



**X-CELLENCE** — Terence Blanchard, Columbia recording artist, who appears as leader of a quartet backing Billie Holiday (Mikki Howard) in the "Malcolm X" film, with producer-director Spike Lee.

(David Gahr photo)

# Trumpeter Terence Blanchard composes 'Malcolm X' soundtrack

By **CLARENCE ATKINS**  
*Special to the AmNews*

**T**he advanced publicity of Spike Lee's projected classic "Malcolm X" continues to flourish superfluously with its many ramifications. And now comes the soundtrack, written by young jazz trumpeter and emerging jazz composer Terence Blanchard.

In a recent dialogue, Blanchard told of Spike's firm resistance to the studio's demand for a more renowned composer for the soundtrack assignment. He offered high praise for Spike's steadfast faith and how it enhanced his personal confidence.

It is a performance that warrants great praise. The evolution of Terence Blanchard as a prolific composer is an incredible accounting in its own right.

Blanchard is a native of New Orleans, where his peers and schoolmates included the Marsalis brothers (Branford and Wynton), Donald Harrison, Reginald Veal, Troy Davis, the drummer in Terence's present band, and a host of other crescent

city-bred jazz aspirants.

## Studied with Marsalis

At age 16, he enrolled in the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, where he studied with Ellis Marsalis. After high school he entered Rutgers University and continued his jazz studies with Kenny Barron and Paul Jeffries. While at Rutgers, he joined Lionel Hampton's band for a tour. Completing the Hampton gig, he and saxophonist Donald Harrison were summoned by Professor Art Blakey to replace Branford and Wynton Marsalis in his Jazz Messengers group, the supreme finishing school for young bebop players. Blanchard speaks of his Blakey experience as his most productive period to date — considering its impact on both his human and artistic values.

Of Art Blakey, he recalled Art saying, "No matter what you do in life, always be true to yourself. Never talk down to anyone, talk straight to them." He also credited Blakey with teaching him responsibility by making him music director of the band.

Music of "Malcolm X" will debut November 17 at Village Vanguard.