Versatile, inventive jazzman Byrd to unfurl genius on guitar in March

By MIKE KARCHMER

Thresher Fine Arts Staff

Charlie Byrd, a guitarist known to jazz, popular, and classical music buffs alike, will bring his trio to the Rice Memorial Center to play a concert Friday evening, March 3. Sponsored by the Student Center Board, the concert will be that organization's second in as many weeks featuring the guitar.

Best known for his jazz playing, Byrd has won several Downbeat and Playboy jazz polls. He has recorded extensively in the classical, jazz, and bossa nova fields.

Boss a' Nova

In 1961 Byrd took his combo on a State Department-sponsored tour of South America. A direct outcome of this trip was his discovery of the potential inherent in establishing the Brazilian samba rhythm in conjunction with jazz improvisation. In early 1962, Byrd and Stan Getz recorded an album entitled “Jazz Samba” at a church in Washington, D.C.

The combination of Getz's subtly graceful improvisation and Byrd's harmonic and rhythmic ingenuity was not only an artistic success, but also a commercial hit of such magnitude that the entire bossa nova craze in the United States may be said to have sprung directly from this album.

Played for Bird

Charlie Byrd has toured Europe with Les McCann and Zoot Sims. In 1965 he gave a recital in the East Room of the White House for Mrs. Lyndon Johnson. Most recently, Byrd has made nightclub appearances with Rev. Malcolm Boyd, from which the album “Are You Running With Me, Jesus?” was made.

Playing regularly throughout the country, the Charlie Byrd trio uses Byrd's own Showboat Club in Washington as home base. The other trio members are Byrd's younger brother Gene, who plays bass, guitar, and sings, and Bill Reichenbach, who plays drums.

The Rice concert marks Byrd's first visit to Houston. Tickets for the concert are on sale at the Rice Campus Store.