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Coda

CANADA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

ONE DOLLAR

ART FARMER

MASTER JAZZ RECORDINGS

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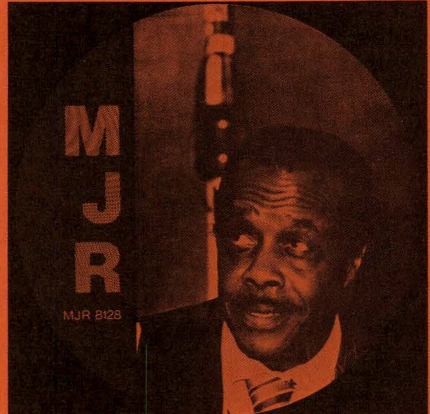

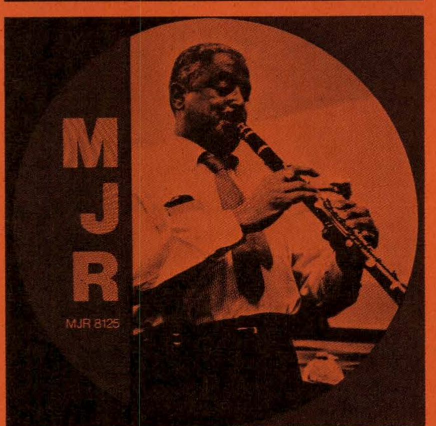

8119 The Budd Johnson Septet and Quintet Featuring Charlie Shavers: Blues A La Mode
Budd Johnson (tenor saxophone), Charlie Shavers (trumpet), Vic Dickenson (trombone), Al Sears (baritone saxophone), Bert Keyes (piano and organ), Joe Benjamin (bass), Jo Jones (drums); also Ray Bryant (piano).

Foggy Nights, Leave Room In Your Heart For Me, Destination Blues, Blues A La Mode, Used Blues, Blues By Five.

8120 The Jimmy Rushing All Stars: Who Was It Sang That Song?
Jimmy Rushing (vocals), Buck Clayton (trumpet), Dickie Wells (trombone), Julian Dash (tenor saxophone), Eugene Ramey (bass), Jo Jones (drums), Sir Charles Thompson (piano).

Baby Won't You Please Come Home, C Jam Blues, I Surrender Dear, Stormy Monday Blues, Jelly Jelly, All Of Me.

8121 The Roy Eldridge Sextet: The Nifty Cat Strikes West
Roy Eldridge (trumpet), Grover Mitchell (trombone), Eric Dixon (tenor saxophone), Louis Bellson (drums, Norman Keenan (bass), Bill Bell (piano).

I'm Beginning To See The Light, Willow Weep For Me, Blue 'N Boogie, Oh Gee, Things Ain't What They Used To Be, A-Wong Came Herb, Satin Doll.

8122 Ram Ramirez: Rampant Ram
Ram Ramirez (solo piano)

Janet, Martell, Fascinatin' Rhythm, Prelude To A Kiss, I Just Refuse To Sing The Blues, Mad About You, Hennessey, Lover, You Ain't Gonna Bother Me No More, Lil' Darlin', Lover Man.

8123 Rex Stewart Septet: Rendezvous With Rex
Rex Stewart (cornet and vocal chorus on My Kind Of Gal), George Stevenson (trombone), Haywood Henry (clarinet and baritone saxophone), George Kelly, (tenor saxophone), Willie "The Lion" Smith (piano on Tillie's Twist and Tell Me More), Dick Cary (piano on My Kind Of Gal), Leonard Gaskin (bass), Arthur Trappier (drums); also Hilton Jefferson (clarinet and alto saxophone), Garvin Bushell (clarinet and bassoon), Dick Cary (piano and trumpet), Everett Barksdale (guitar), Joe Benjamin (bass), Mickey Sheen (drums).

Tillie's Twist, Pretty Ditty, Tell Me More, Damzon D'Amor, My Kind Of Gal, Blue Echo.

8124 The Eric Dixon Sextet: Eric's Edge
Eric Dixon (tenor saxophone), Sonny Cohn (trumpet), Frank Hooks (trombone), Lloyd Mayers (piano), Bill English (drums), Ivan Rolle and Martin Rivera, (bass).

Background Blues, Things Ain't What They Used To Be, Jumpin' At The Woodside, The Meeting Place, Blues For Ilean, Lady Be Good, Whisper M & I, Eric's Edge.

8125 The Buster Bailey Quartet & Septet: All About Memphis
Buster Bailey (clarinet), Red Richards (piano), Gene Ramey (bass), Jimmie Crawford (drums), Herman Autrey (trumpet), Vic Dickenson (trombone), Hilton Jefferson (alto sax).

Bear Wallow, Hatton Avenue and Gayosco Street, Sunday Parade, Beale Street Blues, Memphis Blues, Chickasaw Bluff, Hot Water Bayou.

28126 Earl Hines: Plays Duke Ellington - Volume 2 & 3
Earl Hines (solo piano)

In A Mellotone, Solitude, Don't Get Around Much Anymore, It Don't Mean A Thing, I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart, Satin Doll, In A Sentimental Mood, Black & Tan Fantasy, Don't You Know I Care, Caravan, I'm Just A Lucky So And So, Just Squeeze Me, Prelude To A Kiss, All Too Soon.

8127 The Buddy Tate All Stars: Swinging Like Tate
Buddy Tate (tenor saxophone and clarinet), Pat Jenkins (trumpet), Eli Robinson (trombone), Ben Richardson (alto saxophone and clarinet), Skip Hall (piano), Everett Barksdale, (guitar), Joe Benjamin (bass), Herbie Lovelle (drums); also Buck Clayton (trumpet), Dicky Wells (trombone), Earle Warren (alto and baritone saxophones), Lord Westbrook (guitar), Aaron Bell (bass), Jo Jones (drums).

Bottle It, Walk That Walk, Miss Sadie Brown, Moon Eyes, Rockin' Steve, Rompin' With Buck.

8128 The Buddy Tate Quintet: The Texas Twister
Buddy Tate, (tenor saxophone and clarinet), Paul Quinchette (tenor saxophone), Cliff Smalls (piano), Major Holley (bass), Jackie Williams (drums)

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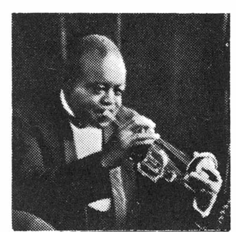

In the 1920's the American recording industry began to document the work of black instrumentalists. After a period of initial popularity, the records went out of print or were haphazardly reissued. For the first time, this comprehensive album brings together 19 classic selections by the greatest performing ensemble of those years which featured the young Louis Armstrong, the Dodds brothers and others. Also included are nine rare recordings which feature "King" Joe Oliver as cornet soloist and blues accompanist.

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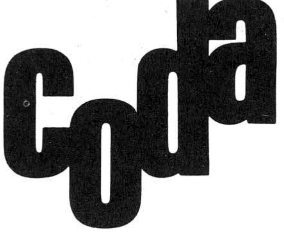

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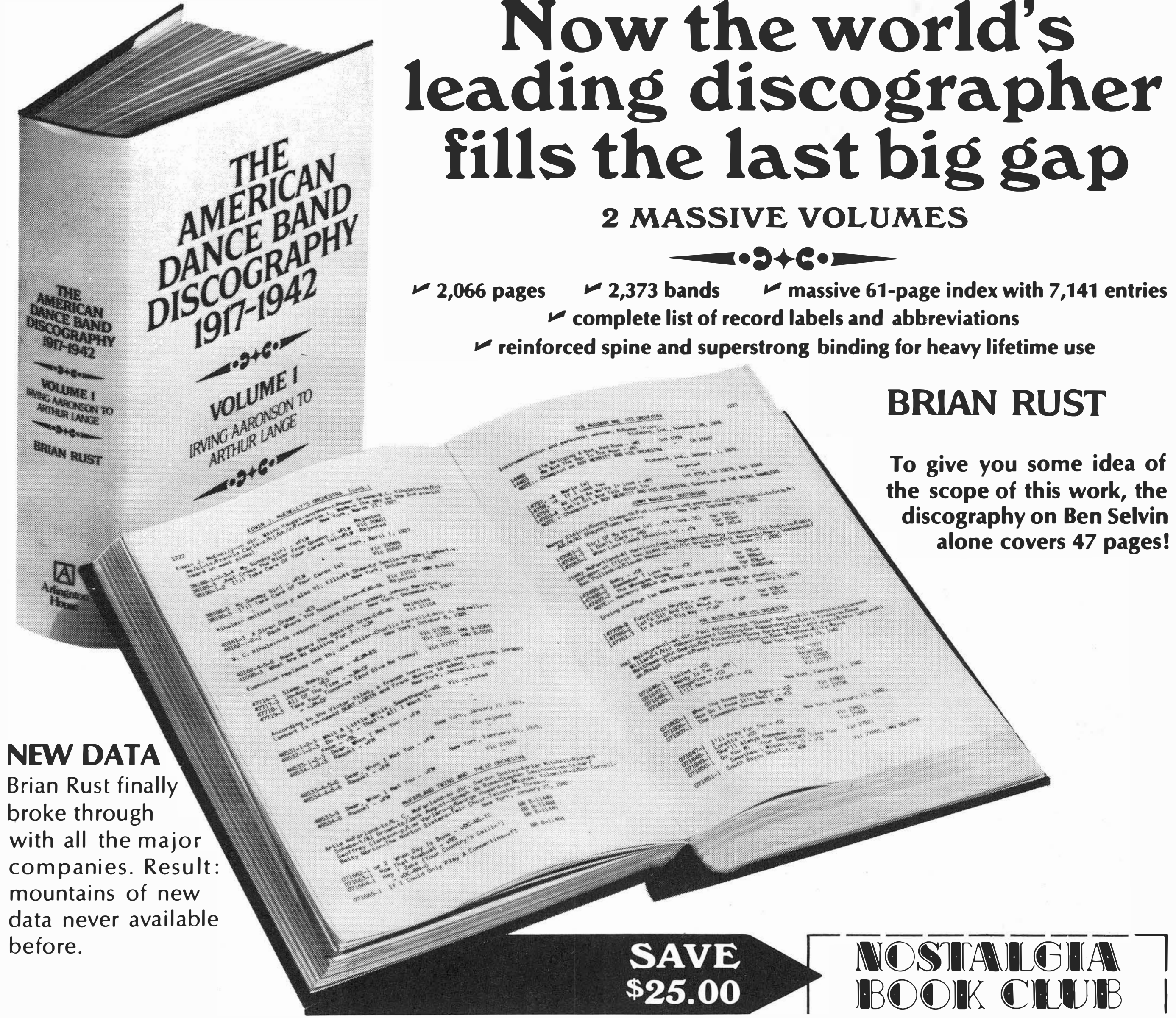

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- Unsung greats (and near greats): Red Norvo, Les Brown, Larry Clinton, Will Bradley, Jan Savitt, Claude Thornhill, etc.
- The deserving (and undeserving) rich: Welk, Lombardo, Kay Kyser, Freddy Martin, Sammy Kaye, Wayne King, Frankie Carle, Dick Jurgens, Jan Garber, Rudy Vallee, Art Hickman, Ben Bernie, Ozzie Nelson, Leo Reisman, Eddy Duchin, etc.
- The obscure but deserving: Joe Haymes, Bert Lown, Paul Tremaine, Teddy Powell, Bob Chester, Mal Hallett, Smith Ballew, Gus Arnheim, Will Osborne, Seger Ellis, Richard Himber, Don Bestor, etc.
- The exotic and the offbeat: Xavier Cugat, Shep Fields and His Rippling Rhythm, the Clicquot Club Eskimos, Ray Herbeck and His Music with Romance, Coon-Sanders' Original Nighthawks, etc.

There are no Negro bands, since Mr. Rust covered them in *Jazz Records 1897-1942*. Glenn Miller is omitted because he is covered definitively in John Flower's *Moonlight Serenade* (Arlington House). Benny Goodman is omitted because he is covered definitively in *BG on the Record* by D. R. Connor and W. H. Hicks (Arlington House). Apart from these sensible omissions, the rolls here are complete.

This is no mere record listing. Brian Rust summons all the arcane data so delicious (and necessary) to the music scholar: recording dates, vocalists, band personnel, matrix numbers, take numbers, pseudonyms, etc. It is a work that can never be supplanted.

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ART FARMER

INTERVIEW WITH BILL SMITH

Bill Smith: Do you have some kind of basic philosophy about life that motivates you, something that makes you get through every day with reasonable ease, some kind of attitude you have that is important to you?

Art Farmer: Well, I think that there's a greater power that's in control of everything that happens here. Many things happen we don't know why they happen. I just try to live my life in a way that doesn't add to the turmoil, and in my personal relations as much as possible I try to be to people as I would like them to be to me. And that's about as far as I can go with it. I want to think that that's why I'm living my life. I'm not any kind of revolutionary that's going to go out and try to break down the bad things because I don't think it's possible for one person to do that. Some people think it's possible and they do a lot of good things. Somebody has to do it, but it's not for me to do. And maybe it's not enough as I say but I'm really trying to play music. I see a lot of things going on that I don't like at all. But I just try to stay away from. And not be a part of.

B.S.: Is the spiritual strength something to do with how you play music?

A.F.: I don't know, it might be, and it might not be. When I play music I don't think about spiritual things, I just think about the music. I don't think about anything else than that, spiritual or not spiritual.

B.S.: Right, like in the music as it comes out of a tradition that, like Gospel music and field shouts and church and all that kind of thing. In those days the passion for music was a lot to do with the religion. Do you thing the music intellectualized itself out of that? Did it fragment it into another kind of thing?

A.F.: I don't know. I think that might be a matter for each individual, I wouldn't say in general but I think a person plays music and he loves music. You got to have some kind of feeling for it. I don't think I ever say I don't give it a thought. If I play something, it's gonna be something that I like and I'm going to try and play it with feeling because without feeling it's dead.

B.S.: But in the content of the music, not as a philosophical abstraction. It's like a real thing.

A.F.: No, music is an abstraction right there. I know it's not something you pick up in your hand and hold it. You can't even look at it. You just hear it. It goes and it's gone, gone with the air.

B.S.: Eric Dolphy says it comes out into the air and it's gone forever, never to be captured again.

A.F.: He was right. That's why I say it's an abstraction. The greatest abstraction that we have.

B.S.: After all the years you've been playing do you still feel the music just pops out sometimes, that it's really improvised?

A.F.: Sure it pops out. It doesn't come from me, it comes to me. You know, the thing is to try to condition yourself in the way that you are open for it.

B.S.: You don't have to step outside into "free jazz". You can play with that kind of sensibility to the music inside chord structures and you don't feel that it's necessary to break open all that?

A.F.: I don't. Not at all. I don't feel that. Maybe somebody else does but I think if I'm intellectually prepared, technically prepared and my mind is open and I don't have any negative influences holding me down, well then something's going to come to me anyway. As long as it happens, well I'm grateful for it. That's what I need, what I'm looking for. And it doesn't have to be free or non-free. You could be playing with someone you've been playing with all of your life and get that experience if the conditions are right; if you're feeling right and you're not bugged by anything; then something might happen.

B.S.: Albert Ayler said that music was the healing force of the universe. Do you think that it has qualities outside it just for the listener? Do you feel when you're playing there's sometimes qualities outside of just hearing things that are nice?

A.F.: There's a lot of truth in that but the listener has to bring a certain openness to it himself or herself. And usually the people who, sadly to say, the people who are able to do that don't need the healing force anyway, 'cause they're already healed. It's a paradox. But you know the people who are walking around really uptight, they're the ones who need it but they're too busy with their own cares to know. They can't see what's in front of their eyes. They can't see what's there or they can't see the forest for the trees. If a person wakes up in the morning and worries about how they're going to make the car payment or pay the rent or something they say, "I don't want to hear that music, turn off that music!"

B.S.: I can't go through a day without listening to music. And I know there are a lot of people like that who can't. I've never known what drew you, drew me to the music. I don't know and I just heard it and I just took it, because it was presented to me. Do you have feelings why people are drawn to it?

A.F.: There's obviously a need for a person to hear something that's pleasing to them. It's a taste. One of their tastes is hearing; one of the senses. You need to hear something you like to hear, you have that sense, you need to touch something that you want to touch that feels good to you, finger, or smell or anything. Food, or whatever it is. I think it's a normal need, a human thing, it's a natural thing. Some people have it more than others do and those are the ones who are drawn more. If you become a very devout listener to a lot of work you may even become a player. A player is also a very good listener. But as I said before it's a need for it. It exists; it always has and always will.

B.S.: It's a universal language. It has no barriers like dialect or anything.

A.F.: Well, people say that it's a universal language but it still depends upon your environment, too, because there's music all around the world and I can hear some music from some place and it sounds strange to me. Because I can't relate to it in my environment. The environment that I was brought up in. Maybe if I'd listen to it more I'd be able to like it more. Because the better the music is the more it transcends these barriers. Let's say, you can take a fantastic classical player, he should be able to get to anybody. You know the better he is the more he can communicate with someone who doesn't really have any classical background at all. And the same thing goes for jazz.

B.S.: Well, I find in jazz circles people who are involved in it all the time, people for whom it's a part of their life rather than just a casual experience, are really drawn together all over the world. In some house in some city where you can knock on a door....

A.F.: Sure, sure that's true. That's true, the world over is like that. You have a common ground with regard to what you're into. Otherways it's a common thing, it draws you right together.

B.S.: It's a good thing, isn't it.

A.F.: Yeah, it's a good thing.

B.S.: It seems really weird that in America it doesn't really happen on an enormous scale. You know, there are obviously people like that in America too, but considering how much of the music is in America it seems as though it should be massive.

A.F.: People are being bombarded with so many other things. There's so many things that can contend with that. You're being bashed on the head with this and bashed on the head with that.

B.S.: Is America in bad condition? I mean, we keep reading in the press how bad it is. As an American, does it feel that way?

A.F.: Yeah, I think it's bad. I think it's been bad really because the truth is just coming out and when the truth comes out it hurts. It's like there's an ulcer in the body and it has to be treated. The treatment is painful but it has to be done or else you die. People in America have been living under some kind of illusion forever. They're breaking up and growing up to find that this is not true.

B.S.: I first became aware of you in a Wardell Gray record. There must be something else before that.

A.F.: That was the first record I made where I was working with a small group and able to take a solo. In front of that I did some recording with Jay McShann but the band was just backing up singers at the time. People think of me as a California product because I was raised up in Arizona and as a teenager I started living in California and I've always travelled since I was 16 years old. I came back East and I lived in New York for a couple of years, studying and then I went back to the West Coast and Wardell Gray was out at the time and we had quite a few things going out there between Wardell and Dexter Gordon and Hampton Hawes and Sonny Criss, people like that.

B.S.: How did you come to the music in the first place?

A.F.: I started as a child because in my generation there was a sort of a standard thing that the family would always have a piano in it. Now everybody has a TV but in those days everybody had a piano so it was there and my mother played the piano in the church and I always tried to copy it. I would try to play around. Music studies started in grammar school and then we were in a house where we had a vacant room and it was being rented out. One of the tenants that came happened to have a violin in a trunk. Well he gave it to me so I could learn to play that. Then there was a marching band and I wanted to get in the band and the only horn they had available was a bass tuba so I started to play that. And one day I heard some guys jamming right before the band rehearsal was to start and I said, I wanted to get in on that, and at the same time there was a trumpet available so I took that and started the trumpet. I started to try to learn to play the trumpet and I got very interested in jazz and started listening to all the big bands that came through town. This must have been in the early 40's, I guess it must have been 1945, when my brother and I decided we would go over to Los Angeles on the summer holiday from school. There was so much going on compared to Phoenix

that we decided we would just stay there. And we met all the guys around. Things were quite open. There was a lot of enthusiasm. Everybody was trying to learn. There was a general sharing of knowledge. We'd just walk the street looking for a place to play. I remember Charlie Parker came there with Dizzy and he decided to stay. We were all in the same cliche, but he would walk the street with us at night too. Looking for a place to play. If a job came we'd take it and if it didn't we'd just go and jam and wait until the next gig came. One thing leads to another. There's no set way.

B.S.: Did Bird make a lot of music happen in California just by coming there from New York?

A.F.: Sure, I would say he did, but in a way he didn't, because the music was already there. There were already a lot of people playing. There always has been bands travelling in between the East and the West Coast. And some people come out West with a band and they stay there. But they have the influence from the East. They bring that with them. And there's always a lot of interest. Everybody was waiting for Bird and Dizzy with bated breath. But they were already playing and pretty well aware of what was going on back East.

B.S.: The studios didn't exist so much then in California?

A.F.: Well, not for the blacks. But for the whites it did of course. But at that time it was a matter of two unions and very few black musicians were getting any kind of work in the studios at all. Very few. You could count them on one hand.

B.S.: So the Hollywood thing wasn't any special asset to you?

A.F.: No, Hollywood was just a place that had a few night clubs in it. Where you could go out and work on the Sunday matinee jam session. Go out and hear somebody play and maybe jam. As far as the studio thing you just didn't think about it.

B.S.: Was Wardell Gray the first person of stature that you played publicly with? Was he one of the first persons you played with?

A.F.: No. I played with a lot of others out there. I played with Benny Carter, Gerald Wilson, and Dexter Gordon and people like that. They had stature. The first band I worked with was Horace Henderson's band. It was right after the end of the war and a lot of the good players were still in the army which made it possible for me to get my start because there weren't so many around. There were some places still open that needed a third trumpet player or something. So I was able to sort of sneak in that way.

B.S.: So you came to jazz sort of gently and slowly.

A.F.: No, not gently and slowly. When I first heard it I wanted to be a part of it. But actually I didn't ever think of myself as being a soloist. I just wanted to be a part of a band. That seemed to be a big enough dream. But then at the end of the war big bands started falling apart. In order to stay in the music world a person had to learn how to handle himself in the small group too. Of course it was a challenge. Everybody was trying to do it.

B.S.: Were there influences on the way you played? Were there trumpet players that made you play certain ways, originally, and were there people that influenced you?

A.F.: Everybody you heard on record and in person. Dizzy and Miles and Fats of course. Howard McGhee was out there. There were millions of them. There were a lot of guys of course that you never heard of. There's one that was out there at the time who's still a very fine player. He lives in Europe now by the name of Benny Bailey. He was the best trumpet player that was living out there that I knew quite well. I thought he was a fantastic player. We would listen to everything that was available on records. I was still in high school at the time. We had a band in the high school and the guys would just get together and jam. We'd go over to Hampton Hawes' house and we'd play with them. Guys like Sonny Criss. We had a nice thing going.

B.S.: Did you have any knowledge of the earlier music, like Armstrong and Waller and all those people?

A.F.: My knowledge was more of the big band thing. I listened to the records but I was more turned on by big bands like Duke Ellington and Count Basie, Erskine Hawkins, Lucky Millinder, Buddy Johnson, Andy Kirk, things like that. I just started to backtrack some time later and really find out about the earlier small groups. I remember one time Roy Eldridge came to Phoenix with an Artie Shaw band. But again that was a big band. I'd never heard of him in a small group context at that time. Things just sort of had their own way of going but I found myself more and more working with these small groups.

B.S.: You stayed in California a long time?

A.F.: No, I stayed there for maybe 2 - 3 years at that time then I went out on the road with Jay McShann, Lionel Hampton or somebody like that. I lived in California for a couple years then I went back East with Johnny Otis' band. I stayed in New York a couple of years. I got the job with Jay McShann and went back to California and that's when I started working with guys like Dexter and Wardell. Of course Dexter is from the Coast anyway and he was living there from time to time. And Wardell came up with Count Basie. He left Basie's band and decided that he wanted to live there and they had some nice things going. We used to have clubs that would go on from 9-2 and after 2 in the morning we'd go to some kind of after hours club, where you could go on till 7 or 8 in the day.

B.S.: It's strange, the history of the California thing that everybody knows about. In England, when I came to jazz in the early 50s, California music was Shorty Rogers and the Giants and Bud Shank, they were the people we knew about.

A.F.: Yeah, that was some kind of a racial thing going on. These white bands would come out there too like Stan Kenton and Woody Herman and these guys, Shelly Manne and all that crowd, decided they wanted to live there too, but they were in Hollywood. We were on Central Avenue which was...

B.S.: A slightly different district.

A.F.: Right. And so they were getting into the studios more. They were getting things going in their favour. They got this whole West Coast movement going which was damn near lily white, with the exception of maybe 2 or 3 guys. Curtis Counce on bass, Hampton Hawes, you never heard about any black players out there at that time. But they were busy. They were playing.

B.S.: Going out on the road took you to cities you'd never been to before....

A.F.: I came to New York the first time in 1946.

B.S.: And there was a lot of activity in New York?

A.F.: Yeah there was a lot. Clubs. Things were really happening. So I decided I wanted to stay there a while and study. I used to go around and sit in with Dizzy's big band. But the street was still going and you could go from one place to another and hear anything you wanted to hear. It was just there. Bird, Fats, Dizzy with the big band, Miles, Coleman Hawkins, all kinds of people.

B.S.: A lot of the press that I read from that era seemed to think that Parker and Dizzy, Don Byas, and all those people, were weird. Did they sound weird to you when you were in New York? Did the music sound so different to what was California music?

A.F.: No, well, you see the first time I heard Parker and Dizzy was in California. And of course the first time I heard them I thought that I couldn't figure out where they were finding those notes. I kept hearing people who were good players. Wonderful players like Lester Young and then you listen to Charlie Parker you can see where the link was. He just took it a step further, but he was still dead in the centre of the harmonic and rhythmic tradition of what had been going on. Going all the way back to Louis Armstrong when you really listen to it. He didn't tear down a thing. So he finally made it just for a moment.

B.S.: The music seems, on record anyway, between the two things, West Coast and East Coast. The East Coast music sounds much fiercer.

A.F.: Yeah, it had more body to it. The West Coast thing was a little bit more intimate. The Eastern thing seemed to have more drive to it, more intensity.

B.S.: The New York feeling; do you have some kind of feeling why that would be? The city environment would change that perhaps? A different kind of city?

A.F.: I think it was. The intensity came from the stress of living and trying to exist in New York or any place in the States. As a black jazz musician the way was much harder than for the white guy. He could match with his environment with a little more ease. Things were a little easier for him so it had to come out in his music. He wouldn't play so fast a tempo

and everything would be sort of nice, and floating along which was the way life was for them. But for guys like Bird and many others, they had a harder way to go. So it had to come out in their music that way, the music was a reflection of their life. So it's a little more fierce. I'm not trying to say it didn't have its own beauty to it.

B.S.: Do you feel that jazz music is very social music. For black America, is it a social music.

A.F.: For some it is, and for some it isn't. And people can take it or leave it. In the past few years there's been more of a black consciousness going on and black people are listening more to jazz in the past few years than they did at one time. At least some did. And this isn't a make it or break it thing because in the days of the big bands and clubs there was an audience for big band music. But then when the big bands went and the small group thing came and the music started growing in leaps and bounds it left a lot of people in back. They couldn't understand or they didn't have the time to sit down and give it an effort and so they sort of gravitated toward the easier type of thing. They could relate more to something that had some words that they could hang on to.

B.S.: That's a normal human trait, isn't it, to go for the simplified thing every time if possible?

A.F.: Yeah.

B.S.: Is it improved in the U.S.? Is it still a very bad situation for you as a creative musician?

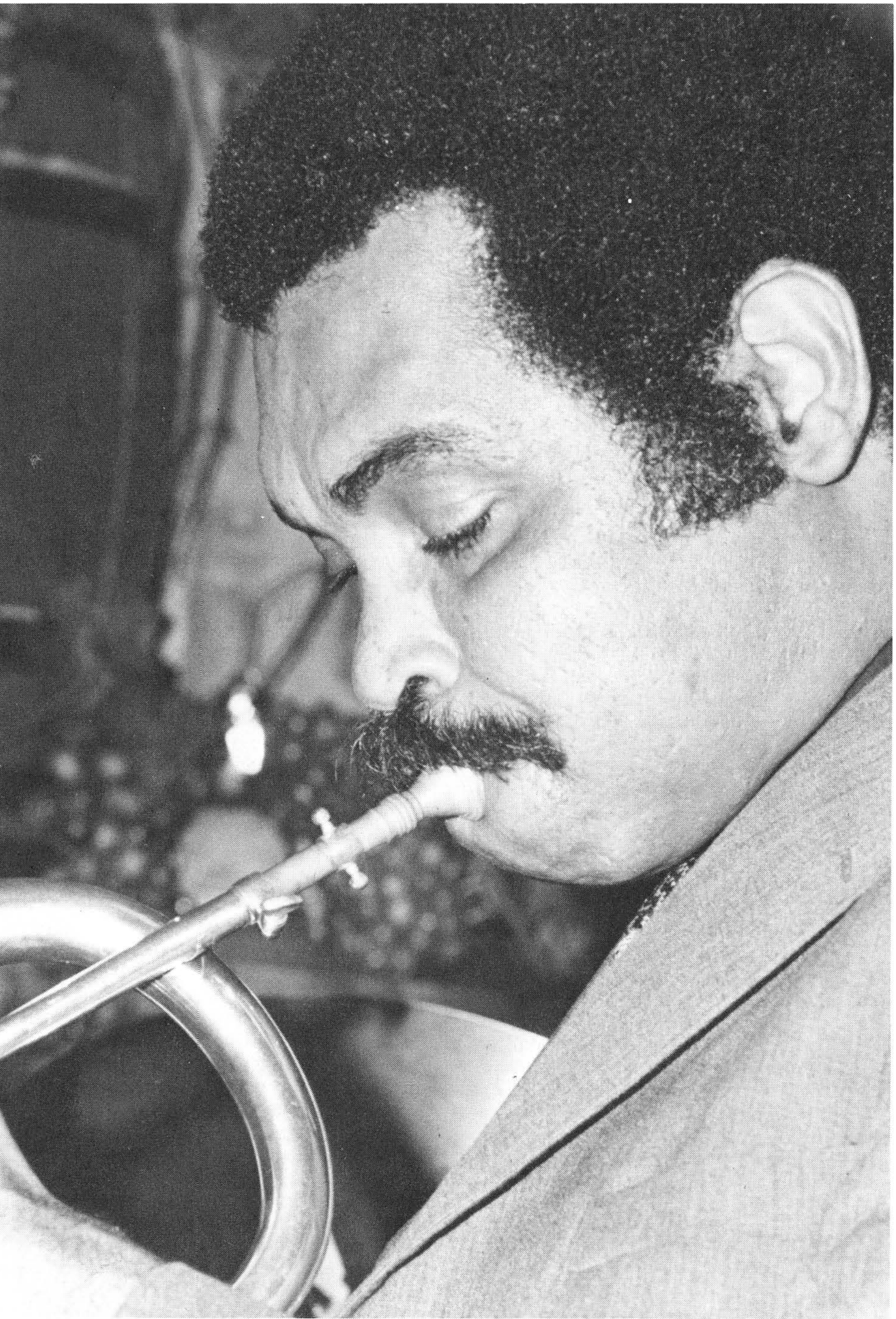
A.F.: Well, it has improved a great deal. There's much more of an awareness of what's going on there among the overall population. As far as the music and the value of the music is concerned there's a lot of education projects going on. The kids are very enthused about learning this music. And the people from my era, from my time, are very busy teaching. People like Jimmy Heath and Billie Mitchell, Jimmy Owens, Jackie McLean, you could go on and on. They're teaching at colleges or in cities.

B.S.: Do you see it perhaps coming out in a more mass media way? Obviously people are becoming more aware of it, if they're taught music that way. Do you think that perhaps we might start seeing jazz as a normal part of life, a television program for example?

A.F.: No, no, I don't see it that way. Of course jazz is always taken and used, but not in the centre ring.

B.S.: I meant people like you, I didn't mean an 8-bar chorus on the Tonight Show. I mean as a part of variety shows where bands....

A.F.: No, I don't think I see that. There used to be a time when jazz groups could appear on big shows, like the Perry Como show. People like Louis, Dizzy, and Duke could appear on the Ed Sullivan show, and there used to be jazz specials on the TV. I don't see those anymore. You know companies like Timex would have special hour shows, with about 5-10 different things going on. I don't see that now.



B.S.: We know that there's a lot more people coming to the music, younger people who are beginning to find out about jazz. Why do you think that the corporations promote all this kind of thing on television and radio? Why do you think that they don't utilize something that's obviously more popular than certain other things? I mean you can still see opera on television. Why wouldn't they want to utilize something that obviously has become relatively popular?

A.F.: Well, because one reason is that it's still regarded as a black man's music. Although there are many very fine white players involved with it. But it's still regarded as a black man's music. You might see a Stan Getz on a Glenn Miller show sometime, but he's just there for half a minute. If it was a white man's music it'd be a different thing. And so that has something to do with it. That's not the whole story because you see rock on the TV all the time and you see black people on the TV all the time. And there are comedies and things but that's a different story. Jazz music in a lot of cases is not so easy for people to get used to and the people who are in control of everything, they're afraid of it because they think that somebody would not be able to understand it.

B.S.: Do you find it objectionable that the music is put in a situation where it has to be performed in bars? Would you rather it was another way?

photograph by Bernie Senensky

A.F.: No, I don't mind playing in bars. Some people might mind playing in bars but to me I don't care where I play, as long as there's an audience that likes what I'm doing. I can play in bars or I can play in a concert hall. I don't see anything so great about playing in a concert hall, really, where you're up there on the stage and off somewhere there are 2000 people that you can't see, and you don't have any contact with at all. If you're playing in a bar or a club, at least you can see the people.

B.S.: Do you like that contact with people where they can come and talk to you, and all that kind of thing?

A.F.: Well, I don't care so much about the talk. But I can sense more of a reaction from the people in a smaller place. That might make a difference in my playing and it might not. One thing I don't like about concerts is that usually your turn is so short.

B.S.: So you have a non-elitist attitude to your music. You still feel that you're an entertainer?

A.F.: I don't say that I am so much of an entertainer but I think the music is an entertainment of itself. I think an entertainer is someone who can do other things than play music. Take Roland Kirk or Dizzy or somebody like that. They can sing and tell jokes and also play very well. But when I go out to play I'm just playing. I don't do anything but that.

B.S.: Do you think outside of the United States that the reception for the music is on a higher plane, do you think people are....

A.F.: No, I don't think so. I can't say that there's that much difference. If you go to a jazz performance in the United States or in Canada you've got an audience that knows why it's there, the reception is going to be just as good, as if it's in Japan, which is supposed to be fantastic. As long as you have an audience that knows what you're trying to do. So it happens that now you have more of that audience in the United States than we did in the past but I'm not putting the audience down because you can play some places in Europe or in Japan where the people haven't heard enough to be able to make a good judgement yet. They're liable to go crazy over nothing. Which is not very flattering to me to go out and play and I'm not able to do what I think is my best at that particular time and somebody is going to jump up and down.

B.S.: Japan has become a super jazz country all of a sudden, in the last four years I guess. This great western thing has swept into Japan. Do they treat you with some kind of special respect when you go there? Were you treated differently than you would normally be?

A.F.: No, I wasn't treated differently, because I'm treated all right any place I go. I don't get any bad treatment. I'm not treated like a king. There's no place I go that people are going to throw me up on their shoulders and dance and make a big deal. But I'm not looking for that. I'm looking to be treated like any other human being. Just because I play music I shouldn't expect to be treated any better than a person who's selling insurance, or painting a house, sweeping the street. They're all humans, you know, I don't go for that special type stuff. It makes me nervous.

B.S.: So is that one of the reasons you chose to live in Vienna, because it's cooler in Vienna for you to be relaxed and so on. Is it a good place like that?

A.F.: No, that's not the reason. That didn't come into consideration at all. I'm the kind of guy who just likes to go and do my work and play my music and be left alone. And I don't want to have to think about what's going to happen if there's a riot, is the club going to close down, am I going to get paid. Is my house going to be broken into. Just like anybody else I want to be able to do the things that please me.

B.S.: Is that an American feeling Art, all that you just said?

A.F.: Yeah.

B.S.: But there's supposed to be hip cities in Europe to live in like Amsterdam, Copenhagen. Why Vienna?

A.F.: Well, because I got an offer to come and work in Vienna and I can work there and have a certain amount of freedom too. I try to balance one thing against the other. Freedom against being able to take care of my obligations and it seemed possible that I could do it there. And I didn't see any chance of that in a hip city like Paris, Amsterdam or Copenhagen. These places are fine to go and play a concert once a year or work in a club for a week or two, I can see living there but it's not for me. Dexter Gordon's been living in Copenhagen for some years and so has Kenny Drew. Art Taylor lived in Paris for some years and Kenny Clarke has been living there for many years. But I think everybody makes their choice in that respect according to their individual possibilities and needs.

B.S.: Some of your early association in Europe is with a piano player from Vienna - Friedrich Gulda.

A.F.: Friedrich Gulda is a piano player who was from Vienna but he doesn't live there any more. The second time I went to Vienna was because he had invited me to come there as a judge of an international jazz competition that he was putting on. And he had J.J. Johnson, Cannonball Adderley, Joe Zawinul, Ron Carter, Mel Lewis and myself as judges. And that's how I happened to go there, I think it was 1966.

And so I went and met a lot of guys there and they said look you know, you can come over here, and work, stay here and you're free to come and go as you please, as long as you're here at certain times, when we really need you. So that's about how I got there.

B.S.: Is it a satisfactory situation in Europe for you, economically?

A.F.: Well, I would say not 100%. Sometimes I have to play certain things that I don't get the satisfaction from playing that I do when I'm playing on my own gig. And sometimes things are very nice. I would rather play music that I don't like than not play music at all.

B.S.: What kinds of things would you do for work in Europe?

A.F.: I worked with a big band which was under contract to the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation. And we're supposed to work about 10 days a month. Sometimes it might turn out that maybe 3 or 4 of the days are jazz productions of one type or another and the other 7 or 8 days are playing background music for singers and things. Or you just sit there and play what's on the paper and that's it.

B.S.: You get to do movie things?

A.F.: I haven't done any movie things, but a lot of TV stuff. And a lot of music that doesn't have anything to do with jazz. It's just pop music.

B.S.: Do you teach as well?

A.F.: No, I don't teach.

B.S.: And yet Vienna is a great teaching city, isn't it?

A.F.: There's a jazz conservatory in Vienna. Also one in another town called Graz. And they asked me to teach in both these places but I never wanted to take a teaching job because that would mean that I would be obliged to stay there. The students come in every week and you have to be there. So, I don't want to do that. I want to be free to go to Copenhagen or to Rome or come to Toronto when the chance comes up. And as it is now, as long as I'm there for those days when they really need me as a soloist, then they don't mind my sending in a substitute when they're doing any commercial work. So that's what makes it nice.

B.S.: So that's when you can actually move out.

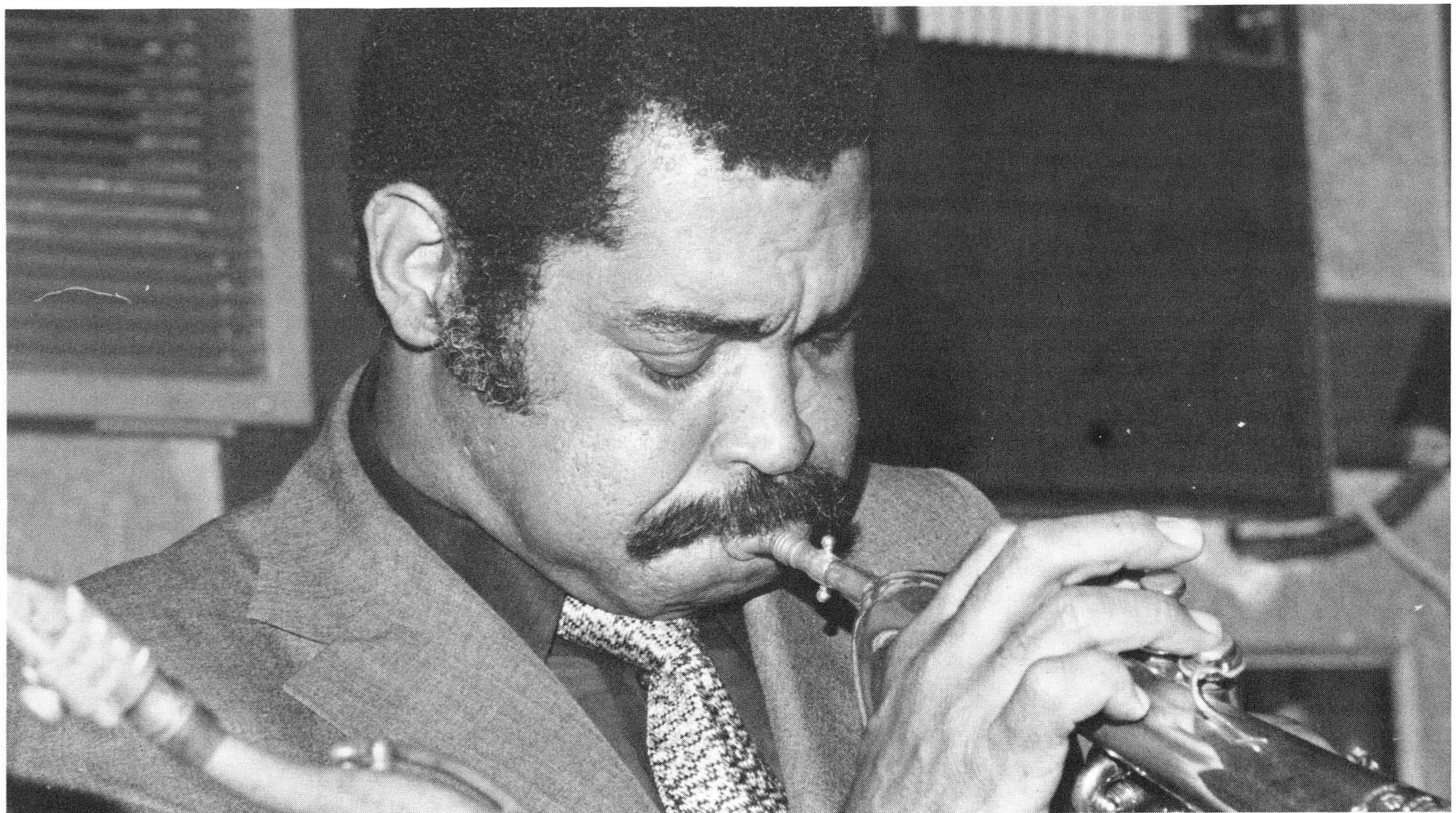
A.F.: I play in jazz clubs and I travel around and play with the other regular orchestras as a soloist, in Copenhagen or in Holland, in Germany, places like that.

B.S.: Do you find that the calibre of the musicians that you play with in Europe is good? Are there specially talented musicians in Europe? Dexter Gordon told me years ago that when he first went to Europe it was really...quite abysmal. That the European musicians were really imitative, didn't swing and didn't really understand the music. Do you feel it's like that in Europe?

A.F.: Well, I would agree with Dexter on that. I'd say that there's always been a few of them playing quite well. But now you find there are more and more that play very well. The calibre is quite high. I find more and more good players there. But still all the impulse comes from this side of the ocean. Nothing of any great influence starts in Europe. Things of influence start in the States. And go over to Europe.

B.S.: There are absolutely no individual originally creative musicians out of all the Europeans that you can think of?

A.F.: I would say that there's some special players but it's not an easy thing to explain. Take the U.S., you have some very good players, some players that are style setters. Well, a few. Every player in the United States is not a style setter. Well, over in Europe you have some very good players but you don't have any style setters at all. They're European as far as I can see. You have some that are fine



that I would love to play with every day for the rest of my life. I don't care about everybody having to be a style setter. Take a player like that famous bass player, Neils Henning. He's just fantastic any place you go. That Spanish man Tete Montoliu; he's a fantastic player too. But you're not going to find anybody in the United States trying to play like Tete. They're going to try to play like some American player, like Art Tatum, Herbie Hancock or Chick Corea, something like that. The innovators are on this side. But you'll find good players the world over.

B.S.: Do you find it very unfortunate where the direction's gone into electric music like Miles and Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea?

A.F.: Not at all, it doesn't make any difference to me what direction it goes in. It's not for me to say for one minute what direction anything should go in. People play what they want to play. They play what they would like to hear.

B.S.: There's a lot of controversial thought amongst jazz listeners about what happened to the music. The electric part of it. I mean that it had become pop music.

A.F.: It has, but it still comes back to where, if you don't want to listen to it, you don't listen to it. There's still a lot of guys around who don't fool around with it.

B.S.: How about the post-bebop development. Do you listen to some of those players? Eric Dolphy, for example.

A.F.: Eric was one of the guys I knew when I first went to California. We were all trying to learn at the same time. Eric was a fantastic musician.

B.S.: He was a style setter though, a major influence on players.

A.F.: That's true.

B.S.: Have you ever played, yourself, in that kind of situation with some of the new musicians?

A.F.: There was a time years ago when I used to live in New York and played concerts with people who were then considered to be in the - what they would call the avant garde - people like Charlie Mingus and there was a vibes player named Teddy Charles. And at that time Teo Macero was quite busy. And I was working with these kind of guys on concerts. They would call me in for the gigs because they knew that I would give whatever I played my best effort. So I was just doing those kinds of things. Playing with George Russell, people like that. But I sort of got away from it because it really wasn't my thing. It was what they wanted to do. I was able to do it. But other than that, I had no great feeling to go after it on my own.

B.S.: I was thinking even further on than that. I was thinking about after Dolphy, like Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, those kind of players. Any thoughts about what their music is?

A.F.: Well, I first heard Ornette out in California, when he was just another guy trying to get up on the bandstand. At the time we were all trying to do that. And later he came to New York City with his group with Don Cherry and Billy Higgins, I had my own guys at the time and I was just going in another direction. And I still am. I never felt any great need to go his way. That's OK for him. But it didn't pull me.

B.S.: Did you listen to some of those people?

A.F.: I listened to him because when he first came I was working opposite him at the Five Spot.

B.S.: There was a lot of controversy going on in New York....

A.F.: There was a great deal. I think it was overblown. It was detrimental to the scene. I think too much weight was put on him. Like here comes the Messiah. You know, this was not the case. He was another individual. A very great player, but there were a whole lot of them already. But these jazz critics and writers around there, they started talking about him. It sort of gave people the idea that the music started right then. It didn't start right then.

B.S.: Do you think that perhaps sometimes jazz writers and jazz critics are irresponsible to the music?

A.F.: Well, I don't think that they intend to be but I would first want to say that Ernie Henry and Dolphy, especially Dolphy, at the time that I was living in California, were very much influenced by Charlie Parker as everybody was. One thing that Ornette Coleman did was to show that there were some other possibilities in the music than for everybody for the rest of eternity trying to play like Charlie Parker. And this is a very good thing. I'm not trying to put Charlie Parker down because I think that he is one of the very greatest players that there has ever been. And I think that the critics and writers in general have to have something new to write about. They just can't keep writing about Charlie Parker all the time. So when somebody comes up with something new that gives them a chance to put some words down on a piece of paper and sell it to a magazine. So naturally they're going to do that, one way or the other.

photograph of Art Farmer by Bernie Senensky

B.S.: But you think that what they write is sometimes detrimental to the music?

A.F.: Well, I think that they can widen the scope.

B.S.: Would it help if a lot more of them were musicians or played musical instruments. Do you think that would be some kind of assistance to them as writers?

A.F.: Well, I don't think you have to play music in order to write about music. To write about music you have to love music and be able to write. And writers who are amateur players don't write any better than the ones who don't know one finger from the other. It doesn't matter at all. It's just that when you put all the emphasis on one style of music to the detriment of other styles that are going on it's going to make music suffer because the public thinks this is the only thing that's happening. So the public goes out to hear that and then they say, well we have heard that, what's new now? And things are going on all the time.

B.S.: Have you found that more young people are coming to see you when you play publicly?

A.F.: Well, I see some young. I noticed that there were some young people in the audience when I played in New York City last year. But I've always seen some.

B.S.: So you haven't noticed that there's some kind of big upsurge with a new generation of people.

A.F.: There's always a new generation and there always will be. And new people are coming to rock too. There are some musicians, who started off in rock, find out that there's more depth in music than just rock and might branch off into jazz. They might bring jazz into what they're doing.

Prestige and Riverside were bought by Fantasy Records, and so they decided to reissue some of the things that were made 15-20 years ago. They didn't have to pay all over again, and they sell very well.

B.S.: Do you benefit from this?

A.F.: No.

B.S.: What about royalties?

A.F.: You're supposed to but you hardly ever hear about them unless you get a lawyer looking for you. There's a double album that I made in 1954. They don't pay me again but there's a whole new audience that's never heard those things and those are the people who go out and buy them. The only thing they heard is rock. They've probably been buying rock records. They might have heard of Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, Coltrane but they haven't been exposed to other things. Well, even if they heard of Coltrane and heard of Miles, they heard of Miles and Coltrane in a later context. The things that they were doing lately. They didn't hear the earlier things, so they go back and buy the earlier things and say wow, this is interesting. That's not a drag.

B.S.: Have you ever had a satisfactory arrangement with a record company? Where it's done you a lot of good, when you felt everything was right?

A.F.: No, not really, I've had a lot of arrangements that were never completely satisfactory. Although I've had my chance. If you make a contract to record three albums for a company and they don't become big sellers, they are not going to keep bringing you into the studio. They're going to bring somebody else in and give them a chance too, so I don't blame them for that. The thing that I blame them for, is why they don't push every record that comes out. If they can't push the records I don't see why you should make them.

B.S.: There are a lot of musicians who have started their own labels because of the unsatisfactory conditions. Have you ever felt inclined to do that?

A.F.: No, I haven't because that requires a great deal of work and concentration and dedication and I'd rather put my energy into making the music than that, but I can see why they do that sort of thing and I think it's a very great idea. But it's a very frustrating thing. Business is a 24 hour job too. You can't split yourself up so many ways if you're going to play music. As far as I'm concerned, that's enough. If you get into the business end of it, you have to worry about the distribution which is a heck of a job, try to get your records into the stores and then try to get the stores to send you the money for the records. I can see where a guy's going to wind up spending more time thinking about that than thinking about what he's going to play. That's the thing that frightens me about it.

B.S.: Would you like to go back into the situation you had before where you had a nice quartet with Jim Hall and you had the Jazztet years ago and the quintet with Jimmy Heath. I heard all those bands. They were very beautiful things. Would you like to get back into that kind of situation?

A.F.: Sure I would. That's the ultimate thing, I think, to have an organized group that you're working with. You're working with a steady group and you know the people and the people know you. And you can build up a repertoire. You can work on things over the months or over the years and polish things up.

B.S.: Isn't there enough places when you consider all the different countries in Europe and the access you have to them. Is it possible to put a band like that together now and tour Europe and do all the festivals and all those things?

A.F.: The economic picture is so hard at this time that it's virtually impossible unless I were to get some fantastic hit record out like say somebody like Chick Corea or Herbie Hancock or Donald Byrd. You know they get the records out where they become very popular and are able to demand a great deal of money. Other than this it's virtually impossible because to get good players to go out on the road you've got to pay them so much more than 10 or 15 years ago. Where's the money going to come from? Now I can come into town by myself and get a decent salary for myself but if I was going to bring in 3 or 4 other guys I would have to get at least triple the amount in order to pay the guys and pay the transportation. I was talking to a guy recently who travelled with big name players. He said, "I just had to leave because I was only making $400 a week and that just doesn't make it on the road."

B.S.: Is it difficult for you to go out because you have to take care of your family, your home and everything, in Vienna. Is is very difficult to do that?

A.F.: Well, it is difficult. It's not impossible but a person doesn't get rich doing what I'm doing. If it's just for the money I can stay in Vienna and work in the studio. But when I come over here in the summer, I have to plan very carefully according to my own needs. It would be the same if I were going from the United States to Europe so it's hard enough for me to take care of myself without having to think about taking care of 3-4 other guys. You get good players and they have their obligations too. It's not an easy thing.

B.S.: Do you like coming back to the United States once a year?

A.F.: Yeah, I like it. I don't like to stay in any one place all the time. I don't like to live in the States that much just to stay there. I don't like Europe that much just to stay there. I really like to get around and play from place to place.

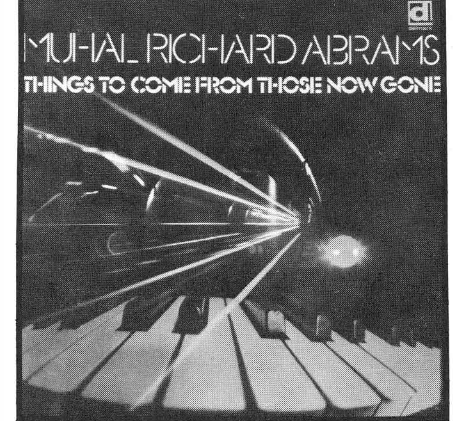
B.S.: It seems there are a lot of people in Europe. Do you feel expatriated? Are you like a colony? Do you all know each other because of this situation?

A.F.: We have our contacts and we meet up from time to time. If I go to Paris then I'll see the guys in Paris. If I go to Copenhagen I'll see the guys in Copenhagen. And vice versa. When they come to Vienna they see me in Vienna. In Berlin I just saw Carmell Jones and Leo Wright. They've been there for some years. And everybody there sort of have their roots there too. It's a spread out thing and I want to feel that I'm at home any place I go. I don't want to be in one place and feel everything is so strange I got to go back home. I don't want to be bound to home, and at the same time I don't want to feel that I can't go back home. I like to live in the world not just in one town or country. But I speak to some guys and they tell me, cut loose. I said I'm going to the States within the next two weeks and they said, "Gee, I'd like to go back too, but I don't have any more connections over there." That's a dangerous thing. That's something that I always try to avoid by coming back every chance I get to keep things open as far as I'm concerned. And I don't have to stay over there all the time. I don't think it's a good thing; at least for me it wouldn't be a good thing to be limited to just being able to work over there. Because I can come and play with certain people over here, and might learn something and take it back there and vice versa.

Bill Smith wishes to thank Peggy Bunting for transcribing the tape and David Lee for his assistance in the final editing.

New souls, Old souls...

Muhal Richard Abrams' eagerly-awaited third album, Things To Come From Those Now Gone, is a Ballad For New Souls and a Ballad For Old Souls, looking at once forward and In Retrospect, a brilliant statement of the amazing musical resources Abrams has at his command. It is a breathtakingly beautiful flute solo by Wallace McMillan. It is the shimmering, impressionistic vibes of Emmanuel Cranshaw. It is the pure voice of Ella Jackson asking "How Are You?" and the blistering saxes of Edwin Daugherty and Richard Brown making you ask the same question of yourself. And it is yet another fascinating proof of the fact that members of Chicago's AACM are creating some of the most gripping music around. Things To Come From Those Now Gone is seven new compositions by Muhal Richard Abrams, each revealingly different from the others, each held together by Abrams' confident piano. It is an album for old souls and new souls. It is an album for good souls.



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(...who? me?) WOODY SHAW

FROM DIALOGUES WITH EUGENE CHADBOURNE

(Author's note: I was once eating dinner with Woody Shaw at a home in Edmonton, Alberta, when someone wisely or unwisely put on the album Iron Man by Eric Dolphy - Shaw's first recording date. Shaw nodded enthusiastically through Dolphy's only solo, but abruptly stood up and went to the bathroom when his own started. Shaw was 17 when the album was recorded. Now 30, he's gone through some heavy dues-paying and now may be going blind due to an incurable eye disease, retinitis pigmatosa. But he insists that followers of the music will be hearing more and more about him. "I'm the next cat", he says. When his Iron Man solo ended, Shaw came out of the bathroom and grunted, "Well, that really wasn't as bad as I remembered it.")

I was talking to Cedar Walton one day and I said, hey, man, is it true that something is happening to us? And he said, yeah, I think so. Sure, it seems like when everything gets down, with recessions and depressions, they give us a chance. It's a drag that it has to get to that stage or level for anything to happen for us, but it's true. Jazz is flourishing now. At least I think so.

I recently left San Francisco, dissatisfied with the musicianship, and I went back to New York seeking a record contract, to get some records out, because I feel I am the trumpet player now. I have the confidence and what-not which I did not have before. When I left New York I hated it. New York: either you make it or you don't. When I left New York I ran away from New York, and I'm sure if you talk to a lot of musicians they'll tell you how New York is. This is the whole thing, survival - survival of the fittest. But I needed that, because San Francisco is just too laid back. There's a certain nostalgia about San Francisco I like - being around the water, going to different parts of the Bay area if I want to. It's a very nice city. But I'm from the east, and I needed to get back to that. I felt that I could bring back west that eastern thing: but I couldn't, and I felt myself dying. Losing the fire in me that I usually play with. So I found that. I went back to New York. I was sort of seeking something, a new level, and I found it, with this new record I did for Muse. Incidentally, the new record features Azar Lawrence, Steve Torey on trombone, Buster Williams on bass, Cecil McBee on bass, Onaje Allen Gumbs on piano, Tony Waters on congas and Guilherme Franco on miscellaneous percussion. This date I did for Muse, with whom I'm now exclusively signed, proved that I have achieved this new level.

I got a chance to play with the cats, you know. I mean, New York is a very unique place, and if it stops the whole world stops. It's that kind of place. I went back to my roots. I did a lot of sitting in. The highest experience was with Sonny Rollins. I played one night with him at the Village Vanguard. He did his shit and I did my shit! He looks like Charles Atlas now, he's so big. I also sat in with Dizzy Gillespie, who had Jon Faddis with him, and that was really good for me. I felt I had achieved what I went to New York for. I also sat in with Elvin Jones. He was swinging so hard his eyes were crossed; but he doesn't like trumpet players. When I started playing he went to nut-ville.

I only stayed about 3-1/2 months, but it was good and I plan to go back. I periodically plan to go back to New York and replenish that fire, you know. I'm going to alternate between San Francisco and New York. I feel that it's necessary, it's time for me to move now.

I feel that I'm starting to hear trumpet players that play like Woody Shaw now. Which is quite amazing. You start out listening to your favorite artists, you emulate them but soon you get tired of emulating them and being told that you sound like so-and-so. Stylistically and conception-wise, you gotta come from somebody and somewhere, but I honestly feel now that I've acquired my own way of playing the trumpet, the way I hear it, and I've become a major innovator and influence on the instrument. And I've recently taken up the fluegelhorn, which has opened up even another dimension. I used to hate the fluegelhorn, but now I'm playing it and I'm trying to play it as a completely separate instrument from the trumpet, which it is. I'm developing a fluegelhorn concept which is different than my trumpet concept.

I want to do for the trumpet what John Coltrane did for the saxophone. So I'm starting to achieve that now, and I'm sure most people who listen to me would say "That's Woody Shaw!" now and not Freddie Hubbard... Freddie and I obviously came from the same source of inspiration, which is Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Navarro, Clifford Brown, Miles Davis. But we're two separate individuals. I find it impossible to sound exactly like someone.

It's a matter of development. I'm just trying to perfect what I want to do, to be heard. I think it's starting to get to a level where I'm starting to... well, a lot of things are starting to happen for me now, because it's been told to me that I'm the next major innovator on the trumpet. Lee Morgan told me that one time. Now I can dig it. It has something to do with turning 30. I started playing very young, and I became professional at the age of 13 and 14. I had that prodigy tag around me. When a man or a woman starts out as a prodigy, you've got to outlive that and become an innovator or a creator in your own right. I think I'm arriving now. What's holding me back, I think, it's been me - mainly me. Not having the confidence in myself. Other people have a lot of confidence in me but I'm just starting to realize, hey, you do your thing, without any reservations.

When I go back to New York and meet young musicians they say, hey, you the cat! And I say, who? Me? But it's true. Because I don't hear anybody else doing what I want to hear done on the trumpet. I don't hear anybody else doing it. I want to create something beautiful and moving. Color... I'm into harmony. And I like color. What I do on the trumpet is, I'll take a rule and break it, and resolve it, just to show I know what I'm doing. The rule in life is, if you go out and you fuck up, you gotta resolve it.

I think that any individual who strives for something has to be able to prove it. If you break a rule, prove why you broke that rule. Make it fit. Show why. I think I can do it now. If I make a mistake, I like my mistakes because I try to turn them into something. If I split a note I might hold it.

All trumpet players I hear play diatonically, like do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do. I don't want to play like that. So I've stopped listening to trumpeters. There are a few... one of the most intriguing trumpet players I can think of is Lester Bowie of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. We've been compared a lot, not that we play alike, but we take those chances. And he can play! He knows the instrument. The first thing I look for in a trumpet is the tone. Not the technique, but tone. I like Charles Tolliver, he's still searching. I like Charles Sullivan, Eddie Henderson, Oscar Brashear, who is an outgrowth of me; Terumasa Hino, who is an outgrowth of me. Don Cherry I can dig as a composer, but not as a trumpet player. It's difficult. A small few. The trumpet is a very difficult instrument to play. It takes years to develop a good sound on the trumpet. Everybody wants to play high when they get a trumpet. In reality, the beauty of the trumpet lies in the lower register; it's hard to get down there. The fingering is difficult. I try to play all over - the bottom to the top.

I think a lot of the young trumpet players should learn more about the basics. In respect to young saxophonists coming up and jumping on John Coltrane, they should learn where he came from. They don't realize he used to walk the bar. Rhythm and blues. Eddie Cleanhead Vinson. That's where he came from. That's where I came from. I didn't just start playing this music.

You gotta learn. When I hear the records I made when I was young... I feel very good about them, and I feel very bad about them. Because from my experience, every prodigy comes to a fast end. The individual has to grow naturally, he

achieves the level that he's looking for. Overnight success is bad for you. The individual has to pay some dues, that's a very necessary process in life. You gotta pay some dues, you gotta get some experiences. To know what hate is, and vice-versa. In a way I regret I was a prodigy because when I turned 30 it really turned me around. WOW! I don't want to sound like a hypocrite, but then again, I don't really regret being a prodigy. I do and I don't. It's very contradictory. One enhances the other.

My experiences with Eric Dolphy were very valuable. I would like to credit him with forming my basic conception of where I want to go. When I met Eric I was playing bebop. I looked at his music, man, and it frightened me. But I could play it. Still, we never really got together like we wanted to. It was quite an experience to go to Paris and find that he wasn't there waiting on me... he was dead. So that was a very strong experience... coming back and playing with Horace Silver, that showed me a lot of basic things. You got to know what the basics are before you can venture out. Art Blakey, Max Roach - Max Roach! That was one of the worst experiences in my life! I was replacing Freddie Hubbard. We started out the first night with Cherokee. Max sets it up...and...how fast is fast? He was playing so fast, man I was blowing into the trumpet and nothing was coming out.

McCoy Tyner, who I look to as my musical guru, he's proven very valuable to me. The man is so together - you can see the wisdom in his face.

He's finally starting to be recognized for what he is and what he has contributed. I would like to become involved with McCoy again. We're going to get together, but McCoy just says, "We'll get together." Eventually I will get together with him. It's inevitable. There's not really any desperate search to get together, though, but we will. Because I can hear it. And what I'm doing on the trumpet fits best with him. Plus - I don't hear any trumpet players playing in that direction.

This new record will pretty much prove where I want to go in music. It's more "in" then the two records I made on Contemporary, but then again, it's just as "out". Those two records, over-all I was satisfied, but I wasn't satisfied with my playing. I hadn't perfected what I was lookingfor. The musicians on the records were very inspiring to me. I put the music together, but they communicated what was there. I thought they did. As for myself, I think I went out a little too fast. I want to prove to the critics and to the public that I can play as in as anybody, as pretty as anybody and as funky as anybody. But at the same time, I want them to look at me and see what it is I want to say. Because I think I have something to say.

I think I eventually would like to play one way, one context. Now, though, I find my enjoyment comes from playing all

photograph by Dac Dang

kinds of music, including boogaloo or funk. But I don't see how a musician can deny his own freedom of expression. I can't buy that. Let me say this. If I could get $25,000 to record boogaloo, I'd do it. But when I went to perform, I'd play what I wanted to play. That's the element of surprise. Surprise is very important, I like to keep the audience elusive.

That's one of the things in the creative process, to never let them know where you're at. And I have a lot of respect for the audience, they're sitting there listening to you, so you have to communicate with them. But I don't believe in becoming subservient to the audience. You have to meet at a halfway point, it has to be coming both ways, you know, from me to them and from them to me. So as far as my audience now, they're starting to hear me. As McCoy used to tell me, you can't separate the music from the life, so I kind of thrive on it.

I try to vary my musical context, different instrumentations. That's where the joy of playing the music comes from. When I was younger and getting there, I used to never want to play one way. When you look at all the records I made, I've made it kind of rough for the critics - they can't tell what I want to do.

I think I was born to play music. That's my purpose. I've been able to make... maybe a little better then a sideman's money. I don't make a lot of money, but I don't mind it. I'm playing my own music. I'd rather make $20 playing music I love to play then make $1,000 playing something I don't like. Because I know how I am, I can get very evil if I'm playing with someone I don't like.

My parents are both still alive, I see them, not often, but at least once a year. My father is very involved in jazz... he wasn't that happy when I first got into it because I was supposed to be a classical trumpeter. But he listens to Trane, Eric Dolphy, McCoy. He's really into it. I'll get a letter from him and he'll let me know the latest things happening in New York. Sends me the latest articles. It's very beautiful. Both my parents are proud. They're just wishing I'd get more - more green. It's hard to explain to people that you really love what you're doing. Make money or not, I still love it.

I compose out of necessity. I can really compose under pressure. I like to compose under pressure. A record date, a particular affair or assignment. I produce then. I like pressure. I like competition. It's very good for a musician to stay around other musicians who are his equal or are better. That way you grow. When you become the best, you stop. Actually, I compose with a title first. And then I write the composition for the title. I compose for the title. I've seen record dates I've done where it's been Tune A, Tune B, and then when I get the record I don't know what's what. I believe a composition has to be inspired by something. So I find what it is that's inspiring me to write a composition and I dedicate it to that inspiration.

I feel today that a lot of musicians are ashamed to swing. That's the essence of jazz, swinging. I go see somebody who doesn't swing, I say, how much money are you making? Are you really satisfied with that? The pulse, the swinging is like the heartbeat. But the hope for the jazz scene lies in the young musicians. When you pick up my records you will hear someone new, who you've never heard before. That's the hope of the music.

The young people today are very serious. They're coming out even younger then ever now, and I think the level of maturity is higher. What I see now is awareness.

It didn't used to be like that. I don't regret having delved into drugs, because it did let me discover something about myself. Not only drugs, but women. You see somebody doing something and you think, hey, this cat's groovin'... but he ain't groovin'. So I don't know, it's just like you try it out of curiousity and before you know it you're hooked, you have no choice. I've always had this personality, being very hyper, always ready to hit... and, I don't want to lay on the subject too long. Now it's changing.

I've found that I have the talent to groom young musicians. Miles Davis had that. Jackie McLean has that. John Coltrane had that - the way he groomed McCoy Tyner for his band. A lot of musicians call me up to play with me. All I can say is, okay, we will one day. Because I can hear a cat and groom him and make him play the way I want him to play. But if I hear somebody in particular where I think, hey, I hear something there, I'll show him everything I know. It's up to him to bring it out of himself. What I try to do is instill the confidence. The main thing I look for is openness, a sign that the person can grow. Because I can do the rest.

I have retinitis pigmatosa now. It's a hereditary disease of the eye that there is no cure for, and I've been to some of the top opthamologists in the country and they've told me the same thing, there's no cure, there's nothing they can do. And I say, wait a minute, this is the 20th century, man. They tell me there's a retinitis pigmatosa foundation.

Actually I'm one of the more lucky people because a lot of people have gone blind. I could eventually go blind. My vision now is impaired in the dark. It's night blindness. You become partially blind at night. But this has just enhanced my hearing. When you lose one, you gain another. Another sense is enhanced.

If I can get on stage with Roland Kirk... Rahsaan, man, is like a wizard. When I see people like that, it doesn't bother me.

I take my glasses off when I play anyway, I shut my eyes. That makes me concentrate more. I can still feel sorry for myself sometimes, but... most of the time I'm cool. I'm starting to get older, I'm starting to accept it now. I'm not ashamed to ask somebody if they can help me around. I'll just put my hand on your shoulder. Never let anybody make fun of you. Never be ashamed. If I stumble over a chair I'll tell the chair, excuse me. People look at me like I'm crazy, but I can't expect them to understand. Because they don't think like I do.

OGUN

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Side Two: Tungis' Song, Ismite Is Right, The Serpents Kindly Eye.

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INTERVIEW BY
ROLAND BAGGENAES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORGEN BO

When Red Rodney came to Europe in late 1974 it was his first visit on the Continent. After playing with Charlie Parker in the 40s Rodney disappeared from the jazz scene and didn't return until recently. He stayed in Europe for a couple of months and played in several countries, using Denmark as his main base. Rodney also recorded in Europe and albums will be released on the English Spotlite as well as on the Danish Sonet label. Hopefully, Rodney's stay with jazz will be long. I wish to thank him for his kind co-operation with this interview which was done in Aalborg, Denmark, on February 21, 1975, before Rodney played a gig with, among others, Duke Jordan and Danish tenor saxophonist Bent Jaedig.

ROLAND BAGGENAES: Red Rodney, recently you did a concert here in Europe called "The Musical Life Of Charlie Parker". What do you think of this way of reviving Charlie Parker's music?
RED RODNEY: It's always a good idea, I guess, especially for promoters to capitalize on Charlie Parker's name. Unfortunatley they weren't able to do that more when he was alive. I thought George Wein had a good idea but I think there wasn't enough thought put into it. Maybe it was rushed, I don't know. The planning wasn't so good and a lot of things were left out. I don't think it was a good concert at all and it got progressively worse each time we did the concert. There was no continuity to it....

The good things were Jay McShann and the early music of Charlie Parker. I like Jay McShann very much and I think we all liked playing the big band music. And then there was Dizzy Gillespie, always very good, always entertaining, always par excellence. But the rest of it wasn't too good, none of us got much of a chance to play. I only played one small blues chorus and I played first trumpet in the big band. I don't know why they brought me over just to do that. The whole thing was a piece of commercialism, they tried to make some money and I hope they succeeded.

Roland: Talking about Charlie Parker's music how do you consider the things he did with strings at the end of his career?

Red: Well, they were very nice but he felt very restricted with them. It was commercial and I guess they sold a lot of records - and that was good for him. But he didn't like it and after a while it drove him crazy.

Roland: Do you think that all the possibilities of the bop-style have been exploited?

Red: Well, a lot of people say that but I don't know if I agree. Of course, there's always room for those of us who play that way to continue and to improve. I don't think that anyone has matched the greatness of Charlie Parker to this day. There have been different things coming out of his influence, Coltrane for one, but it's my opinion that no one has matched him. I feel I can still play bop and be fresh and innovative. Coltrane came out of that idiom and he went on and developed a different way of playing. I liked many of the things he did but at first I didn't quite understand. I had been out of jazz and away from it and when I was confronted with that music it was new and strange and it sounded very harsh and unbeautiful to me. But after I listened a while I began to understand it better and frankly I didn't care too much for it. I liked John himself but his disciples and those who joined in on what they called the free school...I think there were a lot of hangers-on who were waiting for the ride and made a little money playing bullshit. I like anything if the guy knows what he's doing, if he knows the chords and knows his instrument and plays good music. It doesn't have to be bop, but when I hear somebody say, "Well, we don't play changes, we just play what we feel" and I see he doesn't know the changes and he doesn't know his instrument - then I know he's just joining for the ride, and I don't like that. I think you have to know the rules before you break them.

Roland: In a Danish newspaper I read some comments you had made on Ross Russell's book on Charlie Parker. What do you think of the book as a whole?

Red: I think it's great. Ross really researched his subject and today it's the best biography of any jazz personality and one of the best books on jazz. There are mistakes in the book but they are honest mistakes and in the main it's an excellent book.

Roland: From reading the book one might get the impression that Parker was an unpleasant, even malicious person?

Red: Well, I didn't get that impression but, you see, Ross and Charlie Parker were not friends. However, Charlie Parker was not an unpleasant person at all, he was a very beautiful, pleasant, modest and humble man who could laugh at himself and did many times and he was very kind to all people. He had his moments, like anybody else, but he was a genius and also a very hedonistic person.... He lived so wild and so precarious, on the brink of disaster at all times. It was amazing how he could even do the things he did in such a short life. But throughout history, a genius like that doesn't seem to be albe to make it socially and straighten out his affairs - and that seemed to be Charlie Parker's situation.

Roland: Do you think that what Russell wrote about him was correct?

Red: Yes, mostly. Of course, different people would get different opinions of the man's personality and character, but I didn't get that because I knew him. Charlie Parker was very hard to deal with, he couldn't get his personal life together and that was a difficult problem. But he was very friendly, he was a liker, he liked people and things, he was not a hater.

Roland: What can you say about the things that are written about you in the book?

Red: Ross Russell interviewed me and I think he treated me very nicely. You see, I didn't know Russell. I met him way back but I didn't record for his Dial label. I was out there with the Gene Krupa orchestra at the same time as Charlie Parker was there.

Roland: In the book there is a chapter called "A Queer Night in Brussels" in which a certain incident is described. I understand that it was a mistake.

Red: It was a mistake. The scene was true, but it was in America. And Norman Granz didn't put us in a plane and send us to the States, we were already in the States. I don't remember if we were with Norman Granz at that time or not, we could have been.

Roland: The jazz after Charlie Parker?

Red: That's a big question for me because I left the jazz scene at that time. Immediately after I was in commercial music. I was in Philadelphia and worked a lot of society parties, weddings, social events, etc. I made an awful lot of money but the music was so terrible that I finally just decided that I wanted to play a little again. And then I moved to San Francisco and found that there was nothing there. There was less jazz than in Philadelphia, but being there I tried to make the best out of it and I played commerical music. It was a bad period, I worked day jobs for a while and I was completely away from the jazz scene. When I did hear some jazz, that was when the free school and the modal things started, and I didn't like it. I didn't spend enough time listening to it but my first impression was that I didn't like it at all. And as I kept hearing that kind of playing I thought that, well, maybe jazz has passed me by and I'm getting old and this is the new....

But then I started listening more and more and I came to the conclusion that this is not what I consider jazz. To me jazz is happy music, I feel the music must have a good swinging beat all the time. And when someone is playing his solos, his choruses, I feel he should play them the way he feels about life. Naturally, we do that whether we ought to or not, but it got so...angry, so far away from what I think is reality. It became racial and when it became racial it became very bigoted, reversed bigotry. Now it was the blacks against the whites. And I think that was a bad slap against the white jazz musicians who had been the only people in America who had been genuinely and sincerely not bigoted. I didn't like a lot of the new, so-called new jazz I was hearing. The attitude, the performance, the music, the whole thing. And I noticed that the audience didn't care for it too much, they were getting bored. Saxophone players would stand up and play fifty choruses which didn't make any sense to me. I'll quote

Charlie Parker who to me is the greatest. He said: "If I can't say what I have to say in three or four choruses I'll never say it." And that I believe is still true today. I hear players stand up and play twenty choruses and they are just repeating themselves, saying the same things they said in the first two or three.

Roland: You said before that jazz should be happy and express the happiness of life....

Red: And the sadness. The good and the bad things, because jazz is after all an expression of what's happening to you.

Roland: But maybe some of the free players feel that these times are bad and therefore they have to put a lot of hate and anger in their music.

Red: That's what they say, that's exactly what they say. I just don't agree. You know, Charlie Parker had some awful problems but he expressed them with beauty. In his music you can hear anger, sorrow, you can hear beauty and laughter. He even laughed at his own situation. Charlie Parker was confronted with more adversity and more straight-out bigotry than the new young people. I think things have really improved a great deal. But of course they don't see this - how could they? I understand, at least I think I understand how they feel and why they feel this way and to a great degree I agree with them.

Roland: But isn't the new generation

more politically involved than the generations of musicians before them?

Red: Well, that goes for their own political thought. They have no room for anyone else's, and that I cannot agree with. No one is all right...you see, I happen to be quite political, I have always been political to the point where I read two or three editorials daily. There was a time when I could name you every senator in the United States Senate and their party affiliation and a great deal of their voting record. I can still give you a pretty good discussion about it but I'm not as fluent as I was one time, but politics has always interested me. But many of the young people, I don't think they really know politics. I think they're just emulating the Black Power struggles and everything is blackness, blackness, blackness. But everything is not black or white, there's grey, there's blue, there's yellow and I think they're losing sight of that. Of course, the Nixon period was an awful period and I hate to be one to say "I told you so". But I did, I predicted it. Long before he won the election I predicted that if he did win many of the things that happened would happen. I thing the American people deserve what they got because they got complacent, they turned their backs on everything. They were satisfied because their stomachs were filled, they had two cars in their garage, and they came home every night and put on their color TV and watched the cowboys and detectives - and they were satisfied.

But now, oh now they're worried because things are not the same. But they should have thought of that when a great man like Hubert Humphrey had stood for and blamed him for Lyndon Johnson's policies with the war. I don't think anybody could have stopped that war, we were too deeply involved. I didn't agree with the war, I hated the war, but I do feel that if the working people had voted the way they usually do, Hubert Humphrey would have been president and the situation might have been different - it definitely would. Nixon...his whole career is showing what kind of man he is and I'm glad we finally found out. I was very proud of the American people for ousting him, that's something I didn't expect and happily it did occur.

Speaking of American politics...we're much different over there than here and it's understandable. It was so big, so powerful, we've been so wealthy and so many things...and we're spoiled. We lived in luxury compared to the average European and like a spoiled child we can't see some of the other side of the fence. However, I think we're heading towards a socialistic type of existence and it's inevitable just like it appears to me that the Soviet Union is heading towards a capitalistic type of existence. They're going to the right and we're going to the left and maybe this is good. My own opinion now at age 50...at age 25 I was very leftist, more left than socialists, I was embracing communism, but now 25 years later, I'm much more conservative. I still like to feel I'm a liberal but I agree with the capitalistic system, I like it. I feel it could be improved upon and I think it should be. I don't think we should have poor, very poor, I don't think we should have mass unemployment, but I don't think we are all the same and I don't think we should all earn the same.

Roland: But doesn't the capitalistic system mean that these things - at intervals - will occur? I'm thinking of mass unemployment, poverty, etc.

Red: So far it has, but I think America has done more to eliminate that condition than any other Western capitalistic type country. If we will be able to avoid these things happening I don't know. I'm not that fluent and knowledgable, but who is?

Roland: Every system has its weak points?

Red: Of course, but I've seen a little bit of the other system now, including some of the East European countries and I'm very proud to be an American now. Now that I've seen Europe I really am. All I did before was to criticize our policy, our government, our ways. Naturally, not having seen any other ways it was easy to criticize ours and of course we're always so free to do that. But now I've been in places where you can not criticize the governments.

The people in the Scandinavian countries, in Holland and in England are relatively free, they can say what they want, but I'll have to admit that once I've seen a little of the other countries I'm very glad that I'm an American, I consider myself lucky I was born there.

Roland: We were talking about the jazz after Charlie Parker...

Red: Yes, yes. I wasn't too enthused about the jazz after Charlie Parker. I realize that new music has to come in but I didn't particularly care for the music that came after Parker. I loved Miles Davis, I thought he was most beautiful, I thought he changed the sound of the trumpet. He made it much more lyrical, he was a great creative jazz artist, but what he is doing today, I don't care for it. I don't know why he's doing it, and it doesn't matter why, he must have a reason. I like him, I think he's beautiful but as for what he's doing now, only time will tell.

Roland: At Charlie Parker's time many people said that they didn't understand and they questioned the way he was playing.

Red: Well, as far as what Miles is doing, it's not that I don't understand but I don't like it. I cannot criticize him for doing this for he has been doing so much for jazz. He may be experimenting and I'd rather wait until he has been doing more. Then I can at least give a better opinion.

Roland: Are there any of the new players you particularly listen to?

Red: Naturally, Freddie Hubbard I

would listen to. I think he's a tremendous giant, but now he's going into a different direction. I don't know how to label what he's doing. It's different from the jazz I'm used to and the jazz I like and feel. But he's so great - I've never heard a trumpet player do the things he does and he does with such relative ease. He's beautiful and I love the way he plays. But I prefer Clifford Brown, I prefer Miles Davis - that type of playing. I used to like Donald Byrd very much and I understand he's very successful now playing rock and roll and I've heard people criticize him and of course when somebody makes money they are always going to criticize. And there's a trumpet player I just recorded with, Sam Noto, who used to play first trumpet with Stan Kenton and with Woody Herman. We worked together in Las Vegas, he's a great jazz trumpet player. So this last recording I made, we called it "Superbop", there were two trumpet players on it, Sam Noto and myself. We took Clifford Brown's solo on Daahoud - like Supersax did with Bird - we harmonized it and played it but unlike Supersax we each play our own solos and that album has just come out on Muse. Jon Faddis is wonderful, a great young player, he's a Dizzy-influenced player.

Roland: Let's go back some years. You started with the big bands.

Red: Oh yes, I was with Jerry Wald, Jimmy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Woody Herman, Claude Thornhill...there were so many. In Claude Thornhill's band were Gil Evans, Gerry Mulligan, Lee Konitz... it was a real progressive band. And of course Woody Herman, I was in the Four Brothers Band. Gene Krupa's band was excellent.

When I started playing my style was more like Harry James, but Dizzy Gillespie turned me on to jazz. I lived in Philadelphia then and Dizzy was living there too. I listened to him and when he took me to hear Charlie Parker, that was it. When I first met Charlie Parker I was thrilled and we were friendly right away.

Roland: What was the most important thing you learned from playing with Charlie Parker?

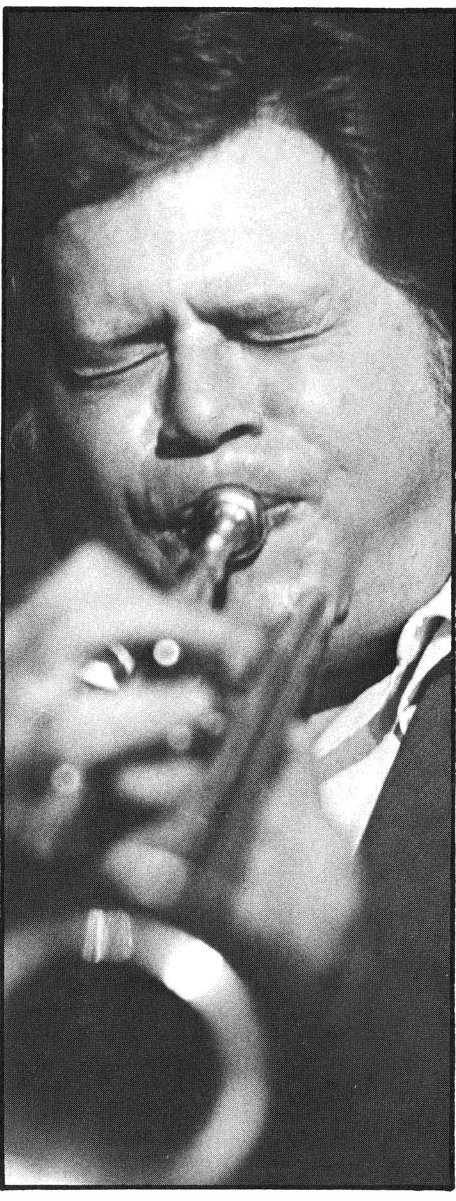
Red: Naturally, playing with him you will play your best, you'll play better than you can - and I did. I learned a great deal from playing every night with him. It has to rub off, some of it.

Roland: In Russell's book it says of you, among other things, "a trumpeter who would fit, who could play, who would follow directions and who thought Charlie Parker was god."

Red: Well, he got a little carried away there. I know he was not god.

Roland: What about your musical situation right now?

Red: It seems that I've gotten back into the jazz situation and when I go back to America I hope to stay in the jazz field. I have two albums out now and another one is coming out on Spotlite. I've gotten a little bit of publicity so I hope to re-establish myself in jazz so I don't have to go back and do Las Vegas showroom orchestras and studio work. Of course this is very lucrative but I don't wanna have to do



that. I'd rather be able to do 25 weeks a year playing jazz. That's enough, that would give me a living and I'm going to try. That would be in the States but I plan to come over here from now on every year for a couple of months. I have made some nice connections here and Arnvid Meyer can always book me a tour and there's Huset in Copenhagen to work. I hope to stay in the jazz field, too old for me to change now. Fifty years old, I'm gonna be chasing the bebops from now on till I go.

Roland: Could you say a little more about the albums you have made?

Red: Yes, the recent one is "Superbop." It is with Sam Noto, Ray Brown, Shelly Manne and Dolo Coker. That's a good one, and as I told you we took Clifford Brown's solo on Daahoud and harmonized it and used it as the melody. It's out on Muse and they tell me it's doing very well and if it makes enough noise of course I'll do a lot more work. The "Bird Lives" album which has been out for a while was the first one I made since I was back playing and I wasn't ready. I don't think it's as good as it could have been. The one I made in London on Spotlite with the Bebop Preservation Society was a great one, I love it and it will be out shortly.

When I go back I'll do another one for Muse. I'll be recording quite a bit. I've got a contract and will do two or three albums this year. I'll also record for Don Schlitten's new company.

Roland: After staying in this country for some time could you say something about the Danish jazz musicians?

Red: Well, I've stayed here for about a month and I've played with quite a few of the Danish musicians. I think you have some very excellent players here. Your bass players are great, for some reason Denmark puts out great bass players. The two tenor players I've played with here are Bent Jaedig, I think he's wonderful, and Jesper Thilo, also a very good player. I have played with both of them more than anyone. I have played with the two drummers Bjarne Rostvold and Ove Rex and your bass player Hugo Rasmussen, I like them very much. Of the bands I have worked with I like Nissen/Fjeldsted the best because they have a modern book.

Roland: You know that a lot of American musicians have come to Europe to live here. Would you like to do the same thing sometime?

Red: No, I don't think so. I like where I live, I like America. I didn't know about that before. I often felt that maybe I would like to stay. I hadn't seen Europe before but now that I've seen it I'm very happy to be an American. Not that I don't like Europe, I like Europe very much. I like to come here, to spend time here and even live here a while but I never want to give up my roots, my own country. It's the same with people here, like Bent (Jaedig), he has been all over Europe and has lived in Germany for years, but he's a Dane and proud to be a Dane.

Roland: Finally, would you comment on the jazz situation in America right now - and how would you regard the future of jazz?

Red: What I'm sure of is that we already have a large minority of fans and this continues to grow which of course is very good. Many jazz players are teaching in our colleges and schools today which has opened up an entirely new and unlimited avenue of employment for us as well as bringing forth new talent and giving these talents the tools and techniques of jazz playing. This will be very helpful to the students and therefore more and more good jazz players will continue coming in to the jazz scene. On the whole, I believe America is getting much better in the attitudes and respect for jazz and jazz players. Also, we are earning more money than ever before and I feel this will continue unless a world wide depression hits us. Regarding the future of jazz I believe it has a very good future although there will be some hard bumpy knocks along the road. Jazz will always be with us and as always it will keep developing new styles and conceptions. As long as the music is played well no matter what particular style is played doesn't really matter... just play it well and it will last forever because it is such a great artistic endeavour.

LESTER YOUNG

The Aladdin Sessions
Blue Note BN-LA456-H2

These recordings - made in six sessions between October, 1945 and December, 1948 - contain some of the best postwar Young. His form is so consistently good that it absorbs such a momentary lapse as the hesitant statement of the theme on Something To Remember You By. There are twenty-seven tunes, more than half of which are originals, which permit him to explore the blues and standard popular songs in tempi from slow to medium to fast. All great instrumentalists, of which Young is obviously one, are at bottom superior interpreters of slow blues and ballads, and one of several such performances here is East Of The Sun. The melody of this quiet piece is stated by Chuck Wayne, and Prez then enters to suggest nuances unexpected by his dry, laconic, understated playing. Here, as throughout the two records, he offers masterful expression within the confines of the three minute recording.

Young is the dominant performer on each of the cuts' even though some of his companions are first-rate musicians, they receive little solo space. He is accompanied on the 1945 date by Vic Dickenson and Dodo Marmarosa. The former is more in evidence than any other side man, but what in another context would be the charm and humor of his gruff playing is here raucous and serves only to distract from Young's lyricism. (The incessant cymbals of drummer Henry Green are similarly aggravating.) The young pianist is heard to advantage on D.B. Blues and Jumpin' At Mesners, and he evinces a fluidity that remains a hallmark of his style.

The next session (early 1946) includes Dickenson, Howard McGhee, and Willie Smith in the front line, but their role is to play riffs behind Young; they solo only on the appropriately titled Jammin' With Lester. Three of the four tunes from this session are standards (and it is on one of them, Paper Moon, that Prez is almost obscured by the loudness of his colleagues), and there is a more obviously boppish flavor to this date than there is to the one of a few months earlier.

Young next recorded with a trio later that year. He solos very well on Lester Leaps In (it must be from this solo that the

THE BLUE NOTE RE-ISSUE SERIES
LESTER YOUNG
THE ALADDIN SESSIONS
For the first time, the complete Aladdin combo recordings in one package. Rare recordings considered among the finest by this tenor saxophone giant and leader of the bop era.

rock 'n' roll classic Long Tall Sally derives), he plays an engaging melody-less You're Driving Me Crazy, and he completely dominates She's Funny That Way. Lester's Be Bop is ineffective, however, because its honky-tonk mood and necessary hyperbole are antipathetic to Young's temperament and art. His performances (and some by guitarist Irving Ashby) aside, the most interesting aspect of this session is perhaps the presence of Joe Albany. These sides are often cited when arguing that his legendary reputation as a great pianist has a basis in fact, but after listening closely to these four performances one is left with the impression that he was then nothing if not ordinary. His right hand is reminiscent of Nat King Cole's, and his left is virtually non-existent. His four albums of the 1970s reveal a musician who has obviously matured greatly in thirty years.

An entirely new group is present on the session of early 1947, and two soloists are of particular interest. The pianist Argonne Thornton (Sadik Hakim) is nearly as legendary (for a quite different reason) as Albany, and while he appears to be competent here, his soli are so poorly recorded that they border on the inaudible. (He is at his best on Sax-O-Be-Bop). A pleasant surprise is Shorty McConnell who performs well, and mostly muted, on trumpet. He is a lineal descendent of Roy Eldridge and Dizzy Gillespie and is clearly superior to some of Young's later trumpeters; vis., Jesse Drakes. As good as McConnell is and as proficient as Thornton appears to be, Young is to them as Bird is to someone like Lou Donaldson.

The penultimate session was recorded late in that same year and it features essentially the same personnel. Several of the six tunes have Young and McConnell playing unison, Thornton plays well on Jumpin' At The Woodside, but it is again Prez who stands out.

The last session of three songs - a year later in December, 1948 - is arguably the most interesting of all because the pianist at first glance appears to be one of the least of those in this album. Marmarosa, Albany, and Thornton are all misty names in the pantheon of pianists, but they are inferior, on these two records, to Gene DiNovi who plays convincingly, especially on Sheik Of Araby. East Of The Sun and Something To Remember You By are the other tunes, with the former being Young's best and the latter his weakest in the album.

It is good at long last to have these sides together and in chronological order, but there are deficiencies that might make one wish to retain the various records on which these performances have heretofore been available. This set is announced as "the complete Aladdin combo recordings," but such is not the case. Why record companies announce the complete something or other and then offer the incomplete is beyond me (Monk on Prestige 24006 is another example), but they do. Prez recorded seven and not six tunes for Aladdin in December, 1947, and the one that is not included in this reissue is the readily available One O'Clock Jump. Also missing is a 1942 session with King Cole and Red Callender, as well as a tune that was recorded at the 1948 Alladin session and was released only on the English Vogue label. It is perhaps possible to understand what caused the producer to exclude the 1948 tune and the Cole session, but Leonard Feather (who wrote the liner notes) should have given Blue Note's reasons for having done so. There can be no excuse, however, for omitting One O'Clock Jump. Two other complaints: first, a few of the original 78's from which some of these recordings were reproduced were in poor condition, and the faulty and distracting sound has not been improved; second, the sides are numbered 1 and 4, 2 and 3, a sequence that must be maddening to everyone. I know of no one who stacks records and lets them drop to be played automatically, and this numbering rewards only that kind of playing.

This set of performances is a flawed one, but its shortcomings are the fault of the producer and not of Young. The music is excellent, with Young superb throughout, and it deserves to be known by those even peripherally interested in jazz.

- N.C.

MATRIX jazz record research magazine MATRIX

Do you have a complete set of Rust, Dixon & Godrich, Jepsen and...and you STILL need to know a bit more about the records that you own, or would like to own? Over twenty years ago, a magazine called MATRIX was started in order to provide that extra bit of information. The current issue is No. 105 and it contains: Jazz In The Troc (a label listing), Billie Holiday (more on alternative masters), reviews of limited edition books and records, and bits and pieces on jazz record problems. Earlier issues have contained articles on the Egmont/ Summit label, a Gene Austin discography, a Beryl Bryden discography, a listing of the 'This Is Jazz' programme, a label listing of Continental, and a lot, lot more.
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DAVE ALEXANDER

The Dirt On The Ground
Arhoolie 1071

Anyone doubting the relevance of the blues today should listen to Dave Alexander. He's a masterful blues pianist whose wide-ranging approach encompasses many aspects of the idiom. But more important is the instantly recognisable touch which gives his music its individuality. All but one of the songs on this, his second album (he was also featured on a short-lived World Pacific album devoted to Bay Area Blues), are originals and they display a sophistication beyond the capabilities of today's geniuses of the blues. Alexander's instrumental style goes way beyond the basic - his incorporation of many jazz phrases reveal him to be a musician who is a descendant of the Ammons-Johnson-McShann lineage rather than that of Sykes-Sunnyland Slim-Spann. It shows in his musical choices - the dramatic St. James Infirmary, the laid-back "balladic" The Dirt On The Ground and the haunting moodiness of The Hoodoo Man. In Strange Woman he gets into the kind of groove typified by such pianists as Ray Bryant, Junior Mance and Mose Allison.

Jimmy Is That You? is a marvelous solo paraphrase of the masterful simplicity which made Yancey unique. The thoughtfulness of Alexander's variations would certainly have pleased his mentor. Blue Tumbleweed comes out of the Barrelhouse tradition of Albert Ammons. Sundown is much more modern - more soulful, if you will, but the strength of Alexander's lyrics and the idiomatic rightness of the blues figures are perfectly blended.

Dave Alexander's singing style is pleasing, clearly enunciated and fits the songs he has written. It is not heavy with feeling but is comfortably flowing in delivery.

"The Dirt On The Ground" confirms the promise of "The Rattler" and establishes Dave Alexander as one of the most individual, and satisfying blues performers in action today. - J.W.N.

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY AND JOHN COLTRANE

Cannonball And Coltrane
Mercury 6336.319

Cannonball Adderley. John Coltrane. Wynton Kelly. Paul Chambers. Jimmy Cobb. Chicago, 1958. The names say it all. The Miles Davis Sextet of the day (remember "Milestones"?) sans leader - one of the most unified, musically advanced and adventurous ensembles of their decade, here caught doing what they did best. The music is solid, down, lyrical hard bop performed so inventively that you wonder that other improvisers would dare attempt to compete in the same idiom. The manic Adderley plays buoyantly, with jubilation and a substance he seemed since to have forgotten. Coltrane continues his explorations after Monk, looking but not quite finding his answers. Kelly/Chambers/ Cobb were simply the most impressively sympathetic rhythm section of that era. What more - verbally - could you possibly need to know? (That this is a new and well-produced reissue, that this music is once again readily available, and that you should take no chances of missing the opportunity to pick up on it.) - B.T.

ARISTA●FREEDOM

Free And Easy
Arista AFSO-1

Albert Ayler
Vibrations
Arista AL1000

Marion Brown
Porto Novo
Arista AL1001

Charles Tolliver
Paper Man
Arista AL1002

Roswell Rudd
Flexible Flyer
Arista AL1006

Gato Barbieri - Dollar Brand
Confluence
Arista AL 1003

Cecil Taylor
Silent Tongues
Arista Al 1005

Arista is a newborn American label operating under the patronage of former Columbia Records president Clive Davis and the stewardship of Steve Backer, late of Impulse. Like Bob Thiele's Flying Dutchman enterprise at the turn of the decade, Arista is that anomaly of the marketplace, an independent speciality label with assured wide distribution. The initial catalogue contains several substantial contributions to post-bop "jazz" - whether independently produced (Anthony Braxton's "New York, Fall 1974", on which I've commented elsewhere), or this series, marketed under arrangements with Alan Bates' English label Freedom.

"Free And Easy" is a sampler highlighting "the more accessible side of the artistry" represented in this first group of releases. I normally give such sets no notice, but this one is worth a passing glance for its excerpts from two albums this series of which review copies were not received. One, AL1004, is a set by a Randy Weston quintet at the 1974 Montreux Festival. As expected, the excerpt (Carnival) is as rhythmically incisive as it is Monkishly harmonically adventurous, with much of the air of high-life music about it. Weston's cohorts are steely tenorist Billy Harper, bassist William Allen, and percussionists Don Moye and Steve Barrios. The second such title, "Doughnuts", is a frenetic performance from Ornette Coleman's 1965 London concert (Arista AL-1900, 2 records). After I point out that this is by the trio with Izenson and Moffett,

and that this concert comprises (along with Chappaqua Suite) the bulk of the important works of Ornette's post-Atlantic output, no more need be said.

By now (1975), I think it is necessary to conclude that Albert Ayler's experiment, while a vital and fascinating one into which the music meandered a decade ago, was a culturally void backwater which of itself proved fruitless. No artist before or since approached improvisation with the fervent intensity or depth of spirituality that Ayler achieved at his paradoxically early crest (1964-1966), or challenged the heritage of the music with such ferocity. During his lifetime Ayler attracted few acolytes - Charles Tyler, Byard Lancaster, Frank Wright, Willem Breuker - but without exception these by now have moved on to either widely different expressive areas or obscurity; of all his potential contributions to the AfroAmerican heritage of improvised sound, only his aesthetic dictum "it's not about notes any more - it's about feelings' has continued to affect his successors. And ultimately even he gave way. There's a morbid fascination in retrospectively watching his music coalesce, peak, and cave in on itself. What he did, only he could do - or (it seems) cared to do. He achieved a great deal for himself in his music, but its implications in extending the heritage are (at this time) apparently nil. "Vibrations" is a prime example of that early peak in his creation. Recorded in Copenhagen in late 1964, and never before released on this side of the Atlantic, the quartet of Ayler, Don Cherry, Gary Peacock, and Sunny Murray was the most powerful and closely-knit ever to interpret the saxophonist's art. In terms of rhythmic development, the tonality of his instrument, and his extension to its limits of paratraditional rhapsodic improvisation, Ayler himself was at his most iconoclastic, far less settled and more unsettling than he would be when his music finally achieved wide listenership (and ultimate prostitution) under Thiele and his successors at Impulse. His direction in his own idiom, and the importance of setting, is obvious comparing the two versions of Ghosts here with his other attempts "Spiritual Unity" (ESP), "Love Cry" and "New Grass" (Impulse), or Holy Spirit with the same composition on ESP's "Spirits Rejoice". Don Cherry's invention and expressive range were also peaking at this time, and hearing him here goes far toward destroying my faith in his present soloistic capacities. Peacock, who has since all but dissolved from the scene, is a fantastically adept melodic bassist; Murray was as averse to convention in his use of the kit as was Ayler with his reeds. But the marvel of this music was that with four such divergent directions, it had a spiritually-driven unity that gave it great expressive malleability and strength.

One of the myriad beauties of the New Music era is that there is no longer a discrete universal set of values by which performance may be judged. (In the late 1940s, any new young saxophonist was a priori a Parker disciple and liable to be dissected as such at least until proved otherwise). Each artist now must be viewed solely on his own merits. That Marion Brown, chronologically, came on the scene later than Ornette Coleman is a fact that is relevant only (industrial logic being what it is) to his marketability, not to the substance of his music. "Porto Novo" is an unusually powerful and intense example of Marion Brown's art. By 1967, he had defined himself in "Why Not" (ESP), "Three For Shepp" (Impulse) as the most gracefully lyric of the new voices by virtue of his singing tone and the natural simplicity of his lines. Here, with much more diversely-driven accompaniment than was his norm, other aspects come forth - Brown the juggler of rhythms, the iron-edged blade of truth. The title selection is a master's essay in elaboration and and contraction of rhythm patterns. QBIC and Similar Limits achieve a critical mass of which the altoist had not previously shown himself capable, with an immediacy of communication that few could parallel. His over-riding bluesiness can almost be tasted. But - as much as Brown's own presence - the determining factor in this music is his colleagues, ICP members Maarten van Regteren Altena (bass) and Han Bennink (percussion). Even in 1967 Bennink was no mere drummer. He is, rather, a master melodist of the kit, who not so much drives or even pulsates as he provides a continual counterlinear barrage from which Brown feeds (just as Bennink's momentum feeds off the alto lines). Altena is not prominent in the music, and seems overly dominated by the other two artists; shamefully so, because his rich conception of post-LaFaro bass alone makes the session worth hearing. Two small quibbles with this album - 1) the original mastering distorted Brown's tone through a great deal of unnecessary echo that has yet to be corrected; 2) the liner notes and cover art of the original issue (English Polydor, 1968) were far superior.

Charles Tolliver's links with Brown are rather tenuous - musical interaction during their seminal college years, and the sharing of the genius of pianist Stanley Cowell in various bands in the late 1960s. "Paper Man", a 1968 New York studio date, stands several paces back from the bulk of this issue, a hard-driven bebop date that would have done the vintage Jazz Messengers proud. Tolliver's conception (all six titles are his originals) is distinctive in his use of modality, in the range of textures he draws from, and in his fluidity. (Although Household Of Sand sounds relatively skeletal in this quintet version.) Even this early, his own playing had moved out of its original Hubbard mold into a darker-sounding, brittler idiom that made more room for his percussive attack and rhythmic surprise. Three titles team him with Gary Bartz, a near-soulmate in a Max Roach quintet of the day that also included Stan Cowell, but the altoist does not show well in this company. His lines are busy and juicy-sounding, over-packing notes into bars like a trash masher; fortunately his role is limited and he is well dominated by the others. Herbie Hancock's incisive comping is delightful, particularly teamed with his long-term associate Ron Carter; but even together it was just another gig - they can't swing as hard or feed the trumpeter as well as Cowell would in "Music Incorporated". Drummer Joe Chambers is idiomatic, brilliant, satisfying - and just a touch undistinctive.

It surprises me - faintly - that Impulse Records has yet to get around to "re-evaluating" Roswell Rudd. Aside from being the only innovator on his instrument since J. J. Johnson, he was - in terms of instrumental command, imagination, and insight of heritage - the only real innovator of his generation in the New Music. But since his skin is the wrong colour, the trombone is a secondary instrument in a reed-dominated era, and he spoke only through his horn instead of making the conscience-salving social articulations of his contemporaries, nobody seems to have noticed. His music always held the qualities of both introspection and universal communication. In any case, "Flexible Flyer" is the remarkable trombonist's first new American recording in nine years, and it's only to be hoped that people pay attention now. This is an eclectic, almost whimsical music in places, with his personal muscularity and respect for the past (whose achievements he uses creatively rather than exploratively as Ayler) mixed with the same pixieish humour that moved Yankee No-How in his Impulse album. But instead of working above and independently of his sidemen, here he leans heavily on the support they offer. The ghost of Charles Ives hovers close by. Besides the importance of being Rudd, "Flyer" is Sheila Jordan's first featured recording in over a decade; the two could not be better partnered. Apart from being one of the few female singers I really care to listen to (the others being Billie Holiday, Jeanne Lee, and Betty Carter), Ms. Jordan has a breathily elastic voice that bends space, intonation, and harmony in much the same direction as Rudd's slide does. The concept of this music looks in both directions in time with great respect and lyricism for both. (Remember "Everywhere"?) But instead of the near-chaotic freedoms of the Impulse date or the smothering closeness of the quartet with Tchicai, Rudd has molded this ensemble into an elastic, well-woven quintet whose voicings occasionally show a debt to George Russell. The grace of Hod O'Brien's Waltzing In The Sagebrush is extravagant and rare, and for some reason brings (of all people) Bob Brookmeyer to mind. Pianist O'Brien is a sympathetic, rough-and-ready improviser in the Silver-Hancock mold. Arild Andersen and Barry Altschul are, at least theoretically, an ideal section for this company, but play little more than the routinely expected.

.....And saving the best for last....

"Confluence" is a rare recording in many ways. Apart from the paucity of recordings by Gato Barbieri prior to the 1970s or by Dollar Brand at any time in the American marketplace, it stands alone as a cross-cultural masterpiece of the AfroAmerican spirit forged by two creators who approach that aesthetic from initially outside stances. Certainly this 1966 Milan encounter (not 1968, as the liner notes claim) was one of those rare virtuoso

meetings of minds where each is lifted from the norm of his music by the presenting challenge of the other. Barbieri is and had always been a pattern player - one set of licks for the bands with Cherry, another for down-home-on-the-Pampas. Brand pulls him into realms he had not previously known, and the tenorist responds - for perhaps the only time in his career - by abandoning the security of his fingers and exploring in depth a new potential offering. This is an ignited Barbieri, one you'll not find again - anywhere. Even more miraculous is what this amazing sympathy does for the already iconoclastically-personal Brand. He plays into times, into harmonies, and into the sound of the keys at length in ways of which he normally gives only tantalizing hints. This is one of the two richest harvests of this crop - and the hardest to find words for.

Cecil Taylor is the last great Ellingtonian, and "Silent Tongues" (unaccompanied in concert from Montreux 1974) is his monument. As the past few years have seen him - in isolation from commercial pressures - distilling the quintessence of his Units through further and further levels of interaction until effectively he has become the Unit, and all its members parts of him, the purity of his driving impulses has been refined and redefined. Through his heritage he draws two vanishing points - an overpoweringly aggressive drive, and its paradox, an impassioned impressionist lyricism that lives in his voicings and flows. "Tongues", like "Indent" and "Spring of Two Blue Js", is a multilayered composition standing as a single offering that traverses a mere universe of mood and manner. Its reward in complexity is surpassed only by the perpetual tribute and message it offers. If you doubt his lyricism (impossible if you know his past music), it could hardly be more clear than in both versions of After All. The contradictions - purity, tenderness, and manic filigree - he sucks from the right-and-wrong-coloured keys are those that no other man could control. Despite this first commercial issue in almost a decade, he may prove again eminently non-saleable - all the better for him and his art; so I would advise you to get this one - of all these or of any other new recordings this year - before it disappears. - B.T.

BILL ALLRED

Reedy Creek Romp!
Reedy Creek RCR-101

The Reedy Creek Jazz Band is a six-or-seven piece Dixielandish unit from Orlando, Florida led by Bill Allred, whose technical ability on the slide trombone is second to none on the current scene. His eight cohorts (Kent Abreo, clarinet is spelled by Tom Satterwhite on some titles, while Bob Glendon handles the piano chores on those tracks where Randy Morris switches to banjo) also have an impressive command of their instruments, each one getting some time in the spotlight over the LP's eleven selections.

The program generally divides into two groups: 1) fast, rather busy numbers featuring sudden key changes or other tricky figures that would come across in fine, exciting fashion when seen in person or 2) off-beat ballads not usually associated with traditional jazz (Wandrin' Star, Deep River, Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas) with room for Allred or tuba-ist Gene Paulson to execute some flashy passages against gentle, often out-of-strict-tempo, backing. With regard to the former, it's a rare musician (a Wild Bill Davison, for example) who can go for excitement and not sacrifice depth; as China Boy, Clarinet Marmalade, Dinah and Runnin' Wild go roaring by, I hear a lot of difficult licks being played cleanly and accurately - but not much ensemble jazz that I'd like to hear again. And as for the ballads, the material doesn't seem to fit the style.

For better results, try Church Street Blues, a relaxed, refreshing ride, complete with a genial Allred vocal and a tasty trombone-clarinet chase. Dr. Jazz is probably the best of the flag-wavers, with a driving cornet solo from Van Crowell, a killer-diller chorus from Allred and a nicely-restrained ensemble out, abruptly changing key to blast its way home.

On the whole, the album doesn't measure up to the individual capabilities of the musicians involved. Pretty much for local RCJB fans. - T.W.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

The All-Stars in Philadelphia 1948-9
Jazz Archives JA-20

My only real complaint about this LP is that Louis sings at length on only one number - Confessin'. There are other tunes where you feel a Louis vocal should be included - Black And Blue, for instance. I get the distinct impression that his vocals have been deliberately avoided for no apparent reason. Certainly I would prefer Louis to Velma Middleton - she is featured on Little White Lies and Blue Skies and she sings both in her strange, limited range, almost monotone voice. Louis does sing a duet with Jack Teagarden on Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans, and Jack does his patent vocal on Baby Won't You Please Come Home.

The disc includes the inevitable "traditional" titles - King Porter Stomp, Milenberg Joys, Panama Rag, Struttin' With Some Barbecue and Royal Garden Blues. On all these Louis excells instrumentally, twisting some of the all-too-familiar strains into typical Armstrong solo shapes. Jack Teagarden tends just to go through the motions on these tunes, content to remain smooth and sure in his improvisations, while Louis attacks every number in his brash and electric manner.

Earl Hines gets his chance to shine on The One I Love and Barney Bigard, who never really did fit in with the All-Stars, twiddles his specialties on Body And Soul. Arvell Shaw is on bass throughout, and Big Sid Catlett is on drums for all but Royal Garden Blues and the closing number (Whispering). These date from September

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18, 1949 and Cozy Cole had taken over.

You can argue all day whether the All-Stars were best in the studios, on the concert stage, or in the more intimate night-spots. If these great fifty minutes are typical of what went on at Ciro's and The Click in Philadelphia in 1948/9, let's hope there is a lot more of it to come. With more Louis and less Velma, please.

- J.R.N.

COUNT BASIE

The Count At The Chatterbox
Jazz Archives JA 16

Count Basie was truly the square root of the Swing Era. Henderson may have devised the basic call and response method of most orchestral swing and Goodman may have perfected and polished it. But it was Basie who edited it. Shook out all affectation and pretense and distilled the swing orchestra to its purest state.

The selections presented here are, for now, the earliest known live recordings of the "original" Basie band, taken from four broadcasts in January and February of 1937 (Five predate the first Deccas by 11 days).

Among the delights are a Shoe Shine Boy (called here Shoe Shine Swing) with two bubbling choruses of fours between Basie and Lester and taken at a considerably slower tempo than the Jones-Smith recording; and Lady Be Good with an excellent violin chorus by Claude Williams, who held the rhythm guitar chair (Fred Green replaced him by March of '37) when he wasn't being featured on violin. His violin attack is direct and to the gut, in the manner of Stuff Smith. He doesn't treat the instrument like a lady. He's also heard at length in St. Louis Blues, and catch the quote from Louis Armstrong's Mahogany Hall Stomp solo near the end.

But, as is normal in any Basie performance of the early period, Lester Young blots out virtually every other soloist, so strong is his presence. Utterly unique even today. Listen to him glance across the changes of Moten Swing or go careening through a triphammer chorus of Tattersfield Stomp. Oddly, he isn't heard on either of the Lady Be Goods; they're Herschel Evans showcases. And Jo Jones was already THE big band drummer.

Basie's dependency on the charts Fletcher Henderson loaned him is evident in Rug Cutter's Swing, Yeah Man (both from the same remote and the poorest sound on the LP) and the 1933 King Porter Stomp. But this is still a major Basie find. Get it.

- J.McD.

BUSTER BAILEY

All About Memphis
Master Jazz Recordings MJR 8125

Although there are some lively flourishes evident in this reissue from the Felsted series of the late '50s, it is, on balance, an LP of only marginal interest.

For one thing, although he was associated for many years with Fletcher Henderson and played with nearly every major musician of the '20s and '30s, Buster Bailey himself never struck me as a soloist of major stature. His playing seemed perfunctory, his phrasing static. At quick tempos he sounded as if he was rushing to keep up with the beat. Moreover, his over reliance on 8th notes gave his lines a predictable, monotonous quality. His tone too lacked emotional responsiveness, correct though it was.

The program he plays here includes four originals, some rather catchy, and two Handy classics - Beale Street and Memphis Blues. Memphis gets a particularly contrived treatment, starting with an oppressively slow tempo and moving through such tricks as a whole chorus in tremolo. He performed this number as a featured piece during his days with Louis Armstrong in the '60s, and it was always substantially the same as this one. His best playing is heard on Sunday Parade, which also highlights some exceptional trumpet from Herman Autrey. Autrey is also well represented on Chicksaw Bluff.

Half the LP is by a septet (Autrey, Vic Dickenson, Hilton Jefferson, Red Richards, Gene Ramey, Jimmy Crawford) which lends nice support, the rest features Bailey with rhythm.

- J.McD.

BUNNY BERIGAN

Bunny Berigan - Leader & Sideman
Jazz Archives JA-19

I regret to say to Mr. Jazz Archives - "You finally goofed"! This record plumbs the depths of the Bunny Berigan barrel and is a far cry from the consistently high standards that this reissue label is noteworthy for.

It starts out with a Saturday Night Swing Club broadcast from November 5, 1936 announced by the late Paul Douglas and Bunny leads a mediocre house-band in a brief snippet of I Can't Get Started and three other titles (Notre Dame Victory March, The Jazzeroo, Mr. Ghost Goes To Town) which last a little over eight minutes. "Guest Stars" are then added in the person of Henry "Red" Allen with a contingent from the Mills Blue Rhythm Band - Tab Smith (alto), Billy Kyle (piano), Hayes Alvis (bass), O'Neil Spencer (drums). Allen is featured vocally on Body and Soul, and instrumentally on Ride, Red, Ride, exhorted by Lucky Millinder.

Then come five airchecks by the Berigan orchestra from the Paradise Restaurant in New York City and the Panther Room in Chicago. These date from 1938-9 and include Sweet Varsity Sue and Downstream (both with vocals by Gail Reese), Black Bottom, Sugar Foot Stomp, and Study In Brown. The sound (and the music) are muzzy to say the least on four of these, only the last-named could be described as "acceptable". These are followed by two rather raspy tunes by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra - Contact (March 1940), and East Of The Sun (May 28/1940) with Frank Sinatra and The Pied Pipers.

The front cover of the sleeve of this LP has an excellent photograph of the participants in a jam session broadcast on Martin Block's Make Believe Ballroom over radio station WNEW in June 1940. The keen young faces belong to Coleman Hawkins, Jack Jenny, Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Harry James, Bunny Berigan, and Count Basie. Most of these gentlemen, along with Roy Eldridge, John Kirby, et al, take most uneven solos in some thirteen minutes of Ad-Lib Blues. The sound is horribly unbalanced, the music deathly dull, and I doubt if any of the stellar performers would have been at all anxious to listen to any playback of the dismal proceedings.

This unfortunate LP ends (mercifully) with Bunny's last big band from the spring of 1942 - a draggy version of Confessin'. To cap it all off, there is a sleeve note by a "leading Berigan specialist" Opie Austin who would have us believe that the "music business" alone drove Berigan to an early demise, and that Bunny's occasional nips had nothing to do with it.

Now if you will excuse me, I will step smartly aside before I am trampled by the monstrous horde of Berigan collectors (led by Bozy White?) elbowing their way to the Jazz And Blues Record Centre (or its closest equivalent) for a copy of this disc.

- J.R.N.

SONNY BERMAN

Beautiful Jewish Music
Onyx 211

Here is one of the earliest examples of extended bebop performances by some of the young Turks who were either already with Woody Herman's Band or would be in a year or two. The session was recorded at the New York apartment of Jerry Newman on January 24, 1946. Through the intercession of Chubby Jackson, seven musicians were assembled - trumpeters Sonny Berman and Marky Markowitz, trombonist Earl Swope, tenor saxophonist Al Cohn, baritone man Serge Chaloff, pianist Ralph Burns and drummer Don Lamond. Jackson himself failed to show and Lamond had only his snare drum. Before releasing the music eight years later, Newman had Lamond come back with a full kit, and bassist Eddie Safranski was booked. Together they overdubbed the rhythm parts. The job was done tastefully and well and the session was enhanced.

Fittingly the record is reissued under Berman's name. This fine trumpeter died from drugs a year after the date. He was 21 years old but had already made a significant contribution. He would have surely gone on to greater things for all the potential was there. He was deeply into the new music and had the chops and intelligence to handle the most demanding tempo or changes.

Cohn and Chaloff were already strong and individual soloists, Swope was surprisingly agile and Markowitz, who remains an undervalued player to this day, has some good moments. Ralph Burns was on a Teddy Wilson/Nat Cole kick but he fits in well.

The four long tracks included are Woodchopper's Holiday (formerly titled Down With Up), Sonny's Blues (first issued as Ciretose), Sonny Speaks Out (alias Hoggimous, Higgamous) and BMT Face (once called The Slumbering Giant). The standout track for this listener is the boppish Sonny Speaks Out where Berman hits a Fats Navarro groove, and Serge Chaloff makes his big horn talk true. You can hear the Second Herd in embryo on this title, BMT Face contains a very far out Berman solo in which he kicks around interesting bitonal ideas. He was certainly developing into a major talent.

This is another offering in the Onyx series of albums drawn from the Jerry Newman collection. Many listeners will be familiar with this date but it is good to have it available again. Also to be reminded in a positive way of really good things (i.e. Beautiful Jewish Music).

- M.G.

JIMMY BLYTHE

Stomp Your Stuff
Swaggie S1324

Jimmy Blythe was a blithe spirit of a pianist who recorded with many oddly-named groups in the late twenties. Blythe's Sinful Five, Blythe's Washboard Ragamuffins, and the Barrelhouse Five are but three examples, and he is featured on this LP with other motley crews all stomping their stuff. First off are the State Street Ramblers, a group which included Natty Dominique (cornet), Johnny Dodds (clarinet), and Baby Dodds (washboard). They recorded three titles for Gennett on August 12, 1927 of which There'll Come A Day is included here. Two months later, the State Street Ramblers had changed into Jimmy Blythe's Owls with the addition of Bud Scott's banjo, and Dodds is well featured in Weary Way Blues, Poutin' Papa, Have Mercy, and Hot Stuff.

Blythe's Blue Boys consisted of Natty Dominique (cornet), an unknown alto saxophone, Blythe's piano, and washboard and vocal comments by W.E. Burton, a man who turns up on many weird recording-groups of that era. The Blue Boys made a long string of titles for Gennett, and the three typical examples here are My Baby, Some Do And Some Don't, and Pleasure Mad, from April 1928. Side Two of this Swaggie opens up with two titles by Jimmy Bertrand's Washboard Wizards, Isabella and I Won't Give You None. Leader Bertrand is on washboard, scrubbing away like mad, ably assisted by Punch Miller (cornet), Darnell Howard (clarinet) and again by Mr. Blythe. Perhaps the highspots of this disc are two titles by the Chicago Stompers, Stomp Your Stuff and Wild Man Stomp. A man called Alfred Bell romps along playing the kazoo and washboard and singing scat vocals, with Blythe laying down a solid rhythm with help from a banjoist, possibly Ed Hudson. Two solo efforts by Blythe, Alley Rat and Sweet Papa, demonstrate that here was no mean pianist. To conclude this excellent Swaggie LP, which could easily be entitled Stomping Room Only, The Midnight Rounders take over with Blythe playing some real funky piano on Bull Fiddle Rag, backed by the driving bass of William Lyle and Bertrand's washboard. Shake Your Shimmy is equally forceful and is enlivened by interjections vocally from a person believed to be Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon.

Altogether this is a good introduction to pianist Jimmy Blythe, one of the legendary figures of jazz. There is a lot more Blythe still in the vaults, including some of the earliest boogie-woogie piano solos, and Swaggie would do well to consider a second volume. - J.R.N.

RUBY BRAFF & GEORGE BARNES

Quartet
Chiaroscuro 121

Live at the New School
Chiaroscuro 126

Plays Gershwin
Concord 5

Salutes Rodgers and Hart
Concord 7

To Fred Astaire With Love
RCA APL 1-1008

The group's beginnings are documented on the first Chiaroscuro album but the atroious sound quality will deter all but those wishing a complete collection of this quartet's work. It's a pity because there is some good playing - especially on Liza, Don Redman's Nobody Else But You and the two originals: It's Like The Fourth Of July and Everything's George. There's an open feeling to the music - hence the longer playing time of some of the songs but the essence of the Ruby Braff-George Barnes collaborations is their intimate sense of the miniature. They have succeeded in revitalising the popular song form into finite statements of only two or three choruses - the length of time an old 78 took to play.

The concert at The New School, from April 1974, is probably the best example of the group's work. For one thing the varied repertoire gives a broader spectrum of feelings while the informal atmosphere gives the music a genuinely relaxed flow. The popular song form is as dominant as ever but there are such genuine jazz vehicles as It Don't Mean A Thing, Solitude, Struttin' With Some Barbecue and Rockin' In Rhythm as well as Goose Pimples, Mean To Me, A Ghost Of A Chance, On The Sunny Side Of The Street, I'm A Lucky Guy and Sugar. The iconoclastic nature of Braff's cornet work is wonderfully evident in this set. His extraordinary eight bars in Sunny Side Of The Street moves from an oppressive growl to an exhultant shout at the top end of the horn. The lyricism of the original songs are respected by both soloists - in fact Barnes and Braff are instinctive melodists whose delightful interaction makes the

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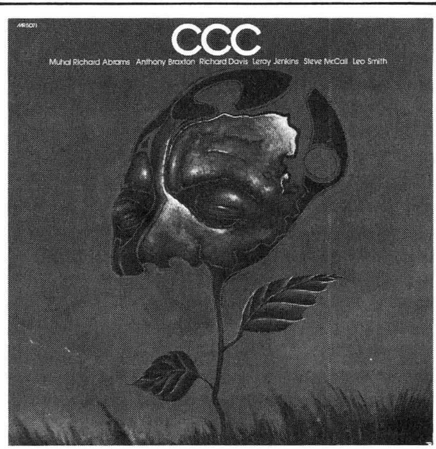

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Muhal (Part II), (Live Spiral), (Total Time)
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music fresh and continually enjoyable. They have given the songs a fresh dimension and restored to life a way of playing jazz which was almost extinct. It is also important to stress that both Barnes and Braff are first rate jazz interpreters - thus a mere eight bars of music is ample time for them to express an idea. The cohesiveness of their arrangements and the positive way in which they execute them has resulted in the production of timeless examples of the jazz art.

The three theme albums merely serve to emphasize the feelings and thoughts about the group established by their New School concert. The Gershwin set was recorded live and is thus a little looser in its flow but both the Rodgers and Hart and Astaire sets are beautiful collections of superior songs which benefit from crystal clear recording. Every nuance of Braff's cornet playing is accurately captured while the uncanny interaction between guitar and cornet is perfectly balanced.

There's little to choose between these three sets - they all represent a high level of quality not found often in this style of jazz today. The music is richer for the contributions of the Braff/Barnes Quartet. In conclusion it should be mentioned that the unobtrusive, yet vital contributions of rhythm guitarist Wayne Wright and bassist Michael Moore are the cushion from which the music flows. - J.W.N.

DOLLAR BRAND

Ancient Africa
Japo 60005

This is Dollar Brand solo, recorded "live" at the Jazz-hus, Montmartre, Copenhagen, in June 1972. Most of the record features Brand on piano in a medley of his own compositions. Brand's style is quite original and dynamic, reflecting a powerful rhythmic drive, gospelish aspects, the ability to keep more than one thing going at a time (as when he gets a powerful storm going down at the bottom, with a light folksong-like melody in a different rhythm going along on top), and the ability to utilize resonance effects on the piano to build almost orchestral edifices against his rhythmic continuity. It is a remarkably sustained performance, filling one side completely and, after a quick fade out and back in again on the other side, most of that side of the album as well. It is a charismatic performance, pulling the listener along by its sheer drive, whether Brand is fascinating you by his complexity or mesmerizing you with repetition and the anticipation of wherever he will be going next; and always conveys a sense of depth and continuity.

This solo piano medley is followed by Brand's unaccompanied flute solo, Air, which somehow evokes ancient Africa far more than his piano work but also manages to evoke a Medieval folksong more than anything else. Brand works into the song-flute routine, humming along with himself, but again utilizes it with his own stamp, and manages to be more effective than most who have tried it: it is part drone, part harmonic enhancement. The piece sounds familiar, like something half remembered from some mythical past.

In both of these performances Brand conveys much more than the sum of his roots and influences. He is even more than merely original; he can convey a sense of the joy and mystery of creation and evoke the feeling that one is listening to the real thing: an artist thinking deeply through music, but without losing that solid rhythmic drive. This is a good one.
- V.S.

ANTHONY BRAXTON & DEREK BAILEY

Duo
Emanem 601

I am quickly becoming more and more convinced that Anthony Braxton is the logical end-and-continuation point of the same musical evolutionary processes that moved - and were frustrated by - Eric Dolphy. This is not to imply that Braxton's expression is dependent to any degree on Dolphy's achievements. Rather, both are the musical renaissance men of their generations. Among his other achievements, Dolphy brought to the benighted "third stream" movement of his day a passionate expressionistic interest in all musical activity, guileless proficiency, an unafraid drive to musical adventure, and an avid intellectual commitment to both the contemporary "jazz" and "classical" traditions and to their current frontiers. For all the pararevolutionary pretense that inundated the movement, Dolphy was the single involved creator fully steeped enough in all the aspects of the expressive problems "third stream" might present to make the music work. (And one notes how quickly that stream, as an organized force, collapsed irrevocably into sterility and oblivion after he left it.) Very analogously, ten years later, Anthony Braxton is carrying through a self-driven intelligence searching toward the development of a personal art derived from the convergent streams of post-Ayler America and post-Stockhausen Europe. But where Dolphy attempted to meet many expressive needs simultaneously and was ultimately frustrated, Braxton to date is thriving remarkably by an ability to recognize and segregate the musical and expressive demands that interest him, and treating each as an individual problem demanding its own medium and attention. Regardless of the other sources in each of his many approaches, he draws from the Black American lineages at least in that his improvisations are of linear /driven/emotive nature. His techniques to be applied to solutions range potentially wider than those available to any previous creator of that heritage, and for cohesive expression demand a superior intellect to prevail and govern his every move. And so it does, without overt cerebrality, but palpably in a way seen in no "jazz" improviser since the heyday of Warne Marsh.

If you have not yet had occasion to hear Derek Bailey - in concert, broadcast, or disc - I doubt that mere words could communicate the manner of his artistry. Bailey plays guitar like no other improviser ever has. If such a species as a "post-Webern improviser" may be said to exist, that term truly may begin to describe his direction. For the most part, he eschews linear motion or development (in the sense Braxton and the predecessors of his heritage use it) in his performances, approaching music rather through "klangfarbenmelodie" = "melody in tone colour" - a process whereby musical concepts are established and developed through exploitation of timbres, pitches, intervals, and timing. The traditional concepts of drive or pulse are inappropriate. His tonal approach to his instrument allows supercompression of rhythms and motion into single, graceful utterances hanging through the spaces he forms in interaction with others. He bears out Webern's thesis that a sigh can say as much - or more - as a novel, simply by placement in its several dimensions; and therein lies his artistry. In a recently-published interview (in Lloyd Garber's instruction book "Guitar Energy") Bailey spoke of feeling no predetermined extra-musical content in his performances, that he plays an absolute rather than programmatic music. (While all "jazz" with its underlying emotional insights tends to be program art at various levels.) His is a highly formal, spontaneous genius that seeks only its own ends.

While both Braxton and Bailey thus creatively approach the fusion of post-Ayler and post-Webern musics through their highly personal stances, the gap between their approaches might superficially seem to leave little common basis for an encounter such as this. Such an assumption is very wrong. The better part of genius, in ensemble arts, is the discretion with which it is applied. Above all, these two men are consummate artists whose approaches are dominated by the need for growth through interaction. Each remained uniquely himself through these performances (two sets from a June 30, 1974 London concert and an extract from a rehearsal held the day previously), and although there were no previous encounters each - as a spontaneous composer above all - came prepared to meet the other. There is something inexplicably beautiful about listening to these three performances in chronological order (not as they are on the disc), as if you were watching a child grow as bit by bit the pair learn more of each other's arts and bend to each other. In "Excerpt from Rehearsal", at one end, you find intense pressure, almost hostility as if each man felt an irrepressible urge to overtake and dominate the other. The other end of the continuum, "Second Set" merges many passages of delicately interwoven but strongly alive beauty. ALIVE. There are so many different levels and degrees of light to beckon.

This music is a conjoint product of shared inspiration with essentially ("Excerpt" to the contrary) no dominant creator at any moment. That this can be done, that moving beauty can be realized, and still that each participant (including list-

eners) can be free to explore whatever aspect of the music he chooses and only strengthen the collective experience by doing so, attests to the enormous potential this music holds. And to the talents and humanity of those building it.

Your reactions to this music will depend on whatever you happen to be at the moments in life when you encounter it. It grows as you hear it, and you may grow with it. The whole music well exceeds its components, which is only as it should be. Producer Martin Davidson is to be congratulated for daring to conceive this encounter. This is open music. Are you open? - B.T.
(Available from: Emanem, P.O. Box 46, Shady, New York 12479 U.S.A.

MILT BUCKNER • JO JONES

Blues for Diane
Jazz Odyssey 011

Jo Jones/Zutty Singleton/Cozy Cole/
Michael Silva

Drums Odyssey
Jazz Odyssey 010

Jazz Odyssey appears to be a Panassie family project (production by Louis and Claudine, annotation by Hugues) devoted to, so far, recording Jo Jones in various settings - two albums with Milt Buckner, one with Willie "The Lion" Smith, one that may or may not be entirely solo, another of the music from the film L'Adventure Du Jazz (with Zutty, Cozy, Tiny Grimes and Buck Clayton), and these two.

At first playing, I hated the organ-drums LP. I have little tolerance for the sound of the organ, and most of the music sounded like some '60s lounge music to strip by. The second time I was able to tune out Milt and focus on Jo, who remains one of the World's Greatest Drummers. Indeed, this is a sort of textbook record, for things to learn to do and not to do. The tunes - a medium blues, Dinah, Am I Blue?, You Always Hurt The One You Love, Ida, Three Little Words, I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan, Organ Grinder's Swing, and Believe It, Beloved - are among my favorites, but lost their appeal for me after the first full chorus (and sometimes earlier), when Milt would begin to bear down, and talk, and sing, and grunt, and mumble, and force them. And there's nothing for Jo to do but follow suit, with the backbeats and triplets and stripper stuff, terrific stripper-stuff though it is, to be sure.

On the Drums LP, there are two more Milt-Jo tracks, one a seven-and-a-half minute Caravan, and a Jo solo, undoubtedly left over from J.O. 008, the solo LP. Cozy has one five-and-a-half minute solo, Zutty has three short ones, all at the same shaggy medium tempo (each is faded in), and Michael Silva, a new name to me (aged 50, he was influenced as a boy by Chick Webb) has two that total about five minutes. None of the solos are particularly inspired (little wonder, given the contrived recording-studio situation), though professional competence abounds. Silva sounds unaccomplished, uptight, (as if the drums are playing him), uninventive, unoriginal, and determined to do a cliche bit on every piece of his equipment in turn. There once were other, better albums of drum solos available, but until those are reactivated we must, I suppose, be satisfied with such as this. No reflection on Cozy or Zutty or Jo, it's just these tracks aren't anything special (beyond the fact that they were made in the first place - no one else is recording solos of the older drummers these days). Recommended, with reservations. Good recorded sound in either monaural or stereo. - W.J.

JIM BREWER

Jim Brewer
Philo 1003

Jim Brewer is a still active Mississippi-born Chicago bluesman with previous exposure on the Testament, Milestone and Storyville labels. He tends to play guitar in a country style, influenced by Broonzy and Tommy Johnson. A finger picking guitar style and vocal approach that developed and matured in rural Mississippi, in the open-air Maxwell Street Market and on the streetcars and the streets of St. Louis. Today Jim Brewer has made a relative step up into the Northside clubs of Chicago and is getting the odd university booking.

This particular solo set was recently recorded live at Kirkland College in North Ferrisburg, Vermont presumably in 1974. The whole effect is similar to Josh White or Bill Broonzy - Folk Singer. Jim Brewer offers thirteen cuts varying in length from 1:50 to 5:17 many of which are original or of traditional background. He also borrows from the song books of Broonzy, Handy, John Lee Williamson, Blind Lemon and even Mel London.

The Folk Singer reference was not meant to be a putdown. Brewer is quite an exceptional artist and entertainer. In approach and interpretation he is competent, relaxed, involved, and above all honest. This combination results in an extremely rich, relaxing, and entertaining set. He offers fine interpretations of such standards as Corrina, St. Louis Blues, Crawlin' King Snake and Key To The Highway. Amongst others there are two boogies She Want To Boogie and Sonny Boy's Shake-A-You-Boogie, a short driving spiritual I'll Fly Away; a somewhat humourous Liberty Bill' plus an interpretation of Broonzy's not often recorded tongue-in-cheek statement Black, Brown And White and a version of It Hurts Me Too (credited here to Mel London).

Adding to the overall enjoyment of this set is the clear balanced sound quality and superior packaging. Philo Records should be applauded for such quality from a live set. By the way, crowd noises are filtered out rather nicely. This is definitely a good one to look for if into superior country blues. It may be ordered directly from Philo Records, The Barn, North Ferrisburg, Vermont 05473, U.S.A. Their unit retail price post paid is $5.50 in the U.S., $6.50 to Canada, and $7.00 to that portion of the world outside North America. - D.L.

GARY BURTON

7 Songs For Quartet And Chamber Orchestra
ECM 1040

This album is disappointing, not because the music is uninteresting but because it is such an ordinary example of third stream music. Consider the potential: the Burton quartet with Michael Goodrick, Steve Swallow and newcomer Ted Seibs is one of the more literate groups in the mainstream of small group jazz; in Michael Gibbs they have a composer-arranger (and also conductor here) sympathetic to their individual and collective talents, and experienced in his own right with large group scoring; the NDR Symphony Orchestra of Hamburg supplied the string and woodwind players for the chamber group; and ECM recorded it with its usual technical skill.

One might be forgiven for anticipating rich and unique voicings, coherence of the quartet and the orchestra, and a spirit of adventure in the whole enterprise. And for bemoaning their absence in the finished product.

At its dullest, in Nocturne Vulgaire and Phases, the orchestra strikes moods more appropriate to the soundtrack of a John Garfield movie, with no discernable pulse either realized or understood. The superimposed solos of Goodrick and Burton on Phases afford some relief, but on Nocturne the orchestra's morbid chords simply stop when Burton enters unaccompanied.

Elsewhere, the quartet alternates with the orchestra more effectively. On Arise Her Eyes, By Way Of A Preface, and The Rain Before It Falls, the orchestra either gives way to or recedes behind the soloists. Apart from the obvious contrast of the two factions, the alternation is not exploited. The contrast itself might have been more effective if the soloists had been more relaxed but they are definitely strained in this setting, especially Goodrick.

At its best, Gibbs has scored concerti grossi with the orchestra providing the rhythmic basis for a typical Burton quartet performance, on Throb, and for individual performances, on Three. (Actually, the quartet is a quintet on Throb and The Rain Before It Falls, with a piano line in addition to the other instruments.) These tracks achieve a more satisfying integration of the parts and should provide a starting point for a collaboration by the Burton quartet, Michael Gibbs and a chamber orchestra that will soar where this one sinks. - J.C.

RED CALLENDER

Basin Street Brass
Legend LGS-1003

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While having the greatest admiration for Red Callender's bass playing, I can't pretend to be bowled over by his lumbering work on the tuba. And on this record, despite the presence of people like Al Aarons (trumpet), Grover Mitchell (trombone), Buddy Collette (reeds) there is simply a surfeit of tuba-ology. Red grunts and growls through the elephantine horn and for the most part his efforts are just plain cumbersome. It's an instrument on which nobody can honestly produce interesting solos - so why try?

The first side is mainly in the Dixieland vein - and not especially good Dixieland at that. After Basin Street Blues, Red's Primrose Lane, a stodgy Saints and and an equally laborious Just A Closer Walk With Thee, Callender does Sophisticated Lady with Al Viola (banjo!) and Harold Jones (drums). Maybe he ran out of wind; the piece definitely ends strangely and incompletely.

The second side is more palatable, especially when Aarons, Mitchell and Viola (guitar) get the chance to blow. There's a tasty tenor solo by Collette on Mitchell's Fat Cat. Lush Life would be fine - minus tuba.

In short this is not an LP to linger over. The most useful sort of tuber is buried underground. Perhaps Callender should start digging a deep hole. - M.G.

GUS CANNON

1927-1930 Complete
Herwin 208

This definitive collection is the ideal reissue: (1) all 35 of Cannon's early recordings (those cut before the commercial success of Walk Right In in the 1960's refocused attention on him) play out in chronological order, including the only known alternate take extant (Viola Lee Blues) - and pressed onto two discs, when many labels would have used three, (2) original 78s in often unbelievably good condition were unearthed and remastered to produce a sound of surprising clarity, (3) the double sleeve presents complete discographical data plus reproductions of rare photographs and ads, and (4) the supplemental booklet contains a lengthy and detailed biography of Cannon, along with complete words to every vocal (the lyrics often appear on some LPs as a substitute for liner notes, but here are valuable not only to clarify occasional slurred diction but also, via additional text, to explain some of the more obscure references by relating them to incidents in Cannon's past). You simply could not want anything more.

The bulk of the material, of course, is by Cannon's Jug Stompers, one of the all-time great jug bands, which could produce an amazing drive and a swirling, full-bodied ensemble from, usually, only three men, playing banjo/jug, guitar/kazoo, and harmonica. Nevertheless, the six selections by Cannon (recording under the name Banjo Joe), which open the set, have their own special attraction, being good musically, offering opportunity for comparison with the later jug band versions of some of the same tunes, showing Cannon's medicine show talent of using everything available (whistling, chatter, kazoo) to enhance the performance, and providing a glimpse of another giant of country blues, Blind Blake, as an accompanist on four sides.

One expects - indeed wants - the weaker tracks to be present along with the masterpieces, but even so the overall standard is surprisingly high. For each of the more famous numbers - the steaming Walk Right In, the bluesy Going To Germany, the driving Mule Get Up In The Alley - there are many lesser-known efforts of equally high quality. Noah's Blues, a slow instrumental, features an imaginative and low-down lead line from Noah Lewis' mouth harp; Feather Bed, a fast country dance melody set to a one-chord harmony, has an irresistably infectious drive and good cheer; and the last Jug Stompers session, on November 24, 1930, produced four real winners, especially the rambunctious, hokum-flavoured Bring It With You When You Come, the band being exceptionally well-balanced to spotlight its roiling sound.

I could go on, but one cannot really "review" reissues by artists whose work was representative of the best in their field, except to report the degree of intelligence and care expended by the producers. In that respect, the album meets any standard you'd care to specify. Indispensable to anyone with an interest in jug band music; a very deep bow to Herwin for this one. - T.W.

JOHN COLTRANE • PAUL CHAMBERS

High Step
Blue Note BN-LA 451-H2

Jazz's popularity with the mass audience is a cyclical thing, and we seem currently to be riding the top part of the curve. In addition to a flood of new albums large enough to give your wallet a cardiac arrest, the current interest has also sparked the reissue of a considerable amount of excellent music long out-of-print.

A case in point is this historically important set of sessions, part of a group of Blue Note reissues which also includes out-of-print or unissued material by Sam Rivers, Cecil Taylor and Gil Evans. The material on the Coltrane/Chambers "twofer" (bassist Chambers was the nominal leader on the dates, but Trane's name sells more albums) includes a 1955 Transition session and two 1956 Chambers dates, one for Jazz West and one for Blue Note. Although the Blue Note session is still around, the first two LPs have been unobtainable collector's items almost since their initial release in the late fifties.

Chronologically first (although the producers programmed it last on the LP) is the Transition session, recorded most probably in Detroit in November of 1955 (the April 1955 date listed as an alternate in the liner notes is unlikely; the Miles Davis Quintet which brought together Col-

trane, Chambers, and drummer Philly Joe Jones wasn't formed until late September of that year). In addition to Trane, Chambers and Jones, the session included baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams and trombonist Curtis Fuller, with saxophonist Roland Alexander subbing on piano on one track - it seems likely that the regular pianist on the date failed to show.

Best of the three tracks from the session is the previously unreleased High Step, an attractive Barry Harris original. Adams solos first in a forceful and fluent demonstration of his control over his large, awkward horn. Fuller's choruses display a rather coarse tone but nice chops. Coltrane does his best work of the date here; his tone is mellower than usual and he moves around well, although some double time passages are a little hesitant. Both Jones and Chambers get a chorus, and nobody seems to have missed the piano player.

One wonders why High Step was left in the can and Trane's Strane used on the Transition sampler LP that was this session's only previous appearance. The head is a funky blues line suspended over a pedal point; Adams plays well, but Fuller goes on a bit, and Trane exhibits the sloppy high register articulation that mars much of his early work. Nixon, Dixon and Yates Blues (the title refers to an obscure Eisenhower-era scandal) is better, an improvised slow blues that coheres remarkably well despite the absence of the piano. Adams is a real demon here, and Coltrane's solo, with its dramatic opening, rhythmic suspensions and genuine emotion, is a hint of things to come.

The Jazz West Session, recorded in March 1956, shows how far Trane had come in his few months with Miles. Recorded under Chambers' name a few days after the close of the Davis Quintet's first West Coast tour, it joins Chambers, Jones and Trane with ringer Kenny Drew on piano in a set designed to display Chambers' skills. It opens with Trane and Chambers playing the head of Dexterity (a bop line on "Rhythm" changes) in unison. Chambers offers a strongly swung pizzicato solo, Trane follows with much improved tone and some no-longer hesitant double time passages, and Drew and Jones are also heard from.

Stablemates, a Benny Golson original, was a part of the Davis Quintet's book, and familiarity leads to a strong solo by Trane. Drew's time is nice here, and Trane's tone is rich and dark as he states the melody in what amounts to the Davis arrangement sans Davis. Trane is absent from Easy To Love and Visitation, both Chambers features. The former offers arco Chambers, a bad idea, since on the melody's sustained notes his buzzy bowed tone is annoyingly raspy, but the latter, all pizzicato, demonstrates how well Paul could pluck.

Coltrane's John Paul Jones probably had more to do with the three Miles-men in the band than with the naval hero. It's a blues with a typically unusual Coltrane line at an easy medium tempo, and Trane's excellent solo gives hints of the powerful "sheets of sound" approach soon to develop. Chambers works with a repeated blues lick in a solo characterized by a strong blues undercurrent.

Finally, Eastbound, a fast Drew original on common changes, shows Trane much quicker at getting around his horn but still far short of the fleet-fingered master-of-tempos he was to become. His choppy solo fades into Drew's well-executed blend of Bud Powell and "funk", and we are treated to one of Philly Joe's musical solos, long but not boring.

The last four tracks represent the sextet portion of another Chambers feature LP, "Whims of Chambers", recorded in New York City September 21, 1956 and still available. The band on this date included Trane, Chambers and Jones, with trumpeter Donald Byrd, pianist Horace Silver, and guitarist Kenny Burrell. Nita is another Trane tune (probably named for his first wife, Juanita) characterized by chords suspended over a pedal point and a two-bar break, typical Coltrane devices it shares with the more famous Moment's Notice. Byrd is self-assured, Burrell follows smoothly, making good use of the pedal point, and Trane's quick chorus includes one of his patented breaks, bursting from a completely unexpected corner. Silver bubbles with a technical facility he no longer displays, and Philly Joe gets a chorus to himself - listen closely and you'll hear him play the tune, pedal, break and all.

Just For The Love, another Coltrane original, is a mid-tempo blues with much-altered changes (for you theory majors, the first chord is a IV chord). Coltrane, Silver, Byrd and Burrell solo in that order.

We Six, composed by Byrd, has a nice Jazz Messengers sort of feel to it. Byrd and a gutsy Trane solo precede another arco Chambers solo, its raspy tone offset by its supple swing. As is usual at a blowing date like this, Burrell and Silver also get a chance to play. Omicron, another Byrd-song built on Dizzy Gillespie's Woodyn' You, features Gillespie-like high range work in the unusual 6/8 opening (and closing) section.

All in all, a good LP, with music valuable not only for its historic quality but also as an enjoyable reminder of how well these giants could play. - D.W.

COUSIN JOE

of New Orleans
Bluesway 6078

New Orleans shuffle piano reached its heights of popularity with Louis Jordan and Fats Domino but there are others who are part of the story. Cousin Joe Pleasant is one of these. His wry lyrics have always been a key attribute of his music and he gained some popularity in the 1940s in New York. Since returning to New Orleans in the 1950s he has been a popular entertainer - in much the same way that Fats Pichon, Archibald and Roosevelt Sykes fit that characterization. His association with jazz was sufficient to exclude him from the first edition of Mike Leadbitter's Blues Records 1943-1966 but that was, I feel, an editorial mistake.

On this LP there are a number of different approaches to the blues but the lack of cohesion between the pianist and the other musicians interferes with the flow of the music. I suspect that a better session would have resulted with the omission of guitar, bass and drums. Some of the tunes were recorded by Cousin Joe in the 1940s (Beggin' Woman, Evolution Blues, Chicken A La Blues) and others are new to record. While it's good to see an LP by Cousin Joe available I am sure he is capable of something better than this. - J.W.N.

JIM CULLUM

Happy Landing!
Audiophile AP-121

I had the pleasure of hearing Jim Cullum's Happy Jazz Band in person for the first time on the day I received the review copy of this recording. Clean-sounding, well-rehearsed, and offering an impressive repertoire mounted on a solid medium-tempo two-beat, the HJB was playing a country club dance and proved to be an ideal jazz band for dancing.

All of these virtues are captured in excellent fidelity on this disc. In the colder atmosphere of one's living room, however, the HJB's predictable, restrained rhythm section tends to become monotonous, robbing several tracks of the vitality that would support repeated listening.

The front line is a different story, with two first-class soloists - Bobby Gordon, whose easy-going, flowing clarinet is featured on all eleven numbers, and leader Jim Cullum, the one really hot musician on hand, whose technical command of the cornet and aggressive approach are both impressive. Trombonists Mark Hess and Gene McKinney are capable enough, though less consistently inspired than Gordon and Cullum, but the apparent need for skeleton arrangements to accomodate two trombones tends to further the canned feel of certain tunes.

At its best - a cooking Lover Come Back To Me (marred by a 64-bar sousaphone solo utterly lacking in musical interest), a highly original Lullaby Of The Leaves featuring up-tempo solos over urging tom-toms, and a genuinely exuberant Emperor Norton's Hunch that brings the album to a roaring conclusion - the HJB is worthwhile and distinctive. And even at its worst, it still plays good dance music. C-plus. - T.W.

WALLY CIRILLO • JOE DIORIO

Rapport
Spitball SB-1

This is one fine album. Pianist Cirillo, who has been on record for some 20 years, and guitarist Diorio, who has worked with figures like Eddie Harris, Sonny Stitt, Ira Sullivan, and Stan Getz, recorded this album of four duets in concert in Miami, Florida, on April 29, 1973.

The record is well named; these men have very tight rapport, their musical lines are exceptionally well integrated and their conception is as one.

On the first side, the instruments are played conventionally, in the sense of retaining their traditional sound capabilities. Both tracks, Talla Sunshine And Naima Rainbow: Dance For Their Father, credited to Diorio, and Sonnymoon For Two/ Four Score, which integrates Sonny Rollins' blues line with Cirillo's composition Four Score, are really extended free improvisation, sort of a 1970's update of the exquisite Bill Evans-Jim Hall duet albums of a decade or more ago, with Cirillo and Diorio's strong personal approaches in place of the delicacy of Evans and Hall; yet conveying equal sublety and, yes, rapport.

On the other side of the LP, the men use their instruments less conventionally, displaying the broader sound potentials available to them. This is not to imply that their playing is any less creative on the first side; the level of creativity, imaginativeness, subtlety, depth, and interplay is almost astonishingly consistent throughout this album. It is just that on these performances they have chosen to utilize more unconventional sounds in their expression. It is good to hear men using conventional instruments to produce this kind of music; it is always good to be reminded that electric attachments, synthesizers, and so forth, are not prerequisites to this kind of sonic exploration. Of course this has been demonstrated often enough before, but in this context it is still refreshing. Of the two performances on this side, Cirillo's Emiereicity is the more consistent in this aspect; Diorio's Lovely Afternoon contains some contrast in pitting almost anachronistically conventional guitar work against Cirillo's effects.

There are no commercial concessions here; it is an intimate dialogue of musical ideas that is fascinatingly coherent. Anyone interested in creative music should appreciate this album; it is what improvisational music is really all about.

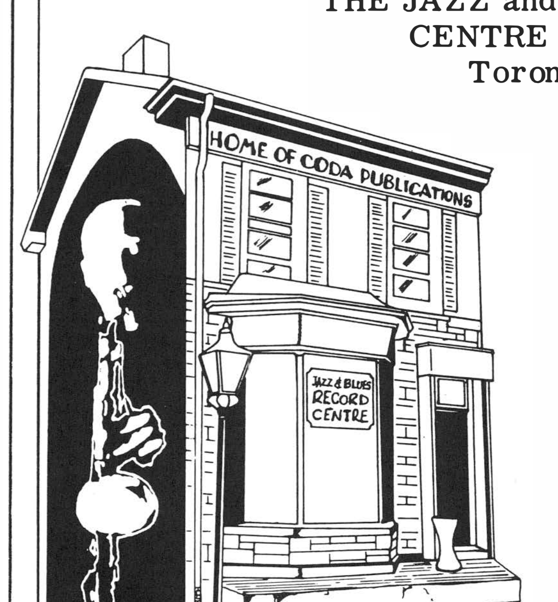
Notes by the musicians concerning their technical and theoretical approaches to these pieces are included in an insert. David Spitzer's Spitball Records is a small operation, a labour of love. The record is available for $5.00 plus postage and handling of 50¢ in the USA and Canada, by writing Spitball Records, PO Box 371, Gratigny Branch, Miami, Florida 33168, U.S.A. - V.S.

BUDDY COLLETTE

Now And Then
Legend LGS-1004

It is obvious that this record is the result of careful planning. The thoughtful arrangements were all done by Buddy who also supplied seven of the eight compositions. There is a tight restrictive mood surrounding this album which is paradoxically both its strength and weakness. A chamber music atmosphere pervades most of the album. All the musicians including among others Al Aarons on trumpet; Grover Mitchell, trombone; Al Viola, guitar and of course Buddy Collette on flute, alto and tenor saxophones play in a highly musical and professional manner. The catch is that all too rarely do I hear the loose swinging that is needed to offset the tightness that holds down portions of this album.

Within the boundaries indicated above this is a worthwhile recording. - P.F.



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MILES DAVIS

Get Up With It
Columbia KG33236

"Prince Of Darkness Goes Public"

In 1970, Miles Davis bowed to corporate pressures, swapped formulas, and recorded a singular album, "Bitches' Brew", which sold phenomenally, transiently bought him a new audience, and became quite a pacesetter in the circles of insipid fuzzyfreefunk. Ever since, his recordings have come from the same stand-pat cookbook for electric ghetto Muzak with varying degrees of musicianly involvement, attempting with little profit to recoup the same commercial advances "Brew" represented. Davis is well-protected by his enthusiastically dedicated crew of professional yes-men and claques from the dues of having to play actual music or listen to adverse commentary now; because no matter what kind of gibberish he embeds on vinyl, they simply do their verbal magic, and (more likely than not) you will buy it. In capital(s). "Get Up With It" is the latest off the line - identifiably personal, rhythmically involved background music, compressing the limitations of his horn to their ultimate closure, with absolutely nothing to project it into consciousness. The only vague interest in this bonsai album comes in an artistically absurd dedication "For Duke". I needed to hear this album...yeah...about as much as Cecil Taylor needs piano lessons. I strongly recommend that Mr. Davis live up to the title of this recording - either Get Up With It and say something in future, or shut up altogether. Waiting for Godot is just about as profitable a venture as waiting to hear something musically valuable from the Prince of Darkness these days; but, unlike Vladimir and Estragon, my patience, for one, is finite - and rapidly wearing thin. - B.T.

KENNY DORHAM

Ease It!
Muse 5053

Although the late Kenny Dorham is credited as the leader on this reissue of an obscure session recorded in May 1961, the actual leader was the tenorman, Rocky Boyd. Within a year of the recording, Boyd dropped out of sight and was never heard from again. However, in his year of activity he made what looked like a fast start. It began with this recording as a leader, with the likes of Dorham, Walter Bishop, Ron Carter and Pete LaRoca as sidemen. Soon after, Boyd joined Miles Davis as one of the many candidates Davis tried out after Coltrane left his Quintet for the last time. (The line of quick succession during 1961-64 included Stitt, Mobley, Boyd, George Coleman, Sam Rivers and finally Shorter, who stayed for six years.) Boyd stayed only a few months and then (according to the liner by Fred Norsworthy, the producer of the record) went with Philly Joe Jones in early 1962. Nothing further is known about him.

The reissue of "Ease It!" sheds a little light on this shadowy figure. For one thing, he was under the spell of Coltrane. Perhaps the similarity of tone was what recommended him to Davis in the first place. For another thing, he was a

very capable player in his own right. On Stella By Starlight, which the Davis Sextet had made an influential recording of a few years earlier, one might expect the influence of Coltrane to degenerate into imitation, but Boyd is no mere imitator. Here and elsewhere, he leads the quintet into some spirited originality. The group style and the choice of tunes are typical of the small group jazz of the time, and by no means inferior to what was produced by a lot of well established leaders.

- J.C.

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In October 1961, upon visiting the Celebrity Club in Harlem (in the company of Mrs. EmmaHill, my wife Liza and Ernest "Bass" Hill) where Buddy Tate's band was holding forth, I met quite a number of important people for the first time in person: Miss Victoria Spivey, Miss Jeann Roni Failows, Mrs. Sir Charles Thompson (June Pelky), Timme Rosencrantz, Doug Dobell, Jack Bradley, Len Kunstadt, bass-player Buck Jones, bandleader and trombone-player Milton Larkin, pianist Dave Rivera, reed-man Rudy Rutherford and drummer Denzil Best. There were also half a dozen musicians whom I had met before. Everybody was there to get their kicks from Buddy and his band. Emmett Berry was even sitting in with them for two sets. What a night!

But for me personally, the start was far from agreeable because Buddy had plans for and with me...Disliking to be the centre of attention, I wasn't happy at all when Buddy, the amiable and warm person that he is, introduced me to the packed hall, the very first minute we had come in, with the following words: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm introducing to you my good friend, Johnny Simmons from Zurich, Switzerland. Johnny is the owner of the largest jazz record collection I've ever seen. He is also familiar with the career of all American jazz-men who are swinging!" (Polite applause) "Johnny will now climb on the bandstand and tell you the names of all my musicians. He can do it despite the fact that he has never met any of them and that this is his first visit to the Celebrity Club. He has been following every good musician's moves from his record-filled apartment in Zurich. Please, come here, Johnny!" Frankly, I was on the verge of refusing but got pushed up the few steps to the podium by Bass Hill who whispered: "Don't be silly. You know these guys and if you goof in one or two cases, it doesn't matter. The public doesn't know their names anyway. In America they don't care for nobody but the leader."

Two seconds after, I was already addressing the audience through the microphone, saying "Sidney Pat Jenkins, trumpet" (applause from a few of the bandmembers who hadn't known that Pat's real first name was "Sidney"). I went on: "Eli Robinson, trombone, Ben 'Smoke' Richardson saxophones and clarinet, Argonne Dense Thornton (now called Sadik Hakim) piano (BIG applause for that one!), Clarence 'Fats' Donaldson, formerly known as 'Jug Head' Donaldson, drums" (laughter and applause for obvious reasons). So far, so good. However, there was still one man, the bass-player, to identify and I had not the slightest idea who he could be. After a moment of hesitation, I thought I had "got" him. I greeted the bass-man: "Good evening, Mr. Carl Wilson, good evening 'Flat Top'!" Just when I had said it, I realized that I had made a mistake: the man in question could not be nick-named "Flat Top" by any spell of imagination because his head (top) was absolutely on the sharp and lengthy side and not flat at all! In addition to that he

CRYSTAL CLEAR

looked too young to be Carl Wilson with whose career I was fairly familiar...(The laughter that followed my blunder was DEAFENING!) After it had died down, Buddy came to my rescue: "Mr. Simmons couldn't know our new bass-man, Lloyd Buchanan who's only a short time with the band." After a hand-shake with Buddy our party, have a drink and dig the music. Ouf!

Often have I told that every visit to the Celebrity Club proved to be an unforgettable experience. Buddy is by all means and standards one of my favourite (whom I called "George" in order to repair "the damage" done) I was allowed to join

photograph of Buddy Tate by Bill Smith

artists of ANY period and to dig him and his fine band was always a thrill. I have often written about Pat, Eli, Ben and Fats, and especially Buddy himself, but never about Sadik Hakim and Lloyd Buchanan (the two were good friends). In 1961, I felt that they didn't fit in with Buddy's group and even today, when I listen to the band's records with Sadik at the piano, I still think that he was not quite the man for THAT job. But, as time went by, I realized more and more, that Sadik is a marvelous musician in his own right. He is a truly gifted, exciting player when you hear him in a musical context that suits him. I have recently listened to a few records he made with Lester Young, Charlie Parker and Dexter Gordon and I was impressed by what I heard. But to REALLY appreciate Sadik Hakim, one has to listen to his one LP-side on Charlie Parker Records PLP-805 where Sadik is heading his own quartet in five original compositions. (The backing by Duke Jordan with Cecil Payne and Johnny Coles is another winner). On his own album, Sadik emerges as an out-of-the-ordinary, inventive, swinging pianist who plays with a spark and attack that are truly amazing. Incidentally, Lloyd Buchanan is the Hakim group's bass-player and he does himself proud as a fine accompanist and good soloist on Buch's Blues. Let's also mention the underrated Eddie Wright's contributions to this album. He's a top-notch guitarist.

I'm glad I had an opportunity to put things in the correct perspective: Buchanan and, especially, Sadik are excellent musicians and it was just the musical context I had heard them in which prevented me from realizing this fact. (Incidentally, Buddy himself and most of his musicians had high regard for Hakim and didn't understand why I did not dig him).

To end this "rectification", I wish to relate a rather funny incident that happened about five days after the night at the Celebrity Club. One afternoon I ran into Sadik and Buchanan on 52nd Street. After a few minutes of chewing the fat, Sadik (strongly approved and supported by his colleague) said: "Buddy seems to listen to you when it comes to musical matters. Can't you tell him to get a more modern approach where the style of his band is concerned?" This time the laugh was on me! The situation was the craziest! After having sufficiently "recovered", I explained that 1) I didn't think Buddy needed my advice in any respect, 2) he wouldn't listen to me anyway with respect to musical matters because I was a jazz fan and not a musician and 3) the group Buddy had was superb the way it was and in the style it played and I'd be about the last guy on the globe to wish for a "more modern approach"! The two men were manifestly disappointed and I could tell that they considered me an old-fashioned square who was just not hip to the real jive. Of course, from THEIR point of view they were absolutely right but from MY standpoint I was just as right. We shook hands and that was the last time (so far) I have seen them. Fortunately, I can enjoy Sadik Hakim's wonderful playing on the above mentioned album. I really dig it. Perhaps I ain't such a square, after all?

A FEW RECORDS, FEATURING BUDDY TATE - PROBABLY STILL AVAILABLE:

Milt Buckner - ("Them There Eyes") Black & Blue 33013
Buddy Tate - ("When I'm Blue") Black & Blue 33014
Milt Buckner/Buddy Tate - ("Crazy Rhythm") Black & Blue 33018
Buddy Tate & his Celebrity Club Orchestra - Black & Blue 33006
Buddy Tate & his Celebrity Club Orchestra II - Black & Blue 33020
Buddy Tate/Wild Bill Davis - Black & Blue 33034
The Buddy Tate Celebrity Club Orchestra - ("Unbroken") MPS BASF CRM 740
Wild Bill Davis/Buddy Tate - ("Midnight Slows" II) Black & Blue 33.045
Milt Buckner/Buddy Tate/Jo Jones - ("Midnight Slows" IV) Black & Blue 33.068
Jonah Jones and Earl Hines - ("Back On The Street") Chiaroscuro CR118
Buddy Tate & his Buddies - Chiaroscuro CR123
Don Ewell - ("Quartet and Trio") Chiaroscuro CR130
Buddy Tate - ("Jumpin' On The West Coast") Black Lion BLP 30128
Buddy Tate & his Band - ("Directed by Buck Clayton") RCA 5034
The Newport All Stars - Black Lion 28 403-4
30th Anniversary Concert - ("Spirituals to Swing 1967") Columbia 630776
Buck Clayton/Buddy Tate - ("Buck & Buddy" and "Buck & Buddy Blow The Blues", Swingville 2017 and 2030) new issue Prestige P-24040
Humphrey Lyttleton/Buddy Tate - ("Kansas City") Black Lion 30163
Jay McShann All Stars - ("Going to K.C.") Master Jazz Recordings 8113 (deleted)
Helen Humes - ("The Talk of the Town") Columbia PC 33488
Buck Clayton - ("Swings Count Basie and Benny Goodman") CBS 88031
Buddy Tate - ("The Texas Twister") MJR 8128
Buddy Tate - ("Swinging Like Tate") MJR 8127

I have not listed any Count Basie and Jimmy Rushing albums - on many of which Buddy Tate is featured extensively and in all his glory. The order numbers of the original editions which I have would not be of any use to my readers since those albums are long deleted. But it will not be too difficult for the real "Tate-fan" to find the new editions in each case....It's an amusing game....and definitely worthwhile. - Johnny Simmen

A SPACE Concert Series

ROSCOE MITCHELL

A Space, Toronto. October 10/11, 1975

Two concerts by the Roscoe Mitchell Quartet certainly showed how central the Chicago way of thinking is to the music at this point, and how central Roscoe is to Chicago. So many musical trends have come out of the A.A.C.M. (widespread use of bells and other "small instruments", for instance) that, in a way, it seems surprising that the music of these people isn't much better known. On the other hand, it is an uncompromising music which leaves no room for any kind of half-way listening approach. It can take even a sympathetic listener (like myself) years before the stop-and-go, often emotionally ambiguous sounds sort themselves out. The best way to hasten the process, as always, is to see the artist live - I've been hearing Roscoe's records with new ears since the concerts.

With Mitchell were Muhal Richard Abrams, pianist and "spiritual leader of the Chicago Musicians" (Bill Smith's phrase) and two younger musicians, trombonist George Lewis and guitarist Spencer Barefield. The full quartet played just half the time; Mitchell, Lewis, and Abrams played solo pieces and there were trios and duets as well. This use of as many instrumental combinations as possible carried over to the quartet pieces, where a soloist might literally be a soloist, or particular players would make but occasional contributions to the general proceedings. Spencer Barefield was at his best in the last regard, as on the first set quartet piece, Cards, which was preceeded by the pensive Prelude To Naima/Naima Medley and Lewis' outrageous solo, Olobo. Barefield was content to wait for the moments when his oblique statements would carry the most weight. His use of the funkiest electronic enhancements - reverb and tremolo a la Elmore James (but not loud) - was a gas when many guitar players are concerned with how unrecognisable the instrument can be made to sound. New to the group, his solos were a bit stiff, but unquestionably he is a very important guitarist who

photograph of George Lewis and Muhal Richard Abrams by Bill Smith

will be heard from for some time to come.

Lewis was even more impressive. I can't think of a trombonist with more to commend him. His technique is remarkable in itself, but always put to a musical purpose. Olobo was a long piece, seven or eight minutes at least, but very tightly structures so that interest did not wander as it will at mere technical displays. George's use of mutes is particularly effective.

Richard Abrams strikes me as something of a latter-day Fletcher Henderson, in that his main importance seems to lie in the impetus he has given to the musicians he has gathered around himself, rather than in his own playing. It is true that he is an excellent group player, and and that fact was borne out by his playing on this occasion. Like Mal Waldron he can find the perfect way to frame what a saxophonist is doing, but his own solos are not as faultless as his group work. Of course I must confess a basic aversion to the impressionistic shimmering style that Abrams slips into what I think are his weak moments - he certainly has more to say than Jarrett, Corea, and the whole stable of ECM house-musicians. But I have yet to make the connection between this aspect of his playing and what Chicago people do.

As for Mitchell, the collectively-improvised framework of the A.A.C.M. groups may have obscured this man's tremendous power as a soloist. At his best, he's as good as anybody - Taylor, Rivers, Braxton, Ornette impress me comparably. His style is kaleidoscopic, but generally ranges from his early bebop days to the pure sound approach. In his moments of greatest intensity, he can simultaneously project a cry of deep anguish and a satirical honking and bleating of almost brutal force. Too, at these times, the gourds and gongs of other musics, and the logical structures of other cultures may be evoked. But I'm on thin ice here because I feel that Mitchell's style - like Albert Ayler's - really defies criticism because of its - to re-use the phrase - emotional ambiguity. His best playing can have an almost disquieting effect.

The framework for the quartet pieces was far removed from both the traditional chord progression method and free-form techniques, involving written music divided into blocks. The fact that written music was used the way it was indicates a superficial relationship with recent "classical" trends, although all the classical pieces calling for improvisation I've heard are terrible owing to the lack of a tradition of improvising in that music. But there were some similarities between the most complex Quartet pieces - Cards, Tahquemon, Nesongo, 3Ex4Eye - and some contemporary composers' techniques which I will mention for what they're worth (not wanting to be a part of any of the traditional arguments which arise when jazz and European music are discussed conjunctively). One, as mentioned, was that the pieces as scored consisted of a number of blocks, some containing musical information and others blank, indicating improvisation. How exactly these scores were used I'm not sure - I mention them as an interesting alternative to playing Autumn Leaves with two choruses each by sax and trumpet, a piano chorus, half each for bass and drums, and out. The other parallel that struck me was the similarity to the compositions of Boulez that occurred with the super-imposition of different instrumental lines, almost all relatively brief, and the attention to timbre and colour. Whatever the relationship or lack of it to Boulez or anything else, the players obviously enjoyed working in this framework, and these pieces were particularly exciting to me.

A few other things must be mentioned. Tnoona was a piece in the kind of non-thematic, impressionistic style of group improvising that is represented on record by Marion Brown's "Afternoon Of A Georgia Faun" at its best and maybe by Bennie Maupin's "Jewel In The Lotus" at its worst. The Roscoe Mitchell Quartet did it better than the best by that barometer - a beautifully gentle, subtly changing piece which wasn't the slightest self-indulgent. On the other extreme, Nonaah, which was played as an encore piece Sunday, was performed with such unabashed ferocity that I felt like I was lifted out of my chair. The uncanny rapport between Mitchell and Lewis should also be remarked. Hopefully they will work together into the future. There is a possibility of a record being produced from tapes of these concerts. If it is, it can't help being a great record of Great Black Music. - Richard Baker

STEWART BROOMER

and Friends
A Space, Toronto. October 19, 1975

Musical activity in Toronto, for more than ten years, has broadened to incorporate all the latest developments. This is hardly surprising in a metropolis as large as this one but what is disturbing is the relatively few opportunities for fresh music to be widely heard. For much of this decade, for instance, Stu Broomer has been languishing in the shadows while expanding his musical horizons as well as his capabilities. With this concert all the various elements of his music came together.

The key, it seems to me, is organisation. Although the music wasn't written out it was definitely structured and there were guidemarks and directions for the musicians - it wasn't yet another orgiastic, bloodletting jam. The sensitivity, space and cohesion of the music was beneficial and it resulted in an event of significance and beauty.

Broomer opened the concert alone and began with an extended improvisation which evolved naturally from within the sound textures of the piano strings. The layers gradually became denser as the full weight of the piano became incorporated within the piece and it soared to a shimmering finale. This mood and feeling was perpetuated when Michael Snow, on electric piano, joined him for a duet.

One of the highlights of the entire concert was the trio interpretation of Arnold, Schoenberg And The Hat which introduced the soprano saxophone of Bill Smith, Michael Snow's trumpet and Stu Broomer's piano. The use of space and often uncanny interlocking of musical ideas made this an especially joyous experience. The unity of thought between the three musicians was gratifying.

Following the first intermission more musicians were introduced. There was the convoluted tenor saxophone of Maury Coles in duet with Smith and Snow; the double percussion of Larry Dubin and John Mars with Stu Broomer's piano - where the high energy of Dubin's approach contrasted with the airy space of Mars; and then further doubling up of various com-

binations in positive sections which revealed the versatility of all concerned.

Following a second interval there was an explosive finale. Stereo split the pianos, percussion and reeds into two halves in much the same way that Mingus and Ornette had done in the past - but the music reflected a different viewpoint and a different time. Pure energy is a thing of the past in today's music spectrum and if the music at this concert is any indication we are at the beginning of a period of real growth. A growth which has come about through the incredible inspiration of performances by the world masters (Mitchell, Taylor, Braxton etc.) - John Norris

ANTHONY BRAXTON

A Space, Toronto
Sunday, November 2, 1975

If the maintenance of personality requires the protection of a performer's musical integrity, then we must hope that there is enough strength within that person and from outside to provide this necessary safeguarding. Otherwise, we may lose that precious quality which is vital to the furtherance of an artistic and musical form.

Anthony Braxton demonstrated once again in two concerts in Toronto that he is still projecting one of the most singular and vibrant musical personalities to emerge in the New Music. Despite some acidic critical comments from his own community as to his lack of innovation and denials of his source, Braxton continues on his own self-structured path.

The appearance of the Anthony Braxton Quartet in a featured concert setting in Toronto was a long awaited event, a fact proven by the sell out for both his appearances. The wait was more than worthwhile. The music soared beyond expectations into a new dimension of personal involvement for the listeners and attainable by only a few musicians in the history of the music (one must think of John Coltrane as an apt comparison with Braxton as to the level of personality and statement reflected through the music).

The Quartet featured the extraordinary David Holland on bass and cello, Canadian born Kenny Wheeler on trumpet, flugelhorn and french horn, and the too seldom heard Phillip Wilson on drums. It would be difficult to find a more powerful and sympathetic group for Braxton's needs.

In the four sets played by the Quartet, two Saturday night and two Sunday afternoon, the true depth of Braxton's voice as composer and instrumentalist was revealed. The overt formalism of the written sections in Braxton's compositions are really contradictory to the true nature of the music. While there appears to be a careful adherence to external forms, it is actually the inner spiritual reality of what Braxton is. And that fact is what makes it difficult for a musician to play with Braxton, for if he cannot enter into that singular spiritual reality, then the music will fail in its objective.

The two sets on Sunday afternoon provided an excellent example. The first set can only be described as extraordinary. With Braxton opening on soprano, the music swiftly attained a unity of thought so necessary to its proper execution. The second set was, by comparison, more ordinary, mainly through a lack of the cohesion, the oneness of thought displayed in the first set, but though ordinary by Braxton's standards, it still stands as music born of a remarkable group.

The swift, angular lines of the unison opening in the first set gave way to an incredible duet between Braxton and Dave Holland. As emerges each time these two perform together, the sympathy and equality of execution was no less than astounding. The remarkable agility of Braxton on all his instruments was comparably matched by the master touch of Holland. The linear movement of this set, which lasted about fifty minutes, was punctuated by alternating instrumentation, dynamics, and form, with sounds ranging from a drum mallet-contrabasse clarinet duo reminiscent of a slow motion circus tune, to a feverish contrabasse-trumpet upper register squealing match. The beboppish coda returned to the swift angularity of the opening, with a drum solo surprise ending to the piece. The latent applause indicated the degree of absorption in the music by the audience.

The excellent contributions of Phillip Wilson and Kenny Wheeler must be noted. Wilson, to this listener, added a new dimension to the sounds of Braxton. Whereas Barry Altschul is so concerned with intricate percussion effects which fill space, and this is not meant as criticism against Altschul, Wilson's drumming is much more concerned with pure energy as a means of movement in time. He seemed to push the Quartet into new energy dimensions with a driving force. As for Kenny Wheeler, his ideas are usually fruitful his technique shorter in phrasing but extremely agile. Whether fully realized or not in the actual performance, the musical experience of Wheeler is made through the concepts he brings out as bases for further development.

One must hope that Anthony Braxton dismisses certain elements of criticism which, for his very desire to maintain his own musical personality, have decided he doesn't fit in to their concept of the New Music. - Bryan Hunt

photograph of Kenny Wheeler by Bill Smith

DON PULLEN

"A Space", Toronto
November 15, 1975

Don Pullen's pianistic art is based on two widely disparate elements that he usually draws together well - a flawless unsentimental lyricism, and the ability to evoke the maximum of intensity in his keyboard expression. The coming of lyricism to his music means that - in many respects -

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Pullen has mellowed since his initial days as one of his instrument's power sources in the New Music of the mid-1960s. Although his expression usually blends the two separate drives into cohesion quite skilfully, this evening was a demonstration of how separate they can still be when the mesh doesn't quite take.

To begin with, Pullen's compositional conception is not very much different from Keith Jarrett's, in that both use dense rhythmically-based chordal figures as central motifs in their originals. His lyricism comes in the lovely way his melodies turn on themselves and flower as he plays, gaining momentum through subtle rearticulations. The accrual of intensity at these times seems almost incidental to the main end of the music. But at the same time his development seems almost unwarrantedly clipped, with branches off into "power" passages - fleet upper register excursions that found him almost flaying the keyboard as if expecting to exorcise the spirit of the music before - that often this night seemed elliptical and even arbitrary incursions into the preceding music. Pullen commands and integrates the resources of the piano well at all times - one composition, for example, was based on a very exact use of piano harp tonality - and his improvisations were never less than strikingly inspired. But his seeming need to impose intensity on passages that had not generated the momentum they needed to swing into it logically left one curiously unsatisfied. Quantum jumps of energy levels work nicely in physics, thank you, but my ears had difficulty making the connection. Percussionist Larry Dubin joined Don Pullen for the last number of each set on the Sunday afternoon and his contribution took the music into another direction.

- Barry Tepperman

MICHAEL STUART • KEITH BLACKLEY

A Space, Toronto. November 30, 1975

Being involved in this series of concerts, at A Space, as a musician as well as an organiser, has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my musical life, for not only has it allowed us to hear the most exciting music being produced by the American innovators in this period, but has also allowed the opportunity of growth with the ever increasing nucleus of players in the Toronto area.

The concert by Blackley and Stuart was a special and singular event, simply because they are the only two players, to my knowledge, who have taken so strongly from the Coltrane tradition. In simple terms it would be an easy description to draw a parallel to the Frank Lowe/Rashied Ali recording or perhaps even the recording with Coltrane and Rashied, and although neither Blackley nor Stuart have yet attained the power of any of these great players, the inspiration and system of presentation can be directly linked to this source.

The concert consisted of two long continuous sets, the first based on segments of "Interstellar Space" and the second containing some compositions generally associated with Coltrane. Stewart is a powerful improviser on both tenor and soprano and although it took him a little while to get into his music, the final result was worth adjusting for. One section, played on soprano, contained some of the best improvised music that I have heard from a local player. Blackley, however, was the real surprise, for although I had heard Stuart on many previous occasions, this was my first exposure to Keith's percu-

photograph of Don Pullen by Harry Abraham

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ssion. As has become normal in the newer musical forms, many small percussion instruments were utilised for space and quiet feelings, but his drums are his real source of power. Many local drummers are going to have to look out for this young man.

Of all the new systems of music being performed in this area, it seems that this combination could make a very strong impression on the more conventional local players, and act as an inroad for many of us who are ready to accept public acclaim.

- Bill Smith

NEW DELTA AHKRI

A Space, Toronto. December 13/14, 1975

Leo Smith continues to be one of the leading exponents of the new creative music that first blossomed in Chicago in the late '60s under the rubric of the AACM. He has been a crucial element in several of the sub-groups that formed within that organization both in Chicago and later in Europe, including the Creative Construction Company (Muse MR 5071) and the Anthony Braxton Trio (whose third member was violinist Leroy Jenkins). Like Jenkins (whose Revolutionary Ensemble is active in New York and Europe), Smith has gone on to form his own group, the New Dalta Ahkri, and has worked continuously with it for several years now. Smith and the Ahkri are based in New Haven, Conn., and it is a measure of the rapid growth of the creative music movement that even in so small a city, housing so traditional an academy as Yale, Smith has found gifted and sympathetic creative improvisers with whom to work. Of these, pianist Anthony Davis has played with Smith longest, and though still quite young his style displays aspects of a unique individuality. In addition, Davis (who is himself a graduate of Yale) presents a breadth of musical interest and understanding that admirably complements Smith's own global awareness. Bassist Wes Brown's musical vistas are similarly broad, enriched by his studies of world music at neighbouring Wesleyan University, where master musicians from West Africa, India, Indonesia, Japan and elsewhere teach and perform regularly (an extraordinary resource of which Smith has availed himself as well). In addition to this trio (which has recently released the album

"Reflectativity" on Smith's own Kabell label) the Ahkri at A Space included the extraordinary reed player Oliver Lake (originally of the Black Artist's Group in St. Louis and now based in New York) surely one of the most exciting young saxophonists playing today, and a remarkable young drummer from Detroit (now New Haven) named Paul Maddox. All are strong players who fit into Smith's conception and complement his own brilliant trumpet (and percussion) playing ideally, and this formation presented two of the most stimulating days of music making heard in Toronto in a long while.

The richness and diversity of the music the Ahkri played during four long sets was so great as to preclude any comprehensive description here. If a description were to be attempted in a word, the one that springs to mind would be "inclusiveness". It has previously been noted in these pages that the music of the "Chicago School" shows a singular awareness of the history of Black American music, incorporating elements from the past into the fabric of contemporary improvisation. In addition to such historical awareness of his own tradition, Leo Smith's musical interests embrace sources for a new world music (to paraphrase the title of Smith's book) from a variety of cultures and traditions. His piece Silence (1969) which the Ahkri played in Toronto (and is available on Freedom 40123 with Anthony Braxton) bears conceptual and notational kinship to the tradition of (white) American experimental music of which John Cage has been the leading exponent, and Smith's title Silence would seem to be more than a gratuitous

photograph of Oliver Lake by Bill Smith

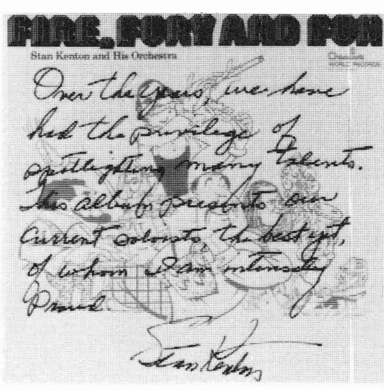
reference to Cage's work. The piece, comprised of eleven brief, minimal events spaced across a field of nine motionless minutes of silence provided one of the most magical interludes of the two concerts. It was made all the more effective by appearing as a window in the midst of contrasting music of dense, contrapuntal complexity. Oliver Lake's Saturns, for example, is a kind of canon in which the interval of entry is telescoped and compacted into a textural density more suggestive of certain heterophonic procedures of oriental musics than traditional European contrapuntal forms. In Smith's Play Ebony, Play Ivory, a somewhat analgous heterophonic effect is achieved through entirely different means. Here a long line is written out in approximately equal note values, to be played slowly over and over again, but with certain "dotted" notes to be somewhat lengthened at the independent discretion of each player. With several musicians engaged in this process simultaneously the result is a kind of continuously shifting broadening and thinning of the basic melodic line. In still other sections of the music, disjunct (often unison) fragments were interspersed to serve as heads or links in the ongoing improvisations.

One of the most interesting (and in some ways still problematic) aspects of this music is its formal organisation. It is a mark of the growing sophistication of "free" music that composer-performers such as Leo Smith are searching for formal procedures that allow for the organisation of large-scale structures capable of holding together highly diverse materials within a cohesive whole. Gone are the all-out, non-stop, high intensity blowing sessions of the sixties. Rather, high intensity sections now take their place as one among many kinds of textures available to the creative musician: incorporated into the ebb and flow of the music to provide a brilliant flash of excitement when called for, then quickly giving way to a contrasting texture or colour. And with musicians of the calibre of Smith, Lake, and company these intensity sections are truly exciting.

Notated structures and tunes, contrasts of texture and timbre, references to the Black American music of the past (Davis' lovely modal piece in a Coltrane vein) or the musics of other world cultures (the gorgeous Ghanian flute duets played by Smith and Brown to close the first set Sunday) are all integrated into a complex web of real-time compositional creation by each (and every player). To quote from Leo Smith's book entitled "Notes (8 pieces) source a new world music: creative music": "the concept that i employ in my music is to consider each performer as a complete unit with each having his or her own center from which each performs independently of any other, and with this respect of autonomy the independent center of improvisation is continuously changing, depending on the force created by the individual centers at any instance from any of the units....this attitude frees the sound-rhythm elements in an improvisation from being realized through dependent reaction. this is the fundamental principle underlying my music...." Thus improvisation is removed from the context of the reactive vyings and clashings of egos in which the "leader" always has the final say. To be sure, it is the leader's concept that the musicians are following, but it is a concept designed by that man to minimize the dominant role that is normally his prerogative. In this sense the Ahkri becomes a collective group though, paradoxically, through a process rooted in individuality (the notion of individual independence an autonomy brings that aspect of Cage's concept to mind once again). Here Smith chooses to take his place as an equal among fellow workers, more anonymously as a part of the "Ahkri" (a word he coined to signify a group of musicians of any size, including one).

An attitude such as this does not square well with the ego-oriented star system of the North American music industry. But here, as in all his musical (and literary) undertakings, Leo Smith prefers to eschew the rewards of commercial success for the apparently more modest, but truly far deeper benefits of Art and the Good Life. Would that there were more like him.

- Richard Teitelbaum



A Five Star Review in Downbeat Magazine
"... a beautiful recorded set of piano solos ... selective keyboard essays on a number of familiar pieces will be intriguing and revealing ... Gently tinged with nostalgia, these lyrical piano reflections are Kenton without pomp and circumstance; a warm, intimate glimpse of a dedicated and sincere musician at ease." Dan Morgenstern, Downbeat

"... a rare performance ... the veteran bandleader in a dazzling pianistic performance." Robert Robbins, The Villanovan

"... a graceful self-portrait that successfully reveals the inner spirit of the artist ... the nuances delivered in Stan's playing will surprise and delight any serious jazz fan." Bob Claypool, Houston Post

"... explosive new arrangements of Chicago and Blood, Sweat and Tears music ... all that I hoped it would be." Al Julian, Jazz New England

"The opening of ... 'Free', rising from silence then breaking loose with trumpets and a Fender bass beat, is one of those rare, totally exciting moments in music. I play it over and over, and believe me when a reviewer who needs to listen to masses of music does that, it is special." Susan Barton, Dallas Times Herald

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"This is a warm, marvelous big band endeavor with the textures full of life." Billboard Top Album Pick

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JAZZ LITERATURE

CHARLIE PARKER

Charlie Parker Discography, Volume 2, 1948-1950

by Piet Koster & Dick M. Bakker, 36 pages, published by Micrography

Once again I must applaud the scholarship of Piet Koster and Dick Bakker. Aside from being painstaking researchers, they also know how to lay out a discography in neat and comprehensible fashion. The format, of course, is the same as Volume One and in this new booklet some 76 Bird dates, official and otherwise, are listed, starting with a date at the New Savoy Ballroom, Chicago in January 1948 and ending with the Machito session at the close of 1950.

These were three crucial years in the Parker story. They marked the real beginning of his association on record with producer Norman Granz, the first "Bird with Strings" sides and a crop of airshots and location recordings in America, France and Sweden. Wherever Parker was playing in those years, so it seemed, somebody was around with a cheap recorder to capture, if nothing else, Charlie's solos. Had it not been for those people we would know a lot less about Parker's music.

Through the winter of 1948 and spring of 1949 Bird was broadcasting regularly from the Royal Roost. No fewer than 16 of those programmes have survived, along with important broadcasts from Birdland and Cafe Society in the summer of 1950.

The compilers have included at least one new session - a gig at Chicago's Pershing in October 1950 with unknown personnel. Dick Bakker reports that this may appear on an album in the near future. Good news!

Indexes of personnel, recording units and titles are again included to increase the usefulness of a first class publication. Don't forget to send any additions or corrections (not forgetting your orders in the first instance!) to: Dick M. Bakker, Micrography, Stevinstraat 14, Alphen aan de Rijn, Holland. - Mark Gardner

WHITNEY BALLIETT

Jazz At The New Yorker

"Lester Young, a stooped, soft-spoken, sleepy-looking man with a static, caved-in face, who affected porkpie hats and sombre, droopy coats, which gave him a monkish appearance, was his own best obfuscation...in Count Basie's band, he developed the distracting habit of veering his instrument to one side at a forty-five degree angle, as if he were about to paddle a canoe....Young's solos often resembled a collection of evasive, melodic hums that had the quality of a sound-proofed room. But underneath this outwardly lazy, one-side-of-the-mouth approach was an absolute mastery of broken-field rhythm and phrasing - the ability to emphasize the beat simply by eluding it - that is the secret of hot playing".

'Vic Dickenson has perfected a combination of sly, prodding humour, graceful lyricism, and easy technical mastery that is unique on an instrument that has has had very few able practitioners and that seems, like a faulty furnace, to devour the energies of those who play it. Dickenson has a smooth, generous tone, and approaches a tune not as a full-dress improviser but as a funny and seemingly casual embellisher. Bleary, heavy-lidded glissandos appear side by side with stuttering triplets that often give way to swaggering, gutteral sounds, full of a slapstick grace".

These two graphic word-portraits of jazz musicians and their music were written by Whitney Balliett, who for many years has been my favourite jazz critic. I have surreptitiously scanned his articles in The New Yorker magazine on my neighbourhood newstand, I have read them in a doctor's waiting-room, and I have read them in the few copies my local library grudgingly allows me to take out at any one time. This hit-and-miss reading of the writings of Whitney Balliett has been somewhat alleviated over the years by various collections of his jazz columns in book form. In the fifth volume of these, "Ecstasy At The Onion", published in 1971, there is an ominous note from the author in the preface: "This will, I suspect, be my last book on the subject. I have been writing about the music since 1947, a more than ample time to say what has to be said on any subject. And jazz itself, in its dwindling defenseless state, can no longer bear much critical weight - if, indeed, it ever could". In spite of this, his articles and reviews continue to appear in The New Yorker.

Balliett's earliest writings on jazz appeared in the Saturday Review and he has contributed both prose and poetry to other magazines including The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, and The Reporter. In 1951, on graduating from Cornell University with honours in English, he joined the staff of The New Yorker. During his early years with the magazine, his functions included those of collator and proof-reader, and he performed every chore imaginable, short of sweeping the floor and polishing up the handle on the big front door. Over the years, his writings for The New Yorker have not been confined to jazz, but have included one season of reviewing off-Broadway theatre, several summers of substitute movie-reviewing, ten years of book-reviewing, a dozen or so poems, and miscellaneous items appearing in the Talk Of The Town.

Whitney Balliett's jazz articles get right to the heart of the matter under discussion by the use of highly descriptive prose, employing a magnificent selection of adjectives that bring the subjects into sharp focus. Here are some examples from the first collection, "The Sound Of Surprise" published in 1959:

"Cootie Williams perfected a still unsurpassed handling of the plunger mute (the plain old plumbing utensil, minus its handle) that results in some of the unique sounds in music. Williams generally plays in the middle registers and uses simple phrases, but when he applies the plunger, he produces an inexhaustible variety of sounds that include aching growls, yearning, ghostly wahoos, and tight, intimate effects that suggest a wordless language of sharp consonants and drawn-out vowels"....."In a slow ballad number, Ben Webster's tone is soft and enormous, and he is apt to start his phrases with whooshing smears that give one the impression of being suddenly picked up by a breaker and carried smoothly to shore. In fast tempos, he will play one clean, rolling chorus and then - whether from uneasiness, excitement, or an attempt to express the inexpressible - adopt a sharp, growling tone that, used sparingly, can be extremely effective, or, if sustained for several choruses, takes on a grumpy, monotonous sound."

Balliett's second collection was entitled "Dinosaurs In The Morning", published in 1962, and it contains an introductory note that is well worth quoting in full: "That jazz should be written about critically is doubtful. It is an elusive, subjective form, whose delights are immediate and often fleeting. It seizes the emotions and the heart - but rarely the head - and few people need instructions on how to feel. Moreover, jazz, unlike many musics, must be listened to and listened to before its secrets, which are many, become plain, and no amount of reading will do this for you. Nonetheless, the music is mercurial, and the curiosity about it is widespread. As a result, perhaps an attempt should be made to pin down its sights and sounds on paper. I am also pretty well convinced that some sort of running commentary on the music's ceaseless change has value; after all, jazz is the liveliest and possibly the most influential music in the world, and tomorrow it may be gone. To be sure, no such commentary can be wholly accurate or wholly agreeable. Critics are biased, and so are readers. (Indeed, a critic is a bundle of biases held loosely together by a sense of taste.) But intelligent readers soon discover how to allow for the windage of their own and a critic's prejudices".

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There are several examples in "Dinosaurs" that prove how Balliett is a master craftsman of words when it comes to crisp, pithy descriptions of jazz musicians. A couple of samples will suffice: "Duke Ellington's unfailingly regal and articulate presence was reminiscent, as it has been for years, of a defeated commanding general who has just surrendered his sword and expects it to be returned forthwith"...."Jack Teagarden's slurred, rubbing (vocal) delivery of lyrics suggests that he is trying to abolish consonants in favour of a new, vowels-only language".

Whitney Balliett is also extremely adept at drawing his rapier and thrusting it smartly into some of the stuffed shirts of jazz. As a verbal demolition-artist he has no peer. Witness the following which appears in "Such Sweet Thunder", a collection of 48 articles on jazz, published in 1968: "One of the oddest contagions in jazz was the outpourings of big quasi-jazz bands that proliferated from 1936 to 1950....Their leaders, in the main, were smiling, affable businessmen, bent on pleasing all of the people all of the time. Their organizations were polished, predictable, and popular, and were capable of rabble-rousing and speaking softly. They were dead centre musically, avoiding the heresies of the left and the Mickey Mouse tendencies of the right. Sometimes they were pompous (Artie Shaw) and sometimes they were just folks (Glenn Miller). Either way, they were dull. In short, they were paragons of conservatism, and while they were in office they ruled with a becalming moderation". Or take this gem from "Ecstasy At The Onion": "The Jimmy Lunceford band, which flourished between 1930 and 1947, has long been regarded as one of the four or five great big bands. As such, it resembles certain works of the imagination that, raised precipitately to false eminence, eventually appear invulnerable, like ivy-covered houses. To be sure, the Lunceford band was remarkably precise, some of its arrangements were ingenious, it had humour and flavour, it was danceable, and it was a good show band. But it was not a great jazz band. It used static two-beat rhythms, or a four-four beat that tended to sag or stampede. It was an arranger's band, an ensemble band, which favoured florid saxophone writing, brass-bound trombone and trumpet figures, and section work that resembled thunderheads shouldering through the sky. Its novelty numbers, often built around a vocal trio, moved between parody and the maudlin, suggesting that the Lunceford band was the first and only all-black Mickey Mouse band. Its up-tempo instrumentals were windy and unswinging. And the band's soloists, in the cramped spaces granted them, were rarely better than mediocre".

Of the four collections of Balliett's writings mentioned, it is unfortunate that only "Ecstasy At The Onion" is still in print and even it may be somewhat difficult to obtain. Bobbs-Merrill is the publisher in the U.S.A. and they have done little to publicize the book. Their Canadian agents (Thomas Allen/Hamlyn Publishing Group) do not carry it in stock. In spite of this, you should make every effort to obtain a copy, or at least demand that your local library carry it. If you are fortunate, you may come across the previous Balliett collections in the second-hand book stores. All four volumes could be certainly described as "The Best Of Balliett". "Ecstasy", for example, contains reports on the Newport/New York jazz festivals from 1966 through 1971 (an historical document in itself), five chapters on Duke Ellington (covering the period 1967-1970), and short sketches of Bessie Smith, Bobby Hackett, Benny Morton, John Coltrane, and Art Tatum. There are also definitive, full-length portraits in writing on Ray Charles, Red Norvo, The Modern Jazz Quartet, Bobby Short, and Charles Mingus.

Full-length profiles of nine personalities also appear in Whitney Balliett's latest book "Alec Wilder And His Friends" (Houghton Mifflin, 1974). As with the previous collections, all the articles originally appeared in The New Yorker "in slightly different form". To quote from the introductory note: "All these first-rate performers hold a common vision of life that has lately fallen low. They are highly moral people who have guarded their souls, who have, no matter how bad the going, refused to compromise. They have gone without jobs when fashion has turned against them, rather than demean themselves in shoddy ones. They have kept their spirits intact despite neglect, near-privation, and even semi-oblivion. These sterling people, in taking the high road, have bent their energies towards the endless polishing of their arts, and pre-eminence, no matter how tardy or circumscribed, has been their reward".

Heading the list is Marian McPartland, an elegant and unique English-born jazz pianist who can and does play anything from Delius to Dixieland, and who owns her own record-label, Halcyon. Also in

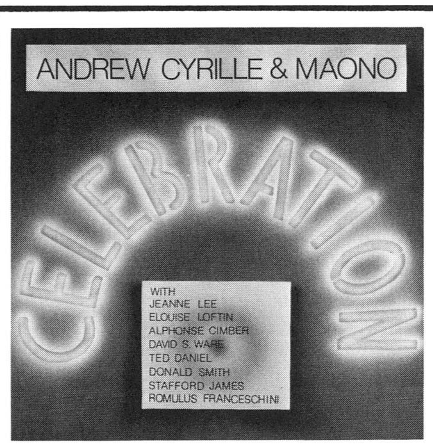
the jazz vein appear two blithe spirits, Bobby Hackett and Ruby Braff, two trumpeters/cornetists who never lose sight of the melody, and Marie Marcus, a jazz pianist with a style made up of "Waller oompahs, Teddy Wilson tenths, stabbing Nat Cole punctuations, Tatum runs, Bob Zurke choruses, and spacious Jess Stacy intervals".

Three popular singers also grace these pages (Mabel Mercer, Tony Bennett, and Blossom Dearie) as do those two mad comedians of radio, Bob and Ray (Mr. Elliott and Mr. Goulding). Finally, there is a chapter devoted to the songwriter-composer Alec Wilder whose life "has been divided between travel and music and my friends and solitude". There are some fine photographs in the book by Geoffrey James. The blurb on the dust-jacket of this book aptly sums it up: "These people form a loose, brave mutual admiration society that readers will surely want to join".

In 1976, Houghton Mifflin Co. will publish another collection of Whitney Balliett. Entitled "New York Notes, A Journal Of Jazz, 1972-1975" it will contain essays on Charlie Parker, Charlie Christian, Joe Turner, Artie Shaw, Helen Humes, Jimmy Rowles, Earl Hines, and Bessie Smith, and farewell obits on Duke Ellington, Harry Carney, and Gene Krupa. There is no doubt that it will be of the same high standard as the previous books.

I discovered only recently that Whitney Balliett was one of the advisers involved in the greatest jazz program ever shown on TV - The Sound Of Jazz which appeared on CBS in December 1957. In that historic production, the musicians were left alone to do what they knew best - play jazz. In his New Yorker articles, and in the various books I have mentioned, Whitney Balliett does what he is best at - write about jazz music and jazz musicians.

- John Nelson



Side One: Haitian Heritage, pt.1, (a) Voices of the Lineage, (b) Agowe, Hunto (Spirit in the Drum); pt. 2, "Levitation"
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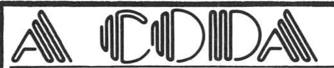
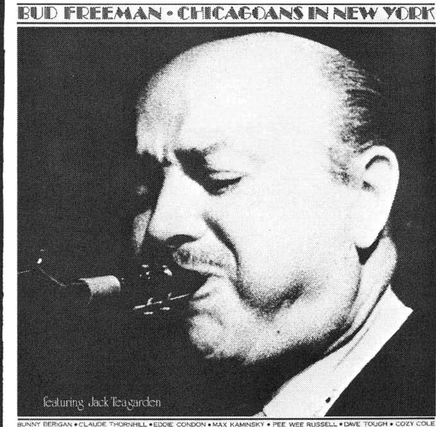


We regret the delays in publication of Coda during the past few months. The problems with the post office were not our own, of course, but the month long strike disrupted our activities considerably. There was no December issue and the one you are now reading is an expanded issue with eight additional pages. It is designed to bring us up to date and many of the regular features will return with the March issue. We want to thank you for your patience during this period and hope that the remainder of 1976 will not be disrupted by further labour disputes. We cannot guarantee that, however. Have a happy New Year.

There are no news columns but a number of important events in Toronto should be mentioned. Mother Necessity Jazz Workshop at 14 Queen Street East is open Tuesday through Sunday, for information phone 368-0971. The Toronto New Orleans Jazz Society presents Friday night sessions with the Silver Leaf Jazz Band at 519 Church Street. A Space Concerts: Sonny Greenwich (February 7/8), Dollar Brand (February 20/22), Richard Teitelbaum, Frederic Rzewski, Anthony Braxton (March 6/7), Karl Berger/Dave Holland (March 27/28). By the time you receive this the C.C.M.C. Music Gallery at 32 St. Patrick Street will be open. Information can be obtained by phoning 368-5975.



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Side Two:
Muskrat Ramble (takes 1 & 2), That Da Da Strain, Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble (take 1 & 2), At The Jazz Band Ball, After A While (take 1 & 2), Prince Of Wails with Bud Freeman and his Famous Chicagoans

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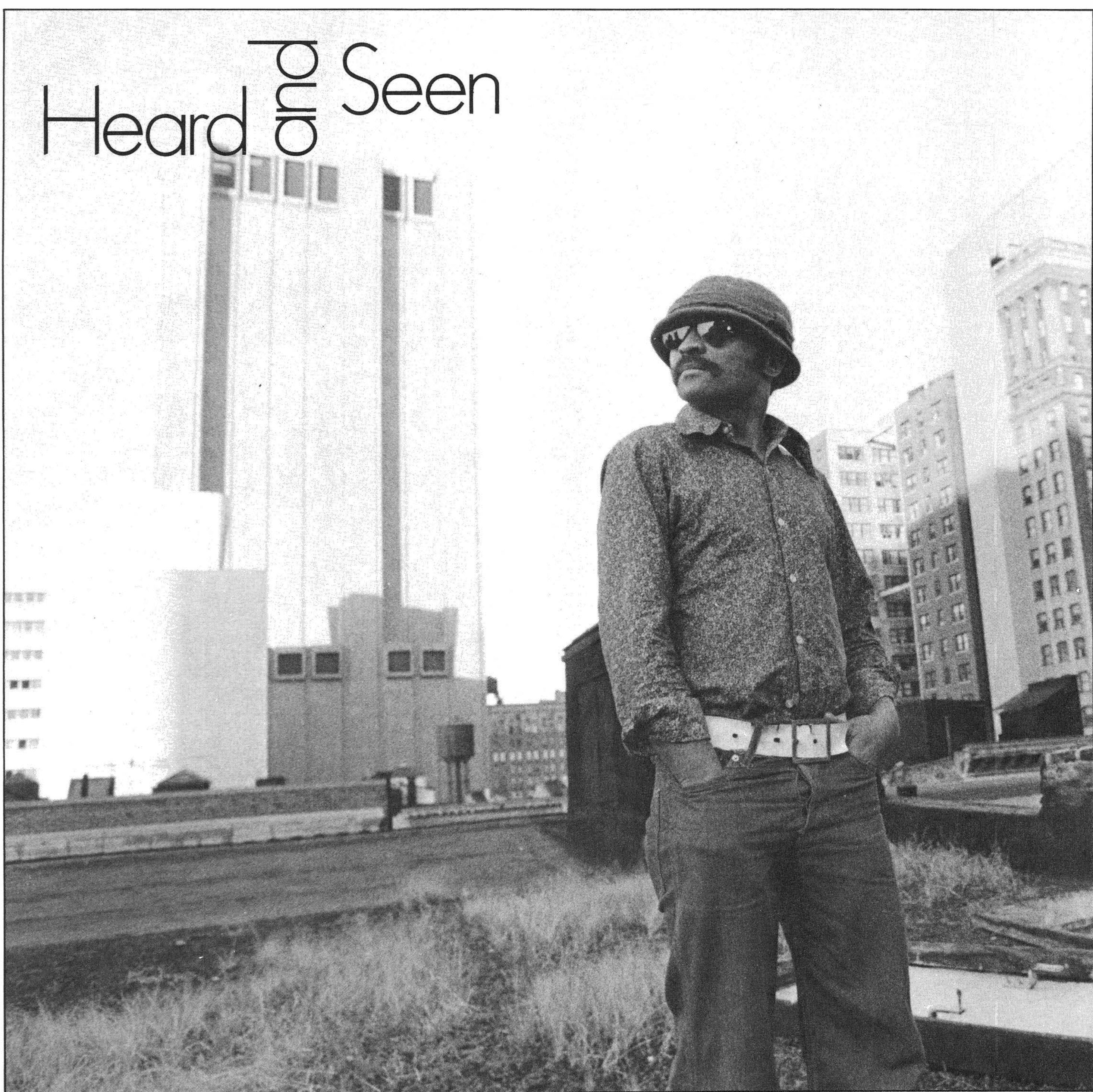
Heard and Seen



CECIL TAYLOR

Burton Auditorium, York University
October 30, 1975

Incredible as it may seem, this was the first time Cecil Taylor had performed in Toronto. His appearance, long overdue for a musician of his stature, was little short of astounding. He has been working together with Andrew Cyrille and Jimmy Lyons for more than ten years and their music has evolved and taken shape in a naturally flowing motion.

The essence of Taylor's music has altered little in the past decade. The consuming energy, the dense layers of sound, the remarkable virtuosity were all highly visible when he worked in Buffalo in the mid-60s (my last experience of the Unit in person) and are just as much a part of Taylor's concept today. Except that an added dimension has finally been added to the cascading sounds: pace and variety. This to me, is the all important ingredient which now makes a Taylor concert a completely absorbing, multi-dimensional journey into the sounds of a musical heritage stretching back at least 75 years in documented aural history. There were times when images of The Lion and Jo Jones popped through the dialogues being created by Taylor and Cyrille while Taylor's consistency can only be likened to the work of trumpeter Buck Clayton. It is almost dangerous to relax with Taylor because he will slip by you with some particularly moving and dexterous musical image which only he can conceive.

This concert introduced another dimension of Taylor's art (although it is not surprising when one remembers his words in his better interviews) - his sense of theatre and dance. The evening opened with disembodied voices (off-stage) collectively and individually evoking the spirits of the music with sonorously warm and highly vocal inflections which were like a musical prelude to the actual instruments that were to be played. This dramatic

Photograph of Cecil Taylor by K. Abe

scenario was enhanced as the human figures gradually emerged from the darkness invoking percussive and rhythmic patterns: Cyrille ricocheted sounds off the floor and walls while Lyons created tattoos of sound through the keys of his saxophone and the Master, Taylor, danced with the litheness of a panther as he continued his invocations to the piano, his instrument. It was a perfect introduction to a performance which escalated into the highest levels of musical transference.

The performance, a non-stop presentation of some half-dozen themes was predictable in its outlines but no one could have foreseen the extraordinary authority with which Jimmy Lyons performed Taylor's music. For years he had functioned in a subsidiary role (much as Charlie Rouse had done for Monk) but on this occasion he was galvanised into a man of iron whose solos grew in imaginative ingenuity as the evening progressed. He revealed an ability to move outside of the "legitimate" range of the alto saxophone while enhancing the momentum of the music.

Taylor and Cyrille are a remarkable team. The percussionist's acutely tuned ears are able to translate Taylor's directions in an uncanny manner and their moments of sublime empathy are so many that it is a surprise when something doesn't quite come together. Taylor's use of space, his intuitive rhythmic drive and his continuing resourcefulness in extending the jazz piano tradition makes him the principle piano voice in the music today. The sheer authority of his music is a constantly moving force which transports you, the listener, along in the tidal waves of his interweaving convoluted lines which build into dense orchestral patterns. This orchestral wall of sound fills the auditorium and there were moments when it felt as if there was, indeed, a stage full of musicians responding to Taylor's own musical direction and yet, when one's eyes opened all there were on stage were Taylor, Lyons and Cyrille. Such is the magic and mystery of Cecil Taylor.

- John Norris

MONTY ALEXANDER

Greensboro, N.C.
November 1, 1975

Believe it or not, Monty Alexander played a more unlikely place than Guilford College on the night before he performed in Greensboro. Up in the mountains of North Carolina at a provincial small school, Lenoir Rhyne College in Hickory. I don't know if they enjoyed him there, but they should have, because his music is rooted in that most basic of idioms, the blues.

It could almost have been a Ray Bryant concert. Their vocabulary is much the same (heavily steeped in blues) and, essentially, they cover much the same ground when they perform live - standards, pop tunes, original blues compositions. It all makes for an enjoyable evening of uncomplicated swinging jazz.

The trio (Alexander - acoustic piano, Jeff Hamilton - drums, John Clayton - acoustic bass) was a tight one and I would imagine that they've been playing together for a while before I heard them. Hamilton is a volcanic drummer. He should be "driving" behind a big band, all his brash and powerful propelling suit him perfectly to that idiom. He was so energetic that he broke two drum sticks during one solo. A trio setting is not really ideal for him. John Clayton's bass playing offered fine, if unexciting accompaniment. Rarely did he solo, but he showed superb technique when he brought out his bow on Ben, the theme from the movie(?) "Willard".

Kenny Dorham's Blue Bossa opened the program and Alexander paced the late composer's composition at medium tempo, exploring the piece with short repetitive phrases. Applause came forth as the first few bars of The Entertainer were heard. It was principally a solo vehicle for piano and Monty Alexander displayed a mixture of styles, moving from a strict ragtime interpretation to stride to an out and out boogie. Without a doubt, the highlight of the concert was a most stunning reading of Thad Jones' A Child Is Born. The tune itself stands like a graceful sculpture and the trio handled its quiet beauty as well as anyone could.

Monty Alexander's trio is a completely professional group. This is not meant to be a derogatory statement, they simply are a very competent band who know how and when to mix their repertoire. They certainly enjoy playing and the communication among the members is strong. For the most part, their material is not very adventuresome or new, although the leader did manage to weave a nice modal tune into a long medley, in between the theme from "The Godfather" and Love Is Blue. It stood in sharp contrast and the tune itself was one I'd not heard.

Catch this trio if you get the chance. You probably won't be wowed by their originality or inventiveness, but I'm sure they'll provide you with variety of material, verve and, once they get going, they sure can swing.

- Kip Lornell

RAGTIME BASH

Cara Inn, Toronto. October 18, 1975

Once again the annual party of Toronto's Ragtime Society, which turns the Cara Inn into a ragtime mecca for a full weekend, was a triumph. Ragtime celebrities, performers and devotees congregated from at least 14 states (that's when I lost count), all coming at their own expense to celebrate their mutual interest in, and the worldwide resurgence of, this irresistible syncopated music.

Rag was everywhere - a spontaneous Sunday morning breakfast session in the dining room at the invitation of the hotel staff; sheet music trading in the rooms; informal Society cocktail parties on Friday evening and Sunday afternoon accompanied by non-stop pianistics from Society members; banjo ragtime combos in the downstairs vestibule; afternoon boogie in the bar; etc. But the big event was a dinner party commencing at 3 p.m. Saturday, at which time those members desiring to play were introduced to an eager and attentive audience. This year my wife Nancy and I, repeating our role as co-MCs, presented no less than 52 persons during a program that ran - with time out for dinner - until 11.30; jamming continued until the wee hours.

Ragophiles will readily recognise the more famous names gracing the stage: Eubie Blake, Terry Waldo, John Arpin, Kerry Price, Mike Montgomery, The Canadian Brass (fantastic quintet of musicians), Walt Gower (clarinet), Mike Schwimmer (washboard), and Brian Dykstra, to list those represented on lp (I guess I fall in that bag, too, come to think of it). Moreover, the appearance of ragtime historian Rudi Blesh and Amelia and Joe Lamb, widow and son of the great composer, added additional stature to the scene. But the backbone of the Bash, as always, was made up of the less-well known performers, displaying an impressive average level of ability and including some real sharks at the 88, who personify the broad appeal of ragtime and the variety of its expression: Toronto ticklers Jack Cuff, Bess Fell, Gordon Sheard (unbelievable Harlem stride), Dave Flowitt; banjoists Wayne Adams, Harry Malfas, Eli Kaufman; composers Bob Milne, Tom Schmutzler, David Lee, Austin Kitchen; mandolinist Rose Zak; saxophonist Brian Bauer; the New Charleston Chasers jazz band; and many others, young and mature, male and female, whose talents justify acknowledgement here but space considerations forbid.

Spice it with after-hours boogie from Ben Conroy and Charlie Booty; jazz vocals from Susan La Marche; Coda's staggeringly complete concession stand of lps, sheet music and books; inside chatter regarding forthcoming records and sheet music folios; and the chance to hang around with so many ragtimers in casual, low-key gatherings, and even the most rabid ragophile had to have come away satisfied. As for me . . . well, you can get the flavor of my reaction from knowing that I plan to be on hand next year - which will be my ninth straight.

- Tex Wyndham

BOB GREENE

The World of Jelly Roll Morton
Rochester, N.Y. November 22, 1975

In much the same way that Max Morath has revived the ragtime years so Bob Greene is doing the same for Jelly Roll Morton. This presentation was a musical meander through the good and bad years of one of the world's great musicians of this century. The songs were linked with neatly spiced narrative which gave insights into the viewpoints and philosophies of Morton. Most of these statements were culled from the Library of Congress reminiscences while the music was lifted, for the most part, from the Victor recordings of the late 1920s.

It's a little unnerving, at first, to sit in a concert hall (where, incidentally, the

sound left much to be desired. The Eastman may be a grand place but it needs modern amplification/speakers to handle this kind of music) and have Morton's familiar arrangements thrown back at you note for note. In a way it's the antithesis of jazz music.

The chosen material was an expanded version of that preserved on disc (RCA ARLI-0504) and there was a delightful version of Mamie's Blues as well as some hot choruses in Down In Honky Tonk Town (the only non Morton recording to be used) which gave the various musicians an opportunity to show whether they were qualified to tackle the intricacies of jazz improvisation. Only clarinetist Herb Hall came through with perfection. He demonstrated time and again that the subtleties of the jazz art are not something to be acquired but are part of your life-force. His phrasing, sound, imagination and rhythmic fluidity made the music come to life in a manner which was beyond cornetist Ed Polcer and trombonist Eph Resnick who were lost once they departed from the notes created many years ago by George Mitchell, Kid Ory etc.

The rhythm was buoyed by Milt Hinton's marvelously appropriate bass playing. He doesn't have the elasticity of a Pops Foster when utilising the "slap" technique but the springy flow of his lines helped make the music move with ease. Tommy Benford's rhythmic patterns were perfectly timed - he makes the most of a few simple ideas and his approach to the drums is ideally suited to this style of music. Bob Greene is to be congratulated on packaging this presentation and his piano playing is a faithful reinterpretation of Jelly's style but there is not the kind of imaginative depth which, for instance, a Don Ewell would bring to the music.

It was an enjoyable performance, and well worth your attendance when the show hits your town. It was certainly worthy of more support than Rochester was prepared to give and the vastness of the Eastman Theatre didn't help very much.

- John Norris

MIXED BAG

Loma Linda Restaurant,
Ann Arbor, Michigan,
Saturday, October 4, 1975

"Mixed Bag" is an apt title for this driving, cohesive unit, combining as it does the talents of six of Detroit's best players in a mixture of the improvisational genius of jazz with Latin and rock-derived rhythms. The mix seems to be succeeding for Mixed Bag; what began as a Sunday-only gig in the lounge (with the Bag featured as the second half of a jazz double-bill) has grown to a Friday-Saturday-Sunday affair in the dining room (the lounge is reserved for disco acts). Half of the band plays quietly for the diners, with the whole crew assembling for stronger stuff later in the evening.

Front man for what appears to be a cooperative enterprise is bassist Ron Brooks, playing both acoustic and electric. He and drummer Danny Spencer were the rhythm team in the Detroit-based Contemporary Jazz Quintet in the late sixties, and both (and especially Spencer) provide much of this group's propulsion as well. Other Bag-men include Larry Nozero, soprano, tenor sax, flute and piccolo; Ed Russ, piano; Jerry Glassel, guitar; and Dave Kother, percussion.

We caught the second of two short dinner-music sets, with a trio of Brooks, Spencer and Russ providing quiet, hip mood music that continually wanted to break loose and swing. Russ first noodled his way into a rather restrained What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life and followed it with J.J. Johnson's Lament (most memorably recorded by Miles Davis and Gil Evans), ending the latter with rich chords over a pedal point. Both showed Russ, the only soloist, to be an attractively eclectic stylist with access to a wide range of jazz piano traditions, here particularly those pervasive post-Bill Evans ballad voicings. Spencer came out of the background a little on I'll Remember April, although still obviously being subdued, while Russ showed his roots (the melody harmonized in fourths echoed the Miles Davis/Davey Schildkraut 1954 version, while a vamp ending turned into Gillespie's Manteca.) Brooks took a pretty solo with swooping lines and a rather chunky tone before a switch to some Green Dolphin Street and some urbane words from him led us into a break.

With the whole of Mixed Bag crowded on and around the stage, Brooks (on upright) set up the simple Latin bass line of Chuck Mangione's Land Of Make Believe, with Nozero on soprano. Glassel soloed first, subordinating a potentially flashy technique to the demands of a fluid melodic conception. Nozero has an open, smooth tone on soprano, mellower than the harsh, shenai-like sound most players seem to be after today, and in his solo he constructed lines rooted more in the diatonic harmonies of late-fifties bop than in the more angular modality of Coltrane. Russ had the third solo, on his odd-looking white Baldwin electric piano, and something of a drum solo followed, although Spencer stayed pretty much within the samba feeling.

An original called Creek was next up, featuring an arrestingly jagged line stated by Nozero on soprano over relatively tame chord changes. Russ, Glassel and Nozero each took solos, with Glassel nicely contrasting basic blues licks with more advanced jazz lines. Bumps 24, a waltz by Russ, showcased Nozero's tenor, revealing with its warm fuzzy tone and rich vibrato an approach mostly out of the Stan Getz/Lester Young tradition. Such an approach works well in highly-charged dramatic Latin-based music such as this (as the Getz-Chick Corea "Captain Marvel" collaboration shows), and in general the earlier elements present in the playing of both Nozero and Russ are a refreshing change from the sometimes overly predictable patterns of many contemporary soloists.

Brooks was also particularly evident on this selection, both in some effective interplay with Nozero and in his own triplet-filled solo. He then switched to electric bass for Danny Spencer's The Sheriff, a powerful rocker built around Brooks' bass line, with a smoothly executed 7/8 bridge. Short solos from Glassel, Russ and Nozero (back on soprano, which he seems to favor with the group) brought The Sheriff and the set to a close.

The succeeding sets had a number of interesting moments. Some of these came during Nozero's New Moon, another fast modal Latin-Rock thing chiefly distinguished by a section in 5/8, some nice kicks, and an out-of-tempo "hole". Each soloist got to use this free section, but Brooks made the most of it with glissandos and Flamenco strumming to support some interesting melodies. Spencer really boiled on this tune - he's a first-string player who could hold his own with anyone now playing. Later we also heard from Nozero's flute and piccolo, both handled well with the same smooth approach of his saxes.

I'm of two minds about Dave Kother's percussion work with the group. Most additional percussionists bash and rattle much more than Kother does, and most of the time I wasn't aware that he was onstage. But Kother's reticence may be a logical reaction to the strongly rhythmic character of Mixed Bag's music and the powerful Mr. Spencer, and several times where the music needed him Kother was there with the appropriate noise. It seems most probably that Kother is just a subtle player in a relatively unsubtle music.

Mixed Bag has an album - appropriately called "Mixed Bag's First Album" - coming out on the Detroit cooperative Tribe label (available from Tribe Records, 81 Chandler, Detroit Mi. 48202 USA). Based on the excellent music being dispensed with the tacos at Loma Linda, I'd recommend buying it. - David Wild

SALUTE TO ZOOT

Salute to Zoot; Highlights In Jazz
New York University Loeb's Student Center, New York City
December 10, 1975

Despite bankruptcy woes and garbage strikes, fare hikes and ever mounting taxes, New York City can still produce some of the liveliest all-year-round jazz fare in the nation. But this winter's highlight was a mini-concert in Jack Kleinsinger's Highlights In Jazz Series titled "Salute to Zoot" to honor that enduring - and endearing - tenor saxophonist. Zoot's popularity is so great that NYU's Loeb Student Center auditorium was packed to the rafters and literally hundreds had to be turned back.

Roy Eldridge, Al Cohn, Joe Newman, Bucky Pizzarelli, Major Holley, George Duvivier, Russ Tompkins and Cliff Leeman were the artists featured, but with a concert like this anything can happen: as the concert progressed, Gerry Mulligan, Mousey Alexander, Al Porcino, even Mose Allison were among those who "dropped in" to say hello to a favorite musician's

musician in the best way they knew - musically. The result was the sort of impromptu all-star jam one associates with good jazz and which, as commercial interests take over, is becoming increasingly rare in such overblown, overpriced events as the Newport Jazz Festival. (This concert was priced at a mere $5 - $4 for students).

Newman, Al Cohn, Pizzarelli, Major Holley, pianist Russ Tompkins - who had just flown in from Los Angeles to be on this gig - and "guest" Mousey Alexander kicked things off into the right groove with Groovin' High and kept up the pace with another Bop standard. Major Holley, riding the crest with his new Paris-recorded lp "Mule" (on French Black and Blue label), constantly requested and aired on jazz station WRVR, broke everyone up with his singing-with-bass version of Angel Eyes from that album (church-Latin phrases and all).

Roy Eldridge took over command for the next two sets, barrelling off with Little Jazz with amazing zest in his trumpet playing, then sinking into an easy going home-brewed blues called Wino, which Roy sang to the accompaniment of Gerry Mulligan (dropping in unexpectedly); Al Cohn and (for the first time) Zoot, plus rhythm. This all-star group mixed things marvelously jamming on Cottontail, which could be heard all the way to Warsaw (via Voice of America, which recorded this event).

Zoot and his old teammate Al Cohn played doubles on My Funny Valentine following intermission, after which things became gloriously disorganized as "guests" continued to drop in, including singer Lynn Roberts (who'd come straight from her honeymoon), trumpeter Al Porcino and Mose Allison.

In the midst of it all, Joe Newman, just back from Russia, produced a plaque (from what first looked like a carton of Jack Daniels) and presented it to Zoot on behalf of Highlights In Jazz. This caught Zoot unawares. Embarrassed by the spoken kudos (from Newman, Cohn, Kleinsinger) Zoot said something like, "Aw, it's just a good gig, man. I just love playing with all these friends. Let's blow

photograph of Roy Eldridge by Tom Van Wageningen

the roof off...." Which they did for the rest of the session, but not before Zoot showed his Ben Webster allegiances with a heartfelt solo on Single Petal Of A Rose (adapted for Ben from Ellington's rare Queen Elizabeth Suite). A rousing Sweet Georgia Brown (Zoot on soprano) went on well after "closing time". After which the group marched off to Eddie Condon's to continue the musical merrymaking with more toasts to Zoot, this time at $2.50 a drink.... - Al Van Starrex

RAY BRYANT

The Van Dyck, Schenectady, N.Y., October 28, 1975

DICK WELLSTOOD

Toronto, October 24, 1975

The inner strengths of a musician are revealed when he has to work alone. Dick Wellstood has been a solo performer for many years, partly through choice and partly through necessity. He is now concentrating on this role, although the roots of his style go back to the original masters of solo piano - such Harlem ticklers as James P. Johnson, Willie The Lion Smith and Luckey Roberts. Wellstood, however, has an insatiable curiosity about jazz music and is as likely to talk to you about Cecil Taylor as he is to reminisce about James P. It shows in his music, too. He was in Toronto for a private party and in two short sets revealed the essence of his music. If Dreams Come True, the opener, was taken at ballad tempo before moving into a faster paced stride section which tore the tune apart. He likes to vary his program but the core of Wellstood's music is when he opens out and plays with the classic gusto of the stride masters. He is an exemplary interpreter of this idiom but probably the most musically arresting part of his program was a fascinating medley of Duke Ellington tunes where the richer harmonic voicings allowed him a broader scope. Some measure and idea of Wellstood's talent can be gained from his more recent recordings but none, to date, really reveal the full scope of his talent.

Ray Bryant, in contrast to the attentive captive audience for Wellstood, was working a supper club engagement - not one conducive to high energy creativeness. It would be unfair, then, to view the evening as more than a typical working night for an itinerant musician making a living on the road. But Ray Bryant is much more than this. He is a jazz stylist of the highest order - an individualist whose instantly recognisable sound/style classify him as one of the masters of the idiom. He, too, has abandoned both bass and drums and is now working regularly as a solo performer. Even when working casually on some suggested tunes from outside of his regular repertoire Bryant gave an authoritative touch to the material. He was instantly arranging the material to suit his particular improvising methods. The key to Bryant's style is his remarkably strong left hand. He has fashioned his own merging of the robustness of Pete Johnson and the harmonic ingenuity of Art Tatum into a gorgeously blues-tinged bottom rung of his music. His melodic flair and precise articulation always make his work of interest and the casualness of the evening - how can it be otherwise when all the customers have gone home by 10 p.m. - seemed well suited to the continuing selection of melodic standards he explored with wit and taste. By the time this appears in print Ray Bryant will have travelled to Japan where his audiences will be large, attentive and enthusiastic. Hopefully this inspiration will create the environment for a masterful first recording for Norman Granz' Pablo label. Bryant, apart from Atlantic's "Alone at Montreux" album, has been ill-served by the recording industry over the past decade - his talent is far greater than many of his recordings suggest. - John Norris

GATO BARBIERI

In Concert, Montreal, October 2, 1975

As someone who really, really liked Gato when he first began consolidating his music on the Flying Dutchman label (records such as "Fenix" and "Under Fire" come to mind), hearing him live turned out to be a disappointment. I knew it was coming, however, since I've continued following his music through the various Chapters on Impulse; the fine recordings with traditional Latin American musicians (records that unfortunately say more about the strength of Latin American music than they do about Gato), the big band album, the live album (Gato's most recent Impulse album), I knew what to expect. I got exactly what I expected.

Giving you exactly what you expect is of course what made me expect what I got, since Gato has quickly become one of those players who approach the unexpected rarely. Looking back, his talent seems to be as an arranger and a bandleader. As improviser, his lack of too many ideas was masked for quite some time by energy and an incredible, incred-

photograph of Dick Wellstood and Jim Galloway by Bill Smith

ible sound, but these things tend to become...well, expected after a while and the turns of phrase, strokes of genius, abilities to turn areas of sound around completely and all the other good things that differentiate an Anthony Braxton, Oliver Lake or Julius Hemphill from a Tom Scott just weren't there when I wanted them to be.

As demonstrated in concert, Gato's world is still drawn between lush, slow ballads and highly-charged rhythmic music. One tends to set you up for the other. He used electric bass, electric piano, percussion and trap drums for this date, immediately getting a coarser, plugged-in sound that is much less suited to the music than Lonnie Liston Smith's acoustic piano was. The music itself really hasn't changed. Both sets included long versions of Last Tango In Paris in which Gato led the band through various rhythm changes; it was spontaneous, to be sure, but the spontaneous side of things ended whenever Gato picked up the horn. Why a man with such a natural ability to drive the music is no longer driving himself is beyond me; but perhaps in his music now he has finally found the area where all you have to do is sit back and repeat yourself and the rest of it takes care of itself. The formula. It isn't for me, and I'm sad. He could have been so good. - Eugene Chadbourne

ANTHONY BRAXTON

University Theatre, University of Calgary, November 3, 1975
Edmonton Art Gallery, November 5, 1975
The Western Front, Vancouver, November 6, 1975

The state of Braxton's solo saxophone art, circa 1975. Having made the arrangements possible for Anthony Braxton to present three solo alto saxophone concerts in Alberta and British Columbia, I thought it might be nice to attend all three concerts. It was.

Braxton has given hundreds of these solo concerts since his first one in Chicago a decade ago ("I just got up and improvised for the whole concert," he told me, "And right away I knew that wasn't the way") and now in one sense has the presentation of solo alto music down to a science. In another sense, Braxton goes through his musical development as a perpetual student, always realizing that there's something else to learn, but when you come right down to it, he is one of the few performers who have been involved in solo music to the extent where the problem of actually pulling the concert off is no longer a consideration. Now it's more a selection of what pieces to play (besides selections from the standard repertoire, Braxton has more than 100 pieces of his own for solo alto on tap), in what order to play them, how long to play them.

Communicating with the audience is a consideration with Braxton, but not the "communication" of the talking-down variety we now see Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock engaged in. No, Braxton does not water down his music, but he feels out the vibrations of each audience and does not present music that will not be received. He realizes the vulnerable position of the solo player ("It's like standing on the edge of a cliff.") and does not want the beauty of what he creates shattered by one or two assholes in the audience. At the Vancouver concert, possibly the most interesting piece of the evening - based on percussive smacks and clicks all over the horn's range - was disrupted by a couple of people who were into their joints and thought the whole thing was a joke. Braxton stopped when they began to hoot and holler and began the piece again to, this time, a silent audience. These things can all ruin the time-impact of solo music.

This is a new period for Braxton. He told me he no longer is as "intense as I used to be. I used to want to go out there and kill someone in the audience." He still can be as intense as anyone, as particularly the Edmonton concert indicated, with the second composition on the program dealing specifically with the range of sound possibilities on the alto at loud dynamic levels. But more than ever Braxton has become a lyricist, a melodist, a believer in silence and space and a creator of "threshold music" (a concept he learned from Richard Teitelbaum) in which sounds are created just slightly over the level of hearing. This sense of finding silence and holding it steady with the slightest sounds contributed to a beautiful composition in the Calgary concert.

"Maybe by the time I'm 50 I'll be able to make a mature statement about where I'm coming from," Braxton said in Edmonton, but already we can see him developing a new maturity about what he is creating and how it relates to history.

These Braxton solo concerts each contained several standards, and not the elongated, belch-fire renditions of the past such as his Come Sunday on the French Futura solo album. His performance of Naima in Edmonton consisted of a straight reading of the theme, with no improvisation. In Calgary, 'Round Midnight and East Of The Sun, West Of The Moon were given bittersweet, soft treatments with improvisations respectful to the tradition the music developed from. "I'm talking about playing the entire history of the music and understanding it," he said. Soon he will be playing ragtime and "re-studying everything Duke Ellington ever wrote," and a period of looking back as well as forward begins.

Still, it is undoubtedly Braxton's original music which creates the high points of his concerts. His conceptual grafting of language studies to the alto, explorations of changing "weight shifts" in structure and compositional adaptation of various approaches to improvisation have helped to create a field of music all his own in which the composition and the improvisation are totally linked; one could not exist without the other.

As each concert indicated, this music also represents Braxton's most successful organizing of sound; a successful performance of one of his solo pieces becomes, at least for me, the plateau of his accomplishments, a totally personal and completely revealing system for dealing with playing music that, despite the somewhat ominous equation titles, is as warm as any music around. Braxton swings, he sings, he happily gets it across exactly the way it should be. Despite the high quality of much of his work with ensembles, he has yet to reach a relationship with another musician which is as telepathic and understanding as the one he has with himself. - Eugene Chadbourne

PETE KING

Jazz Centre Society, London, England
December 4, 1975

The quartet were digging deeply into Yesterdays when I arrived, and King was soloing - using the chord structure but giving an impression of moving freely within it. His alto shows a strong Bird influence, and maybe a little Cannonball, but there's a lot of King in there too. He was followed by guitarist Louis Stewart, with a driving well-conceived and well-executed solo.

The next number was introduced as "a very ad-lib improvisation on the twelve-bar blues", adding a few quotes en route, and then the bass and drums dropped out to let alto and guitar go it together, the alto gently exploring over rich supportive guitar chordings. The tempo changed upwards as the bass and drums returned, spurring the sax into wilder explorations. A percussive bass solo by Ken Baldock, a brief drum solo and some heated trading between King and Martin Drew (drums), ended the set.

The second set started with Freddy Hubbard's Far Away. King came on strong from the start, on the theme and then around it, using the whole range of the alto with great conviction. Stewart's guitar kept up the intensity of the piece, his solo full of ideas forcefully and economically presented. Martin Drew contributed his most interesting drum solo, using contrasts in volume and tempo very effectively. Alto and drums duetted, and then guitar and bass returned for a delicate ending which set the mood for the next number. This was the ballad Here's That Rainy Day. King and Stewart opened this one sensitively, King displaying his impressive technique as he explored all the possibilities of the melody. Stewart's guitar solo maintained the mood, generally gentle and reflective, but with fine fast little runs interspersed. King ended the piece with a series of unaccompanied rising cadenzas.

The set, and the session, ended with Parker's Scrapple From The Apple. The The theme was stated, appropriately, by unison alto and guitar, with King taking the first solo, wearing the mantle of the master with authority, and then taking off in his own torrid direction. A sparkling guitar solo, driving and even percussive, logical but never predictable, followed, then a pleasant bass solo. Alto, guitar and drums swapped fours and then ended

with a unison restatement of the theme. Both King and Stewart are international level jazzmen (Stewart has toured with Benny Goodman), and both have ideas and the necessary mastery of their instruments to express them.

The Jazz Centre Society is the moving force behind much of the best jazz to be heard in London. With assistance from the Arts Council, they present at least two live sessions and one workshop each week. Information about their activities can be obtained by phoning 01-930-4261 or by writing them care of The Institute of Contemporary Arts, 12 Carleton House Terrace, London S.W.1. - Ron Sweetman

MANASSAS FESTIVAL

Manassas, Virginia. December 5/7, 1975

Once again, producer Johnson McRee's Manassas Jazz Festival brought to the unlikely hamlet of Manassas, Virginia a phalanx of top-drawer talent, mostly of traditional persuasion, to be grouped into all-star bands for a weekend of jazz principally of the free-wheeling Chicago style. And once again, stimulated by the opportunity to hear and play with famed artists such as Max Kaminsky, Doc Evans, Maxine Sullivan, Joe Muranyi, Art Hodes and Cliff Leeman, everyone rose to the occasion and delivered solid value for the seven-to-eight-dollar admission to each of four concerts.

The Friday evening and Sunday afternoon affairs, plus the closed patrons' party Sunday night, were held in a meeting room at the Ramada Inn. I missed Friday, having to play my regular club date at Wilmington with my combo, but the Sunday show and party were superb - probably because the intimate atmosphere of the setting was well suited to the sparse crowd turned out by a small town, putting the musicians at ease and giving the audience an unobstructed close-up view of the proceedings, Kaminsky, whose inspired playing was a highlight of the festival, kicked off Sunday at the helm of a tasty, swinging quartet including pianist Bobby Hirsch and, if I recall correctly, Leeman and bassist Gene Mayl. Things were still wailing when I left the party that night, with a hot combo including Spencer Clark's liquid bass sax and Tommy Saunders' biting cornet holding forth for dancers and listeners. (I was particularly impressed with Saunders' work all weekend, his style having matured from the predominant Davison influence of some years back into a personal, accomplished and consistently driving sound.)

Circumstances were less felicitous for the two Saturday sessions at All Saints Church, a large auditorium-gymnasium with (1) an echo that prevented complete aural separation of the instrumentalists and (2) a recessed bandstand that removed the customers somewhat from the music. Still, the calibre of the artists - the astonishing technical facility of trombonist Bill Allred; the appealing stage personalities of vocalists Natalie Lamb and Dave Wilborn; the blazing trombone of Danny Williams; the cleanly-executed well-balanced program served up by the featured out-of-town unit, Stan Levine's Original Traditional Jazz Band from New York - was sufficient to overcome the deficiences of the surroundings. The OTJB, incidentally, is itself an all-star bunch, with trumpeter Bill Barnes, clarinet-soprano saxist Jacques Kerrien, banjoist John Gill and tuba-bass saxist Vinnie Giodano all being called upon as sidemen for non-OTJB sets.

The bands were slotted among more specialised spots, which added variety to the lineup (for example, I did one solo turn of rags and rag-songs-with-vocal in addition to my keyboard assignments with full groups. Clarinetists Tommy Gwaltney and Wally Garner performed in tandem with rhythm), while the comfortable ambience of the Manassas scene - plenty of chance for informal mixing among musicians and audience - further contributed to the good time that pretty much everyone seemed to be having. I sure did. - Tex Wyndham

MUSIC FUSIONS

Theatre Guild, Georgetown, Guyana
July 20, 1975

In the Caribbean where Reggae, Calypso and Rhythm and Blues are king; jazz also holds its court. On Sunday, July 20, 1975, the Theatre Guild in Georgetown, Guyana presented a program called Music Fusions. This consisted of a group of musicians from both Trinidad and Guyana who were trying to make a fusion between jazz and calypso music.

As a member of the audience I felt the attempt was a very successful one; but more so was the fact that the music was happening in a place not associated with jazz! 3 different groups appeared on the program and each had its own version of the theme.

The feature group and most dynamic consisted of Clive Alexander, Harry Whittaker, Scofield Pilgrim, Keith Waite, Ed Hines. Alexander is a native of Guyana and now residing in Trinidad. He has just returned from New York where he was collaborating with Archie Shepp on the music fusion concepts of jazz and Caribbean roots! Scofield Pilgrim of Trinidad (Duke of Edinburgh Award) is actively at work travelling from island to island setting up school programs and organizing youths into bands for performances. Another musician of note is Keith Waite, a flautist with very good taste. He is also a Police Sargeant and plays in the Police Band.

The audience was very electric and for the first time in my concert experiences the people actually laughed instead of being up-tight and super-hip.

All in all, The Theatre Guild is continuing to present programs of this nature each week. Jazz is not alien in South America, radio programs have long been broadcast in the region. Also musicians such as Elvin Jones, Les McCann and Cannonball Adderley have all done concerts in Guyana.

Each Sunday at The Chaugacabanas Hotel there are jazz concerts. On Sunday, July 27, 1975 The Clive Alexander Quartet appeared: Mike Georges (bass), John Blake (guitar), Mike Tobas (drums) - all from Trinidad - and Clive Alexander (piano) from Guyana. This is a very exciting and explosive group (although hidden from the mainstream), dynamic enough to be given more notice.

Also visiting Trinidad was Nathan Davis, saxophonist (University of Pittsburgh) who was touring the area studying native African music and religious cultures. - Amos Hollins

FLIP PHILLIPS

Bourbon Street, Toronto
December 8, 1975

The graceful lines of the master saxophonists of jazz music's first classic era are well represented in the playing of Flip Phillips. Perhaps he, too, can almost qualify for a chair in those ranks. There are certainly few around today who can evoke the style and spirit of such masters as Ben Webster with as much authority.

His emergence from the warmth of Florida was as unexpected as it was delightful for anyone who savours the delights of warm-toned tenor playing. There is a resilience to Phillips' playing which grows stronger as he develops his ideas through more extended solos. His first set was slightly misleading. Perhaps he uses it to get himself into shape but his solos were short and slightly perfunctory - perhaps he was respecting the wishes of those who had come to the club to dine rather than to listen. The second set was highlighted by a string of well chosen (if somewhat familiar) Ellington themes and it was here that Phillips got to display the inner strength of his playing. He capped everything with a wonderfully structured version of Body And Soul where the feathery grace of his lines gave the tune a feline silkiness.

Phillips worked hard to get the music moving without once resorting to the tricks which gave him a somewhat notorious reputation in "Jazz At The Philharmonic" days. His music reflects his taste and the cohesiveness of his lines makes even familiar ideas sound good. Finding the right rhythmic combination for a musician of Phillips' generation is not easy and Carol Britto, Dave Young and Marty Morell were wide of the mark. On their own they sounded comfortable but working with Phillips was a different matter. The saxophonist feels the beat with the lazy swing of a summer afternoon while the rhythm team were constantly bearing down with the hustle and bustle of the morning rush hour. This clash was personified in Sweet Georgia Brown where the sizzling cymbals of Jo Jones would have made the opening saxophone-drum duet move forward rather than remaining a static exercise.

The pastel shades of Flip Phillips' music evokes strong images of Ben Webster - its brightness warms the spirits of listeners in tune with that approach to jazz saxophone. - John Norris

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JOHNNY HODGES: The Jeep Is Jumping - 2 lp set of 1950s Verve recordings w. Emmett Berry, Lawrence Brown (Verve).................................12.00
ELVIN JONES: Live at Town Hall w. Frank Foster, Chick Corea (PM)........... 5.98
JIMMIE NOONE: 1931-1940 (Queen Disc).. 6.50
DEXTER GORDON: More Than You Know w. Palle Mikkelborg Orchestra (SteepleChase).. 6.98
1974 NICE FESTIVAL RECORDINGS: EARL HINES: Fireworks; TRIBUTE TO LOUIS ARMSTRONG: w. Bigard, Davenport, Davison, Dickenson etc; TRIBUTE TO COUNT BASIE: w. Braff, Davenport, Tate, Coleman etc.; EUBIE BLAKE: 91 Years Young; EARL HINES/BARNEY BIGARD: Giants in Nice w. Bill Coleman, Vic Dickenson (French RCA).................................. each 6.98
LEE KONITZ: Motion w. Sonny Dallas, Elvin Jones (Verve).................... 6.98
THE BIG 18: The Swing Collection - 2 lp reissue of big band recreations featuring many of Swing Era's Jazz Greats (RCA)........................ 12.00
MASTER JAZZ PIANO: Volume 4 w. Hines, McShann, Jackson, Cliff Smalls, Gloria Hearn (MJR)... 6.50
CECIL GANT: Rock Little Baby (Flyright)..................................... 6.98
ANTHONY BRAXTON: Five Pieces 1975 w. Wheeler, Holland, Altschul (Arista)....5.98
ELLA FITZGERALD/LOUIS ARMSTRONG: The Special Magic of Ella & Louis (Verve)...6.98
THAD JONES/MEL LEWIS: Suite for Pops (Horizon).............................5.98
FATS WALLER: Complete Recordings Volumes 12, 13, 14, 15 French RCA)...each 6.98
ELLA FITZGERALD: sings the Duke Ellington Songbook Volume One - 2 lp reissue with the Duke Ellington Orchestra (Verve).........................12.00
CHARLIE PARKER: Dance of the Infidels (S.C.A.M.)........................... 6.98
MIKE WESTBROOK: Citadel/Room 315 w. John Surman (RCA)......................6.98
DUKE ELLINGTON: Integrale Volume 12, 13 and 15 - note that Volume 14 has yet to arrive here but is expected (French RCA)..................... each 6.98
ZOOT SIMS: and the Gershwin Brothers w. Peterson, Pass, Mraz, Tate (Pablo)... 6.98
FRANK TUSA/DAVE LIEBMAN: Father Time (Enja).................................6.50
RED NICHOLS: Early Red Nichols 1925-1927 (Jazz Studies).....................6.50
LESTER YOUNG: The Genius of - w. Nat Cole, Oscar Peterson, Buddy Rich - 2 lp set (Verve)..12.00
MILES DAVIS: Kind of Blue & Porgy and Bess (Columbia)................. each 4.00
ORNETTE COLEMAN: Science Fiction (Columbia)............................... 4.00
THE GIANTS OF JAZZ: w. Dizzy, Blakey, Monk, Stitt, Winding; COLEMAN HAWKINS/FRANK WESS: The Commodore Years - 2 lp sets (Atlantic)........ each 5.00
LOUIS ARMSTRONG: Town Hall 1947 w. Teagarden - previously unissued part of the concert (French RCA)..................................... 6.98
COLEMAN HAWKINS/BEN WEBSTER: Blue Saxophones (Verve)...................... 6.98
JIM HALL: Concierto (CTI).. 6.98
PAUL DESMOND: Pure Desmond w. Ed Bickert, Ron Carter, Connie Kay (CTI).... 6.98

The above records have been selected from our current stock and the prices include all packing and shipping charges. We can usually supply all recordings listed in the Schwann Catalog as well as British and Continental releases. We will search for out of print recordings on receipt of the information on 3x5 index cards.

ANTHONY BRAXTON
LEROY JENKINS · LEO SMITH
SILENCE
SIDE ONE
Off The Top Of My Head
SIDE TWO
Silence
Recorded in Paris, July 18, 1969
Available from Coda Publications,
Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4J 4X8. $6.98 postpaid