

general. Who made that first impression?

J.B. I started out as a rock player and since my sister Jill worked at the Fillmore East, I got to hear lots of it live. Favourites were Frank Zappa, Jimmy Page and especially Jimmy Hendrix. I started playing around the age of fifteen or sixteen and moved into jazz after about a year of playing.

C.B. Can you recall what your first instrument was?

J.B. Actually, I played a little violin in 1st or 2nd grade. Not exactly a 'formative' experience.

C.B. It's a huge jump from Hendrix to bop jazz guitar. You mention in the liner notes of "Remembering Grant Green" that he was possibly your first real introduction to jazz guitar. What was it about his playing that made such an impression?

J.B. Actually, I was not originally interested in Grant's playing. I came to appreciate it many years later. First, as far as guitar players were concerned, it was Kenny Burrell and a bit of Wes. But in terms of everything, it was trumpets and saxophones for me."

C.B. When then did you make the transition from rock to jazz and realize that playing jazz guitar was what you wanted to do.

J.B. The transition came around the age of 16 or 17. I never made a solid decision about making jazz guitar a profession, it just kinda happened and I guess I've been very fortunate all along."

C.B. You then went to study with Sal Salvador. How long was that after you started and how long were you with him?

J.B. I studied with Sal Salvador for about two years from 1971 to 1973. He's a great teacher and really exposed me to what I needed to learn and to a broad look at what the possibilities were on the instrument. We'd work on one thing in each of about a dozen books for each lesson. In addition to

graduated in three years. NC also had an allowance for off-campus study, so I went to Berklee for two terms then returned to Florida and graduated. So it was New College from September '72 thru June '73, Berklee from September '73-June '74 and then NC again September '74-June '75."

C.B. How did studying jazz guitar at a college differ from the one-to-one teacher format, and a famous one at that?

J.B. Actually, NC didn't have much of a music department. I took some theory and music history and was lucky to have occasions where some music faculty or other would work with me individually on one thing or another. One of the reasons I went there was that by the time I got to NC, I was very self directed and, having had the experience with Sal, knew what I needed to work on and what I had to do. I spent all my time practising, listening and writing. But to play, one has to be in the real world. So I spent my summers in NY, heard music and had a chance to get together with other players. This is what makes a musician. Jazz, the type I'm interested in anyway, is still GROUP IMPROVISATION and can't be done in a vacuum."

C.B. Following on from that, what are your thoughts on the statement that "jazz guitarists are born and not made". Given a real good ear and natural technical flair, do you think that you need to know the musical language to be able to play jazz guitar?

J.B. Yes, you must be aware of the musical language to play music and this doesn't only pertain to guitar. Only then can you speak or say something unique. Nobody is born with the ability to play jazz. It may come quicker to some and sound more natural. It's different for everyone when you get to the level of art - the level where you're no longer dealing with the craft of how to play notes over harmony, but are now expressing yourself and hopefully saying something unique."

C.B. In 1979, you were appointed Pro-



Joshua Breakstone

courtesy Contemporary Records

PHOTO: MARY MACKAY

learning about how to play from Sal, I also learned how to teach. I'm truly indebted to him and am happy to be good friends with him now.

C.B. You then made the decision to study at Berklee College. Was this a 'formative' experience?

J.B. The Berklee thing was just two terms. I went to New College in Sarasota, Florida and as a result of the accelerated program that allowed me to work through the summers, I