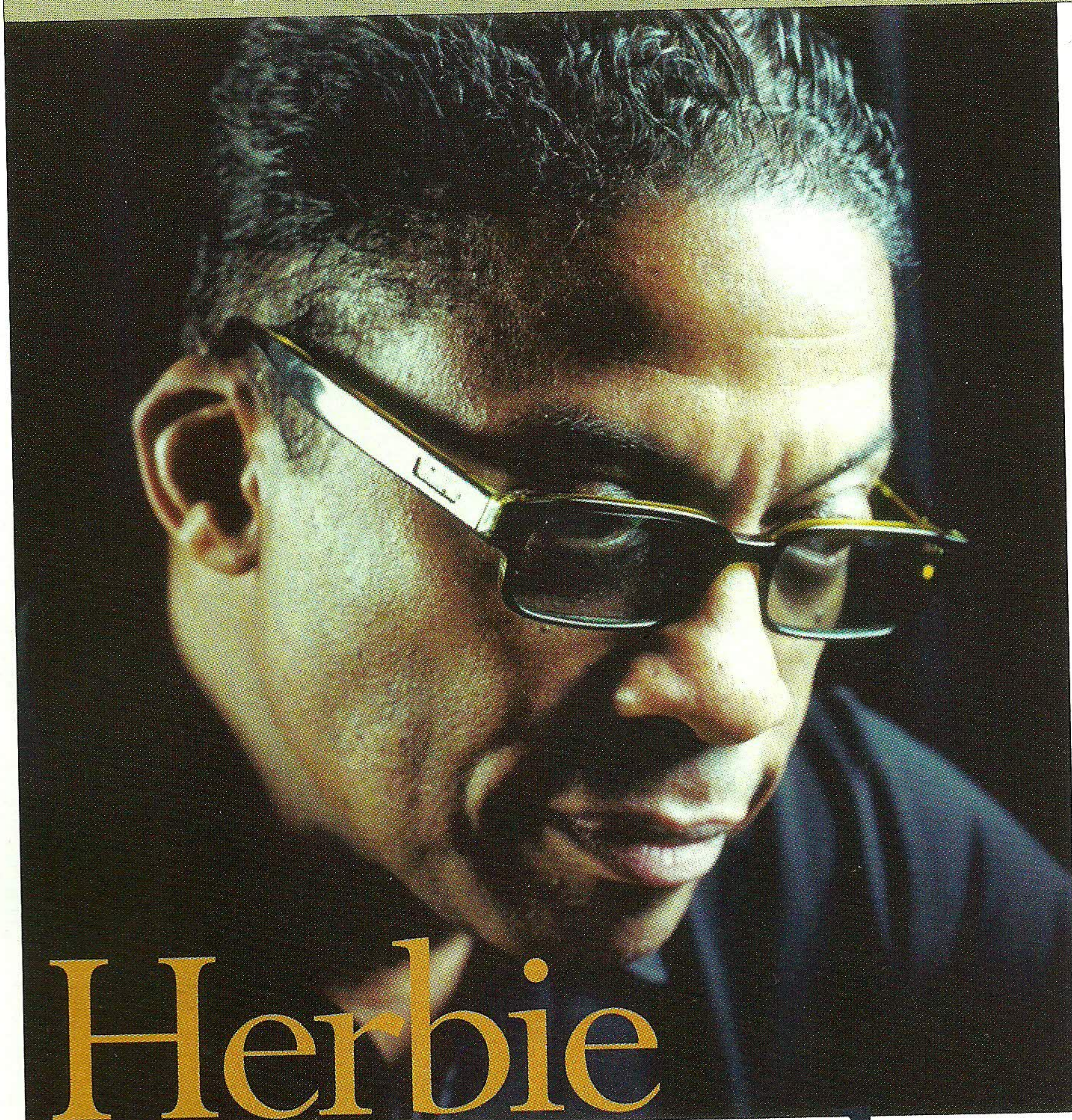


"Music is about life and tells the story of humanity—its triumphs and fallibilities." —HERBIE HANCOCK



Herbie Hancock

WHO: With a career spanning five decades, Hancock is one of the true innovators of modern jazz. He's equally skilled at acoustic piano and electronic instruments.

WHAT: Keyboard virtuoso, composer, and musical renaissance man.

WHEN: Born in 1940, he began recording in the early 1960s and remains active today.

WHERE: Herbert Jeffrey Hancock grew up in Chicago, but came to New York in his early 20s and has been on the national and international music scenes ever since.

WHY: Few musicians have spent as much time at the cutting edge, from his early days with Miles Davis to his pioneering work in fusion to his return to more traditional jazz, Hancock has been at the center of the genre's many moods and movements.

THE STORY: Herbie Hancock was a child prodigy. Starting on piano at age 7, he was already soloing with the Chicago Symphony at 11 years old. He had a solo contract with Blue Note Records by the age of 21.

By the mid-1960s Hancock had joined the Miles Davis Quintet, and went on to help Miles create an electrified blend of jazz, rock, and funk that would come to be known as fusion.

Influenced by rock and funk, Hancock started to use electric piano with

Davis. Hancock was an early user of synthesizers and audio effects, especially after he left Davis in 1968.

By the mid-'70s, his jazz took on a hard-funk groove. The debut release of his band, Headhunters, became the best selling jazz album of all time up to that point.

Soon, Hancock started experimenting with sequencers and other electronic tools. His work with producers like Bill Laswell would do much to influence hip-hop, a style then in its infancy. In the early 1980s, his single "RockIt"—with its video of warped, dancing mannequins—was a surprise MTV hit.

But Hancock never totally left straight-ahead jazz behind. One of the things that marks his career—and sets him apart from all but a handful of musicians—is his ability to work in pop, experimental, classical, and jazz genres.

By the mid 1980s, audiences were looking for more traditional jazz sounds. His collaborations with some former Miles Davis Quintet partners, and his work with the Marsalis family, proved that Hancock could still speak eloquently on the piano. He has continued to shuttle between traditional and experimental music, recently recording an album of George Gershwin tunes.

Hancock has won nine GRAMMYS, including his most recent for *Directions in Music: Live at Massey Hall*, in 2002. 2005's *Possibilities* topped the *Billboard* Jazz charts and went as high as 22 on the *Billboard* 200, an impressive accomplishment for any jazz album. In 2004, he received a Jazz Masters award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Herbiehancock.com. **T**

Listening List

Miles Davis: *Seven Steps to Heaven* (1963)
Herbie Hancock: *Head Hunters* (1973)
Herbie Hancock: *Gershwin's World* (1998)