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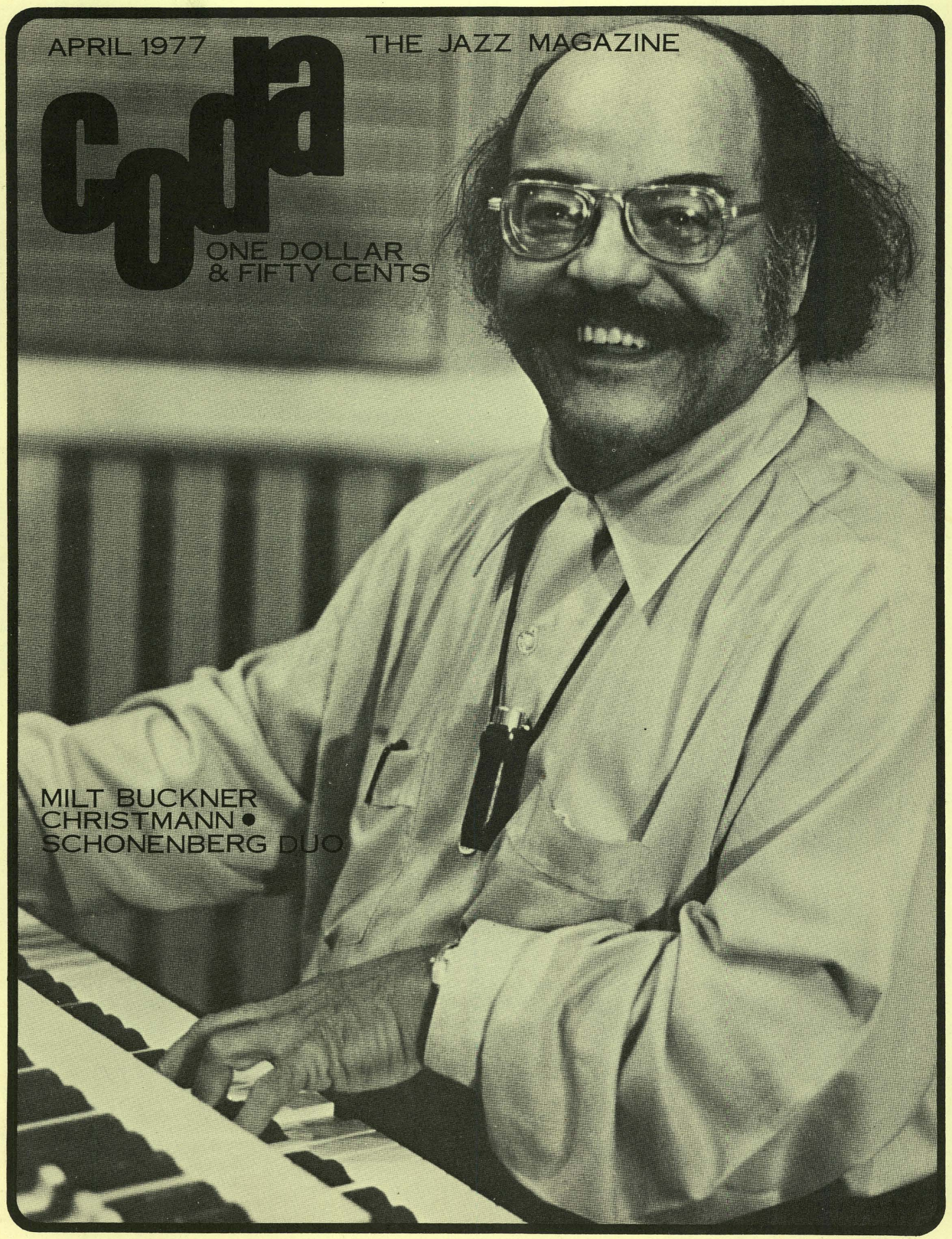

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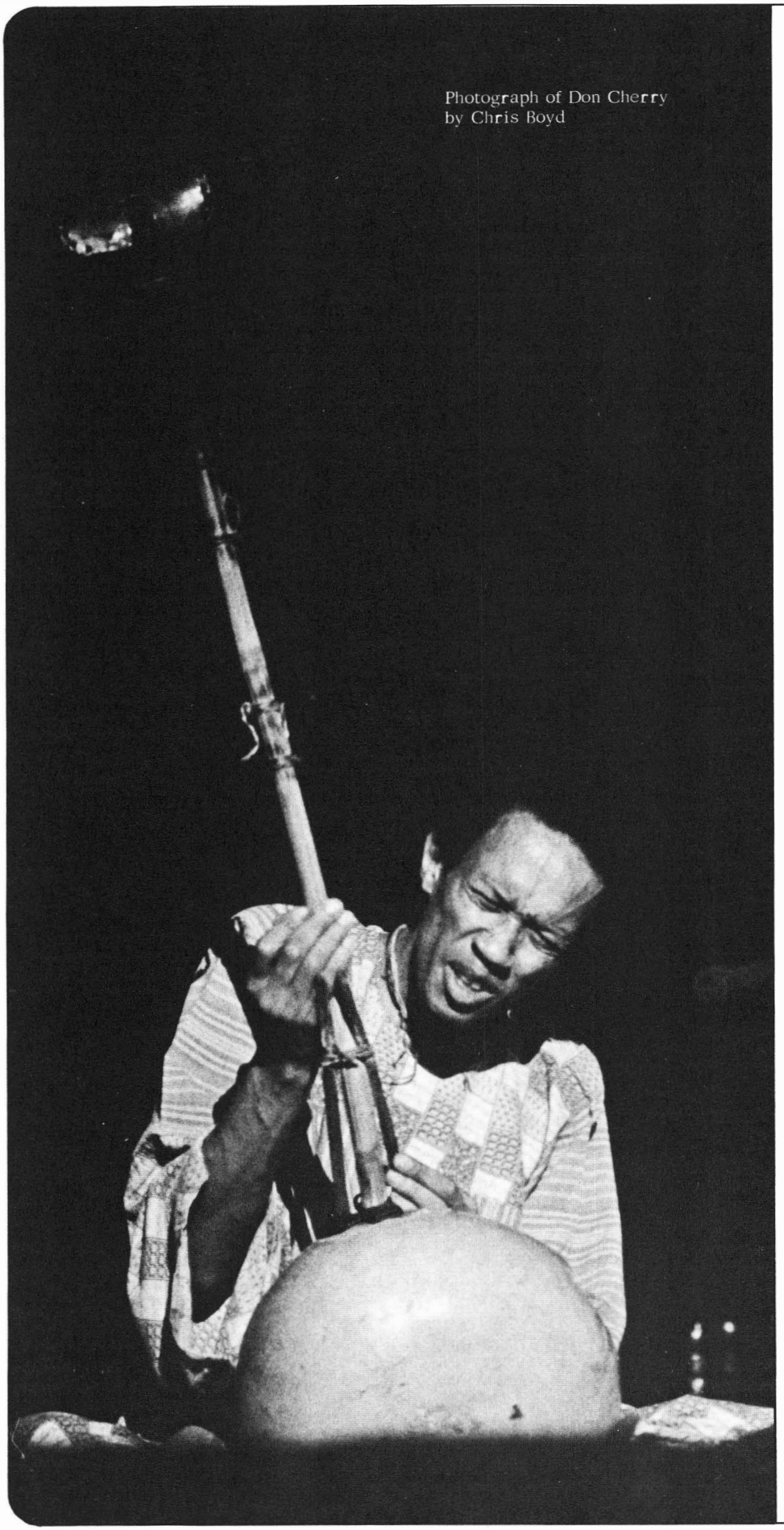

Photograph of Don Cherry
by Chris Boyd

Coda

MARCH/APRIL 1977 - Issue 154

STAFF

Dan Allen - Patricia Brown - David Lee - John Norris - Bill Smith

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MILT BUCKNER
photograph by Jean-Pierre Tahmazian
(courtesy of Black and Blue Records)

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the MILT BUCKNER interview w

MILT BUCKNER: I'll tell you about my first piece. I was playing with a kid band around Detroit back in the early thirties - in 1931 or '32, I can never remember the right year. I claim it was '30 but Jo Jones says it was '32 because he knew just when Art Tatum started playing in this particular H-house. We played a dance that night in Toledo, Ohio. After the dance everybody said, "Let's go by Angelina's place". So we went up the cobblestoned alley, you could hardly find the place, but there it was - a beautiful place, big. Just when we got in there I heard this piano player playing up on the little mezzanine - Art Tatum - and he was wailing. Now while I'm so busy listening to this man blow, standing right behind him, the guys were putting nickels and dimes to get two dollars to stake me out. I was seventeen years old and I hadn't even started dating yet. So, they picked me out a fine lady, and she took me on upstairs, and to the music of Art Tatum, there I was - deflowered. I never forgot that. I was telling Jon Hendricks about it in London and he said, "Yes. I remember the place" because he and Art Tatum used to play a lot of gigs around (he was a kid singer). I said I wondered why I never could find the place after that and he said, "Well you know they paved that street". They took up the cobblestones and that was why I couldn't find it.

ALAN OFFSTEIN: Did you ever tell Art Tatum about that?

Milt: No, I didn't talk to him much. I was raised up in Detroit. Whenever he came in to Detroit he would look me up and Lannie Scott, another piano player, and Buckles, and we would go to an after-hour joint named George's where we took turns playing. I got so disgusted because I could never play like him and later on that year I started playing with a band at a dancing school. We had five pieces - trumpet, saxophone, drums, piano and bass. We broadcast every night. You're too young to know anything about dancing school. The regular dancing school has from 59 to 60 dances an hour. Now where I was we were allowed to do maybe 30 or 35 dances an hour so we were able to play arrangements. We would play the first part of the arrangement, stop, and go on with the arrangement. And that was the dance. We had the stock arrangements there and on them they had the lead (the piano part) and the cards. I would blend the lead and the cards to make it sound like a big band. And that's how I developed the locked-hands style. After that when Art Tatum came by I exhibited it to him and he said, "That's fine. You keep that up". And I know that I have some records here that I did back in the forties when I was with Lionel Hampton, with him doing the locked-hands style. He could do it too. Shearing had grabbed it in 1942 when I first saw him. He had been in this country about six months and I used to see him down at the Three Deuces on 52nd Street. He started doing the locked-hands style then.

Alan: In the old days, horn players like Freddie Keppard used to cover their hands so that nobody could see....

Milt: That's what they say, but I was too young to know then. I used to see Freddie Jenkins with Duke Ellington and I remember him as a sharp cat. He used to flash his fingers on the horn. That's the way I remember him, but I never saw Duke's band too much during the early days. They would come in to Detroit at the Greystone Bar room and sometimes my uncle would take me down to see them. That's how I first heard Lawrence Brown. He had just joined the band - I can't remember what year that was - must be 1927 or '28, but I was just a kid. My uncle played trombone too. He pointed to Lawrence Brown and said, "That's a trombone player".

Alan: So you never worried about anybody copying what you were doing?

Milt: No, I never thought about it. George Shearing has always been the one who said that he got his style from me and Oscar Peterson - when I first met him I had a trio with Jo Jones and Gene Ramey at Birdland in 1950 - he told me that I had been his idol - in the chord style. He has now gone on to become an all-round pianist. There's a friend of mine over in Germany now called Joe Berendt and he was the cause of me getting over there in '66 - the first time I went to Europe - he talked George Wein into bringing me over. Joe put a write-up on the back of one of the records about some writer over in Europe (I can't think of his name) that wrote and said, "Well, if he was the first one to develop that style, why does he let everybody say that George Shearing did it first etc." So, I wrote Joe back and said, "Listen, every musician that started out copied after somebody. When I first started out I copied after Earl Hines (1928/29) until I heard Art Tatum. Then I decided that my fingers wouldn't do that. So, just by accident, I developed the chord style. It seemed to be easier to me".

I said, "I have never felt against anybody because they have taken my style and not given me credit, because I've copied after others. You can't say that Charlie Parker never copied after anyone else. Of course he gradually developed his own thing. Just like Illinois Jacquet. He started out with that first solo of Flying Home. Now you can't tell me he didn't copy Lester Young a little bit and Coleman Hawkins. Same thing with Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, Buddy Tate. They all copied a little bit but later their own personality showed through. I'm never jealous of someone that went on to do different than what I did."

Alan: Rex Stewart, in his book "Jazz Masters of the Thirties" talks of tunes that he composed but never wrote down and that later appeared under other peoples' names and became famous. He was resentful about not getting some....

Milt: Let me give you an idea of what

ith Alan Offstein

the situation was in the thirties. There were very few recordings made and it took a long time to get to the market. If you record a number with this band, the bandleader will either buy the song or he will just go ahead and put his name on it and the musician doesn't know the difference. For instance, Jo Jones wrote some songs for Basie, but Basie just put his name on them and went on. That was the system in those days. Jimmie Lunceford did the same thing. Today it's a different proposition because they have found out there is so much money in a composer's rights. But the people who originally composed them didn't feel that way until they found out how much money was involved. Duke Ellington was better than most bandleaders. He would buy the song outright from the composer. But he was really taking a chance because he didn't know the song was going to be famous. Basie and Lionel Hampton did the same thing. There is a joke with Lionel Hampton's band. Joe Morris wrote a song called Chop-Chop (he was a trumpet player, but he died back in 1957 of a stroke). On this song it says "written by Joe Morris, Lionel Hampton, Gladys Neal" and some other names. Back in those days, the composer's rights were 33 1/3 per cent of only a certain other percentage - it was quite low. The only one who made money was the publishing company. Today it's quite different. A guy can make a million dollars out of one song. My daughter was the financial secretary for Motown Records for a while, handling the accounts for the Supremes, and she mentioned some young composer, about 25 years old, who got one cheque for one year of $995,000 for the songs he'd written. So royalties were different back in those days. My brother Ted Buckner played saxophone in the Jimmie Lunceford band when Willie Smith was there, he played solos on Margie, Ain't She Sweet, and all the credit went to Willie Smith after he left. You can't blame anybody. That's just the way human nature is. My brother helped to write the Twenty-Four Robbers song and it wasn't until about ten years ago that he finally got a cheque for two thousand dollars. Because Jimmie Lunceford was dead they went to the estate and figured out who it was. The bandleader had to exploit the number so therefore he had to have an interest in it to exploit it. He's the one that's going to be calling the number to play and he has to deal with the publishing company, so he should get something for it. But I think the bandleader should get the popularity and the composer should get all the royalites from the publishing company.

I recorded for the Argo company - Chess Records - but I didn't find out until recently that I'm going to see one-half per cent of one cent off each record as the composer. I'm supposed to receive five per cent of the record royalties but that's net, and when you say net - that's after everything else has been taken off. So, that's how it goes. Of course, the bigger you get the more you can demand. Ray Charles owns his masters now and he has his own publishing company that the records come out of. Lionel Hampton did the same thing. I did a recording one day for royalties on Hamp's Boogie Woogie, and I got this young lawyer and he fought the case for four years and then finally one day we all went down to the court - the same court and the same judge that sent the Rosenbergs to the gallows - and Chauncey Olman was the lawyer for Lionel Hampton. He stood up and said, "Your Honour, all I want to do is pay him the owed money. Well he could have said that four years ago. So he paid me the royalties and I took half and I gave the other half to the lawyer. Chauncey said he did that because my lawyer was young and he needed the experience. Chauncey was the big lawyer for all the record companies and he was Lionel Hampton's main lawyer and anybody fighting him had a rough time because he was really sharp. If each of us had lawyers like that it would be just fine. The bandleaders have a co-operative now for lawyers but the musicians can only go to the union.

Alan: Well, there's only so many things that a musician can keep on his mind and the first one has to be his music.

Milt: That's right. For instance, I have a one-track mind and I can't think about anything but the music. For about twelve or fifteen years my wife travelled with me on the road and handled all the business, et cetera. Now I don't even have an agent. I just go here and there and all I think about is playing. I don't have a business sense.

Alan: Working as an independent musician must place some other demands on you.

Milt: Not so much. I quit the business in 1964. I was disgusted. I dropped my trio - I had Maurice Sinclaire, a very fine drummer, and Al McQueen, a very fine tenor player, the kind that can play rock and roll, rhythm and blues, jazz, far out, avant-garde and everything - so I dropped that and went into the Playboy Club in New York to do a single. I went in there for two weeks and I stayed for eleven. Kai Winding got the job for me because he was the musical director for the Playboy at that time. And it's been like that ever since. People that I know and trust, I just call them and say I'm here and they say come on - no contracts, nothing. Illinois calls me every now and then for something he has to do, and Buddy Tate. I go to Europe once or twice a year. I didn't know I was so famous until I went over there. Nobody knows me over here but over there....

Alan: Travelling in Europe as much as you do, you must meet lots of other musicians like Kenny Drew and Ben Webster, and Dexter Gordon. They decided to stay there but Milt Buckner always comes back. What's the difference between life here and life in Europe?

Milt: Well, the fellows that go over there to stay have severed just about all

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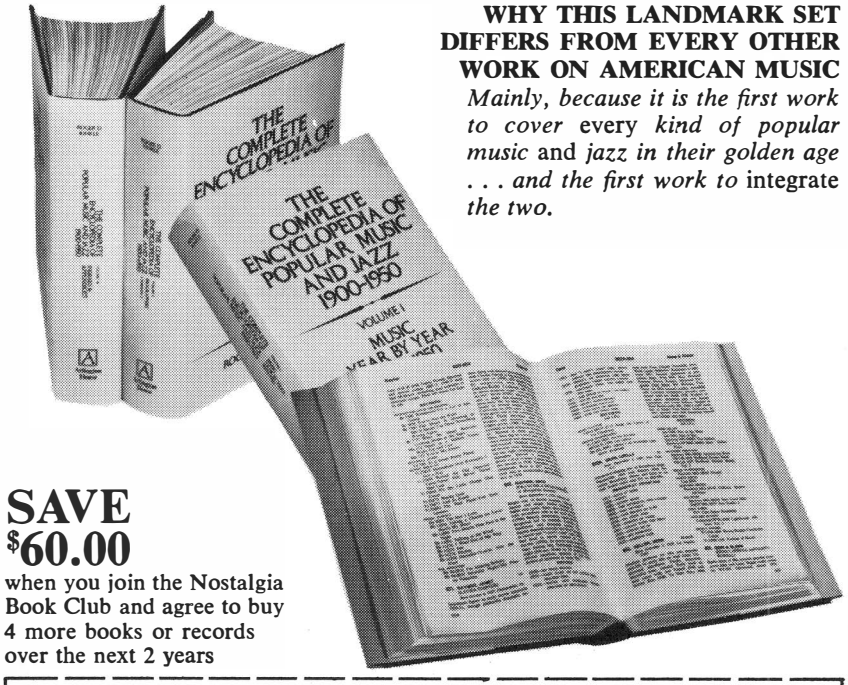

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their connections but in Europe they can start a new life. Like Kenny Clarke has got a wonderful thing, with a nice home out in the suburbs and a little boy and he teaches drums. He and Francy Boland had their big band. They had to stop it because where could they play? Unless they play around the big cities in Europe - in France, Paris is the only place you can play. Al Singer left here and went over there to live and he's remarried and has two kids - doing very nice. His wife does his booking for him because she speaks French. Bill Coleman has a fine apartment in Paris and he's doing fine. He's 65 years old and takes a little shot now and then. Memphis Slim was almost dying in the States and last year he bought himself a Rolls Royce.

The difference over there is this. If you are an artist, musician, painter, sculptor, writer, poet, you are put up on a higher plane. So if you are well-known you can live over there for a long time. Don Byas was doing really well over there. The trouble is that you've got to stay in the public eye. And the more you stay over there the more they get used to you and your prices begin to come down. But Dexter is king of Copenhagen.

I'm not ready to make that kind of decision. I want to stay right in the United States. I have my daughter, my grand-daughter, my brother and my sister, my mother and my wife's mother, and I can't leave them. Sometimes I've thought about going over there to live. I love the French people - they're something else. Jo Jones and I make a trip over there every year.

Alan: You have recorded four albums over there for MPS in Germany - "Play Chords", "Locked Hands", "More Chords" and the latest one is "Birthday Party". What were the circumstances that led to making these records and how is it different from making records in the United States?

Milt: First, I told you that Joe Berendt got me over there, and he was the one that arranged the session with Willie Fruth who is the production man for MPS Records (which was Saba Records then). So when the tour was over George Wein called me and told me they wanted me for a session. Our last concert was in Geneva (that's when Illinois Jacquet, Roy Eldridge, Jo Jones, Jimmy Woode and myself would play behind the dancers - they called us the Uptown Swingers) so we flew from Geneva to Zurich and then a car picked us up and took us up that torturous path to Ullingen in the Black Forest. Jo Jones, Jimmy Woode and I did this first session. They don't ever tell you how long to play. They don't interfere, they just say go ahead and play. In the United States they're beginning to change now. It really started in England I think where they would take three or four months to make a whole album and when Illinois and I recorded they allowed us to play whatever we wanted as long as we had enough to fill the album. So they're beginning to change a little bit.

Alan: Do you listen to your own recordings when you've finished them and make a decision as to what will stay in and what will go out?

Milt: I usually leave that up to the ones I know - like Willie Fruth at MPS. In France I leave that up to Monestier or Louis Panassie (the son of Hughes). But Illinois goes down and tells them how he wants it done and so forth....MPS has the best recording studio for pianos. They really know how to record a piano. Oscar Peterson will tell you that too.

Alan: What are some of the worst conditions that you have recorded under?

Milt: In the States, my last recordings were for Argo Records in 1960 and I did about three for them. Only one of those ever did anything and that was "Midnight Moods". I see that they re-released that in '67 because in '68 it won the prize in France as the top album of the year. I made it in Chicago. I was playing the Tivoli Theatre there with the Larry Steel show. We were on the South Side and we had Sally Blair with us and she was the hit of the show. I was up in the middle of the show, and while I was there my two tunes hit on Capitol - Count's Basement and Mighty Low. So they took me out of the middle spot and put me at the end where Sally Blair was supposed to be. So Argo Records wanted to record me one night after the show. We got in there at about one o'clock in the morning with a little bottle of Johnny Walker Red Label. Jack Tracy was handling the session then and he doesn't interfere at all. So that was one of the most beautiful times. Now there's other times, like Capitol Records would send me a wire back in '56, '57, '58 saying be at the studios at such and such a time. We're going to record an album. They don't ask me what I want to record or anything.

Alan: Did you have a contract with them?

Milt: Yes. So, when I got there they would have the music and all the tunes picked out. My wife told me one time to tell Dave Cavanaugh that I wanted to record a song that I wrote when I was courting her. That's on one of the albums. It's called Send Me Softly. That album was made with Earl Warren, who played first saxophone with Basie. He's still working around New York now. He had just got out of hospital two weeks before that for an ulcer operation and he sounded beautiful on that session. It had Osie Johnson on drums and Milt Hinton on bass. But there was one bright spot there when I was recording organ. They were using my organ and my speaker. I had a big special name speaker with four 15-inch Jensens in it. It developed a hum. I think some of the screws were loose in it. So they said, "We can't use that speaker". And my manager, John Leiberman suggested that I do a piano album. So I did that with bass and drums. That was the only time Dave Cavanaugh ever let me go. I must have recorded twenty or twenty-five tunes. He never did release that record. I tried to get him to release it but he said they wanted to sell my organ.

Alan: And of course they won't turn the tapes over to you.

Milt: No, no. I tried to get Leonard Feather to go down and get them for me but he said he couldn't do anything. Capitol Records is too big. So, I don't know what's going to happen to them.

Alan: Are you keeping some sort of pressure on them?

Milt: What kind of pressure can I keep on them? I can't do anything.

Alan: Those record companies have hundreds and hundreds of tunes that jazz-

men have made that they never release, and as soon as he splits or dies or something, out come the records.

Milt: I don't want them to wait till I die though. I know they're good because even the engineer was applauding me when I got through - and engineers don't applaud anybody. That was one of my best sessions and I haven't been able to talk them into releasing it yet. That's some of the poor times. The best recordings usually happen accidentally. They're not planned. Buddy Tate and Wallace Bishop and myself were in France in 1967 and we recorded two albums. We would make the records from about two in the afternoon till about eight o'clock at night. They had shut off all the overhead lights and we were sitting in a close bunch. They put a little table in the centre and a bottle of Johnny Walker Red Label and all these girls in miniskirts were sitting around and they had a floor lamp - just like home. That was the record that won the prize in France in 1968. The Midnight Moods won the prize in 1967. That album was pure accident. There was just a good feeling there.

Other sessions have been hard work. When I recorded with Hamp, certain things had to be done in a certain time and Hamp always did whatever they told him to do. So his sessions were pretty hard.

Alan: Let's talk about the piano and the organ. You play both and you record with both. In the club you play the organ which fills out the sound and you get a bass player with your left foot. Would you like to play piano in the clubs more?

Milt: Well I could if I wanted to have a group again. But I don't want to break up my organ trio right now.

Alan: Fats Waller used to like to play classical pieces on the organ although he played the piano all the time. Does the piano offer any kind of outlet into other kinds of music for you?

Milt: It's jazz all the way on the piano. When I was studying music, I had a scholarship to finish but there was a little kid's band playing around and I would slip off to play with them and I just forgot all about the classical music.

Alan: When did you discover the organ? Did you have a teacher?

Milt: I have a little story to tell you about that. Back in 1953 the Grinnell Brothers in Detroit (a big music store) had organs sitting in the store. One day I started playing the boogie woogie on it and a guy came up and said, "Hey, do you know how to play the organ?" and I said no, so he said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. We'll teach you how to play the organ if you will demonstrate the boogie woogie in the store". After I left and went home Mack McKinney from the McKinney Cotton Pickers phoned and said they wanted me to go with them as arranger to Buffalo for two weeks and then down to Louisville for two weeks to the Kentucky Hotel, so I left with him as an arranger and I got $25 a week. Finally they got the idea that I should play piano behind Dorothy Derrick, the singer. I would take Todd Rhodes' place on the piano when he had to run off somewhere. On Sunday afternoon, Mack McKinney wanted to have a chance to talk with the cigarette girl - he smoked a lot - so he asked me if I would conduct the show. Kelly Martin was on drums - an excellent drummer. So I went up there and every Sunday I would conduct the show. Those shows in those days were tremendous. They were an hour and a half long with show girls. There was one girl that did the dance of the seven veils and when she got through she didn't have no veils. Well, anyway, that doesn't have anything to do with how I started the organ. I had forgotten all about the organ by now. Then I heard Wild Bill Davis doing the Tamburitza Boogie which was his big hit with Louis Jordan. And then he went out on his own. I left Hampton in '48 and formed my little band and in '49 I formed a big band which lasted about three or four months. While I was gone he brought in an organ player called Doug Duke - a white cat. He was one of the finest I ever heard, the kind that is dedicated to the organ itself. He even built his own organ. He travelled with Hamp for one year, so when I came back in the band he asked me if I could play the organ. I said yes. At the time we were in the Esquire Theatre in Los Angeles where they had a pipe organ in the pit. I got in there before the show and started to practise. What he wanted me to do was play some soft chords and stuff while he was playing the vibes. We had a wail of a time with that. For the whole two weeks I had to double on organ and piano. When we got to Philadelphia in September or October of 1950, we went down to Jacob Brothers' store and we talked Hampton into buying a brand new organ and speaker. And that's when I started on the Hammond organ - 1950.

Alan: What are some of the things that the organ does that the piano doesn't do?

Milt: First I have to tell you the difference between the two. On the piano, the strength or lightness that you hit the piano with determines the sounds of the piano. You control the sounds by the power of hitting it. With an organ, you can hit it as hard as you want and it's not going to get any louder or softer. You have to use the right foot, which is the expression pedal, to make it loud or soft. You have to develop a light touch on the organ because if you hit it too hard it knocks it a stop up. On the left of the organ there are some black and white keys which are called pre-sets. You can press it down and it stays down and this sets the sound of the organ outside of the regular pull-out stops up there. So that sound will be there until you cancel it to get another sound. But if you hit too hard on there it knocks up that stop and you don't get any sound at all. That has embarrassed me several times. I was with Sally Blair down in Miami Beach one time and I had to read all the band music for the organ because all I had was a saxophone player and a drummer. I would get all excited and hit the organ too hard and not a sound would come out. You could hear me scrambling to try to hit another stop and she would get mad. That's the difference between the organ and the piano. Another difference is that you can get the particular sound you want for jazz by manipulating your particular stops. It takes a lot of study on your own because they don't teach that in schools. Jimmy Smith developed his own stops by playing his organ down in the basement and now his stops are copied all over the world. But I didn't want that type because I'm an arranger and I wanted to hear the band sound. That's why I never did go toward the Jimmy Smith style. He got famous at it, and that's good. Jimmy McGriff, I remember his father used to bring him over to see me in Philadelphia and I would let him play my organ.

Alan: Who are some of the other people who are playing now that you had a direct hand in teaching or influencing....

Milt: Well, Johnny Hammond Smith played a particularly different style. In fact there was a record that came out in the sixties I think, of him playing Summertime. The funny thing about this record is that it was made ten years before with Chris Columbus' band and they just put it out as a single and it swept the country. They tried to find him but by then he had gone off into the funky style and he didn't play like that any more.

Alan: Would you describe your style as orchestral?

Milt: Yes. I try to play all the different sides of an orchestra. I'm not much of a soloist - like Jimmy Smith.

Alan: We have talked about Lionel Hampton. Apart from being his piano player, you were his arranger. Were you with the band right from the beginning?

Milt: No. I joined him - this is another story...ha, ha.....I was with a band named Jimmy Raschell with Big Nick Nicholas and Howard McGhee. We were in Chicago and Jimmy Raschell drove us in one night to hear Lionel Hampton at the Grand Terrace when he had Joe Newman and Ernie Royal in 1940. A fine band. He asked me to do an arrangement for him which I did and sent to him. I didn't hear anything more until 1941 when he came back through there. They were rehearsing at the Cotton Club and I was the arranger there. I would do the opening number with the chorus girls, a middle number and the finale. Two places every week, the Cotton Club and Brown's Grill. I sat in on the rehearsal with them for a couple of tunes because the piano player wasn't there. During the show, at the intermission Raymond Walters, the piano player, had a fight with his old lady and somebody called the police and had them put out. So I finished playing the night with Lionel Hampton. The first number I played with him was Let's Take A Trip On The Bus which I had never played before in my life. I reminded Gladys Hampton about that night last year and you know they never paid me for that. I started rehearsing with them and we left town that night on the bus. We played Uniontown, Pennsylvania one night and then drove all the way to New York for the next night. I didn't get paid until

I was talking to Jack Lee and he asked how much he owed me for the arrangement. When I said twenty-five dollars he said that if he only paid me fifteen dollars I could join the band. They still didn't pay me, so I went to Joe Glaser and he straightened it out.

Alan: As an arranger, how many of the band's trademark tunes were yours?

Milt: Hamp's Boogie, Flying Home, Slide Hamp Slide, Overtime and Lamplighter. I've always played Nola in chords and I did an arrangement of that. We were in the studio recording and the electrician was so enthused by my playing that he left my mike open and I was playing all through Hamp's spot. Nobody knew it until the record came out and then Hamp got mad and pulled the record back in. Hamp always wanted to stay up with the times but he also wanted to satisfy the people; so that was a constant battle. He hired Kenny Dorham and he had Mingus come in and Fats Navarro and Morris Lane.

I did a lot of arranging for him on J.J. Johnson's tunes. That's when Diz was doing a lot of things and Miles was just hanging around studying.

Alan: Who were some of the other modernists that passed in front of you?

Milt: We all used to go down and jam at Minton's. Scotty used to come there and Eddie Lockjaw Davis and Hawkins. Louis never jammed in those places. Joe Newman was tearing everybody up at that time. Dizzy was just getting himself together and Max hadn't started yet on his new thing. Blakey was playing with Billy Eckstine's band. Bird came to town with Jay McShann and he played with Billy later but he mostly stayed around New York. He had his own group for a while. Morris Lane was with Hamp and he quit later to do the Jazz Scene. Morris used to go down to Brooklyn. You never saw so many strange cats. They didn't know what they were doing. They were searching and they would hit a note that was completely out of key and stop and say, "Man, did you do that?". They thought that was great. Completely out of context. There were a lot of cats that came up at that time. Roy Eldridge had already made his name with Gene Krupa. We tried to get Clark Terry into Hamp's band one time after he came out of the Navy. We spent a whole night trying to talk him into it. And we finally did and he went to New York and joined Basie when he had that small band. First time I saw Clark was in Illinois in 1940 when he was playing in a club called The Top Hat or something. He was playing everything that Roy Eldridge played, in fact I wrote out some solos for him that Roy Eldridge played. He played in a fine band they had up at the Great Lakes naval base near Evanston. Willie Smith was there and Booty Wood and a nut that was a heck of a trombone player. He disobeyed orders and they sent him overseas. Trombone Smitty they called him.

Alan: Working in a band, some of the musicians tend to hang around together off the job. What were some of the interesting combinations of personalities that you remember?

Milt: Well, when the bop cats came in the band they hung out together because a lot of them drank wine and smoked cigarettes with no name on them. They would go to different clubs. Bird, Gene Ramey and Diz and Billy Eckstine and J.J. John-

son, Max was just coming in and Babs Gonzales. They were all in the same crowd. I was never in that much of a crowd because I never liked to run around a lot. I just drank whisky but those guys were something else. I had a bunch that I hung with. But most of the boppers stayed together like Mingus and Fats Navarro. They used to ride in the back of the bus with a gallon of wine - not half a gallon. They used to call Fats "the valve" because when he opened up that valve in his throat, half the gallon was gone. Everybody used to get a drink first before they handed it to him. So there they are in the back seat of the bus - Kenny Dorham, Mingus and Fat Girl and Morris Lane. Hamp would be up at the front of the bus with Gladys and me right behind him, and he would look around at Gladys to see if she was sleeping and then try to sneak back. And she would wake up and say, "Lionel, you sit right down." All through the night you could hear them back there.

One time we played a dance in Albany, New York where they had a contest to see which girl had the best figure. They all stood up there in bathing suits. The one that was on the left from the back was well-endowed and Fatgirl said, "Look at the ass on that bitch" and Mingus said, "Yeah", and Fatgirl decided that he would go down there and bite that girl on the ass. And he did - just as the judge was getting ready to announce the winner.

Alan: Maybe the judge should have been sitting in the back.

Milt: Fatgirl left the band to go back to New York because he thought he was sick. And when we got back he was working with a band there. It wasn't too long after that before he was in the hospital and my wife went down to see him. He was about as thin as a rail. He had been sick but he didn't want to let on because all he wanted to do was play. All those late hours and eating the wrong food and all that wine is what did it. The same thing with Charlie Christian. He lived in night clubs and after-hour joints and whore houses. He didn't care about anything except that single track mind - do that one thing. Often I wished that they had tape recorders and made records back in the days of Kansas City. That actually was the jazz centre of the world but nobody can prove it now because there are very few records from the late twenties when Ben Webster was playing, and Basie. What a lot of people don't understand is that a big seaport had to have the best houses of ill repute. The only places that had pianos in them were the houses of ill repute. That's where all the musicians worked. New Orleans was the greatest port in the world at the time and that's why they claim it all started there. That's where all the musicians played. Other places had the big houses but nobody ever wrote about them. All the sailors would go to New Orleans and then go back to Europe and talk about it and the musicians there and that's why it was more famous than Kansas City.

Alan: Your brother, Ted Buckner, played saxophone with the Jimmy Lunceford band. Did you ever work together with him?

Milt: Yes, with Jim Raschell's band in '35 and '36. He played alto. Willard Brown was first saxophone and Ted Buckner on third alto and Arthur Raschell played first tenor and Tubby Bowen who was with Basie for a while till he found out he couldn't read. We had a trombone player named Jake Wiley, he was with Ella Fitzgerald's orchestra for a while, and Stump Brady. The only claim to fame that we got was when we had a battle contest against Chick Webb in 1936 down at Wilberforce University in Ohio. That was the first time I met Ella. She was slim and nice.

Alan: There's a photograph in a book called "Simon Says" of you sitting behind a guitar player in Hampton's band in 1942 with Dexter Gordon and Illinois Jacquet in the sax section. How long had you known Illinois Jacquet by the time that picture was taken?

Milt: I met him in 1940 when I saw the band at the Grand Terrace. But I used to hang around with the trombone players. I'm a frustrated trombone player myself. My claim to fame is that I played first trombone with the band at Carnegie Hall when the first trombone player got sick from the night before. I had to run from the trombone section back to the piano and then jump back to the trombone part.

Alan: Did you get paid double for that gig?

Milt: I think I got paid less. So, Illinois left the band in 1942 when we had quite a mess up. In fact the band really started splitting up after that. Illinois left in Frisco, the Royal brothers left in Los Angeles, Jack McVea left after Frisco, Karl George left and I think he went and played with Stan Kenton. Illinois went to Cab Calloway's band and later went with Basie and then came out with the Jazz Philharmonic and in '47 he formed his own thing. I knew him fairly well while he was with us, but I didn't get to really know him until later. We got together in '66. I was doing a single at the Embassy in Toronto playing the twenty minutes in between the rock and roll group. Jackie Davis was in town playing at the Park Plaza. While I was here Illinois called me and said that he was going with me on the turnpike. That's when Shaw Artists had me, and they were supposed to hire two sidemen for me. When I got there, he took over. The third man was Alan Dawson. That was when we recorded the album "Go Power". Then we went on a tour to Europe in '66. When we came back we went into the Park Plaza for two weeks and that's how we met Catharine Smythe. She was mostly into opera bookings then but she got to know Illinois and they're good friends now. She booked him into the Colonial Tavern and promoted us for the Sick Children's Hospital. So essentially Illinois and I have been working on and off together since 1966.

Alan: What about Jo Jones?

Milt: I knew him when he was with Basie before he went into the army. We started playing together in 1969 when we did a five-month tour of Europe - just the two of us. Hughes Panassie knew Jo very well and his son arranged the tour for us. In fact, we were in his movie called "L'Aventure du Jazz". It's a wonderful vehicle for Louis Armstrong and it was made before he died. It was showing all through Europe when he died.

Alan: I was really impressed by Jo Jones.

Milt: He's sixty years old you know. He has a son who teaches drums to about twenty-three kids. Jo loves to brag about his eight grand-children and his great-grand kids.

This interview was done in 1969, but the tape was mislaid and has only recently come to light. Because the manuscript was interesting we are running it even at this late date.

Photographs courtesy of Milt Buckner:
Page 2 and 3, from left to right:
Johnny France, Emett(?), Couch (?), Dyer(?), Tom McNary, George Bacon, Jim Raschel, Hebert McClardy, Lannie Scott, Willard Brown, Manny Raschel, Milton Buckner.

Page 5, from left to right:
Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Illinois Jacquet, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Ziggy Elman.

Page 7: Strand Theatre, New York, 1944.

Page 8: Milt Buckner with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, 1951.

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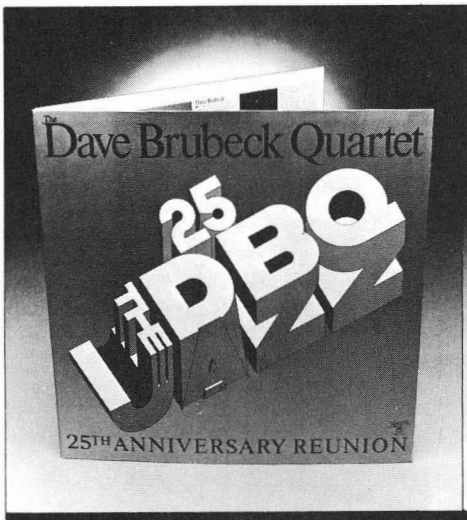

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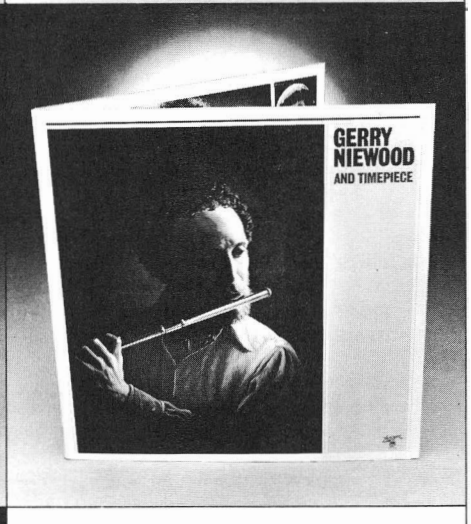

GERRY NIEWOOD "GERRY NIEWOOD AND TIMEPIECE"

Gerry Niewood has won acclaim for his flute and sax work as a member of the Chuck Mangione Quartet. One listen to his debut Horizon album and you'll know why *downbeat* Magazine called him "One of the most underrated musicians on this planet."

Produced by Gerry Niewood

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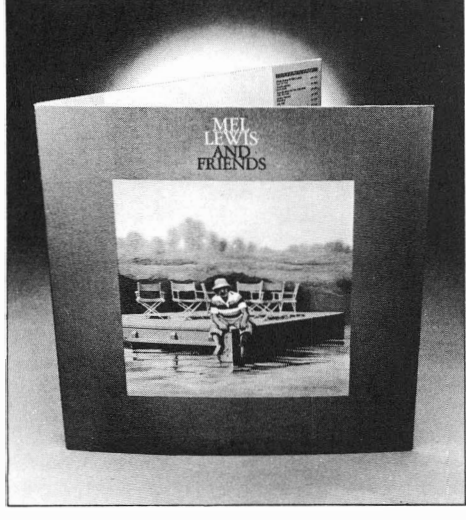
The co-founder of the legendary Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Band leads a small group of his own for the first time in 18 years. Guest musicians include: Hank Jones, Ron Carter, Mike Brecker, Cecil Bridgewater and a blazing Freddie Hubbard. Musical supervision is by — you guessed it — Thad Jones.

Produced by John Snyder



Horizon

A&M RECORDS

Christmann -Shönenberg Duo

If Free Jazz really was more than the rebellious or "caterwauling" row of opposing musicians, how far has its echo carried? The present jazz scene is flooded with reactionary beauty. And the fans continue to encapsulate themselves in esoteric cliques.

Without betraying the ideals which were acquired in a stormy musical revolution, the Globe Unity Orchestra (in Germany, in co-operation with accordion and drum bands) and the Willem Breuker Kollektief (in Holland, in blends of jazz of all kinds, Eisler-adaptations and netherlands street music) are seeking an escape in larger ensembles.

A contrary, but equally logical linear direction is taken by the duo of Gunter Christmann and Detlef Schonenberg. Both are distinct individuals, sceptical of formalism and cliches. From this they have in common a single irrevocable premise for making music: improvisation without predictions - total improvisation. Not as a residue from Free Jazz, but as a virtue. They also have in common one of the musical sins of jazz-youngsters, the Dixieland, where (in the best cases) collective improvisation is similarly part of the makeup. Privately, their biographical roots are in different regions.

Family circumstances brought about Detlef Schonenberg's (born 1944 in Bochum, West Germany) flight at the age of 12 into the monastery of the "White Fathers" (an order which provides missionaries for Africa). Although he still regards the five years spent there as a "step towards healthiness", he returned to the world to take his Abitur-exam. When he was 18, he discovered the magic of the drums, took instructions from an orchestral timpanist up to the Aida-overture and at the same time from a Dixieland drummer, but soon dropped taking lessons. "I wanted to sound out something which was going on inside me", he remarks today, and believes that both teachers might have helped him to destroy it. This process of consciousness took place as onwards he steered his own course resolutely, yet certainly without thinking about partners. For two years he withdrew and worked on himself.

He held his head above water by working as a surveyor's assistant, as well as performing the bread-and-butter music of the dance-halls, for carnivals etc. With the money he supported his family, begun in the meantime and already blessed with two children, and gradually provided himself with a growing collection of instruments, bit by bit, and also by building some himself. An arrangement with his wife relieved him of part of the burden of his refusal to compromise: she practiced her profession as a librarian whilst he did the housework, and was able to divide his time up so that he could practise.

He made contact with musicians of similar opinions first of all in Wuppertal, then in Paris, where he was successful for three months. It was there that he got to know trumpeter Don Cherry, who was a sort of catalyst for many exponents of this genre. Trade union regulations put a stop to this fruitful visit. At that time in Germany tenorsax-player Rudiger Carl was looking for people to form a group and found two in Detlef Schonenberg and Gunter Christmann. This quartet lasted two years, until 1971.

Metallic Sounds

Schonenberg prefers metallic sounds. In setting up his instruments he pays attention not only to pitch, but also to chosen, different colours in sound. His equipment consists of two dozen cymbals and gongs of two to twenty-six inches diameter ("Paiste" made) of an almost conventional kind, then an octave of cup chimes (sawn-off cymbals), six crotales (antique, extraordinarily heavy cymbals, which sound out larger), apart from such obvious things as a vibraphone, castanets, cow-bells, flexatone, temple-blocks, and other assorted percussion. Even the drum-skins ("Sonor") sound metallic under his hands.

Schonenberg's tendency towards distinctly melodic percussion playing is made plain by his method of arranging his instruments. The proof of it is to be found (among other sources) on his solo album "Detlef Schonenberg spielt Schlagzeug" (SAJ 04). On it the smallest of structures and the finest of nuances, acting as mere details of greater associations, encourage active listening. Contrasts between long, suspended vibrations and short, sharp explosive effects are the poles of his spectrum of sounds. No street-hawkers' ego-trips, like those of many other Jazz and Rock drummers, intrude onto the scene; these open studies are attempts to listen in behind Schonenberg's sensitive psyche.

No Circean Handstand

If you risk typifying personalities, you can observe, if you simplify things somewhat, that Schonenberg is an intuitive, introverted ponderer. Christmann appears, in the foreground, as the materialistic, practical one, if you judge him from his "Solomusiken fur Posaune und Kontrabasse" LP (CS 5).

As a departure-point for instrumental adventures, he employs the services of an ordinary trombone ("Bach" made), i.e. not particularly a jazz-instrument, because he doesn't want to commit himself from the word go and thus he values its neutral sound. That, however, is seldom heard. He sometimes swaps the bell-mouth for the narrower one of a baroque trombone. Or he pushes a second bell, one from a trumpet, into the voice-canal of the quart-valve. In this way he can direct the streams of air upwards or downwards, and this enables him to extend the length of crescendi or glissandi even more. However this second bell sounds towards the rear, so he needs a suitable place to play in.

He doesn't mess about with these constructions for a Circean effect, he

photograph of Gunter Christmann by K. Brusehoff

assures us: "Not for a single-handed handstand with the trombone at my lips." He is always re-examining new material for its musical suitability, and whether he can identify intimately with it. When he whispers, chirps, whistles, spits and sighs into the copper mouth-piece, it is simply a manifestation of his individual will of expression. He includes guttural sounds, and sings into the instrument, so that harmonic accord or exciting dissonance is produced from the vocal, the instrument and their interference with one another. Or he fits an oboe-reed into the trombone instead of a mouth-piece. An analogy to this is his tearing into the strings of the double-bass with a comb. On this instrument, however, he is by far not so unmistakeable as on the trombone.

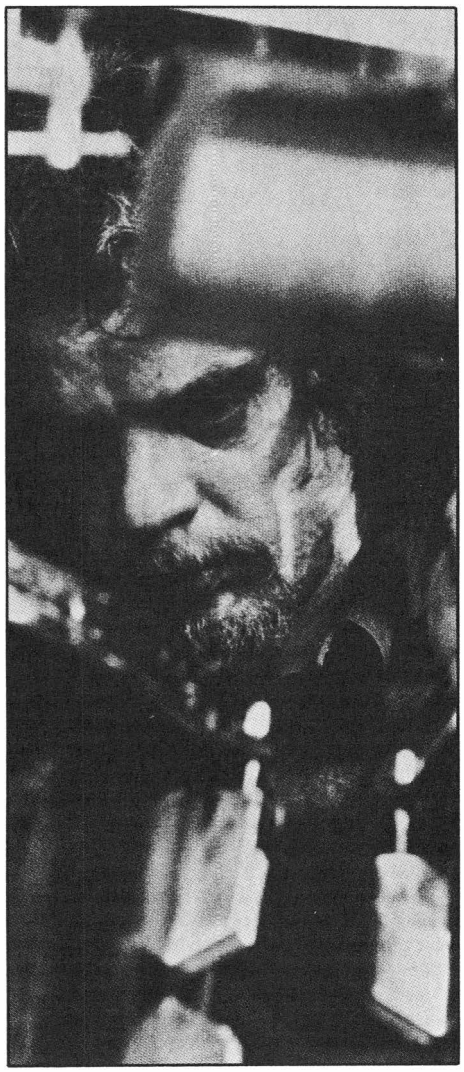
In Free Jazz circles Christmann has the reputation of a strong-blowing trombonist. You discover that this is only one side of his professional ability, when a small, tenderly melodic phrase unexpectedly slips out between his excursions, seeming like a shy wave, like a wink to the listener: "Don't take everything so so damn' seriously!"

Existential Seriousness

Christmann's techniques are the result of his lively disposition towards experimentation. In the state church-school, which he attended for only six months, that was not part of the curriculum. He came into contact with music in a practical sense when he was fifteen years old (born in Langenhagen, West Germany, in April 1942) and he always cast furtive glances towards jazz. Kid Ory and George Lewis stimulated him to try his hand, first of all on banjo. He heard New Jazz from Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane. Through them the pressure on his artistic motivation became so great, that he changed over completely without stylistic evolution (via bebop, for example), straight into free music. His first steps were interpretations of Coleman-soli. He was also fascinated by Vinko Globokar's ideas; what helped him over the intellectual horizon, which previously-experienced kinds of music had set upon him was, he explains, non-jazzy music. He completed the change so totally that he finally left his job (as a chief magistrate) in the civil service. In retrospect, this was in his case not a fashionable "dropping out", but a real existential seriousness.

Both members of the duo swear by it as being the model form of reactive playing, as the smallest possible unit - "Nowhere else is the chance and the freedom to make music so great." Both had recognized their established positions as drummer and trombonist respectively. After they had reduced their numbers from a quartet via a trio to a healthy duo, they avoided strictly any further obstructive assignation of roles. They realised that they achieved optimum results when they rid themselves of that and plunged one another into musical risks. This realisation discharged a welder's-arc as they came together five years ago. The welding process is still going on.

Gunter Christmann and Detlef Schonberg prefer to develop dialogues taut with tension in live concerts, dialogues ranging from loving whispers to genuine duels, when each follows up the characteristic traits of his partner and takes up his challenges (their four joint records only give an incomplete impression of this). For example Schonenberg seizes hold of a trombone phrase, turns it into a rhythmic motif, perhaps brings it to an abrupt end. A movement swells up in abrupt waves out of silence, rears up like a breaker, and then collapses. Eruptive effects might frighten sensitive listeners, who are then immediately appeased with artful humour. There is nothing long-winded about it despite the small numbers. Agreements are rarely made, and when they are, generally thrown out of the window.



Telepathic Influence?

A unity of remarkable consistency unfolds in front of the listener. If it were not a paradox, you might describe it as a "heterogeneous homogeneity". When asked about telepathic influences which their work suggests may be present, neither of them wishes to dismiss it out of hand, but would rather not speculate further on the issue, because it might turn out to be silly.

Always on voyages of discovery to areas of sound as yet unexplored, they called in the electronium-player Harald Boje to join. The piano-professor was attracted by the art of improvisation, which he had come to know "of necessity one-sidedly" as a pupil of Stockhausen. He admits that "an interesting style of playing", as he puts it, could have been the outcome of working together more continuously (something not so amenable to jazz-people). A notion of this is given by four tracks on the LP "Remarks" (FMP 0260).

An instance of how alive the constant renewal-process still was after three years of performing together was embodied impressively in joint-efforts with a dancer: Pina Bausch, principal of the Wuppertal Ballet, famous all over the dance-world. She stretched and writhed in time to the undulations, sweeps and curves described by the music, lay down, forming a static figure in a quiet passage, tripped nervously across the stage to hacking staccati. Or she moved so economically that only her chin and throat twitched. Although the dialectical character of music and dance, as a consequence of specialisation in separate fields, does not, even according to Luciano Berio, favour a synthesis, there was fruitful creativity at work here, because Pina Bausch was more than a figure added as an afterthought - through her the duo grew into an emancipated trio, because she not only reacted and co-acted, but also demanded, by her very presence, spontaneous new intentions from the musicians, far more than the attempted co-existence propounded by Cage and Cunningham. At this performance the original unity of music and dance, which existed in the past, was restored. And the artistic fascination was multiplied not only two, but threefold. "That's what music means to me", Christmann confesses, "the constant challenge". The following might be added: "Even in Free Jazz any further development is often hindered by cliches and mannerism". Because her engagement-diary was overstretched, Pina Bausch was recently replaced by Elisabeth Clarke, whom Stockhausen had brought from Philadelphia for "Inori". However, the central part of Gunter Christmann's and Detlef Schonenberg's work, so they assure, will remain their activities as a duo.

Many jazz-fans are disappointed that the musical roots of the pair - in Jazz - are threatening to dry up. For that reason they were only tolerated with regret by the hard core of German avant-garde musicians of Free Music Production (FMP), of which Schonenberg had been a founder-member. Here too they acted accordingly and withdrew from the movement. As they themselves have recognized, they can do without it. When they kicked over the traces, the whole, still abundant musical horizon revealed itself to them. What you might terminologically describe as "the practice of interdisciplinary improvisation", they themselves, with musical sleeves rolled up, call their "own stuff".

- Werner Panke

(Translated from the original German by Ashly Baker)

photograph of Detlef Shonenberg by Norbert Gerdes

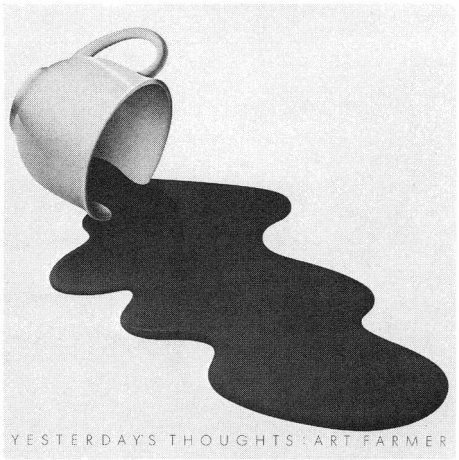
EAST WIND

Most North Americans are likely to be unaware of the fact that the Japanese have a serious interest in jazz. The evidence which demonstrates just how devoted they are to jazz may be presented in a variety of ways. On the one hand, tours to Japan by American jazz artists are usually very well received. Crowds are at times to be found at the airport awaiting the musicians' arrival in Japan. Secondly, the Japanese have been embarked in full scale reissue programs of the jazz catalogues of numerous record labels for a number of years now. Finally, the Japanese have been involved in the active recording of many jazz musicians (including many Americans), usually for release only in Japan.

It is that last point above that is the subject of this essay. One Japanese record company has done such an outstanding job in the new recording area that it should not go unnoticed by the English speaking jazz world. I am making reference to the label called EAST WIND. In particular I will focus on six of their recordings that were all released during 1975 and 1976.

Forget those two jive RCA electric Cedar Walton LP's and try to get hold of a copy of "Cedar Walton - Pit Inn" - East Wind EW-7009. This is THE Walton record. It is a trio date recorded live in a Tokyo club in December of 1974. Walton is joined by longtime musical colleagues Sam Jones and Billy Higgins. No electric instruments do so much as rear their ugly heads as the trio stay with acoustic instruments all the way. According to one well-known jazz pianist I spoke with recently in New York City, Cedar Walton is playing more piano than anyone these days. This record certainly goes a long way to support that point of view. In plain words, these three men have their shit together. One hearing of the depth of feeling and rhythmic vitality to be found in the trio's performances of such evergreens as Con Alma, Without A Song and 'Round Midnight plus the three originals by Walton should have you joining in the applause of the audience who were fortunate enough to be at the Pit Inn for the live session.

The same threesome joined forces two days prior to the Pit Inn date only this time it was in a recording studio and under the leadership of bassist Sam Jones. The result of their collaboration can be found on "Sam Jones - Seven Minds" - East Wind EW-7010. A different feeling takes over on this album due in part to the string quartet that shows up on three of the six tracks. Don't let that scare you off. Usually I find the addition of strings to be a bringdown - but not here. They actually do nothing to detract and believe it or not may even add to the success of the album. This is by no stretch of the mind a so-called commercial jazz record, but rather straight ahead jazz of the highest quality. Aside from one standard tune (I Didn't Know What Time It Was), we are treated to three originals by the leader and two by pianist Walton. I can't find a weak track on the record. A special word about Sam Jones' approach to the bass is in order here. Many talented bass players have become prominent in jazz during the past ten to fifteen years. I have one criticism regarding many of them. They seem to be overly concerned with a demonstration of their virtuosity. An emphasis is placed on speed, lots of high notes and in some instances an attempt to make the bass sound like a guitar. While Sam Jones is a fine technician, he is into the music first and foremost. He swings beautifully and is a rock of Gibraltar in support of whomever he is playing with. He has a big bottom woody natural sound that all too many bass players seem to avoid. In my opinion, Sam Jones deserves to be rated as one of the best half dozen bassists now playing jazz. His name in the personnel on a record jacket is a form of guarantee to me that the rhythm section is going to be taking care of business.



Speaking of the best, I have some doubts as to whether there is a better trumpet player in jazz than Art Farmer at the present time. Perhaps I should have said fluegel horn rather than trumpet as he sticks to that instrument all the way through his two East Wind recordings. The first is called "Art Farmer - To Duke with Love" - EW-7012, while the second is "Art Farmer - Yesterday's Thoughts" - EW-8025. Interestingly enough, both these records were done in New York City, the first in March of 1975 and the second in July of the same year. On both sessions Farmer is in the company of Cedar Walton, Sam Jones and Billy Higgins. Once again acoustic instruments are the order of the day. As the title suggests the first album is totally devoted to Ellington compositions. They are six in all and Mr. Farmer and associates make each one a gem. The second Farmer LP also has six tracks, but this time with compositions by such as Michel Legrand, Anton Jobim and Benny Golson. There is no phony funk or disco or rock nonsense to be found here, what you get instead is pure jazz music of the first order. Both records are works of beauty. I couldn't choose between them and am delighted to own them both.

The East Wind label has a special talent for selecting deserving musicians and recording them in the perfect context. The next record will amply demonstrate my point. Hank Jones has been one of the finest jazz pianists for about thirty years, but until now has not had a record under his own leadership that truly showed him at his best. "Hank Jones - Hanky Panky" - East Wind EW-8021 rectifies that oversight. This is another acoustic trio date with the sterling rhythm support coming from Ron Carter and Grady Tate. Good taste, marvelous touch and all around fine musicianship are on display on every track which adds up to nine tunes performed masterfully. With a record such as this from Hank Jones it almost (but not quite) seems worth the long, long wait.

The sixth and last recording I want to discuss at this time is "Al Haig Trio - Chelsea Bridge" - East Wind EW-8023. This one and the aforementioned Hank Jones side were both recorded in New York in July of 1975. Haig's rhythm section includes Jamil Nasser (formerly George Joyner) on bass and Billy Higgins on drums. This also makes the sixth LP in a row I am mentioning with the electric piano and bass kept locked in the closet. Perhaps they had armed guards in the studio with orders to shoot any electric instruments on sight - that's not a bad idea come to think of it!

All of a sudden we seem to be receiving an abundance of Al Haig albums. Not long ago there was a very nice trio side on Spotlite followed by an even better record on Choice. The East Wind is even better and is in fact Haig's finest LP as a leader yet recorded. This time there are four tunes per side and Al gets inside each of them in his own unique manner. The results bring forth pure listening pleasure.

East Wind seems to be a company that actually cares about their product. The packaging is tasteful and fully in keeping with the music. While the liner notes are in Japanese, the tune titles and personnel are in English. Most important is the beautiful sound quality of the pressings. A frustrating experience I have had much too frequently is to bring home a record from the store and find it either warped, or defective in some other way. This is a very rare occurence with European or Japanese records. If only the American record companies believed in quality control.

The outstanding record of East Wind places them along with the Danish SteepleChase label and the American Xanadu label as the three top jazz labels now in business. Pablo puts out a lot of good

music but their terrible pressings weigh against them. Some of the other very small private labels do a good job but release so few records as to be an insignificant force. The larger companies like Columbia, Atlantic, Blue Note, Prestige, Fantasy, Milestone, etc. put out some true jazz now and again but for the most part seem dedicated to the sale of music designed to demonstrate what noise pollution is all about. At the present time the only way you are going to be able to obtain these East Wind recordings is through a direct contact with someone in Japan or through one of a few small mail order services that specialize in supplying foreign jazz albums. Check the classified advertisements that appear in Coda and the other jazz periodicals. East Wind is just one label in Japan putting out quality jazz issues. I hope in the future to call attention to other first rate Japanese jazz releases. - Peter Friedman

HARRY EDISON

Sweets, Lips & Lots of Jazz
Xanadu 123

Featuring Dick Wilson, Count Basie, Thelonious Monk, Joe Guy, Kenny Clarke, George Johnson, Herbie Fields, and others. Recorded 1941.

As part of their on-going series of first-time issues culled from the seemingly bottomless treasure trove of the late Jerry Newman, Xanadu has recently collated six heated examples of swing trumpet at the zenith of its creativity. Much has been made of the incubatorial effects of the Harlem jam session scene on the birth of bop, and as undeniably accurate as this historical observation may be, it has also tended to promulgate a view of swing in the early forties as being merely a fortuitous precursor of the more highly valued innovations of modern jazz. In such a manner, then, are Roy Eldridge and the lesser-appreciated Harry Edison and Lips Page regarded more as father figures to the emerging Gillespies than as the vital and potent spokesmen of jazz art that they undoubtedly were.

Eldridge is the most heavily represented of the three trumpet giants showcased on this particular release as he is featured on four of the six tracks. His crackling, biting forays into chordal areas where only Coleman Hawkins then dared to tread illuminate dramatically the well-springs from which the Gillespie vision was soon to rise. But more than that, Eldridge's inspiration was a continually erupting volcano - even the dispirited, listless meanderings of the various tenormen fail to distract the trumpet player from his unswerving commitment to total expression.

Harry Edison, rarely encountered in such settings, disports himself with appropriate heat and characteristic inventiveness. Basie, albeit with no intended aspersions cast at the redoubtable Thelonious Monk, once again underscores his indispensability to any swinging rhythm section. His control of time is one of the inexplicable secrets of superior jazz playing and no small factor in the success of this track. The long-anticipated jam session appearance of the seldom heard tenor great Dick Wilson should do much to restore this artist's reputation to its former and well-deserved place among his contemporaries. A devotee of the Herschel Evans approach, Wilson employed a sonority and a concept of phrasing which are perhaps best likened to those associated with the more familiar Buddy Tate.

Hot Lips Page, with Armstrong one of the most beloved figures in all jazz, was an inveterate participant in jam sessions. One of those musicians who untiringly delight in the sheer joy of playing for its own sake, Lips had an all-embracing humanness about him which never failed to uplift his surroundings no matter how pedestrian they may have been on occasion. Fortunately, Lips is abetted here by the kicking drums of Kenny Clarke which all but reduce to insignificance the contributions of the other members of the rhythm section. The unidentified tenorman, his tentativeness notwithstanding, is obviously a different person from those whose work appear on the Eldridge tracks. Unlike the others, this man has been touched by Lester Young, but there the dissimilarity ends. All of the saxophonists on this album, with the aforementioned Dick Wilson being the singular exception, share in common several marked handicaps: a severely imprecise response to the rhythmic flow, an embarrassing dearth of melodic ideas, and a total unawareness of developmental structure. These liabilities noted, one must in all fairness commend them for not displaying the atrocious lapses of taste of which Herbie Fields has been repeatedly guilty, although even in the latter's case, not as much here as elsewhere.

The sound of this material is remarkably good, and especially so considering its vintage and the conditions under which it was originally recorded. A worthy addition to the growing documentation of the Harlem jam session scene.
- Jack Sohmer

After You've Gone
Concord Jazz Inc. J6

This concert LP offers up man-size if generally uneventful swing by a crew of players we're all familiar with. If it's uneventful, it's only because we know them so well.

Edison, heard more and more frequently in recent years, is in excellent fettle on After You've Gone, McSlatty, and a fast Flintstones II. He's muted and lightly reflective on Mood Indigo. Plas Johnson, whom the whole world knows as the wiley tenor centerpiece of Mancini's Pink Panther music, proves himself a worthy colleague. On After You've Gone particularly, behind Jake Hanna's rock-tinged drumming (which nevertheless swings hard), he gets off some of his

most striking work. He plays alto on McSlatty. Ellis and Ray Brown share a duet in Detour Ahead that is brimming with scintillating virtuosity. The guitarist indulges in a few effective bars of Lester Young licks in the second eight bars of his Flintstones chorus. Mitch's Lament is a pretty Ellis showcase, and Home Grown is a lively Edison reworking of In A Mellotone and Rose Room. As on the rest of the date, the playing is tight, no-nonsense swing. A good set.

- John McDonough

TEDDY EDWARDS

Feelin's
Muse 5045

Tenor saxophonist Edwards has been a mainstay of the West Coast jazz scene for many years. Don't confuse him with the so called "cool" music often associated with that region in the past. In fact Edwards along with Dexter Gordon, Harold Land and Sonny Criss were among those ignored while the "cool" West coasters were in their heyday back in the mid-fifties. It is instructive however that Edwards, Dexter and Criss are still blowing meaningful jazz while the majority of the "cool" West coasters seem to have faded into the sunset.

The music on this record will garner no awards but is in fact in the best tradition of the hard bop sessions associated with labels the likes of Prestige and Blue Note from an earlier period. Albums of this type are in many ways at the core of what jazz is all about. Let's face it, every record nor every live performance can be expected to reach the level of greatness. What this lp does offer is six tunes that are well played and swinging. Conte Candoli plays above average trumpet, Dolo Coker provides serviceable piano work, and Ray Brown and Frank Butler are a dynamic rhythm duo. Teddy Edwards is a stone delight. I am reminded of players such as Lucky Thompson, Hank Mobley and Harold Land whenever I hear Mr. Edwards' rich tenor excursions. I hope records like this will continue to be produced for many years to come.

- Peter S. Friedman

DUKE ELLINGTON

The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse
Fantasy F-9498

Starting with "Black, Brown and Beige", and especially in the last two decades of his life, Duke Ellington was involved in the conceptual expansion of his music beyond the individual composition into extended works which allowed him to relate larger frames to his vantage point. Though superficially many aspects of these "tone parallels", secular and religious, were programmatic, to the attentive listener they depict not the verbally-designated subject matter (e.g. Asia in the "Far East Suite"), but the composer's reactions and visions adjusted to that subject. They portray landscapes and materials that existed primarily in the space behind Ellington's eyes, and secondarily in our listening minds from the work of his instrument, the orchestra. Thus, the "Afro-Eurasian Eclipse", which presents itself as an eight-part suite around a Marshall McLuhan pronouncement on the coming orientalization of the world, is in fact neither a suite of orientalia (although the pentatonic scale of the opening title does indeed pertain to Chinoiserie) nor of asiatic borrowings into a jazz setting. Rather, think of it as a particularly sophisticated AfroAmerican reflection (by a particularly sophisticated AfroAmerican) on the whole McLuhanesque issue.

Once cleared of exotic trappings, we can get down to appreciating the music at hand. The oriental theme crops up repeatedly in Ellington's ever-widening vocabulary of tone colour for the band - and therein lies one of the major strengths of this session. In detail, it is the voicings - two altos over ensemble for Chinoiserie, piano-bass-baritone in polydirectional layers in Didjeridoo, flute and clarinet followed by a baritone call-and-response with the two tenors in Gong - that draw and keep your attention in this music. His textural exploitation of the orchestra extended more obviously than before from the fingers at the keyboard, where he uses the positions of soloists and (equally important) accompanists to anticipate major contextual changes in each movement of the suite. Thus the formal unity of each movement of the suite. Thus the formal unity of each movement stems directly from "our piano player" (and if you're not sure of what I mean, go back and listen to Ko-Ko again).

Unfortunately, what one gains on the swings here, one loses on the roundabouts. While texturally vibrant, his music has become rhythmically oversimplified in this version of the orchestra (1971), placing a disconcerting emphasis on repeated rhythmic patterns without elaboration or resolution of the drums into the ensemble as a whole. Joe Benjamin's bass is often inadequate for maintaining the connection between the two levels thus established. Certainly one must approach these eight pieces looking for the greatest benefits from ensemble colours, because this particular conglomeration was not strong on solo voices. Of the "classic Ellington" soloists, only the leader himself and Harry Carney were with the band at this point (Cootie Williams, while present in the trumpet section, does not emerge as a significant soloist; this is a reeds-only album). While two titles are given over to the baritonist with excellent results (Didjeridoo and Gong), the remaining horns suffer by comparison. Tenors Ashby and Gonsalves are exciting the first couple of times through - but the more you listen to them, the more aware you are of their limited inventiveness. (One almost wonders whether Archie Shepp, whose base idiom expands from the same point, might not have been a valid addition to the Ducal pallette at this time.) Rufus Jones is an obvious and heavy drummer, who fails to carry the full potentials of his feature, Afrique. True, an uneasy marriage of waltz time with gospel changes, suggests that Ellington might have reflected as well on the work of some of his juniors; the same territory was covered with much the same result several years ago by Charles Mingus, who called it Better Get It In Your Soul.

"The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse" is not Great Ellington. But of the recordings made in Duke's last five years with us, only it and the "New Orleans Suite" amply show his personality and the caring genius he brought to the jazz orchestra. Its ultimate greatness may be that it is Ellington's - but it withstands that test well indeed.

- Barry Tepperman

BUD FREEMAN

Chicagoans In New York
Dawn Club DC 12009

The Buzzard, Tillie's Down Town Now, I've Found A New Baby, Easy To Get, China Boy, The Eel, As Long As I Live, Jack Hits The Road, 47th And State, Muskrat Ramble (2 takes), That Da-Da Strain, Shim-Me-Sha-Wobble (2 takes), After A While (2 takes), Prince Of Wails. The generous playing time on this Lp allows coverage of the complete July 19, 1939 and July 23, 1940 Bud Freeman sessions, plus Long (September 18, 1939) and the "A" takes of Buzzard and Tillie's (December 4, 1935). The brand of jazz - call it Chicago, New York, Nicksieland, or whatever - is here purveyed by a coterie of its finest practitioners, at the prime of their careers and at the top of their form.

As such, the disc is really beyond criticism. However, let it be noted that the proceedings are somewhat more controlled than one typically expects from bands including Eddie Condon and his cohorts - doubtless the influence, as nominal leader, of the relatively urbane and mannered Freeman. (They do rip off the lid on Ball, though, and the closing ensemble on Wails, after some individual musings by artists not completely comfortable with the odd changes and spare melodic line, is hotter'n a pistol). I would have liked a little brighter sound – the band more into the microphone, maybe - but what's here will certainly do.

The most successful soloists on these dates, in my view, were Pee Wee Russell, always with a distinctive and intelligent contribution, and pianist Dave Bowman, who produces consistently cooking, full-bodied stuff. Side One, by the way, is mostly solos, with brief full-band statements to close each performance; Side Two, where Max Kaminsky turns in a driving, no-nonsense lead, is better balanced in that regard.

All the above, plus Bunny Berigan, Jack Teagarden, Dave Tough and other shades are resurrected to re-create their timeless music in renditions that, hope-

fully, will be perennially reissued to be included in one's basic jazz library.

- Tex Wyndham

with Jess Stacy

The Joy of Sax
Chiaroscuro CR 135

Although only two titles are reprised, this session is of course strongly reminiscent of the Freeman-Stacy dates done for Commodore in 1938 and early 1939 with George Wettling. Cliff Leeman replaces the late Mr. Wettling here, but the spirit and quality remain very close to the original, you will be pleased to learn. Leeman sits out She's Funny That Way making the track a literal reprise of the original drummerless version of 1939. I Got Rhythm is light, comfortable and relaxed, but not a match for the all-stops -out excitement of the original. Leeman is perhaps the key. His tempo is a might slower, and he makes far fewer demands on the others than did Wettling. Leeman may be less obtrusive than Wettling, but he's also less of a challenge. The originals are on Atlantic SD2-309.

As for Freeman, he has made time stand still for 40 years. His lines puff from his horn in light, billowing plumes that strut and swagger with an airy agility unchanged by the years. He speaks generally in short, pithy phrases that stab at the chords. But then he'll unfurl one of those long, rolling lines of his that spills over as many as eight bars. Perhaps his best playing is on Somebody Stole My Gal. Catch the way he breaks the tune into a series of riffs. Or Leeman, Freeman & Nod - essentially one long coda, sans piano. Freeman is a continuous marvel on this LP. A welcome addition to his discography after eight years of WGJB and the Eel.

Stacy also has changed very little from the time of the original I Got Rhythm (recorded for Commodore by the way the day after his first appearance with Goodman at Carnegie), notwithstanding 15 years of retirement. His playing is somewhat less varied here than on some earlier records that come to mind. But the brittle swing, rich chords and gentle single note phrases that characterize his playing are still there in abundance.

- John McDonough

VON FREEMAN

Have No Fear
Nessa N-6

Side 1: Mr. Lucky (11:53), Swinging The Blues (9:56). Side 2: Polka Dots And Moonbeams (11:37), Have No Fear, Soul Is Here (12:34). Freeman ts; John Young pno; David Shipp bs; Wilbur Campbell dms.
Recorded June 11, 1975.

Von Freeman was born in 1922, which makes him a contemporary (give or take a couple of years) of tenor players like Lockjaw Davis, Jimmy Forrest, Dexter Gordon, Wardell Gray, Illinois Jacquet, Sonny Stitt and Lucky Thompson. Most of those names meet with instant identification from half-serious listeners; an excellent LP, a particular sound on the horn, a historic session, a solo with a great band. Freeman is the odd man out. "Have No Fear" is only his second LP as leader, and the first one was just four years ago (Atlantic SD 1628).

Working for a whole career in front of local audiences has some rewards, but not many. For one thing, if the musician is as good as Freeman, it can result in an underground reputation, probably started by touring musicians who have known about him for years and then built up by fans with stars in their eyes. Just before Freeman's first LP came out, I was told that he was the best. "They say he's better than Coltrane," were the exact words. Then, of course, the LP arrived, proving that he is not "better" than Coltrane, just different, and still very good.

Freeman's local audience is in Chicago, which is not exactly limbo for a jazz musician. Still, how he kept going for all those years, obviously growing and developing with a talent that rated international recognition long ago, is not easy to fathom. And how he could be virtually overlooked by record producers, who must know how to get to Chicago, is even harder. In this Nessa release, he gets some of his own back. The Nessa label is identified with the Chicago avant garde, a category that does not fit Freeman at all, even if he does incorporate overblowing and rhythmic freedom as minor elements of his style. But Nessa respects musicians. The Freeman session, which apparently left twice as much in the can as would fit onto this record, is loose and swingy with lots of room to stretch. It offers an excellent opportunity to hear one of jazz's missing links.

The liner note by Terry Martin furnishes some of the background. Freeman was born in Chicago on October 3, 1922, into the family that also produced guitarist George and drummer Bruz Freeman as well. He took music at DuSable High, where Captain Walter Dyett had Gene Ammons and Bennie Green in the same class as Von and a few years later taught people like Johnny Griffin, John Gilmore and Clifford Jordan. Even after stints with Horace Henderson, the U.S. Navy bands and Sun Ra, Freeman was apparently dissatisfied with his progress for several years. He himself has said, "By about 1951...I got where I could put up with my sound." At the time, he was leading a group with Andrew Hill on piano, David Shipp on bass, and his brothers. There is earlier material from a private session with Charlie Parker (released as Savoy MG 12152), at which Freeman's playing, according to Martin, is "indecisive". If so, it looks as if the low profile Freeman kept for the first thirty years was wise, but what about the twenty years since he found his voice? It is far from indecisive now. What has been lacking, apparently, is an audience beyond the borders of Illinois,

and this release should correct that.

- Jack Chambers

DIZZY GILLESPIE

Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods
Pablo 2310-771

Oro, Incienso y Mirra/Three Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods: Calidoscopico, Pensativo, Exuberante.
Dizzy Gillespie with Machito and his Orchestra. Composer/conductor/arranger: Chico O'Farrill.
Recorded July 4/5, 1975, New York.

Dizzy Gillespie's attraction to Afro-Cuban rhythms and the added potential that they might bring to jazz was most likely initiated by his one-time section-mate in the 1940 Cab Calloway band, Mario Bauza. A Cuban by birth, Bauza was equally proficient on trumpet, clarinet, and saxophone and had played alongside Sidney Bechet in Noble Sissle's band before going on to work with the orchestras of Chick Webb and Don Redman during the mid and late thirties. Ultimately to devote the remainder of his career to Afro-Cuban music, Bauza became the musical director of Machito's Orchestra in the late forties, a position he has held since then. Gillespie's fascination with Afro-Cuban polyrhythms was a natural by-product of his search for further means of extending the jazz vocabulary which, even in the early forties, the young trumpeter was finding stultifyingly limited. By the end of 1947, Gillespie had added the great Cuban percussionist Chano Pozo to his band and had recorded such milestones in Afro-Cuban jazz as Manteca and George Russell's Cubana Be-Cubana Bop. His continued interest in this dimension of music is well-documented on subsequent recordings, one of the most important being the result of his 1954 collaboration with composer Chico O'Farrill.

Like Bauza and Pozo, O'Farrill had been born in Cuba, albeit of Irish-German ancestry rather than Afro-Iberian. However, the native music of that country provided him with an inspiration and source of ideational material which, coupled with his understanding of jazz orchestration, made him the ideal composer to work in this medium. Although such early charts as Undercurrent Blues and Shishkabop, both of which were written for Benny Goodman's 1948 bop band, do not focus attention on this facet of his expertise, the suite that he wrote in 1950 for Machito, and which featured Charlie Parker and Flip Phillips in solo roles, does for it is a prime example of his ability to effect a successful fusion between jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythmic devices.

Both compositions presented here were originally designed for concert performance. Five months prior to the recording of Oro, Incienso Y Mirra, Gillespie had played the piece with Machito at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, and so enthusiastic was the response that Bauza arranged with Norman Granz for its permanent commitment to vinyl. To complete the LP, it was decided to use a suite that O'Farrill had written for Clark Terry to play at the 1970 Montreux Jazz Festival.

O'Farrill uses various harmonic systems (diatonic, polytonal, clusters, and serial devices) in order to reinforce the essentially Cuban melodic themes which Dizzy improvises on with assurance, enthusiasm, and inventiveness. As it embraces a wide range of emotional attitudes and provides the soloist with provocative springboards for his own imaginative leaps, O'Farrill's music is an ideal setting for a musician such as Gillespie. Thus, thirty years after his initial experimentation with Afro-Cuban music, the trumpeter is still able to find in it fresh sources of inspiration and fertile ground for his unceasing creativity. And thanks to the superb recording quality, the variegated subtle timbres of the rhythm instruments are not lost in the powerful sound of the brass and saxophone sections.

- Jack Sohmer

DEXTER GORDON

More Than You Know
SteepleChase SCS-1040

Stable Mable
SteepleChase SCS-1040

Whilst each of these 1975 release embodies much that is distinctive in Gordon's music, neither ranks with the best records he has made during his long career. In the case of Stable Mable the drawback is essentially one of personnel. Horace Parlan, who played piano in the splendid Doin' Allright album some fifteen years earlier, proved then how suitable an accompanist he was, and the interesting modifications his style has undergone in the interim have not eroded that ability. Pedersen, whose remarkable agility allows him to do for the string bass what DeFranco did for the clarinet, is a less happy choice, for whilst his dexterity is obvious, his value as a soloist outstrips his contribution in the section; one listens in vain for the gutty drive that George Tucker, say, seemed always able to impart. As for Inzalaco, although his time is sure, there is little spark in his work and his contribution to the quartet's drive is negligible, Gordon himself having to shoulder much of this basic responsibility. This he does especially well in Red Cross, a full-hearted performance which is easily the best of the six to be heard. The worst, just as indisputably, is In A Sentimental Mood, where his lack of experience with the soprano stands out clearly in comparison with the firm control be brings to bear in the other ballad, Misty.

In contrast, the essential weakness of the other album, "More Than You Know", is one of conception. As has been demonstrated so often in the past, to present a jazz soloist with a large string-laden orchestra gives rise to serious problems. Palle Mikkelborg's orchestrations are certainly of interest - he shows real imagination, for example, in Good Morning Sun - but even the sophistication of this item, which raises it a cut above the palm court trivia with which Parker and Gillespie once had to contend, cannot conceal the frequent schism in emotive terms between the saxophonist's improvising and its orchestral contest. The sleevenote suggests that Gordon was delighted with the outcome, but one at least of his admirers must take leave to question the desirability of mounting a project of this type, prestigious perhaps, but positively wrong-headed for all that.

- Michael James

WARDELL GRAY

Central Avenue
Prestige P-24062

Side 1: (A) Twisted (3:02), Twisted (unissued) (3:26), Easy Living (unissued) (4:35), Southside (unissued)(2:50), Southside (3:18), Sweet Lorraine (4:03).
Side 2: (B) Scrapple From The Apple (9:01), Move (9:44).
Side 3: (C) A Sinner Kissed an Angel (3:06), Blue Gray (2:41), Grayhound (3:00), Treadin' (3:44), (D) April Skies (3:00), Bright Boy (2:44), Jackie (2:29).
Side 4: Farmer's Market (2:45), Sweet And Lovely (3:13), Lover Man (2:17), (E) The Man I Love (3:08), Lavonne (2:55), So Long Broadway (3:10), Paul's Cause (2:56).
Gray ts. On (A), with Al Haig pno, Tommy Potter bs, Roy Haynes dms; recorded Nov. 11, 1949, in NYC. On (B), with Clark Terry tpt, Sonny Criss as, Dexter Gordon ts on Move only; Jimmy Bunn pno, Billy Hadnott bs, Chuck Thompson dms; recorded Aug. 27, 1950, at the Hula Hut, LA. On (C), with Phil Hill pno; John Richardson bs; Art Mardigan dms, recorded April 25, 1950, in Detroit. On (D), with Art Farmer tpt; Hampton Hawes pno, Harper Crosby bs, Lawrence Marable dms, Robert Collier conga; recorded Jan. 21, 1952, in LA. On (E), with Frank Morgan as, Teddy Charles vibes, Sonny Clark pno, Dick Nivison bs, Lawrence Marable dms; recorded Feb. 20, 1953, in Los Angeles.

Paradoxically, these are good times for jazz music. No matter that the world is being ripped apart by earthquakes or frozen by fuel droughts or broken by inflation, it is a good time to be listening to the music. The only times that rivalled these good times within living memory (my living memory, anyway) were twenty years ago, but they were only second best. Like these good times, those saw a creative burst from younger players and an expansion of places for playing the music. But unlike these, those treated players over 45 with indifference, whether they deserved it or not. The current interest is more catholic. It touches, say, Joe Venuti as well as Jean-Luc Ponty, and Benny Carter as well as Anthony Braxton. Which makes for very good times indeed.

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These records are available at the above prices (which include postage) from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8.

And it goes much deeper than that. Reissues of classic performances, at least on a grand scale, were an innovation twenty years ago. This time around they are commonplace, and the innovation is in reissuing hours of performances that are not even classic. Since jazz only exists in performance, records are its only primary sources. Scores and charts and memoirs are secondary at best, once the concert has ended. And the primary sources have never been available in such profusion. There is no doubt that a brand-new listener today, given a little guidance at the start and unlimited funds and lots of time to listen, could become more knowledgable than a scholarly listener of twenty years experience. Virtually the whole history of the music (as far as recordings capture the whole history) is accessible, for the first time.

This package of Wardell Gray's work is a good example. It is important not so much because Gray is a forgotten man among the boppers, but because he could never have been heard so advantageously on record during his lifetime as he is here. This double album collects five different recording sessions and sells them in your corner record store. (The same package without the three unissued takes was put together in a more limited issue as Prestige 7343 a few years ago.) Gray seems to have been too mobile for most of his career to have inspired the kind of coverage he gets here. The cuts on Sides 1, 3 and 4 were issued as 78s, when they were issued at all, and to make them Gray had to catch up to the recording equipment in New York, Detroit and Los Angeles. About the only argument I can think of in favour of corporate bigness is that somehow all of the masters ended up in the same vault, where they could eventually be collated. Except for that, Gary might have been remembered by fragments, either as the bopper who Benny Goodman could dig or as an unexpected sideman for Charlie Parker on Dial session or as the musical model for Annie Ross's bop lyric on Twisted.

Instead, we get a generous sampler of the kind of music Gray could make, spread across five years and set among bands that vary as widely in instrumentation as they do in competence. It is possible now to hear him as a coherent individual stylist, who sounds like Lester Young might have if he had been influenced by Charlie Parker. Like both of those men, he was a midwesterner, born in Oklahoma City in 1921 and raised in Detroit. He served the first-class bopper's apprenticeship in Earl Hines' band from 1943-45 and then chose to go it alone, settling in Los Angeles. Soon joined there by a few other top rank musicians, like Howard McGhee (another Oklahoman raised in Detroit), he helped give the local bop scene an appearance of respectability during those repressive years, though he had to hit the road intermittently, with Goodman (1948-49) and Count Basie (1948, 1950-51). When California became more receptive to modern sounds in the early 50s, Gray got to stay home more. He died in 1955, while playing a gig in Las Vegas. His body was found in the desert, apparently tossed out of a passing car. The cause of death was never determined.

This reissue covers small group recordings he made while on tour with Goodman (session A) and presumably with Basie (session C), with an interim recording of a live date in Los Angeles that is of considerable value (session B). The two later sessions are studio appointments from those more settled years, the first (D) as leader of the cream of the younger L.A. musicians and the other (E) as sideman for Teddy Charles.

Session A, with Parker's rhythm section of the day, is notable for the original recording of Twisted, a brilliant bop theme, and an alternate take that was probably made after the good original, judging by the desultory treatment that pianist Haig gives it on his chorus. Southside, also represented by two takes here, is the other jump tune. The ballads, Easy Living and Sweet Lorraine, were probably destined to fill the flip sides on the original 78s, and they come out as straight, unexciting dance tunes which give Gray a chance to show off his mellow tone. Session C is more of the same thing, without any playing of the quality shown on Twisted. The four tracks were made with a Detroit rhythm section and were aimed at a general audience. A Sinner Kissed An Angel is an unabashed fox trot and the other three are for jitterbugging, equally unabashed. Blue Gray is a very thinly disguised jump version of Blue Moon.

These quartet tracks seem to be removed from the later L.A. studio recordings by a whole generation rather than just a couple of years. The emphasis in the later music is clearly on the tricky themes, with unison heads, lots of stop time and pert endings. Working within a three minute time limit, solos had to be carefully rationed. On the first date, the young Hampton Hawes, who would be hailed as a rising star as soon as he shucked the early influence of Bud Powell and moved into Horace Silver's turf, gets a chorus on April Skies and another on Farmer's Market that show him to be in transit between the two styles. Art Farmer, in his recording debut, rips into a peculiarly overexcited chorus on Bright Boy and gets another on his own tune, Farmer's Market, that sounds more like the cool stylist he later became. As the leader and veteran, Gray gets a turn on every tune and is the only horn on Sweet And Lovely and Lover Man, his best ballads in the package.

In many respects, the cuts under the direction of Teddy Charles might have been better forgotten. Charles was a vibist with the touch of a bell ringer and the rhythmic sense of a jackhammer operator. His arrangements are so ornate, especially with the three minute time limit, that no one can play much. Thus the underrecorded Sonny Clark, who plays on all tracks, puts in his time comping, usually buried behind riffs, and is really only heard on the introduction to Paul's

Cause. The session does not add materially to the sparse collection that Clark left behind. Gray does not fare much better, but then Charles, who is heard almost constantly, fares much worse.

The taped performance from the Hula Hut would be a blessing if only because it allowed the musicians to stretch beyond three minutes. But it is important for several other reasons too. The two tunes, Bird's Scrapple and Denzil Best's Move, are perfect vehicles for a blowing session by musicians of this vintage. (The sound quality is reasonable, considering the noisy audience and the number of players on mike.) Clark Terry, a mate of Gray's in the Basie band at the time, was only thirty but his facility and his lyricism were already mature, as he shows especially on Scrapple. On Move, he has to separate the combative solos of Gray and Dexter Gordon, and he chooses to join the combat himself, resulting in a more boppish turn than he ever played after he became more widely known. Sonny Criss, then a 23-year old, arrived in L.A. at about the same time as Gray and quickly developed into an exciting altoist. He holds his own even with all the veterans around him here. Comparison of his style to Parker's is inevitable, and on this night he could have been mistaken for the master himself. Dexter Gordon's presence on Move underscores what this album is all about. Always a bold, swinging tenor player, Gordon was the commanding figure among west coast musicians until Gray moved in. The two were a good match, and the hard choruses they take on Move are definitely competitive. Wardell Gray, now nearly forgotten by most listeners, was a force to be reckoned with. All the music on this album proves that he still is, really.

- Jack Chambers

JIM HALL

Live!
Horizon (A&M) SP-705

Side 1: Angel Eyes (11:06), Round Midnight (8:04). Side 2: Scrapple From The Apple (7:34), The Way You Look Tonight (5:55), I Hear A Rhapsody (8:31).
Hall, gtr; Don Thompson, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.
Recorded June 1975, Bourbon Street, Toronto.

Going to Bourbon Street when Jim Hall is playing there is a mixed blessing. Unless you get there at supper time, you miss out on the stageside seats, and the intricate jazz that Hall plays with Don Thompson and Terry Clarke can really only be heard from the stageside seats. For latecomers, purgatory takes the form of the bar area adjacent to the stage and separated from it by an open wall. On a good night, when almost everyone else is trying to listen to the music too, you can identify the tunes and pick out the soloist.

On the other hand, when Jim Hall is at Bourbon Street, just being in the general vicinity of the stage is worthwhile. Few other guest soloists appreciate the club as much as Hall does; he shows it by playing long sets and extending himself night after night. No one else seems to appreciate the house musicians as much, either; he challenges Thompson and Clarke, picks up their challenges to him, puts them on and gets broken up by them, and they generally romp through their sets. Being in the bar area is a lot better than not being there at all.

Or it was, until this record was released. "Live!" is a selection of tracks from a week-long gig during June 1975 at the club. Presumably Don Thompson taped the music so the latecomers, along with the noncomers and the out-of-towners, could finally hear the music from the vantage point of a front row table. It was a good idea, on musical as well as egalitarian grounds.

Here, finally, is a record by Jim Hall that is unbridled and swinging, in a sense that his duet records with Bill Evans and Ron Carter have missed entirely. The feeling ranges from easy to loose. It is definitely at its loosest on The Way You Look Tonight, which opens with some noodling and arrives at the melody to the apparent surprise of everyone, including Hall, who introduces it. The track swings from one surprise to another, especially for Clarke, who spends most of five minutes adjusting the time to suit the solos. The other ballads are easy, and better listening, because they have all come up in other sets by this trio during the past couple of years. Not really arranged, they have been structured in performance, and they all include some beautiful harmonies by Hall and Thompson. Best of all is Scrapple, an unexpected entry in the repertoire of Jim Hall. The unison playing and Hall's rich comping for Thompson's long solo create a subtle ebullience, like chamber bebop. Since Bird, no one has sucked so much life from the tune's changes.

This recording, despite the clinking of glasses in the background and the homemade masters, is an honest recreation of the atmosphere that Jim Hall imports into Bourbon Street. It is the next best thing to being stageside. One ominous note: the producer of the record encloses a memo stating that the record will be remixed (further) on its second pressing. Get the first pressing if you really want to hear the "live!" Jim Hall.

- Jack Chambers

HINES AND ELDRIDGE

At The Village Vanguard
Xanadu 106

Back in the middle '60s when this session was cut people were saying that Roy Eldridge wasn't the man he was in 1955 or 1940. Well, he sounds pretty good when measured against some of his recent Pablos. And I suppose in 1986 people will be wondering whatever happened to the great Eldridge of 1976.

Anyway, he has three numbers here, including an effectively torchy Can't Get Started and a swaggering Blue For Old "N'S". There are some particularly nice conversations between Roy and drummer Oliver Jackson on the latter as well as some pointed bass playing from George Tucker. Roy is muted and open, and never plays an inappropriate note.

Hines is a blaze of fingers on a long medley beginning with Love Is Just Around The Corner. Ideas come so fast and from such odd directions they ricochet off one another in mad and kookie sequence. As always, though, Hines sees the logic of it all long before the listener, which is why he's there and we're all here.

The takes heard here are the remnants of an evening's music making from which two Limelight records were assembled (one of which was recently reissued on Trip) in 1965. Like those, this one is pleasantly disjointed in its informality. That these were hailed by some as classics when they came out in '65 is more an indication of the leaness of the mid '60s for jazz rather than the singular quality of the performance. They're good, but not classics. But in today's faster track, they still make it.

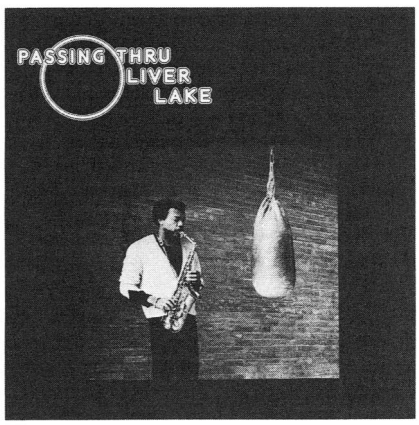
- John McDonough

FLETCHER HENDERSON

The Complete Fletcher Henderson (1927-1936) Bluebird AXM2-5507
Fletcher Henderson (1927-1936)
RCA Black and White 730.584
Fletcher Henderson Vol. 2 (1927-1934)
RCA Black and White 741.071
Fletcher Henderson Vol. 3 (1923-1936)
RCA Black and White FPM1 7011

Most collectors have become resigned to the inaccuracy of the word "complete" when it is used in connection with the recorded output of an obscure artist. But when it supposedly refers to the entirety of a well-researched artist's work for a particular label, the inaccuracy then becomes downright misrepresentation. A case in point is the otherwise praiseworthy "Complete" Fletcher Henderson on Bluebird.

As compared with the forty-six selections on the B&W three-volume set, the Bluebird offers only thirty-four titles. Missing from the American issue are the following: St. Louis Shuffle (takes 1 and 2), Variety Stomp (takes 1 and 2), Sugar Foot Stomp (take 1), Roll On, Mississippi, Roll On (take 1), Moan, You Mourners (take 1), Say That You Were Teasing Me, Take A Picture Of The Moon, and Hocus Pocus (take 2). If you were counting, the seeming discrepancy is explained by the fact that, in addition to including the above-mentioned takes, the RCA's also include two titles by Rosa Henderson. But even the RCA's are not complete for the period encompassed. Test pressings exist for Singin' The Blues (take 2) and Phantom Fantasie (take 1) which have yet, to my knowledge, to be made available to the public. Moreover, neither series is accurate in stating that Shufflin' Sadie



was previously unissued; it first appeared on Pirate MPC-525. Completists, then, are advised to hunt for the rather hard-to-come-by RCA's, but the average collector should be more than pleased with the long-awaited Bluebird set. Among many other Henderson titles, St. Louis Shuffle, Variety Stomp, and Sugar Foot Stomp are classics and belong in everybody's library.

Ingenious arrangements by Henderson and Don Redman, along with the brilliant solo work of Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey, Tommy Ladnier, Joe Smith, Jimmy Harrison, Benny Morton, and Rex Stewart, made this band the most exciting, inventive, and challenging one of its kind in jazz history. It was, of course, the primary pace-setter in the development of big band swing, and the early- and mid-thirties sides amply demonstrate the influence of Hawkins and such young modernists as Red Allen, Roy Eldridge, and Chu Berry on things to come. The Henderson Orchestra, throughout its long participation in the growth of jazz, did not so much reflect its times as it did define them. One need only to examine the parallel work of its contemporaries to appreciate its determining force.

The sound quality of the Bluebird set is slightly superior to that of the RCA's as is also its intelligent and considerate use of chronological order in the programming of selections. - Jack Sohmer

CLAUDE HOPKINS

Singin' In The Rain
Jazz Archives JA-27

These are the very first recordings I have ever heard of Claude Hopkins and his Cotton Club Orchestra and the band sounds to me a little like the Casa Loma Orchestra in its early days. The somewhat military-sounding arrangements are by Hopkins and trombonist Fred Norman and the sections play in a precise, close-order style. Several of the tunes on this LP hardly lend themselves to swinging performances - Canadian Capers, Nagasaki, Nola, That's A Plenty - it would take a Nat Gonella, a Fats Waller, or a Wingy Manone to ignite successful conflagrations under this type of offering. There are three vocals by featured trumpeter Ovie Alston (Yankee Doodle Never Went To Town, Sweet Horn, and Everybody Shuffle) and Fred Norman does his Bert Williams imitations on The Traffic Was Terrific and Somebody.

The orchestra trudges manfully through Backbeats, What'll I Do, Aw Shucks, Singin' In The Rain, Broadway Rhythm, In The Shade Of The Old Apple Tree and its theme I'd Do Anything For You. Claude Hopkins' piano scintillates all too briefly and there are snatches of Bobby Sands' Hawk-like tenor and Fernando Arbello's trombone.

Hopkins' trumpet team of Alston, Sylvester Lewis, and Albert Snaer remained constant from May 1932 to February 1935 and they are listed in the personnel on the sleeve for this 18th October 1935 recording session, originally issued issued on transcriptions. Frank Driggs' liner note introduces an element of mystery by stating "...It's probably Russell 'Pops' Smith leading the trumpet section and either Sylvester Lewis or Lincoln Mills on third trumpet". According to Rust, Smith never did play for Hopkins, and Mills did not arrive until 1937. Strange. Driggs also opts for altoist Gene Johnson as the clarinet soloist, with Edmond Hall sticking to baritone, and Hilton Jefferson on alto. The reed section in toto performs capably enough aided by a reasonably solid rhythm section - Walter Jones (guitar), Henry Turner (bass), Pete Jacobs (drums) and the leader's piano.

This Jazz Archives issue is a representative sampling of the Claude Hopkins orchestra as it performed during the early thirties in the Cotton Club and elsewhere. It recorded extensively for Columbia, Brunswick, and Decca. Undoubtedly there must be some broadcasts available somewhere and before rendering final judgement I would like to hear some of them if only to determine if the recording studios did in effect inhibit what was obviously a swinging band.

- John Nelson

HORO RECORDS

Dannie Richmond
"Jazz A Confronto vol. 25"
Horo HLL 101-25

Don Pullen
"Five To Go"
Horo HZ 02

George Adams
"Suite for Swingers"
Horo HZ 03

The reason that I review these three records together isn't the community of the obvious facts: the same label, more or less the same personnel, all of whom were at that time members of Charlie Mingus' group. Not at all: just because the 134 minutes and 35 seconds of music you'll listen to were recorded during the same long session from 4 pm, July 28 to 12 am, July 29, 1975; then a race for the plane to the place where Mingus and his musicians were to play in the evening.

Twenty hours of music, I said; at the end of them the recording engineer, Raimondo Caruana of Mama Dog Studios, was the most tired but surely the most satisfied, for he had recorded on tape exactly what the artists had expressed in the studio.

The most fascinating among the three albums surely is Don Pullen solo, in which the pianist from Virginia shows unequivocally the technical and expressive maturity he has come to and which is comparable to that of the greatest pianists in the history of jazz. His music, as much as it is a creative expression of today, contains all that the piano art has expressed in the field of improvised music during 60 years. His approach to

the blues, as much as his approach to the more advanced forms, is excellent; his touch has the grace of the sweeter and more poetical feelings, and the vehemence and the fierceness of the most aggressive protest. All mixed and seeped through a sincere sensibility and awareness. A clear aim.

Richmond's album will satisfy the many supporters of the drummer from Harlem, who has waited for a personal evidence since 1965, when he recorded "In Jazz for the Culture Set" for Impulse, which didn't truly do him credit. He waited patiently for ten years before a second record was finally made into a reality in Italy. This LP surely represents Richmond's decennial aspiration and maybe his excitement and generosity, but his joy in being a leader again and being able to record four of his originals did not come up to his expectations. Of course this is a good record, but it leaves something to be desired. I Told You So, which lasts for all of side B, even if it contains an exceptional rhythmic impulse, disappoints a little, and the samba-like rhythm and the presence of two Brazilians, Irio De Paula, guitar and Afonso Vieira, percussion, induced Richmond into a musical experience which seems far removed from his own characteristics. On the contrary, the whole of side A is most enjoyable, from Neata Babe Boogie, where trumpeter Jack Walrath's solo, which invokes a memory of Clifford Brown, is magnificently incisive, as much as is the virile and fierce Don Pullen. Waltz For Tamia is a wonderful "atmosphere" tune, a waltz which recalls to mind Nino Rota's compositions, the composer of Fellini's films' soundtracks. In this tune everything is easy-going and it displays the precision of young bassist David Friesen, perfectly at ease with the mingusian musicians. A life spent with Mingus can't be forgotten and so Richmond, in April Denise, draws his musical world with a moving melancholy, an intense lyricism and a sharp irony, just as Mingus himself would have done; and the outstanding solo by George Adams reproduces all these feelings, adding his peculiar sound which reminds of the human voice, of life.

Last but not least, "Suite For Swingers" by George Adams. Notwithstanding many moments of real beauty this album is not comparable to the previous Horo LP which Adams had recorded four months before for the glorious Jazz A Confronto series; that record seems to be more complete and homogeneous. The tune which titles the album, played by a sextet, and the blues sung by Adams, even if deeply interesting, don't add conclusively to Adams' art, although the extremely fertile interaction between Pullen and Adams is magnificently underlined in Melodic Rapsody, played by the duo of George Adams on tenor saxophone and Don Pullen at the electric Fender Rhodes piano, with a bright variety of colours, a continuous chasing of each other which unifies both the musicians in a common mood; a mood made of simple feelings, of impulses which burst in a sounding embrace full of deep human and artistic intensity. If today there are two men who are able to express new feelings about the musical tradition and the human condition of Afro-Americans in the States, they undoubtedly are George Adams and Don Pullen.

You can involve politics in music even as George Adams, Don Pullen, Dannie Richmond, Jack Walrath, David Friesen, Irio De Paula and Afonso Vieira are doing, expressing without any clamour their feelings as men and musicians.

- Mario Luzzi

BUNK JOHNSON

The Last Testament of a Great Jazzman
Columbia JCL829

The Entertainer; Someday; Chloe; The Minstrel Man; Till We Meet Again; You're Driving Me Crazy; Kinklets; Maria Elena; Some Of These Days; Hilarity Rag; Out Of Nowhere; That Teasin' Rag.

As originally issued years ago on CL829, Columbia's Jazz Collector's Series restores to us Bunk Johnson's last recording session, at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York in December 1947. Bunk was given a completely free hand - repertoire, musicians, even dictating the placement of the single microphone in the front of the balcony - and the excellence of the output certainly does great credit to his musical judgement.

George Avakian's absorbing liner notes tell us that Bunk wanted to emphasize here the danceability of his music, thus accounting for the generally medium tempos and the brevity of the renditions (over half run a typical fox trot length of four choruses or less, with solos of usually one-half chorus from clarinetist Garvin Bushell - consistently juicy and swinging, trombonist Ed Cuffee - rather on the wooden side, and Johnson - in excellent lip, clear and forceful, with hardly a fluff despite his advanced age). Indeed, it is difficult to keep your feet still against the urging of the firm, steady four-beat laid down by Don Kirkpatrick (piano), Danny Barker (guitar), Wellman Braud (bass) and Alphonso Steele (drums).

Johnson fans will note the replacement of the superb but rougher-sounding musicians normally associated with Bunk by somewhat more polished veterans of the swing era. The tunes, a marvelous selection of mostly-overlooked gems, are also more sophisticated than the early New Orleans jazz numbers featured by Johnson's previous bands (except for four rags, read directly out of the famed "Red Back Book" in well-integrated, carefully controlled versions that need take no back seat in musical value to the flood of ragtime orchestrations that have been recorded since). Perhaps these dramatic changes in approach will turn off certain Johnson purists, but, to me, the thoroughly satisfying results demonstrate a versatility in Johnson that might otherwise have gone unsuspected.

The band's distance from the microphone tends to sacrifice the opportunity

DIZZY GILLESPIE & his Orchestra
"Good Bait" Spotlite SPJ 122

with Cecil Payne, Budd Johnson, Ernie Henry, Charles Greenlea, J. J. Johnson, Yusef Lateef, Benny Harris, others.

Good Bait, Algo Bueno, Minor Walk, Half Nelson, Cool Breeze, The Squirrel, Oo-bop-a-da, 'S'posin', Tabu.

Recorded 1948, 1949.

DEXTER GORDON
"The Chase" Spotlite SPJ 130
with Wardell Gray, Teddy Edwards...
Recorded in Hollywood, 1947.

The Chase (2 takes), Mischievous Lady, Lullaby In Rhythm, Horning In, Chromatic Aberration, It's The Talk Of The Town, Blues Bikini, Ghost Of A Chance, Sweet And Lovely, The Duel.

HOWARD McGHEE
"Trumpet at Tempo" Spotlite SPJ 131
with Roy Porter, Teddy Edwards, Dodo Marmarosa, James Moody, Milt Jackson, Hank Jones, Ray Brown....
Recorded 1946, 1947.

Trumpet At Tempo, Thermodynamics, Dialated Pupils, Midnight At Mintons, Up In Dodo's Room, High Wind In Hollywood, Night Mist, Dorothy, Cooler-ini, Night Music, Turnip Blood, Surrender, Sleepwalker Boogie, Stop Time Blues, You.

Available from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8 Canada. Each $6.98 postpaid.

to single out individual instruments in favor of a tightly-knit blend, but otherwise there is no fault to find with the fidelity or, in fact, anything else about the album. Like Jelly Roll, Johnson had the talent to back up his ambitious remarks about himself, going offstage in triumph with a performance that leaves you longing for more. A must for the traditionalists. - Tex Wyndham

JONES AND LEWIS

New Life
Horizon A&M SP707

One does not meet craftsmanship of this stamp at every turn of the road. The arrangements, five of them by Thad Jones, the other two by Cecil Bridgewater and Jerry Dodgion, show considerable imagination in terms of voicings and interplay between different instrumental groups. Advantage is taken of the presence of a French horn section in three of the items and extra percussion is also utilized at times to good effect. The interpretations, unfailingly exact and evincing a nice understanding of dynamics, attest to the thoroughgoing professionalism of the men involved. The solo passages, too, are well played. Amongst those featured are Frank Foster, who displays verve and control in Love And Harmony and Cherry Juice, Thad Jones, whose fluegelhorn distinguishes not only these two compositions but also Forever Lasting, Thank You, and Love To One Is One To Love, and that interesting pianist Walter Norris; but the deepest impact is made by the baritone saxophone of Pepper Adams, whose irruption in Thank You injects some real heat into proceedings that, polished and musicianly as they are, may appear unduly genteel when viewed in the long perspective of the jazz big band tradition. - Michael James

Suite For Pops
A&M SP-701

Why this album sat on the shelf for four years before being released is something of a mystery since the music is good. The record, of course, is offered as a tribute to Louis Armstrong although you would be hard put to it to find the connection between, for example, the angular tenor sax solo on Meetin' Place and anything that Pops ever played. The bulk of the tracks - Meetin' Place, The Summary, The Farewell, The Great One, Only For New, A Good Time Was Had By All - were arranged by Thad and show a pronounced Gil Evans influence. Toledo By Candlelight was to have been part of a suite by Gary McFarland who, unfortunately, died before any more segments were completed. As Thad notes, "there is a lot of pain here", which reflects McFarland's despondent frame of mind at the time.

The Farewell is much closer in spirit to the Armstrong we all loved and one can almost hear that unique trumpet sound fitting into this bouncy context. The liner information to the contrary, pianist Roland Hanna plays regular piano on Toledo By Candlelight. The lonely soprano interludes are carried by Jerry Dodgion. The Great One is party time for the orchestra with a wordless vocal by Dee Dee Bridgewater who seems to owe more to Sarah Vaughn than the several singers mentioned by Arnold J. Smith. It is a good idea but is rather overplayed (there is a lot to be said for the ability to compress ideas). Sassy has been doing this stuff for years and she doesn't need 11½ minutes to make the point. Only For Now is a gentle, lilting Jones chart where he achieves a distinctive ensemble sound. Thad duets with himself thanks to neat overdubbing. He manages to achieve the best ensemble tone around (and that includes Art Farmer). Listen too for some delicious Quentin Jackson effects.

Finally, A Good Time Was Had By All - and so it sounds for this is a groovy, agreeable conclusion.

The personnel listing occupies the entire back cover and, given a computer and several hours, you could probably figure out the line-up for every track. I can't think of a more complex method of setting out information. Does anyone need graph scores and stereo mix diagrams? Well, you get them. Not that any of this nonsense detracts from the generally high level of jazz playing contained on a nice set which runs for a generous 46 minutes. - Mark Gardner

FRANCOIS JEANNEAU

Techniques Douces
Owl Records OWL 04

Side 1: Autrefois les Baleines (8:04), En Marge (5:52), O'Kunide (4:45), Techniques Douces (4:27). Side 2: Heliodanse (6:15), Le Lynx (9:26), Pour Quelques Arbres (5:48). Francois Jeanneau (ts, ss), Michel Graillier (p), J.F. Jenny-Clarke (b), Aldo Romano (d).

The veteran French reedman Francois Jeanneau, 41 years old at the time of this recording and formerly with the groups of Rene Rutreger, Oscar Pettiford and Francois Tusques among others, had been using the above personnel as his working group for over a year at this recording, and this is their third LP, recorded in June 1976.

All pieces are Jeanneau originals, and all are interesting, with the ballads quite beautiful. Jeanneau plays tenor on En Marge and all of side 2, and soprano on the remaining three tracks, overdubbing tastefully for the melodic line of Heliodanse. Le Lynx is a duo cut between Jeanneau and Romano. Jeanneau's work throughout is remarkable for its good taste and genuine feeling, for despite his tenor solos being directly out of early '60's Coltrane, he plays with maturity and conviction; his soprano work and composing evidence a bit less of Coltrane's shadow. Graillier's piano style seems to blend echoes of McCoy Tyner and Chick Corea effectively. Jenny-Clarke and Romano are excellent as would be expected.

The group works well together; empathy is strong and support appropriate. Although jazz musicians have routinely been playing out of this bag for well over a decade, this record should not be passed off as just another Trane echo, for Jeanneau's music sounds, paradoxically, more personal than that of many Coltrane disciples who sound rather less like the master than Jeanneau does.

In short, nothing startling, but good to listen to. Owl is a French label; the jacket notes it is distributed by Soul Posters, 6-8-10, Bd Jourdan, Paris.

- Vladimir Simosko

(Owl Records are being reissued by Inner City Records, 43 West 61 Street, New York City, N.Y. 10023 U.S.A.)

RICHIE KAMUCA

Richard Kamuca: 1976
Jazzz 104

Richie Kamuca, tenor sax, vocal; Mundell Lowe, guitar; Monte Budwig, bass; Nick Ceroli, drums.

Richie Kamuca's last album was recorded ages ago, about 1958. This strongly traditional modern jazz saxophonist has done a lot of sideman work on big bands, played with Shelley Manne and his Men in the late 50s and early 60s, spent several years in New York working the studios and clubs, and has worked the last ten years with the Merv Griffin show and played regularly on the Southern California club scene, as well as touring the East once or twice a year, always playing great original jazz.

Kamuca has a rich, earthy tone on tenor and an abundance of soloistic wit and style. Always a Pres-ophile, Kamuca has created a strongly individual way of playing the horn that successfully combines the Lestorian mode with elements of Parker and Konitz. Harmonically, melodically, rhythmically, Richie's playing evidences swing, imagination and above all, artistic sense of control.

The quartet used here is a working group that has played Los Angeles area clubs for several years. Their playing on this album, like their club dates, is straight ahead with empathy. A bonus is the unusually tasteful selection of tunes on the lp. A set of standards swung in a variety of tempoes and feeling, include up versions of If I Love Again and I Concentrate On You, a revival of Symphony, a hip blowing vehicle of the late 40s that shows off Kamuca's versatile technique, and a very happy version of Flying Down To Rio. Kamuca also records 'Tis Autumn as a ballad vocal, revealing an appealing and musicianly singing style that fits in beautifully with the album program. Supporting Richie with excellent guitar solos and good comping throughout is Mundell Lowe. Monte Budwig on bass and Nick Ceroli, the drummer, work together to provide strong rhythmic foundation on every tune. Budwig and Ceroli contribute wonderfully to the overall

of the group.

Kamuca's album on Jazzz is a beacon of hope for appreciators of jazz of an honest and real character, something unfortunately becoming a rara avis in a period of desperately bland and unimaginative programming by vinyl conglomerates. Kudos to Jazzz Records, produced by veteran jazzman Jack Tracy. Treat yourself to a taste of freedom and pick up on Richard Kamuca: 1976. - Jeff Barr

ERIC KLOSS

Essence
Muse 5038

The highest praise in critical circles, at least so far as jazz is concerned, is usually reserved for those who break new ground; players who build their styles out of existing elements are generally taken for granted. Small wonder, then, that Kloss has reaped little in the way of acclaim, for his music represents an intelligent synthesis of several currents that run through the jazz of the past couple of decades. Rather as Wardell Gray was able to distill a smooth and powerful blend from Charlie Parker and Lester Young, so has Kloss looked to Coltrane and such of his contemporaries as Eric Dolphy, Wayne Shorter and Sonny Simmons, and beyond them to Rollins and Stitt, to construct an individual style possessed of real emotional cogency. His finest performance here is Affinity, a slow ballad which stresses his intimate knowledge of the tenor saxophone, especially of its tonal potential, and exemplifies his close rapport with his accompanists, pianist Mickey Tucker, bassist Buster Williams and drummer Ron Krasinski. The last-named's considerable talents impress one even more forcibly in Love Will Take You There and Essence, where the fierce and free-ranging improvisations of the leader, first on alto and then on tenor, and of trumpeter Marvin Peterson, draw impetus not only from their colleagues' support, which is amplified by the addition of Sonny Morgan, always a resourceful percussionist, in Essence, but also from structures that are all the more effective for not being over-evident. For all its modernistic qualities, this is jazz that sits in the central tradition, warts and all, and it is therefore not surprising that in Descent it contains one performance whose sheer rapidity militates against the powerful expressiveness which marks the rest of this rewarding album. - Michael James

CLIFFORD JORDAN

Night of the Mark 7
Muse MR 5076

Jordan's throaty tenor is backed by Cedar Walton's piano, bassist Sam Jones, and drummer Billy Higgins on this recording made "live" in Paris on March 26, 1975. The title of this LP commemorates Jordan's first recording with his Selmer Mark VII saxophone, but the effect of the music is much the same as on several other albums by roughly this quartet. If you are already happily into what Jordan, Walton et al are playing in the 1970s, as I am, this will be good news.

Unfortunately, this set is a bit uneven, although playing time is good and there are only five cuts. The notes state Jordan opened the set with Walton's piece Midnight Waltz, but they already sound in a nice groove with good solos from Jones, Jordan and Walton. One For Amos is even better, with Jordan really getting off a potent solo. Highest Mountain and Blue Monk are done nicely, although the latter fades out during Jones' bass solo without a proper ending. A piece called John Coltrane is also an effective composition with some good solo work, although the group chanting "John Coltrane, Black Spirit, First New Born" in the middle of the proceedings sounds rather less impressive than it seems intended to be.

This group has been playing some of the best mainstream bop in the 1970's, giving evidence that these musicians have continued to grow within their genre over the years since they individually began recording in the latter 1950's. This mellow feeling makes for a comfortable and rewarding group sound; although some listeners may find it a dated conception, there is nothing dated about a tight group playing straight ahead in their bag, whatever their bag is. That's my objective reaction; my subjective reaction is to want to hear even more of the various Clifford Jordan/Cedar Walton Quartets' albums. - Vladimir Simosko

LEE KONITZ

"Jazz A Confronto vol. 32"
Horo HLL 101-32

with Warne Marsh
Meet Again
Produttori Associati LP 72

Truly a great school, that of Lennie Tristano! 25 years after its birth, the music retains its characteristics of freshness, refinement and an extreme sincerity.

The two LPs I've in my hands, both recorded in Europe, the first in Rome on January 17, 1976; the second in London, on May 21, 1976, live at Ronnie Scott's club, are devoted to two of the greatest saxophonists in the "cool jazz" style: Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh.

It is irritating to admit that notwithstanding the undiscussed worth of that style, its wonderful "bravura", Konitz and Marsh haven't influenced any saxophonist worthy of inheriting their musical experience in these years, when 80% of the young musicians are influenced by John Coltrane. Maybe this is the reason why, after a period of estrangement from the jazz scene, time devoted to teaching, they have again started to wander about the world reoffering their music which, although it has changed very little, reveals an increased density.

The two albums are filled with those themes which made famous the tristanian school: You Go To My Head, All The Things You Are, 312 East 32nd Street, Star Eyes, and so on; but these interpretations are not motivated by nostalgia but by a modern revision of that dedicated and intellectual atmosphere, a revision rendered unavoidable by the influences of later schools.

Along with these artists there are two musicians, also out of the school of the blind Chicago pianist - it would have been beautiful if he had been present for these recordings! - drummer Al Levitt, always discrete, never intrusive but very effective in his accompaniment, and English bassist Peter Ind, a true giant of his instrument. Ind must be a joy to play with. He's one of the most sensitive bassists who can be heard. Whether he's behind, out front, or walking along with the others, his sense of timing is always perfectly in symphony and he is a constant provider of new, lively and creative ideas. English guitarist Dave Cliff, on the Konitz quartet album, is one of the most lucid guitar players around today; his way of phrasing and his scund remind me of Billy Bauer, and his insertion in the group is perfect.

Both albums are worthy of praise, but if your budget doesn't allow the extra expense I'd advise you to purchase the Jazz A Confronto LP; then again, how could one resist the temptation of listen-

ing once again to Warne Marsh and Lee Konitz, together after so many years?

- Mario Luzzi

STEVE LACY

School Days
Emanem 3316

By 1963, the first great wave in the New Black Music had made its appearance and was busy consolidating its genius. Even if not working frequently or necessarily in the most desirable contexts, all the prime innovators - excepting Ornette Coleman, who had retired temporarily for study in 1962 - were known and acknowledged influences on the scene. It was a time of securing of gains, and in this setting the first generation of disciples - those learning freedom from the founding fathers - was beginning to make a concerted appearance. This album - from private tapes of previously unknown sessions - is evidence of the great promise and gains to be made by two of the second-generation artists - Steve Lacy and Roswell Rudd.

The session comes from a 1961-1964 quartet which, at the time of this recording, consisted of the sopranist, trombonist Rudd, Henry Grimes, and Dennis Charles. Neither of two commercially-recorded studio sessions were ever released. This particular date, recorded by Jimmy Giuffre, Paul Haines, and Vashkar Nandi comes from halfway through the quartet's life, and is of astonishingly good quality for a ringside "live" set. This was an unusual band not only in its implications for the future, but as well in that it finds Lacy at the height of his involvement in the music of Thelonious Monk, leading a quartet that played nothing but Monk compositions. This represented a particular challenge not only in the formal learning of the structural intricacies of Monks' music - meters, keys, harmonies (and some of the selections, like Brilliant Corners and Pannonica, are among the pianist's most profound works) - but of using this discipline and cultivating easy command of it to refine the performers' approach into freedom. "School Days" indeed. Rudd and Lacy shared a common background in this latter respect, because both had separately made the transition from the routinized liberties of New York Dixieland into Cecil Taylor's bands with reasonable success. Dennis Charles had been the drummer with Taylor's first recorded groups, while Grimes was already moving quickly out of the studios through Taylor's current groups into a freer, more melodic approach to the bass that was to make him the most sought-after counterfoil of the New York lofts of the mid-to-later 1960s.

This was - at the time, at least - not a "free" group. Lacy was definitely The Leader. He booked the gigs, chose the repertoire, stated the head over accompaniment and, in most performances, took the first solo. Charles and Grimes in this setting were strictly accompanists - Grimes already having his technique together (something he lacked, say, in 1961 behind Roland Kirk) and showing his imagination at shifting rhythms and anticipating melodic fragments. Charles, for all his tendency to rush the beat, was playing far more melodically than he had four years earlier with Taylor. In many respects his performance through the opening bassless Bye-Ya is reminiscent of Max Roach in Monk's original recording of Bemsha Swing. He was still a very formal drummer, in all close in his approach to Ed Blackwell.

Lacy, too, was learning. He had already proved with Gil Evans his admirable agility at running the hiply complex changes and substitutions of the previous era. Now he was going beyond isolated sweetsayings in his use of melodic improvisation without strict reference to chord structure - although he has still never mastered (with the thoroughness of Ornette or any of his followers) the transition from structural to emotional content as an improvisational base. Rudd was much farther removed from chordal reference points, and was now in transition from the rational idiomatic legitimacy of his 1961 Taylor recordings toward the style that would spearhead the New York Art Quartet in 1964. The visceral chuckle of the 'bone, and his command of such devices as the microtonal gliss, is already apparent. But for all that Lacy primarily determined the direction of this music, their empathy is surprisingly warm in duet (hear especially Bye-Ya and Pannonica) and they apply their invention with wit. Too, by then they were reaching the looseness they had sought in this music, and at many points the textures approximate a Dixieland band with updated repertoire. (And Lacy had thought that it would sound too sparse!) "School Days" is a vital link in the histories of these two players, but to be prized far more for the incredible substance of the quartet's music. Martin Davidson is certainly to be commended for finding and issuing this tape in his continuing documentation of Lacy's career, and even more for the superb production quality of the disc.

- Barry Tepperman

Saxophone Special
Emanem 3310

Steve Lacy (ss), Evan Parker (ss, ts, bari), Steve Potts (as, ss), Trevor Watts (as, ss), Derek Bailey (el-g), Michel Waisvisz (synthesizer).

This LP was recorded "live" at Wigmore Hall in London, England on December 19, 1974. It is exceptional creative music, an ensemble music throughout, without solos in the usual sense. Lacy's scores for Swishes, Staples, and Snaps, are reproduced on the back of the album along with a chart of where each of the reedmen are to be heard. Lacy is on the right, Watts on the left, and the others are easily separated; on earphones they seem evenly spaced across the inside of your head, with Bailey and Waisvisz in the middle except on Sops, which is just the four saxophonists all on soprano. Part of the time the net effect is a bit reminiscent of some of Sun Ra's music, with the reeds either lushly voiced or simultaneously improvising with the synthesizer hooting and wooshing along; at other times it seems to have strong affinity for some of the music Anthony Braxton or some of the other AACM musicians have been creating over the last decade. Of course Lacy's own conception is clearly evident, an extension of ideas he has been developing on LP since his Candid album with Charles Davis back in 1960 or so, documented through his exceptional group with Roswell Rudd (see the preceding review) or on "The Forest and the Zoo" which latter was also continuous simultaneous improvisation. Here, of course, there is no rhythm section, giving the music a more open, abstract feeling and enhancing its cerebral nature. Lacy's old interest in Monk's music is also in evidence in some of the thematic lines, but this is clearly music of the 1970s in conception and feel.

While many jazzmen and alleged jazz albums have been taking an increasingly commercially oriented turn over the last decade, little pockets of creative activity have continued to provide a steady trickle of interesting music, unfortunately not as prominently or as accessibly as its listeners would like, but nonetheless vital and intriguing. Sun Ra of course; the AACM-affiliated musicians and a handful of others identified with the so-called avant-garde in the U.S.A., and increasingly a number of European musicians of which the little group of names affiliated with Emanem Records have been among the most interesting. Emanem Records can be contacted for albums or information at P.O. Box 362, Highland, New York 12528 U.S.A. - Vladimir Simosko

Stabs - Solo in Berlin
Free Music Production SAJ-05

Side One: Deadline/Coastline/The Duck. Berlin, November 5th, 1975
Side Two: Cloudy/Moon/Stabs/No Baby. Berlin, April 1st, 1975.

with Andrea Centazzo
Clangs
Ictus Records 0001

Side One: The Owl / Torments / Tracks (part 1). Side Two: Tracks (part 2) / Dome/The New Moon.
Italy, February 20th, 1976.
Steve Lacy: soprano, bird calls, pocket synthesizer.
Andrea Centazzo: percussion.

Myself, being a serious student of the soprano saxophone, was drawn quite naturally to this particular instrument, and in all probability it was the music of Sidney Bechet and Steve Lacy that made the initial decision for me. That is not to say however that I can accept their music indiscriminately. Quite the contrary. Since Steve Lacy has moved to Europe, not very much of his recorded output has excited me, and with the exception of the

wonderful quartet recording from 1963, on Emanem (#3316), with Roswell Rudd, Henry Grimes and Dennis Charles, I had made a subconscious decision to look elsewhere for music/sound.

In the last twelve months I have been enlightened in a very full manner, and due to these circumstances have found myself looking upon Steve Lacy's music with different sensibilities. Meeting him personally in the spring of 1976, hearing him play in concert in both Vancouver and Toronto, and reading his interview in the February issue of Coda, has presented a series of thoughts that suggest that I was never completely aware of all his music's possibilities. (A great deal of my feeling came however from the very important situation of hearing a performer live.)

These experiences have not that much altered my opinions about previous recordings, but have indeed made me feel inclined to review these two recordings, both of which are to be considered very LIVE.

The solo soprano record, "Stabs", has an aura of tranquility about it that seems not much affected by tempo or song form. A secret ingredient that one must be aware of, a feeling that exists first, before the music becomes crystal clear. With the exception of The Duck and Moon, the songs consist of structures that are melodically and rhythmically simplistic. Simplistic is a good word when considered akin to tranquility. It captures the sound/music/occasion perfectly. A tone so pure in sound, a breath so even, a pitch that arrives at its point of note, very right, sounding on. Movement can be in any way rhythm for your mind or body. Sounding On. Some kind of folk music perhaps. Very beautifully natural. Tranquil, simplistic, sounding on.

The Duck and Moon are real time. The titles are their music, is the result. Duck (a bird) - Moon (a force).

Clangs in response to each other. Music can move freely about, given its opportunities. Performing duet with a percussionist, one Andrea Centazzo, who is in no way to be confused with a drummer, throws out more moments of Lacy's music, moments that do not occur solo. Lacy's concept as described earlier with additional theatre, such as bird calls, and surrounded by Centazzo's open sound percussion, brings about a truly remarkable situation. It, in its highest moments, becomes a true conversation piece, a dialogue of unique sensibilities, musically so dramatic that I can see the pictures quite clearly. Lacy's music remains intact, and still simplistic, but he now has the opportunity of response to his own ideas. Centazzo is more in touch with a sound effects orchestra, than a drummer would know. I truly hope Steve Lacy agrees.

If you have not listened to Steve Lacy in some considerable time, now would be a good time to return to his music. Now would be a good moment to realize that he is a unique American improviser, who simply lives in Europe. - Bill Smith

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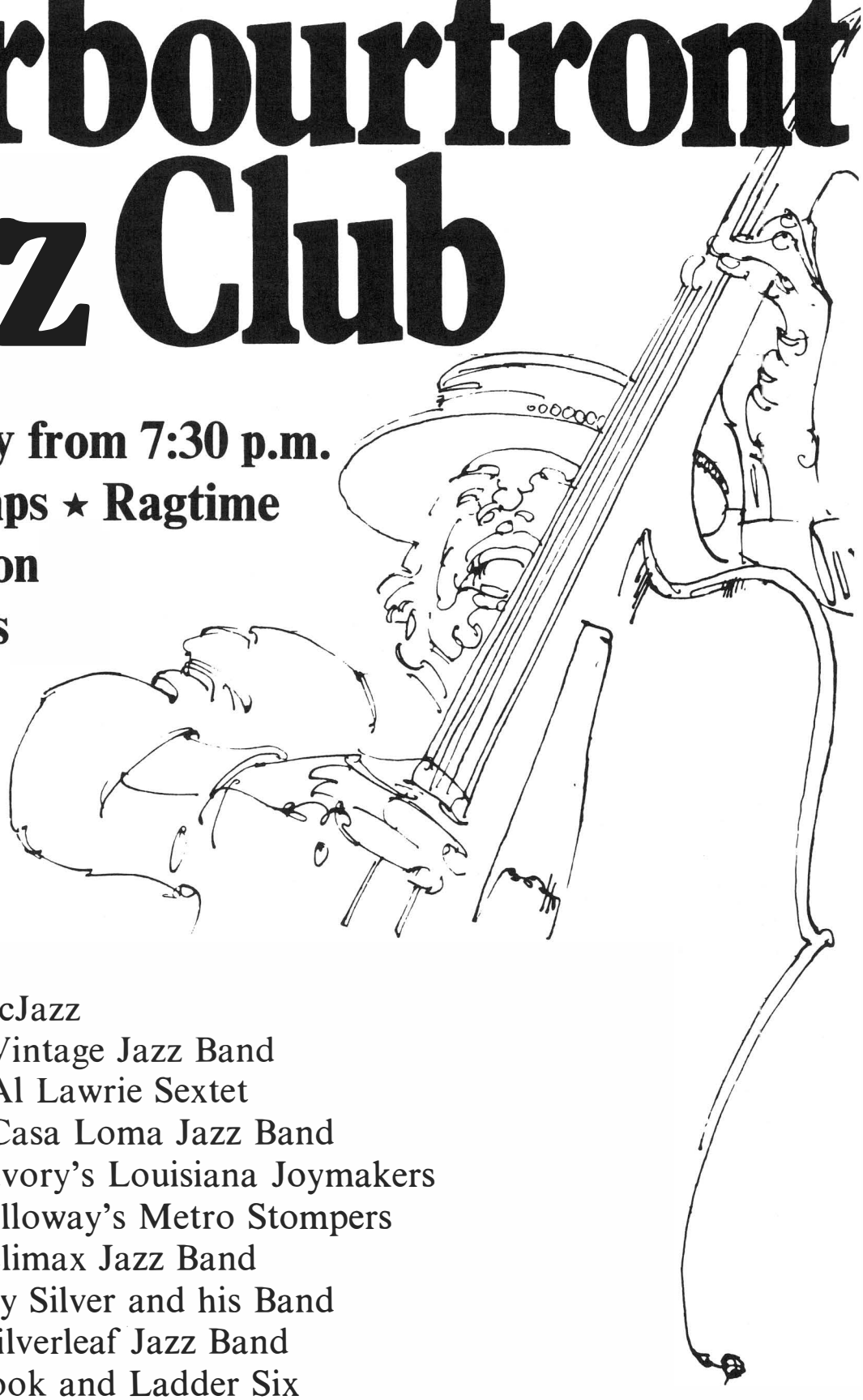

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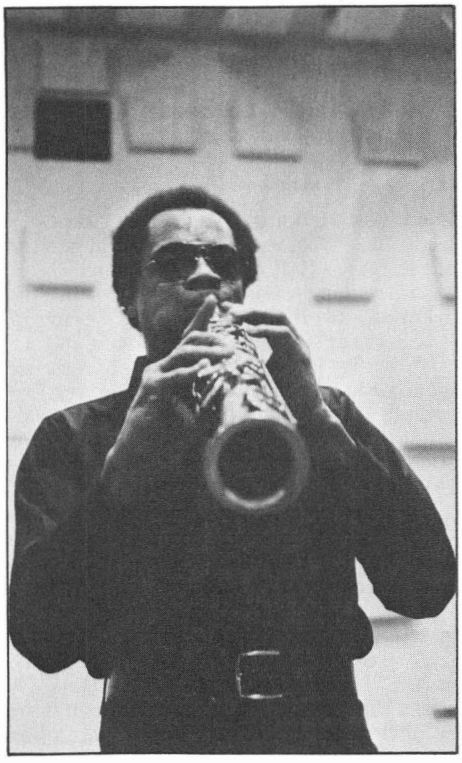
Around The World Around The World Around The

CANADA

TORONTO - Recently in Toronto a number of local musicians have complained about the fact that I do not sometimes cover the Toronto scene in the kind of detail that includes everyone and their grandmother, so I thought in this issue I would explain the way that a column is prepared. The most important consideration is that one can only write reviews and observations about hearing music live, and I have never thought it a good idea to write on the assumption of hearsay. Secondly there are only certain kinds of music that I would be prepared to check out, for like other people I only go to listen to music that can be enjoyed on my own level. Thirdly, because I am myself a player, I naturally think that some of my friends are the most interesting players, but it is not very sensible to continually write about the same performers all the time. Of the musicians that have complained the most, several of them are members of the CCMC, an organization that I have been a member of for the last three years. It of course was very obvious to me that it would be considered of no value if that was all I wrote about. In the last month I have resigned from the CCMC, so perhaps in the future I will be able to view their situation with more objectivity. I hope that this in some way clarifies the situation for the local players who have felt that they were not receiving the attention they think they deserve.

These last two months have brought to Toronto a very varied and occasionally incredible array of musics, and perhaps the two most significant ones were Cecil Taylor and Julius Hemphill. I unfortunately did not hear Julius Hemphill in concert at A Space as I had the flu, but was fortunate enough to record him later in the week for Sackville. A review of the concert does appear further on in the magazine. What more can be written about the wonderful world of Cecil Taylor? His solo piano concerts at the New Yorker Theatre just enforced any opinions that I had of him previously, the power, the beauty and strength of his music becomes even more apparent when one hears him solo, and no mere words can do justice to a musician who is most obviously one of the few performers/composers to be considered a master musician in the twentieth century. A most fantastic experience that everyone should attempt to discover.

Bourbon Street has continued to present many interesting American guests, among the ones that I have heard the most interesting was George Coleman whose style, at the very least, would be considered virile, on the other hand, Ruby Braff, regardless of how accomplished he may be, really just churned out the same old stuff in a predictable and tedious manner. George Coleman was fortunate enough to have a local rhythm section



with some power, consisting of Bernie Senensky, Rick Homme and Terry Clarke. York University closed its Burton Auditorium jazz concerts with McCoy Tyner's group, and appears to have suffered unduly from an atrocious sound system.... The Legends of Jazz, under the direction of Barry Martyn, were brought to Toronto by clarinetist Bruce Bakewell and played at Anthony's Villa. El Mocambo presented Gato Barbieri and Jack DeJohnette's Directions in the same week, I unfortunately could not afford to go to both occasions, and as I had never heard Gato live this was the choice. On his first night, after being held up by the Canadian customs for five hours, he played a set for what seemed like several hours. His music, although very commerical, was indeed powerful.... Charles Mingus appeared at the Colonial Tavern and was most disappointing, it seems that he might be between real bands, or maybe I really thought that the band with Pullen, Adams and Bluiett would continue forever. Later for that. Something most unusual happened on television, channel 19, Ontario Educational TV, had a half-hour program of New Music, which included an ensemble with Don MacMillan, Marvin Green (guitar) and John Oswald... plus the full contingent of the CCMC. Unfortunately the sound quality was not too good and only the smaller groupings could be heard clearly. A breakthrough in the media nonetheless. A new club that has opened, Yellowfingers, seems to be going from strength to strength, and has instigated a full-time jazz policy, and the only complaint would be that the booking of artists is very conservative. I went to its opening and heard some very fine music from Don Thompson and Ed Bickert. The Artists Jazz Band had an opening party at the Music Gallery to launch their new record, "Live at the Edge". This was the first time I had heard the band in some time and the music was extremely good, but for the most part not to be considered Avant Garde for they really sounded like the Artists JAZZ Band, in the best traditional sense of the word. A pity they don't perform more often in public....I just received a letter from Ted Joans who attended The Black World and African Culture and Art Festival in Lagos, Nigeria. It seems that the jazz was advertised but did not completely materialise with the exception of Milford Graves and Hugh Glover and Sun Ra, the latter emptied the theatre completely with the first tune, it seems that the Third World was not ready for the evolved American version of its own art. The poets were fine and Ted appears to have had a terrific time....Marion Brown, who is at present in Europe, will perform at A Space on April 16th, also two films of Marion's featuring Leo Smith, Rashied Ali, Stanley Cowell and Sirone will be shown. Spring is here, and can't you hear the BIRD..... - Bill Smith

The opening and closing of clubs has dominated the Toronto scene recently. Gone, after a few brief weeks, is the Toronto Dixieland Society's sessions at Anthony's Villa. Mother Necessity was forced to close at the end of February. The landlord repossessed the building. Ted Moses reports that they hope to find a new location soon....Then, too, the Climax Jazz Band has cut back to three nights at DJ's Tavern. The concert series at A Space has ended. And now for brighter things: Yellowfingers began as a weekend after-hours spot but is now featuring jazz six nights a week. It's a pleasant spot with fine food and slow service and the groups scheduled are a representative cross section of Toronto's established jazz community. The Music Gallery has been attracting good crowds for its mixture of contemporary jazz, electronic and classical music. You'll want to check out the concert with Maury Coles and Bill Smith on April 9 as well as Eugene Chadbourne's concert on April 2 with Casey Sokol and Larry Dubin. Greg Gallagher's Firebird will be there April 16 with guest trumpeter Freddie Stone.

Hart House's Music Committee presented a festival February 21 through 25. It was supported financially by Wintario (which is nice) and the Jim Galloway/Ian Bargh duo, The Metro Stompers, John Arpin, Phil Nimmons, Ted Moses, the U of T and Queens Stage bands, the CCMC and Moe Koffman participated....A one-day (afternoon) extravaganza of similar proportions is scheduled for the Inn on the Park for March 26. Most of the groups and soloists who have performed at the Copper Lounge will be taking part. ...Guitarist Ed Bickert is finally being showcased. Apart from his upcoming PM

photograph of Julius Hemphill by Bill Smith

recording he will be cutting an album for CTL. This one, to fit the format, will be melodic interpretations of popular songs. C'est la vie. The Stratford Festival has booked Ella Fitzgerald (July 11), Preservation Hall Jazz Band (July 25) and Keith Jarrett (August 29) for this summer's concerts.

EDMONTON - Vocalist Big Miller, long a resident of Alberta, has been appearing at the Hovel with a big band under the direction of drummer John Gray.

Willi Germann has organised a concert in Vancouver to take place April 19 with the group "Gibralter".

- John Norris

TORONTO MUSIC SCENE

A SPACE - 85 St. Nicholas Street 964-3627

BOURBON STREET - 180 Queen Street W. see advertisement on page 35 864-1020

CHEZ MOI - 30 Hayden St. 921-5566

DJ's TAVERN - Hydro Building, University & College 595-0700

GEORGE'S SPAGHETTI HOUSE 290 Dundas Street East 923-9887 see advertisement on page 35

INN ON THE PARK - 1100 Eglinton Ave. E. Jazz every saturday 2:30 to 5:30 pm. 444-2561

MALLONEY'S - 85 Grenville St. 922-4106

EL MOCAMBO - 464 Spadina Ave. 961-2558

THE MUSIC GALLERY - 30 St. Patrick St. 368-5975

YELLOWFINGERS - 1280 Bay Street
Jazz After Hours 964-1984

INNIS COLLEGE (Town Hall)
Sunday afternoon jazz concerts 461-8080

VANCOUVER

Good news from the Vancouver Jazz Society. The Society has just acquired the old Heritage Hall at 2611 W. Fourth Ave. as a permanent home and plans to put the premises to immediate use. A Spring 77 concert series has been finalized and includes the Lee Konitz Quintet featuring Warne Marsh (March 9-12), The Art Ensemble of Chicago (March 16-19), Cecil Taylor (March 23-26), Dollar Brand (Mar. 30-April 2), the Paul Bley Trio (April 13-16) and the Sam Rivers Trio (May 4-7). In addition Lee Konitz, Paul Bley and Sam Rivers will each hold an afternoon workshop on the final day of their respective engagements. A reminder also that the VJS is a non-profit society endeavouring to stimulate the appreciation, understanding and experience of creative improvised music. To this end, the society actively seeks the support of the committed listener and neophyte alike. For a five dollar membership fee, members will receive information and bulletins regarding upcoming events for one year. Those interested should write VJS, P.O. Box 46615, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4G8 or call (604) 736-6891. It should be mentioned that the impetus behind the formation of the society belongs to its president, Brian Nation, whose personal vision and determined efforts have made past and present concerts possible.

And now the bad news. Oil Can Harry's, this city's last major jazz club, closed its doors just before Christmas. Ironically, attendance seemed on the upswing but apparently could not offset deep financial difficulties. Throughout 1976 the club was a showcase for the talents of Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, Sonny Rollins, Ahmad Jamal, Anthony Braxton, Gary Burton as well as such local groups as the Vancouver Sound Ensemble and Gavin Walker's Trio. In spite of its rather shabby environs the club will be sorely missed.

Local tenor saxophonist Fraser MacPherson's record, "Live at the Planetarium", on West End Records, has received a fair amount of attention from trade magazines throughout North America. It certainly must rank as the most highly reviewed disc of any resident jazzman. It is a warm, swinging date in which MacPherson is joined by Oliver Gannon on

guitar and Wyatt Ruther on bass. At the moment the album is receiving limited distribution, but that may soon change as RCA is reportedly interested in carrying the work. Otherwise, it may be obtained from Black Swan Records, 2936 W. Fourth Ave....Earl Hines recently played the Queen Elizabeth Theatre followed shortly afterwards by Dave Brubeck and sons.... The Classical Joint in Gastown and Jablu, 1333 Burrard, feature local groups throughout the week. - John Orysik

AMERICA

LOS ANGELES

Eddie Cleanhead Vinson, PeeWee Crayton, John Carter, Bobby Bradford and Horace Tapscott still holding down their usual gigs per previous reports. Donte's in North Hollywood is a sure shot to find Art Pepper, Hampton Hawes, Supersax (less Warne Marsh), Warne with a succession of groups, teamed with Gary Foster, Don Menza, Art Pepper and Irene Kral, rhythm sections of Lou Levy, Alan Broadbent (Tristano student), Nick Cerolli, Monty Budwig....And as long as you're in N. Hollywood stop by the Baked Potato (providing that it's Sunday) and catch Plas Johnson and his quintet.

New clubs in the area: The Improvisation at 8162 Melrose Ave., Hollywood had Monday nights of Phineas Newborn Jr. and Supersax. The Redondo Lounge at 411 N. Francisca, Redondo Beach has had Warne Marsh, several evenings of Art Pepper, Frank Rosolino and many other local musicians.

John Cage performed his "Renga with Apartment House 1776" recently to a bewildered audience with the help of a scoffing Los Angeles Philharmonic. "That my music could not be immediately accepted I quite understand," the composer was quoted as saying after performance, "what is unjustifiable, however, is the lack of goodwill on the part of the audience...."

A handbill stating that the David Murray-Hamiet Bluiett Quartet plus Bobby Bradford attracted a full house at the Century City Playhouse on January 6. Another Lee Kaplan venture. The whyfors of Bluiett's or Bradford's unattendance went unsaid, leaving the group at Roberto Miranda, bass and Oliver Johnson, drums. Second set included James Newton, flutes and John Carter on clarinet. I can only sum it up as a total wailing ascension of well controlled, thoughtfully conceived fine distillation on what has been called the energy school of playing. So much so that one sensed the presence of Coltrane, Ayler, Shepp and Ornette throughout the monstrous proceedings. Oliver Jackson has been seen elsewhere in the company of the likes of Braxton, Bobby Bradford and Steve Lacy. Roberto as always, ditto John Carter and James Newton. January 14 at The Studio on Slauson David did a solo performance, then a duet with James Newton. January 15 David and James brought their act to Murray's old stomping grounds, the Claremont Colleges. All three evenings were taped by B&B Productions and are in the hands of David Murray in search of a record company. James Newton plans to release an album of his own music soon.

Jazz films - the first in a series of screenings exposing Mark Cantor's collection February 14. "Pie Pie Blackbird" (1931)Eubie Blake; "Smash Your Baggage" (1933) the Noble Sissle Orchestra, Buster Bailey, The Washboard Serenaders; "Symphony in Black"(1934) Duke Ellington Orchestra, Billie Holiday; "Jitterbug Party" (1936) Cab Calloway; "Boogie Woogie Dream"(1941) Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, Lena Horne, Teddy Wilson Orchestra; "Soundies" (1941) Fats Waller, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong; "Snader Teletranscriptions" (1951) Basie, Lionel Hampton, Helen Humes, Buddy Defranco, Clark Terry, Wardell Gray; "Sound of Jazz"(1958) Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Gerry Mulligan. Bobby Bradford filled in the details on the films afterwards. A lot of cats for one evening! Thanks to The Pasadena Film Forum under the direction of editor and jazz affectionado Terry Cannon, P.O. Box 5631, Pasadena, California 91107.

The Los Angeles Times Sunday Calendar section would be the best source of information for most jazz functions. For information on the more contemporary stylings in the music, which the Times can neglect sometimes, due to lack of funds on the part of new music entrepreneurs and Times' critic Feather apathy, speak to Lee Kaplan at his employ, Rhino Records, Westwood. Another great source for the goings-ons of all Black music idioms is John Breckow KPFK friday eves (thursday morn) 2:00 a.m. or at his employ, Rare Records, Glendale. John and Paul Vangelesti (jazz show "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" KPFK 12:00 friday eves) have scheduled several live broadcasts and interviews over their friday night expance. Looking for anybody particular? Ring the musicians' union for the artist's home phone and speak to the man himself. Or call me 714 982-1940. - Mark Weber

NEW YORK

Pianist Joanne Brackeen played Thursdays through Saturdays at the Surf Maid in December and January. Having played in the bands of Art Blakey, Joe Henderson, and Stan Getz, Brackeen is now finally getting more of an opportunity to perform her own music. She is essentially a self-taught musician, and although the influence of McCoy Tyner and Cecil Taylor, among others, can be detected in her playing, Brackeen has now found her own voice and has much to offer.

Brackeen is an aggressive player; she literally attacks the piano when she plays. Her great intensity and conviction produce a diamond hard sound which grabs the listener and doesn't let go. "The way that you feel about life...comes out in the music", she says.

Brackeen prefers a freer type of music as opposed to diatonic harmonically-based tunes which she has to play in many situations. This is not to say that she doesn't play these tunes well; it is simply a matter of preference. Many of her own compositions don't have predetermined harmonic progressions, and the pieces simply unfold as the music goes on. But there are definite structural forces present which can take the form of either melodic cells or rhythm, the latter being the element which Brackeen believes is "the basis of all music.... Once you can feel the rhythm, you don't have to define that rhythm and you can play on top of it". The result is a music which has tremendous drive and vitality and flows freely. Joanne Brackeen is a musician who has much to offer us. Listen.

The Real New York Saxophone Quartet (Hamiet Bluiett, baritone saxophone, clarinet, flute; Julius Hemphill, soprano and alto saxophones, flute; Oliver Lake, soprano and alto saxophones, flute; David Murray, tenor saxophone, flute) presented a program of their original compositions and improvisations at the Tin Palace on February 5. The quartet's music was more concerned with color, texture, and sound per se rather than specific notes. The Quartet's performance gave new meaning to the concept of group interaction and improvisation; all four members submerged their individual talents into a group conception. The resulting rightness of sound and exploration gave their performance incredible strength, a music so tightly organized and presented that one wasn't certain what was improvised and what was composed.

Recent visitors from Europe have included soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy and pianist Kenny Drew. Lacy performed solo concerts at Environ in both January and February as well as five nights at Ali's Ally in January with Steve Potts (alto saxophone), Ron Miller (bass) and Oliver Johnson (drums). Drew played some good bebop piano for his one night engagement at Storyville with Bob Berg (tenor saxophone), Lisle Atkinson (bass) and Jimmy Cobb (drums)....Another visitor from Europe was Frank Wright who played for five nights at Ali's Ally in January. The tenor saxophonist seems to have synthesized both Albert Ayler and John Coltrane into an original sound. Wright usually takes a series of notes and repeats it, while ever so slightly making a small change or two. His choice of unexpected notes plus his huge sound are able to heighten the tension and excitement throughout his solos and create great emotional impact....Hamiet Bluiet, Don Pullen (piano), Fred Hopkins (bass) and Don Moye (drums) played an incredibly powerful program at Jazzmania on January 30. Bluiett took the baritone into areas of expression that one doesn't normally associate with that horn. As for Pullen, he is simply one of the finest pianists playing today. He can play anything and everything. The rhythm section was superb, too....The Ladies' Fort will feature their 3rd April Live Loft Jazz Festival (Festival '77) of artists deserving wider recognition. Performers include Clifford Jordan, Sheila Jordan, David Murray and Archie Shepp. Check with the club for further details....Inner City Records is now releasing the Enja and SteepleChase recordings in the U.S. and

Canada on the Inner City label as well as releasing long unavailable tapes and producing their own albums. Among their most recent releases are the last recording date of pianist Elmo Hope (IC 1918), a new recording by trumpeter Ted Curson (IC 1017), and long unavailable sessions by singer Eddie Jefferson (IC 1016) and dancer "Baby" Laurence.

Mary Lou Williams and Cecil Taylor will give a concert together at Carnegie Hall on April 17. The concert is officially titled "Mary Lou Williams and Cecil Taylor Embraced", and will feature the two pianists playing jointly composed music - both written and improvised - together. They will be accompanied by a rhythm section. - Clifford Jay Safane

ANN ARBOR

The Michigan city with the double name offers something of a central vantage point for an observer of the current southeastern Michigan jazz scene. About 45 miles east lies Detroit (some twenty miles of farmland keep Ann Arbor from being a suburb); the Motor City's music scene remains quite active, with more than a hint of jazz. An hour's drive to the northwest brings one to East Lansing, a thin commercial growth on the flank of Michigan State University. Several first-rate talents have performed in East Lansing through the efforts of the MSU-based Showcase Jazz organization, the most recent being the Sun Ra Arkestra (February 25 and 26).

Ann Arbor itself has a lot of offer musically; the University of Michigan plays a similar role in the city's cultural life, and the student-run Eclipse Jazz has produced a half-dozen excellent concerts recently. However, the most interesting jazz event so far this year occurred not in Ann Arbor, but ten miles east in Ypsilanti, at Eastern Michigan University, which presented Don Cherry, Oregon and Leon Thomas on March 5. A friend of mine holds the view that contemporary musicians are developing a "world music" out of the jazz tradition, using massive infusions from other ethnic musics; this concert, with its rich mix of non-western traditions, provided considerable support for his argument.

The group Oregon opened the concert with a set that displayed their knowledge of different traditions and instruments. The four players between them played well over a dozen instruments: Ralph Towner, 12-string and classical guitar, piano, harpsichord, trumpet and flugelhorn; Colin Walcott, sitar, tablas, clarinet and percussion; Glen Moore, bass, violin and piano; and Paul McCandless, oboe, English horn, bass clarinet and wooden flute. In addition to an obvious if understated jazz reference, Oregon drew on 20th-century classical European art music, a sort of Euro-American folk music, and a number of non-western modal approaches (particularly the classical Indian).

Walcott later told the crowd that the group simply calls their mostly- improvised opening "The Opening"; it began with wide sparse textures (bass, guitar and percussion) and a plaintive oboe melody. Walcott established a 4/4 pulse and McCandless (oboe), Towner (guitar and flugelhorn), Moore (bass) and Walcott (tablas) each played with the strange, augmented-sounding mode. Without pause the group segued into Walcott's Cloud Dance, a folk-like composition with chord changes floating over almost a samba rhythm. McCandless seems to favor the oboe, on which he revealed himself as a strong, technically proficient soloist in the jazz hornplayer tradition - the extroverted emotionalism of his fierce eighth-note lines and shrill probing of the oboe's highest register spoke strongly to the audience.

An untitled composition by Towner featured the composer on piano, an instrument he plays with skill and confidence. He provides an effective counterbalance for McCandless, similarly proficient on guitar and piano - his brass work was not as adept but by no means amateurish - but less easily characterized. The speaker system did not favor him, but his piano playing seemed to blend classical, jazz and occasionally barrelhouse approaches. Moore's Land Of Heart's Desire opened with an out-of-tempo melody stated by a harsh near-unison of trumpet and bass clarinet, followed by a long series of textural improvisations in a modern classical style. Several interesting colors developed, but the piece dragged on a little - such improvisation can often become more interesting for the players than for the listener.

Gradually a simple, broad, folk-like progression (drawn from a diatonic major scale) coalesced, built up and ritarded to an ending - setting up a satisfying movement from chaos to order. The audience demanded and eventually got an encore, the piece Yet To Be, a pretty composition in a rushing 6/8 paced by Walcott's triangle. Both McCandless (oboe) and Towner (piano) played well on the changes.

It would be wrong to call Cherry's set (which followed a ten-minute intermission) disappointing or unsatisfying; it was more that as a listener I was unprepared by his most recent recordings for the idiom in which he chose to create this evening. Cherry brought his pocket trumpet, but he also brought his douzan-gouni, or hunter's guitar. The instrument comes from the African state of Mali, and the source of Cherry's music this evening was also Africa, a source with which Cherry demonstrated considerable familiarity.

Cherry, who sat crosslegged on a raised platform beside Walcott's tablas, was first joined onstage by singer Leon Thomas and Oregon's Colin Walcott; the other Oregonians were added after the first piece. What developed was something of a freeform jam session with African folk music as a basis. For each of the several selections Cherry established a pentatonic mode in triple meter, and the others added their instrumental voices; each piece developed through repetition with some rhythmic and melodic variation, in the African tradition.

The first piece (which Thomas described as a traditional "morning song" had Thomas and Cherry singing over the douzan-gouni drone, with counter-rhythms from Walcott. Walcott is a capable tablaist and conga-player, but his efforts on sitar betrayed a quite limited technique, in view of the virtuosity associated with the instrument in Indian music. His simple melodies did blend well with the African context, however. Thomas unexpectedly interpolated most of Nature Boy at one point, his only non-African song of the set.

Cherry switched to his pocket trumpet later in the set, the signal for the rest of Oregon to join in, blowing with belled-out cheeks a la Dizzy Gillespie. He has lost none of his skill on the horn, but chose to limit his solo to a blues-tinged mode in 12/8, keeping pretty much within its pentatonic limits. Oregon supported him with a variety of textures but seemed constrained by the limitations of the tonality and rhythm. Towner even added some punctuations on harpsichord but that harmony-oriented instrument seemed particularly ill-adapted to the African context, and he quickly gave it up for guitar.

Still later Cherry had the audience add their handclaps - they got behind, of course - and showed his agility on the wooden flute. Thomas provided important support with his bag of vocal tricks - falsetto, unusual vibrato and some yodelling - and some conga and percussion work, and at one point even related a short folk tale with Indian characters. The concert was definitely enjoyable, once one abandoned the performance expectations bred by western musical traditions; not surprisingly, the audience wanted more, and Cherry and Thomas came back to offer a brief reprise, Cherry pounding his sock-clad foot to emphasize the beat.

All in all, an interesting concert, if a little off-beat, and a strong indication of the wide range of music available to the contemporary musician with roots in the jazz idiom.

On March 19, after we go to press, the aforementioned Eclipse Jazz people will present Anthony Braxton (with trombonist George Lewis, bassist Fred Hopkins and drummer Barry Altschul) to close their season. Braxton will also lecture on the new music and conduct a workshop with local musicians that afternoon; it promises to be much more rewarding than the performances offered by Charles Mingus, who gave four concerts February 4 and 5 under the auspices of the Eclipse organization. His strangely dissatisfying concert seemed actually to benefit from the loss of drummer Dannie Richmond, who was called away by the death of both parents shortly before the appearance. The absent drummer made Mingus work harder to hold things together, and similar demands worked a like effect on the rest of the group - Ricky Ford, tenor sax; Jack Walrath, trumpet; and Bob Nelams, piano.

Nonetheless the concert fell below the level of the innovative and unusual music for which Mingus is known. Mingus

looked tired and overweight and his music was similarly weary and out-of-breath. On For Harry Carney, a minor blues, and Better Git It In Your Soul, Mingus took short solos with only flashes of his old assertive style; his most visible and effective moments were in Better Git, where he provided with outrageous vocal pantomime the drum solo provided by the chart. Only in the extended Sue's Changes, a complex arrangement with many tempo changes and an Ellingtonian cast, was there any sign of Mingus the composer who once challenged his sidemen to grow and create (Ford met the challenge most successfully) - and Mingus himself didn't solo here. Most of the fire comes from the sidemen these days, and without Mingus, that focussed energy his dominant personality once provided is missing.

The local scene has been quite active lately. Two facets of the music of bassist Ron Brooks are on view in the Ann Arbor Inn. On Fridays and Saturdays Brooks, Danny Spencer (drums) and Rich Ames (piano) examine jazz standards and latin/rock in the jazz piano trio tradition in the ground floor "Pub". On Sundays Brooks, Spencer, percussionist Dave Kother and several others (Ames or Eddie Russ, keyboards; guitarist Jerry Glassel; Pete Kahn or Larry Nozero, reeds) offer the Latin-based, strongly rhythmic music of Mixed Bag, in the Sandalwood Lounge on the hotel's top floor. Spencer and Brooks might be remembered as the strong pulse of the Detroit-based Contemporary Jazz Quintet in the late sixties.

Last year a club called the Blue Frogge opened in Ann Arbor, dedicated to the disco music scene. The owners soon found that the disco crowd stays home early in the week; as a result, the Frogge has begun offering jazz-oriented groups from Detroit on a weekly basis Sunday through Wednesday. Lyman Woodard's organ combo (with guitarist Ken English) started things off in February, and in March the cooperative group Tribe (with Wendell Harrison, Charles Moore and Phil Ranelin), drummer Roy Brooks and his Artistic Truth, and saxophonist Sam Sanders with Visions were featured.

Finally, there's a lot of music in the air - or on the air, to be more accurate. A wise spectrum of jazz FM radio is available in the area, ranging from the commercially - oriented WJZZ, through frequent programs on WUOM, WCBM and WDET, to Eastern Michigan University's WEMU, which recently switched to an all-jazz format. - David Wild

TOWN HALL N.Y.

The Revolutionary Ensemble: Leroy Jenkins (violin, viola), Sirone (bass, trombone), Jerome Cooper (drums, piano)

Anthony Braxton: solo alto saxophone

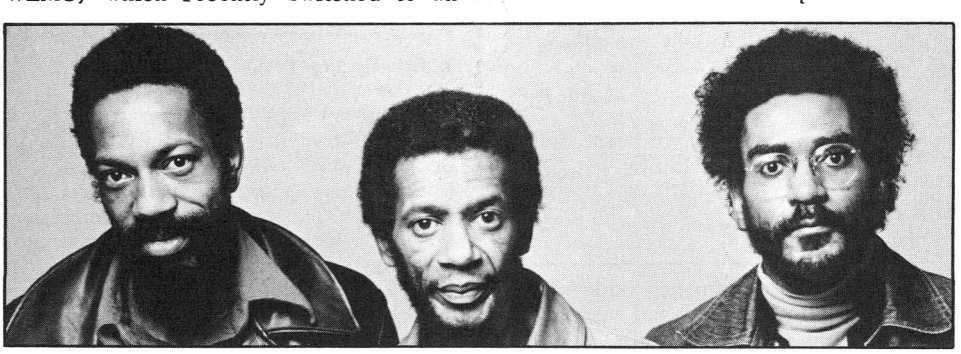
Billy Harper Sextet: Harper (tenor sax, cowbell), Everett Hollins (trumpet), Ted Dunbar (guitar), Mickey Tucker (piano), Greg Maker (bass), Horacee Arnold (drums). Town Hall, Feb 18, 1977

Anthony Braxton, Billy Harper and The Revolutionary Ensemble are musical architects compelled to put painstaking forethought into their performances. They are creators of the most profound beauty, musicians who bring much warmth and spontaneity to their art, and to hear them play truly is to hear reflected the longterm distillation of what has traversed their hearts and minds during the many years of becoming people and artists.

The Revolutionary Ensemble is really a band, and it has few, if any, peers. These three men do not fall into the trap of playing and refining personal licks (even on their principal instruments), and over the years have expanded the musical settings in which they regularly perform. Their set was beautifully conceived and paced. Solos, duets, and swinging trio heads and improvisations on violin, bass and drums alternated with pieces using other instrumentations. One of the set's many pleasures was Jerome Cooper's piano playing. There have been past instances when I have winced a bit at seeing Jerome walk over to a piano, but this time around he was in command, so either my ears were screwed on wrong times past or Jerome has recently come to grips with the keyboard in a big way. I loved watching Leroy Lenkins pound out the melody, looking like a master drummer, on a small marimba-like instrument during another piece. On violin, Leroy sings to me more and more each time I see him, and his virtuosity is such that I sometimes suspect his fingers and bow are about to fly off the fingerboard without any loss of sound. The set also included a composition for three kalimbas during which a delicate descending melodic fragment was occasionally stated on violin, piano or trombone, a brief, hearty African chant-like vocal piece on which Sirone belted out the lead, and a trio for recorders. My only gripe is that Sirone's wrestling match with his bass wasn't very audible because of the hall's acoustics. Delicious music.

Braxton's solo alto set was a treat, perhaps the evening's highpoint. Everyone knows Anthony's role as impetus for the many solo saxophone concerts that abound these days. But when hearing other people play, one often thinks, "My, this is a dangerous and difficult task this musician is attempting, standing up there without anyone to fall back on." With Braxton the thought never occurs; his playing is that self-contained and conceptually-defined. His alto veered through half a dozen or so pieces embracing straight ballad-like "jazz", rapid-fire non-stop cascades of notes, quiet lyrical lines that intertwined and co-existed ever so naturally with those lower register blasts that sound like they are going to wrench off the bottom of the horn, and a piece that consisted entirely of quiet shrill harmonics and loud reed-slapping "fwak-fwak" utterances that sounded like a one-man 1977 update of the musical conversations between Mingus and Dolphy fifteen years back. Intense, serious, humorous, and without a wasted note, this was some of the most satisfying solo playing I've ever heard from Braxton.

Billy Harper's band concluded the evening. Billy's sound on the tenor is one of the most distinctive and moving around. He is a monstrous soloist and one of our very finest writers, and in this respect his present position in the music reminds me of that held by Wayne Shorter about ten years back. Billy performs with a sextet that always sounds like a larger ensemble because of the tightly-crafted shifting melodic lines and rhythmic patterns of his compositions. The sound is a celebration of good feelings, joyous and open, and with a near-big band expansiveness implied. Billy's pieces are the kind that give you chills from the first chord, and for the concert the band performed ringing renditions of three of his best: Priestess (with a new arrangement), Croquet Ballet (absolutely one of the best tunes of recent years) and Cry Of Hunger. The present sextet is a solid one with good solo and ensemble work throughout. One sensed a real respect between Billy and trumpeter Everett Hollins, who played with fire and personality in a straight-ahead manner. Mickey Tucker is an extremely fine pianist who I had never had the privilege to hear before. With a couple of more concerts like this, Billy Harper ought to be swimming in the record and job offers that have somehow only come his way sporadically in the past. - Richard Scheinin



photograph of (l to r) Sirone, Leroy Jenkins and Jerome Cooper courtesy A&M Records

LEGENDS OF JAZZ

Anthony's Villa, Toronto
February 3, 1977

Somehow it is appropriate that the survivors of the first generations of jazz music are travelling under the banner of

"legends" or "preservers". Most of their audience is now too young to have heard them and their contemporaries other than through the medium of phonograph records so it is instructive to view the music at its source. Of course, they don't perform with the energy and commitment they once had as younger men. They pace themselves carefully and occasionally stumble through the choruses but it must be said that the men assembled by Barry Martyn as The Legends of Jazz perform remarkably well and retain the flavour and nuance of the earliest and simplest of jazz forms.

In presentation and repertoire they compare favorably with the various outfits currently touring under the banner of The Preservation Hall Jazz Band. To begin with the Legends of Jazz reflect the beneficial influence of the Kid Ory concept of this music and trumpeter Andrew Blakeney and bassist Ed Garland both served with the trombonist at one time or another. Then there is Louis Nelson, a trombonist who has never succumbed to the huff and puff limitations of tailgate trombone. He is a versatile, lyrical trombonist whose choice of features usually encompasses ballads such as Body And Soul and Stormy Weather. Clarinetist Joe Thomas is the most limited of the front line but his personality (= show business) more than compensates and he certainly fits well into the ensembles. Pianist Alton Purnell is another showman - he puts across New Orleans R&B with a certain flair while his rolling ensemble style gives punch to the band as a whole. Behind it all sits Barry Martyn, cigar out front laying down varied jazz percussion patterns in sympathy with the material and its interpretation. He has absorbed the concepts of his two mentors (Zutty Singleton and Cie Frazier) without being restricted to their concepts.

But it was Andrew Blakeney who finally caught all of my attention. His smoky, hot tone, excellent intonation and clean articulation provided the kind of lead trumpet that this music needs but which is so rarely found today. He is a powerful, well-rounded musician who seemingly can handle any material - whether trite or interesting. It is a misfortune that he has chosen to live in Los Angeles - a city which does little to laude its talented residents.

The Legends of Jazz may well represent the end of a line but while they have the strength to perform you should experience their music. They may never come your way again. - John Norris

STEVE LACY

February 7, 1977
Environ, New York City

In his last engagement this winter, before returning to Paris, soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy performed solo at the downtown music loft Environ.

His program consisted of his own original compositions which is just one gift of this unique musician. Putting together a repertoire of solo material for soprano is one thing, but making that music come alive and sustain itself over a two hour long performance is quite another.

Lacy meets the challenge head on. Constantly putting demands on himself to find new ways to express the possibilities of his music. As a solo performer on an unusual instrument he certainly must rank high with the masters in any form of music, from any culture. Because Lacy stands apart as an original he must be judged as an original and a virtuoso. As Pablo Casals is, as Ravi Shankar is, as Kimo Eto is. All of these artists are masters and as such transcend the cultures they come from to show all peoples the love of music.

Lacy is an improviser. His musical language is large and well rehearsed. He is a master of technique, but is beyond the mere chromatics of the scale. He can divide space and time into any shape he pleases. To understand Lacy's musical thinking you must go back to Monk. For his conception of time, for his unusual accents and phrasing. Evidence, Epistrophy, Off Minor are the germs for Lacy's improvisations. Lacy incorporates these "Monkisms", but extends them to their logical conclusions. Lacy is a thinking man's improviser. He likes whole and complete statements, starting places and stopping places. Pauses for breath and silence are all part of his style. His soprano soliloquies push back the invisible boundary lines of possibility. They are like short animated conversations for breath and space. Lacy has humor. He'll play a very familiar riff for a few bars, maybe hint at another for just a bar and then stretch it into something else entirely. Lacy likes tongue twisters, he plays phrase games with himself. He likes to trap himself in complicated twisting labyrinth phrases. You become part of the search too, as you listen to him improvise his way out. A musical Houdini, performing musical magic. Lacy uses whatever is at hand for his ideas, as well as his own well stocked memory. A pair of scissors provides the snip rhythms for one of his pieces, or just the repeated chanted phrase "Don't go to school, Don't go to School" becomes the cadence for another. Lacy's expressiveness is complete over the whole range of the horn. His intonation is near perfect and he can play in between the normal intervals of the instrument. He has total control of his music. As an improviser Lacy is an innovator. He has raised the soprano sax to new heights and created new standards to which other musicians may look up.

- Jim Eigo

A SPACE CONCERTS

Julius Hemphill
February 26, 1977

Julius Hemphill performed solo at A Space, on alto and soprano saxophones and flute, to the accompaniment of his own voice and instruments, stereo-taped beforehand. The harsh, vibrant bluesiness of his records prepared one for a performer of, at the very least, panache, but beyond coming onstage in a silver lame/black velvet zoot suit and red running shoes with silver sequins, his piece Roi Boye And The Gotham Minstrels came off with almost mannered restraint. Hemphill in performance is an unlikely combination of Eric Dolphy and, say, Cab Calloway - Dolphy's strident, vocal alto sound and birdsong-affinities, Calloway's (or virtually any performer who carries out his art in the "show-business" milieu) assumption that the purpose of his art is to give pleasure to an audience.

The performance of this piece, virtually a concerto for several horns with the live Hemphill as featured soloist, brought to mind Hemphill's records only occasionally. It is above all a very benign piece of music, gentle, elegant, humourous, ironic.

It is surprising how little it takes to bring out the theatrical aspects inherent in any live performance. In this case Hemphill's costume - certainly an eye-catcher - focussed a degree of audience attention on the man himself that otherwise might have been distracted by the recorded music playing through the speakers on either side of him. The constantly-shifting structure of the piece continually moved one's attention from a purely aural level, as when Hemphill's live voice (vocal or instrumental) merged with the recorded ensemble, to a striking immediacy as the taped voices faded away leaving only the solitary presence of the improviser with his horn.

The piece was fluid, not the most intense evocation possible of this man's music, rather a lovingly constructed miniature with the darker emotions held at bay, to be evoked only occasionally by passages of surreal humour, sharp bebop leaps and blurps imposed upon lyrical, flowing lines. Nothing that Hemphill has recorded so far led one to expect music like this. No one else of these new music performers, who stand in the forefront of improvised music today, has displayed this kind of attitude towards their music - what is surprising is not so much the combination of live and prerecorded music, as the assumption implicit in Roi Boye And The Gotham Minstrels - that this music is already accessible enough to be incorporated into a performance in which the performer's expression accords naturally, easily and perfectly with the audience's enjoyment. - David Lee

Smith/Broomer/Dubin/Rosenboom
January 29, 1977

Knowing precisely where to look, the occasion to hear the open musics of Smith, Broomer and Dubin - and associate David Rosenboom - is not an infrequent one in Toronto. Why, then, this celebration of their music? Originally, it began as a celebration of Marion Brown - to wit, Brown in concert alternating sets with Rosenboom and the Smith/Broomer

trio. Unfortunately, the Creator had another, more masterful plan - a blizzard which prevented the arrival of both Brown and of drummer John Mars. However, an audience came and, undaunted, the musicians present decided to make an evening of it, following as much as possible the original concert plan - an opening trio set performing Mind Images, dedicated to Brown; a set of Rosenboom playing piano compositions by Brown; and a second, non-predetermined trio performance.

I doubt that I can say very much about this manifestation of music that I've left unsaid about other of the superior performers of the same art. This is an open, fluid music in which the impetus - the source of power radiated - shifts liquidly from mind/instrument to mind/instrument. As befits a performance dedicated to Brown - a melodist and much more - Mind Images sprung from a series of short alternated motivic fragments developed in a textural rather than a linear manner. Each submovement depended upon a different depth of ensemble interaction - from initially relying on Dubin only for timbral feed while Broomer and Smith generated drive, up through an ascending spiral of power until Dubin overtook and dominated the ensemble to the point that the other two instruments, played pointillistically and percussively, seemed to flare out from under his hands. At all times in both trio sets there was an easy exchange of musical information - like breathing between the levels and lines. If any specifically outstanding point about their second set need be cited, it would be Stuart Broomer's art of preparing and controlling the piano, generating a new vocabulary of sounds which remained yet distant to and superimposed on the regular tonal resources of the keyboard. One never sensed the lack of Brown's voice.

Less conspicuously convincing were Rosenboom's offerings - Sunday Comedown, Sweet Earth Flying (both after poems by Jean Toomer), and Evening Song (in two parts). Rosenboom chose to play them in a heavily vertical style with much reliance on the pedal to draw his arpeggiated textures together. While this eventually summed to an aggressive sort of power (as in Sweet Earth Flying), more for having done the technical feat than anything else, it was easy for the listener to lose direction in a music of notes at constant dynamic and pace, or to forget (except for frequently reiterated rhythmic figures to mark out sections) exactly the relation to root material. After a while, it blurred into a hazy sameness.

- Barry Tepperman

KALAPARUSHA

Kalaparusha Difda Ensemble
The Tin Palace, New York City

Kalaparusha Difda, as his recorded legacy clearly points out, "Humility in Light of the Creator" and "Forces and Feelings" (both available on Delmark records) adheres to sustained shadowy themes which are the essential starting point for a group catharsis that eventually emerges as the basic source of the "solo" segments of his music. On the evening in review tenor saxophonist Difda wasn't as lyrical as one might have expected him to be judging from his recorded output and from his recent concertizing here and abroad (especially at the Berlin Festival held recently where writer Steve Lake commented in Melody Maker that the saxophonist conveyed "...a sense of peacefulness that is quite moving."

At this concert with a more expanded ensemble and one that included the explosive baritonist Hamiet Bluiett, the rather unduly loud drumming of one John Betch, the music took on aspects of utter musical chaos and meaningless wondering in many of the solo segments. Yet one could hear or sense a heart-felt beauty struggling to get through in Difda's themes and in the beautiful playing of trumpeter Lester Bowie who seemed to really sympathize with the inner currents of joy that are the source of Difda's creations. His tone and his way of bending certain notes are a joy and a "traditional" reminder of the legacy that many great black trumpeters brought to the altar of improvised music.

Baritonist Bluiett (who is heard to good advantage on his recently released "Endangered Species" on India Navigation records) fit fairly well in the ensemble segments, making for a heavy, almost tonally descending effect on the themes. Yet when Bluiett picked up his clarinet for the more serene portions of the music the whole vibration changed and the lighter horn seems, by all indications, to fit his purpose and the purpose of Difda's music under these circumstances a little bit better than the larger horn. In an ensemble with two percussionists, a rather obtrusive trap drummer in the personage of Betch and a bassist of Fred Hopkins' persuasion, who echoes and refines every significant rhythmic nuance in the atmosphere flawlessly, one has to be careful not to allow the music to get lost in the shuffle only to be replaced with a meaningless elicitation of sounds that has little if any significant effect on the true spirit of the music. It's like what violinist Leroy Jenkins told me once about something Muhal Richard Abrams said: "...sometimes we get so emotional we forget about the music."

The work of percussionists Juma Santos and Juma Sultan along with trumpeter Bowie became the saving grace of most of the evening's proceedings. For it wasn't a problem so much of the compositions or the themes in themselves as it was a question of presentation in terms of the internal idea of the context that was peculiar to each individual in the band at the time of execution - in that each man took the <u>feeling</u> away from the general

rhythmic and textural flow of Difda's carefully conceived environments (which seems to be how Difda's music is built).

It must be said too, in conclusion that Difda's music seems to work best with brass players on the front line - his horizontal, scattered but often intensely lyrical approach (listen to him on Leroy Jenkins' "For Players Only" - although there are multiple ideas at work his work still contains an inner lyricism and logic that is more than gratifying) blends well with trumpet players who have mastered the art of bent tones, slurs, unorthodox approaches to lip techniques and eccentric ideas about sound placement and design (Bobby Bradford, Olu Dara, Leo Smith (!) come easily to mind here). Trumpeter Bowie has this quality and facility too and it was actually he and bassist Hopkins (who's probably the busiest New Music bassist in New York) who held the harmonic contours of the music together.

I for one know what Difda can do under situations and circumstances that could be called positively musical (meaning that the strongest vibration is on the situations the sound is placed within) and I long to hear a reading of his creations under such conditions because, after all, he's one of the master instrumentalists in terms of execution and form as his earlier work clearly indicates.

- Roger Riggins

PAUL MOTIAN

Creative Music Studio,
Woodstock, New York

Percussionist Paul Motian is probably best known for his recorded work and concertizing with the now defunct Keith Jarrett quartet. Although he has on occasion worked or recorded with various other pianists throughout his career (Lowell Davidson, Bill Evans and Paul Bley come most easily to mind) Motian has never really "surfaced" as an important player nor has he gained qualifiable exposure to a significant number of people in the "jazz" community.

This was the premiere performance of his recently formed Trio which includes bassist David Izenzon (who is, more than likely, best remembered for his fine work with the Ornette Coleman Trio of a few years back) and reedist Charles Brackeen (who has done concerts with several bands bassist Izenzon has assembled over the years and was an integral member of a great ensemble known as the Melodic-Art-Tet). Motian wrote most of the material for the evening and one was immediately struck with the quiet beauty of many of his tunes. It seems that his writing depends pretty much on the advanced harmonic and sonoric implications that both bassist Izenzon and reedist Brackeen bring fully into view - that's to say that Motian's tunes seem to have a shifting harmonic base that at some point dictates the melodic content of his music.

Reedist Brackeen exhibits a gentle, harmonically rich tone that is almost surreal in its final effect. On the final selection, for example, Brackeen was found on soprano sax and his work was so real, so strikingly touching that one almost had the feeling that one's mind was being transported to another, and considerably more beautiful, world. For we must not forget that reedist Brackeen served time as a street musician and the quality and sensitivity of his tone suggest an essential knowledge of the contours of cities and neighbourhoods and the beauty of people.

Motian and bassist Izenzon create the textural shading for the melodic implications of reedist Brackeen's pronouncements - where it is left up to the saxophonist to whirl melodic cascades of notes that attempt to fill the spaces left due to the masterful re-distribution of the harmonic and rhythmic parameters of the music brought about by Motian and Izenzon's contributions.

The trio swings beautifully but I was particularly impressed with the moody plaintive side of the group's playing (and it was also on material like this that bassist Izenzon showed the rare beauty of his arco playing - it is, undoubtedly, some of the most exquisite bass violin playing in all of improvised music). It seems, too, that each member of the band has a substantial area of investigation to cover; and that this area of investigation is highly pronounced and considerably broader than in most aggregations of this size. One could possibly say that the advanced harmonic foundations of this music dictate a more than standard requirement for the players, thus allowing them to cover a lot of new musical territory almost automatically.

It should be mentioned in conclusion that the Creative Music Studio which presented Motian's Trio has been scheduling some fine music of late and the atmosphere couldn't be better. For information for concerts and classes one should call (914) 679-9245. - Roger Riggins

ODDS &. . . .

Cecil Taylor and Mary Lou Williams join hands and pianos in a potentially amazing recital entitled "Embraced" to be presented at Carnegie Hall on Sunday April 17....The Brook, 40 West 17th in New York is another club featuring some of today's powerful music. Arthur Blythe and Charles Tyler were there February 27...The Bobby Naughton Unit (featuring Perry Robinson and Leo Smith) gave a concert of new works at Yale University's Art Gallery on January 30; The Revolutionary Ensemble were guests of Jazz Interactions at Storyville early in March; the National Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Chuck Israels is giving a series of concerts at the New School. Guests are Gerry Mulligan (February 19), Carrie Smith (March 12), Tommy Flanagan (April 2) and Mike Brecker (April 23). Peter Brotzmann, Han Bennink, Alexander von Schlippenbach and Sven-Ake Johansson are in New York during April under the auspices of FMP and the Goethe Institute.

They will be appearing at the Downtown loft of Denise Renee (484 Broome Street) on April 16 and 17. Earle Warren was one of many musicians who gave their services in a fund-raising drive for the New York Jazz Museum recently. Rutgers University is presenting a series of "Jazz Artists in Residence". Opening the series was The Jazz Sisters, a group which features Jill McManus (piano), Janice Robinson (trombone), Jean Davis (trumpet), Lynn Milano (bass), Willene Barton (tenor sax), and Paula Hampton (drums). Following them were Frank Foster and the Loud Minority (Foster now has a fan club - 1235 Post Road, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583), Billy Cobham and Tommy Flanagan. There's a tribute to Ellington on April 19 with Sonny Greer, Russell Procope and Harold Ashby. They are followed by Larry Young (20th), Ron Carter (26th) and Jimmy Heath (27th).

The Xanadu All Stars (Barry Harris, Ronnie Cuber, Gene Taylor, Leroy Williams), Michael Gregory Jackson and Jay Cameron were among the musicians who participated in a Jazz All Night Concert at the Church of the Covenant in Boston on February 20....The Harvard Jazz Band directed by trombonist Tom Everett will premiere "From The Tower", a large three section work by Boston's Baird Hersey on April 27. Phil Woods and Lee Konitz will be guest soloists....Detroit's New McKinney's Cotton Pickers came back in great style at the Presidential Inn on February 20....Sun Ra was at Michigan State University for concerts February 25 and 26....San Francisco's music activity continues with appearances by the ESP Ensemble at the Pangaea Club (March 11) and the Blue Dolphin (April 22); "Closer Look" will be at the Blue Dolphin April 7. Trumpeter Eddie Gale will be giving a concert at Kresge Town Hall, Santa Cruz on April 29....Berkeley's KFPA Radio is broadcasting a series of live concerts from Mapenzi. Heard over the airwaves have been Leo Smith, Oliver Lake, Anthony Braxton and Julius Hemphill.

The Creative Music Studio's spring session runs from April 4 through May 29....Rahsaan Roland Kirk has opened a music school. For more information write to Rahsaan's Vibration School of Music, 9 Midland Avenue, East Orange, J.J. 07017....Anthony Braxton swept the Melody Maker's first-ever International Jazz Critics Poll. He won top honours for alto saxophone, clarinet, composer and miscellaneous instrument.

A celebration and memorial tribute was held at NYC's St. Peter's Church on February 13 for Erroll Garner. The great pianist had succumbed on January 2 in Los Angeles after a lengthy illness....Blues great Freddie King was stricken with a fatal heart attack December 28 at the age of 42....Blues pioneer Bukka White died in Memphis.

Stephen Bedwell (47 Deepwood Crescent, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2Y5, Canada) has compiled and published Part 1 (pre-1959) of his Pete Fountain discography. There's over 100 pages of information and data about the clarinetist. Jan Scobey has written and published what appears to be a very slick book about her late husband Bob Scobey. Titled "He Rambled 'Till Cancer Cut Him Down" it is available for $31.50 (including shipping) from Jan Scobey Pal Publishing, P.O. Box 807, Northridge, California 91328 USA... "Jazz In The Movies" is David Meeker's compilation of jazz musicians' contributions to the silver screen. It's an English book published by Gough-Yates and Tarratt, 27 Sumatra Street, London NW6, England...."The Devil's Music" is a new book by Giles Oakley about the blues....Don Brown has announced that the current issue of The Record Finder is the last. Exhaustion is the principal cause but you can take it over if you have the energy and ambition. Write Don Brown, Jazz Man Record Shop, 3323 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, California 90405.

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Larry Ridley's new album on Strata East is called "Sum of the Parts"....Esquire Records has issued in England an album of early Johnny Dankworth Seven titles....Charles Austin and Joe Gallivan are working out of England and have a new album "Peace on Earth" which will appear on the Compendium label.....Joe McPhee's latest lp on Hat Hut Records is a series of tenor saxophone solos recorded in Switzerland.....SteepleChase Records continue their prolific recording schedule. Upcoming are a double album by Stan Getz's Quartet recorded at Cafe Montmartre; further albums by Kenny Drew and Niels Henning and a series of recordings from Nils Winther's latest trip to New York. Watch for lps with Horace Parlan, Kenny Drew, Hilton Ruiz (quintet and trio) and a duet session with Walt Dickerson and Richard Davis....French RCA has just published the 1977 version of their catalog covering the Black and White series. You can get your copy (when they arrive!) from Coda Publications. - compiled by John Norris

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2004 Willie The Lion Smith and Don Ewell: Grand Piano
Willie The Lion Smith (piano), Don Ewell (piano)

I've Found A New Baby, A Porter's Love Song, I Would Do Anything For You, Some Of These Days, Just You Just Me, Everybody Loves My Baby, Can't We Be Friends, You Took Advantage Of Me, Keeping Out Of Mischief Now, Sweet Georgia Brown

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2005 Teddy Wilson In Tokyo
Teddy Wilson (piano)

I Get A Kick Out Of You, Sweet Lorraine, Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (And Dream Your Troubles Away), My Ideal, On The Sunny Side Of The Street, Body And Soul, I Cried For You, Smoke Gets In Your Eyes, I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter, Summertime, Runnin' Wild, She's Funny That Way, I've Got The World On A String, I Surrender Dear

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2010 Oliver Lake/Joseph Bowie: Duets
Oliver Lake (alto and soprano saxophones, flute), Joseph Bowie (trombone)

Zaki, Orange Butterflies, After Assistance, Universal Justice, A Space Rontoto

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3003 Herb Hall: Old Tyme Modern
Herb Hall (clarinet), Claude Hopkins (piano), Arvell Shaw (bass), Buzzy Drootin (drums)

Old Fashioned Love, All Of Me, Buddy Bolden's Blues, Crying My Heart Out For You, Swinging Down Shaw's Hall, Beale Street Blues, How Come You Do Me Like You Do, Willow Weep For Me, Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans, Sweet Georgia Brown

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3004 Claude Hopkins: Soliloquy
Claude Hopkins (piano)

Indiana, Sugar, If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight, Crazy Fingers, You Took Advantage Of Me, Late Evening Blues, Safari Stomp, New Orleans, You're Driving Me Crazy, Memphis Blues, Who's Sorry Now

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3005 Jay McShann: The Man From Muskogee
Jay McShann (piano), Claude Williams (violin), Don Thompson (bass), Paul Gunther (drums)

After You've Gone, Four Day Rider, Yardbird Suite, I'll Catch The Sun, Thing's Ain't What They Used To Be, Smooth Sailing, Mary Ann, These Foolish Things, Hootie Blues, Nancy Boogie, Jumping At The Woodside

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3010 Karl Berger/David Holland: All Kinds Of Time
Karl Berger (vibraphone, piano, balaphon), David Holland (bass)

Simplicity, Perfect Love, Fragments,
The Beginning, Now Is/D'Accord/All Kinds Of Time/We Are

3011 Jay McShann/Buddy Tate: Duets
Jay McShann (piano), Buddy Tate (tenor saxophone)
To be released in March 1977.

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