



Created in early 1994 when Polish violinist **Michal Urbaniak** brought his jazz and rap concept “**Urbanator**” to the New York offices of Silva Screen Records. Michal had been discouraged by the established jazz labels inability to cope with the rap content. Likewise the rap people who, despite the genres free use of jazz samples, couldn’t fully comprehend the jazz. The album that resulted was simply called “Urbanator” and proved that jazz and rap could blend seamlessly without recourse to samples or loops.

Guesting on the album was **Tom Browne** who, despite being semi retired from the music industry, sounded as sharp and enthusiastic as he had during his ascendant years at G.R.P. Tom was signed to the label and provided the second release “**Mo’ Jamaica Funk**”.

During the time of this activity another key member of Urbanator, **Lenny White**, was working on what was to be his first solo venture for thirteen years. Lenny’s importance in the jazz world stems from his recording debut in 1969. The album was of course “**Bitches Brew**” by **Miles Davis**. Lenny’s album “**Present Tense**” marked Hip Bop’s first appearance in the Billboard Jazz Chart with the **Chaka Khan** collaboration “**Who Do You Love**” achieving widespread radio play.

After only three releases the label had been graced by **Herbie Hancock**, both **Brecker Brothers**, **Chick Corea**, **Stanley Clarke**, **Kenny Garrett** and **Marcus Miller**. “**Update**” by **The Meeting** added **Patrice Rushen**, **Ndugu** and **Ernie Watts** to the list.

In 1995 Hip Bop Essence was formed to showcase conceptual recordings of straight jazz. Beginning with the **Lenny White** produced “**Essence Of Funk**” and “**Primal Blue**” the label immediately attracted the finest names to its projects. The “**Essence All Stars**” were invented as an identity for the major musicians taking part in these sessions. **Kenny Burrell**, **Ron Carter**, **Cedar Walton** and **Wallace Roney** are among the musicians who assumed the identity and contributed to the fiery celebration of **Blue Note** funk (“**Essence Of Funk**”) or the tribute to **Freddie Hubbard** (“**Hub Art**”).

The concept behind the label has been broadened out with the work of producer **Milan Simich**. His “**Jackies Blues Bag**” pays tribute to alto player **Jackie McClean** as well as **Slugs** the location where he could often be seen performing in the mid sixties and early seventies. **LaMont Johnson** who plays piano on the album was a member of Jackie’s band during those years: a direct connection with the music and the place. “**BongoBop**” is a tribute to the Harlem jazz club scene which flourished then died in the early seventies. Organ led groups were always a favourite at Club Baron and Smalls Paradise.

In the meantime Lenny has recorded and released his follow up album “**Renderers Of Spirit**” as have Urbanator. **Tom Browne** has recorded for **Hip Bop Essence** and the rap with live musicians approach has been extended on “**Hip Strut**” by **Bop City** with **Brand Nubian Lord Jamar** guesting. In the latter part of 1998 **Lenny White** went into the studio with **Bennie Maupin**, **Victor Bailey**, **Patrice Rushen** and **Foley** to record a “group” album. This band had toured with Lenny and Patrice had accompanied him for dates at the Blue Note Club in Tokyo. The album also featured a special guest appearance by **Dianne Reeves** on “**It Was A Very Good Year**”.

In 1999 new signing **Dave McMurray** released his debut album for the label. The album called “**Peace Of Mind**” (HIBD 8021) became an airplay favourite on JAZZfm radio. When the radio station celebrated its 10th anniversary in March 2000 with three U.K. concerts by Bob James’s band, Dave was the saxophone player Bob brought with him. At each of the concerts Dave was outstanding and won over a whole new set of fans. Dave is due to release his new album in May 2001 and his guests include **Mark Isham**, **Bob James**, **Chuck Loeb** and **Marcus Miller**.

“**AfroCubano 11**” (HIBD 8022) which follows the successful “**AfroCubano Chant**”. “**AfroCubano 11**” features **Dave Samuels**, **Chuck Loeb** and **Eddie Bo**. Chuck Loeb appeared again on the label when the group **Metro** which he formed with keyboard player **Mitchel Forman** released “**Metrocafe**” (HIBD 8024)

The first release of 2001 is the new recording by legend **Freddie Hubbard**. Freddie’s new album called “**New Colors**” (HIBD 8026) will be released in April 2001 and sees Freddie back to form and playing with some of New York’s finest young musicians. Included on the album are special guest **Kenny Garrett** and **Idris Muhammad**, **Joe Chambers**, **Craig Handy** and **Dwayne Burno** who also arranged a new version of “**Red Clay**”.

Released shortly afterwards was the second Hip Bop release by **Dave McMurray** called “**Soul Searching**”. The album quickly received huge radio play for stand out tracks “**What Cha Gonna Do About My Loving**” featuring **Gloria Ridgeway** on vocals and the show stopper “**Walk In The Night**”. The album was followed by Dave’s first European shows with his own band. He sold out two U.K. shows and received great reviews for both the album and the shows.