

NAC notes

with Carol Archer

Congratulations to Norman Brown, whose "Out 'a Nowhere" (Warner Bros.) bumps Richard Elliot's "Chill Factor" (Blue Note) to take the top slot. Brown's track is the only one on the chart with airplay on 100% of the panel.

Momentum, especially in the realm of increased plays, is a little anemic on the top half of the chart. Jazzmasters, Dave Koz, Chris Gaines, Nestor Torres and Brian Tarquin all have steam left, but it's not until we drop to 19th that we see really impressive movement, on Eric Clapton's "Blue Eyes Blue" (Reprise). The track surges from 28th with five new adds and an impressive +122 increase in plays. No other track reflects triple-digit increases this week.

Brian McKnight's "Back at One" (Motown) is by far the Most Added, with 12 stations jumping aboard, among them KTWV/L.A., WNUA/Chicago, WYMY/Detroit, WJZW/Washington,

KSSI/Sacramento, KOAI/Dallas, WNWV/Cleveland and KHHH/Denver. What a hit!

Chuck Loeb's "High Five" (Shanachie) earns five new adds, including WQCD/NY, and moves 27-22.

Brian Culbertson's "Back in the Day" (Atlantic) is among the Most Added and picks up play at KOAI and five other reporters.

Kirk Whalum's "That's the Way Love Goes" (Warner Bros.) ties Culbertson with six adds, including WNWV and KHHH.

One station with an outstanding track record for picking hits is WNUA/Chicago. Besides McKnight, WNUA added Brian Hughes' "Shakin' Not Stirred" (Higher Octave) — it's got just a hint of vermouth in its sophisticated retro sound — as well as Kenny Garrett's "Simply Said" (Warner Bros.) this week. I've really got to hand it to PD Bob Kaake and APD/MD Steve Stiles!

Jonathan Butler's "Suite 830" (N-Coded) is added at KMGQ/Santa Barbara, WWNJ/Raleigh and three others. Up to 13 plays at WJZ/MIWaukee.

Check out Ed Hamilton's cool "Boogie Woogie" (Fahrenheit) for plenty of backbeat and a smooth groove. Added out of the box at JRN and KSBR/Mission Viejo.

WHRL/Albany OM Brant Curtiss has gained a reputation for very good ears in the years he's programmed NAC/Smooth Jazz — and he's certainly broken his share of hits. In addition to programming, Curtiss does mornings on 'HRL and recently added duties as Director/Creative Services for all of Clear Channel's Albany stations. Here he discusses the role of new music and his criteria for adds.

UNDER THE RADAR

R&R'S EXCLUSIVE BAROMETER FOR NEW MUSIC

Our recent adds include A-One's "West by South..." (Push), which has that fresh summer sound that people don't want to let go of, because the format needs as many up-tempo, yet smooth-sounding, songs as possible. This one has that whole Duncan Millar thing going on, which is such a great sound. Another is Victor Wooten's "Urban Turban" (Compass), which is not only a snappy song, it's very uplifting too. Some people program according to the season, perhaps playing more Latin jazz in the summer — or the opposite in winter, trying to match the mood, but ending up sounding somber. I think we as a format should try to keep the energy up. A good example is Ed Hamilton's "Boogie Woogie" (Fahrenheit) or Michael Paulo's "Struttin' With Momma Mae" (Noteworthy).



Brant Curtiss

Sometimes I'll grab a song that fits the market and the environment I'm in rather than something that fits the format per se, although a lot of times the format will catch up with a chance I might take. I'm not a soothsayer, but I am willing to try something. It works the other way too. When I saw that The Wave was on Victor Wooten, I listened to it and said to myself, "[Wave APD/MD] Ralph [Stewart], you're right!" All the PDs in this format seem to feed off one another to some degree.

Kombo's "Talk the Talk" (GRP) is an example of a perfect song for us, totally fresh. It sounds killer in the morning, and that's something crucial for us, because mornings can be devastating in this format. Not everyone has a powerful morning show with a big, recognizable name like 'NUA has with Ramsey Lewis. We're all up against competitors that are playing powerfully up-tempo music backed with big personalities and huge marketing.

Our ratings rise continuously through the day. During evenings, with our Today's Jazz Tonight and Lights Out programs, the numbers go through the roof — No. 1 and 2 in certain demos — and we are kicking the hell out of 41 stations in Albany. That's because the format fits the function, and our function is stress management. When people leave work and are driving home, we're like a decompression chamber for them. It's sad, but our morning show is almost not a factor; middays are more like morning for us. That doesn't mean you should waste mornings; you've got to go after it. With great songs like "Urban Turban," Kombo and Brian Tarquin's "Darlin' Darlin' Baby," you can pump up your sound. They have very strong hooks. Songs that are very smooth complement them and offer balance.

Heads up

Brian Culbertson
Somethin' Bout Love
Atlantic

Brian Culbertson's new release, *Somethin' Bout Love* (Atlantic), is a celebration of love and life from start to finish. It's a deep record, musically and emotionally, with some very radio-friendly tracks — and some great ones for listening at home too. The first single, "Back in the Day," is a '70s-inspired retro-groove whose shamelessly infectious hook makes it destined for the top of the NAC/Smooth Jazz charts. "The Rise and Fall," with a guest turn from Dave Koz on sax, is a cinematic piece. "Escape" epitomizes a late-night hang. It's a bold move to include both instrumental and vocal versions of Q's "The Secret Garden" on the same record; Howard Hewitt turns in a delicate, haunting performance on the latter. The grand finale is Culbertson's tribute to the late Howard Lowell, appropriately titled "I'm Gonna Miss You," featuring Lori Pery singing from the bottom of her heart backed by a full live gospel choir. It's sure to give the listener goose bumps with its sheer beauty. Yeah, there's definitely *Somethin' Bout Love!*



— Steve Stiles, APD/MD WNUA/Chicago

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SW: There prognosis for NA We're seeing growth — more than other format has experie over the past four or five y and those doing well on the rating side are doing well in revenues too. Where the format has gone away, it's because the operators couldn't find the dollars to support their stations, like in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Boston.

Lack of resources is one reason stations flipped, but the main reason is that they haven't figured out how to tap into revenue streams available to broadcasters. You have to have the

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SW: When someone a niche format and not a standing. This isn't a niche: it