging of legendary former Warner Bros. president & music mogul Joe Smith, moved to Elektra Records, recording five albums including "Magnificent Madness" & "Hush" etc. He then returned to GRP & VERVE Records & after more recordings & touring, Klemmer then took his most lengthy yet of his many controversial sabbaticals focusing on rest, reflection & composing after recording, performing, touring & creating etc. for gruelingly for decades. To many, the sudden, unannounced & unexplained departure from an active presence on the musical scene, created a myriad of false & untrue rumors & speculations including health problems etc. All such rumors & speculations etc. being untrue, this most lengthy sabbatical of all, was fertile ground for yet more creating & composing etc. as he also actively moved into the world of new technology. However his well deserved sabbatical of rest & creativity etc. continued on much longer than planned due to the plethora of major changes, challenges & complexities in the Music Business & the entire Musical landscape.

After this lengthy sabbatical he "quietly" returned to the stage with select live performances & recording as guest soloist for Smooth Jazz/New Age artists, 3rd Force, David Arkenstone & Craig Chaquico etc. He founded at this time his own "vanity" record label, Touch Records USA, for occasional "special projects only" releases along with his major label releases. He released the albums, "Simpatico", "Rio" [Vol. I & II] and "Making Love" [Vol. 1] in digital only format first & all are scheduled for CD release. His vast catalog of recordings with Universal/Verve & Elektra/Rhino Records are constantly & consistently being re-mastered & re-released on CD & in digital format. His vast catalog of songs & recordings, primarily from his early

Cadet/Chess recordings, have been heavily sampled by a large variety of Rap, Hip-Hop & DJ Artists. "The Very Best of John Klemmer", with 3 new Bonus tracks, giving a glimpse of new musical directions, is awaiting release along with a new Solo Sax recording.

John's current activities & future plans consist of, as always, more recordings, select live performances, composing & song writing, further offerings of his Solo Sax concept. John declares; "I am dedicated to making the most beautiful music I can. However, with the monumental changes in the global Musical world, how Music & product is made & distributed, the mood of the times & the Music Business in general, there are great new demands, never there before, creating greater than ever challenges to overcome & achieve musical & career goals"; John declares. Yet, for a life long innovator etc. over the years of his career, challenges & demands to overcome has always been there for John Klemmer & he met & overcame them all, producing a long lasting series of recordings, songs & performances, that have stood the test of time & it continues on today & there is much, much more to come.

With such a history of musical innovations & creating new directions of expressions it would be of no surprise to all to witness even yet more exciting & beautiful music, as has always been, emanating from John Klemmer.

Klemmer's entire audio catalog of recordings, his history & his new projects & much more, can be found at the extensive web site: johnklemmer.com.

"JOHN KLEMMER BIOGRAPHY ADDENDUM"

"More than will ever be able to properly portray, Klemmer is quick, smart, funny, highly observant, still seeking musical truth, and the possessor of one of the worlds most facile minds, but, to know this all you have to do is listen to his music. It would be almost impossible to plan out a career as multi-varied, historically important or musically significant in music than the one tenor saxophonist & composer John Klemmer has led. Few if any have followed their musical muse into uncharted waters with the strength of conviction John Klemmer always shows. His career as a solo artist, performer & composer, creating new concepts & production styles & his musical creations, reach a wide Pop and R&B audience, as well as Jazz & Smooth Jazz fans, as, the creation & advent of smooth jazz is directly attributed to Klemmer & his "Touch" series of recordings, plus, & his pioneering, innovative & unique solo saxophone recordings & achievements with his use of electronic effects and his incredibly vast & valuable catalog of music compositions performed by himself as well as many others stand."

Abbreviated; By Thomas Erdmann from The Saxophone Journal