

BIG SISTER JANIS

In 1969 I'm rehearsing in a SoHo loft with Billy Cobham and Jeff Kent — the nucleus of what will soon become Dreams, an eight-member jazz horn band that will sign with Columbia Records within a year. (More about Dreams in 'Frequent Music Miles' chapter.)

In the rehearsal room next door is a force of nature: Janis Joplin. Janis is funny, vivacious and gregarious. You never know what's gonna come out of her mouth! We start visiting each other's rehearsals and soon we become friends. I quickly learn that she is very aggressive with the male species. Very!

One day during a rehearsal room visit she asks if I'd like to go out sometime ... for fun!

I decline. Janis is a loose cannon, and I can't deal with that right now. (I wish I had said yes. Imagine a night of drinking with Janis! I wonder who would have wound up under the table!!)

After the amazing trumpet player Randy Brecker joins Dreams, he starts dating Janis. They get along swimmingly.

In July, Randy is with Janis when the first moon landing occurs. Later he tells me that at the moment history was being made, he was, uh ... having his rocket serviced.

Fifteen months later, Janis would die in Hollywood. I can't help noticing "The J Connection."

Jimi
Janis
Jim
John

Go figure.

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