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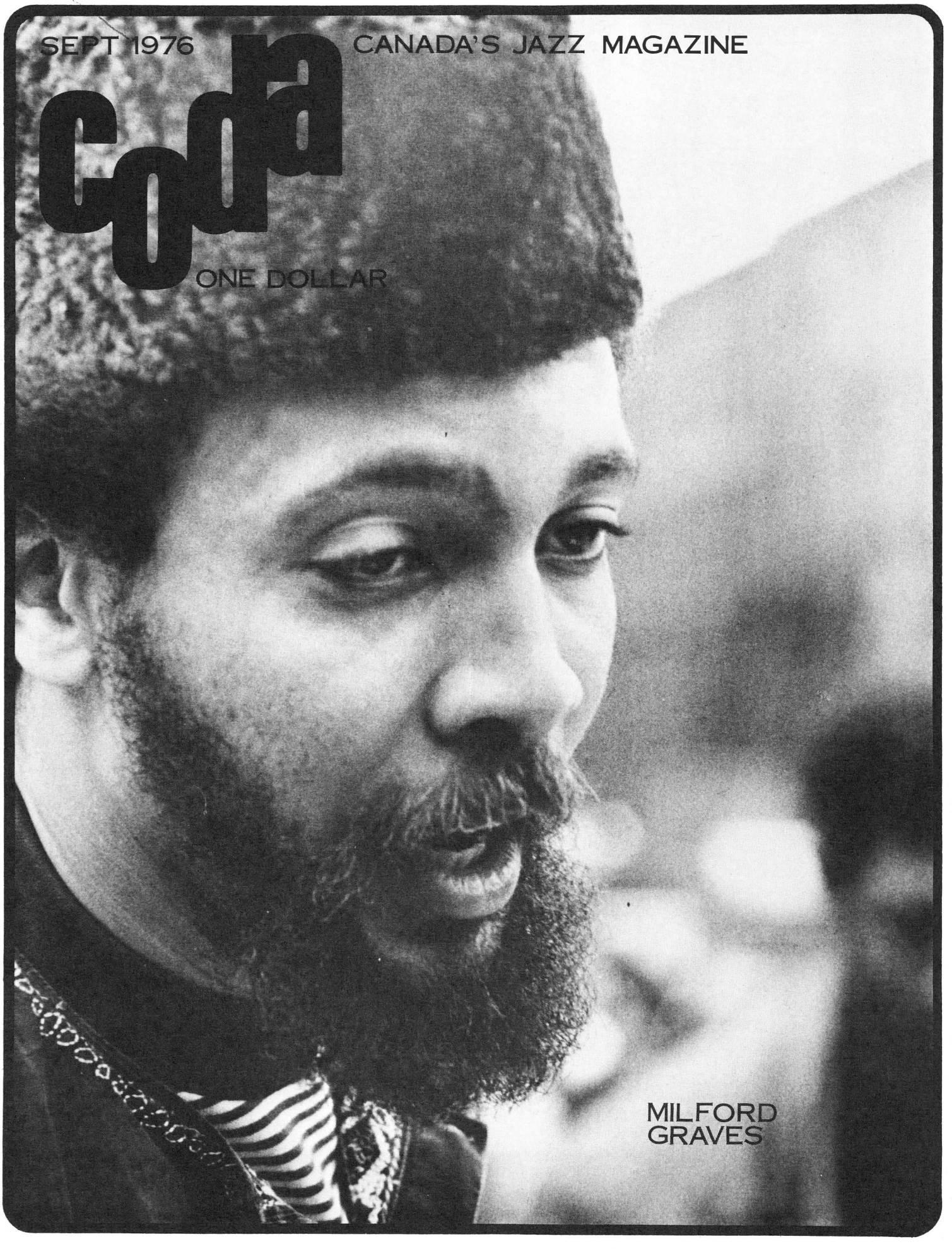

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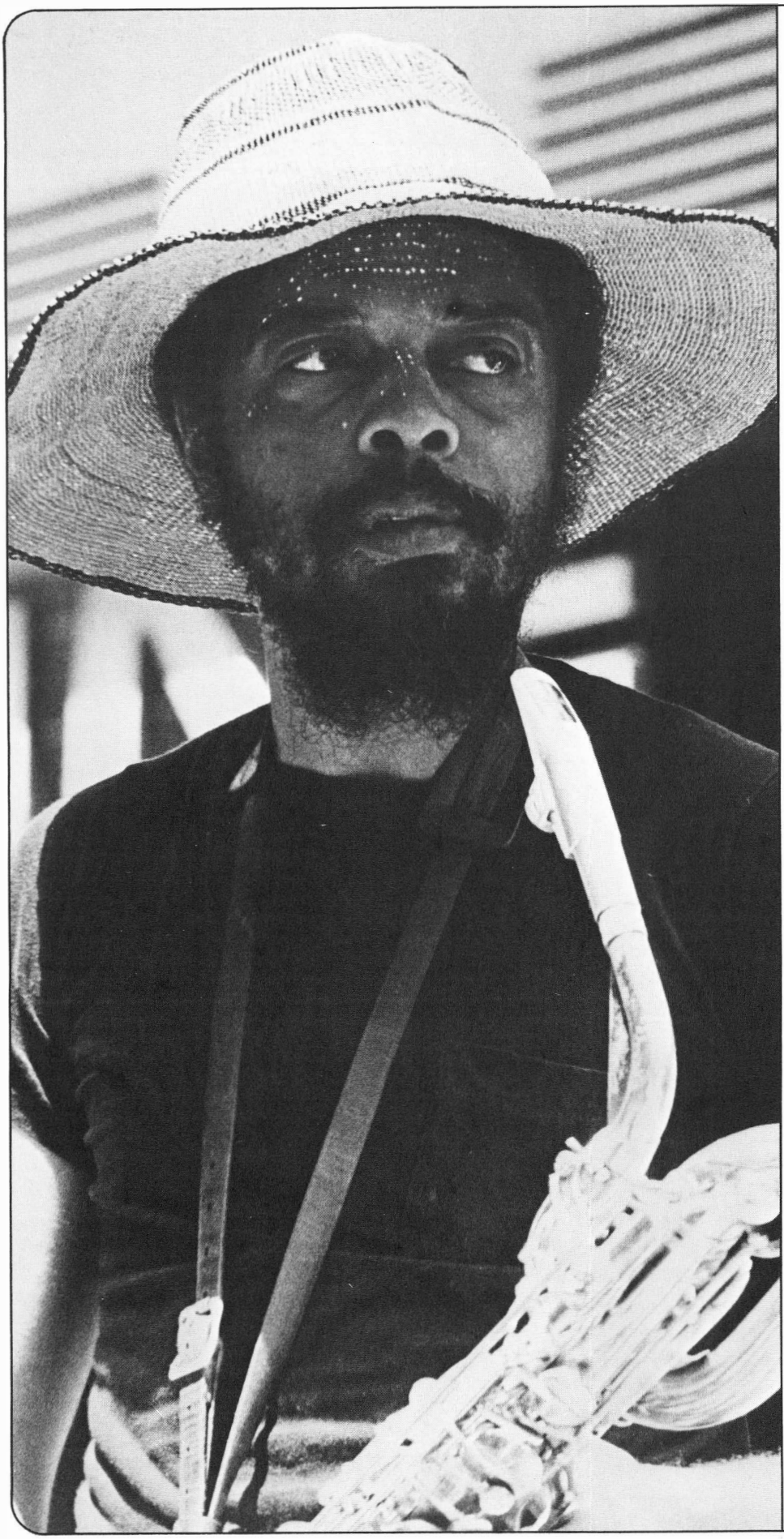

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STAFF

Editor..... JOHN NORRIS
Art Director..... BILL SMITH
Business Manager..... DAN ALLEN
Editorial Assistant..... DAVID LEE

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER

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photograph by Valerie Wilmer

photograph of Hamiet Bluiett
by Gerard Futrick

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WILL BRADLEY

and his orchestra

Featuring

RAY McKINLEY

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On Tour

Will Bradley had one of the purest sounds next to Tommy Dorsey. But Tommy could be very stiff. Will was freer. He played with great accuracy - he was very well schooled and you can just hear it in his sound.

(Dick Nash)

Here's a trombone player who has everything: a real, legitimate brass tone, pretty conceptions of phrasing sweet tunes and a solid, rhythmic punch to his jazz efforts. Little wonder that Glenn Miller once remarked that Will is the country's number one all-round trombonist.

(George Simon)

Drumming, quite obviously, is Ray McKinley's idea of fun. Just watch or listen to Mac and you can see how much fun he's having... his style attracts you, not only because of its basic solidity and natural swing, but even moreso because it's an inspired style you don't hear any other drummer using.... Don't let it allow you to overlook his singing - he has a completely whacky style that is responsible for a great deal of the showmanship the band possesses.

(George Simon)

Will Bradley, an extremely accomplished trombonist even if not a great jazz soloist, had a decade of experience benind him when he formed his band in July 1939 .... Bradley's group was unusual in having drummer Ray McKinley as co-leader .... During 1940, boogie woogie.... was enjoying a vogue and arranger Leonard Whitney.... became interested in presenting the form in an orchestral idiom.... Today these pieces sound what they actually were - novelty ephemera - and are interesting only as a reflection of the boogie woogie craze of the period.... There is irony in the fact that the idiom which brought the Bradley band its commercial success was one which the leader himself did not find altogether to his liking, but his realisation that the benefits of hit recordings were not solely pleasurable was one he shared with quite a few of his colleagues.

(Albert McCarthy)

In the fall of 1940 a widely circulated syndicated newsstory announced and simultaneously deplored the overnight building of a new band to 'Name' status. The band referred to was that of Will Bradley. Nonexistent a year before, it had.... bookings scheduled in all the top hotels, theatres and ballrooms in the country and a phonograph record which was a smash hit. All of this the newswriter credited to or blamed on high pressure publicity arranged by the band's handlers at heavy financial cost.... The Bradley band building actually made news only because it was the first to occur in that manner.

(Lee Walker)

The concept of a band under the co-leadership of two such dissimilar characters as Bradley and McKinley was the brainchild of Willard Alexander of the influential William Morris booking agency, who ar-

ranged ample financial backing and a Columbia recording contract. Will Bradley, formerly Wilbur Schwichtenburg, was a serious, soft-spoken musician from New Jersey who, apart from short stints with Milt Shaw's Detroiters, for whom McKinley played drums, and Ray Noble, had spent most of his professional career in the relatively secure environment of CBS radio studies in New York. Ray McKinley a gregarious Texan, was essentially a road musician, a veteran of many bands before acquiring national recognition with Jimmy Dorsey. "The Dorsey band was playing at Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, "he recalled. "Detailed discussions on the formation of the new band took place between Will, Willard and me in the cocktail lounge of a Newark hotel during the day. We suggested musicians we'd like for the band. I recommended Freddie Slack, who was playing piano with Jimmy Dorsey, Delmar Kaplan, bassist with the old Dorsey Brothers band and who had worked with Will in Ray Noble's band, Jo Jo Huffman on clarinet and Dorsey's fine arranger, Leonard Whitney. I also brought in Joe Weidman, whom I'd heard playing in a club when I was on vacation at Lake Tahoe." (1) According to Huffman, "My first big band was Beasley Smith out of Nashville, Tenn., in 1926 and Ray McKinley was the drummer. In summer 1939, I was working with Phil Harris in Salt Lake City, when I got a call from Mac inviting me to come to New York and audition for a new band he and Bradley were getting together." (1) Auditions and rehearsals took place at Nola's studio in New York during the summer and the band broke in with a road tour of New England, opening at the State ballroom in Boston with the following personnel: Steve Lipkins, Joe Weidman, Herbie Dell, trumpets; Will Bradley, Jimmy Emmert, Bill Corti, trombomes; Artie Mendelsohn, Jo Jo Huffman, Bernie Billings, Sam Sachelle, saxophones; Freddy Slack, piano; Danny Perri, guitar; Delmar Kaplan, bass; Ray McKinley, drums; Carlotta Dale, vocals. "We were quite well received, "recalled McKinley, "but we did not exactly get an ovation!" (1) The band returned to New York for its first recording session on September 19, 1939, which included Memphis Blues and Old Doc Yak, the latter being one of the first of the many novelty vocal numbers featuring McKinley. Returning to Boston in October for an engagement at the Ritz-Carlton hotel, guitarist Bill Barford replaced Perri and Peanuts Hucko took over Billings' jazz tenor chair. The next recording session on October 16, 1939 included Stan Wrightsman's fine arrangement of I'm Comin' Virginia, which gave the first hint of things to come by the inclusion of a surprising boogie woogie piano solo in the middle of an otherwise orthodox semi-dixie arrangement. "It was the only arrangement Wrightsman ever did for the band, "said Bradley. "I don't know why, because it was one of the best in the book." (1) The next engagement was at the Kenmore hotel in Albany, N.Y. "The manager was a gregarious Irishman called Bob Murphy," Bradley recalled. "On any night the ringside tables would be occupied by Senators from the nearby State Capitol and at the end of a set I would be obliged to join them. At the quietest time of the evening - usually the dinner hour - Murphy would insist on us playing something like Hallelujah, the loudest arrangement in the book. The effect on those venerable customers was comparable to firing a cannon in the living room!" (1) "After that date, " said McKinley, "my wife and I and Peanuts Hucko drove all the way to Dallas, Texas, for a date at the Baker hotel. We introduced a little jazz group from within the band there, featuring Hucko on tenor, Huffman on clarinet, Weidman on trumpet and me. " (1) In December, the band played at the Jung hotel in New Orleans - "not our most successful engagement by any means!" recalled McKinley wryly. At the next session on January 17, 1940 the band recorded Freddy Slack's own composition Strange Cargo (originally called Boogie Woogie Nocturne and later retitled King Calypso) and Celery Stalks At Midnight, which became its biggest selling record to date. "We'd had it in the back of the book for some time, " said Bradley. "It was an original composition called Woodland Shuffle brought in by a colored arranger, George Harris, and it didn't get much attention. One day Mac and I were talking and we agreed that with a little dressing-up it might be usuable. So we got our heads together with some of the boys, changed nuances, mutings, etc... the low G pedal notes in the latter part of the arrangement, I stuck in as an afterthought. Leonard Whitney, our chief arranger, came up with the new title - he liked weird titles, Etude Brutus was another example - we played it as an extra tune on the session and it became our best seller!" (1) After a guest appearance as Band Of The Week at the New Yorker hotel, they moved into the Famous Door nightclub with new guitarist, Steve Jordan and Felix Giobbe replacing Kaplan on bass. "Kappy received news of his father-in-law's death," Will recalled, "and he had to leave to take care of family business. It was quite a blow because he was such a schooled bassist. We had a fine arrangement by Freddy Slack on All The Things You Are which provided quite a challenge to the bass player with an ostinato figure through the bass part. Kappy and, later, Doc Goldberg were the best equipped to handle it." (1) "When I joined in February 1940, " recalled Steve Jordan, "Felix Giobbe had arrived a few days earlier. The boogie craze really got started at the Famous Door with Beat Me Daddy Eight To The Bar. At my first rehearsal, after my successful audition, Freddy Slack had arrived early and was going over the tune on the piano." (1) "Beat Me Daddy was written by Don Raye and Hughie Prince, " recalled Ray. "The title was suggested by a vocal break I adlibbed one night when Raye and Prince were in the audience. They called me over to their table and asked me if they could use it as a song title and offered to cut me in. My wife's name was used to represent my third interest in the song - I couldn't use my own name because I was under contract to a different music publisher than they were. She later sold her third share to Raye and Prince with my permission." (1) Changes occurred when the band took to the road after the Famous Door engagement ended. Nick Caiazza replaced Hucko on tenor sax and singer Jimmy Valentine was added. "Peanuts was noted for his lack of punctuality, expecially on the job, " Will recalled. "We parted company several times because of that. The only date for which I remember him turning up on time was his wedding!" (1) "He was also a very poor clarinettist in those days, " added McKinley. "When our boy singer, Larry Southern, left, I remembered hearing Jimmy Valentine in Austin, Texas, when the Jimmy Dorsey band was playing there and I recommended him to Will." (1)

Bassist Felix Giobbe didn't want to leave New York and was replaced by Doc Goldberg, who told me, "I was working with George Hall when I heard that Bradley was auditioning bass players but nobody was making the grade, because the book required a good legitimate background as well as as good swing player. I was curious and took the audition even though I wasn't really interested in joining the band. Anyway it seems I did so well that they made me a good offer, which I accepted. The rhythm section was really great. We fitted in together so well that we felt as if we were in our own little group - we even recorded things like Down The Road A-Piece, Tea For Two and Southpaw Serenade. Mac always had a mike set up at the drums and did all his vocals from there. " (1) The band played in Mike Todd's Dancing Campus at the New York World's Fair and the Steel Pier Ballroom in Atlantic City in the summer of 1940, during which time former Goodman vocalist, Louise Tobin, replaced Carlotta Dale. "John Hammond persuaded Louise to come out of retirement, " Will recalled. "She recorded 'Deed I Do and did a terrific job. Her marriage (to Harry James) had broken up and she had eyes for Joe Weidman, our jazz trumpeter!" (1) Beat Me Daddy Eight To The Bar was recorded on May 21, 1940, and released as a double-sided record which sold over 100,000 copies in a month and is still the band's best-known record. 'Deed I Do was recorded on July 16, 1940, a session which also included Rock-A-Bye The Boogie, the first of many follow-up boogie tunes like Scrub Me Mama With A Boogie Beat, I Boogied When I Should Have Woogied, Chicken Gumboogie, etc. They were all constructed to a set formula, enthusiastically pursued by McKinley, but only dubiously acknowledged by Bradley, who complained recently, "I've always been disappointed that the band never achieved its proper recognition for its rendition of ballads. They were usually written in sharp keys like G, D, or E, and many players weren't accustomed to that, particularly on clarinets. Such arrangements as Flamingo, I Think Of You, and Who Can I Turn To, I thought sounded very well. But the band was stamped with the boogie label and that was what the fans wanted to hear. " (1) After a return engagement at Boston's Ritz-Carlton hotel, the band returned to New York to appear at the Paramount theatre in Times Square, followed by a winter season in the Bowman Room of the Biltmore hotel. George Simon wrote, "Big opening for Will Bradley at the Bilt-

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more tonight. Band sounds good but that's an awfully tough room to play in - high ceiling, live walls and no bandstand accommodations excepting a platform. A canopy sure would help. New singer Phyllis Myles is good. Ray McKinley is using two small bass drums on the trio numbers- unique effect." (2) Will agreed, "That was quite a stuffy date! While we were there Nick Caiazza got a call from Muggsy Spanier, so Peanuts came back again." (1)

Virginia, nicknamed me 'the Vagina Flash!' Being young and innocent, I didn't know why all the guys laughed! One night, after the floorshow, I was making a little time with one of the chorus girls when Pete came in and cried, 'If it ain't the Vagina Flash - who's your girl friend?' I was so embarrassed, I spent the remainder of the engagement avoiding that girl!" (1) During this period, the band played on Ed Sullivan's weekly CBS radio show and on July 23, 1941 recorded their second best selling disc. Basin Street Boogie was actually made by a small group from the band called the Six Texas Hot Dogs, consisting of Mahlon Clark, clarinet, Lee Castaldo, trumpet, Billy Maxted, piano, Felix Giobbe, bass, McKinley on drums and Will on trombone. "It started when we were playing the Capitol theatre in Washington," said Bradley. "We used to get together between shows and came up with this head arrangement. It was first performed at the Capitol theatre." (1) "There were only Four Texas Hot Dogs at first," said Clark. "They rehearsed it with Slack first and then with Holt, but they didn't want to record it with Bobby, who wasn't too strong a boogie player. When Maxted came, Lee and I were added to the group and we recorded it as a sort of throwaway at the end of the session. The Texas Hot Dogs never played anything else but that one tune." (1) Before travelling to Chicago to play in the Panther Room of the Sherman hotel, Lee Castaldo was replaced by Tommy DiCarlo and Bunny

During the spring of 1941, while on an extended theatre tour, rumours persisted of impending changes within the band. Freddy Slack was reported to be leaving to form his own band. "Actually," said Doc Goldberg, "Freddy was drinking heavily and not functioning too well. They got a young pianist called Bobby Holt from Worceater, Mass., to stand by in case Freddy didn't show." (1) "Bobby came to the Paramount theatre to 'case' the band," Will recalled, "and to familiarise himself with the charts." (1) Clarinettist Mahlon Clark replaced Huffman and told me, "I had been working with Dean Hudson, when Tommy Dorsey came to hear us, but he was looking for a trumpet player and took Ray Linn. I became friendly with Zeke Zarchy, Jimmy Blake and Ward Silloway from the Dorsey band and they recommended me to Bradley. I joined the band at the Palace theatre in Cleveland, Ohio, in March 1941, two weeks after my 18th birthday. Actually there weren't many clarinet solos in the book when I joined, but afterwards Will got the arrangers to write more solos for me. Lee Castaldo replaced Joe Weidman before we opened at the Chicago theatre on May 28, 1940 and Freddy Slack left at the end of that engagement." (1) According to Jo Jo Huffman, "I wanted to return to the West Coast. I knew Freddy was going to form his own band so I went with him." (1) The Cleveland date was to have further significance on the Bradley band. During their week there they crossed paths with the Benny Goodman band and the sound of the Goodman sax section had a profound effect on Will. "He was deeply impressed," recalled McKinley, "and insisted that was the sound we ought to aim for." (1) Following dates in Baltimore and Detroit, the band returned to New York's Paramount theatre prior to opening at the Astor hotel on July 16, 1941 for a two month engagement. Doc Goldberg and trumpeter Alec Fila both left to join Glenn Miller. "Alec was a great first trumpet player," said Mahlon Clark, "but he split his lip, playing all those high notes without warming up properly, so he didn't last long." (1) Felix Giobbe resumed on bass, former Red Nichols pianist Billy Maxted replaced Holt and Will made sweeping changes in the sax section, as Ray recalled, "Will, by that time, was beginning to lose interest in the boogie stuff and clearly wanted a sax section like Goodman's." (1) "Many of the arrangements were in a lot of sharps and flats," said Clark, "and Will used to complain that some of us didn't know what a sharp key was! Anyway, he called us into his dressing room backstage at the Paramount and said, 'I'm letting you all go, except Mahlon, who is young and still willing to learn.' He had decided to have a five man sax section and brought in Les Robinson on lead alto, Art Rollini and Pete Mondello on tenors and Larry Mollinelli on baritone. Robinson, Rollini and Mondello had all worked with Benny Goodman. Les left after a few weeks to go back to Artie Shaw and was replaced by George Koenig, another Goodman alumnus. Pete Mondello was a very funny man and, knowing I was from

Snyder from Ben Bernie's band. With the style of our band being so much different from Bernie's, Bunny had to adapt very quickly, which he did. Pete Candoli came out of the University of Indiana and wanted to join the band, but he wasn't even reading at that time. He went away for more experience and joined later from Sonny Dunham. Another very durable trumpet player, who joined soon after Pete and played the whole book when I reorganized at the end of 1941, was Tony Faso." (1)

In September 1941 the Bradley band became one of the small number of white bands to play at Harlem's Savoy ballroom, before embarking on another gruelling tour of Ohio, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Indiana. "We were playing the Palace theatre in Fort Wayne, Indiana, when we heard news of Pearl Harbor," said Mahlon Clark. "Pete Candoli and Larry Mollinelli tried to enlist in the Marines straightaway, but they were turned down because they were too young. By this time dissension was growing between Will and Ray - Ray liked the boogie, but Will wasn't hot on it and was more for the ballads. They had a blow-up at the Sherman hotel and Ray tried to drown out Will in the middle of his trombone solo!" (1) In January 1942 the band lost three key men, George Koenig and Bunny Snyder received their Draft calls and Phil Gomez came in on clarinet for Mahlon Clark. On February 16, 1942 after playing for the annual military ball at the University of West Virginia, Ray McKinley left to organize his own band and was replaced by a young, up-and-coming drummer, Shelly Manne, who recalled, "Will knew about me from Ray McKinley, who got me my first big band job with Bobby Byrne in 1939, and asked me to join the band while I was working with Raymond Scott. I also did all of Mac's vocal charts! Will had almost a new band by that time; Shorty Rogers came in on trumpet and was the youngest member of the band. He didn't do much writing in those days and was so shy, he had to be coaxed to play a jazz chorus! Lead alto Ray Beller was my best friend since our days with the Bob Astor band and bassist Marty Brown was also in that band. He used to take the brunt of a lot of jokes by the guys. Tenor saxist Sal Agosta was respected by all the guys on the band because he was such a good jazz player. We had a great engagement at the Roosevelt hotel in Washington, D.C., when the band really took fire! It was a young band with great spirit and freedom in playing. I think Will got a kick out of our youthful enthusiasm." (1) "It was a fun band," agreed Phil Gomez. "We were all very young, the trumpet section was a powerhouse and Shelly was a great drummer even then. The band stayed fairly busy for several months but began to feel the Draft and Bradley wasn't too happy on the road and complained of his health. He also had a standing offer to return to studio work in New York." (1) This new band of Bradley's lasted barely six months and, unfortunately, was never recorded. The last recording session took place on January 8, 1942 and was notable only for the inclusion of Request For A Rhumba, an original arrangement by Bud Freeman. According to Will, "My split with Ray was a matter of disagreement over band policy. Naturally, Ray being a showman, favoured the flashy, showy things and I was always trying to stress the ballads. We parted amicably and I had great hopes for my new band, but with no recording contract and trying to find replacements for men going into the services, the strain became too much. I finally disbanded in St. Paul, Minnesota, in June 1942. We were having transportation troubles, they had drafted five men out of the band and I couldn't see going to Denver and trying to find the type of men I wanted." (1)

Having been a staunch fan of the Will Bradley band since I first heard it on records 35 years ago (probably because I was and still am a sucker for boogie woogie!) my interest was reawakened by three recent albums on the Bandstand label, BS 1, 7110 and 7112, comprising dubbings from the old Columbia 78s, transcriptions and airchecks. The sole Columbia LP, issued on the Epic label, is long out of catalogue. My thanks are due to Bandstand for reminding me of one of my favorite forgotten bands and to the following musicians who patiently answered my endless questions and supplied me with photographs and other Bradley memorablia: Bernie Billings, Mahlon Clark, Herbie Dell, Doc Goldberg, Phil Gomez, Jo Jo Huffman, Steve Jordan, Shelly Manne, Les Robinson, Art Rollini and, of course, Will Bradley and Ray McKinley.

REFERENCES

(1) Correspondence with author
(2) Metronome December 1940

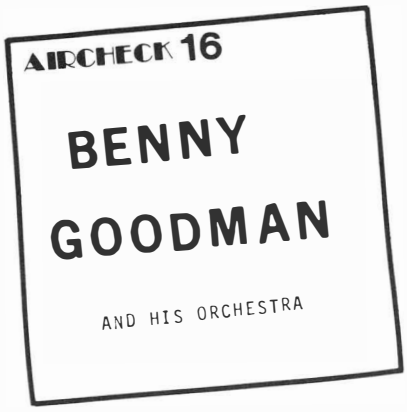
ROLL OF HONOUR

The following Bradley alumni are now deceased: Artie Mendelsohn, Pete Mondello and Johnny Van Eps (saxes); Freddy Slack (piano) and Delmar Kaplan (bass).

Photographs courtesy of Ian Crosbie
Page 5 - Sherman Hotel, Chicago, Oct. 1941, featuring Six Texas Hot Dogs.
L to R: Billy Maxted (pno); Ray McKinley (drs); Steve Jordan (gtr); Felix Giobbe (bs); Mahlon Clark (clt); Bunny Snyder (tpt); George Koenig (alto); Bill Corti (tb); Pete Candoli (tpt); Will Bradley (tb); Larry Mollinelli (bar); Tommy DiCarlo (tpt).
Page 6 - Back Row: Doc Goldberg, Ray McKinley, Joe Weidman, Steve Lipkins, Al Mitchell. Middle Row: Steve Jordan, Jimmy Emmert, Bill Corti. Front Row: Freddy Slack, Sam Sachelle, Will Bradley, Jo Jo Huffman, Peanuts Hucko, Phyllis Myles, Jimmy Valentine.

ARTICLE BY IAN CROSBIE

NEW RELEASES FROM AIRCHECK



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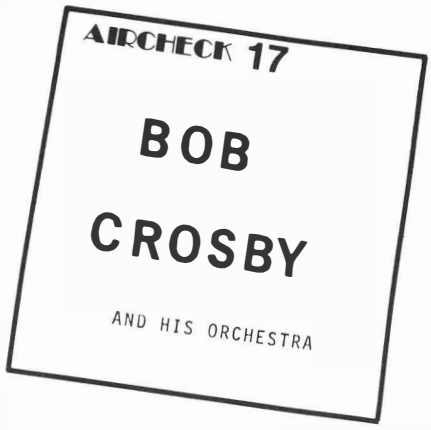

Side 1: The complete remote broadcast from the Peacock Court of the Mark-Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco ... with Charlie Christian, Lionel Hampton, Ziggy Elman, et al. May 28, 1940.
Lets Dance/Big John Special/The Hour Of Parting/ Seven Come Eleven/Where Do I Go From You?/Good-Bye.

Plus excerpts from the "Bond Wagon" broadcast of August 10, 1942 from Chicago, Illinois.
These Foolish Things (Peggy Lee-vocal)/After You've Gone.

Side 2: The complete remote broadcast of June 4, 1940 from the Peacock Court of the Mark-Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco.
Lets Dance/Board Meeting/Where Do I Go From You (voc-Helen Forrest)/Six Appeal/Star Dust/Good-Bye.

Plus excerpt from the "Bond Wagon" broadcast of August 10, 1942 from Chicago.
Idaho.

Side 1: The complete remote broadcast of March 25, 1940 from the Terrace Room of Hotel New Yorker, NYC.
Summertime/Skaters Waltz In Swing Time/Shake Down The Stars/A Vous Tout De Vey, A Vous/Complainin'/ In The Mood/Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day/It's You, You Darling/It's A Small World/Wolverine Blues.

Side 2: The complete remote broadcast of April 29, 1940 from the Blackhawk Restaurant in Chicago.
Boogie Woogie Maxixe/Fools Rush In/Cecilia/The Old County Down/Jazz Me Blues/Reminiscning Time/Oooh What You Said/The Starlit Hour/Sugarfoot Stomp.

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14 - JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA featuring ADELE GIRARD remotes of October 23, 1942 and October 30, 1942

13 - FREDDY RICH & HIS ORCHESTRA - Volume 2

12 - FREDDY RICH & HIS ORCHESTRA - Volume 1, featuring Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Tony Parenti and many others

11 - ARTIE SHAW "ON THE AIR" 1939/1940 featuring Buddy Rich, Tony Pastor

10 - TEDDY BUCKNER & HIS ALL STARS from The Hangover in San Francisco; July 16, 1955 and August 6, 1955

9 - T N T * JACK TEAGARDEN and FRANK TRUMBAUER in rare early performances from the 1930's

8 - JIMMIE LUNCEFORD & HIS ORCHESTRA on November 23, 1945; and LOUIS PRIMA & HIS ORCHESTRA on January 15, 1945

7 - JOE SANDERS & HIS ORCHESTRA on March 16, 1945; and, HENRY KING & HIS ORCHESTRA on January 4, 1945

6 - CHARLIE SPIVAK & HIS ORCHESTRA on January 19, 1945; and, JIMMY JOY & HIS ORCHESTRA on January 6, 1945

5 - CHARLIE BARNET & HIS ORCHESTRA complete remote of March 14, 1945 plus other selections from 1945 and 1940 vocals by Ginny Powell and Kay Starr

4 - DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA in two complete "Duke Is On The Air" broadcasts from the Blue Note in Chicago on July 30, 1952 and August 13, 1952

3 - BOBBY SHERWOOD & HIS ORCHESTRA in two complete VPSLB broadcasts; January 2 and 18, 1945

2 - RAY NOBLE & HIS ALL-STAR AMERICAN ORCHESTRA (w/Glenn Miller, Will Bradley, Charlie Spivak, Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Erwin, Claude Thornhill, et al) on March 13, 1935 with vocals by AL BOWLLY; plus on side two the complete January 29, 1935 remote of JOE HAYMES & HIS ORCHESTRA

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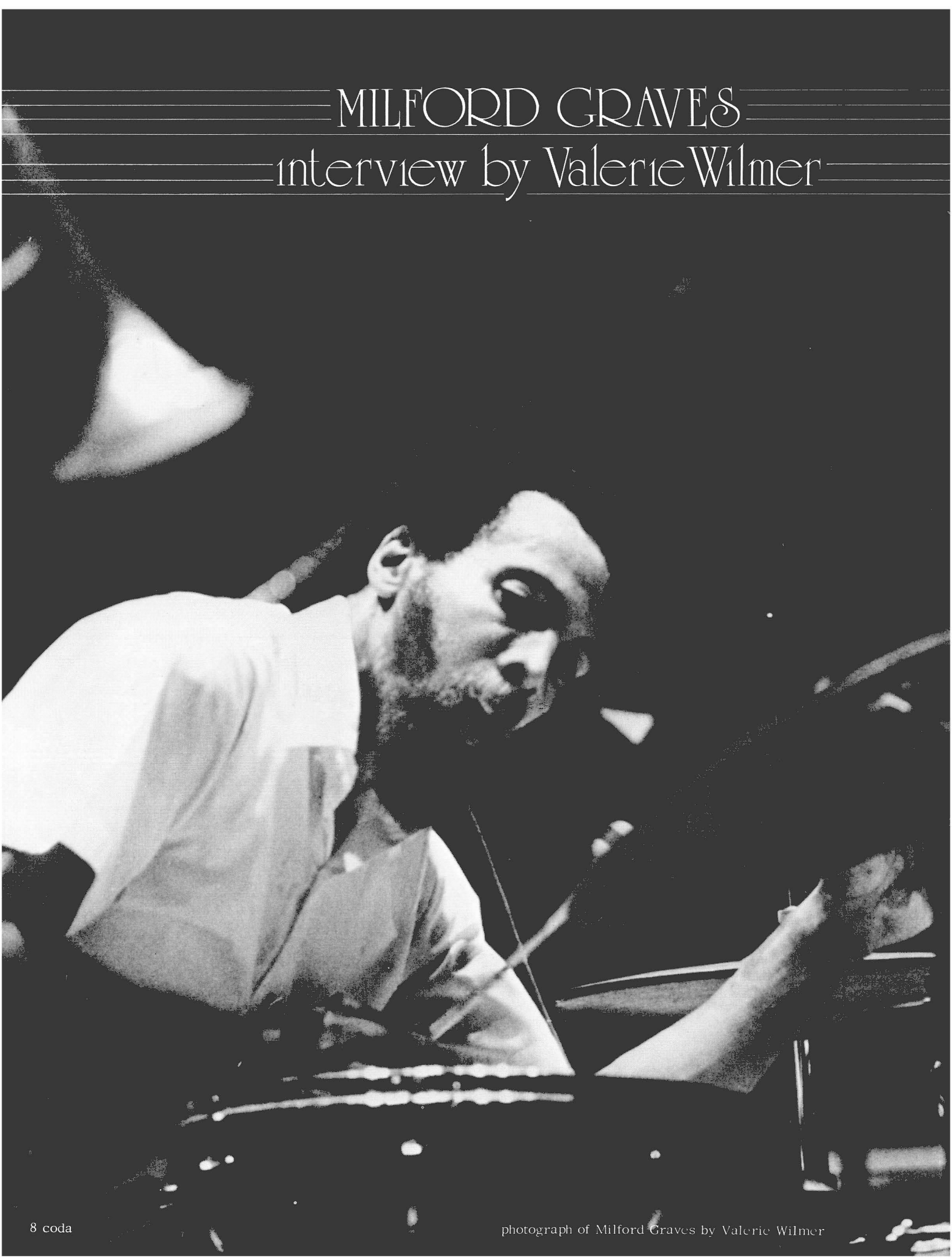
MILFORD GRAVES
interview by Valerie Wilmer



photograph of Milford Graves by Valerie Wilmer

When Wallace D. Muhammad succeeded his father, the late Elijah Muhammad as leader of the Nation of Islam, (the so-called Black Muslims'), last year, he amazed Blacks and whites alike by his pronouncement that membership of the Nation would now be open to whites. Previously, the NOI had been an avowedly separatist organization but Muhammad's move was only a reflection of the changes that had been taking place within the Black community. At the same time, Imamu Baraka, the former Leroi Jones, announced that he intended to forsake his own separatist teaching that had been based on African concepts of revolutionary socialism, and adopt a Maoist philosophy and political strategy.

The powerful Nationalistic mood that grew during the 'sixties in the Black community has tapered off somewhat as Blacks have achieved some of their goals. The music has always reflected the state of the Black people at any stage of their history and so an examination of the political situation is always important in reaching a fuller understanding of the music. But despite all the changes that have taken place in this decade, it came to me as something of a surprise to find the innovative drummer Milford Graves, a respected cultural nationalist who had previously dedicated most of his time to taking the so-called new music into the Black community, teaching at Bennington, a white upper-middle-class college in Vermont.

When I spoke to him on the telephone, Graves had said, "That's what you've got to do when the gigs don't come." Later, he explained how he had been approached earlier by Bill Dixon, the head of the Black Music programme at Bennington, but had turned down the job due to his other committments. In 1973, though, he decided to accept. What follows is an edited transcript of a conversation that took place in the summer of 1975.

Valerie Wilmer: How does your job at Bennington conflict with your former statements that you wanted to devote most of your energy to the Black community?

Milford Graves: Well, there's a whole lot of changes been taking place in America. I must honestly say, not only for myself but for a lot of people who were very active in the community, that a lot of statements made in the past were emotional. At certain particular times, a lot of people said things that pertained to that mood. But a lot of people were disillusioned. There was a lot of dishonesty within the community to make people see that things had to change. You see everybody's changing because people are maturing now to understand what it's really about out here. And you can't just confine yourself to one little area.

I don't see it so much as such a conflict as a growth. Even at the age of 34 now, I'm growing. Maybe at 40 or 50, I'll probably be changing again. But I think people should understand that there are certain things that I won't change, things that I won't change, things that are very basic to life.

Also, if I said that I wanted to stay in the Black community, maybe it was inadequately stated. I was not saying that I wouldn't go off to other communities, but at that particular time I was concentrating on Bedford-Stuyvesant, Harlem and so on. This was only because I thought there was a need at that particular time.

V.W.: What about now - are you still doing things in the Black community?

M.G.: Oh yes, I'm still doing them, and some people don't understand how I can still deal with the community and go out of the community into the white middle-class community. But what people should realize is that when I said I would devote myself to Black Music before, I wasn't coming from a racist point of view.

V.W.: No. You implied that you didn't want to devote yourself entirely to that Black community, I understood that. But are you still educating Black people about the music like you were before?

M.G.: Yes, but let's say this. Before, when we were teaching in the communities there were lots of organizations set up that were utilizing lofts and schools and so on, and we had the opportunity to really teach and lecture on a different basis than you do now. Mostly what I do now is based on a kind of concert presentation. It would be like a lecture demonstration plus the concert. So it's not as extensive as before. The way I'm doing it now is that I'm not teaching only from within the community, but without, trying to bring in other experiences and not teaching people only about music, but how music is related to life or how music is life itself.

A lot of those programmes that were happening are not happening any more for the simple reason that they were funded by different government agencies and a lot of those monies are not available now. Plus people that were directing those programmes are no longer in those positions. Now they have their new positions and they have no need to organize like they did before. Most of them are 'individuals' now, you know.

V.W.: Do you view yourself primarily as an educator or as a creative artist?

M.G.: Both. I would not say just one.

V.W.: You seem to be one of the few people who practise what you preach. Other people bullshit so much. I really respect you because I feel that you're really straight. Still, it must be really strange to be teaching at a place like Bennington!

M.G.: Well, it was a new experience.

V.W.: How did you relate to the people there? Did you find it difficult?

M.G.: No, it wasn't hard. I'll tell you why - I think it's because I'm also educated in the medical field. See, with music, you're dealing with people, too, but in medicine it's a little different. People are constantly coming to you with pain and so it's something you really have to be concerned about if you really want to help people. And I think this really helped me before I even went to Bennington, to realize how people are from different ethnic groups, and how to really respond with people. I think that kind of like prepared me. The job I was doing before I went to Bennington, I was running a laboratory for a veterinarian. It was located on the East Side and most of the people that were coming there were from the upper-middle-class East Side. I had a chance to really deal with those people for two years, so when I went to Bennington, I pretty well knew what kind of people I would be dealing with. They were younger, but the background thing was very closely related.

V.W.: Obviously you've got to make a living - and you must be making a reasonable one now - but don't you feel any conflict between teaching and not playing as actively as you were at one time?

M.G.: I respect a person who's working all the time - not all the time, because you wear yourself out that way - but you have to work enough to keep yourself in good shape. There's nothing like an audience in front of you, and all the musicians coming in. Not coming from an ego level, you know, but it's a thing of, like, inspiration. You see other musicians coming in, they say 'You sound nice', and it's really an inspiration to go up on the next set and play. And it keeps your mind really functioning good. I don't feel like I'm stale because mentally I keep myself in shape, but it would definitely be better if concertwise, I was working a little bit more.

V.W.: I'm sorry to keep harping back to the Black community thing. I'm not trying to put a racist thing on it....

M.G.: Oh no, that's cool.

V.W.: ...but I'm just interested to know exactly how your music is going down now. I've seen you play in the community and I've seen you play at concerts, and I wonder how things have changed.

M.G.: I'll tell you something. I did something up at the Harlem Cultural Council that was sponsored by the New York Musicians and Studio We. An ex-student of mine from Bennington was there and she told me later that she felt a little strange because it seemed like I was trying to explain myself, or tell the people like 'You gotta dig this music'. I told her she misunderstood what was happening. She agreed later, but I explained it to her how I've seen so many musicians defeat themselves when they go into the Black community to play.

Number one, the music in the Black community is the foot-patting and snapping the fingers thing. And you must realize this. There are four things you can do. One, you can go into the community and compromise - play their thing. Number two, you can go in there and you can just go out on them. Number three, don't go in there! And number four, you can go in there, understand what it is, and kind of like build up and bring them into a thing. Or you can realize what they dig and have it as an underlying statement, but don't have it so pronounced. It has to be well-camoflaged, but if you start off like that, before they know it, they're into your thing.

So this is what I do now. I've been doing that when you've seen me. Like I had Sahumba (Raleigh Sahumba, a childhood friend of Graves' who plays congas) when I went up-town. I knew the conga-drummers community! So what I try to do, I try to start 'em off and then bring 'em up.

And a lot of people say 'Well, man, you're tripping out on yourself', 'Your ego's gone', but like I'm just a voice to myself

now. I'm saying that just from my observation, just by working in the community, by talking to people and being raised in the community myself, that of all the new groups, the people have received me much better than anybody. And that's simply because I understand this particular kind of thing. I've been through all the communities and I've never had no problems.

V. W.: And your music is pretty way-out from what they're used to....

M. G.: Oh yes. Trying to explain it is one thing; people would have to see it. As a matter of fact, Juma Sultan came to me on the break and said, 'Hey, man, some people said they want to hear you talk!' People like to hear me talk, they want to hear me say certain things because I don't come out real intellectual in the community. You've got to know how to come out in the community style!

So some people may say it's a compromise, that you're lowering yourself, but I don't think so. I think all I'm trying to do is educate the people and let the people accept the music a little more. I'm not being played on the radio and they don't get a chance to hear it, so any opportunity you do have to go up there, why blow it? Why go up there and just say, 'Well, people don't have to dig what I'm doing'? And then when the people start booing, or they start using foul language at you or start walking out, you go out and say 'Oh, the people ain't hip'? That's kind of rough, you know.

V. W.: It shows a lack of foresight on the part of the musicians.

M. G.: Exactly. So, I mean it's different if I was to go and play in an all-white community; I would play different than I would in Harlem. I would **understand** their basis, I would understand a certain type of intellectualism that's happening in the white community, I would understand their exposure to classical music or country music or whatever it is. What I'm simply trying to say is that as a musician you really have to study all different kinds of music, I mean listen. You don't really have to get down and technically take it apart, but if you can get the feeling of that type of music, if you walk around the audience and see what they're talking about, when you get up on the stage, at least you'll be in their feelings. That's like 'Welcome'.

V. W.: That's being really hip instead of being super-hip!

M. G.: Exactly!

(At Bennington, Graves teaches a variety of courses, and one of the most popular amongst music students and others alike is called The Influence of Music. In this he discusses the various uses to which music is put all over the world, including cult and ritual and its application as a healing force, long a subject of vital concern to him.)

M. G.: I think that every musician who was classified as a jazz musician or new music musician or whatever it is, or anyone who's coming out of a real African, Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American experience of music, it's good for them to teach on all levels, from elementary to University. And the reason I say this is because being that this music is a music that is supposed to be spontaneously improvised and there's supposed to be no intellectualism goes into it - it's something you feel - you can get in a situation in some of these universities where you have some really bright kids, and some of the questions they ask you, they really make you think! You think 'Wow! I never really figured that out!' I mean you're doing these things but they really open you up. They make you

photograph of Milford Graves and Hugh Glover by Gerard Futrick

investigate things that you never even thought of! I find that since I've been teaching on a college level, many questions have really made me think! I think it really improves you.

V. W.: It must do, because if you go around and you think you know it all, your mind never grows.

M. G.: Exactly. Well, I know musicians who turned down these jobs because they're afraid. It's really heavy. Most of the musicians I've talked to that are teaching in colleges, they feel the same way, that they have really got down and understood their music a little better. Their whole analytical thing has grown and it has really made them a little more alert.

V. W.: What are the kids themselves getting out of it? They're not all going to be professional musicians, are they?

M. G.: I'll tell you the experiences I've had with some of the kids. They say 'I really feel good' after they've taken my class. 'It's opened me up and made me understand life a little better now'. What I'm really trying to tell them about comes really, from my experiences of being a musician. It's not only like learning how to play certain rhythms and notes, you must study life.

And especially new music. Like if you talk about 'sounds' and 'rhythms', you must understand people. If I talk about certain basic rhythmic developments, I'll talk about the heartbeat, and after I talk about the heartbeat, that automatically brings me into basic biology, circulation and things like that. And then a discussion will go off from there about different kinds of sicknesses and so on. People really begin to see that there's much more than just playing an instrument if you're a musician. So most people feel that they have been able to study their particular subject, whether it be architecture, sculpture or whatever, much better because their feelings, their whole rhythms, their rhythmic sense, has changed.

V. W.: It's like that thing about 'Music is the Healing Force of the Universe'.

M. G.: Exactly. So this is what I try to deal with, not take them off on any superficial, phony trip. It's like some people make statements. They say, 'Well, as a Black musician, the white students are going to rip-off all your stuff, they're going to steal all your knowledge'. I say, 'No, that's not true. I don't even worry about that. If they become into it, more power. It's no different to me going to Carnegie or Cal Tech and studying Nuclear Physics and building an H-bomb or whatever it is. It should be a challenge from all sources, especially for musicians because once you draw that box and say 'nobody else can get in', then that's it.

I think the Chinese showed you that like when they had their Great Wall and felt that they were at the centre of the universe. They had to open it up and bring some of their secret knowledge out. I mean they're learning more now, and they have their acupuncture and their martial arts and everything, and people are beginning to show them the faults in their own particular thing.

V. W.: Do you find that most musicians

are changing their way of thinking in the same way that yours has changed?

M. G.: The one thing I do find is something that you said a little earlier: I don't find a lot of people practising what they preach. They're getting into it a little bit - they're talking, so at least they've got the theory of it - but the practice, that'll eventually come. I realize I started off in the same way, doing a lot of thinking about what you want to do, and then you eventually get into it.

V. W.: We're both the same age. I guess this is the age when we tend to crystallize our thinking more to have it make more kind of sense.

M. G.: Oh yes. But then I'm sorry to see a lot of musicians also are really starting to think that they have to play a certain way, that they've got to play the little superficial melodies and so on. A lot of them are pseudo. They dress in certain ways, and get on album covers and get in Buddah poses or Lotus poses and so on, and I regard that as superficial. If you go to these people and talk to them and see how they live on a regular daily basis, you see that too. All these people with these fancy names for their songs, and so on.

V. W.: Well, that's show-business, isn't it?

M. G.: Yes, but I mean...I realize that America can make you really think like, 'Well, what the hell? I don't really care about being that disciplined because nobody really respects it'. But I think that if someone is really interested in a certain kind of growth, they'll do it differently.

See, I think that something that a lot of people don't realize is that music in ancient times was not just entertainment for a lot of people. I mean, a lot of your scholarly people, Galileo, Pythagoras - even just the western people - these people were great scientists. But even so, they had time to be with their music. All of them were really fine great musicians. And from what I understand, you weren't even considered a scholar, you wasn't considered complete in ancient times unless you knew music. Music was just a way of studying the order of the universe.

So my interest is to deal on the same basis. I'm interested in knowing certain other secrets, I'm interested in knowing Nature a little better. So that's why I can't go out and do something because it breaks my discipline from a certain way I want to go. I mean, sure, I would like to play for people, but it's not going to affect me if I really don't get the chance. I mean I don't get all depressed or get down, because I realize that music, that's one part just playing for people. But the other part that I'm trying to deal with is sounds, vibrations, rhythms and so on, so that I can understand the cosmos, so that I can answer other questions.

DIZZY GILLESPIE

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Dizzy Gillespie's groups in the 1970s have not been much to write home about. In fact there hasn't been a good one since the departure of James Moody. This has been reflected in Dizzy's recorded output - his best albums are now invariably made away from the unit of his choice. Thus we had two splendid LPs on the America label where Diz teamed up with Johnny Griffin and Kenny Drew, and now this very satisfying session taped in Los Angeles in September 1974. Here Dizzy is reunited with his 1945/46 bassist Ray Brown and the unit is rounded out by the ubiquitous Joe Pass and Gillespie's current drummer Mickey Roker.

Some old leaves from the Gillespie book - Be Bop, Birks Works and Hurry Home - are re-read freshly and profitably. He's also done September Song before. Then we have further delights in Russian Lullaby, Jitterbug Waltz and the third original by the trumpeter on this set, Tanga, which sounds like a Latin-ized precis of On A Clear Day.

In this kind of company Dizzy produces the sort of quality solos that unravel with an effortless ease when he is inspired, and he isn't forced to carry all the solo load - Brown and Pass are right there to enhance the proceedings. Hurry Home shows just how gentle and tasteful Dizzy can be, while Russian Lullaby and Be Bop are positive reminders of Dizzy's brilliant coherency at presto tempi. Indeed, it augers well for the listener that Gillespie is back on the Norman Granz roster because we can, presumably, look forward to more LPs by Dizzy that are truly representative of his greatness.

When any trumpeter reaches his late fifties you expect some dimunition of power and technique. You will listen in vain for any such loss in the case of Dizzy Gillespie whose lungs, lips, fingers and mind are as sharp as ever. It is all there, as breathlessly beautiful as ever - and in the right kind of setting. Dizzy in 1974 had it perfectly together, just as he did in 1945. Don't miss the experience of enjoying total trumpet playing, the like of which nobody else is capable.

- Mark Gardner

Something Old, Something New
Mercury 6336 304

Some dynamic versions (breathlessly fast, reminiscent of Miles Davis' "Four and More") of some familiar Gillespie tunes, and others by Tom McIntosh with modal sections (November Afternoon). Gillespie is on exciting form on the fast tempos, and gives us also a lovely version of I Can't Get Started, with the double tempo middle eight. This latter track is slightly marred by a fairly irrelevant fanfair coda, but there are no other flaws at all in his work here.

He is complemented by some vivacious and personal playing by James Moody, particularly on a McIntosh tune, Cup Bearers. Moody plays flute, in addition to tenor, for textural contrast. The rhythm section, especially Kenny Barron (piano), is relaxed yet tight, although Chris White (bass), who does not solo, provides little melodic or rhythmic variety in the bass lines, and seems underrecorded.

A fine Album. - Roger Dean

TERRY GIBBS

Launching a New Band
Trip Jazz TLP-5545

This is an album for Terry Gibbs fans and people who dig vibes in a 1950's big band setting. Little else of interest happens on this collection of twelve Marty Paich arrangements of all-too-familiar pieces. Gibbs solos extensively on every track, and on many he is the only soloist. There are a few trumpet solos from Conte Candoli, a few trombone solos from Frank Rosolino, a couple of tenor spots for Bill Holman, and a couple of Pete Jolly piano solos, but nothing really special ever occurs. The band performs with studio precision and studio energy. According to the liner notes, the album was recorded on February 18, 1959, but Gibbs' vibes solos are out of the same conception he used with Woody Herman's Second Herd over a decade earlier. Good music well played, but excepting the limited audience described above, few would be likely to consider this an essential reissue.

- Vladimir Simosko

DEXTER GORDON

Tangerine
Prestige P-10091

Side 1: Tangerine (8:55), August Blues (9:47). Side 2: What It Was (8:00), (a) Days Of Wine And Roses (8:43). Gordon ts, Thad Jones tpt, flugelhorn, Hank Jones pno, Stanley Clarke bs, Louis Hayes dms.
(a) Gordon, Cedar Walton pno, Buster Williams bs, Billy Higgins dms. Recorded June 28, 1972, (a) June 22, 1972, Hackensack N.J.

The trouble with getting recognized as an old master is that the master might start acting old. Dexter Gordon seems listless on this collection of medium tempo tunes, and so does everybody else. Of course you can't tell by listening if he infected the others or if he caught if from them. But it was his date, so he has to take the flak if it's only mildly interesting.

Part of the problem is that the first three tracks are the left-overs from the session that was released as "Ca'Purange" (Prestige 10051). That album had some variety of tempo and at least some rudimentary heads. The three tracks released here have neither; they are quite obviously the culls. On all of them, Gordon states the theme alone except for occasional obbligati from Thad Jones, and then solos at length. Thad follows, then Hank Jones, then Stanley Clarke, all relatively cursorily. Then back to Gordon for the out-chorus, with a little help from Thad. On Tangerine, Gordon unexpectedly starts into a fresh solo after what should have been the out-chorus, but instead of breaking up the tired pattern the track just fades away and cuts him off. Days Of Wine And Roses is more energetic. Cedar Walton makes Gordon reach a bit by feeding him harmonic figures, something that Hank Jones never does on his tracks. If the tune itself had been more interesting, this track would have given the record the bright spot that it needs so badly. - Jack Chambers

STEVE GROSSMAN

Some Shapes To Come
P.M. Records - PMR-002

Steve Grossman has a lot in common with Dave Liebman. Both young tenor/soprano saxophonists, Grossman all of twenty-two and Liebman an old man of twenty-eight, they've played together with Elvin Jones and separately with the mad rocker Miles Davis. That's an impressive apprenticeship (still going on in Grossman's case) which can't help but have an interesting effect on their own music.

Liebman hadn't worked long, if at all with Miles when his "Open Sky" (PMR-001) with drummer Bob Moses and bassist Frank Tusa was recorded in the early summer of 1972. And the music, thoughtful and introspective as it is, only occasionally owes something to Elvin and almost nothing to Miles. On the other hand, Grossman had worked with both when "Some Shapes To Come" with Jan Hammer and his keyboards, bassist Gene Perla and percussionist Don Alias was recorded in the fall of 1973. Although each of the other musicians have also

worked and recorded with Elvin ("Merry-Go-Round", Bluenote BST 84414), the music, perhaps strangely, perhaps not, bears much more of Miles' imprint.

It's heavy music; loud, aggressive and unpolished. Many of the seven cuts sound like fragments of longer performances and at least three seem to be spontaneously and collectively "composed". Of course, the music follows a formula, one which is by now well known. Perla and Alias remain rather anonymous as a rhythm section, rarely getting the opportunity to be anything more than loose and funky. Grossman and Hammer share the spotlight, Grossman usually on tenor and Hammer always on synthesizer (which quickly becomes an equal voice in the front line). It's a very hip sound, with echoes of the Mahavishnu Orchestra from Hammer and of Santana from Alias' percussion, mixed in with Grossman's raw and rough edged reeds. He's a most extroverted and expressive player, revealing little in the way of subtlety on soprano and even less on tenor. It's quite appropriate here though; any other approach might easily be overwhelmed. The lone exception to all of this is Grossman's Pressure Point, a straightahead tune very much out of Elvin which is handled, at least by the rhythm section, with a certain degree of restraint. It makes a nice contrast.

The rest of "Some Shapes To Come", in all its fashionable excess, could be a very popular and successful album, given the proper sort of promotion. That's something that could never be said of Dave Liebman's "Open Sky". Word has it though, that Liebman, with his latest "Lookout Farm" (ECM 1039) has stepped in line with Grossman. Apparently, they've both found that it's hard to argue with the Midas touch.

Unfortunately, the promotion which could turn "Some Shapes To Come" into the same kind of success as "Headhunters" and all the others is probably beyond the means of Gene Perla's P.M. Records, which is basically a mail order business. It's available for six dollars (plus postage on foreign orders, sixty cents/surface and two dollars/air) from 20 Martha Street, Woodcliff Lake, N.J. 07675 U.S.A. - Mark Miller

ROLAND HANNA

Child of Gemini
MPS 21 20875-3

The mixture of jazz and European classical influences is common mostly among white musicians, especially Europeans. Although many black musicians have studied 'serious' music ("We went to school, too," Mingus said, "We studied music, too...") the sounds of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms show up much less often. A rare example of a black musician strongly rooted in the three B's - and not Bird, Byas and Bechet - is pianist Roland Hanna. At the age of eight, Hanna taught himself Bach preludes and inventions, Chopin nocturnes, the music of Mozart, and Beethoven sonatas. Thus, "Child of Gemini", a German trio recording with Dave Holland and drummer Daniel Humair, opens with a strongly Bach-influenced piece entitled Prelude - So You Will Know My Name. The album spells out Hanna's identity totally - it shifts between the black and white classical worlds with grace and logic. The first feeling "Child of Gemini" communicates is one of strength of assurance. Trio albums won't work if the leader doesn't have a strong direction in mind; Hanna knows exactly where he wants to go and the trip is a gas. He's a two-handed keyboard man capable of a stylistic range that brings Jaki Byard to mind; his grounding in the classics provides him with an ability to improvise comfortably in an endless number of styles of feelings. Holland and Humair are behind him all the way. Side one is a suite in five parts, originally intended for cello and jazz ensemble. The trip interpretation lacks nothing, and the same goes for the three fine tunes on side two. The sensations are tasteful. Hanna describes his music as "the middle road". Whatever you want to call the highway, it's a good one. - Eugene Chadbourne

Perugia
Arista: Freedom AL 1010

The Newport Jazz Festivals of the past few years have featured single programs of solo piano by distinguished artists who are either seldom given the opportunity on record or in live appearances to take unaccompanied performances, or who have gained a respectable reputation for solo accomplishments. The results of solo piano concerts, however, are not always successful. Solo piano is a demanding setting for the improvising artist and the limitations of weaker players in this idiom will stand out boldly. Non-pianist members of the press can also detect that something is amiss, but have yet to agree on just what it is. For one, some pianists who are brilliant and consistent in groups are not convincing as unaccompanied soloists. At Newport - New York in 1975 John Lewis was the only one of seven to play a blues, somewhat ironic given the notion that he seems pre-occupied with the "third stream". But the pianist whose principal concern is improvised music faces the problem of projecting his/her ideas without being too pretentiously bombastic or sentimental or otherwise cute.

Roland Hanna, one of 1975's seven at Newport, performed masterfully and probably encouraged sales among the scant audience for "Perugia", his solo album recorded at Montreux nearly an exact year before. Leading off this album is a stride piano rendition of Take The 'A' Train that is a resounding success because the dancing two-handed rhythmic appeal of this style, so crystallized in the work of Earl Hines, is distinctly what some might call "true jazz solo piano" in that it embodies quintessentially the history of Afro-American articulation and

necessary flamboyant embellishment and improvisation on that instrument spanning Scott Joplin through Morton, Hines, Waller and Tatum. Furthermore, to play 'A' Train stride is to capture its image as a powerful underground vehicle in motion en route to places where people are trying to make some joy out of otherwise depressing situations. This meets the major problem of solo piano head on albeit it leaves much unsaid for later pianistic styles. Where the other lovely tunes on this album are concerned the major drawback perhaps is that a blues was not included, and Jazz piano owes its heritage in large measure to that tradition.

Where the ballads and other compositions are concerned we often have the pianist mired in the sentimental, the detached and the subjective; sometimes, as in the case with Bobby Timmons' early sixties attempts, a tune is played without much feeling because the pianist was confined both by not enough time to develop it as a piece for solo piano and by the fact that many melodies by Kern, Porter, Rodgers and Hart are not really suited to the kind of treatment a jazz pianist alone would give them. For one thing solo piano is enshrouded in the tastes of the concerto or sonata and the expectations listeners and likely but unconsciously the artists themselves bring to such performances, especially if these performances emerge as distinct from styles like stride or show the influence of Bud Powell. The challenge to the artist is to avoid unnecessary sentiment because when it shows in this context it reeks.

I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good was, like 'A' Train, performed as a tribute to Ellington and here Hanna is warm, reflective and well-paced, alternating between the tentative and the unyielding in his voicings that brings out his sense of humor. Three originals are included. Time Dust Gathered is a medium-tempo bounce in AABA form that stylistically shows Powellian gestures. Hanna expertly holds back a phrase that he will later on rush at the listener who will be caught off guard. Perugia, a ballad, would fit the stereotype of "concert piano" piece, and for the solo idiom it and other examples would deserve performance by "classical" artists. It is full-bodied harmonically with plaintive feeling and much rubato, an impression of the Italian city that seeks to capture an appropriate sentimental lyricism. Thad Jones' A Child Is Born is a favorite of Hanna and others as another sentimental ballad with a simplistic line, and Wistful Moment opens with a bow to the sonata but blossoms into a joyous yet sophisticated Latin experience.

Actually, the level of sentiment on this album is not nauseous. Hanna manages to execute all of his ideas with respectable control but perhaps because of his selection of material sacrificed more of his sense of humor. He was obviously in a serious mood for this one. "Perugia" moves from stride piano to a kind of neo-classicism if you will, holding its own among the literature for solo piano by virtue of the life-blood of improvisation. Roland Hanna did not solve all the problems of this performance idiom, but then neither did Cecil Taylor's "Silent Tongues" which due to the multi-faceted character of Taylor's rhythmic facility and drive may have come a lot closer. Roland Hanna at least contributed a great deal to the promise this idiom holds.

- Ron Welburn

BILLY HARPER

Black Saint
Black Saint Records BSR 0001

ARCHIE SHEPP

A Sea Of Faces
Black Saint Records BSR 0002

Black Saint is a new Italian label which devotes all its space to "creative black music". They intend to publish immediately their productions and this has happened for their first two albums, which have seen the light after just 45 days from the recording date.

Billy Harper's Quintet album is a kind of "hard bop" style, in line with his previous album "Capra Black". On first hearing Billy, some years back, when he was playing with Max Roach's Quartet at the Pescara Jazz Festival, I made the comment: "whoever he is, he's damn good". Now that I know who he is, he still is damn good! Harper has got the chance to be exposed to a wider audience playing with the big bands led by Thad Jones - Mel Lewis and Gil Evans; in those bands he has really learned how to play. His playing is together and his head has become in harmony with that kind of musical expression: arrangements, precision, organization. All these things are in his mind and he seems to be trying to keep them together in his small group, particularly on the theme's exposition, (notably in Dance, Eternal Spirit, Dance), where the sound is nearly that of a big band. On this record, he offers a generally individual style with more marked emphasis on note coloration, modulation and organization of line. His tenor has such a large extensive sound which sometimes reminds me of the baritone sax sound. As a soloist he is, for me, one of the most exciting and inventive improvisers whom I have heard in the last few years. As a composer (all the pieces of this album are his) he is one of the most imaginative. Another good bonus of this happy LP comes from pianist Joe Bonner; he distinguishes himself throughout, especially on Croquet Ballet, in which he takes an impassioned solo that is commensurate with both the tune's overwhelming (and his own personal) spirit. Occasionally he sounds like McCoy Tyner on tumultuous pieces like Call Of The Wild And Peaceful Heart, (which from my point of view is the best piece of the entire album) unleashing resounding chordal showers beneath the soloist; his pensive solo spot on this tune is a small gem, as is much of the music here. Virgil Jones on trumpet has a good solo on the first title and the bass player and the drummer are both good young honest musicians.

Archie Shepp's album opens with Grachan Moncur III's composition called Hypnosis, a piece 26.10 minutes long, which takes all of side A. It starts with an intense solo by Shepp on tenor saxophone, full of his typical humor and characteristic visceral force. Here, we have the impression that Shepp really wants to hypnotize his listeners, with an impetuosity and tension which only he can produce. It seems also that his rhythm section undergoes or feels this hypnotic state because it gives the impression of being incredibly still, nearly static, and extremely repetitive, as if hypnotized by the firm sound of his leader. Listening to it again more carefully (and this means that it was us who were being hypnotized) we realize how much it is alive, rich and extremely creative. Pianist Dave Burrell emerges to emit a few notes full of color and extreme beauty; his solo in this piece is one of the most impressive things we have ever heard from him. Side B is opened by Song For Mozambique, with a rich and beautiful melodic line, inside which the poem A Sea Of Faces is inserted. Shepp plays this in a very convincing way. Here, the social and political message replaces temporarily the musical one but the musical value of this piece remains present with the beautiful voice of the singer Bunny Foy. In I Know 'Bout The Life, we can still listen to Bunny Foy, accompanied at the piano by Archie Shepp (he had not done this for six or seven years on record) in a style very close to Monk's. The last piece permits us to listen fully to Shepp's quintet, in the piece written by Cal Massey in which Shepp gives a boppish interpretation in complete sympathy with what he has done in the last few years. Trombonist Charles Greenlee is in really good form as is bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Beaver Harris. This album is without any doubt the best Shepp has made in the last five or six years and comes close to such gems as "Fire Music" and "The Way Ahead".

- Mario Luzzi

EDDIE KIRKLAND

The Devil and Other Blues Demons
Trix 3308

Unfortunately this LP does not capture the extremely high voltage charge of Kirkland live. At the same time it may turn off both strict blues purists and sophisticated Stax-oriented soulful types. However Kirkland and his small rhythm section lay down a mean, raw, hard-driving and emotive mix of dance-funk soul, R&B, and urban blues. Many of the songs, especially the blues are of an autobiographical base and express the intensity of a scuffling man's experience within his not so ideal environment.

This grouping of twelve vocal cuts with one instrumental comes from three different sessions recorded in either 1970 or 1972. Backing includes a basic three piece rhythm section (guitar, bass, and drums) with the occasional addition of piano. There are also three or four appearances by Piedmont harp player, Har-

monica Sammy Davis. Davis' work does much to enhance the overall sound. Kirkland handles all the vocals in a tight gutbucket manner and is joined on one of the soulful ditties by a female vocalist - Ella Brown. Eddie also turns in some mean slide guitar work, alternating this more traditionally based style with some semi-distorted modern runs. As if his biting guitar work is not enough to impress, Eddie blows some convincing harp on several cuts.

When considering this LP give a listen to such blues items as Pity On Me, Burning Love, Minkhollow Slide, Rollin' Stone Man, Tell Me Baby, and especially - Hard To Raise A Family Today. While they all communicate an emotive and intense personal commitment, the latter cut seems to pull Kirkland's very soul into his expression. The strength of the above blues should be enough to sell the LP to modern urban blues fans. The sometimes repetitive soulful material may grow on you at a later date.

The recording quality, final mix-down, etc., are all passable so give this one a chance. All Trix material seems to have wide distribution throughout the U.S. and in Canada is available from the Jazz and Blues Record Centre in Toronto. - Doug Langille

ERIC KLOSS

One, Two, Free
Muse MR 5019

PAT MARTINO

Live!
Muse MR 5026

Two albums of what some smart writer of liner notes calls Pennsylvania Jazz, referring mostly to where the musicians involved keep their hearth and home. The Kloss album is worth getting, despite the water-logged nature of some of the music. It is his twelfth album as a leader; now 23, the blind alto saxophonist made his record debut at the age of 16. He's good, very good. He can play long, fast and hard and happily prefers to get into his grooves slowly and subtly rather than stand up and blast off all at once. "One, Two, Free" is all about building ideas up slowly, and it works most of the time. The title cut is an 18-minute suite in three parts, with Kloss, guitarist Martino and pianist Ron Thomas each contributing a section. Several moods are explored, and the playing is consistently firm and exciting. The two remaining members of the band - Dave Holland and drummer Ron Krasinski - are a has. When Krasinski and Kloss duet near the finale of the suite, ideas are tossed back and forth with unrelenting toughness. On side two, Kloss' composition Licea features more tough alto bedding down on chord clusters provided by piano and guitar. A 13-minute version of Carole King's pop tune It's Too Late is well...a 13-minute version of Carole King's pop tune It's Too Late. All in all, Kloss impresses as a fine musician and soloist, continuing to mature steadily.

Although Pat Martino plays ably as part of Kloss' group - and has done good work as a sideman elsewhere, too - his solo efforts have always seemed well-meant and energetic but ultimately directionless. Like many guitarists on the scene, Martino just runs through his riffs quickly and rarely comes through with any concern about where his statements are leading. The new live album contains logical, well-thought out music played with dignity and skill but lacking much real substance. Pianist Thomas is on hand again, backed by Tyrone Brown on electric bass and Sherman Ferguson on drums. Everyone plays hard, but the harder they play the harder they fall. Many of Martino's fans are guitar students, and for them only "Live!" comes recommended as a tough lesson.

- Eugene Chadbourne

LEE KONITZ

Satori
Milestone M-9060

"Satori", like too many of Lee Konitz' Milestone sessions, is a disappointment - a probably-sympathetic date that just doesn't come off on record as expected. The reasons for this are, I suppose, many but for me a major one is that Konitz himself has come full circle. His musical output can be divided roughly into

three stylistic areas of development - his initiation under Tristano, an unfolding after Kenton, and a recrudescence in the late 1960s and 1970s. Despite the evident promise of "The Lee Konitz Duets", recent years have seen him returning to virtually every element of the original style he had abandoned since Kenton. It took the big band experience to teach Konitz economy of expression; he has since unlearned it. It took the big band experience to teach him relaxation of line; that likewise is undone. Lyricism, an important feature of his middle works, has been replaced by a nervously chattering strain, as if in the thrill of harmonic exploration (Konitz being always harmonically audacious if nothing else) the saxophonist has completely forgotten the emotional connotations of the material he chooses (especially the standards - here Just Friends, Green Dolphin Street, Sometime Ago, and What's New). His tone is edgier than ever before, with a brittle glassiness that makes his lines unpleasant to hear and difficult to follow as he shatters them into thousands of shards. Swing doesn't exist, drive is dissipated by lack of direction. His long, hard lines (on all horns - soprano, alto, tenor) are strung loosely over rhythm as if he expects support.

Which brings me to a second source of Konitz' difficulties. The saxophonist's full-ranging divagations demand support from underneath if they are to be relevant. However, he has a predeliction for choosing keyboard men as accompanist - and, at that, ones whose concepts compete with rather than supplement his. Konitz himself (among others) demonstrated the problem with the piano more than two decades ago as an instrument which, as normally practiced, blocked away and obstructed the soloist's range rather than merely furnishing essential rhythmic-harmonic feeds (as a bass-percussion accompaniment would). Why the return to a keyboard underpinning escapes me - because the problem of avoiding being pushed into a closed corner inevitably arises here. Martial Solal and Dick Katz both have horn-like concepts that parallel his own - which, unfortunately, means that instead of feeding they string long, complex lines of their own which diverge from and often conflict with the saxophonist's. (For a rather demoralizing example of how this can destroy the feeling of a performance, check out What's New.) Both also make use of electric piano, from which they draw a flat, inexpressive sound which aids Konitz' tonal neurosis not at all in achieving emotional intensity.

Overall, it would have helped "Satori" immeasurably had the members of this quartet been able to play together. Konitz, Solal, and Katz are rugged individualists who fit neither with each other nor with Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette, the completion of the rhythm section. Holland and DeJohnette are consummate artists who normally anticipate each other with great sensitivity, but - understandably given the circumstances - are totally uninspired here, and perform accordingly.

Lee Konitz has now come full circle. Konitz the experimenter is alive and flourishing fascinatingly. But at least by this hearing, Konitz the expressionist is dead.

- Barry Tepperman

JOACHIM KUHN

Joachim Kuhn
MPS 2111330 - 7

Association P.C.
MPS 2121763 - 9

This pair of German discs will give most listeners a liking for Joachim Kuhn, an extremely fine German pianist whose music provides an itch that's damn hard to scratch. Two sides of his personality are represented. "Piano" is a complete album of unaccompanied piano, while the Association P.C. disc is the third album by one of Germany's many new 'jazz-rock' bands, marking the integration of Kuhn and reedman Karl-Heinz Wiberny into the personnel. On "Piano" Kuhn is featured on the acoustic keyboard; on "Rock" he is plugged in. The approach couldn't be more different - the solo album is delicate, while the band set is hard electric music that brings to mind H-bombs, drag-strips and barbed wire. Kuhn shines on both albums. The solo effort features his vision in its most direct form, of course. The ten pieces included, with the exception of the haunting seven-minute Paris '71, are all short. Some, such as Part, Fast, Chords and Mixing Two seem to be totally improvised. It's easiest to label Kuhn as a 'free' musician. Yet the freedom on this disc has nothing to do with melodic or harmonic concepts. The approach is smooth, as Kuhn gently re-works romantic themes that owe more to Chopin than Cecil Taylor. It is beautiful music, and the noise-free pressing and recordings add to the pleasure. Like Dollar Brand, Kuhn's touch - although firm and strong - gives the illusion of a floating lightness. It is graceful supple playing.

"Rock Around The Cock" (what a title) is heavy rock music performed by musicians who are capable of giving this style an inspiration and excitement. Kuhn is featured on the second side; Wiberny on the first. Kuhn's side is most impressive. There are two rugged, raw tunes - the title cut and Cap Carneval - and a lyrical ballad entitled Autumn In March. The Association P.C. nucleus - Toto Blanke on guitar, Siggi Busch on bass and Pierre Courbois on drums - is strong. Blanke's playing is normally very rough and dissonant, emphasizing weird, bent combinations of notes; but on the ballad he simmers down and brings to mind Sonny Greenwich. Kuhn hogs most of the solo space on Cap Carneval, coming down hard on the keyboard for a fierce solo. Side one is lacking mostly in material. Polar Anna - the only tune on the side that isn't totally improvised - includes a Wiberny tenor solo that is long on wind and short on ideas. Blanke burns nicely on this cut, but the most impressive thing is Courbois' re-shuffling of basic

rock rhythms, as punchy as Billy Cobham but much subtler. Phenis is a duet between Courbois and Blanke on the Japanese nogoya harp; while Shirocco teams Busch and Wiberny on the Chinese schalmei, a reed instrument similar to the musette. Both cuts are interesting but not spectacular. The remaining piece, Mirrored Dimension, is about three minutes of science fiction sound effects. The total effect of this album is fragmented, with the parts much better than the whole. Kuhn's voice is easily the most exciting. Check him out.

- E.C.

KUSTBANDET

Kenneth KS 2037

This Lp, recorded in Stockholm, contains 11 sides by a contemporary group playing in an early big band style a la Bennie Moten, Luis Russell, etc. Arrangements by a multi-reed man Kenneth Arnstrom display a thorough understanding of the idiom and make full use of the highly varied instrumental combinations available among the eleven musicians.

Kustbandet's strengths lie in its cleanly-executed and well-rehearsed routines, and in the comfortable two-beat generated by its five-man (tuba and string bass) rhythm section. The three reeds work well together, generating a full-bodied, funky blend.

On the minus side, the faster tracks (Jersey Lightning, Too Late) sound rushed and overly frantic, and the vocals are thin and uninspired (with the exception of a beautifully conceived and executed rendition of Clementine From New Orleans by trombonist Jens Lindgren). Lindgren's instrumental solos are also about the soldiest among a capable but not especially noteworthy assortment, with pianist Lars Tidholm being just a hair too modern for the rest of the group and both cornetists trying to cram too much fireworks into their moments center stage.

Early big band is not an easy style of music to play, especially (as must be the case here) on a part-time basis by the musicians. You need a larger-than-usual group with each man having the dedication and skill to master intricate arrangements of unfamiliar tunes (as well as somebody to write the arrangements). This album documents a welcome and often successful effort in that direction.

-Tex Wyndham

STEVE LACY

Solo
Emanem 301

Anyone who could conceive of a six minute opera based on a Kafka short story about the career of a mice singer named Josephone and then include it in a series of soprano saxophone solos must surely be something of an original. And it's nice to find someone like Steve Lacy who's not afraid to inject a little of the absurd into the oh-so-serious tradition developing around solo saxophone. But it's not just his imagination and occasional light-hearted spirit which makes Lacy's music so open. His whole approach, right down to the level of the titles, dedications and notes which actually attempt to explain the music's whys and wherefores, places his presentation on familar ground.

Giving credit to "Hawkins, Rollins, Dolphy and especially Anthony Braxton" for leading the way, Lacy claims that "now it seems quite logical and, in a certain sense, easy to fill an evening with a single voice". And he proceeds very convincingly to prove the point. Like Braxton, he's working with a variety of forms, inspirations and attitudes, but they're not as intellectually abstracted. He has stepped back a bit stylistically from the altoist, although the range of his music is as great (even if its pretensions are not) by taking his starting point directly from the jazz tradition and working his way out from there. His themes are first and foremost musical (in fact they're written down, should memory fail) regardless of whatever other elements might motivate each solo's development. They're not exactly the sort of things written for whistling in dark alleys; they haven't the kind of logic that would make them instantly memorable. But the turns of phrase in the bluesy line of The Breath (dedicated to Gil Evans), the humourous and affectionate theme of The New Duck (to Ben Webster) and the harsh air of Weal (to Roswell Rudd by way of New York City), to name three, all seem to fit the inspiration.

And Lacy's ideas don't stop there. Perhaps in an effort to show the world what programmatic music is really all about, he performs two solos, Stations and Cloudy, to the "accompaniment" of a barely audible onstage radio. It's a strange and interesting idea as is Kafka's Josephine with its boppish Overture, a ridiculous Chorus of Mice and a suitably funky Work Song. To be successful, both ask a great deal of Lacy's ability as a saxophonist. In the solo context, his highly personal style which leans heavily into tonal distortions is particularly effective. Even a squeaky reed sounds quite natural. As that suggests, Lacy's playing is almost as original and certainly as striking as his ideas.

- Mark Miller

The Crust
Emanem 304

> ...the entropy balance in an open system may well be negative, that is, the system may develop toward states of higher improbability, order and differentiation.
> - von Bertalanffy 1967

Soprano saxophonist/composer Steve Lacy has been playing his quiet exploratory soprano sax for over a decade now, many times in situations that would have undoubtably driven lesser men to the bastilles of conformity and financial security. Yet Lacy continues to embrace challenging playing situations with a diligence and urgency that can only be admired.

Unfortunately, however, the music found here is not a well worked out music and suffers terribly for its lack of form and structure (i.e. and it is not that form and structure are always necessary, it is just that a designation must be set no matter what the inclination of the players). Guitarist Derek Bailey (actually an exceptional player in other situations) shouldn't have been included here. His system and way of moving is antithetical to the flow of Lacy and especially percussionist John Stevens. Their sound and tonal range has no relationship whatsoever to any type of group sound. Along with this the music doesn't move well in and out of the tonal centers; the silences in the music and in the atmosphere work against the overall plan here - always a bad sign. It is only when altoist Steve Potts enters does the music begin to really live.

Bassist Kent Carter is beautiful throughout. He plays with an assurance and strength that only comes with time and study. As for Lacy's contribution in the solo context, let it just be said that he has been heard to better advantage. I can dig Bailey and Lacy, I can hear Bailey, Lacy, and Carter; I can't hear the rest of these people playing together however. I'm sorry, I just can't see it or hear it.

If you're looking for an introductory hearing of Steve Lacy's music you had better pass this one up, for there is better Steve Lacy available.

- Roger Riggins

LEGENDS OF JAZZ

Crescent Jazz Productions CJP - 1

The Legends Of Jazz is a six-piece New Orleans jazzband comprised of five veteran Negro musicians assembled under the leadership of youthful English traditional jazz drummer Barry Martyn. Although the ten tracks on this Lp do not seem to have been performed before a live audience, we are told that they were recorded during an LOJ tour in the fall of 1973.

The band is well-rehearsed, with cleanly-executed routines and a light, pulsing rhythm section. Individually, 75-year-old trumpeter Andrew Blakeney is the hero of the session, displaying a strong lip, clear tone, sure technique and a good sense of how to lead a jazz ensemble. Joe Darensbourg also acquits himself well, playing easy-swinging, fluid clarinet lines and lots of warm low-register work (something you don't hear much anymore).

Tunes include a satisfactory mix of standards and less familiar titles. Out In The Cold Again gets a gentle treatment, the soloists adhering rather closely to its plaintive, moving melody. Legends Boogie is a steaming number that builds effectively from pianist Alton Purnell's gutty opening statement, through the solos, and into a couple of roaring ensembles before settling back to riffing out choruses. And the somewhat unlikely choice of Down Among The Sheltering Palms pays off with a rolling rendition that crackles at a comfortable medium tempo.

Recording balance is not really what

it should be, trombonist Louis Nelson being badly underrecorded and bassist Ed Garland all but inaudible. The opening track, Conti Street Parade, on which the band sounds as though it's too far from the microphones, is really too poorly reproduced to be enjoyable, but things improve from there - or maybe you just get accustomed to them.

Balancing a grade-A band with grade-D acoustics, I come out with about a C-plus. Too bad; the LOJ deserves better presentation. Available from Cresent Jazz Production, P. O. Box 60244, Los Angeles, California 90054, USA.

- Tex Wyndham

DAVID LEIBMAN

First Visit
Philips RJ-5101

David Liebman is a meaty, hard-blowing reedman who seems to have sprung fully-formed out of the hard-bop tradition. In front of the right rhythm section, he cooks with all the power and ingenuity one could wish for. Elvin Jones and Gene Perla, for instance, gave him the proper polyrhythmic impetus, and with Steve Grossman's telepathic foiling of Liebman across the front line, the four made up an incredibly empathetic ensemble. Here, Liebman is the only horn, and what textured diversity the music can attain must stem completely from the differences in his approaches to his various horns. Of those, there is little. Liebman builds his solos by fragmentation and harmonic eleboration of lines hung recklessly through space; he needs the support of a closely-woven rhythmic mat. Again, he has it here. At these sessions, after working for several months with Stan Getz, the team of Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, and pianist Richie Bierach had honed their synergistic rhythmic momentum to a maximum. As you already likely know, DeJohnette specializes in intricately fast and heavily-interwoven tone patterns from his kit, drawing from where Elvin left off. Holland is technically exquisite and harmonically and rhythmically extravagant in the diversity of his imagination. Bierach (whom I've not heard on record before) is the impressionist of the band, who can play brittly fleet modal lines when he wishes, but seems on this date to prefer working in pastels if he can.

"First Visit", recorded in Tokyo in June 1973, contains two selections by the full band, and a series of duets and trios for the saxophonist with different accompaniments out of the quartet. The album opens with Bierach's Man-Child, which more-than-vaguely resembles Chick Corea's 500 Miles High with guts. Liebman burns his solo, freshly and unbelievably intense, resolving and building tensions in successively widening waves; but the real magic starts when he lays out and the trio digs in by itself. They play with the rhythms, laying down and stretching them like raw latex, building through concentric arches that ever seem just on the brink of a breaking point. I've rarely heard that mastery of interplay from three men before. Side one concludes with Holland's Vedana, featuring sweetly numb and overlong birdsong flute from Liebman over band watercolours.

The second side begins with Round About Midnight - a version for tenor and piano the like of which you'll not hear again. Liebman and Bierach together have carried out a wholesale harmonic restructuring of Monk's composition whose ingenuity is shocking when you first hear it. In the out-of-tempo, sparse voicings Midnight quietly retakes on the aura of ascetic mystery it had shed when it became a jazz commonplace. Tommy's Hut is a fragmentary excursion for soprano powered mainly by fascinatingly feathery kit work from DeJohnette; Holland, in the middle, uses his full harmonic ingenuity to bind together the two swirling currents. Lonnie's Song is a brief, plaintive soprano chant given some degree of dignified majesty by Holland's underpinnings. The final selection, the title piece, is a third Liebman original, for tenor and drums. I find the intricacy and consistent total involvement of DeJohnette's lines fascinating and rewarding throughout the album; here, as the total power behind Liebman, his forms strip down the tenor lines to their essential intensity.

"First Visit", then, is a good tenorist in front of a great rhythm section. DeJohnette and company dominate the proceedings at times, but certainly not out of proportion to the amount of substance they contribute. The quality of recording is excellent. The availability of Japanese albums being as unpredictable as it is, buy this one if/when you can find it.

- Barry Tepperman

BILL LUCAS

Lazy Bill Lucas
Philo 1007

Although a relatively neglected bluesman, Lazy Bill is sure enough worthy of a great deal more attention. His hard driving and functional piano work coupled with his down-easy soft/high nasal vocals and his original interpretation of standard or traditional blues themes establishes him as an unique, and above all, an enjoyable artist. He has recorded before on 78, 45, and LP, with these releases being plagued by limited promotion, bankruptcy and poor sound quality. Fortunately this Philo release is first class, both in sound and overall production. Included are a varied mix of ten vocals ranging in tempo and theme, plus extensive biographical and discographical information. The liner notes expand beyond the back cover into a four page booklet written by Jeff Titon and include the lyrical content of Bill's Philo repertoire.

Two of the cuts were originally recorded for, but not released by, the now defunct Revival label in 1971 with Jeff Titon and John Schrag joining in on guitar and drums. The remainder, recorded in 1973 for Philo, are solo numbers with Bill playing his funky piano on six and acoustic guitar (with mixed results) on two. The songs are from original or traditional

sources and from the blueswriters, Willie Dixon - Bring It On Home, Jimmy Reed - Wake Me Up In The Morning, Arthur Crudup - Coal Black Mare and Greyhound Bus, and Leroy Carr - Blues Before Sunrise.

The overall set is quite remarkable with high points being the rocking - Bring It On Home and the knee slapping - Cabbage Head. The latter is similar in theme to Rice Miller's 1958 Checker recording - Wake Up Baby. The only real low spot is when Bill strikes out momentarily while playing guitar on Coal Black Mare. Bill is quick on the recovery and plays quite adequate guitar for a man who downgrades his own abilities. In the midst of this collection of secular blues, Bill throws in the spiritual - Old Ship Of Zion, for those who are so moved.

This all makes for a well rounded and enjoyable set easily worth a listen. All the songs have never appeared elsewhere in this form, but for those with the Wild or Lazy sets there may be some repertoire overlap. - Doug Langille

MALC MURPHY

At The Mardi Gras
Joy Joys 259

Diga Diga Doo, San, My Darling, Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans?, When We Danced At The Mardi Gras, Swingy Little Thingy, Calico Pie, I'm Puttin' All My Eggs In One Basket, Crazy 'Bout My Baby, City Of A Million Dreams, Grizzly Bear Rag.

Swinging Lp, this. Unpretentious, too - just four guys riding along, mostly on pop standards, generally in the familiar ensemble-solos-ensemble format, the output flavored about equally with conventional Dixieland jazz and the looser mainstream idiom of the thirties. With just a few exceptions (Swingy is overfrantic and noisy, Grizzly - the only vocal - pretty trivial), it all cooks into a hearty stew.

Leader Murphy does a fine job of filling out the combo's sound without pushing the drums into the foreground, while his sidemen Cuff Billett (trumpet/flugelhorn), Dick Douthwaite (clarinet/tenor sax) and John Marks (piano) perform with the relaxed confidence and infectious spirit of capable musicians who know what they're doing and who enjoy playing. Billett has a hot, jazzy tone and refreshingly economical ideas - not too many notes, and they all mean something. The back-roomy timbre of the piano used on the session is a good fit for Marks' funky, Alton Purnell-influenced style, substantially contributing to the comfortable atmosphere. Douthwaite generates flowing, easy-going clarinet lines, switching to a leathery, effective tenor sax for the punching Crazy.

A flexible group that works well together and has the maturity and taste to avoid overdoing anything. Maybe not raunchy or rough enough for the die-hard moldy figs, maybe not adventurous enough for the late-swing-to-early-bop fans, but surely for anyone who'll settle for good jazz listening. Suits me fine.

- Tex Wyndham

GUIDO MANUSARDI

Romanian Impressions
Amigo AMLP814

The cross-cultural implications could be staggering. A multinational band (Swedish, Italian, white American) performing Eastern European music transmuted into Afro-American idiom. In fact, the cultural cross-over is minimal. All the performers involved are far too committed to the Black component of the melange for the supposed ethnic background of the music to take serious root.

But the title is accurate. These are pianist-leader Manusardi's impressions of Romanian folk music. Like most indigenous Balkan sounds, this source interests Western ears for its modal and pentatonic structures, its usage of time signatures considered odd or even ametrical by the Anglo-Saxon standards, and its departures from orthodox intonation. Thus the start, but what comes out is pure, unadulterated hard bop. The head statement preserves the melodic flow of the original lines, and the solos are modally-oriented, yes. But harmonic complexity via chord progressions and substitutions invariably takes root. Characteristic time signatures are negotiated only with unnatural difficulty in the heads before being finally discarded for straight orthodox 3/4 or 4/4 in solo. And intonation - as befits a piano-led organization - is strictly of the well-tempered variety.

So much for the pretense behind this date. All that being noted, this is pleasant and maybe strong post-bop art, performed by a cohesive quartet - Manusardi, Red Mitchell, reedman Lennart Aberg, and drummer Peter Ostlund. Like myriad Blue Note dates of the early 1960s, the patterns are predictable once you become accustomed to them. Aberg is inventive, but solidly grounded in the youth of Coltrane; Manusardi sounds a little too much like Horace Silver for comfort; and Mitchell and Ostlund ride along comfortably. It's well-played music. But as an exploration of yet another culture's ties to jazz, it fails miserably; and as jazz, it's undistinguished. - Barry Tepperman

CECIL MC BEE

Mutima
Strata-East SE7417

Cecil McBee has been one of the most esteemed and proficient of bassists in the jazz of the past decade. Unfortunately, because of his choice of instruments his own creations have been featured less often than would otherwise have been the case. "Mutima" (named for the spirits in an African mythology which unite mankind with the cosmos) is his first opportunity on record to choose his own direction; and self-produced at that.

Unfortunately, the results of this venture are mixed. The album opens with From Within, an overdubbed arco duet showing extravagant technique in extended Chassidic-sounding improvisation. However, because of a limited textural range in the instrument as McBee chooses to play it, and because of the small harmonic space he allows the interaction, the episode palls after a short while. Voice Of The Seventh Angel, a large ensemble textural work with vocalise by Dee Dee Bridgewater, is brief, extravagant, and works to no apparent purpose.

The remaining four selections revolve around a large group whose prime soloists are McBee, trumpeter Tex Allen, reedmen George Adams, Allen Braufman, and Art Webb, and pianist Onaje Allen Gumbs. This is in itself a major asset of this recording, because of these only McBee and Adams (with Mingus) have been extensively heard elsewhere. All are worth your attention. The ensemble concept behind most of these titles reminds one vividly of McCoy Tyner's modal exercises, an impression emphasized by Gumbs' long, intricate lines. Allen, recently heard on record with Louis Hayes and an apparent neo-bopper in that setting, keeps consistent with that ideal except on LifeWaves, where he provides a machinery musical violence of a sort I'd not heard since Don Ayler. Adams, of course, plays blues-infused tenor with an intelligence encompassing the fullness of the post-Coltrane saxophone; his soprano is far more lyrical and personal. Altoist Braufman, bridging Bird into the post-Coltrane experience, is attractive but not yet individual in his playing.

"Mutima" is rather a thrown-together sort of session, with no consistent single identity; but it certainly is a competent expression with its moments of worth.

- Barry Tepperman

PAT MARTINO

Consciousness
Muse 5039

Side 1: Impressions (4:33), Consciousness (11:48), (a) Passata On Guitar (2:48)
Side 2: Along Came Betty (5:22), Willow (6:09), On The Stairs (5:29), (a) Both Sides Now (2:06)
(a) Martino gtr; all other tracks, add Eddie Green el pno, percussion(on Willow); Tyrone Brown bs; Sherman Ferguson dms.

Recent recordings have turned up a lot of excellent music in Philadelphia, the city that W.C. Fields said he'd rather be dead than in. Martino's rhythm section is borrowed from Catalyst, a local group that is becoming known nationally just as the Visitors, led by Earl and Carl Grubbs, is becoming known in wider circles. Pat Martino is a Philadelphian too and he may be the most talented individual of the whole talented lot.

At age 32, Martino already has the reputation among guitar buffs of a spectacular technician. On "Consciousness" he shows why. The two solo tracks start from very different material but leave very similar impressions of Martino's ability to transmute his classical training into swinging music. Along Came Betty is an up-tempo ballad that flows lyrically in every chorus that Martino takes. Willow is more percussive. Best of all, Impres-

sions assembles bouquets of sixteenth notes that would surely win the applause of its composer John Coltrane, a transplanted Philadelphian himself.

Through all of these changes, there is a restraint that is the best indication of Martino's personal voice. The rhythm section does not move him, even on Willow. The overall impression is that Martino might be holding back in order to avoid a technical lapse, a criticism that was leveled against an earlier guitarist who was also a great technician, Bill Harris. However, Martino's style is saved from the severities of Harris's simply because he is more obviously rooted in jazz than in the academy. For that, he can probably thank the lively musical scene that he grew up in in Philadelphia. So can the listeners, because it makes Martino one of the very best guitarists currently playing improvised music. - Jack Chambers

FRED MC DOWELL

Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning
Arhoolie 1068

The late Fred McDowell was one of the most respected country bluesmen to be recorded in the post-war years. Fred was somewhat of a perfectionist, while at the same time very honest, sincere, and humble about his music. Whether it was a country spiritual or a secular blues, he sang and played with an intense conviction. Fred was also at home with both acoustic and electric guitars, making either wail, scream, toll, or whisper low when creating the appropriate mood. As most blues fans will agree, he was bottleneck/slide bluesman extraordinaire.

This recent collection from the Arhoolie vaults (closets) brings together much of what was Fred McDowell's music. Most of the material is from the session tapes or field tapes that made up the earlier Fred McDowell LPs on Arhoolie. By no means is this LP to be considered a collection of seconds. This is a first class collection with one of its positive features being variety. There are both spirituals and blues, on acoustic and electric guitars, in a solo and accompanied setting.

Don't Look For Me On A Sunday, Good Morning Little School Girl, Little Girl, Little Girl, are solo blues recorded in Como Mississippi back in 1964. I Heard Somebody Calling and Amazing Grace, also solo numbers, were recorded live at a Berkeley concert in 1965. Where Do I Go But To The Lord and Keep Your Lamp Trimmed And Burning were recorded live at the Hunters Chapel (Fred's old church in Como) in 1965 with Fred's wife, Annie McDowell taking lead vocal on the former and The Hunters Chapel Singers assisting on both. Bye and Bye is from a 1965 studio session and Dig My Grave With A Silver Spade comes from a 1969 studio session, featuring a second guitar and an electric bass. Finally, Levee Camp Blues was appropriately recorded in Memphis (1969) and is augmented by the sympathetic harp of Johnny Woods. All the cuts shine but possibly Bye And Bye, Don't Look... and Little Girl,... bring out the best of Fred McDowell.

The variety, the precision and intense conviction of each performance, along with the Arhoolie quality control make this a first class set and one that needs little rationalization in order to be highly recommended. - Doug Langille

JACKIE MC LEAN

Two Sides of J.M.
Trip TLX-5027

This Trip reissues parts of two obscure recording sessions from the Fifties. The music is not particularly distinguished, but the general level of improvised music was exceptionally high at the time of the commercial jazz boom when these were made, and no one with the patience to listen will be disappointed with them.

McLean plays exceptionally well in the later of the two sessions, from December 27, 1957 (originally Jubilee JLP 1093). He punches out his lines and tosses off Bird-like runs with the authority of the young veteran that he was by then. Offhand, I can't think of a better, or more typical example of his style than on Two Sons, by Ray Draper, who plays tuba on this session. The other players are Webster Young (cornet), Gil Coggins (piano), George Tucker (bass), and Larry Ritchie (drums). The insertion of a tuba into a standard neo-bop group may seem a little bizarre now, but the West Coast had struck gold with "strange" instruments like celli, french horns and tubas, and the East Coast was not going to stand idly by. All in all, Draper was an unobtrusive, but positive factor.

The other session, from October 21, 1955 (originally Jubilee JLP 1064), is not as good, although the quintet looks better: Donald Byrd, Mal Waldron, Doug Watkins, and Ron Tucker. For one thing, the sound is quite dull, a distinct contrast to the earlier recording.

The whole production shows the usual sloppiness. Both sessions included one more title that is not reissued (Little Melonae on the first, Tune Up on the second), thus limiting the value of this one for completists. The package is extremely brief by present standards (about 57 minutes for four sides), so the remaining tracks would have fit. The jacket title adds "Featuring Donald Byrd", but he sits out one-third of the record. Byrd fans might want to look elsewhere, but the music is good and the price is right. - Jack Chambers

CHARLES MINGUS

Mingus at Carnegie Hall
Atlantic SD1667

A Charles Mingus jam, sprinkled with disparate spirits from his musical lives, is surely no mere session. Above all, Mingus is a catalyst. Even playing simple head charts of someone else's music (appropriately enough, Ellingtonia) without space for his own, that thunderbolt drive rolling and pitching through is enough to

stamp the experience as his. C Jam Blues and Perdido, the music builds tension by rapidly alternating between chordal and "outside" passages, funk and free, tempos furioso and rubato. This could have been JAPT 1974 - but it isn't.

Most of the music is made by horns drawn from those who have attended the Mingus college through the years - Charles McPherson, John Handy, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Jon Faddis (alumni), George Adams and Hamiet Bluiett (then-current bandsmen), with pianist Don Pullen for impressive measure, and eversurging beneath Dannie Richmond twining the bass around his neck. Comments about individuals need only be brief. John Handy's return to record is inauspicious - when he finally gets his intonation together, he has trouble finding the ideas the heavy company demands of him. Bluiett is an exciting, manic baritonist with excellent command of mind and instrument but who, occasionally, forgets to swing. Altoist McPherson is always appropriately tasty if unsure about how to reach lightning potential; Faddis is singularly indebted to Dizzy (much akin to McPherson's old partner Lonnie Hillyer in that respect), but rewarding in that context. Kirk (not surprisingly if you recall his time with Mingus) is the most consistently rewarding of all the horns, with a tight, flitty approach among and through harmonic/tonal/rhythmic barriers, reliably orgiastic. His empathy with Adams, the latest generation of Mingus' exploratory funky tenors, is amazing. Pullen, orthodox and more lyrical than powerful, is the common ground that pulls and holds it all together, keeps the music from becoming just one Jacquet-Phillips tenor orgasm after another.

Dissection is unnecessary. This music is a bubbling cauldron, sweating and overstretched like all Mingus' endeavours, but one in which collective creativity far outweighs individual adequacy or the lack thereof - because if it's good enough for Mingus, it's usually pretty damned good. This may not be great Mingus Music, but as an example of music in the spontaneous making it has few peers.

- Barry Tepperman

MISSISSIPPI SHEIKS

Stop and Listen Blues
Mamlish S-3804

It has been a long wait to have a full LP devoted to this guitar-fiddle duo, but collectors have been rewarded for their patience with this beautiful reissue. Recently Biograph featured the Sheiks on one side, with their 1932 Paramount session, but this is drawn mainly from 1930 sessions, with a few 1931 cuts thrown in, and has no duplication with that LP. Although four cuts have previously appeared on anthologies, the sound quality here is superior, because of the sparking originals they were remastered from.

The Sheiks basically consisted of Walter Vinson and Lonnie Chatmon, although occasionally other artists from the Chatmon entourage sat in. The flavor of their music is best described as good-time, with echoes of Patton on his party material and a dash of Tommy Johnson added; on the whole it has about the same relation to the heavy Mississippi Blues as that between Bo Chatmon to his Delta counterparts. The music is funky, and it's fun, and best of all it's well enough conceived to withstand numerous replays without palling, all charactaristics which made these people favorites with their blues contemporaries such as House and Patton. The LP is an excellent place to start to break others into the joys of country blues, and is fully recommended to collectors and casual listeners alike. - Roger Misiewicz

JAMES MOODY

Never Again!
Muse MR 5001

Feelin' It Together
Muse MR 5020

These two albums, taped seven months apart, find James Moody in completely different settings. On Never Again! (recorded June 8, 1972) he sticks with the tenor saxophone and for the first time, to my knowledge, is backed by the instrumentation of organ (Mickey Tucker), Fender bass (Roland Wilson) and drums (Eddie Gladden). In Feelin' It Together (January 15, 1973), Moody uses alto, tenor and flute with support from Kenny Barron (piano, electric piano, harpsichord), Larry Ridley (bass) and Freddie Waits (drums, assorted percussion, tin flute). The results, as you might expect, produce two entirely different portraits of Moody.

Most of us tend to overlook Moody's substantial achievements during the last 30 years, and there is really no excuse because his work has been amply spread over many records. If I say that you miss Moody most when he is not there, it is not intended as a slight on this gifted saxophonist. Somehow, Dizzy's small groups of recent years have never sounded so good since the departure of Jimmy. Check out Moody's numerous sides since 1946 and you'll be hard put to it to find a mediocre example of his playing. James is always better than good.

Never Again! presents a nice mix of material. There's his own title track, two tunes by the gifted Tucker, A Little 3 For L.C. and This One's For You, Sonny Rollins' St. Thomas, Eddie Harris' Freedom Jazz Dance and the 1950s pop hit Secret Love. Moody plays some beautiful tenor on this set. His earthy statement on Never Again is enhanced by Tucker's "churchy" organ chords. Secret Love turns into a good natured frolic as James cheerily ribs the tune and then proceeds to blow the hell out of it in the Tubby Hayes manner. The rhythm section performs slickly and smoothly.

Tucker's waltz is sturdily swung by the quartet. Nothing Blue Danube-ish about this unsentimental gallop. Moody finds plenty of rhythmic and harmonic meat within his organist's composition. Tucker impresses here, too. Moody also makes light work of the calypso St. Thomas with an extended vamp introduction and more than a nod or two in the direction of Sonny's tenor style in the early choruses. This One's For You is a reflective ballad that does credit to Tucker as a writer and Moody as a sensitive interpreter. Moody explores Freedom Jazz Dance with typical inventiveness, moving in and out but never getting so free that he isn't in control. He and Gladden limn the theme in unison to perfection. Jimmy's solo on this one will surprise a lot of people. Good as Never Again! certainly is, the later collection is far more significant and gives a clearer picture of Moody's mastery and incredible breadth on both alto and tenor with some of his excellent flute work stirred in for good measure. The set opens with what Garry Giddins calls a masterpiece and I must agree with him that this supercharged version of Anthropology is a classic. Very fast, very sure with really stretching solos by Moody, Barron and Ridley, topped off by glittering fours betwixt Moody's tenor and Wait's drums. This is bebop now, a form that is still with us and continues to grow.

Moody switches to flute for Kenny Barron's evocative Dreams, a calm piece of poetic playing, Barron laying a silvery carpet on electric piano for Jimmy's restful bossa flights. Then comes Autumn Leaves, prefaced by an impressionistic statement before Jimmy swaggers into the melody at a down tempo. Moody is a great builder of solos, complex architectural structures in which every note has a place. The way he develops, shapes and hones his thoughts has never been better illustrated than here. It's a heavy effort, even by Moody's own critical standards. Barron, a colleague of James' from their Gillespie days, is heard to splendid advantage.

There's a scene-setting opening for Jobim's Wave and Moody does up that delightful melody a treat, working hand in glove with the alert Barron. Waits supplies the Brazilian beat and Ridley fills in any gaps via a perfect selection of notes. There's a surprising solo handover from Moody to Barron. You think the piece has suddenly ended - but, no, it is just a natural break in the arrangement, and the trick is pulled again when Kenny concludes his passage. The ending is sure to fox you!

Barron's charming Morning Glory allows us to hear the Moody alto at some length as he prods and probes around in the interesting melodic contours of the line. His sound has a dry edge but there is a "cry" in it. He and Barron are gentle and groovy. Finally a tasty arrangement of a comfy blues, Kriss Kross, composed by Red Holloway and Art Hilliary. After the harpsichord introduction, the four sweep into four and James Moody gives these blues all he's got which is a whole lot. Barron has me digging electric piano as few other pianists ever have.

Get both albums if inflation allows, but don't miss "Feelin' It Together" even if it means hocking something else on your shelves. - Mark Gardner

NEW BLACK EAGLE BAND

Dirty Shame 2002

The strength of the New Black Eagle Jazz Band is its rolling ensemble, comprised of a restrained, controlled front line and a solid punchy, four-beat from the rhythm. The eight tracks making up their second Lp stress ensemble playing, and indeed, the two best numbers, full band versions of the piano rags Kinklets and Sensation, contain no solos at all.

Not that there is any particular weakness in the solo department. Stan McDonald, who gets most of the solo space, is top-notch on both clarinet and soprano sax, while tubaist Eli Newberger and pianist Terry Waldo are particularly effective on the rather extended performance of Breeze.

If the album has any deficiency, it is that some selections, Trog's Blues or Once In A While, for example, are a bit long - even though they maintain a high musical quality throughout. I also think Oriental Man would have benefited from a less hectic tempo.

Nevertheless, the NBEJB is one fine traditional jazz band, with an unusual approach and a wide repertoire that make their album especially attractive. I recommend it. Available @ $5.50 postpaid from the NBEJB, c/o Pete Bullis, 128 Front Street, Marblehead, Massachusetts 01945.

- Tex Wyndham

WALTER NORRIS

Drifting
Enja 2044

Once a year or so, I encounter an album whose title is totally appropriate. This is one such. Walter Norris is a good, romantic session pianist in the traditions of the very young Chick Corea - there is the trace of harmonic distinctiveness aborning, but little else to note. Both he and his partner for this date, bassist George Mraz, have admirable techniques and a close, cultivated empathy. But also cultivated - almost to the point of offensiveness - is an impersonal, precious blandness about this music that means that anyone of a great number of other, similar pianists could have recorded it. In spite of harmonic intricacy and abundant lyricism, both men have a great deal to learn about idiomatic originality.

- Barry Tepperman

JELLY ROLL MORTON

Volume 7 - 1929-30
RCA 741.081

This is the seventh in the series of eight albums that contains virtually every side - including many second masters - that Jelly Roll made for Victor and its subsidiary Bluebird label. For dyed-in-the-wool collectors of Mortonia, the appearance of this series is the Impossible Dream come true. It is true that the dream is ever-so-slightly blemished by the failure to follow strict chronology in the order of the tracks, and in a few instances by remastering that does not reach the high example set in the RCA Vintage series. But who's perfect?

All Morton true-believers will probably have already obtained this album long before reading this review. However, I suspect that for most collectors, the decision to purchase any of the Black and White releases will depend on how many tracks have not appeared on long-play before, especially in the four Morton albums in the superb RCA Vintage series. Volume 7 contains fifteen tracks, of which six have not appeared in the Vintage series. These six are 1930 performances by the Red Hot Peppers: Each Day (two takes); That'll Never Do; Oil Well (two tracks); and Load Of Coal (different take than on Vintage). None of these six are among the best of the Peppers tracks, and usually come to life only when Jelly Roll himself plays a solo. The opportunity to hear alternate takes of Jelly's piano solos is probably the main feature of Volume 7. Jelly's admonition to his sidemen to just play those "little black dots" has often been quoted; but in practive, Jelly allowed himself great freedom in his own solos, much greater than any of his sidemen. A good example is found in comparing the two tracks of Oil Well. On the second take Jelly plays a full chorus instead of just sixteen bars as on Take 1, and repeats very little of the licks he used in the first take. Both takes of Load Of Coal also exhibit exciting differences in Jelly's solos.

The nine tracks in Volume 7 that duplicate material available on RCA Vintage contain at least three of Jelly's finest - two spectacular trio sides with Barney Bigard (My Little Dixie Home and That's Like It Ought Two Be) and the late Pepper's masterpiece, Ponchartrain Blues. Incidentally, the Ponchartrain in this album notes say that the take used is the second, but this is wrong. Only one take on Ponchartrain appears to have survived, and it is this take which appears in both albums.

- Eugene Kramer

MULLIGAN • BAKER

Carnegie Hall Concert, I & II
CTI 6055/6

It is too much to hope for two volumes of old gold uncovered from the early Fifties. Instead, we get two volumes recorded at a reunion concert on November 24, 1974, twenty-one years after the Mulligan-Baker duo went off the gold standard. It is coinage from a different mint all right, and it is a nice surprise to find out that it is worth something anyway.

Only half the tracks reunite Mulligan and Baker. On Volume I, they are the horns on two old standbys, Line For Lyons (8:17) and My Funny Valentine (8:38). On Volume II, they play Bernie's Tune (7:58) and a new one by Mulligan, It's Sandy At The Beach (9:10). No attempt is made to replicate the pianoless quartet of yesteryear. They are joined on all tracks by John Scofield (guitar), Dave Samuels (vibes) and the CTI rhythm section of Bob James, Ron Carter and Harvey Mason (drums).

The other half of Volume I has Mulligan with this same personnel except for Baker, playing two originals. Volume II is filled out with another Mulligan track, and a Baker vocal with Ed Byrne (trombone) and the CTI rhythm pals. (Stan Getz, also featured in the original concert, joined Mulligan and Baker for the finale but he is not heard on these records.)

In case anyone has forgotten, the last time Mulligan and Baker played together was in September 1953. Mulligan's quartet was forced to disband then because Mulligan was busted in Los Angeles. When he was released that Christmas, he was supposedly welcomed back by Baker with a demand for $400 a week to reunite the old group. Since Mulligan was jobless at the time, they went their separate ways.

Mulligan went on to some of his most creative playing and writing, finding musicians like Bob Brookmeyer and Art Farmer to share the lines that Baker had formerly shared. Baker formed groups with the likes of Phil Urso, suffered a series of busts of his own, and steadily declined. His trumpet became increasingly thin of tone and he began to emphasize his crooning which was equally thin. In 1968 he dropped out altogether. He is just coming back now.

No one will ever know if their youthful collaboration would have developed beyond the minor masterpieces they recorded for Pacific Jazz. On "Carnegie Hall Concert" they are just the guest soloists. Mulligan's playing is superb, as if he was turned on by the reunion. He swings hard as always, but here his phrases have an uncommon bite. The new compositions (Sandy At The Beach, Song For Strayhorn) and the recent ones (Unfinished Woman, K-4 Pacific) indicate that his feeling for melody has stayed fresh. Baker is diffident, and it is hard to tell if his playing will get a response from new listeners, but it will certainly touch those who can remember his better days.

The other players are merely functional, and it is grievous that James gets more space overall than anyone else (by playing on every track, and soloing on every one). Scofield and Samuels, too, get a lot more space than Baker, and almost as much as Mulligan. On the other hand, it is an advantage in every way to have Carter and Harvey Mason around all the time. Carter is as steady as ever, and Mason, a new name, turns out to be a worthy counterpart for him. His brushwork on Song For Strayhorn and his drive on It's Sandy At The Beach are high points of the album.

- Jack Chambers

CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

Goin' Back Down South
Arhoolie 1074

There is something humble and honest about C.D. Musselwhite's blues interpretations. He continues to understand and respect the blues. His harp playing is heav-

ily amplified, straight ahead/powerhouse and always controlled. A style straight out of the Windy City. His vocal work is by no means outstanding, yet it is distinctive and steady rolling. A vocal straightforwardness - well suited to the overall "no-jive" image that Musselwhite lays down.

Backing for the 8 numbers, of which 3 are instrumentals, is provided by Musselwhite regulars, Skip Rose (piano) and Tim Kaihatsu (guitar) with Larry Martin and Pat Ford alternating on drums and Gerald Pederson and Karl Sevareid sharing the bass chores. Guitarist Robben Ford sits in on guitar for the opening number and blows sax on the uptempo instrumental - Blue Stu. This latter cut is one of those rockers where it seems all band members solo or periodically come upfront. The high-light feature of the LP is the appearance of Chicago piano great Lafayette Leake on six of the cuts. Lafayette's contributions are of a high order. Catch him on Blue Steel, his introduction to This Old Night Life and throughout On The Spot Boogie. On two cuts - Blue Steel and Taylor's, Arkansas - Musselwhite displays an adeptness for the Earl Hooker guitar style and a more generalized down south guitar style. His guitar work is quite impressive. The only real low point of this set is the rather weak - Cut You Loose. Charley fails in an attempt to extend beyond his vocal limitations.

In terms of technical criteria, the LP rates highly. If you can appreciate a not-too-heavy collection of empathetic blues interpretations, this LP should hit home. Personally, it recharges a long time respect for C.D. Musselwhite.

- Doug Langille

N.O. RAGTIME ORCHESTRA

Vanguard VSD 69/70

African Pas'; Pineapple Rag; Pretty Baby; Cleopatra Rag; After You've Gone; That Teasin' Rag; Pekin Rag; Ballin' The Jack; Sunburst Rag; Oh, You Beautiful Doll; Fig Leaf Rag; Reindeer Rag; Grace And Beauty; Mama's Gone, Goodbye; Shim-Me-Sha-Wobble; Kiss Me Sweet; Kinklets; Bugle Boy March; Someday, Sweetheart; Original Rags; Sister Kate; Rose Leaf Rag; Trombonium.

If one adopts the customary definition of "ragtime" - a syncopated melody played against a strict march-type bass - one can clearly see why this excellent two-Lp set captures a ragtime orchestra rather than a jazz band. The lilting rhythm is steady, understated and highly infectious, Walter Payton, Jr. switching from bowed to plucked bass depending on mood and John Robichaux's light military-like drums bouncing into choked-cymbal afterbeats to intensify the rideouts; the lead is simply stated by one of the four front-line instruments, sometimes by two in unison, often enhanced on the repeats with background chords or simple unsyncopated counterpoint from the others. The overall effect has all of the charm and cheer of the best of the stately midwestern classic rags, without spilling over into the complex, hot polyphony of the later jazz bands.

Many of the arrangements are stocks from the ragtime years, but leader-pianist Lars Edegran has filled out the program with charts so skilfully done that you can't tell them from the originals. About half the selections are rags, the remainder being a mixed bag of pop tunes and novelties, some with half-spoken vocals by trumpeter Lionel Gerbos, giving the session the flavor of an authentic turn-of-the century evening at the local hotel dining room-dance hall.

Despite the lack of improvisation, there is plenty of imagination and variety here to hold the listener's interest in the variegated palette of sounds available among the NORO's seven musicians. Bill Russell's violin lead takes over the chorus of Mama's, bringing out the bittersweet character of the tune without losing the lowdown aura established on the verse by Ferbos' wailing muted trumpet. After the vocal on Kate, accompanied by Orange Kellin's tasty, full-bodied clarinet, the band shifts into stop time for an effective raspy Paul Crawford trombone solo. There's always something going on, it always develops the performance in an appropriate way, and it is consistently executed with the ease you expect from men who know what they're doing and are used to working with each other.

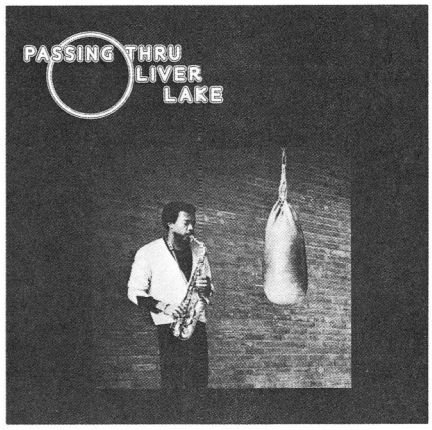
Well-recorded, fully-realized, most enjoyable and with scarcely a weak moment across both discs. It might be too restrained for some, but it's an engaging album that hits the target dead center and can certainly be recommended to ragophiles.

- Tex Wyndham

RANDY WESTON Hi-Fly 101
informal solo piano recorded at Annecy France, July 11, 1974

Night In Tunisia, Willie's Tune, African Lady, Blues For Senegal, How High The Moon, Kasbah Kids, Hi-Fly, Where, Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me, 3 Blind Mice

Available from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, CANADA. $5.98 postpaid.



OLIVER LAKE Passin' Thru 4327
Solo Saxophone - recorded in Paris - May 18, 1974

France Dance, Whap, E9 B9 C9, For Dancers, Improv 1, For Dancers

Available from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, CANADA. $6.50 postpaid.
A Musicians Cooperative Recording

N.O. RASCALS

You Rascal You
Philips FX 8529

Ten tunes, plus the opening and closing theme, recorded at a live performance at the New Orleans Rascals' home base in Japan. Crowd noise is minimal, and balance is acceptable, but the band is not close enough to the microphones to generate the feeling of presence that the Lp ought to stimulate.

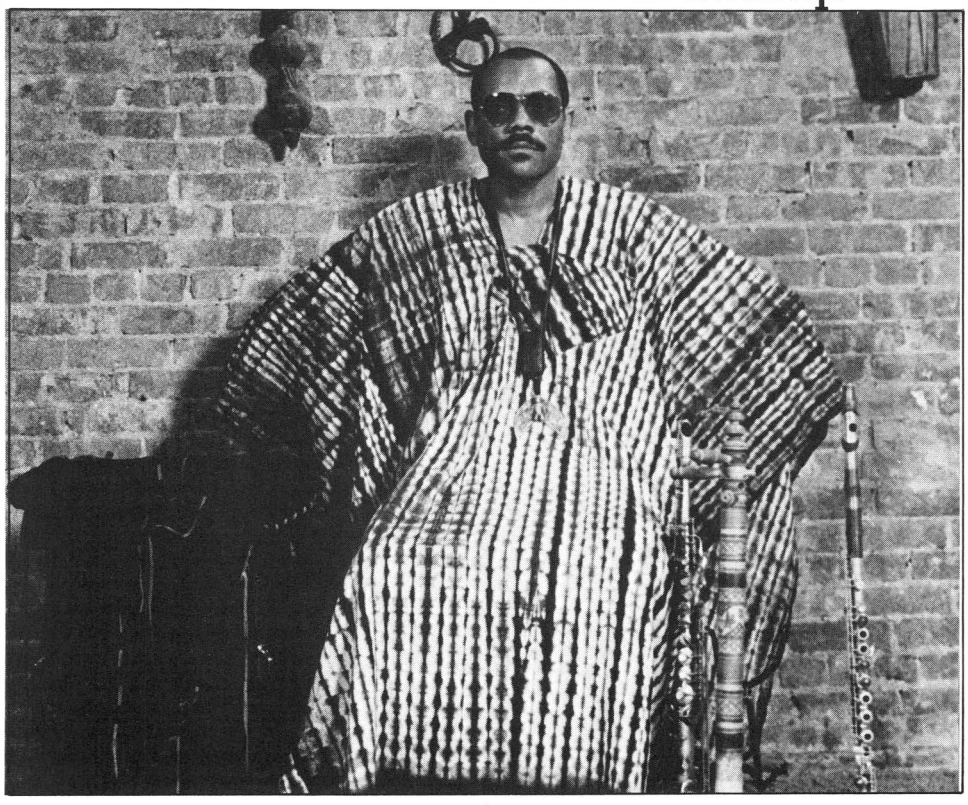
The NOR is a nine piece band (standard seven plus alto sax and washboard) playing the 4-beat "uptown" New Orleans style associated with men like Bunk Johnson and George Lewis. Although the musicians are well integrated and know what they're doing, reflecting the NOR's 13 years of existence, they have not developed any particularly distinctive approach to the music. Thus, while there is nothing really wrong with the NOR, and they certainly should be commended for capably carrying the traditional jazz torch to Osaka, Japan, this Lp really has nothing special to recommend it to a collector with limited funds who must select carefully among a reasonably broad range of Lps available in this style.

Individually, pianist Satoshi Adachi does a rather effective job on the band tracks (but still sounds stiff on his solo performance of Morton's Perfect Rag). The others, like the band in general, are too derivative and imitative to sustain interest throughout an Lp.

One gets the feeling that the NOR puts on an enjoyable show in person, and perhaps better recording arrangements could have captured more excitement. As it is, I think this one's mostly a souvenir for the people who were there. If you were, write Original Dixieland Jazz Club, 16-5 Kitahorie-Dori, Nishi-Ku, Osaka, 550, Japan.

- Tex Wyndham

An Introduction to Julius Hemphill



The idea that reality is composed of a still undetermined number of coexisting universes was first expressed by Wheeler's (1) concept of superspace. His idea was that the singularities of space-time are exit and entry points connecting these different universes. These assumptions bear striking light in the area of music and are expecially applicable to a lot of the contemporary musicians who've recently found their way to New York via the South, the Midwest, and Chicago.

I think it's undeniable that a lot of the musics from these regions have a relationship to certain ideas expressed in quantum physics, mathematics and contemporary ritualistic theatrical presentations (I would imagine Anthony Braxton is one of the more consciously aware of musicians of the various scientific and mathematical laws inherent in improvised music). It seems that the "field of vision" of the contemporary improvisor has come full circle and is constantly in a state of expansion and absorption; which allows the musician/composer a refreshing and fantastically broad range of colours and textures to work with.

Reedist-composer Julius Hemphill belongs to this new breed of men. He is one concerned with enlarging the sonic range and general implications of improvised music in order to make his point of entry a bit more relevant.

"I was about twelve when I started the clarinet which was for about three months. I participated in the junior high school band and was probably more interested in sports as opposed to music.

"Originally I wanted to play the trumpet but because of the difficulties I had with it, I turned to the clarinet."

Julius was born in Fort Worth, Texas on January 24, 1938, and stayed there until after his high school years. When one listens to his Arista release 'Coon Bid'ness or the beautifully conceived Dogon A.D. one gets the feeling that this musician must have always had a unique style and presentation, even at the beginning. I asked him about this: "I took a course in harmony and theory in high school and the emphasis was on four-part harmony - Bach chorales were what was taught. And this was thought to be the basis but it is only part of the basis.

"As a senior in high school I heard Gerry Mulligan and the quartet he had at that time and patterned a group on that format. I never could use chords like a lot of other people.

"Music was just something that I liked to do really. I didn't have any reference for any type of study - I was probably in college before I heard of a conservatory or an idea of studying something in a disciplined manner - my idea of playing was like singing."

Julius played in several bands prior to his connection with people of the Chicago school and his meeting members of BAG (Black Artists Group) in St. Louis which had a profound effect on his development. Before this time Julius "...hadn't really found what I really wanted to do. I really wasn't content playing the material from the 40's, 50's and 60's and so forth - it wasn't really satisfying. At this time everyone was pretty much concerned with a particular region of music, people were mainstream, which was alright, but it just didn't satisfy me. When I met the people in St. Louis and people like Roscoe Mitchell (around '66) this was really interesting to me."

Julius emphasized too that it just wasn't the idea of music that stimulated him but other things that these players could bring to the altar of life.

I just couldn't help but ask Julius at this point if he had any idea as to why certain players outside of New York, like himself, developed so many different ways of presenting and performing their music. The reedist thought for a moment and reflected on his experiences with BAG in St. Louis.

"As far as variety is concerned, I think the context in which we were working allowed us to use music in different settings - music with acting and dance and things like that are bound to have an influence on what the outcome of the music will be...Although this might go on in other places I think that the sustained effort was more available in St. Louis at the time. With BAG we covered the spectrum of the performing arts - it required a closer relationship between the play and the character of the music."

Recently there's been quite a bit of activity in the solo context for keyboard artist as well as horn players - Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell and Oliver Lake come most easily to mind. I asked Julius how he feels about solo playing.

"I don't find the solo context all that interesting. I'm more interested in the input from other sources in the music, particularly rhythmic and orchestral ideas.

"So at this point I guess I really like textural things and the utilization of other voices other than myself."

Julius Hemphill along with many of the third wave New Music players possesses a distinct utterance in terms of technique and ways of playing. Like bassist Malachi Favors and reedist/composer Roscoe Mitchell his music is at times consciously African aesthetic in creativity.

The idea that the music is part of a somewhat larger overview and the idea that it is in part part of the ritual is the present placement of contemporary improvised music in the West at this time.

With this idea we can say that Hemphill's music is a product of a particular method of research that has its correlation in the Afro-American continuum of music making, a basic method of research that has to do with dreams which result in ideas of reasoning, measurement and exact calculation. A method of research that eventually becomes a question of entry.

- Roger Riggins

Partial Discography

as leader

Dogon A.D./ Mburi MPC 501
'Coon Bid'ness/ Arista AL 1012
with K. Curtis Lyle/ Mbari MPC 502
with Lester Bowie
Fast Last/ Muse 5055

1) Geometrodynamic (New York: Acade-Press, 1962)
Space-Time Physics (San Fransisco: Freeman, 1971)
both volumns by Wheeler and are highly recommended.

photograph courtesy of Mobari Productions

FESTIVALS

Cohelmec Ensemble, Aude Cornillac, Sun Ra Arkestra
Antibes/Juan-les Pins, July 25, 1976

The last night of the Antibes Jazz Festival started with the French group Cohelmec who played three pieces. In their original compositions (Saturation, La Croix Fry) there was plenty of room for improvisation and group interplay. The brothers Mechali (Francois on bass and Jean Louis on drums and vibraphone) formed a very open rhythm section, while Jean Cohen (tenor sax, bass clarinet) was forceful and inventive. Jean Francois Canappe on trumpet has a pure, soft sound, his melodic imagination came through particularly well on the group's arrangement of Prelude, Opus 28 (Chopin). Time limitations prevented them playing more, which is what the audience wanted. Cohelmec's musical language is freedom within the boundaries of the compositions and the empathy between musicians, they play what they feel and just sound beautiful.

Aude Cornillac, a French vocalist, performed with the sole support of Jean Louis Mechali on percussion. Like other female vocalists of our time (Susan Garrett, Jeanne Lee, Julie Tippets) she is trying to show the musical possibilities (and beauty) of the voice as an instrument. She improvises with a rich variety of timbres and is especially outstanding in the higher register. Let's hope to hear some of her artistry on record as well.

Then Ted Joans had the pleasure to announce "brother Sun Ra". The Arkestra was composed of a large rhythm section: Atakatum aka Stanley Morgan (conga drums), Clifford Jarvis (drums), James Jackson (infinity drum, bassoon), Larry Bright (drums), Hayes Burnett (bass), Anthony Bunn (el. bass). The brass was: Vincent Chancey (French horn), Craig Harris (trombone), Al Evans (trumpet, flugel), Chris Capers (trumpet), Ahmed Abdullah (trumpet). The reeds: Danny Thompson (bar. sax), Pat Patrick (alto, bar. saxes), Marshall Allen (alto sax), Danny Davis (alto sax), John Gilmore (tenor sax), Reggie Hudgins (soprano sax), Eloe Omoe (bass clarinet). June Tyson vocal and dancing, Wisteria Moondew, Cheryl Banks, Shawn Tyson and Rhonda Patrick dance.

Sun Ra played piano rocksicord, organ and moog. But really the indication of who plays what is arbitrary because during the concert everybody sang, danced and played rhythm. The "show" this band offers should be analysed at greater length, the whys especially. Why a song like Space Is The Place turns into Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child while Sun Ra sings(!) Stranger In Paradise. The only thing that matters now is that the Arkestra is fine the music sounds as beautiful as ever, the level of all musicians is so high (excellent young players: Vincent Chancey, 15 years old, Chris Capers and Al Evans back in the band after some years). This night they really played everything: from a very long percussion based Watusa to a revitalized King Porter Stomp (Gilmore magnificent on this one). There were also the ballads (Discipline 27, The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise) and those burning solos by Marshall Allen and Danny Davis and John Gilmore and Pat Patrick, and the splendid dances by the girls, but it's impossible to treat these factors separately: it was just the miracle of Sun Ra's community still repeating itself after more than twenty years. - Roberto Terlizzi

Le Grand Parade du Jazz
Nice, France. July 8 - 18, 1976

If Swing is your thing - then Nice was the place to be this summer. More than fifty of the world's best musicians were gathered together for more than ten days of intimate musical exchange in nearly an ideal setting. Each evening, between 5 p. m. and midnight, three stages were occupied with various combinations reflecting a particular viewpoint within the central framework of the music. Informality and organisation were neatly balanced and while there were presentations from regular bands (Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Art Blakey) much more of the music was performed by groups of musicians who were only vaguely aware of each others talents. Naturally this led to music of varying levels but the overwhelming impression was one of good natured bonhommie and a desire to perform music which generated a great deal of heat and intensity.

The ancient gardens of Cimiez, high above the town of Nice and nicely cooled by the evening breeze, is a wonderful setting and there was always room to move around, find a new comfortable perch to listen to the music and relax with a quality local wine. This feeling was also experienced by the musicians who generally fell into the enthusiastic mood of the audience. The concentrated pressure and scrutiny of such spectacles as Montreux and Newport - New York was not in evidence and musicians took many chances. The routine predictability of so many festivals was noticeably absent.

There were many highlights - some of which had been and gone before I even reached Nice. Everyone, for instance, was talking about the revitalisation of the Basie band and then there was a session with six soprano saxophones (Bob Wilber, Zoot Sims, Budd Johnson, Heywood Henry, Jim Galloway) in which Jim Galloway established himself as a musician with his own voice in the toughest of settings. Every night, it seemed, it was necessary to make a choice between two programs which looked, on paper, to be of special interest. The program was nicely balanced between sets of a specific nature (e.g. the music of Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong etc.), those by organised groups and those simply constructed around compatible souls per-

photograph of Marshall Allen by Gerard Futrick

forming in front of a well-oiled rhythm section. This was often the key to the success of the set. Milt Buckner, Arvell Shaw and David Lee proved a volatile combination when they worked with Clark Terry and Lockjaw Davis and then, later the same night, joined forces with the tenor saxophones of Zoot Sims and Eddie Daniels. Both these sets produced some of the most exciting moments. There was also a set which was nominally under the direction of trumpeter Pee Wee Erwin but the mood was set by the superior choice of tunes from pianist George Wein. Dan Mastri and Oliver Jackson gave the music rhythmic thrust and Johnny Mince, cornetist Bert de Koort and Jim Galloway (sitting in) helped with spirited embellishment. Their casual rephrasing of the basic language of the music was more interesting that all of the careful preparation and planning which went into the various recreations of past music by Dick Hyman and Dick Sudhalter.

Hyman and Sudhalter, between them, gave the festival, I suppose, its serious touch and undoubtedly their dedication is reflected in the early morning (8 a.m.) rehearsals which were called. The Armstrong, Goldkette and Ellington big band programs had been performed before but there were other salutes of a more informal nature. We heard a nice salute to Fats Waller which was notable for the clarinet and saxophone contributions of Eddie Barefield rather than Hyman's own pianistic forays. He somehow seems to hold back. For all his skills at echoing the framework of the music's early geniuses there is none of the freedoms embodied in the pianistics of Jay McShann and Milt Buckner (both of whom were among the delights of this event) and ultimately the transparent nature of his music becomes most noticeable.

Eclecticism (or versatility) has become part of the performance of jazz music as the sharp edges of each new generation's viewpoint becomes merged with the central path. Consequently, at this festival, the seeming incongruity of such stylists as Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan was not apparent. Ms Vaughan completely captivated the audience with her astounding vocal control. She soared and sobbed (in the manner of a virtuoso instrumentalist) as she ran through the changes and lyrics of many superior songs in a most cleverly devised combination. Even better, though, was her astounding performance of I've Got A Crush On You where conception and technique came together in miraculous fashion.

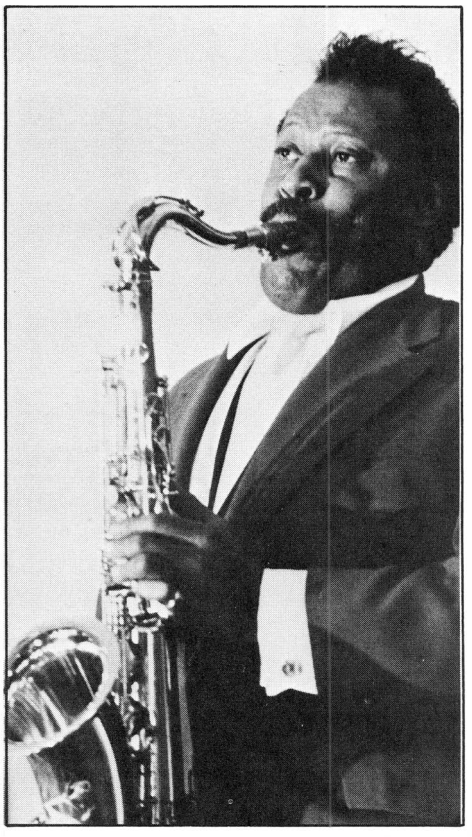
Art Blakey had already received the acclaim of Montreux's youthful audience. His old-fashioned drive affirmed some basic principles at a festival over-run with the electronic trappings of the space-age. At Nice it was much the same. Tenor saxophonist Dave Schnitter is the newest in a long line of musicians to work for the drum maestro whose intensity of swing is matched by their ability to construct lengthy solos of gathering momentum and impact. With the steadying influence of veteran Bill Hardman alongside this has to be the most exciting version of the Jazz Messengers in some years.

Something of the spirit of Nice was reflected in the viewpoint of Harold Mabern, a pianist who has been associated with more contemporary music for most of his twenty years as a professional. He was genuinely excited at the prospect of performing with musicians whom he described as "the real pros". And yet Mabern was constantly being thrown into situations which he would never experience anywhere else - such as playing a set of W.C. Handy tunes with singer Carrie Smith and a band which included Pee Wee Erwin, alto saxophonist Benny Waters, clarinetist Peter Schilperoort, trombonist Vic Dickenson, Arvell Shaw and Oliver Jackson. Carrie Smith has been singing around New York for some time and this was her first opportunity to show the folks in Europe just how good she was. Perhaps because of this she oversold herself and forced the music too much. Handy's songs have an inbuilt lyricism of their own which doesn't fit well with the strident devices of gospel music. But this was the direction taken by Carrie Smith. Instrumentally the set was a fascinating example of how years of experience can put together music which is not part of the everyday repertoire of the musicians. Vic Dickenson's riffs and backgrounds constantly set an appropriate mood and both he and Benny Waters gave us solos of warmth and intelligence.

Benny Waters was one of the most pleasant surprises. His few recordings hardly prepared me for a musician (and he must now be well in excess of seventy) who performed with such power and determination. It was a glimpse backward in time to the days when the powerful sounds of Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins were the voices of New York. While Benny Waters' rhythmic pulse is like a lumbering steam locomotive (or - in musical language - like the Coleman Hawkins of Hello Lola etc.) the direct intensity of his conception and the forthrightness of his solos gives his music an undiminished freshness through the years.

This power, this strength of instrumental virtuosity was emphasised in another program in which Benny Waters took part. Entitled "Louis Armstrong Rarities" it was choreographed by trumpeter Jimmy Maxwell who admitted that Louis hit 250 high C's in the 1920s when playing Shine. Maxwell skipped 245 of them in his version at Nice but also omitted to mention that Louis's tone was as broad as ever when hitting those notes. The trumpeters on hand (Doc Cheatham, Bernie Privin, Maxwell, Dick Sudhalter, Pee Wee Erwin) never came close to this broadness of tone, part of the epitomy of Armstrong and it was left to Benny Waters (in I'm Confessin') and Heywood Henry (in Stardust) to evoke the true spirit of Louis Armstrong.

Jim Galloway's All Star Sextet functioned primarily as an organised unit and and the leader's soprano saxophone was one of the highlights of the festival. Both Jay McShann and Buddy Tate performed with their customary brilliance and Buck Clayton, after a disasterous Montreux performance, struggled to get his playing together and offered occasional glimpses of what might be possible.



Scattered throughout the schedule was an assortment of European bands. They worked, for the most part, as organised units and they produced music which had a character of its own. Maxim Saury, Les Bootleggers and The Barrelhouse Jazz Band, for instance, have a very European conception of time and their intonation sounds closer to old records than it does to the reality of the music. Only Michel Attenoux, of those we heard in passing, seemed to display the kind of swing which make them suitable as a framework for American soloists. Gerard Badini's Swing Machine benefits a great deal from the presence of Sam Woodyard and it too avoids the pitfalls of European traditionalism. Badini's tenor saxophone interpretation of Cornet Chop Suey, in fact, was a more fitting tribute to Louis Armstrong's genius than the more organised efforts in that direction.

These were some of the highlights of four evenings. Over the entire two week period it would also have been possible to listen to such people as Cootie Williams, Norris Turney, Bud Freeman, Bootie Wood, Bob Wilber, Marian McPartland and Panama Francis without feeling the pressure of time. These were some of the musicians we failed to hear at length. There were others, such as Jo Jones and Bill Coleman, who were in town but not on the festival roster. There were nightly jam sessions at The Meridian Hotel (headquarters for the festival), numerous other impromtu performances and recording sessions. The setting and atmosphere at Nice is unique. It encourages the kind of comradeship which is so much a part of jazz and is an ideal setting in which to listen to some of the best exponents of the music.

- John Norris

photograph of Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis by Gerard Futrick

Newport Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, New York, N.Y. June 27, 29, 30, 1976.

One of the most ambitious projects of the Newport Jazz Festival and its prestigious spinoff, the fund-run New York Jazz Repertory Company, was the four-part retrospective of Duke Ellington's music, from 1920 to 1940, at Carnegie Hall this year. It demonstrated by its virtues as by its shortcomings what a unique, complex genius the Duke was - and how difficult it is to imitate all of Ellington.

On the plus side was the music itself and the army of dedicated musicians and arrangers who lovingly, almost reverently, tried to bring Duke's musical history back to life as the Duke, a master of constant improvisation and innovation, would not have done in his lifetime. Some ten arrangers were involved, while the lineup of the four bands read like a who's who of mainstream jazz. An authentic Ellingtonian, Cootie Williams, was coaxed out of retirement to guest star in two of the concerts.

To the credit of those involved (and these included many, like critic Stanley Dance and British trumpeter-writer Richard Sudhalter who worked behind the scenes), the JYJRC avoided the " Greatest Hits "formula and mined for the most part less familiar compositions not heard in public since the Duke recorded them in the '20s and '30s. It was a rich lode:

In the 1920 concert, a 12-piece orchestra led by Dick Hyman faithfully recreated such "lost" Ellingtonia as Harlem River Quiver, Sweet Jazz O'Mine, Jubilee Stomp, Black Beauty, Hop Head, Stevedore Stomp, Saturday Night Function, Double Check Stomp (without accordion) and Birmingham Breakdown as well as the classic Black And Tan Fantasie, Mood Indigo, The Mooche.

It was uncanny. If you closed your eyes you were listening to your old Ellington 78s, which had been transcribed note for note and played as close to the originals as possible by top notch musicians who had to subdue their own styles and techniques to emulate the Nanton, Whetsol, Miley, Hardwicke, Carney, etc., of the '20s. This is what the Duke must have sounded like, you say.

But it wasn't the Duke of the Cotton Club, where he played mostly for dancing, but the Duke of the recording studio: Since no original scores exist, the music had to be transcribed from old discs - so most compositions were restricted to three minutes. Then you realized it was only a re-creation.

The visual enjoyment came from seeing such musicians as Joe Newman, Doc Cheatham, Dick Sudhalter (who co-authored the Bix book), Bob Wilber, Norris Turney, Marty Grosz (banjo) and drummer Panama Francis tackle the '20s sounds without making any '70s slips. They did a fantastic job.

Joe Newman, besides pinch-hitting for Bubber Miley, Arthur Whetsol, Jabbo Smith, etc., also imitated Cootie Williams' scat vocal note for note in Hot Feet. The band, which had been somewhat tight, began to relax and open up after the real Cootie Williams appeared to play his own specialties, including East St. Louis Toodle-Oo (Duke's theme at the time) and The Mooche.

Long just a sideman in the Duke Ellington Orchestra playing an occasional solo, Cootie was now justifiably the star, "an authentic voice of Ellingtonia" (as Bob Wilber referred to him) and true to the Ellington ethic he didn't attempt to copy himself. He played as he would have with Ellington now, his rich, powerful tones soaring majestically over the recreated sounds of his former colleagues.

Besides Cootie, the highlight of this night was a young, attractive concert vocalist named Geanie Faulkner who performed two of the Duke's earliest voice-as-instrument numbers exactly as Adelaide Hall immortalized them in 1928, including Creole Love Call (with Cootie). To see and hear Geanie sing The Blues I Love To Sing (recorded the same day) to Doc Cheatham's Bubber Miley made you wonder why this record never got the attention it deserves. Next day I played the record (on Victor's "Flaming Youth" album) and it gave new meaning to me. In fact, the whole Ellington retrospective gave new meaning to much of his music heard up to now only on shellac/vinyl.

By the 1930s the band had grown, the musicians had matured, and the Ellington sound had taken on its unique character. Swing era veterans Jim Maxwell, Bernie Privin and Dick Vance (formerly with Webb, Henderson) trumpets; Benny Powell, John Gordon, Jack Gale and Vic Dickenson (solos only), trombones and a sax section - Bob Wilber, Eddie Barefield, Johnny Mince, Kenny Davern - as imposing as the originals they had to impersonate - were in the new lineup.

This time, under Wilber's no-nonsense direction, the numbers were grouped starting off with Old Man Blues (which Duke wrote on his first British tour), Harlem Speaks (Mince as a convincing Hodges) and Jungle Nights In Harlem.

A group of vocals followed: It Don't Mean A Thing; I'm Satisfied; I'm Checking Out, Goombye - essayed by Pug Horton who was no Ivy Anderson and didn't try to imitate her. Since Duke was the first leader to compose for his sidemen, there were spots for soloists: Bernie Privin as Rex Stewart in Boy Meets Horn; Wilber as Bigard in Clarinet Lament; Lightnin' for Kenny Davern (struggling bravely on baritone to become Carney); Slippery Horn (inspired by Lawrence Brown) for all the trombones and Tootin' Through The Roof (written for Rex and Cootie) for the trumpets led by Vance, who played most of the trumpet roles, including Cootie's.

Cootie (the original) came in to play Echoes Of Harlem as only he presumably can, while Vic Dickenson, Ellingtonian in spirit if not by association, essayed The Sheik (the only non-Duke composition). Both Cootie and Vic topped it off with Bundles Of Blues (originally written for Cootie and Brown).

After a mellow journey through Duke's "Pastel Mood" (Mystery Song, Azure, Lazy Rhapsody, Drop Me Off At Harlem) the band opened up on a group of such "Hits of the '30s" as Sophisticated Lady (Davern); Song Go Out Of My Heart and Caravan. The program climaxed royally with a rousing Stompy Jones when the band, freed from its '30s belt, really loosened up.

Like the '20s concert, the musicianship was impeccable, the transcriptions faithful to the originals - except for the sometimes jarring drumming of Bob Rosengarden who just couldn't fit into the '30s groove (even with chimes for Ring Dem Bells).

On June 30, the NYJRC (with yet a different lineup) gave one of Duke's earliest works Black, Brown And Beige its first complete performance in 33 years. It was last played in its entirety at the same Carnegie Hall in January 1943 with the same vocalist Joya Sherill (who in this edition gave a moving rendition of The Blues.)

Though the Repertory Company (led by Dick Hyman) played with the verve and polish of the Ellington band, sitting through the unbroken performance for 50 minutes made one realize why the Duke broke up its loosely knit components into more malleable "finger poppin'" parts or used the expressive Come Sunday (sung here impressively by Carrie Smith) in a more powerful "My People" showcase.

The second half of the program was an eye opener (and ear-blaster). It introduced to most New Yorkers the latest edition of Duke Ellington's Band led by Mercer Ellington. It was also a revelation - of sorts. Burdened by the Duke's mantle, Mercer sought to impress sceptics with the musicianship of his spanking, talented new team, some of them apparently just out of (or still in) college. Despite his painful parody of the Duke, in dress and address (even to Duke's bandstand shuffle and blown kisses), Mercer showed he was equal to his pop in putting a band through its paces.

The scoffers may have scoffed but the audience was jumping in their seats to the beat of the new band, led by the powerhouse drumming of Rocky White and the Blanton-like bass of an even more youthful J. J. Wiggins. Although the band played some earlier Dukish things, including a pepped-up It Don't Mean A Thing with singer Anita Moore, it came up to date with the Duke's last work The Three Kings which Mercer impressively put together from scribbled half-finished notes.

Despite the volume (Mercer years ago wrote that Duke can create tension subtly whereas most bands can do it only by volume) if the public has a vote, Duke Ellington's band is here to stay another generation at least (a third generation Ellington, shaven-headed Edward Ellington II plays guitar and in young Bobby Eldridge, the band has the equal of Carney) and will continue to improve and improvise as Duke always did.

I did not attend the fourth concert in the series, directed by Buck Clayton, as it fell on an awkward day - Fourth of July. Although it covered Duke's peak period, the swinging '40s, and included Ellingtonians Quentin Jackson, Norris Turney and singer Al Hibbler (Barney Bigard could not make the date because of illness) the concert received mixed reviews because it emphasized one fault common to all the concerts: the absence of Duke himself.

For Ellington was as much a part of his music as his music was part of him. Without the Duke, even the current Ellington band sounds like a pilotless showboat caught in a storm. Above all, the Ellington Saga proves that while you can recreate the music of Duke Ellington, you cannot the man. Something was missing and always will be missing. Still the Ellington Saga was a unique experiment in music that, it is hoped (and despite half-empty houses), will by played and replayed.

- Al Van Starrex

Chamber Music And All That Jazz
Fredericton, Nova Scotia

Through a freak combination of government and private funding and some sisterly love, big city jazz came to the hinterland this summer. Rob McConnell, Moe Koffman, Guido Basso, and Phil Nimmons with his excellent rhythm section, played at concerts and workshops the last week of June as part of Fredericton's annual Chamber Music And All That Jazz festival.

One of the concert organizers, and a classical pianist in her own right, Arlene Pach, is Nimmons' sister. Phil has been a faithful visitor to the Maritimes and is especially loved by Fredericton fans.

The jazz stars chosen for this year's festival are probably the four top Canadians in the business, with the exception of Oscar Peterson, who was in town for last year's concerts.

Although the jazz portion of the 10-day festival was better attended than the classical concerts, jazz was forced to take a back seat. Monday, June 28, was advertised as a co-operative effort of the two musical streams, but after two hours with "serious" musicians, less than an hour was left to Phil and Rob McConnell with Phil's trio: Gary Williamson on Monkish piano, double bassist Dave Field, and drummer Stan Perry. Guido and Moe never made the date thanks to the strike by airline pilots. (They flew in later for the Wednesday concert and dance.) But the evening was salvaged magnificently by the magic of Nimmons and his band, and McConnell's always perfect valve trombone. Phil and Rob traded licks on the opening of It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing. Nimmons' solos seemed looser and better than on his albums. Starting off in the lower register, he took a couple of minutes to work into solo space, but when there, his improvisation was amazing. Fast and wild or gutsy, live Nimmons was a real treat. Consistently fine solos were also laid down by Gary Williamson on Sarah, In A Mellow Tone, and If You Could See Me Now. The young pianist received probably the warmest response from the audience next to Phil and Rob.

On Wednesday, the evening before the July 1 holiday, the festival ended with a concert and dance in the University of New Brunswick's new auditorium. This time it was strictly jazz music and Moe and Guido were on hand to add to the fun. The four big names didn't hold out on quality. Especially beautiful was the subdued interplay between McConnell and Basso on Thad Jones' A Child Is Born. Take The A Train ended the concert part of the show and showed the musicians' best side with some tight up-tempo phrase trading. Nimmons' bursting clarinet solos and Koffman's alto sax were outstanding, highlighting the incredibly together four-man fusion. More in the novelty vein was a trumpet solo by Fred Davis, CBC announcer, who was on hand to present a cheque to the festival from the Du Maurier Council for the Performing Arts. He promised more money for next year. About a dozen young musicians from the Maritimes, Montreal and Boston, who attended Phil's week-long workshop, also got several turns to play during the dance session. The annual workshop is a tremendous resource for local talent. Fredericton has one highly competent modern jazz band, the Martini-George Sextet, playing off and on at local nightspots.

The festival is scheduled again in 1977, hopefully with music as great as this year's.

- Brian Bannon

12th Annual National Ragtime And Traditional Jazz Festival, Goldenrod Showboat, St. Louis, Missouri
June 14-19, 1976

This year's St. Louis rag fest was nothing short of a colossal bargain for fans of ragtime and of two-beat New Orleans jazz. From 6 p.m. to 1 a.m., for each of six nights, the $6.00 admission to the Goldenrod Showboat brought you a choice of music at, usually, any of five locations, plus a sixth location available for jamming by unbilled out-of-town cats, and a very well-stocked record counter. Moreover, the standard of musicianship was quite high overall; even though the producers had lots of spots and locations to program (performers rotated sites and times according to a schedule in the lobby which covered sets as short as fifteen-minute piano intermissions up to hour-long band shows), there were practically no fillers on hand.

Chicago's Original Salty Dogs, featuring a hot, muscular, Watters-Murphy approach, and San Antonio's Happy Jazz Band, with leader Jim Cullum's shouting cornet and Allen Vache's liquid clarinet, riding over a controlled rhythm, were there all six evenings. Ditto the host ensemble, the incomparable St. Louis Ragtimers, whose rollicking, rolling sound, mounted on Trebor Tichenor's impeccable country-style ragtime piano and banjoist Al Stricker's infectious vocals, is a guarantee of good taste and good cheer. Other visiting bands (New Jersey's Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Band on Monday-Wednesday and Denver's Queen City Jazz Band and Phoenix's Desert City Six on Thursday-Saturday) were supplemented on various nights by local combos (Tiger Rag Forever Jazz Band, Tin Rainbow Ragtimers, Mississippi Mudcats and St. Louis Saints).

For ragtime piano buffs, Dave Jason, Butch Thompson, Mike Montgomery, Bob Milne and myself were brought in to rotate with St. Louis regulars Jean Kittrell, Dan Peelor, Darryl Ott and Tom McDermott. During the week the pianists sometimes branched out as Mike worked with everyone from ragtime violinist David Reffkin to a jazz band with Butch on clarinet, Charlie De Vore cornet, Ralph Gruget trombone, Tom Shea banjo, and Dawes Thompson guitar. I played cornet with Jean on a couple of her sets, and she in turn helped out the Desert City Six at the keyboard (their pianist couldn't make it, and several of us were Desert Citians for part of the show in addition to our solo turns.)

As you can see from the foregoing, there is a tremendous variety available within what might seem, to some, a rather narrow musical idiom celebrated by the festival. Ragtime ranged over Dave's fast novelty stuff, Jean's red-hot-momma vocal piano numbers, Butch's earthy Jelly Roll style, Bob's elegant classic rags, and more. The bands had our aggressive, outgoing Bix unit at one extreme through the careful, precise Tiger Rag outfit at the other. Yet, it seemed to me that no one was out of place, and each performer found his own appreciative audience. That qual-

ity, I think, is what makes for a well-planned, thoroughly successful festival, and St. Louis 1976 certainly qualified for that title. - Tex Wyndham

Jazz Picnic, Waterloo Village, New Jersey
June 27, 1976

Spectators in Summercasuals, some young women in bikinis, lolled about under the big green-and-white striped tent sipping sodas and beer or munching sandwiches as they watched the musicians on stage. An all-star group led by Pee Wee Erwin and featuring Teddy Wilson was going into Lady Be Good. Teddy went into a solo Stompin' At The Savoy, then the band broke up the first set with Honeysuckle Rose.

Outside, in the sun and under the tall trees, more spectators strolled around, waiting to talk to musicians, take pictures, get autographs. Earl Hines was sighted getting out of an airconditioned limousine and a mob broke cover and hovered around "Fatha" until time for his solo spot. More, dixie-oriented groups were picknicking under trees enjoying The Red Onion Jazz Band - banjo, tuba and all - stride into Irish Black Bottom. A couple even tried a cakewalk...

It all resembled the Newport Jazz Festival, circa 1960. It was the Newport Jazz Festival 1976, returning after several years of indoor orientation in New York City back to its old, enjoyable casual format for several events. The scene this time was the Jazz Picnic at Waterloo Village, a 200-year-old colonial restoration site in Stanhope, New Jersey, complete with historic revolutionary buildings, a working mill and picturesque settings about two hours from Manhattan (where the core of the NJF still functioned).

A crowd, mostly white, kept coming throughout the day to listen to the likes of Wilson, Hines, John Bunch, Kenny Davern, Ed Hubble, Warren Vache, Major Holley and singer Natalie Lamb, among others, without pressure, the hassles of parking in traffic, the threat of muggings (tourists only) and in near-zero pollution levels.

The day previous, from noon till five, an equally large if somewhat different crowd attended a genuine Southern-style Gospel Picnic organized by Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, Canaan Baptist Church, Harlem. Gospel singing is far more complex than hand-clapping and shouting "A-a-a-men", as the accomplished groups from Harlem and other hotbeds of church-singing in New York and New Jersey demonstrated.

For instance, some of the gospel-singing styles featured were "Dorsey style (nothing to do with old Tommy believe me), Contemporary Gospel, Shape Note Singing and Gospel of Pentecost." They opened the way for a wider and more appreciative audience to this facet of jazz. If you haven't been to a real gospel marathon, you haven't heard anything yet.

An even bigger event in the outdoor series at Waterloo Village was the salute to Count Basie by his home state. 93-year-old Eubie Blake, who knew the Count when he was a toddler from Red Bank, N. J., was among the celebrities on hand to honor Basie.

But it was the Jazz Picnic on Sunday, June 27 that brought back warm memories of the Newport of old, when jazz of high quality was presented in the most casual of settings. Since moving to New York, the NJF had become for the most part and by necessity formalized, pack-housed affairs. This is ideal for specialized events (like this year's Ellington Saga concerts). But casual jazz and jamming calls for settings just as casual - and Waterloo Village had it.

Presented in conjunction with the hyperactive New Jersey Jazz Society, the picnic exceeded the expectations of even Newport organizer George Wein. "We did it as an experiment", he remarked. "Now it looks like it would be a permanent fixture of the NJF" (hearty applause). Later, he proclaimed it as "a new era for the Newport Jazz Festival and the New Jersey Jazz Society." Who knows, Newport Jazz Festival ultimately may even move to New Jersey, which many feel is fast becoming the new center of jazz in America.

- Al Van Starrex

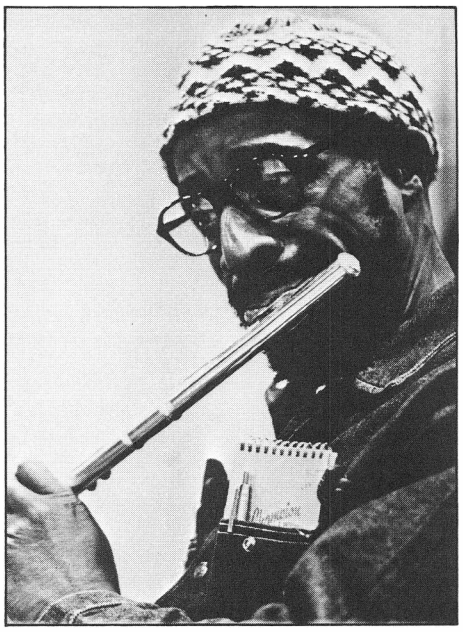
YUSEF LATEEF

with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra
"A Touch Of Class"
Ford Auditorium, Detroit. July 20, 1976

Lateef's group appeared as part of an eclectic concert which also included dramatic reading, the choral fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (with incidentally an excellent performance by pianist Ruth Laredo), and a Shostakovitch overture. The concert was one of a series designed to celebrate the American Bicentennial and the 275th anniversary of Detroit's founding by featuring local and national performers with Detroit backgrounds (like Lateef and Laredo). A too-small advertising budget and poor planning resulting in poor advance ticket sales had led to the cancellation of many of the scheduled concerts, but fortunately this concert attracted sufficient interest to go on as planned.

For the concert Lateef had adapted a five-movement work entitled Detroit Suite from his Atlantic album "Yusef Lateef's Detroit" to feature his quartet - Kenny Barron, piano; Bob Cunningham, amplified acoustic bass, and Al "Tootie" Heath on drums - and the orchestra under the direction of James Frazier, Jr. While the suite did not make any extended, deep exploration of the orchestra's resources applied to a jazz context, the strong musical personality Lateef projected and the rapport he established with his audience made the performance a satisfying artistic success.

Much of this rapport was due to the brief comments with which Lateef prefaced each movement. The five movements each bore a title referring to people or places out of Lateef's Detroit past; the audience response indicated that what Lateef was remembering and expressing was a shared cultural experience. The contrast between



Lateef in a bright dashiki and faded jeans and Frazier in the orchestra's white coat and black pants also seemed to chart the range of Detroit's cultural life.

The suite's first movement, Woodward Avenue, made the best use of the orchestra and revealed Lateef's abilities as composer and arranger. It opened with three dissonant held chords, over which Lateef's flute floated, and led into a slow, broad statement of a minor theme in waltz time by the strings. Lateef's flute and the quartet followed without transition, restating the theme as a jazz waltz. The classical string texture reappeared briefly before another rich held-out chord (over which Lateef's flute again moved languidly) ended the movement.

Raymond Winchester, named for a street musician of Lateef's youth who evidently was known for his ability to make music on "found" instruments, had Lateef blowing on what appeared to be a gourd or a bottle top, over a rock texture with some brassy orchestral interjections. Barron soloed (with the orchestra silent), displaying facile technique and familiarity with the directions modern jazz piano has taken. Lateef returned to make loud, duck-call like noises in a call-and-response pattern with the orchestra; a dissonant held chord closed the movement.

That Lucky Old Sun, composed by Beasley Smith, has lyrics that deal with the grind of physical labor; Lateef made the audience roar with appreciation when he indicated that the lyrics had a special meaning for him, as they would for anyone who had spent ten years "...expressing the dignity of labor as I did at Chrysler's Motor Car Company out on Jefferson". After a short string introduction, Lateef's tenor sax entered to dominate the balance of the movement. His approach was timeless, a free broad exposition of the melody in the fuzzy, almost hoarse-toned tenor tradition, with some boppish probing of the chord changes. His deep, gruffly warm tenor was an effective contrast to the smooth strings and blended well with the rhythm section when they replaced the

photograph of Yusef Lateef by Jorgen Bo

orchestra for a few bars of the bridge. The movement concluded with a series of sustained chords (descending by whole step) over which Lateef had evidently planned to play cadenzas; although satisfactory, what he created was closer to noodling than to the display of technique one might have expected.

Eastern Market, named for Detroit's large farmer's market, was cast in a modal rock vein that approached dangerously close to middle-of-the-road AM muzak. Lateef's strong solo flute and some effective brass fills kept things from degenerating too far, however. After a fleet-fingered but under-miked piano solo, Lateef returned as a singer, making delightful blues shouts out of the remembered cries of the market's fresh produce vendors.

The final movement, Russell And Eliot, recalled a store-front church located on the corner of those two streets. Cunningham's bass outlined the repeated two-chord pattern over a slow, pulsating rock beat; the orchestra played whole-note chords while Lateef's tenor honked and bleated in a dark blues idiom. Barron played a solo laced with blues licks over the driving bass line and a strong back beat, after which Lateef came back to fade the movement to a close.

In the "Detroit Suite" Lateef created nothing startlingly new or unusual, nor did he take advantage of the orchestra's possibilities. But the work did offer Lateef a simple, effective vehicle through which to express his strong musical personality, and the result was individual, evocative, and quite enjoyable. - David Wild

OSCAR PETERSON

Olympic Village, Montreal
July 25, 1976

Oscar Peterson, Joe Pass and Niels Pedersen came together in Montreal for a 3 week gig at the Grand Salon of the Queen Elizabeth Hotel during the Olympic Games; playing two sessions each night in a superbly exclusive (and expensive) spot resplendent with ladies in long evening gowns, glittering diamonds and even mink plus a very tight security set-up - (all people entering the hotel had to pass through a metal detector.

On their day off the trio had quite a different engagement at the Olympic Village. This correspondent, who was lucky to be invited by RCA Records (who recorded "live" this exciting concert) to photograph it, felt like a VIP when he was checked 3 times, and registered to enter - the same way as Oscar Peterson and also Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones who interestingly enough was eager to see the conert as well. The concert took place in a natural amphitheatre in a small valley surrounded by woods, flanked by an impressive silhouette of two high-rise "pyramids" which was the residence of the atheletes. The audience consisted of a somewhat different type to that of the Queen E. A little over 500 people in sweat-suits was probably the most multi-national audience ever to attend a jazz concert in Canada. After the one sentence introduction repeated six times but each time in a different language came Oscar Peterson warming up the piano and gently flowing into a prelude joined by Joe Pass on guitar and bassist Niels Pedersen into a tune, which was later identified by Joe Pass as a "made up on the spot blues".

I noticed that quite a number of spectators were pleased to discover that a jazz concert was taking place that night (the majority of atheletes apparently did not know what the O. P. Trio stood for.) Knowing several languages and being somewhat curious as to the crowd's reaction, I had a hard time dividing my attention between the music and the spectators' comments (not to mention my photographic assignment!) It took another superbly meditative and yet swinging tune called Feelings with solos from all three players to set things straight with the spectators - several women from South America and East Europe left (to sleep?) but after that followed an Ellingtonian medley and with it Caravan interpreted by Peterson in boogie-woogie style ending in a storm of applause, and from that moment on the night went just like any other superb concert at i. e., the Vanguard or any other sophisticated place. This music proved to be esperanto of the heart and the tapping of feet by the Russian group kept the same time as the feet belonging to a mixed crowd of British, American, Polish or Australians, and although different in their expression of applause - depending on their temperament and "discipline" (I was glad to hear one of the Russians whisper to another: "Fantasticheskoye" the Russian version of the word "fantastic") the sincerity of appreciation was of the same value.

Almost all of the tunes played were "standard ones" - Take The A Train, Mood Indigo, Old Folks, Solitude and so on, but what interpretation! The incredible tightness of the trio full of rich interaction and perfect understanding of one another's own territory in their intervoice and common sense in delivering these standards was incredible. With Peterson's stylist "hobby" he will deliver his version of a tune just to confront it with a ragtime or blues or other (just name it) version and then collaborate on the contradictions of these by means of rhythm, dynamics, joyful imitation of other pianists, style, phrase, beat or harmony switches - finally finishing in his own reflection quite different from the original entry. Joe Pass usually stayed back and was "filling" the space between Pedersen's bass and Peterson in "all" choruses ready to flash in on any spot suited for exposure to come up with a shining whip of a swinging break. He also played two solo numbers, to everybody's delight, in the Django-like melodic structures, as comes from Pass only.

Niels Pedersen was another great experience of the concert. This young Dane from Copenhagen is a bass listener's delight; his use of glissando in the trio is actually doing what the brass does in a big band. The other two sometimes gave him choruses where he was actually the leading force - and what a rare and pleasant experience to hear something like that acoustically!

The trio finished with Hymn To Peace - a beautiful gospel (or spiritual) by Peterson - which in places was played as ragtime or the way Lil Hardin would play it as a blues - but the important thing was the message (without knowing the title as was the case with this ignorant correspondent!) the experience left one with goose-pimples! Well, after that there came terrific applause and an encore; another "made on the spot" blues.

It might be foolish to expect mood or fancy to influence music of such a superb trio but the whole concert was felt as a

photograph of Oscar Peterson, Neils Henning Orsted Pedersen and Joe Pass by Henry J. Kahanek

rather rare spiritual phenomenon in the Olympics: this music was a true expression of human dignity. I guess the "Jazz Ambassador" O. Peterson, who thinks that it is a great honour for this country to have the Olympics, must have felt this atmosphere intensely, and was pleased to have this opportunity to expose his own musical interpretation of the cosmopolitan freedom he believes in. Peterson's music was an unforgettable experience and somehow this seemed to be the most appropriate place to experience it. - Henry Kahanek

QUARTET

A Space, Toronto
July 17, 1976

Probably the best of Toronto's new music is played by and with pianist/composer Stu Broomer, who most recently is appearing in a quartet with Bill Smith on alto and soprano saxophones, John Mars on drums and Graham Coughtry on trombone. It's an exciting group and a revelation to those who think that "new music" equals "free jazz". The two major new music groups in the city, the Canadian Creative Music Collective and the Artists' Jazz Band, are both large collectives whose repertoires are for the most part spontaneous and totally improvised, free of chord progressions or even key centres.

This quartet tends to be more organized and in doing so comes closer to the concept of the man who coined the term "free jazz", Ornette Coleman. Coleman's piece of this title relied on written heads to give the players a common ground and direction, but largely the music depended on the individual improviser and his sensitivity to the others' needs and abilities. Thus the improviser has freedom, but also an initial musical statement to which he can react and shape his own ideas.

This quartet debuted in accompaniment to the readings of guest star and A Space resident poet Victor Coleman (no relation). As the harsh lights slanted against Coleman's pale, haunted features, the combination of his original and found poetry and the accompanying music made for some effective theatre. Psychuous Sex, his interpretation of an ad for an erotic instruction manual, made the greatest hit, but his politically oriented works, Take Me To Your Leader and America, depended for their impact on the listener's sense of outrage, respectively, Canadian political scandals and the crassness of life in the United States. Both these subjects are so self-evidently absurd and wrong in themselves that the determined anguish of the poet and the music seemed clumsy and false in comparison. Coleman sounded best on his own poetry, where his decadent good looks - rather like Tadzio in Death In Venice, grown to manhood - and his tortured baritone added up to a stage presence that put the feelings of the poems across more or less regardless of their content, which seemed to consist of a lot of self-doubt, a disgust with sex, and an understandable weariness of sexual relationships.

On its own, the music was original and refreshing in its execution as well as its concept. These musicians recognize structure the same way that jazz musicians used to recognize chords - not as a yolk to be avoided but as an artform in itself. Thus a piece like Smith's Goats Hill Road flowed from soprano solo to a duet with Mars on marimba, to marimba solo to marimba/trombone duet, to trombone solo to trombone/piano duet, to piano solo and back to the soprano again. All fine musicians, but John Mars rarely plays in Toronto and it was a special treat to hear him, a propulsive drummer who plays the rhythms not only of sounds but of the spaces in the music, and who produces a wide variety of textures from an only slightly augmented drum kit.

I don't know if Stu Broomer is really a living legend, but although he is seldom heard and little-publicized everyone seems to have strong opinions about him. A local musician told me once of hearing Broomer in concert and being "horrified" at the things he had done to the piano. True, hearing an improviser who uses technique as a means of expression and not as an end in itself can be upsetting sometimes, and Broomer plays with energy and passion. He also puts various objects such as empty tape reels and pie plates on the strings of grand pianos, not just for laughs but to change the textures and overtones of the piano's sound, and to enhance the percussive character of his huge instrument.

Graham Coughtry didn't play anything mindblowing at this performance, but his sensitivity to the music and the poetry made him a key part of the overall sound. With the AJB and more recently with the CCMC he has demonstrated that he can play with both ferocity and good intonation, a considerable feat on the trombone. Bill Smith is leaning more and more to the curved soprano, but on America he played some gorgeous alto. On both instruments he plays with considerable melodic invention, with a bent for leaping, angular lines, such as the head for Goats Hill Road. More than most players he deals with tone and dynamics, to pauses and rests in the music, to varying a note "as written" from reed-thin to fat and blowzy in tone. He and Coughtry play together with a strong empathy, and the three short sets of this evening, largely devoted to accompanying the poet, left one feeling that this quartet has only revealed a fraction of the music they have to offer. - David Lee

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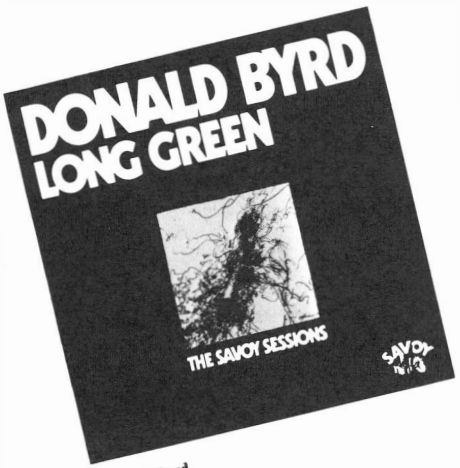

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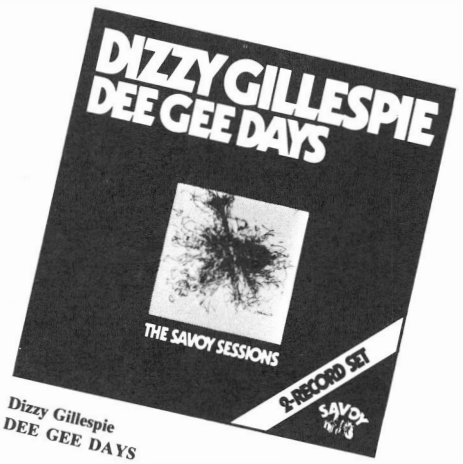

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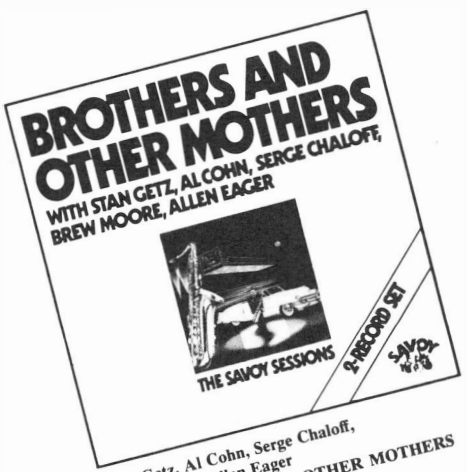

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