

Industry Focus: Retail sales
Surpassed expectations for February **Page B4.**

Sports: Showalter readies Arizona
Diamondbacks for Opening Day **Page B8.**

MARKETPLACE

THE FRONT LINES

BY THOMAS PETZINGER JR.

Greg Abate Finds Music in Hard Work, Hard Work in Music

NEW YORK

SAXOPHONIST Greg Abate rubs his eyes. He has spent weeks making intricate arrangements. The night before he barely slept attending to last-minute details. Now, with the big moment at hand, he has a sore throat and a cracked reed.

"Man, am I tired," he says.

But one minute and one reed later, the tiny recording studio in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn is swinging. Backed by four other musicians, the 50-year-old Mr. Abate is recording another disk he hopes will propel him into the big time. It is his seventh album as a band leader.

Mr. Abate lives in the purgatory between obscurity and stardom, a place where talent alone is insufficient for survival. He plays tempos so furious that his fingers blur, but he also madly dials the phone in search of gigs. His musical phrasing is redolent of Charlie Parker, but his sales pitch is no less practiced.

"I may be a musician, but I also have to be a businessman," he says. The difference is smaller than you may imagine.

In the salad days, jazz musicians held secure jobs with bandleaders whose gigs lasted months or years. That security slowly disappeared as rock overtook jazz and jazz splintered into subsidiary genres. Today bands constantly reform around the tastes of the moment.

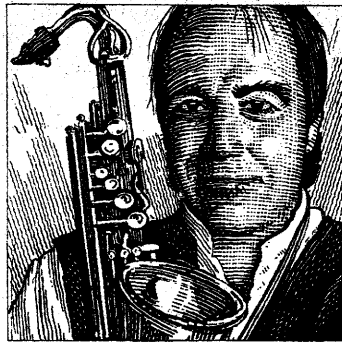
Mr. Abate's career has shown the same changes. After graduating from Boston's Berklee College of Music in 1971 he played alto sax for the incomparable Ray Charles, but after two years of globetrotting with a child at home he settled down near Providence, R.I.

Since then, other than a few years playing tenor with the Artie Shaw Orchestra, he has worked pretty much on his own, linking up with a

hungry enough."

His work ethic has won him the loyalty of his record company, **data music inc. of Red Bank, N.J.** "He's extremely motivated, pushing, pushing, pushing the venues," says **data music's Achim Neumann.** In addition to releasing Mr. Abate's material, the company eagerly hires him as a producer because his recordings are invariably on time and on budget.

At the company's urging, Mr. Abate has decided to attempt a breakout album with a trendy Latin



Elliott Barnfield

sound, forcing him to reach beyond his immediate network. His friend Harvie Swartz, a top bassist, plays often with Afro-Cuban artists and recruits drummer Ed Uribe and conga player Wilson "Chembo" Corniel. On piano, Mr. Abate brings in a former European touring partner named Mark Soskin, who spent several years backing the sax grandmaster Sonny Rollins.

With only a single evening of rehearsal behind them, this combination of close friends and complete strangers finds a tight groove. Says an approving Mr. Corniel, "The give and take is automatically there."

Finally, with an infant seat in back and saxophones piled high, Mr. Abate pulls up one bracing cold morning to a century-old building where 15 microphones await in the basement headquarters of a studio called Acoustic Recording. One by one the others walk in and set up, careful to make sure their lines of sight are clear. With just the solos and basic melodies blocked out, they'll fix their timing through eye contact and body inflection

ENTERTAINMENT

Manager's Dual Role

By EBEN SHAPIRO

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

On HBO's "The Larry Sanders Show" comic Garry Shandling lays out his duplicity and back-stabbing on a fictional talk show. But as the lines go, the real-life litigation between Mr. Shandling and his ex-manager, Brad Grey, just got underway.

In January, Mr. Shandling filed a \$1 million lawsuit in California state court for breach of fiduciary duty. His company, Brills, is suing Mr. Grey for breach of fiduciary duty, serving as both Mr. Grey's lawyer and the executive producer of the lawsuit claims, Mr. Shandling says. He has conflicts of interest in representing himself at Mr. Shandling's trial.

Mr. Grey denies the allegations. On Wednesday, Mr. Shandling and his company, Hair Inc. Mr. Grey's "The Larry Sanders Show" set in 1997, and of driving Mr. Shandling's allegations. "The show hasn't aired since 1997 for a final season of 1997.

This is the right now. The new breed of Hollywood manager of a hot position into a pre-television series. In egos, allegations charges of attempted sides have assembled attorneys and publicists in overdrive.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1998 B1

MARKETPLACE

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

COMPUTERS

Get Serious! Computer

By DEAN TAKAHASHI

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

SEATTLE — Two modern-day gladiators enter an arena bathed in the glow of kleig lights, and a violent duel begins. Spectators roar as they follow the action. "Did you think this was a game?" bawls an announcer. "This ain't no game."

The death match is the first champion-

Some young guns have

NAME

Dennis Fong

David Magro