

BIOGRAPHY

LIZ STORY

Windham Hill Records Recording Artist

Latest Album: Solid Colors, C-1023 and CTC-1023 (cassette)

Liz Story is, at the time of this writing in 1982, 25 years of age. Her music came to our attention via an unsolicited demo tape which instantly floored everyone who heard it. Solid Colors is Liz Story's first LP, and is clearly only the first of many that will eventually emerge from this talented composer and pianist. Eight of the nine pieces on the LP are composed by Liz Story, the last being "Peace Piece" composed by one of her principal influences, Bill Evans. We normally print second person bios, but the following information is as she submitted it to us.

— William Ackerman

My early music education came in the form of weekly lessons at my grammar school... a new teacher every year. There wasn't a lot of continuity until the seventh grade when I learned a Mozart piano concerto and realized that I could play something beautiful even though I didn't know what key it was in.

I quit playing piano altogether in the 9th grade because of a conflict with softball and my budding pitching career... that career died after high school and then I started studying "legitimate music"... I enrolled at Hunter College in New York and stayed for 2 semesters when I decided that I wasn't learning what I wanted to know, even though I didn't really know what that was until a stunning experience.

I went to hear a piano player at the Bottom Line in NY that my brother had mentioned to me... his name was Bill Evans, somebody I had never heard of because I had never heard jazz, much less improvised music, before. It was a kind of major revelation that night and after the performance I went up to him and asked if he would teach me what he knew... he replied that he didn't teach but that I might get a hold of Sanford Gold... which I did and with whom I studied for about 8 months.

I also during this time started listening to a lot of jazz piano players in town and on records. I also called up Thelonious Monk (whose name was in the phone book) to ask him for lessons because of his writing which I was very attracted to. I spoke with his son who told me that he had only given a few lessons to Bud Powell but otherwise didn't teach... then I found out about Bud Powell... While I was in NY I used to go to a small restaurant in the Village where Joanne Brackeen used to play a lot of weekends. She had a major influence on me because of the power she has, the tremendous energy she plays with.

When I moved to LA I briefly studied with Jack Scalese and then went to Dick Grove Music Workshops for some classes, where I first feel I came to some grasp of harmonic structure as an expression of melody. It finally started making sense and then I started writing my own things... I got a gig at a restaurant on a funky piano that had no place for sheet music and so I learned what improvising was since I hadn't at that time written enough material to last very long... This was the most important phase for me to start really getting into myself and tapping the resources of all that I had absorbed so far but hadn't transformed into an active vocabulary.

I listen to every kind of music now and am again studying classical piano with Bernardo Segall.