

funk band led by Sly Stone. The group was soon named Sly and the Family Stone, and became a leading rock band during the late 1960s and early 1970s, producing eleven hit albums for the Warner Brothers,



Thunderbolt, and Epic labels. Robinson was one of the first Afro-American females to play trumpet in a major rock band. Although the band broke up in 1975 due to substance abuse by several members of the group, especially the leader, Sly and the Family Stone was later inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In 1974, Robinson and fellow band member Larry Graham began to work together outside the Stone band, and formed a group known as Graham Central Station. Robinson also recorded for labels such as Columbia, Sony, Priority, and Sanctuary with artists such as Robert Cray, Funkadelic, and others. In 1993, she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2006, Robinson reunited with the original Family Stone for a performance at the Grammy Award ceremonies.

Cynthia has two daughters: Laura Marie, and Sylvette Phunne. (Sylvette's father is Sly Stone.)

Bibl.: Erdmann, Thomas. "Cynthia Robinson's Journey from Humble Beginnings to Rock Stardom" (*International Trumpet Guild Journal*, Mar. 2011); "Cynthia Robinson" (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

Rock, George (b. Farmer City, Illinois, Oct. 11, 1919; d. Champaign, Illinois, Apr. 12, 1988). American trumpeter. Rock was not only a great trumpet player, but also a true comic. He attended Illinois Wesleyan College on a football scholarship, but by the age of twenty decided to leave school and become a professional trumpet player. He played in various small groups in the Midwest before joining the comedy music group, Freddie Fisher's Schnickelfritz Band, with which he made his first recordings (for Decca) and appeared in several movies.

When Spike Jones heard a Schnickelfritz Band program in 1944, he immediately knew that he needed to hire Rock as his trumpet player. This turned out to be a perfect musical marriage because both performers were great entertainers and each person's humor inspired the other. Rock played with Spike Jones and His City Slickers for nearly twenty years, although he spent a short amount of time



with the Charlie Barnet band when Jones went on a USO tour during World War II. Rock's best trumpet solo was *Minka*, a tune taken from his solo, *Trumpet Blues*, which he had played with Fisher's group. However, Rock's biggest-selling tune was *All I Want for Christmas (Is My Two Front Teeth)*, which sold over two million copies. Other trumpet features were *I'm Captain of the Space Ship*, *I'm the Angel in the Christmas Party*, and *Happy New Year*.

The City Slickers performed a Command Performance for President Truman. The highlight of the show was Rock's performance of *I'm Forever Blowing Bubble Gum*. Rock, a 250-pound, six-foot-tall man was dressed in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit. The Jones band made numerous recordings for RCA and appeared many times on television during the late 1950s.

As the Jones group's popularity began to diminish during the early 1960s, Rock left to play in Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada, with his own group. For a short while, he played with Turk Murphy, but later formed a new group, the New Society Band that consisted mostly of former City Slickers members. They made one LP recording.

Near the end of his life, Rock sold used cars in Las Vegas during the day, and played with Merle Koch's jazz band at a steakhouse at night. While his name was mostly unknown to the general public, Rock was one of the best trumpeters in the business. He was admired by many musicians, including Al Hirt.

Bibl.: "George Rock" (www.allmusic.com).

Rockwell, Bland Sidney ("Rocky") (b. St. Joseph, Missouri, Mar. 2, 1923). American trumpeter and vocalist. Rockwell studied music at Maryville State Teachers College (now Northwest Missouri State University). During World War II, he played with the 865th American



Air Force Band, after which he toured with the territorial bands of Harry Collins, Sonny Dunham, Jimmy Caton, and Elmer Hall. While he was performing with the Royal Bohemians on a radio show in Grand Island, Nebraska, bandleader Lawrence Welk heard him and invited him to audition for an opening in his band; from March 2, 1951 to March of 1962, Rockwell served as one of the Welk Orchestra's most popular trumpet soloists and vocalists. His crew-cut hair and impish face, combined with a comedic flair, made Rockwell a hit with television audiences. His musical skits included performing the Christmas tune *Rudolph* for

children while utilizing a hand puppet to press the valves, impersonating Elvis Presley, and playing trombone with the trombone section until his slide got away from him and was flung across the stage.

Rockwell formed his own band in 1962, which played the Las Vegas-Reno-Tahoe circuit, and featured jazz, comedy, and standard dance tunes; it sometimes opened for Louis Prima. Rockwell returned to his hometown of St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1970 when his father became ill, and performed in the area until 1983. He then played in various cruise ship bands before retiring to Sun City, Arizona, near Phoenix.

Rockwell lost his wife, Pauline Wood, in 2000. They were high school sweethearts, and were married in 1943 while he was on leave from the Air Force. Their children, Wynona and Jeff (Jeff is now deceased), appeared on some Welk Christmas television