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at the recording of
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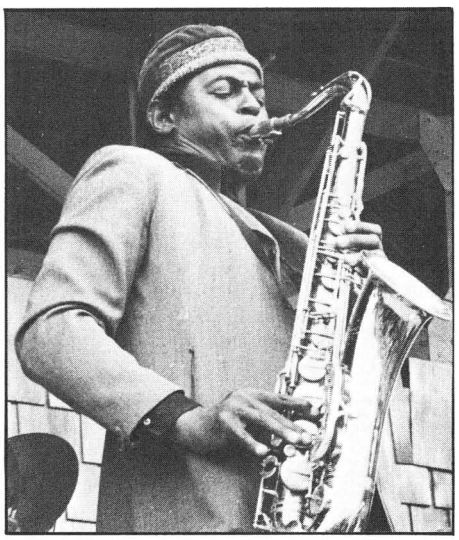

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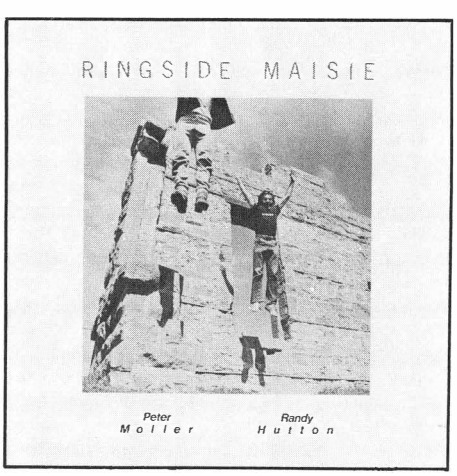

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AN INTERVIEW WITH DANNY

BILL SHOEMAKER: ***I was surprised when I learned how soon you began your association with Charles Mingus after you began playing jazz.***

DANNIE RICHMOND: Before I met Charles I was actually playing rock and roll. During that time I was playing tenor saxophone and not the drums. I was also in school, at a now-defunct music university in the Bronx — it was called the Music Center. The reason for the change from the saxophone to the drums was primarily this: after studies, every other day, we would have a jam session at the university and there would always be a thousand musicians present and no drummer. I found that I could keep time — you know, just dink-a-ding-dink-a-ding — and I thought that maybe something was happening. You know how many times guys will be switching instruments and just seeing what they can come up with, the same thing happened with me and little by little I was really able to play good time — I couldn't play any back-ups with the left hand during that period - but little by little I found that I could play real good time and it could get faster and faster, because during that time that was the thing to do — to play fast — and then one of the guys at the university said "you're a natural drummer." My tenor saxophone playing was coming along but it was not like Gene Ammons or Charlie Parker, so I took my tenor, flute, and clarinet and traded them in on a set of drums. Six months later I was playing with Mingus.

You never had a journeyman period as a drummer.

No. I practiced for six hours every day, Sunday included, and my mother would have to make me stop to come to eat. I felt I was latching on to something that I also wanted to do besides the saxophone. Basically, I'm self-taught, as far as the drums are concerned. Of course, there was a period that Mingus helped me a great deal, but there was no book, no teacher, no lessons.

What was your regimen for those six hours?

There wasn't any rudimental drumming at all. I was trying to enhance my left hand and the accents of my right foot and also to play polyrhythms. I still believe that if you can't play polyrhythms there's no point of sitting down at the drums. A lot of people don't know that your right hand is playing one thing, your left hand is playing another, your right foot is playing something else, and your left foot is playing the accent with the ride cymbal that you're playing. So, there are actually four different things going on at one time. I set as my goal the ability to play these polyrhythms and to play them at any speed.

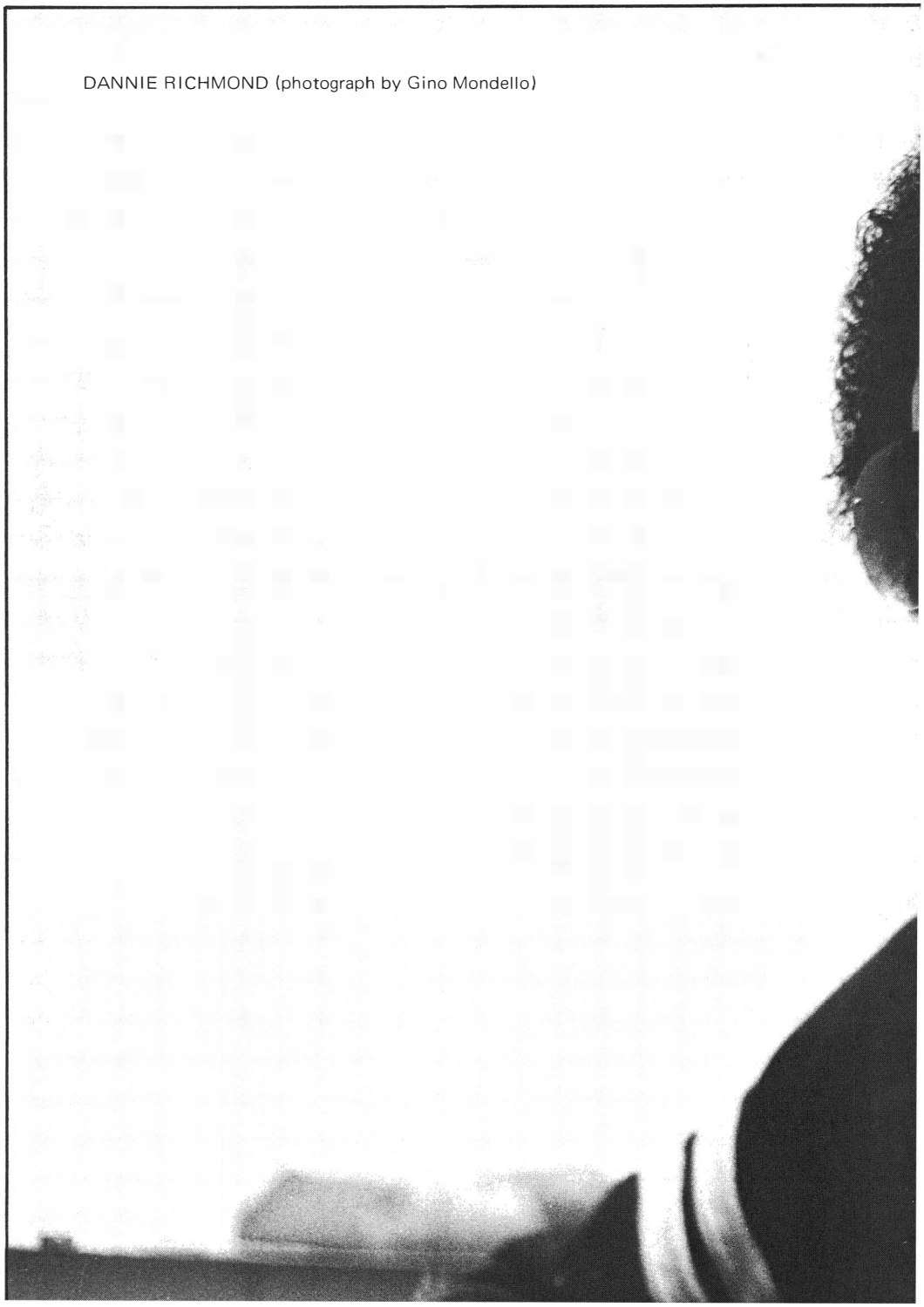
Did you have models at that point?

Oh yeah. Max Roach was my man, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, just to name a few, but I never played with records. I would just listen and one of them would do something interesting and then I would stop the music and go to the drums and try to do the same thing. I found that after I was able to decipher what they were doing and was actually able to do it myself, it enhanced the ideas I already had and didn't know about, yet, as far as playing the drums. I would take a little bit of this and a little bit of that and incorporate something of mine for it to appear that I was not a carbon copy of one of the top drummers of that period. I think all musicians sometime during their career have a person that they idolize or look up to and not copy, but try to do some of the things they do. That was true in my case, as well.

How did Mingus initially help you?

In the beginning, I wanted to play fast. Many times, as a result, I would go past the bar lines. Let's just say we're playing a 12-bar blues, and at the end of the chorus there's a set-up so that you make your solo come out at a 1 and it starts over again. Now it's fashionable to play past bar lines and not even include that in the music, in some cases, but then the 1s had to be in the right place and, essentially, you are the bandleader. I was going beyond the bar lines and always trying to play fast meant that there was no cohesiveness in the solos that I would play. It would be just a lot of fast sticking and going around the drums. Charles said one night, "Wait a minute, man, a solo is like a conversation. You just don't walk in and if there's two people talking and take the whole conversation. First you say 'hello, how are you doing, what's happening' and it builds." It's not that I hadn't thought about that, but the way he put it was like a complete drum lesson

DANNIE RICHMOND (photograph by Gino Mondello)



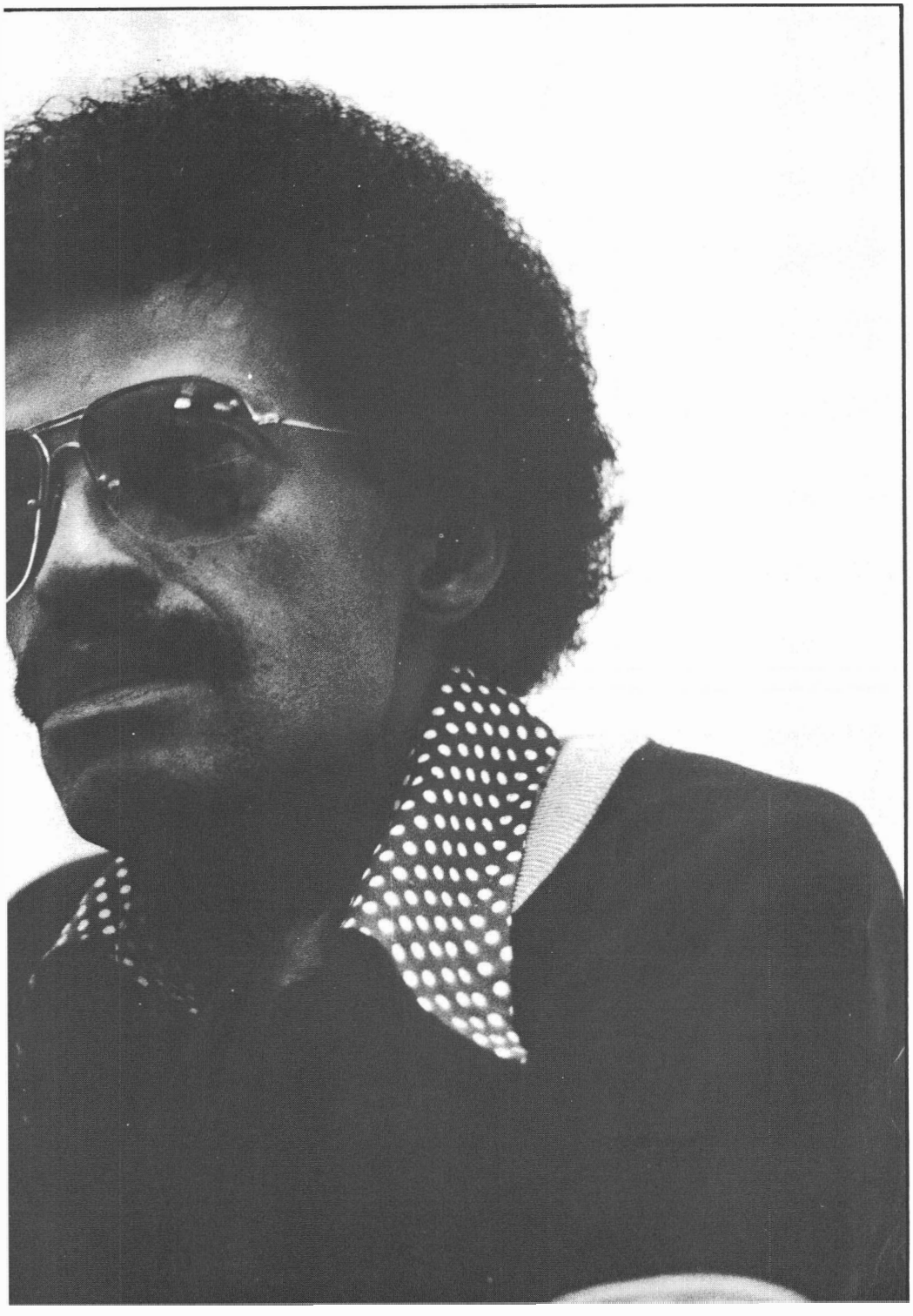
RICHMOND

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

for me. I can also remember very vividly once when we were in a club and they had tablecloths on the table. He took out his pen and said "Let's just say that this dot is the beginning of your drum solo and if it were a graph it would go in a circle." So he's drawing on the tablecloth. And he said, "OK...and it would go around and it would expand and grow larger and larger and then, at some point near the end, it stops, but then you have to go back, back, smaller, smaller, until you get back to this dot where you started." And that was the thing that said more as far as overall playing, for me, than anything else, because I've kept that concept from then until now. I've found that it works and that it is not included in what a lot of jazz players do. A lot of them don't have any concept of having a conversation in the solos that they play.

Soon after you joined Mingus, his music really matured, especially in terms of shifting tempos and representation of his roots. What adjustments, if any, did you have to make in your playing?

Even then as a beginner, it was very easy for me to listen to what the theme would be, and what it was about, and where Charles wanted it to go. So, I was actually open for anything he wanted to do. As a beginner, it was very easy for me to grasp what he was saying and what he wanted, and together we would do it. In the beginning, some of it — in terms of the different time changes he would initiate, and would become very important as far as many of his compositions were concerned — was hard because I had never been exposed to having to play double-time and then, without any warning - because it was never actually set where we would change the tempo - we would go into six or what we call dead slow, four or two. After we - bass and drums - practiced together on just playing time, switching it up - sometimes I would be the one to change it, sometimes Charles would change it - the changes were so rapid it would be as if we were doing it together. That was the only challenging part of the music I had to face, because by this time I was - with Charles - really able to play fast, which I wanted to do all along, and not have to carry the burden of being a fast player. When you have a dynamite bass player, that takes half the weight off you right there. During the early stages of joining the Jazz Workshop it was still a learning process and, as a result, it kept building until we looked around and ten years had gone by. Even though that was happening, there were many musicians who came through the Jazz Workshop all during the career I had with Mingus. Especially during the early stages, he was one who wanted the music played correctly. This meant long rehearsals, regardless of if we were travelling or not. It meant that we were going to rehearse. As a result, you put the gig, the travelling, the rehearsal, all on a daily basis, and you look around and say, "What day is it?", you know, because a week has passed. It was a very enjoyable week, of course, because of the music and travelling means you come in contact with many people. It also means you're family and you get to know the musicians you're playing with and see just how they live when they're on the road. In terms of time, you have a few moments to find out about another person, it's time to eat, the next thing you know you're going to the gig, you do three sets — and that was a must during that period, which was why last night was a little strange to play three long sets because we haven't been doing that. Before Charles got ill, he made it a point in all the contracts that we would never play over two sets, regardless. As I sit here now and think back, it just seems like it was all so short - really, so short - and it's years that I'm talking about.



What was a typical Mingus rehearsal like? Was there such a thing as a typical Mingus rehearsal?

Yeah. First, with every new member that would join the Jazz Workshop there was the incentive to pull out sheet music, pen, and write down the melodies that Mingus would be rehearsing. First of all, he wouldn't let that happen. That was not allowed. He felt that writing music down would inhibit and restrict. You know now that these were supposed to be top jazz players and, of course, reading was important, but he felt it was a means of keeping you locked into a certain thing and he didn't want this. He was responsible for musicians actually going beyond their abilities in playing certain things he would ask them to play. No

music was written down. He would play the line on the piano and it would be almost like the musician was taking a lesson. Of course, there would be many stops because he would say, "No, bend this note like a human voice" and many cats wouldn't know because it was their first time attempting something like that. I witnessed capabilities going beyond what a musician was able to do with this method that Mingus used. One thing he said was, "I am responsible for the melody, lead line, etc., you are responsible for the solos that you play. Therefore, I want the music played right." So many times - I can't count the times —that he stopped a band in the middle of a tune at a performance and explain to the audience that this was the concept of the Jazz Workshop. That's where the name came from, because in San Francisco, back then, the musicians got together on Saturdays and Sundays as a means of getting their music out. So this carried over into all of his performances with all of the different Workshop bands that he had. It was nothing for him to stop in the middle of a piece and go to the piano and say, "No, it goes like this" and then play what the saxophone or the trumpet or, for that matter, what the piano was supposed to play, because in his method the piano reinforced all of his melodies, sometimes with a countermelody or by playing a unison line with one of the horns. There would never be any hassles as far as the rehearsals would go. They would always be smooth. Every time a musician would grasp something real quick that Mingus would have, that would make him real happy. After the musicians copped the line, then we would play it as a unit, maybe take a couple of choruses as far as the solos. Another thing was that the musicians would want to write the chord changes down, to have something to go on. He said, "No, no, just listen. You've got ears." "There is no such thing as a wrong note," he would also say. I heard wrong notes - they sounded wrong to me, but not to him. It kept the musicians thinking, thinking, thinking. I've seen this method work and expand a musician's capabilities. It also gave us something to talk about, deciphering what he really wanted at that point. So, it was also a conversation piece when we weren't playing. All in all, it was music, music, music, especially when we were on the road.

What was the dynamic between Mingus and Eric Dolphy when he was part of the Workshop?

First, I had never heard the alto saxophone played the way Eric Dolphy played it and, quite frankly, I've not heard it played that way since. It was sort of like a godsend for Charles. I didn't know at that time that they had previously known each other in California. This was in New York and we were at a place called the Showcase for nine months, six nights a week, sometimes four sets a night. As I said earlier, Mingus wanted the instruments in many of his compositions to be like a voice and Eric's alto saxophone came closest to this. As a result of Eric being able to get all these different sounds, and to play all of these ideas, Mingus went to work, writing. There was not any formal collaboration between them as far as meeting and saying, "Let's put this down." At the rehearsals, Mingus would bring in a new piece of music just on one piece of paper. At this point, I had never gotten the real reason for dropping the piano during this period. It was just a quartet — alto, trumpet, bass and drums — and the fact that it made this particular group become more tight as a unit made me see that the piano, in this case, would be in the way. Because of the way Eric played, I can see Mingus dropping the piano, because of the passing tones, the long notes associated within the context of his solos meant there would be a clash between what Eric was playing and what a pianist would be playing. This period was one, I feel, that brought about a change in the structure of what was happening musically, because there were modal things that we would do and it was the first time that I can remember a piece only having two chords in it. Of course, this also gave Charles the opportunity to show what a virtuoso he was and it meant that certain things that he would play on the bass I would play on the drums, or vice versa, and it was not only a dynamite melodic concept that was happening but there were a lot of rhythmic changes taking place. That was without a doubt one of the top bands that came through the Jazz Workshop. I remember nights when we would vary from the theme and expand it, take it inside, take it outside, free, have a swing section to it... oh, man... I would just say that I reckon that many musicians who heard the music during that period wished that they could have been a part of it. Many important voices came out of the Jazz Workshop. Also many of the big band things that we did were important. Of course, all of the music was written out except for the extended solos, where there was a cue given for when the solo would end, or another one would begin, and a build-up from a whisper to, at the end, planned chaos. In many of the big band sessions we had what sounds like a who's who in jazz. For me, they were equally rewarding. I found out, especially when there were thirty-eight musicians involved, that these were musicians of the calibre that did not make mistakes. So if there's a mistake being made, you're the one who was making it. That means you're going to say, "Well, I'm not going to be the one who makes the mistake;", so it brings your whole thing up to the level of those top musicians. You just don't make mistakes.

That's the crux of professionalism. There seems to me to be two facets to professionalism in the music: professionalism in performance and professionalism in doing business. Mingus had many unfortunate things happen to him in this latter regard. What sense of ethics did such close proximity to this instill in you?

Of course, to see all this go down and not be aware of it would be chaotic. I can remember going with Charles to a record company and demanding his money for a session we had previously done. They would have the smooth talk and the come-on and I'm sitting there thinking, "How can they do this?" Finally, it got to the point where Charles had to get someone to do the business part for him. Even with this happening, he was still not the kind of person who would just let the person handling all the business handle it. He would still have to inject something he felt should be done. As I said before, I was checking all this out and was learning from it. One example was that many times, especially in the beginning, Charles would demand, and get, what he wanted, not only from musicians but from club owners, record people, whoever he dealt with. It just seems that as time went by he got more relaxed and wasn't as uptight as he was in the beginning. That's when many of the unfortunate things started happening. As a result, I've said to myself that I'm going to try and not let this happen to me if I became a bandleader, or as far as any business dealings are concerned. I've found that if you're at your very best at all times that you can succeed in the business side, as well as the music side. There is a certain professionalism required to pull this off. Being with Charles and going with him to certain business dealings was a learning experience that has carried over with me to today. I'm thankful for it.

Can you compare yourself as a bandleader to Mingus?

No comparison. Of course, many things would carry over, especially the positive things that I witnessed and saw work well. One thing I try to stress to the musicians is that the music must be played right, and that's a carry-over from the Workshop. Also, solos don't have to be one thousand bars, because some of the greatest solos played, say by Charlie Parker, were just two choruses on a three-minute record. And that there's a code — not of ethics — but of how your appearance and your performance is on stage, because I know that for a long time people used to come to hear Mingus not only for the music but to see if he was going to punch somebody in the mouth or call the club-owner an asshole or throw a whiskey bottle or something. Sensationalism — I've found that it doesn't work. I think that, especially today, there can be a meeting of common sense with everyone involved. In trying to get musicians involved, to not think that they're the baddest cats playing; there's a comparison, because I've heard bad cats everywhere. There is no one dude that's doing it all. That's all aside from the music that was written and played during the period with the Jazz Workshop. I can't write music of that calibre. That's where it starts to take a dive!

Are your compositions on your recent recordings new work or have you accumulated them for a while?

I've been trying to put things together for five or six years. Actually, it started when I won the Downbeat poll in 1968 and '69; Impulse would record all of the winners of the poll; but only in the last few years has it really been serious. I incorporate some of the things I learned from Charles, but it's not a total copy. I would never do that.

Has the Mingus Dynasty served its purpose or are there chapters yet to come?

That's hard to say. I do know that in the beginning, it was a dynamite band, but little by little it started to change and the music also started to change. I didn't like that. The whole idea was that this was a band that was to play all Mingus compositions the way that he wrote them. The voicings started to change because the band grew to seven from five. This meant that the harmonies changed; when there were unison lines to play there would be harmony included that would change the whole color of the composition. It just got to the point, for me, that it didn't have the excitement that it had in the beginning.

The second thing was the fact that the personnel changed too often, for me. First of all, you don't just sit down and play Mingus' music the first time around... it meant living with the music, the concept, the story behind it, so it meant long rehearsals. You'd rehearse for a week with one band, go out and play some gigs, and at the conclusion of the tour everybody goes their own way. When it's time for a second series, it's new personnel. This means all these rehearsals all over again, the same

Jaki Byard, Clifford Jordan, Charles Mingus, Eric Dolphy, Dannie Richmond (hidden), Johnny Coles (photograph by Tonvan Wageningen)

music, trying to convey the same message to the new musicians and it gets to be very tiring.

Another thing was the fact that it was the Mingus Dynasty and not the Dannie Richmond Quintet. By continuing in that context I was not furthering myself; even though I was looked upon as being the leader of that band, it was just that I was the spokesman and introduced the tunes. At one point, there was a little conflict because there were two engagements happening at the same time and of course you can't be in two places at one time. As a result, I chose to do the engagements that were going to help me, because with my quintet it's different, I'm involved with all aspects of it. So I chose the gigs that were going to help me and as a result the cats were getting bored, the excitement wasn't there, and after Jimmy Knepper split, I split, Ted (Curson) split, and it went from seven pieces to five, with all new personnel. I haven't heard this new band but I can only say I hope, for the sake of Mingus and the music that he wrote and played, that if there is a band that will truly do that, that it will continue to happen. Otherwise, I don't see any function for it.

Were you satisfied with the Mingus Dynasty's album "Chair In The Sky"?

Not totally. There were a lot of things about it that I didn't dig. The same with the Joni Mitchell album. I won't get into specifics but in all of the Jazz Workshops the music went up and down with a purpose and a meaning and this was more like a stock, arranged band playing ***at*** some music that they had. I'll just leave it at that.

Much of your recent activity has been in the company of Don Pullen and George Adams, with whom you played in a great edition of the Jazz Workshop in the early seventies. Will this continue, in tandem with your own quintet, as a main part of your work?

It was an experiment at first and it was only supposed to be for one short tour. We didn't know who the bass player would be for the quartet. But the rapport was such, primarily because we had all played with Charles and knew each other, that it was comparatively simple to have a new bass player, which basically meant that he was to follow us. The rapport was there and as soon as we hit the bandstand the music was so hot – this was about three years ago – that what was supposed to be a one-tour quartet has in fact become, I think, one of the hot quartets that's playing jazz today. There is no lack of excitement, musical ideas, togetherness, openness, freedom, you name it, that can happen within the context of this one group. It's all there and I think that's why it's happened for so long and that it will continue to happen. We're all friends, have been for a long time, there's never been any real static with anybody in the group, and everybody contributes to the oneness in this particular band. We're playing some of Don's music, some of George's, some of mine, Cameron (Brown) hasn't actually submitted anything yet and said "Let's do this" but in terms of what we want to do, he's open and we'll try it. After playing with Cameron for this period of time, I've found that, unlike a lot of bass players, he can do it all. I have played with some of the best in the world and it's hard for me to play with just any bass player, because I hold the bass in such high esteem. After playing with Charles, just to name one, this means that I'm looking for a lot. I can truly say that Cameron can do it all, from the bottom of the funk to total freedom. It's a gas to play with cats like that.

Washington, D.C., 1/31/81

DANNIE RICHMOND: A selected discography

As leader:
"Dannie Richmond Quintet" Gatemouth 1004
As co-leader: (with George Adams)
"Hand to Hand" Soul Note 1007
George Adams-Don Pullen
"Don't Lose Control" " " 1004
With Charles Mingus
"The Great Concert of Charles Mingus" Prestige 34001
"Better Git It In Your Soul" Columbia CG 30628
"Live at Antibes" Atlantic 2ASD 3001

Dannie Richmond may be contacted at 1710 Bashford Lane, Greensboro, North Carolina 27405. Phone (919) 621-5285.

JIMMY KNEPPER

An interview by PETER DANSON

JIMMY KNEPPER: I got into music because it was something I knew how to do. I came into it almost by accident. I was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen — not old enough to be drafted, or even to register until the war was over. At that time a lot of musicians were in the army so I lucked into jobs that if I'd had to compete at that age I probably would have never made. I did the KHJ staff orchestra in Los Angeles, under Frank De Vol of all people. If I knew then what I know now I would have immediately split back east and played with one of the hot bands. As it is I didn't work very much and then I got to like playing the horn. It was something I knew how to do and I just kept on doing it, for thirty-and-some years now.

I started to listen to jazz quite early. When I was about sixteen or seventeen a tenor player in Los Angeles took a few of us youngsters under his wing. We used to go over to his apartment and listen to jazz records that we'd never heard before. All I'd heard was this music that was on the radio: Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Jan Garber, Freddie Martin, people like that. And one of the first dance bands that I played with, we had to play some jazz choruses. There were chord symbols and I learned how chords are made up and got a little idea of how to do it.

Then this fellow Dean Benedetti, who's kind of a dead legend now, formed the first bebop band in Los Angeles. His brother was an entrepreneur in Reno, and he said, "If I ever get my own place, you got the band there." So he did get his own place, and Dean and I and Dale Snow, Ray Rosser, Don Tossi who's a disc jockey in Los Angeles now, and a drummer, Don Bean I think his name was, went to Reno and played in his place. We came back to Los Angeles and we had uniforms, we had arrangements, we had a girl vocalist, and we were trying to play jazz but had to be somewhat commercial to be able to work at all.

There was some activity, but it wasn't hot and heavy every night. There were jam sessions around Los Angeles. On Sunday afternoons they used to play in garages. Dean rented a place from this old lady that had a piano in it. It was just a small apartment, I think her bed was right next to the piano, but she said, go ahead, play any time. We'd go up there in the middle of the night and it didn't bother her, she'd just sit and listen.

I've been playing since I was five years old. In a military school I went to as a little kid, the bandmaster called me and said, "Here, take this. Go into one of these little closets and see what you can do." So I took this little alto horn and played a few notes on it, then I switched to baritone horn and got in the band. He gave kind of community lessons, in fingering, saying "Who can hold the longest note?" and all that. I

JIMMY KNEPPER (photograph by Gerard Futrick)

learned how to play that way and then I started playing in the military band there. They had a band and an orchestra. When I left the school, my mother wanted me to play an instrument I could play in both the band ***and*** the orchestra. So since I'd already played baritone horn, I took up the trombone. I took lessons from the bandmaster for a few years, and then went to another school and kept on playing there, so I kind of grew up with the trombone.

I played with a lot of big bands, but I missed the classic era of going on the road for six or seven or eleven months of the year. I came east with Tommy Reynolds' orchestra. He had an arrangement of ***Begin The Beguine*** and every time he played it he'd get a faraway look in his eyes: "If only I'd recorded it before Artie Shaw". He had some pretty good arrangements, I was very fortunate to be let in the band, but I quit in Memphis. Right after that they went to New York: played the Apollo Theater and all that but I missed it. I played with Ray Bauduc's band and I quit that; then ***they*** went on to New York.

I didn't get to New York until about 1948 when I came east with Freddie Slack; we played in Chicago and then the small band came on to New York and it didn't do anything — so I milled around New York for four or five months until Freddie started to get some jobs with a small band. We played around Boston and various places, then his agent got him a tour of the South with a big band — which he'd had before the war, he'd recorded ***Cow Cow Boogie*** and had a few hits. So he got this band together in Boston. We did the tour of the South and came back, played the Apollo and the Howard Theater and that didn't last very long either. I was a little frightened of New York; I only had about fifty dollars left and no work, so I went back to Los Angeles and milled around there for a couple of years, got in a little bit of school.

There was no particular reason for me dropping in and out of these bands, I was just dumb. Just a dumb kid who didn't know enough to stay and hang on and learn something. If we only knew then what we know now, to be aware of what was going on around you. Probably a lot of players in a lot of big bands in those days played a lot of standards, but they didn't even know the tunes; they didn't know the chords — me neither, I didn't learn anything from that, except years before, with the first professional band I worked with, a fellow by the name of Chuck Cascalis (years after I left him he changed his name to Chuck Cabot). Chuck used to get arrangements from a bunch of different sources, and he was Johnny Richards' brother, he had a lot of Johnny's discarded arrangements. He had high society-type things, with clarinets playing semi-classical things, some Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman arrangements and Pat McCarthy, an excellent arranger that he never kept on.

So I had a good background that way. On one of these jobs, when I was still going to high school, during the Christmas or the Easter vacation we made a tour of the Northwest, and we played at a base there where it turned out they made parts of the atom bomb: Medford, Oregon I think it was. And on this particular job the lead trumpet player, the other trombone player, the leader and the bass player all got sick and left — even the ***leader*** had left! He went back to Los Angeles and let us finish the engagement by ourselves, with kind of like half a band. The musicians couldn't play the arrangements written for five saxes and five or six brass, so they started faking. Dean Benedetti was in this band, playing trumpet of all things because he had a hernia. But he brought his tenor along, and this was right up his alley when they started faking. They were playing ***Stardust*** and ***Ghost Of A Chance*** and all those sorts of tunes, and I didn't know Tune One. So I started writing my own fakebook, writing the melodies and the chords of these tunes. It was like a hobby for years and years; that's why I know so many of the standards that I know. Some of them I've never played, I've just written them out and maybe played them on the piano.

Dean was also with the Tommy Reynolds band. He was gassed by some of these arrangements and he used to take the piano parts home and copy the chords off them; that's how he learned about turnarounds and altered chords and harmony and different progressions.

This bebop band with Dean Benedetti, one night in San Pedro our regular bass player couldn't make it so Dean hired Charles Mingus. Mingus came in and about fifteen or twenty years later he told me that it was the first white band he'd ever worked with. But I remember he didn't say a word all night long; he didn't make any comments. This was about 1945 I guess, and a little while after that he called me and the trumpet player who was with Dean at the time to work at Billy Berg's with him for a couple of nights. We didn't play any of his music, we just played bebop riffs: ***How High The Moon*** and ***Yardbird Suite*** and stuff like that. Around the same time, or maybe a few years later, Mingus called me to get him a trombone section to make a demo. He got a band together, and we did about three hours in this remote studio somewhere. The music was kind of screwed up and I don't know if it was ever released. That was the last I saw of Mingus for about ten years, until 1957 when I joined his band.

I think I just heard one night of those sessions at Billy Berg's when Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie came out. But I heard Howard McGhee and Coleman Hawkins there, and Howard was fantastic — boy, he was burning! Then when Bird got out of Camarillo we tried to seek him out, wherever he was playing; we heard a few jam sessions on Central Avenue. Howard McGhee got a job playing at a little place, the Hi De Ho, on Western Avenue, near my house. Dean by this time had a disc-cutter, a disc-cutting record machine. We managed to get into a corner booth there and we recorded as much as we could, with the discs, and the paintbrush, scraping the stuff away. Then I went with Dean up to Susanville to his folks' place and we transcribed a lot of Bird's solos from the records and tried to play them. In the beginning of 1948 I got to New York. Dean and I hitchiked from Chicago to New York in the dead of winter!

In New York I had this basement apartment with Joe Maini, an alto player who's dead now. We had a rotten piano, a set of drums and the whole place was underground, there was about four feet of concrete between it and the street. We did tests, we had the drummer play as loud as he could, and you couldn't hear it out in the street — in fact you could barely hear it out in the hall. And so we could play all night long — actually we didn't, it wasn't an orgy place like it was written up in the Lenny Bruce book, it wasn't at all like that. And the best musicians didn't come to play, mostly it was the worst musicians, except that Bird came there a few times and had a session and it was recorded. That session has been released in the last few years — on two different labels, in England and in the United States, called the "Apartment Jam Session". Bird played fantastic, too!

One of the effects, on me, of Charlie Parker's influence was that... the object wasn't just to play, it was to make music. And Bird made music. And after you got enchanted with Bird, everybody else who was playing just sounded silly, they sounded like children tootling away. It kind of got to where I couldn't listen to anybody, because everybody that he played with, he made them sound like they were children and he was an old master. So I got kind of biased. It's only been years and years later that I can listen to somebody and try not to hear what's bad about them but what's good about them.

Bird just took that horn and sang. He made musicians like me technique-conscious; among the musicians that I knew there weren't very many that had a very fast technique but Bird was ***speedy***. Some of the tempos don't sound very fast if you listen to them now, but at that time they were lickety-split. When you tried to play tunes like ***Ko Ko*** or ***Salt Peanuts*** you were scrambling to keep up.

I came up listening to Lester Young, Harry Edison, Ray Nance.... I listened to all the trombone players but I was never really ***taken*** by any trombonist except Vic Dickenson, Vic could always play; and Lawrence Brown was very polished.... I never really listened to or modelled myself, or tried to copy any trombone player. To this day I haven't really heard very many of them. But I'm not a record collector, so I'm not that great a student of jazz history, although I appreciate it.

So I played with lots of different bands. I played with Charlie Barnet for about six weeks; Charlie Spivak for about six or eight weeks. I came back to New York in about November 1956 and went down to the union. I ran into Gene Quill who said, hey, Claude Thornhill needs a trombone player. A lot of bands around New York would go out for the weekend, or even just for one night: go to South Carolina for thirty-five dollars and your motel room. Leave Friday at midnight, play Saturday night and get back Monday morning. Claude did that, and I made a few trips with him in November and December and then he got a job playing nothing but army and air force bases in France, Germany and North Africa over Christmas and New Year's. That took three weeks or so, then that was the last I saw of Claude. But I sold him a couple of arrangements, and with him I met Al Antonucci, the French horn player; Gene Quill, Skip Ryder, Max Robinson, and some of the other musicians around town.

Then I settled in New York and Willie Dennis, a trombone player whom I'd met some years before, told me that he was leaving Mingus and that I should give him a call. Before I could do that, Mingus called ***me*** and asked me up to his apartment, so I went up there and we started rehearsing. We rehearsed ***Reincarnation Of A Lovebird, Haitian Fight Song*** and a piece he was really hot on at the time, ***The Clown***. About a month after that we recorded the first album I ever did with Mingus, for Atlantic Records, "The Clown". We learned tunes one by one and then we started working a little bit; not very much when I look back at that year. Altogether it must have been six

weeks out of the whole year that we worked, but there were quite a few record dates. We worked at the Half Note, before they tore the wall down, and at the Village Vanguard, the Five Spot, the Continental in Brooklyn. This was the band with Dannie Richmond and Shafi Hadi, myself and Mingus. Wade Legge was the first piano player, then we had Nico Bunink, Horace Parlan; Bill Evans and Roland Hanna each played a few nights, but the piano players didn't last.

Mingus had his ideas, and it was his band so we had to cope with and try to produce what he wanted. I wish I could do it now; I wish I knew then what I know now because I'd have a better idea of how to do the idea he had, which was kind of new at that time, which you might call "vamp 'til ready", or Mingus called "extended portions". The band would play one chord or two chords. You were supposed to start soft; a lot of times that never happened, but that was his idea, to start soft, simple, with space, and then get more and more complex and listen to one another and work up to a climax and then there'd be some sort of cue and then you'd go into another section of the music, which as far as I know hadn't been done to any great extent before that, it was one of Mingus's innovations in jazz music. A bunch of his tunes were like that, with an extended part where you were supposed to start out a certain way. A lot of times when musicians started out that way they got frantic almost immediately and the effect was lost; but sometimes it came off, and I know now what Mingus had in mind.

He had a prejudice against written music at the time; years later he might have gotten over that for practical purposes. When he wrote something he tried to write it accurately, but when he wanted something played in a certain way, like, lag behind on this bit, if you write it out accurately and someone reads it and tries to play it just as it's written it gets very stiff. So Mingus had a prejudice against written music, and when I first joined him he'd teach us these tunes, he'd sing part of it, play it on the piano, play it on the bass and then we'd play it, a few bars at a time. This I thought was an

JIMMY KNEPPER (photograph by Peter Danson)

awful waste of time, because by the time, for example, Shafi had learned his part we'd played it about six times and I knew my part. Then I'd just sketch it down so I could look at it in the subway: oh yeah, that tune, and kind of remember it. I'd just write it in eighth notes, however it was played; triplets, or dotted eighths, lagging behind, whatever, just sketch the notes and the pitches and the chords themselves so I had an idea of the general form of the piece. So by the time we'd played it, and I'd sketched it out, I knew it anyway, so a lot of the time I didn't need it written down. But it was just a time-consuming process which I thought was unnecessary.

The Jazz Workshop might have been one of the first names of a band that wasn't the leader's name, and that name might have been a device so that when something goes wrong and you're in a performance situation you can just stop, and start over and to heck with the audience, the audience is there to hear music being put together, it was like an open rehearsal — although the band I was with never did that. Mingus changed every year of his life probably, so a lot of the things about him that I remember years afterward might have been just the opposite — during the time I was with him we never rehearsed on the job. We'd be sitting around the Half Note for an hour waiting for somebody to come in to play a set. We'd take an intermission and the place was empty, it was ten o'clock at night and we were going to play until two or whatever, and we'd just sit there when we could have gone up and learned another tune. Later on, the band that Ted Curson was with, they played every night, six nights a week in the Village there for a year. When I was with Mingus we never had a job that went that long. And Ted said after they'd get through, they'd rehearse for another three hours; that's something that never happened with me.

I didn't work with Mingus for a long period at a stretch, just in a few periods. After about a year, Tony Scott came in one night and sat in with Mingus, and hired me. I started working with him and Mingus at the same time, until some of the jobs conflicted, and then Mingus got some other replacement — Booker Ervin, John Handy, Leo Wright was in the band at one point too. He worked with whatever he had and whoever was available. Occasionally I would do some commercial jobs in New York, then I'd get back with Mingus for a few weeks or so — a few jobs with him at a place in Queens, but mostly for recordings, eventually he had a different working band, the band with Ted Curson and Eric Dolphy and Booker Ervin, and later the one with Charlie McPherson and Lonnie Hillyer. I worked in the band with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, we did a trip to California, this was in about 1960. We drove from New York to San Francisco for two weeks' work, and then to Los Angeles for a week.

The working bands that I was with were always two horns and we played unison all the time, there wasn't any orchestration involved except for maybe a few contrapuntal things. When we got into a studio Mingus would add more people; another alto player, another trombone, another tenor, he'd get a baritone player every now and then and we'd play the tunes that we'd been playing as unison; and right in the studio Mingus would come up with another part. It was almost by accident the way that some of the arrangements that are recorded came out. Some of the tunes were never played at all by the working band, they were just on the record.

In 1961 or '62 Mingus had a concert at Town Hall. I hadn't been playing with him and to earn some extra bucks I had to copy music. Mingus asked me to help him with this concert. He started out with a small band, and he added me and a couple of other horns, this was a month or two before the concert. He was writing arrangements, so I used to go up to his apartment at 132nd Street, the Lenox Terrace Apartments, and I'd copy what he had — which wasn't very much, because he wrote very slowly. Mingus's tenor part would be written in concert and I'd point out, the tenor can't play this high; that's off the horn. "Put it on." This went on for about a month. I was copying eight bars a day; I'd just wait around and wait around and finally it would be early in the morning and I'd be waiting around for another two bars. It was taking him ages to do this. Mingus kept adding horns, and he ended up with about six trombones, six trumpets, eight saxophones, two pianos — it was a *mess* of musicians. Finally the concert was two days away, and Mingus said, "I need some help to do this! I need some arrangers." He got his uncle, Fess Williams, a trumpet player who had a band in the '20s, to give him an arrangement, and I recommended every arranger I knew of: Gene Roland is the only one who showed up. Mingus handed him a score that was blank except for a few little notes, and said, "Expand this into a composition." Which is straight composition, but Gene did it. I don't think Mingus even played it. Mingus got a few arrangements out of his trunk, that he had done with Lionel Hampton. Anyway, we padded the program out. I copied a lot of the stuff that was given to me, and on the very last day, the only rehearsal was at midnight. I couldn't handle it, so I went to a copying service. I was up there getting this work done and Mingus calls up and says, "Jimmy! Come up to the apartment, you've gotta help me!" So I went up there and he said, "I want you to write some backgrounds for soloists." I said, "Mingus, this is your concert, you should write it."

Looking back at it, this concert meant a great deal to him and I understand that. He was very nervous about the thing, it was like his first real concert, and at Town Hall, a prestige thing and he was very uptight so he jumps up and says, "You'd better help me, you white motherfucker!" and he hit me. It just happened to break off one of my incisors, which was a capped tooth, it broke the enamel off and the stub in half, so I had all this gravel in my mouth. It didn't even hurt, there was no blood, nothing. And Mingus is swearing at me and all this so I picked myself up and walked out. I went back to the copying service, keeping my mouth closed because if I got air on that thing it would really jump. So I got all this work done, went overto the rehearsal and plopped it down. And that was the last I saw of Mingus for a while. The concert was kind of a disaster, they recorded it and the reviews were terrible, and the record company didn't want to pay. I owed these copyists about a thousand dollars for the work they'd done, so we had to go to the union and finally they paid off.

The next day I went to the dentist and he said, "Oh, the nerve is exposed, there's nothing I can do except pull the stub." So he pulled the stub and made me what they call an apparatus, of surgical steel that hooked on to about four teeth, just to replace that one tooth. So I had to learn to play all over again. That kind of

Mel Lewis · Thad Jones Orchestra's Brass section. JIMMY KNEPPER · far right
Photograph by Ton van Wageningen

knocked me out of the jazz business – not that there was any at that particular time. I was working more at Basin Street and the Copa, the Americana, New York parades, club dates on Staten Island, whatever came along – which wasn't much, there were some desperate years there.

I did three years and three months in "Funny Girl". I did Marlene Dietrich's one-woman show for a limited engagement for a couple of years, eight weeks at a time. And "The Me Nobody Knows", which ran for almost a year. So I've done my time on Broadway. That was good, every Thursday there was a paycheck and I wouldn't even have cashed the one from the week before. So I got well-established and bought a house. In fact I had just bought the house when this incident occurred with the teeth. So I thought, holy crow I've got twenty years mortgage on this; just when I thought things were going well. Anyway, I own it now, so I'm pretty secure in that way, I don't worry about not working anymore - which you can very easily do in New York - because you can't be evicted from your own house.

I did my first record as a leader with Mingus's company, Debut Records, called "Jazz Workshop Presents Jimmy Knepper". We only did four tunes and it was released on a 33 1/3 EP. As far as I know it was only released in Denmark. I met some Danish trombone players who came over who said, hey, do you know what your name means in Danish? and maybe it was released because of that.

And when Mingus was recording for Bethlehem he talked the guy at Bethlehem into giving me a record date. It was called "A Swinging Introduction To Jimmy Knepper". The company released the record and immediately went out of business. About twenty years later whoever bought the catalogue was looking through it and saw, "hey, Bill Evans is on this!" so they re-released the record and re-named it after one of the tunes on the record, "Idol Of The Flies": Jimmy Knepper and Bill Evans.

In 1958 Pepper Adams and I were International Critics New Stars Of The Year so Leonard Feather said, Pepper and Knepper, hey that rhymes. So we did an album, "The Pepper & Knepper Quintet", with Elvin Jones and Wynton Kelly and Doug Watkins, on Metrojazz. Then ***they*** immediately went out of business, so that record went out of print, although it's been re-released too, in Japan. Years later I did another record with Pepper; the piano player was supposed to be the leader on the date, neither one of us was the leader so we didn't get leader's scale and all that, and then I found the record was released in Japan as "Pepper and Knepper Together Again"!

The record on SteepleChase happened in 1976. This guy says, you haven't done any records for twenty years, how'd you like to do a date for me? So I said, fine, the only day I can do it is Monday. I went home and got six originals, and every one of the guys that I wanted was available: Al Cohn, Roland Hanna, George Mraz, Dannie Richmond, the whole band. We did it all in the studio in one fell swoop – which I think is maybe a mistake, it's a little too hard to play for six hours, repeating the tunes and all that, you should take three days to do it. I learned a lot from that session. That record got a Grammy nomination, by the way, which was a big surprise, because it was done a few years ago and only released in this country last year. That was a feather in the cap.

Since then I've also done one, produced by Lew Tabackin, for Discomate, a Japanese company. I've worked three or four times with Toshiko Akiyoshi's big band. The first time I worked with her was before she moved to California; she had a concert for the Japanese Society and I did that with her. Later she did a record, and it was a hit, she sold thirty thousand copies in Japan – but thirty thousand copies doesn't mean anything to RCA, they want a hundred and fifty thousand – so she got a Japanese tour on the strength of that. Britt Woodman couldn't make the gig, so she flew me from New York to LA and we did a

couple of weeks in Japan and came home. The next time, she was invited to Colorado for the jazz party – no money, but the transportation – and the trombone player couldn't make it, so she flew me out to Colorado, and then I went on to LA and made a record. I learned something from that, too: not only was I paid scale, but it's her policy to pay a percentage of the gross for artist's royalties: fine, there was no contract, nothing, and as a matter of course they just send me the royalties. Which I admit is not a hell of a lot, but they actually do it, it works.

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band began in the sixties. I started subbing for Bob Brookmeyer and Tom McIntosh and eventually McIntosh didn't show up at all so I officially took his place, in 1965 or so. Then Brookmeyer left so eventually I ended up playing lead, by seniority I guess.

Thad had about six arrangements I think, tunes that Count Basie didn't want to buy because he didn't think that they were his style. So the band started off with those six arrangements and they played them over and over and over again. Brookmeyer did about four, Garnett Brown did only one that we really played, and that was about it. For years and years we'd go down to the Vanguard and play those same ten arrangements. Finally Brookmeyer did another one and then he moved to California. But the only time that Thad would write was under compulsion or for a record date. Very surprising to me, because a writer like Gil Evans or Gene Roland, if they had a job every Monday night, they'd write two new arrangements a week! But Thad wrote nothing for years, and I think that by the time the band got known as the greatest band in the world and all that, Thad had had enough of it. But by that time they had commitments and contracts and all that, so he was kind of forced to continue it.

As for the Mingus Dynasty band, I called it a necrophiliac orchestra in print once and Mrs. Mingus flipped out. It's her baby. I don't know why; I'm sure she feels strongly about Mingus's music. I think she's writing a book about Mingus; she's collecting anecdotes from the musicians that have worked with him and people that knew him. She was with him about six years too so she has a lot of stories. She's kind of a rich lady and she likes to travel and hobnob with diplomats and people like that, so it's something for her to do.

As far as it being Mingus's music, nobody will play Mingus's music. You may play his tunes, but once you're finished playing the tune, that's it for being Mingus's music, you're going to be playing George Adams, or Don Pullen, or Jimmy Knepper, or Ted Curson, you're going to be playing their music – not Mingus's music, which will never occur unless Mingus is playing it, and he happens to be dead. So you can really get into it and try to create or re-create the mood or the style or the approach that Mingus would have approved of, but without Mingus playing the bass, you're really only playing your arrangement or your version of Mingus's tunes. That's something I don't think Mrs. Mingus realizes.

I did tour with that band, the one with Ted Curson, George Adams, John Handy, Hugh Lawson, Dannie Richmond and Mike Richmond. We did a tour of the Near East in February 1980, sponsored by the International Communications Agency, a branch of the State Department. We played in India, Syria we had three concerts but two of them were cancelled because of shooting in the streets; the Arab Emirates; and we went to Saudi Arabia but both of our concerts there got cancelled because the Minister Of The Interior was afraid of American influence, something like that. So we went there but the only playing we did was at a jam session at the Welldiggers' Club, which I enjoyed very much. It was a nice tour, but there were a few little disasters. The bass player's mother got sick and he left after Egypt, so we played about a week without any bass at all, until Mrs. Mingus got a bass player to come over from New York. We ended up, the last few weeks, just down to playing about four tunes.

I also work with Lee Konitz's Nonet. Somebody called Lee up and said, "How'd you like to tour with nine pieces for nine days in Italy?" He said sure. I showed up at the first rehearsal and there was no music, so I started writing a few tunes. The trip to Italy never happened, but by this time some guys brought in some arrangements so we had enough to work a job. So we started working one night a week at Stryker's, a night at the Tin Palace, hardly any work and it didn't pay anything at all. But it was a night out with the guys and a chance to play, and a lot of New York musicians don't get that chance at all, there are just no opportunities to play.

In fact that's one of the things that eventually got to me; if you want to play, just to get the opportunity to play, you've got to be a star. And I found out: gee, I am a star – in a low-priced field, but I made all those records with Mingus, and guys come up now and say, "Gee, Mr. Knepper, I've heard you since I was a teenager." You feel like Old Man Moses or something. But my name has been out there long enough that people who are very familiar with jazz know who I am, so that's the beginning of some sort of reputation or renown. And just to get the opportunity to play, you've got to capitalize on that – which I've never done until now. I haven't even started on it yet, I'm having a brochure written now, to mail out and I'm going to do a lot of phone calls. I'm hoping to work as a single or, if somebody can afford it, to have my own band. But I'm very happy to work with local rhythm sections, there are excellent musicians all over the world. It's economically more feasible for me to work as a single with local rhythm sections, and I'd be tickled to death to do that. Nice little room, no big auditorium, no big speakers, play acoustic jazz, and play harmonic tunes, which I love to play.

New York City, April 13, 1981

A SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

As leader:

"Cunningbird"	SteepleChase 1061
"Jimmy Knepper in L.A."	Inner City 6047
"Tell Me..."	Daybreak 001

With George Adams/Dannie Richmond

"Hand To Hand"	Soul Note 1007

With Charles Mingus

"Better Git It In Your Soul"	ColumbiaCG 30628
"Nostalgia in Times Square"	" JG 35717
"East Coasting" (out-of-print)	Bethlehem 6019
"Tijuana Moods" " " "	RCA LPS (S)2533
"Passions Of A Man"	Atlantic 3SD-600

Jimmy Knepper can be contacted at 11 Bayview Pl., Staten Island, N.Y. 10304. Telephone (212) 981-6789 or 582-8800.

JAZZ LITERATURE

TED JOANS

"The automatic camera will certainly become a reality, but this will only augment the role of the operator.... In the future we will have cameras that will be handled like musical instruments...."

— Man Ray 1937 interview

Ms. Valerie Wilmer, is often seen on both sides of the Atlantic, with her camera; "In smoke-filled joints/Where syncopation/Shakes a mean dance/and body thunder/gets down fonky...*", And she is also a guest of the musicians and their families, she is unique amongst writers on Black music, and truly fortunate. Her camera cooks! Her camera work is perhaps better known than her jazz prose, but this new book; "As Serious As Your Life" puts her prose on par with her magnificent photography. The book is a "real bitch", that is to say, it is marvelous in its pages of pure discovery. Unlike the conventional jazz journalist, that write the weakly weekly magazine or newspaper column, album liners, etc. Lady Wilmer, in her hipness, puts the musician and his music first and foremost. The musician's music is serious, it is as serious as her/his life. Read this important book on that informal Black classical music, that goes by its nickname: jazz.

The book "As Serious As Your Life" has been published in the USA by The Lawrence Hill & Co., 520 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Conn. 06880, hard cover $12.95/paperback $6.95.

*The poetry quote is "Flossie" by Jayne Cortez 1969.

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Other things reviewed in between the past twelve bars of 1980:

(1) Editions Filipacchi is still the hippest publisher in France; it is they who consistently fly the surrealist and jazz banner at full mast. Their latest jazz output is an excellent French edition of Ross Russell's "Bird, La Vie de Charlie Parker", with a preface by Chan Parker and Mimi Perrin's translation. I am in total accord with Ms. Parker's statement en francais, "Je crois que Ross s'est livré à un très sérieux travail de recherche et qu'il a écrit ce qu'il croit être la vérité."

(2) Someone very thoughtful and hip sent me a copy of Rob Backus's "Fire Music". It is a serious attempt to publicize the political history of jazz, published by Vanguard Books. Nice try, but the book fails, although it has a fabulous collection of documentary photos that speak out louder and clearer than the borrowed text.

(3) "The Collected Poems of Sterling A. Brown", published by Harper & Row, is a great book of Black and blues poetry by one of the forerunners of jazz poetry, Sterling A. Brown. The masterpiece poem, "Long Gone" is included in this well-selected volume of Mr. Brown's poetry. Git this book, read dis book and dig it!

(4) The Kuumbwa Jazz Center's 1980 illustrated calendar is First Class and the kind of calendar that is valid forever.

(5) Stanley Dance, the nostalgic jazz writer has put together a small part of "The World of Count Basie" for Scribner's Publications. I say a "small part", because the man and music we know as Count Basie is much more than this book of nostalgic interviews.

(6) "Desolate Angel" by Dennis McNally is the (so far) best book on the hipster Jack Kerouac and it is the only one that delves seriously into Jack and jazz. Published by Random House.

(7) "The Art of Romare Bearden", published by Abrams Editions is a huge volume on Afroamerica's number one painter. Mr. Bearden's work is duly reproduced in color. Many of his paintings concern or depict jazz music.

(8) "Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka/ LeRoi Jones", is an enlightening selection published by William Morrow and Company. Important poems (hand grenade and non-grenade) from his previous books of poetry makes this book a classic, many poems being about Black music. If you have never been to Timbuktu and are interested, read his poem "Will They Cry When You're Gone, You Bet" on page 78. A real right-on poem in the difficult key of "B" natural.

(9) Speaking of Timbuktu makes me recall the 1976 arrival of a recording "Celebrations and Solitudes", by jazzpoet Jayne Cortez, put out by Strata East Records. It was a big hit wherever I played it in that town and other places throughout West Africa. The recording is the ultimate jazz poetry disc with Ms. Cortez "blowing" her poems and Richard Davis on bass encouraging each poem. "Unsubmissive Blues", a new disc of Ms. Cortez backed by musicians Bill Cole, Joe Daley, Bern Nix and Denardo Coleman, is not First Class music-wise, but is classic poetry-wise. *— ted joans*

JAZZ

JAZZ
by John Chilton
London: Hodder and Stoughton

John Chilton's book is a concise, factual introduction to the world of jazz. It explains most of the major trends and developments that have taken place and introduces the reader to a wide spectrum of musical styles and musicians. It is important, primarily, as a summarised reference work to the events, bands and individuals which, collectively, have made up the tabloid of jazz.

Missing from this history is any real attempt at explaining how and why the music developed and changed. All we are offered is a rapidly changing kaleidoscopic scenario of musicians, bands, locations and events. We are left unsure as to why this music took on different guises and it is hard to ascertain whether the major artists had a big impact on those that followed.

Three chapters focus on the theory of jazz playing. The first one presents the rudiments of music theory, the second explains the harmonic developments used by jazz musicians in the 1930s and 1940s while the final section deals with modal concepts and some of the principles involved in the more recent "free jazz styles."

John Chilton, himself a trumpet player of some repute in British traditional circles, has managed to remain objective and reasonable in in his assessment of all styles of jazz. He is at his weakest in listing representative recordings. He fails to recommend the Parker Dial/Savoy sessions, Gillespie's Musicraft years, the Clifford Brown/Max Roach EmArcy sessions, Bill Evans' Trio with LaFaro and Motian, Art Blakey's Blue Note activities, Mingus' Candid, Columbia or Impulse sessions, Ayler's ESP/Arista LPs, Ornette Coleman's Atlantic records, Coltrane's Impulse sessions, any Sonny Rollins before his current Milestone efforts, etc. The list is as long as those that are mentioned — many of which are far from being definitive examples of the musician's work.

After reading this book the reader is not substantially better informed about the nature and shape of the music. All he has acquired is a catalog of musicians to investigate. A history of jazz should offer much more than what is provided here by the author. *— John Norris*

THE MAKING OF JAZZ

by James Lincoln Collier
New York: Delta Books

Drawing on the experience, opinion and resources of previous researchers James Collier has come up with a most convincing explanation of the mysterious growth and development of jazz music. He has managed to bridge the gap between fanciful biographic descriptions and incomprehensible musical annotation so that his message is understandable to the average reader. While Collier's perspective may be based on the research of others his conclusions are usually his own.

He has managed to find a reason for the existence of many musicians in the cobwebbed threads of jazz history and it is refreshing to read explanations which relate to the music and style of the musicians rather than geographic mushrooming of the music. Collier is at his best when he investigates the earliest beginnings of the music and its development up to, and including, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Three-quarters of his book deals with music before 1950 and his reappraisals of many of the musicians are thought provoking. Best of all, perhaps, is his favorable reevaluation of Art Tatum's role as a link between the Swing Era and the 1940s.

"The Making of Jazz" is an outstanding primer for anyone wishing to investigate the music's history. As a guide to more contemporary directions it is less convincing. It can be summed up in Collier's own words: "It is my feeling that very few jazz players have demonstrated an ability to sustain interest in a solo for more than two minutes or so, and most are unable to build a consistent piece of work for as long as a minute."

There are, it is true, fairly serious appraisals of the work of Charles Mingus, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane but they are by no means that favourable. Eric Dolphy is the recipient of one brief paragraph: there is no mention of his association with Mingus.

Eric Dolphy is described as a clarinetist on page 465 while Dave Pike is identified as a bassist on page 471. Howard McGhee's name is spelled as McGee and Booker Ervin becomes Irvin. Ron Carter might dispute Collier's statement that no one followed up Oscar Pettiford's innovations on cello and it should be pointed out that Gunther Schuller's treatise on Sonny Rollins's "Saxophone Colossus" appeared in the ***Jazz Review*** and not ***Jazz Journal***.

Collier views the 1970s as a pastiche of fusion and revived bebop and swing. There is no mention of the AACM or other such developments of the past decade.

Some 261 records are listed in the back as examples of the musicians discussed in the text. Approximately 100 of these are no longer available (but just about half of them have returned to the catalog with different numbers). It is impossible to compile a listing of current records but it is strange to see listings of Riverside records in a book published in the late 1970s. No two people can compile a definitive list but there are some strange omissions from Collier's list when you realise that he has "listened to the bulk of the recordings of all the major figures in the music."

Despite its shortcomings, "The Making of Jazz" can be highly recommended as a guide to the first fifty years of the music. It could well make you reassess the status and contributions of many of the musicians you are already familiar with. For perceptive analysis of more recent developments, however, it is probably best to look elsewhere. — ***John Norris***

UOMINI E AVANGUARDIE JAZZ

by Mario Luzzi *(published in Italian)*
Gammalibri **lire 10,000**
(Gammalibri, via Poma 4, Milano, Italy)

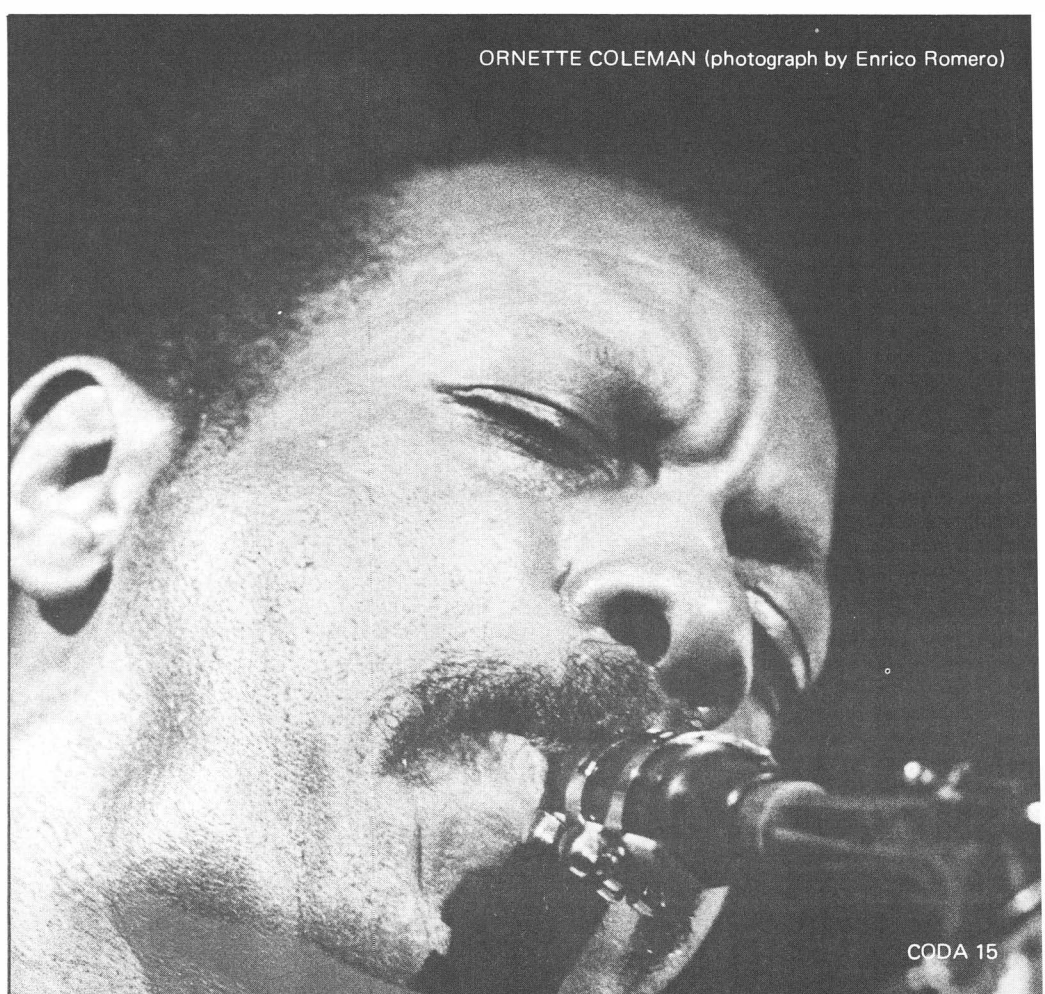
The publication in Italy of a book made up of interviews with musicians is to be considered a welcome change. Italian critics have been notorious for the undertaking of ridiculous scuffles on behalf of this or that musician, or to prove the superiority of one style or period over another. They have always ignored the possibility of a kind of criticism that might go deeper into musical, social or philosophical analysis; in most cases did not even convey the simplest information about the music. Whereas the media already tended to separate the sincere musician from the people, the critics broadened the gap with their prejudices and obtuseness. Of course some major exceptions were "Jazz e Universo Negro" by Walter Mauro and "Canto Nero" by Giampiero Cane but alone they could not change the dominant attitude. Criticism can be led out of its blind alley only by someone who is living the music's social and artistic contradictions every day: the musician.

I do not advocate that musicians should become essayists or writers, although some books are so tremendously important that one hopes that more contributions will come (to the works of Leo Smith and Derek Bailey should soon be added a book by Anthony Braxton).

I can say that I started to understand more deeply the relation between music and life not from hearing the critic's different opinions, but when I started to read what the musicians were thinking, why they dedicated their lives to the music and more. The works of Nat Hentoff ("Hear Me Talking To Ya") and A.B. Spellman ("Four Lives in the Bebop Business") can never be praised enough, and some single interviews by Bill Smith in ***Coda*** were exemplary (Braxton, Smith, Taylor).

Now for the first time a whole collection of interviews is available in a single book, together with accurate biographies and discographies of the artists interviewed (by the way, Mario Luzzi is one of the major discographical experts on the planet): Sun Ra, Ornette Coleman, Archie Shepp, George Russell, Roswell Rudd, Sam Rivers, Anthony Braxton, Lester Bowie, Steve Lacy, Willem Breuker, Enrico Rava, Roscoe Mitchell, Oliver Lake and Alex Schlippenbach.

The work of Mario Luzzi reveals a deep understanding of the problems of this music, since he is variously friend, stimulus, provoker of the interviewed musician. The interviews were not preconceived as a book, so there are not prearranged subjects, therefore we cannot compare the musicians' views on specific themes, but each interview becomes a sincere reflection of how the artist's personality expands into different areas of life) particularly revealing in this context are the conversations with Sun Ra, George Russell, Steve Lacy and Anthony Braxton). In everyday life it may happen that a dull conversation will suddenly become passionate, or sometimes it becomes difficult for even close friends to communicate at a prearranged time, so if there is a limit to a work like this, it has its roots in daily life because it is so close to it. An interview is just a fragment of the potential of communication between two (or more) people, and when the people involved are creative musicians such as these and an excellent journalist, the limit is only in terms of quantity. Mario's work is of great importance, he indicates and confirms a new possibility for Jazz criticism; that is, to function as a bridge between the artist and the people. — ***Roberto Terlizzi***



ORNETTE COLEMAN (photograph by Enrico Romero)

BLUES

A COLUMN BY DOUG LANGILLE

The most recent Mr. Blues Records release, "MOJO BUFORD'S CHICAGO BLUES SUMMIT" (MB 7603) is one hot LP. The title certainly fits. The on again/off again Muddy Waters harp player, Mojo Buford, leads guitarists Sammy Lawhorn, Pee Wee Madison, Little Smokey Smothers and Sonny Rodgers, plus bassist Ernest Johnson and drummer Sammy Lay through an 11-cut set of tight and fluid Chicago blues and jump. The set has a "jam" feel to it, but the participants, production staff and musicians took some time to work a few things out before hitting the record button. The fundamental characteristics of prime Chicago ensemble blues are evident — feeling, drive, instrumental proficiency, empathy, plenty of trading off, and of course quiet, subtle moments.

Mojo takes five vocals and blows strong amplified harp on eight of the selections. With the exception of the B.B. King-inspired ***Windy City Blues***, his lead numbers have a definite hard-driving Muddy Waters Blues Band feel to them. Especially note ***I'm So Glad*** and ***Deep Sea Diver***. The former features some good slide by Lawhorn. When Buford steps back, the four featured guitarists take a vocal each; a real high point of the set is Sonny Rodgers' sensitive performance of ***St. James' Infirmary***. Finally, there are two cooking instrumentals, ***Mojo's Jam*** and ***Blues For Georgia Boy***. Both have a '60s Muddy Waters feel, driven along by Lay's powerhouse drumming.

Recorded in 1979, "Summit" has done a lot to reinforce my faith and interest in post-war Chicago ensemble blues. This spirited set was professionally performed, produced and engineered. There is good variety in technique, tempo and ensemble format, and I strongly recommend "Summit" for a banquet of spirited and proficient Chicago blues.

Next is Eddie Clearwater's new release on Rooster Blues Records, "THE CHIEF" (R 2615). Clearwater (Eddy Harrington) is one of the more exciting and versatile West Side Chicago stylists. Prior to this Rooster release, he has had a fair amount of exposure through his own Atomic H and La Salle singles, reissues of the same on Delmark (624), Redita (108) and Red Lightning (RL 006), his featured sides with the Bob Riedy Blues Band on Flying Fish (006), and his feature LP, "Black Night" (MCM 900.296).

"The Chief" presents Clearwater as a convincing vocalist, as an exciting guitarist, and as an imaginative lyricist. "The Chief" goes beyond the live excitement of "Black Night" (3 sidemen and a program of mostly blues standards) to showcase Clearwater in front of a larger ensemble (fluctuating both in size and composition) with a program of mostly original compositions. While primarily a blues LP, there are detours into jump rhythm-and-blues and Chuck Berry-inspired rock-and-roll) Clearwater is well known for his choreographed Chuck Berry medleys).

All in all, the program provides a collage of contemporary blues themes, clearly influenced by some of Clearwater's stylistic models: Chuck Berry, Little Walter, Willie Dixon, Magic Sam and Otis Rush. The proceedings are effectively fuelled by Clearwater's strong vocal and guitar work, particularly on ***Blues For Breakfast*** and ***Bad Dream***. There are also strong contributions by Lurrie Bell on guitar. The other sidemen are Carey Bell (harp), Lafayette Leake (piano), Chuck Smith (baritone), Abb Locke (tenor), Joe Harrington (bass) and Casey Jones (drums). Leroy Brown, one of the Five Du Tones, provides backup vocals on ***Blue, Blue, Blue Over You.***

"The Chief" is recommended to anyone liking the more modern West Side Chicago blues style. My only complaint lies with the technical quality. The levels fluctuate, the mix does not provide enough backup definition, and on my review copy there is a noticeable high register (lead guitar) distortion. However, these problems do not seriously detract from my enjoyment of the LP.

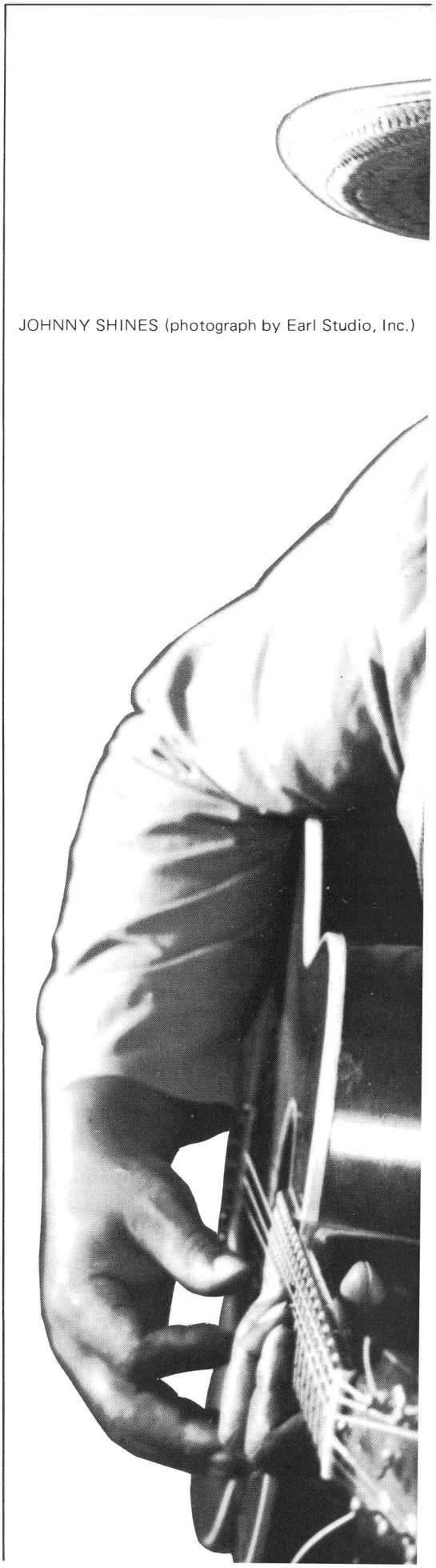
Also from Rooster are three 45s and an EP. The first 45 (Rooster R23) features two solid sides (Leroy Carr's ***Prison Bound Blues*** and Tampa Red's ***Don't Lie To Me***). Originally recorded in 1964, and previously unissued, both feature Jones' pre-war style vocals and piano in front of a post-war ensemble with sax, bass, drums and guitar. Rooster R24 presents Hound Dog Taylor's ***My Baby's Coming Home*** and ***Five, Take Five*** from his 1960 Bea and Baby session. This is classic Taylor — good cookin' slide and downhome vocals in front of a small ensemble. The third 45 (Rooster R44) features Billy Emerson with two hot 1960s R&B dance ditties: ***A Dancing Whippersnapper*** and ***Zulu***.

The Rooster EP (R706) features four songs by West Memphis harpman Sonny Blake. Blake is a very good bluesman who deserves much more exposure. His more obvious influences are Little Walter and Rice Miller. Side One includes a Little Walter-inspired instrumental, ***Sonny's Harmonica Jam***, and a nice, loping vocal, ***I've Been Mistreated***. Side Two includes an instrumental train workout and the moody Charles Brown classic, ***Driftin' Blues***. All were recorded live at the Memphis club, Blues Alley, and feature Sonny with a variant of the house band. In the mix Sonny is well up front, but the piano, guitar, bass and drums tend to be under-recorded. While not bad, these sides are not as strong as Sonny's downhome sides for Dan Craft's CMC label, especially those that remain unissued (strong lyrics, strong harp and vocals, and hot guitar from Bo-Pete).

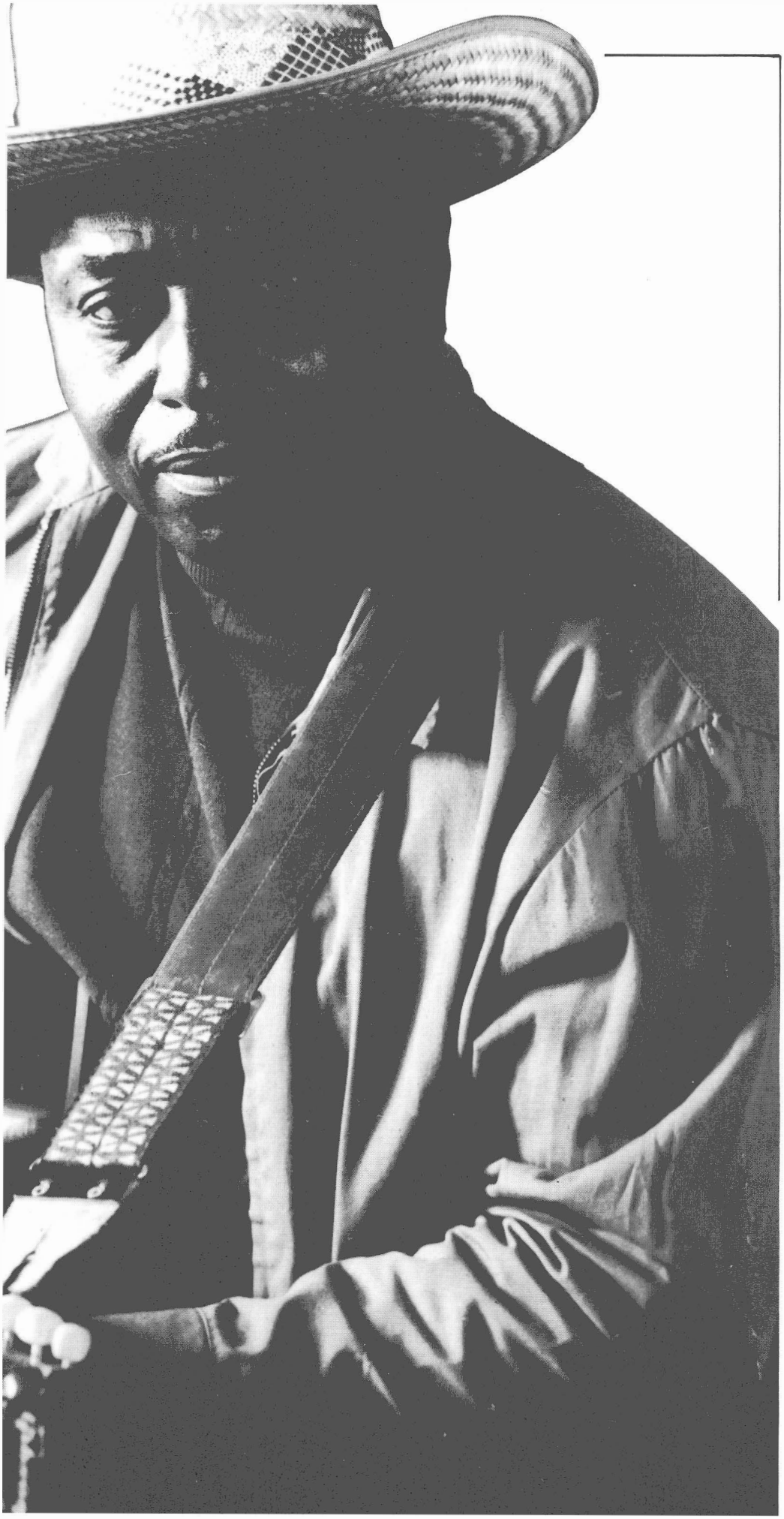
Rooster Blues Records is the multi-national effort of Jim and Amy O'Neal, and Chuck and Cilla Higgins. Future plans include a session with vocalist/guitarist Larry Davis, a reissue of Billy Emerson sides, and the re-mastering and reissue of the Good Rockin' Charles, Eddie C. Campbell, and Mojo Buford LPs on Mr. Blues. Addresses are: 2615 N. Wilton Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60614 U.S.A.; or P.O. Box 148, London W91DY, England.

Albert Collins' second Alligator release, "FROSTBITE" (AL 4719) presents 8 longish vocals. The tunes give plenty of room to stretch out, and Collins gets ample opportunity to launch into some biting high-energy solos. The backup unit is his Alligator road band, The Icepickers: A.C. Reed (tenor), Casey Jones (drums), Allen Batts (keyboards), J. Gayden (bass), and Marvin Jackson (guitar). Selected cuts are beefed up with an additional tenor, trumpet, baritone and trombone.

With the exception of the violent, and rather disturbing tune, ***Brick***, "Frostbite" is an enjoyable release. There is plenty of off-beat humour, the backing is punchy and tight, and the horns,



JOHNNY SHINES (photograph by Earl Studio, Inc.)



when used, fit well with Albert's modern Texas/West Coast blues style. The emphasis is on Collins as vocalist and lead guitarist, not simply instrumentalist. Both production and sound are superior. A highly recommended release.

From Rounder Records comes an extraordinarily good LP that teams up Johnny Shines and Robert Jr. Lockwood: "HANGIN' ON" (Rounder 2023). The program is a mix of quiet, intricate guitar duets and jazzy, funky ensemble blues, with Shines and Lockwood splitting the vocals.

The real strength of the LP lies with the 6 acoustic duets. The delicate guitar interplay is superb as Shines and Lockwood mix jazz guitar stylings with their delta bottleneck roots. This blend is especially evident on the instrumental, ***Razzmadazz***, while ***I Gotta Find My Baby*** and ***Lonesome Whistle*** concentrate more on traditional delta roots. The ensemble cuts place Shines or Lockwood in front of Lockwood's regular band, featuring alto, tenor, bass, drums and electric piano. ***Goin' To England***, featuring Shines on vocal, has that percussive delta/Chicago drive to it, while the others cook along in more of a laidback funk vein. Featured are some good lead guitar breaks by Lockwood (electric) and some pleasant sax breaks.

Shines and Lockwood are in great form on this release, both vocally and instrumentally. The sound quality is excellent, and the backing is relaxed and satisfying. Shines and Lockwood come across as progressive giants of the blues.

Next are two first class reissues by Nighthawk Records: "LAKE MICHIGAN BLUES 1934-1941" (Nighthawk 105) and "DOWN BEHIND THE RISE 1947-1953" (Nighthawk 106). Like the earlier Nighthawk reissues of Chicago, Detroit and Memphis blues, the sound quality is good and the choice of material excellent. The packaging is also excellent, with detailed and purposeful liner notes.

"Lake Michigan Blues" includes sixteen pre-war sides by Robert Nighthawk, Sonny Boy Williamson, Tampa Red, Yank Rachell, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Milton Sparks and Elijah Jones. "Down Behind The Rise" focuses on southwestern blues guitarists who recorded in the early post-war years for such industry giants as Miltone, Murray, Club, Gold Star, and Star Talent. The emphasis is on downhome solo electric guitar blues with featured soloists including the more familiar Texas stylists: Lightning Hopkins, Frankie Lee Sims, and the more obscure Jesse Thomas, Willie Lane, Beverly Scott, Wright Holmes and Johnny Beck. Of particular interest are the Jesse Thomas selections. A cousin of the more famous pre-war bluesman, Rambling Thomas, Jesse is one of the more sophisticated of the single string Texas blues guitarists. His playing is fluid, precise and imaginative, and serves as a solid solo accompaniment to his six vocal selections here.

Beverly Scott teams with a pianist for a cooking rendition of the Texas standard, ***Brown Skin Woman***. Willie Lane serves up a clean, electric version of ***Too Many Women Blues,*** and there are good solo tracks by Wright Holmes and Johnny Beck.

Both "Lake Michigan Blues" and "Down Behind The Rise" are good complements to any pre-war Chicago or post-war Southwest blues reissue collection. Both are highly recommended, especially "Down Behind The Rise" for the Jesse Thomas material. If these records are unavailable locally, write: Nighthawk Records, P.O. Box 15856, St. Louis, Missouri 63114 U.S.A.

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS

YAROSLAVL JAZZ FESTIVAL

Yaroslavl, USSR
March 12-15, 1981

Yaroslavl, an ancient city on the Volga River, in the last couple of years has become a major jazz centre in the USSR. The local jazz club and its president Igor Gavrilov, with the help of the Komsomol, organize a festival every spring. This year's festival was the largest so far, and the best in terms of quality of music.

Each of the six concerts in four days (March 12-15), packed the house, which seated over 1,000 people.

The most distinctive trait of this year's festival (although in general it was rather eclectic) was the predominance of the avant garde. It was in spite of the fact that the top Soviet avant garde group — the Ganelin/Tarasov/Chekasin Trio of Vilnius — couldn't come as a trio. In fact, it was only their pianist Vyacheslav Ganelin who didn't come. Drummer Vladimir Tarasov presented a solo effort which was dull and unimpressive, only faintly resembling his playing in the group. Chekasin's performance, on the other hand, was one of the high points of the festival. Besides the leader were two more brilliant personalities — pianist Sergie Kuriokhin and vocalist Valentina Ponomaryova. Ponomaryova is a Gypsy singer and her profession is in a Gypsy guitar trio singing ballads and romances. Now and then, she appears at jazz festivals with Chekasin and Kuriokhin, where she startles the audience with her dizzying vocal calisthenics, rather like those of Jeanne Lee. The group's performance was accompanied by about a dozen of their friends, who seated among the audience produced all kinds of sounds at the leader's command, on a variety of pocket trumpets, whistles, flutes, bells, et cetera.

Another highlight was a performance by Sergei Kuriokhin's 10-tet. The 27 year old pianist from Leningrad, who until recently has been known to the jazz audience mainly through his cooperations with reedmen Anatoly Vapirov and Vladimir Chekasin, has proved his efficiency as a leader. The group included saxophonist Piatras Vishniauskas from Vilnius, bassoonist Alexander Alexandrov and saxophonist Igor Butman from Leningrad, bassist Eugeny Panasenko and drummer Sergie Belichenko from Novosibirsk, bassist Viktor Melnikov from Moscow, cellist Vladislav Makarov from Smolensk. This "national team" performed Kuriokhin's 30-minute composition ***Glass Bead Game (Das Glasperlspiel) With The Swine*** full of energy, inventiveness and grotesquerie.

Among the established jazz "stars" there appeared a new group "Boomerang" from Kazakhstan's capital Alma-Ata who captured the audience's and the critics' acclaim. Especially interesting in this group were trumpeter Yuri Parfyonow and saxophonist Sergei Morolukhoyev.

Cellist Vladislav Makarov's solo performance made a great impact on the audience. The cello remains not very common in jazz, and in this country it is still quite new. Makarov's harsh and uncompromising treatment of the instrument resembled the guitar playing of Derek Bailey.

I should also mention the singing of Tatevik Oganesyan from Armenia, which was sweet and charming as usual. Notwithstanding these high points, it should be said that there were a lot of simply mediocre groups. It should be understood by the organizers that Soviet jazz has now reached that point where we should search not for quantity, but for the quality of the performers.

— Alexander Kan

BERN FESTIVAL

Bern, Switzerland
April 27 - May 4, 1981

The European festival circuit is given a warm springtime initiation in the charming city of Bern. For the past six years Hans Zurbrugg and his organising committee have assembled illustrious groups of musicians for concert presentations, jam sessions and less formal performances in the various squares of the ancient city.

The festival's basic philosophy is to present compatible musicians from within the central tradition and it could be looked upon as a miniature version of Nice — the summer jewel of the jazz circuit. But Bern has its own special flavour and character. The evening concerts are held in a breathtaking hall — the Kursaal — where the audience is comfortably seated at tables and chairs in tiers affording them a panoramic view of the proceedings. Each night the concert focuses on a particular aspect of the music. There is always a blues night, always a "Jazz Band Ball", always a spectacular "Gala Night" attraction and now, it seems, an evening devoted to more contemporary sounds. Completing the program this year was a "tenor saxophone" summit. In addition there is always a Sunday morning jam session in the historic Kornhauskeller and a Sunday afternoon gospel concert in a local church.

Bern, like all festivals, continues to grow in both size and stature. It has probably reached the point where, if it is to retain its charm and warmth, it should hold the line rather than expand further. Both Nice and the North Sea Festival seem to be opting for more and more names rather than using fewer musicians in a more imaginative manner and it would probably be a mistake for Bern to do the same. As it is, many of the musicians were only briefly in town this year and never got a chance to fully display their capabilities. This was most apparent on Saturday night. The festival built its foundations around the traditional sounds which are still so popular in Switzerland but the talent on display could easily have filled two nights of the proceedings.

The Traditional Festival All Stars featured Billy Butterfield, Kenny Davern, Flip Phillips, Trummy Young, Dick Cary, Jim Rivers (guitar), George Duvivier and Barrett Deems. Jim Galloway was a special guest with this band at the festival but no one really got a chance to display their full potential. Each member did a feature spot and in between there were long jammed numbers with solos all round. This format stretched their on-stage appearance to close to two hours (with an intermission) and no attempt was made to break down the personnel into smaller combinations. A gruelling travel schedule prior to the festival hardly prepared this all star group of musicians for the kind of presentation which would have made their memorable. It was merely rewarding to see and hear them all performing so well.

The dramatic solo highlights offered by Kenny Davern (***I Want A Little Girl***), Jim Galloway (***Come Sunday***) and pianist Dick Cary's version of a Willie The Lion Smith number were the individual high spots, but the consistency and organisation of both Switzerland's Tremble Kids and Peanuts Hucko's Pied Pipers earlier in the evening offered the listeners two satisfying sets of music.

The Trembles were the most interesting of all the Swiss bands heard at the festival. They rank with the best in Europe: cornetist Oscar Klein, trombonist Raymond Droz and pianist Henri Chaix are all good soloists and the band has a tight, organised sound. Their repertoire is interesting and they play with conviction.

Peanuts Hucko's Quintet is very much a showcase for the clarinetist. Its Goodman image is enhanced by the percussive vibraphone

KENNY DAVERN (photograph by Jay Anderson, courtesy of Chaz Jazz Records)

of Peter Appleyard and its repertoire draws heavily on the tunes Peanuts has been playing for years. Ralph Sutton, Jack Lesberg and Jake Hanna are a cohesive and swinging rhythm section and the polished professionalism of this band is outstanding. Their music has all the precision and grace of a finely tuned Swiss watch.

The most explosive music came from the most recent edition of Freddie Hubbard's Quintet. The trumpeter has threatened to take the jazz world by storm since the days when he sparkled with Art Blakey, but he has often stepped sideways into lucrative subsidiaries of the jazz stream. None of his recordings prepared his audience for the intensity, power and sheer energy of this band. They played bop classics, extended blues-based originals and only rarely hinted at the electronic interference of the past decade. Hubbard was the dominating figure — playing long solos with a slashing attack, ingenious half valve asides and subconsciously evoking images of Louis Armstrong, Clifford Brown and Miles Davis as he unleashed a torrent of cascading runs which threatened to lift the roof off the building. Tenor saxophonist David Schnitter did his best to keep pace with the leader but his voice seemed muted in comparison - even though he soloed well. Pianist Billy Childs, bassist Larry Klein and drummer Carl Burnett were a powerhouse rhythm section but a little anonymous as soloists. But they were there to serve Freddie Hubbard's needs and he used their skills unmercifully in an extraordinary performance.

Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Jim Galloway, Arnett Cobb, Junior Mance, Lloyd Glenn, Jimmy Woode, Ed Thigpen and Alvin Queen were the repertory musicians heard in a variety of settings and circumstances. Also present were Buddy Tate, Jay McShann, Milt Hinton and J.C. Heard who were also concluding a successful two-week stay at Jaylin's Club in the Schweizerhof Hotel (the festival headquarters). These musicians were heard at the jam sessions, in the main concert hall, during the daytime in various city squares and at a shopping centre. The tenor saxophone summit was marred by the sound system. None of the rhythm sections could hear themselves properly and as a result the music had an uncomfortable edge. Zoot managed to overcome these problems to give us a breathtaking ballad rendition of ***Dream Dancing***, but all of these musicians really showed their worth in the more informal late night jam sessions. Al and Zoot gave us an outstanding set with a fine assist from Junior Mance and Alvin Queen, while Jim Galloway evoked memories of past tenor giants in a set with Jay McShann, Milt Hinton and J.C. Heard. There was also an exceptional open air set where Jim Galloway's soprano blended easily with the cool precision of Buddy De Franco's clarinet over a cooking rhythm section of Junior Mance, Jimmy Woode and Ed Thigpen. Galloway also distinguished himself in another open air performance with Al Cohn, pianist Vince Benedetti and Ed Thigpen.

Junior Mance and Jim Galloway should be singled out for the consistency and intensity of their many different performances over the festival. They always performed at an exceptional level. Both Alvin Queen and Ed Thigpen gave the musicians the solid support so necessary from a drummer. The Jaylin sessions with the Tate-McShann Quartet were an extraordinary bonus for festival goers and a viable alternative for the battle weary. Their performances were enhanced with the strong contributions of Carrie Smith who, strangely enough, was not part of the opening Blues Night.

The roots of the music have always been popular in Europe but it is a musical form crowd listened to the traditional folk style of John Jackson, the electric dazzle of Clarence Gatemouth Brown, the recreations of Oscar Klein and Jerry Ricks and the jazz flavoured blues of Al Grey, Lloyd Glenn, Milt Hinton and J.C. Heard.

Gospel music has also found a home in Europe but it is a musical form which thrives on the interaction of singers and congregation and the spiritual essence of the music is not experienced by many outside of Black America. The Brooklyn All Stars gave us a glimpse of the majesty, emotional beauty and moving eloquence of gospel quartet singing at its best through the lead singing of Paul Owen (who helped shape the style of the Swan Silvertones), but this formed only a small part of the concert. Audience response was heaviest for the brighter, simpler and more popular numbers which emphasised soloists and the instrumental roles of guitar, bass and drums. James Brown and Aretha Franklin are much closer to European audiences than The Gospel Sound. Nonetheless, it was a rare opportunity to hear in person one of the men who helped shape the direction and destiny of gospel music in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Gala Night was turned over to Oscar Peterson and his Friends. We were offered the perennial tour de force display of pianistics by the leader as well as some tasteful soloing by Clark Terry and Zoot Sims. The show was dominated by Peterson, however, and he continues to mesmerize his audiences with his blend of dazzle and tenderness. Niels Henning Orsted Pedersen seemed intent on matching Oscar's virtuosity and his bass lines were so complex and unrelenting that one waited (in vain) for the breathing space some simple lines would have given us. Martin Drew's heavy and unswinging drumming was totally out of place. He barely kept up with the whirlwind of sounds surrounding him. It was a glittering but rather brittle finale to a festival which perhaps, in the final analysis, did not quite live up to all of its promises.

A selection of jazz movies opened and closed each concert. Seeing and hearing Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Buck Clayton, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk (and many others) confirmed the continuity and continuation of the music. It was a warm and reassuring reminder of the music's greatness.

But a festival is more than just the music it presents and Bern has to rank among the best. The organizers and the Bern Tourist Office have made a tremendous success of this event through great organisation and attention to detail. The musicians feel comfortable and the audiences love the ambience of the city and the bountiful variety of musical offerings. There are many bonuses for the visitor to Bern; the most notable of these is a breathtaking trip into the Alps by bus and cable car to the Schilthorn summit (made notorious through the James Bond movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service"). The purity and majesty of the mountains is very much a natural reflection of the music performed by all the great musicians who annually turn Bern into one of the jazz centres of the world. — ***John Norris***

DAVE McKENNA

Left Handed Compliment
Concord Jazz CJ-123

Dave McKenna is a very satisfying pianist — and this is a very satisfying record — because he is not a trio pianist who is trying to get by without the aid of bass and drums, but is a real bonafide solo pianist. One very definitely does ***not*** have that feeling of "something missing", of a sense of a fragmented conception, that is becoming increasingly prevalent these days as trio pianists make more and more solo records that reveal their inability to 'fill out' the sound and to sustain the interest, in the way that McKenna can. Interestingly, all of McKenna's major influences have been 'trio' pianists, that is, pianists who made their reputations playing accompanied solos, men like Erroll Garner, Oscar Peterson, and, to a lesser extent, Bud Powell and Lennie Tristano. Also interesting is the ability of all of these pianists to play without accompaniment when they so desire(d), rather than relying on the accompaniment to disguise deficient conception and/or execution. These men were, in terms of sheer ability, heirs to the great solo piano tradition that goes as far back as Joplin, and as far forward as Tatum. McKenna is ***their*** heir, and his musical integrity is rooted in his art of using the work of his predecessors to fashion a new and similarly valid musical personality. He never falls into the trap of revivalism, nor does he lose sight of his influences.

The record's opener, ***Have You Met Miss Jones?***, is a case in point, with its changes in tempo, style and mood. McKenna recalls Garner and Peterson but is ultimately his own man, and the sound that he gets is ***full***. On the up tempo material his powerful walking bebop bass lines propel the music with a really rollicking swing. The record is worth buying simply for the confidence and the joy of authority with which he virtually attacks the music. And he never allows the subtle qualities to be inundated by his overwhelming flow of energy. The record's title is appropriate in spotlighting McKenna's left hand as it is his left hand that, more than anything else, makes him unique. His hard-driving, rhythmically hip bass lines are perhaps the basis of his solo up tempo piano style, and present one of the few viable alternatives to the stride bass as a basis for a solo piano style.

There are some 35 or 40 minutes of marvellous solo piano here, music that flows freely and unhampered. Nothing intrudes — there are no superfluities, the tunes are good, the recording is good, and the piano-playing is superb. The only fault one could fairly find would be a rather thin sound in the way the bass has been engineered. A worthy successor to last year's "Giant Strides," also on Concord.

— Julian Yarrow

JAY McSHANN

Tuxedo Junction
Sackville 3025

Jay McShann (piano); Don Thompson (bass)
Recorded August 24, 1980

This is Jay McShann's fifth record on Sackville to come out in the last ten years or so, and although he has recorded a similar number of issues for other labels in this period, it seems the Sackvilles have always been the most consistently interesting. Each of these five records can stand on its own as a genuine indicator of the man's musical personality in a way that, say, the recent Atlantic issues cannot, though to be sure any record with McShann on it contains some memorable music. The point is this: if a Jay McShann record doesn't come off properly, the fault doesn't lie with McShann but with the producer(s). McShann makes music; it's up to the producer(s) to make a record out of that music. Now it would seem that with an artist as accomplished and professional as McShann this would be a piece of cake. Perhaps it is, but the fact remains that producers other than Sackville's Norris and Smith have invariably failed to give us McShann in all his glorious variety.

Those who have heard McShann's previous Sackville records will not be surprised by this one. It is another successfully realized, superbly played collection of pieces; this is not "new" McShann, it's "more" McShann. Whether this is a plus or a minus will, I suppose, depend on the expectations of the individual listener. One thing is for sure: it's downright impossible to dislike this music and its maker. Jay McShann's records are like letters from a friend, full of warmth, affirmation and vitality, and if you want something other than that then you should probably look elsewhere.

This is not strictly a solo piano record, nor does Don Thompson's presence on bass make it a duet. Rather than a dialogue of equal participants, it's more of a monologue with accompaniment and interjections from Thompson, who supports McShann with great taste and restraint. McShann has, of course, always been a very capable solo pianist, possessing a solid left hand, yet he seems to sound happier and more comfortable when playing with accompaniment, and thrives on the interplay between himself and Thompson.

The choice of material is good, McShann's interpretation of the title track in particular, re-affirming its place squarely in the middle of the black swing tradition; one is reminded not of Glenn Miller, but of Erskine Hawkins and Julian Dash, which is as it should be. And McShann's gorgeous, rather Garneresque ballad style has never sounded better than on this version of his own ***One Sided Love***, which only further serves to remind us that he has never been adequately appreciated for the fine ballad player that he is. ***Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me*** continues to reveal the affinity that McShann has shown for Ellington compositions, most notably on his collaboration with Buddy Tate (Sackville 3011). A whole record of McShann playing Duke wouldn't be a bad idea, should the opportunity arise. Are you listening, gentlemen? In the meantime, there is more than enough first-rate McShann here to satisfy even his most demanding admirers.

— Julian Yarrow

CARMEN McRAE / GEORGE SHEARING

Two For The Road
Concord Jazz CJ 128

On the surface, the first recorded pairing of such accomplished troupers as Shearing and McRae should have been a memorable occasion. But, given their individual talents, in which they excel, this recording is less than momentous — in fact, it's a disappointment. There are few singers who can caress a ballad as movingly as McRae and as pianists go, Shearing has held his own niche for years.

But here, McRae seems reluctant to extend herself while Shearing, a superlative soloist, restricts himself to the role of accompanist. The impression is that, with mutual respect for each other's talents, neither wanted to upstage the other. There are two exceptions, however.

Cloudy Morning is an all-Shearing exercise of sheer delight, with the pianist dipping into

CARMEN McRAE (photograph by Gerard Futrick)

REVIEWS

classical piano literature from Debussy to Gershwin, and sung plaintively by Shearing. He does much the same thing with ***Two For The Road***, the album's closer (and title inspiration). These two tracks make this release worthwhile, without taking anything away from McRae.

The singer, in her inimitable style, goes through such ballads as ***More Than You Know***; ***If I Should Leave You*** (from a forgettable 1935 flick "Rose of the Rancho"); ***Ghost Of A Chance*** and ***What Is There To Say*** with characteristic McRae verve and aplomb. But McRae and Shearing fans are better off getting individual albums by these sterling artists (also from Concord Jazz). — ***Al Van Starrex***

CHARLES MINGUS

Mingus in Europe (Volume 1)
Enja 3049

The first of two promised albums documenting the live concert from the Town Hall of Wuppertal, Germany on April 26, 1964, this recording should be of interest mainly to historians and collectors of Mingus and reedman Eric Dolphy. Wuppertal was the second-to-last stop for the Mingus Quintet (having lost trumpeter Johnny Coles earlier to ulcer surgery in Paris) on their stormy European tour during the spring of 1964 — a tour from which Dolphy was not to return, as he died only two months and three days after this concert.

The majority of this release is given over to a performance of ***Fables of Faubus*** which, for the most part, duplicates the one available on "The Great Concert of Charles Mingus" (Prestige 34001), which was recorded a week earlier at the Theatre des Champs-Elysees in Paris. Both performances share the same design — order of solos, shape of solos, tempo variations, playful incorporation of quotes (suggesting that not all of Mingus's arrangements were as spontaneously conceived as they seemed) — though the new German performance is nearly 40 minutes in length compared to 28 minutes in Paris. Clifford Jordan's tenor milks the same ***Swannee River*** quote that he used in Paris, while Mingus's solo is positively collagistic, essaying ***Dixie, Camptown Races, The Old Grey Mare***, and a number of others. Dolphy counters with a chromatic ***Rockin' in Rhythm*** prior to a long conversational duet with Mingus similar to the famous ***Stormy Weather*** dialogue.

What sets this recording apart from the previous concert is a newly discovered seven minute duet (Dolphy's flute, Mingus's bass) performance of ***I Can't Get Started***, here obliquely titled ***Starting***, with Dolphy receiving composer credit. Dolphy's flute is alarmingly facile as he ornaments the theme and constructs a dazzling solo — which makes this performance an interesting addition to the Dolphy discography. — ***Art Lange***

NEW YORK JAZZ QUARTET

Song of the Black Knight
Sonet SNTF 753

The New York Jazz Quartet is able to combine a well thought out, carefully organized musical format with relaxed swinging performances. This album exudes sensitive tasteful jazz but without sacrificing an earthy essence.

Roland Hanna plays marvelously throughout this record. At times both on record and in person, Hanna becomes too rhapsodic for my taste and loses the swinging jazz quality I admire so much in his best work. That problem doesn't surface here and Hanna does no wrong.

Frank Wess is one of very few players I find satisfying on jazz flute. The level of his flute playing here is very high indeed. Wess also contributes tenor saxophone solos deserving special attention. The beautiful tenor solo he produces on ***After Paris***, a ballad dedicated to the late Coleman Hawkins, is the best I have ever heard him play.

Four of the six compositions on this album were written by Hanna while the remaining two are by Frank Wess. Each is interesting in its own right and the writing adds to the feeling that a great deal of work and planning went into this recording.

Bassist George Mraz is perfect for this group. His time, facility, sound, and concept all mesh together in a bass player that would be next to impossible to improve upon for this quartet.

The least known member of the group is drummer Richard Pratt. The only thing I can tell you about him is that he fits in perfectly with the other three members of the quartet. He supplies the rhythmic thrust with a vital crispness.

Recommended. — ***Peter S. Friedman***

EVAN PARKER

At The Finger Palace
The Beak Doctor 3/Metalanguage 110

Evan Parker, soprano saxophone.

Fingerprints.

This album merits special consideration as it is

the first issue on a North American label to document the increasingly important solo activity of English saxophonist Evan Parker. One of the last legs of Parker's first North American tour in late 1978, the Berkeley, California performance presented here has enough similarities with the Washington, D.C. concert I attended less than two weeks earlier that it is fair to assume that ***Fingerprints*** is an accurate representation of Parker's orientation during that period. At the crux of ***Fingerprints*** is Parker's unique blend of multiphonics and timbral manipulation propelled by circular breathing. As Parker uses the extremes of the soprano saxophone's capabilities as the basis of his work, conventional thematic and emotional development is supplanted by a refined, if not calibrated, sense of variation. While Parker's music is, to a degree, systemic, it is never sterile; rather, it is consistently immediate in its impact and, for the most part, gripping in its originality.

Throughout ***Fingerprints***, Parker repeats a general procedure that shapes the direction of the performance. Initially, Parker focuses on the elongation of his phrasing, a concern replaced by close attention to dynamic detail as circular breathing is engaged. Parker utilizes several timbres and rotates them rapidly through short ascending and/or descending figures to produce an absorbing illusion of hair-splitting polyphony. Simultaneously, Parker's attack increases its bite until all of the components he is working with hits a feverish pitch: only one section midway through the performance remains muted. Intensity then subsides in a deliberate manner until the momentum has been disassembled. The material ranges from fluid lines to chunks of sound that sputter and spew and Parker's familiarity with the various terrains suggests him to be a native of each.

A must for neophiles, "Live At The Finger Palace" breaks the packed North American ice for an unalloyed Evan Parker to be heard in stark splendor. Available from Coda or Metalanguage Records, 2639 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705. — ***Bill Shoemaker***

CECIL PAYNE

Bright Moments
Spotlite SPJLP 21

This recording won't overwhelm you with technical fireworks. Nor will it impress your friends with fashionable disco-fusion-soul-rock-funk-jazz faddishness (or rather foolishness). What it does offer is the pleasure of hearing five experienced jazz musicians improvising in a modern mainstream vein.

Cecil Payne approaches the baritone saxophone in a liquid legato manner. Compare his attack, for example, to that of Pepper Adams, who seems to get a more guttural, almost fire-spitting sound from his instrument. As a result, Payne's solos don't always attract the listener immediately. On this recording his solos are well-developed and generally quite interesting. The only exception is his one outing on flute. His individuality is lost on that instrument. As a matter of fact, I would be more than happy if saxophone players, with only a few exceptions, would put their flutes away and use them only for studio work.

Trombonist Curtis Fuller demonstrates why he is so often regarded as one of the three or four premier exponents of that instrument now playing. His solo work is consistently at a high level.

The all-British rhythm section is composed of Mick Pyne, piano; Dave Green, bass; and Alan Jackson on drums. Pyne's sparkling solos are worthy of notice while the section as a whole lays down the solid foundation necessary for strong solo performance.

While by no means an essential album, this 1979 recording features forty-five minutes and fifty-eight seconds of enjoyable music.

— ***Peter S. Friedman***

DANNIE RICHMOND QUARTET

Ode to Mingus
Soul Note SN 1005

Dannie Richmond, drums, vocal; Bill Saxton, tenor saxophone; Danny Mixon, piano; Mike Richmond, bass.

Ode to Mingus/Olduvai Gorge/Love Bird/If You Could See Me Now/Drum Some, Some Drum.

It's encouraging that Dannie Richmond isn't satisfied with just being the figurehead of the Mingus Dynasty. He does his unique relationship with Charles Mingus more justice by continuing his career in his own right. It is unavoidable that the spirit of Mingus would figure substantially in Richmond's first collection since Mingus's passing — it would be improper any other way — yet "Ode to Mingus" goes beyond being a rite of passage. It is a slice-of-life, a bracing workout from a jelling unit.

It's also encouraging that Richmond assembled a quartet of lesser known musicians, as it is appropriate to The Jazz Workshop's practice of bringing such musicians into their own. This process is most evident in the work of Bill Saxton, who shrewdly navigates the material with an intelligence and an abandon that is rarely paired by a young player. He can translate aspects of the tenor tradition as to convey its vitality while remaining unencumbered by its panache. This quality makes Saxton an effective counterpart to Danny Mixon's pianistic flamboyance and deft touch with an occasional pastiche. Mixon alternately muscles the music along or adds a delicate frosting, much the way Jaki Byard or Don Pullen could with The Jazz Workshop. While he can be heard to good advantage on recordings with The Piano Choir and Betty Carter, "Ode to Mingus" presents Mixon with more elbow room than he has ever had.

As the interplay between Richmond and Mingus will be the standard that will be applied to any bassist working with Richmond, bassist Mike Richmond is presented with an enormous task. He responds with personable zeal and a very good ear, which leavens the classical formalism most prominent in his arco cadenzas on the title piece: particularly noteworthy in these solos is the occasional airbrushing of what Morton called "that Spanish tinge" onto the mid-eastern mold of the material. The sleek blues sections of the title piece and the finger-popping samba ***Love Bird*** are catalyzed by the full force of Richmond and Richmond's combined effort, a double-clutched rhythmic drive that provokes inspired performances.

Except for Dameron's ***If You Could See Me Now***, Richmond's vocal encore when Mingus was too sick to return to the bandstand, Rich-

mond composed the entire album. On the whole, Richmond's music stands up well to repeated listenings and is extremely well-tailored to the strengths of his quartet. The only real surprise is ***Olduvai Gorge***, a multi-tracked excursion for Richmond. It reveals Richmond's structural finesse in a unique way while pointing up his melodic considerations in handling undiluted African materials. It is a performance that will flesh out some peoples' perception of Richmond, as "Ode to Mingus" is an album that will convince them that Richmond has embarked on a new phase of his activity in a self-assured manner. — ***Bill Shoemaker***

MAX ROACH QUARTET

Pictures In A Frame
Soul Note SN 1003

Cecil Bridgewater, trumpet, flugelhorn; Odean Pope, tenor saxophone, flute, oboe; Calvin Hill, bass; Max Roach, drums, piano, vocal.

Reflections/Mwalimu/A Place of Truth/China's Waltz/Mail Order/Magic/Back To Basics/Ode From Black Picture Show.

Throughout the seventies, Max Roach's quartet recordings were characterized by extended improvisations that were as disciplined as they were inspired by Roach's inescapable presence. Rarely did an album of Roach's in this period have more than one composition per album side. In addition, then, to being Roach's first quartet recording since the departure of tenor saxophonist Billy Harper, a principal contributor to the expansive performances that were the trademark of that quartet, "Pictures In A Frame" merits close attention as Roach uses more compacted formats. Of the nine compositions, only four exceed four minutes, with the longest (***Mwalimu***) barely breaking eight minutes. Roach et al waste none of the precious time allotted in getting down to the business of delivering well-crafted performances that exude a sense of commitment and heritage.

The content of these precis-like readings loses none of its impact because of their brevity. In fact, there is an urbanity in these performances that would be diffused if the duration of the pieces were doubled or tripled. Only ***Mwalimu*** and ***Magic*** seem suited for extended performances, as both are rousing heads primed by Roach's eruptive drumming and Hill's pinioning of the proficient front line of Bridgewater and Pope. The format also allows Roach to utilize his programmatic sense with great effect, as "Pictures In A Frame" holds together as a suite in a subtle, unassuming manner. The mix of solos, duets, trios, and quartets presents a contextual diversity comparable to the diversity of the material.

Subsequently, there are several unexpected pleasures afforded by "Pictures In A Frame." A wonderfully sensual ballad, Clifford Jordan's ***Japanese Dream***, receives a sublime duet reading from Hill and Pope, who, oddly, is far more in command of this situation than of the smokers. Hill is sterling here and throughout the album, especially on ***Back To Basics***, a true-to-its-name solo accompanied solely by Roach's high hat. Roach is at the piano for ***A Place Of Truth***, an atmospheric trio setting for Roach, Hill and Bridgewater, who is more Milesian than usual. At the piano again for the closing ***Ode From Black Picture Show***, Roach sings an achingly plaintive lyric with an Armstrong-like charisma.

There is also plenty of Roach's drumming. ***Reflections***, a Roach solo, opens the album with streamlined cadences that point up the reductivism that has emerged in his approach. Roach is deliberate in outlining his ideas and pacing their exposition. A seamless polemic of his mastery, ***Reflections*** centers around his singular ability to captivate with the staples of jazz drumming — contrasting a wristy ride cymbal with a jabbing snare; capping a roll with a flam of rim shots; accenting momentum with airbrushed high hat and bass drum; and, always, the pulse — and he never confuses simplicity with the obvious. Roach's solos on ***Mwalimu, Magic,*** and ***Mail Order,*** an angular line by Pope that serves only to frame Roach's solos, are comparable in the heft of his attack and the gravity of his ideas.

Though there has been a good amount of excellent new and reissued Roach recordings recently released, you won't want to let this one get lost in the crowd. — ***Bill Shoemaker***

MAX ROACH / ANTHONY BRAXTON

One In Two — Two In One
Hat Hut six

Max Roach, percussion, gongs and tuned cymbals; Anthony Braxton, alto, soprano, and sopranino saxophones, contrabass clarinet, and flute.

One In Two/Two In One.

Documenting Roach and Braxton's 1979 Willisau Jazz Festival appearance, "One In Two — Two In One" presents the duo in a more open-ended light than the quasi-programmatic "Birth And Rebirth" studio date of 1978. This one and one-quarter hour improvisation infers the collaboration to be comfortable as well as challenging, in that both Roach and Braxton have a sure sense of constructing the music so that lead-support roles are traded effortlessly at a deliberate pace and are pivoted on the trademark materials of the respective players. A common ground is achieved that is not exclusively Roach's or Braxton's, though no one familiar with the players would mistake them for anyone else throughout the entirety of the improvisation. Roach and Braxton take pains to accomodate each other and greater pains not to sublimate their own voices in the process. Calculation is not at issue here, but rather the ability of Roach and Braxton to estimate the other in terms of the intensity or the duration of an idea as it evolves: in doing so, the duo admirably steers away from a continuous crescendo-decrescendo strategy. If the suggestion of telepathy is at the core of the present attraction towards the duo context, then this recording is necessary to its investigation, as unlike most duet recordings, which tend towards first meetings or reunions, "One In Two — Two In One" presents a duo — a rare duo as the members have only played with each other within the context of the duo — at an intermediate stage of its development.

While Braxton is in exemplary form throughout the proceedings, his work does not provoke the astonishment that Roach's does, as the terrain covered in this performance has been an integral part of the vocabulary Braxton has

worked with for his entire career. Roach's seamless handling of the numerous facets of creative percussion is truly amazing in the comparative light of other musicians from his generation: after a few listenings it becomes apparent that Roach has journeyed as great a distance as John Coltrane. Roach is as orchestral a percussionist as Cecil Taylor is a pianist, as his work not only pillars the idea flow but also sets parameters for its phraseology. This latter quality surfaces several times during the improvisation when Braxton introduces staccato lines that recall aspects of his Kelvin series: as they do not effect an abrupt change – Roach's sense of duration is not conducive to dime-turning – Braxton deftly changes gears rather than risk the momentum. Certainly, Roach inspires Braxton during those sections of the improvisation that most closely echo the bop roots of Roach's career; but Roach is equally effective in those sections where he creates the textural atmospheres that are increasingly cornerstoning the language of today's creative percussionists, using the same kind of rudimentary design Roach applied to trading fours thirty-five years ago.

Roach's strong sense of craft and identity constantly incites Braxton to freshness. Braxton's previous duet recordings, to me, have been inconsistent: while his recordings with Derek Bailey, Dave Holland, and Roscoe Mitchell generally find him at the height of his ability, his recordings with Muhal Richard Abrams, Joseph Jarman, and Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen are, to varying degrees, unfulfilling. As in his recording with Bailey – recently brought back into print on Inner City IC-1041 – the succession of broad areas in which to improvise allows Braxton to strike a satisfying balance between his structural and lyrical facets. Hence, this is a warmer Braxton than is sometimes heard, one more prone to a short burst of poetry rather than a lengthy exposition. Braxton is certainly an equal partner here despite his secondary billing, giving Roach a good run for his money at several points: his fiery alto passage on side one is a case in point. The deployment of Braxton's woodwind arsenal is well-timed and Braxton, perhaps a little more than usual, is able to project distinct voices on each of his instruments (I, for one, could stand to hear his flute more often) – one of Braxton's finer outings in some years.

Heartily recommended to listeners of both Roach's generation and Braxton's.

– Bill Shoemaker

ROUTE 66

JIMMY McCRACKLIN
Rockin' Man
Route 66 KIX-12

ROY HAWKINS
Why Do Everything Happen To Me
Route 66 KIX-9

FLOYD DIXON
Houston Jump
Route 66 KIX-11

LITTLE WILLIE LITTLEFIELD
It's Midnight
Route 66 KIX-10

California was the new home for thousands of migrant workers in the 1940s and one of the results of this movement was the development of an important entertainment scene which focused on the blues well-laced with the greater sophistication of jazz. It is personified by T-Bone Walker (his ***Stormy Monday*** became a classic) but he is but the tip of the iceberg. Record labels mushroomed and artists were extensively recorded. It is ironic that Route 66, a Swedish label, has rescued many of these recordings from obscurity.

Jimmy McCracklin is one of these artists. He is still active but his popularity reached a peak in the late 1950s. The sixteen titles in this reissue span the years 1945-1956 and musically range from the down home feeling of ***Movin' Down The Line*** to the urban slickness of ***Rockin' Man***. McCracklin wrote his own material and all of the performances have worthwhile qualities. He is also an excellent blues pianist whose touch enhances all of his recordings. The sound transfers are excellent and the overall production complements the quality of the music. Jimmy McCracklin is a major artist – he deserves to be listened to again. Route 66 has made this possible.

Roy Hawkins has survived beyond his own time primarily because of his songs. They were covered by such well known artists as James Brown, Ray Charles and B. B. King. Now we have the opportunity to hear, once again, the original versions of such tunes as ***Why Do Everything Happen To Me, The Thrill Is Gone*** and ***Blues All Around Me***. These sixteen selections, recorded between 1949 and 1952, are quintessential examples of the Texas/California mix. Strong blues piano (probably by Hawkins in some cases) and idiomatically strong but unidentified saxophone and guitar give the music a solid feel and there isn't a single selection which is less than good. ***Why Do Everything Happen To Me*** (written by producer Bob Geddins, the catalyst for so many of these great recordings) summarises the tragedy of Roy Hawkins. Paralysed in a car accident he quickly faded from the scene and not even a photograph seems to have survived of this influential artist. This is the first cohesive reissue of his music.

Floyd Dixon recorded prolifically between 1947 and the early 1960s for such labels as Supreme, Modern, Aladdin, Specialty, Cat and Checker. This is the second collection on Route 66 and like "Opportunity Blues" (KIX-1) is a first rate sampling of the two-dimensional musical personality of Floyd Dixon. There are the bright, somewhat glib renditions in the Louis Jordan idiom (***Red Head*** and ***Cadillac***, ***Girl Fifteen***, ***Rockin' At Home***, ***Roll Baby Roll***) as well as the more personal, deeply felt and always wistful slow blues (***Mississippi Blues***, ***Sad Journey***, ***Pleasure Days***, ***Come Back Baby***). The early recordings stand up best – they are all Dixon originals and are free of artifice and outside production influences. Dixon's piano provides just the right idiomatic touch to make the instrumental accompaniments of more than casual interest.

The smoky resonance of Little Willie Littlefield's voice oozes over the insistent rumbling of his barrelhouse piano. It is the quintessential sound of West Coast Blues – adapted and polished from the rich Texas heritage which produced so many great blues interpreters. The blues patterns are endless – both in their similarities and differences – and the lyric variations are often merely reshuffled versions of the same old story. But the individual performance of a blues transforms these limitations through the intensity and uniqueness of the artist. So it is with Little Willie Littlefield in this excellent collection of his music which spans the years 1949 to 1957. *– John Norris*

ARCHIE SHEPP/ HORACE PARLAN

Trouble In Mind
SteepleChase SCS-1139

Backwater Blues / Trouble In Mind / Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out/Careless Love Blues/How Long Blues/Goin' Down Slow/Courthouse Blues/See See Rider/Make Me A Pallet On The Floor/Saint James Infirmary.

As Archie Shepp and Horace Parlan's first volume of duets, "Goin' Home" (SteepleChase SCS-1079), was comprised solely of spirituals, it is fitting that "Trouble In Mind" places a similar focus on the blues, a fundamentally secular spirit-music. Where Shepp grafted his vast knowledge of the saxophone tradition onto church music to give it a very worldly form, his treatment of the blues here is imbued with a rectified aura, as if the blues is a state of being to aspire to. The breathy tenor tends to be reflective and yearning while the oboe-like soprano sings like the apotheosis of a faith in the hardships of life. This atmosphere is well-buttressed by Parlan's austere accompaniment and spartan solos, which, at their best, are compact epiphanies. The pieces are executed in such a way that each phrase and rest assumes a sovereignty and gravitate together like blocks in an arch, uncemented. The interaction between Shepp and Parlan is muted and its effect is such that no sparks are thrown to distract the listener from the issue at hand, which is not Archie Shepp and Horace Parlan, but the blues. Especially for an explosive player such as Shepp, the diligence in keeping the issue foremost in the listener's ear and mind is to be commended. Shepp and Parlan are immensely capable of transforming tradition into highly personal terms. That they have chosen to present this program in such a selfless manner is testament to the power of the blues.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of Shepp's recordings of the past several years, "Trouble in Mind," as well as "Goin' Home," does not exude Shepp's allusive abilities. In tandem with the duo's approach to the program, this may be accounted for by the fact this music was created before the saxophone really asserted itself in the music. Hence, Shepp's task here is decidedly more complex than is Parlan's, as Shepp must project an authenticity where no precedent exists. Quite naturally, Shepp looks to the human voice as the basis of his phraseology. With this as his pivot point, Shepp is able to introduce aspects of the pre-bop styles without overextending himself in regards to the maintenance of a vocal quality. The most striking example is ***Careless Love Blues***, where Shepp laces together the sensibilities of the blues singer and the tenor balladeer without blurring the distinction between the two. To varying degrees throughout the remainder of the album, Shepp tips this balance in the direction of the blues singer, occasionally, and prudently, utilizing the timbral effects he has drawn from Ben Webster to accent his statements. It has long been my contention that Shepp, of all the post-bop saxophonists, has integrated the styles of earlier generations into his vocabulary for more

profound reasons than to simply extol the virtue of the tradition, which his duets with Parlan bear out. What these reasons are has not been my contention, as it is evident that they are of such a scope that it will necessitate the remainder of Shepp's career to explain them.

— Bill Shoemaker

Goin' Home
SteepleChase SCS-1079

Deep River/My Lord What A Morning/Amazing Grace/Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child/Swing Low, Sweet Chariot/Goin' Home/ Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen/Go Down Moses/Steal Away To Jesus.

Archie Shepp is an important creative artist because he realizes that music can function as entertainment and communicate on a socio-/ spiritual basis. He has written plays and poetry, and fused the two together with musical statements (two cogent examples: ***Skag***, recorded live at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1965, and ***A Wedding***, performed in San Francisco in 1966). He has lectured on college campuses. But most importantly his music reflects the revolutionary and evolutionary causes which he believes in. His various groups have explored the paths of avant-garde freedom, they have shouted funky r&b complaints, and they have sung eloquently the songs of Ellington, Coltrane, and Monk — reverently balancing the lessons of tradition and the future.

It is Shepp's sense of emotional communication, his awareness of his roots (and the music's roots), and his instrumental assimilation of styles and techniques (drawing on nearly every horn player in the music's history, yet blended into a voice which is comfortably, honestly, recognizably Shepp's own) which informs this recording. On the surface, "Goin' Home" is a collection of spirituals performed by Shepp on tenor and soprano saxophones, ably assisted by Horace Parlan on piano. But it is much more than that.

In sheer musical terms, the man has an exquisite control of his instruments, and is quite literally able to make them talk — and make no mistake about it, these spirituals are sung, not translated into instrumental terms, but ***sung***. In so doing, Shepp adds textural and timbral variety through a number of technical devices — harmonic overtones, breathy tonal weight, expressive chromatic elaborations of melody. Nevertheless, it is the emotional, not the technical, which is communicated through these performances, and the result is a truly spiritual music — one which is tender, passionate, muscular, uplifting, sensual, fiery, heartfelt, and heaven-storming all at once.

As a previous Shepp album was, this recording could have been called "The Cry Of My People," for in it you can hear the same cry heard in Mahalia Jackson, in Billie Holiday, in Lester Young, in Ornette's piercing wail, in Ayler's wide-eyed scream, in Mingus, in Coltrane. It is not a cry of lament or a cry of weakness — it is a cry of strength, of affirmation, of soul.

— Art Lange

WAYNE SHORTER

Etcetera
Blue Note LT-1056

WAYNE SHORTER (photograph by Jorgen Bo)

Shorter, tenor saxophone; Herbie Hancock, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Joe Chambers, drums.

Etcetera/Penelope/Toy Tune/Barracudas/Indian Song.

If only for the unexpected opportunity to hear Shorter again in the company of Hancock and Chambers — two of his erstwhile collaborators of the 1960s — this would be a valuable release. But the moody, muted, haunting atmosphere of his compositions and the tough, cunning phrasing of his saxophone in pre-Weather Report days make this all but essential listening.

Recorded in 1965, a year after he left Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and joined Miles Davis, this previously unissued album finds Shorter in laconic form. The title tune is typical of what you'll find here — the theme, as stated by Shorter's sparse, rather reticent articulation, explores subterranean shadows with provocative dynamic and textural chiaroscuro. Here and on ***Penelope*** the saxophonist practically has to coax the notes out of his horn, so succinct is his invention and impassive is his attack. On ***Toy Tune*** we begin to understand why; his insouciant phrasing is Lester digested: constant and subtle sparring with the bar lines, Hancock's comping, and Chambers's vital, varied propulsion.

Speaking of the latter two participants, Hancock's work is sweetly expansive in his early style and a healthy balance to Shorter's darker phrasing, while Chambers's contribution serves to tie the varying voices together, as on ***Barracudas***, where his Blakey bombs turn the music into a percussion concerto, along the way jolting Shorter to life so that his solo, starting out casual, quickly toughens like wet leather shrinking in the sun.

— Art Lange

TOMASZ STANKO

Almost Green
Leo Records (Finland) **008**

Tomasz Stanko, trumpet; Tomasz Szukalski, tenor saxophone; Palle Danielsson, bass; Edward Vesala, drums.

New Song/ From Greenhills/ Slowly By/ When On Earth/ Almost Green/ Megaira.

CECIL McBEE SEXTET

Compassion
Inner City IC 3033

Chico Freeman, soprano, tenor; Joe Gardner, trumpet; Dennis Moorman, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Steve McCall, drums; Don Moye, percussion.

Pepi's Samba/Undercurrent/Compassion.

Both these albums have a commendable sense of adventure about them but unfortunately the occasional promise, the spots of fire, the free-roaming spirit are never really brought into cohesive focus.

Take the Stanko album. What is immediately striking is the centrality of Danielsson's bass. Richly resonant, rhythmically firm yet intricately spacious, his playing gives something for the other players to swirl around.

This music comes out of early and middle period Ornette Coleman without striking out into any really original or even personal direction. ***New Song*** has an affinity to ***Lonely Woman***, with Danielsson not playing a drone

effect but the horns stating the melancholy theme yearningly. Stanko solos with a broad, smeary tone but Szukalski's tenor has little personality, hovering around ideas without direction. Yet these musicians are obviously involved in their music, urging each other on with shouted encouragement at times.

In general all the themes have an interesting spaciousness with pauses left open. Vesala's drums have a loose pulse which allows him room to fill in those spaces. And he takes what I can only call an a-rhythmic solo on ***From Greenhills***, as he constantly shifts the rhythmic urge.

In spite of this interesting ambience, the solos are not very memorable and they too often disintegrate into aimless fluttering. While the essence sought is looseness, this group seems to need a firmer focus. Strangely enough, the most convincing piece is ***When On Earth*** which in its theme statement fixes a more inherently rhythmic surge, and so in a sense seems tighter with organization.

McBee's group has that tighter organization but nonetheless it doesn't make their music much more pleasurable. The themes are more spontaneously original, though Freeman's ***Pepi's Samba*** comes over as a clever concoction of Monk filtered through hard bop.

There's a certain sameness about their approach to everything — a moving in through percussion or solo bass that then picks up a vamp with the horns gradually entering to state the theme.

Chico Freeman is the principal soloist but I'm not entirely convinced by his playing. He always starts well but somehow doesn't have much staying power or maturity to keep developing. He can be exciting and excited, working up a good head of steam but too often his resolutions of ideas are ordinary or seek refuge in sound experimentation out of Ayler or late Coltrane without their solid musicality.

The rhythm section offers the horns a thick cushion allowing for change and looseness. They are responsive to a shaping process, listening to the soloist — on ***Undercurrent*** a good example is during Freeman's soprano solo, which is complex and many-noted, but sometimes technically adroit without being genuinely inventive. Yet the rhythm behind keeps the solo from flagging.

The title track zips through different tempos and McBee's solo, with its hesitations followed by fast-fingered surges echoes the insistent stop-and-go nature of most of the music on the album.

There is drive and vitality here but again the real sense of cohesion and focus is missing, leaving the album interesting in places but finally disappointing. — ***Peter Stevens***

TROMBONISTS

GUNTER CHRISTMANN, PAUL LOVENS, and MAARTEN ALTENA
Weavers
Po Torch PTR/JWD 7

JERRY CHARDONNENS, LEON FRANCIOLI and RADU MALFATTI
Humanimal
Hat Hut Eight (1R08)

As much as any instrument during the past two decades, the trombone has been reapproached by several American and European practitioners to effect a substantial change in the way the instrument is heard within the context of improvised music. In the sixties, Roswell Rudd, Grachan Moncur III, and Albert Mangelsdorff introduced many new elements to the vocal approach to the horn and, in the seventies, Mangelsdorff, George Lewis, and Paul Rutherford created new technics to accomodate the horn to the increasing conceptual demands of the music. The work of Gunter Christmann and Radu Malfatti, two of the most well-equipped trombonists working with free improvisation in Europe, is along the lines of this latter group, as it is most concerned with the capabilities of the horn coupled with a striking sense of ensemble presence. While these two recordings reflect different sensibilities towards improvisation, their commonality exists in an instrument that is sensitively handled so as to transcend the horn-bass-percussion trio cliches of old and new music.

One of several performances that Hat Hut culled from the 1979 Willisau Festival, "Humanimal" somewhat unevenly matches Malfatti with percussionist Jerry Chardonnens and bassist Leon Francioli, who also plays piano toward the end of the album-long improvisation. Chardonnens and Francioli give the high-energy sections of the piece a personal edge and there is some wit behind their calypso excursion at the end of the piece, but often they are merely providing a backdrop for Malfatti. Malfatti responds very well to the burden placed on him, as he uses his inventory of burps, grunts, smears, and screams to build a contrasting momentum rather than to ride on what has been set down for him by Chardonnens and Francioli: during much of the first side of the album, this consists of Francioli using the bow in a percussive manner and manipulating the strings to create overtone effects while Chardonnens sustains a busy wash of cymbals and fills. Occasionally during the performance — perhaps more during the first half than during the less visceral second half of the piece — Malfatti displays an affinity for the type of boisterous wails and bluesiness associated with Roswell Rudd, but otherwise he takes the trombone into a rarified sonic terrain where the extremes of the instrument's capabilities become points of departure rather than conclusions that were long in the making. This quality is most apparent in subdued circumstances, as in his liquid unaccompanied solo that opens the album, a limber duet passage with Chardonnens at the end of side one, and his accompaniment of Francioli's Hadenesque treatment of a folk melody on side two. The latter two examples contain Chardonnens's and Francioli's most assertive moments, but for the most part, Malfatti carries the weight of the session and does so in such a way as to divert the listener's attention, at least initially, to the best aspects of a mis-matched trio.

The photograph of a flat-weave dining carpet from Azerbaidjan that wraps about the cover of "Weavers" is a very apt metaphor for the approach taken by Christmann, bassist Maarten Altena, and percussionist Paul Lovens. The overall effect of the carpet is stunning, even when close examination reveals minor imperfections due to the sectioning together of the several pieces of the carpet: it is an excellent example of how, after a certain point, craft has little, if anything, to do with precision. "Weavers" is a well-crafted album in this

respect. Christmann, Altena, and Lovens are most suited to each other as they share a fine sense for detail and nuance and a pronounced ability to build cohesively from disparate elements. Unlike "Humanimal," "Weavers" does not employ any material that is readily identifiable as a thematic or rhythmic launching-pad. Neither is there the tacit polarization that took place on "Humanimal" which creates lead-support roles. Christmann, Altena, and Lovens instead focus their considerable faculties toward the intuitive and the aleatory. It is in such an atmosphere that Christmann can best be assessed: as if he were the subject of a cubist portrait, "Weavers" presents Christmann in a light where the many facets of his approach may be heard in one sitting. Like Malfatti, Christmann has a command of the extreme limits of the trombone and uses them dynamically, though the respective contexts in which the trombonists are heard support the perhaps unfair conclusion that Christmann has a more strident attack and, at times, a more terse, brassy sound. ***Cirim***, the opening piece, reveals Christmann to be a masterful manipulator of the mouthpiece, whether he is projecting piercing multiphonics or a languid oscillating wash. He uses these techniques, combined with pungent tongue-flutterings, to adhere Altena's arco fragments and Lovens's crisp, yet muted, stickings on ***Sismak***, and, elongating his phrases to assert his most vigorous presence on ***Yaylak*** and ***Kishlak***. To judge Christmann the more distinctive voice on the basis of these two albums would be a mistake, as Altena and Lovens contribute as much as Christmann to the setting in which Christmann shines; but it is a very good basis on which to recommend "Weavers" over "Humanimal," if a choice between the two is necessitated.

— Bill Shoemaker

REISSUES by John Norris

This column is designed to guide the listener through the maze of LP reissues. Repackaging plays an important role in the schemes of record companies both large and small, and the international ramifications of parallel reissue programs in different countries is often confusing. This column also covers notable sessions from the past which are only now being issued for the first time.

COUNT BASIE
The Count
Encore P.14355

Ten years is a long time in the development of jazz music. The kind of musical language which was being evolved by such men as Freddie Keppard bore fruit in the decade between the New Orleans trumpeter's last recording and Count Basie's first recordings in 1936.

This reissue is full of concise ***short*** solos (one chorus at the longest) by musicians who were comfortable at ad-libbing both the blues and the popular song. Trumpeters Buck Clayton and Harry Edison, trombonists Dickie Wells and Benny Morton, saxophonists Earle Warren and Buddy Tate are all given solo opportunities and there are generous portions of the leader's piano. Both Jimmy Rushing (***Baby Don't Tell On Me, Nobody Knows, How Long Blues, I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me***) and Helen Humes (***If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight, Sub Deb Blues, You And Your Love, Moonlight Serenade, Someday Sweetheart***) are featured in a program which is complementary to the Basie sides now reissued by Columbia as "The Complete Lester Young" (JG34840 and JG34843). This reissue, in fact, issues all the remaining titles (where Pres doesn't solo) from recording sessions between Mar. 19, 1939 and November 6, 1939). ***Rock-A-Bye Basie, Baby Don't Tell On Me, Jump For Me*** and ***Volcano*** are 'prime' Basie with the remaining selections of lesser interest. International collectors will be aware that Queen Disc has issued many of these titles and, in fact, only ***If I Could Be With You*** and ***Someday Sweetheart*** are new to LP (excluding their issue last year in France as part of a ten LP complete Basie — CBS 66101).

HELEN MERRILL
A Shade of Difference
Spotlite SPJLP 12

Helen Merrill is an acquired taste. Like other singers who have tried to add something fresh to the art of song interpretation Helen Merrill has never reached beyond a refined minority of listeners. This album, issued originally on Milestone 9019, was recorded in 1968 and utilises the talents of such musicians as Thad Jones, Jim Hall, Ron Carter and Dick Katz. The instrumentation varies from track to track as Ms. Merrill pushes the boundaries of the songs beyond the expected.

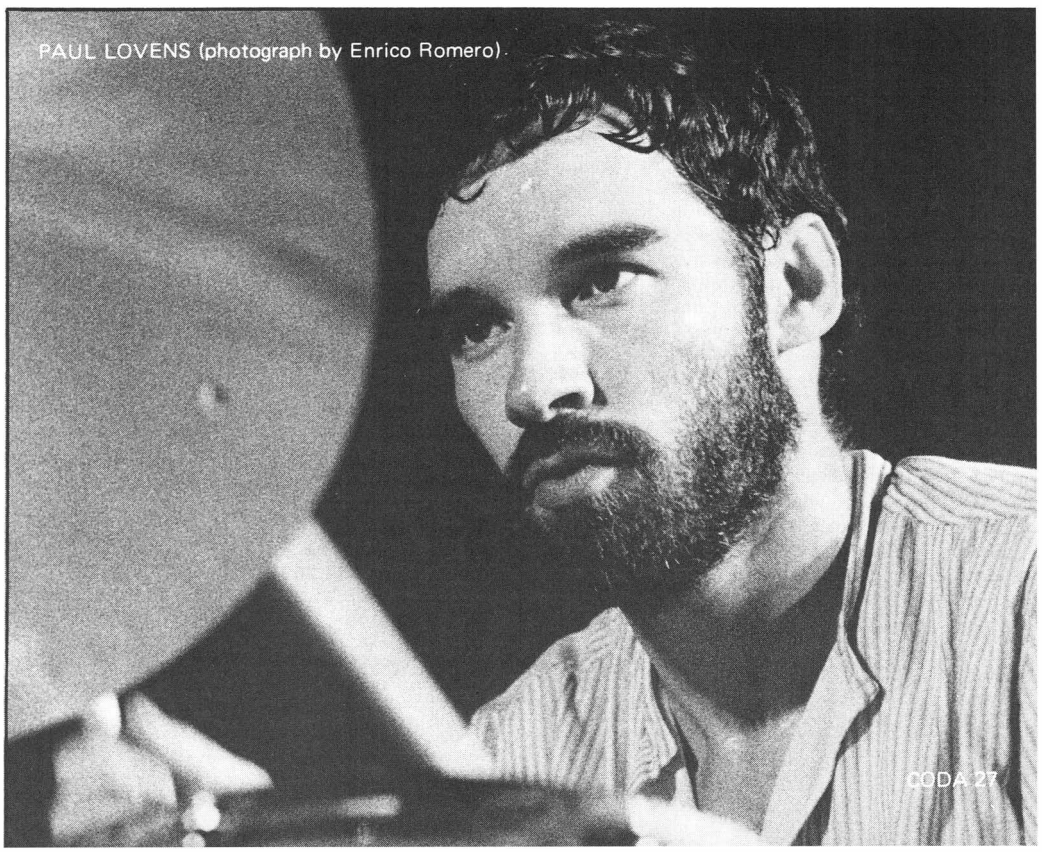
WOODY HERMAN
V Discs
Solid Sender SOL 503

Strange as it may seem only an occasional Herman V Disc has found its way onto LP before now. The music on this record covers the period from February 1943 to August 1945 and are all big band performances except for ***John Hardy's Wife*** and ***Somebody Loves Me***. They are a microcosm of the growth of the volatile First Herd and there are generous solo spots for Flip Phillips, Bill Harris and the leader. Sound quality fluctuates but is acceptable and only the Herman ballad vocals sound dated. Selections included are ***Red Top, It Must Be Jelly, Caldonia*** (FDC 1012), ***Somebody Loves Me, John HArdy's Wife, Don't Worry 'Bout That Mule, Apple Honey, Dancing In The Dawn*** (Swingfan 1011), ***There Are No Wings On A Foxhole, Flying Home, Jones Beachhead, 125th Parade*** This limited edition is available through Discofon Tontrager GmbH, Krogerstrasse 4 D, 6000 Frankfurt/Main, West Germany.

CHARLES MINGUS
Passions of a Man
Atlantic 3ESD600

Portrait
Prestige 24092

Atlantic's three LP set is an overview of Mingus' music - as reflected in the recordings he made for them in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. They reveal a great deal about the intense creativity which always marked Mingus' music. Undoubtedly the unity of purpose expressed by the musicians in the early years resulted in the overpowering performances which are drawn here from "Pithecanthropus Erectus" (***Pithecanthropus Erectus, Profile of Jackie***), "The Clown" (***Reincarnation of a Lovebird, Haitian Fight Song***) and "Blues and Roots" (***Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting, Crying Blues***). The first two of these albums have long been unavailable and would make an excellent two LP set. Inevitably in a compilation such as this, one third of the music comes from the final years when Mingus' ferocity was dampened down by his declining physical strength. He was surrounded then by musicians whose statements seem lightweight in comparison to such people as Roland Kirk, Jackie McLean, Booker Ervin, John Handy and Jimmy Knepper. Because two thirds of this set is drawn from "Oh Yeah," "Tonight at Noon" and the abovementioned early LPs it must be


PAUL LOVENS (photograph by Enrico Romero)

recommended to anyone who doesn't have the original recordings. As a bonus there is a three minute monolog by the bassist.

"Portrait" repackages two of Mingus' own productions which were also released by Fantasy as Town Hall Concert (JWS9) and My Favorite Quintet (JWS5). They date from 1964 and 1965 and have, as a common denominator, long versions of ***So Long Eric***. Johnny Coles, Clifford Jordan and Eric Dolphy are the horn players at Town Hall and Lonnie Hillyer and Charles McPherson take care of things in Minneapolis. These are both exciting performances by cohesive groups of musicians who were finely tuned to Mingus' demands. Eric Dolphy's genius gives the music an added dimension, of course, but all of the other horn players have much to say. Underpinning everything was Jaki Byard. The broad range of his musical horizons was a perfect foil for Mingus' vision and he came to rely on the pianist's skills and organising ability. These concert recordings are well recorded momentos from an important period of Mingus' career.

MEAN MOTHERS
Independent Women's Blues, Volume One
Rosetta 1300

WOMEN'S RAILROAD BLUES
Sorry But I Can't Take You
Rosetta 1301

The pool of blues recordings from the period before 1942 is large and seemingly bottomless. The earliest reissues concentrated on artists who had gained wider recognition (Jefferson, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Leroy Carr). They were followed by Origin, Yazoo and Roots who, between them, put out a huge body of recordings. The music was usually arranged in regional and stylistic groups. Now we are getting some of the same material in 'thematic' collections. Stash took care of pornography, prostitution and narcotics, Magpie took care of the pianists, and now, it seems, Rosetta Records is going to present various aspects of the woman's viewpoint.

Whatever sociological twists might be at play in Rosetta Reitz's presentations there can be no questioning the quality or musicality of these recordings. "Mean Mothers" is the more interesting of these two records. There's a wider range of expression to be found in the material and, somewhat surprisingly, only six selections have been on LP in recent years as far as I can ascertain. The singers, although not among the most famous of female blues singers, for the most part, are all worthy of our attention. The accompaniments are full of interest — both these LPs offer generous glimpses of some of the best jazz musicians active between 1925 and 1949.

The "Railroad" LP theme wears a little thin. There are two versions of both ***Freight Train Blues*** and ***Panama Limited***, for instance, and not all of the recordings are top quality examples by the artists. Outstanding, though, are the Lucille Bogan songs and Chippie Hill's version of ***Panama Limited***. Both these ladies knew how to sing the blues!

Taken together, these LPs are an excellent introduction to the various viewpoints of the Women of the Blues. Listed below are the selections for each LP with other reissues noted where known.

1300: Martha Copeland: ***Good Time Mama/ Bessie Brown/Ain't Much Good In the Best of Men Nowadays***; Maggie Jones: ***You Ain't Gonna Feed In My Pasture Now*** (VJM VLP 25); Susie Edwards (Butterbeans and Susie): ***Oh Yeah***; Bernice Edwards: ***Long Tall Mama*** (Magpie 4404, Saydisc 182), Gladys Bentley: ***How Much Can I Stand***; Mary Dixon: ***You Can't Sleep In My Bed***; Bertha Idaho: ***Move It On Out of Here***; Rosa Henderson: ***Can't Be Bothered With No Shiek***; Harlem Hannah (Peggy English): ***Keep Your Nose Out of Mama's Business***; Lil Armstrong: ***Or Leave Me Alone*** (MCA (J) 3079, Ace of Hearts 161); Blue Lu Barker: ***I Don't Dig You Jack*** (Tax 10" LP); Rosetta Howard: ***Come Easy Go Easy*** (MCA (G) 30109 Blues Box 2); Ida Cox: ***One Hour Mama***; Lil Green: ***Why Don't You Do Right*** (RCA LPV-574); Billie Holiday: ***Baby Get Lost*** (MCA 2-4006).

1301: Trixie Smith: ***Freight Train Blues*** (Decca DL4434); Clara Smith: ***Freight Train Blues*** (VJM VLP 17); Bessie Smith: ***Chicago Bound Blues*** (Columbia G30126); Trixie Smith: ***Choo Choo Blues/Railroad Blues*** (Collectors Classics 29); Clara Smith: ***The L & N Blues***; Chippie Hill: ***Panama Limited*** (Herwin 103); Ada Brown: ***Panama Limited*** (Pirate 515, Historical 16); Sippie Wallace: ***Mail Train Blues*** (Jazum 6, CBS 65421); Martha Copeland: ***Mr. Brakeman Let Me Ride Your Train***; Bessie Jackson (Lucille Bogan): ***T N & O Blues*** (Roots 317)***/I Hate That Train Called The M & O*** (Origin 6); Blue Lu Barker: ***He Caught That B & O*** (Tax 10" LP); Sister Rosetta Tharpe: ***This Train***; Nora Lee King: ***Cannon Ball*** (MCA (G) 30109).

GEORGE WALLINGTON

Our Delight
Prestige 24093

The trio sides which make up the first half of this twofer are exquisite examples of bebop piano. They were recorded in 1952 and 1953 with Max Roach on drums and Charles Mingus, Oscar Pettiford and Curley Russell sharing the bass responsibilities. The 1953 session of eight tunes with Russell and Roach is particularly good. This music has been available for some time on Prestige 7857 ("Trios") and this reissue still contains a lot of extraneous surface noise.

The second LP in this set was originally titled "Jazz for the Carriage Trade" and is a quintet date with Donald Byrd, Phil Woods, Teddy Kotick and Art Taylor. This is idiomatic music in the Silver/Blakey mold and everyone plays well. The ensembles are cleanly played and the relaxed empathy of all concerned indicates that this was much more than a casual record date. Nonetheless Wallington's own contributions are much less notable - there isn't a single composition of his own here whereas ten of the trio pieces were written by him.

Wallington has been inactive for twenty years so it is nice to have available this reminder of his considerable talent.

BILLIE HOLIDAY
I'll Be Seeing You
Commodore XFL15351

Billie's final two Commodore sessions (April 1 and 8, 1944) are presented here. The earlier sessions are on Commodore 14428 and all of the songs were on Atlantic 1614. This reissue has all the original 78 versions of the songs and alternates of all but ***On The Sunny Side Of The Street***. The alternates of ***Billie's Blues*** and ***Lover Come Back To Me*** were used on Atlantic 1614 and all of them were included in the Japanese two record set on London 3003.

Billie's versions of these songs (***I'll Be Seeing You, I'm Yours, Embraceable You, As Time Goes By, He's Funny That Way, Lover Come Back, Billie's Blues*** and ***Sunny Side***) are the definitive interpretations. She put her mark on a song — it was never the same once Billie Holiday had sung it. Even though there's not much to choose between the different takes of the songs it's a nice bonus to have them.

WOODY SHAW
Blackstone Legacy
Contemporary 7627/8

Recorded in 1970, this two LP set is a rougher, less slick version of much of the music being recorded at that time on CTI by young up and coming musicians. Apart from Shaw, this set features Gary Bartz (alto sax), Benny Maupin (tenor sax), George Cables (piano), Ron Carter or Clint Houston (bass) and Lenny White (drums).

The music heard here is an outgrowth beyond the kind of blowing sessions which made Blue Note Records famous in the 1960s but its lack of harmonic ingenuity also makes this very boring. The improvising is rambling and undisciplined, for the most part, and the band lacks the internal balance necessary for success. Like many recordings, this music merely reflects the time when it was recorded, and has little relevance ten years later.

ART BLAKEY
Once Upon A Groove
Blue Note LT-1065

Only the most dedicated of Art Blakey's enthusiasts will have more than a cursory knowledge of this 1957 Pacific Jazz recording. The band with Bill Hardman, Jackie McLean, Sam Dockery and Spanky DeBrest recorded for seven or eight different labels during its brief existence. Johnny Griffin was to replace McLean before Blakey restructured the Messengers with the arrival of Lee Morgan and Benny Golson. Jackie McLean is the brightest light in this well executed set of original tunes from within the jazz community but the extra dimension of both earlier and later versions of The Messengers explains why this band is, ultimately, less interesting.

All of the tunes except for ***Little T*** were originally on Pacific Jazz 402 and 1275 (dropped from these LPs is ***Ritual***). ***Little T*** was on Pacific Jazz JWC 508.

RECENT RELEASES

LEROY VINNEGAR SEXTET
'Leroy Walks!' Contemporary S 7542
SHELLY MANNE and His Men at the Black Hawk 'Volume 2' " S 7578
JOE HENDERSON
'Relaxin' At Camarillo' " 14006
JAY HOGGARD
'Rain Forest' " 14007
STU GOLDBERG
'Piru' MPS 0068.262
MONTY ALEXANDER/ERNEST RANGLIN MPS 0068.269
MONTY ALEXANDER/ RAY BROWN/ HERB ELLIS' 'Trio' Concord CJ 136

CAL COLLINS / HERB ELLIS
'Interplay' " " 137
STEPHANE GRAPPELLI
'At The Winery' " " 139
JAMES WILLIAMS
'Images (Of Things To Come)' " " 140
WOODY HERMAN
'A Concord Jam' " " 142
JOHNNY LYTLE
'Fast Hands' Muse MR 5185
ETTA JONES
'Save Your Love For Me' " " 5214
NEAL CREQUE
'Black Velvet Rose' " " 5226
GUNTER CHRISTMANN/ Gerd Dudek/ Albert Mangelsdorff/ Paul Rutherford/ Manfred Schoof/ Kenny Wheeler: 'Horns' FMP 0060
BROTZMANN/ MOHOLO / MILLER 'The Nearer The Bone, The Sweeter The Meat' 0690
'Hormusik' " 0790
(Free Music Production, Behaimstrasse 4, 1000 Berlin 10, West Germany)
LARRY VUCKOVITCH
'Blue Balkan' Inner City IC 1096
WAYNE JOHNSON
'Arrowhead' " 1098
SHUNZO OHNO
'Quarter Moon' " 1108
KELLIS ETHRIDGE
'Tomorrow Sky' " 1109
CARLOS FRANZETTI
'Galaxy Dust' " 1113
THE GREAT JAZZ TRIO
'Kindness, Joy, Love & Happiness' " 6023
TERUMASA HINO
'Daydream' " 6069
CONNIE CROTHERS
'Solo' Jazz Records 4
TED HARRIS
'Presents Five Giants of Jazz' H&D
(Harris & Dyer, P.O. Box 34, Teaneck, N.J. 07666 U.S.A.)
ART PEPPER With Strings
'Winter Moon' Galaxy GXY-5140
RON CARTER
'Patrao' Milestone M-9099
HEINASIRRKA DENNIS GONZALEZ
'Air Light (Sleep Sailor)' Daagnim
RON BUCKNAM
'Hints' "
(Daagnim, 1127 N. Clinton, Dallas, Texas 75208 USA).
JOSEPH JARMAN/Don Moye/Johnny Dyani
'Black Paladins' Black Saint 0042
DAVID MURRAY OCTET
'Ming' " " 0045
GEORGE GRUNTZ Concert Jazzband
'Live at Quartier Latin' MPS 0088.051
RAY LINN and the Chicago Stompers
'Empty Suit Blues' Discovery 823
ERNIE ANDREWS
'From The Heart' " 825
LOREZ ALEXANDRIA with Mike Wofford
'Songs of Johnny Mercer' " 826
TOSHI TSUCHTORI Solo drums
'Ajagara' D.Y.M. 003
(available from Bellows Records, 214 East 11th Street, # 3A, New York, N.Y. 10003 USA).
ERIC WATSON
'Bull's Blood' OWL 023
(Owl Records, 50, Rue Liancourt, 75014 Paris).
HENRY & JOHN KUNTZ (cassette)
'New World Music' Hummingbird Tapes 001
HENRY KUNTZ, JOHN GRUNTFEST (lp)
'Ancient of days, light of glory' 1002
(Record & tape each $6.00 U.S. & Canada, $10.00 each overseas from Henry Kuntz, 1921 Walnut # 1, Berkeley, CA 94704 USA).

WALDO'S GUTBUCKET SYNCOPATORS
'Feelin' Devilish' Stomp Off 1001
TERRY WALDO
'Wizard of the Keyboard' " " 1002
PERUNA JAZZMEN
'Come on & stomp, stomp, stomp'" " 1003
SCANIAZZ
'Messin' Around' " " 1004
CANAL STREET JAZZ BAND
'New Orleans Stomp' " " 1005
(Stomp Off Records, 549 Fairview Terrace, York, PA 17403 USA).
CLARE FISCHER
'Alone Together' Discovery 820
(also on MPS 0068.178; reviewed in ***Coda***, issue 177, page 25)
ANDRES BOIARSKY
"Plays South of the Border" Spotlite 18
AL HAIG/JAMIL NASSER
'Expressly Ellington' " 20
SANDY BROWN
'Splanky' " 901
JACKIE McLEAN
'Vertigo' Blue Note LT-1085
LEE MORGAN " " " 1091
JIMMY SMITH
'On The Sunny Side' " " " 1092
ALLEN VIZZUTTI Headfirst 9700
"BUG ALLEY" PM 019
MINGUS DYNASTY
'Live at Montreux' WEA 99145
OKAY TEMIZ
'Drummer Of Two Worlds' WEA 58 186
WARREN JAMES AND FRIENDS
'Floating on a Dark Wind' WAJA JRC 80864
(Waja Records, Box 433, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 USA)
VON FREEMAN QUARTET
'Young and Foolish' Daybreak 002
(Daybreak Records, P.O. Box 7734, 1117 ZL Schiphol, The Netherlands).
JOHNNY HARTMAN
'Once in Every Life' Bee Hive 7012
DAN WALL
'Song for the Night' Landslide 1002
MILCHO LEVIEV Quartet with Art Pepper
'Blues for the Fisherman' MOLE 1
GIL EVANS Orchestra - 'The Rest Of... Live at The Royal Festival Hall 1978' " 3
CURTIS CLARK
'New York City Wildlife' Anima 13254
(Anima Productions, 231 East 5th St., New York , N.Y. 10003 USA).
RIO CLEMENTE & Friends
'Antigua' Reality 8001
(Reality Records, Box 824, Elizabeth, N.J. 07207)
RUFUS REID Trio
'Perpetual Stroll' Theresa 111
'FULL FAITH & CREDIT' Palo Alto 8001
AL HAIG / Jamil Nasser
'Interplay' SeaBreeze 1005
'Piano Time' " " 1006
JIM HOWARD/PAT SULLIVAN Orchestra
'No Compromise' " " 2005
GENE RUSSELL
'Autumn Leaves' " " 3001
(SeaBreeze Records, Box 717, Mentone, CA 92359 USA)
BJORN MILDER
'The Swing Piano My Way' Kenneth 2048
KENNY DAVERN
'El Radio Scuffle' " 2050
ALAN LAURILLARD
'New Blues' Kloet Muziek
(Alan Laurillard, Burg. Wiersumstraat 34, 9967 RD Eenrum, Netherlands).
MICHAL URBANIAK
'Music for Violin & Jazz Quartet' Jam 001

AROUND THE WORLD

CANADA

PWD (88 Yorkville Avenue) is the most recent club in Toronto to become involved with jazz. It is a spacious and comfortable bar/restaurant which has the seating capacity to support the presentation of well known entertainers. It has begun cautiously with Jodi Drake and Don Francks. Upcoming is an engagement for tenor saxophonist Eugene Amaro. There was a good crowd on hand to welcome Don Francks' zany mixture of satire, song and music which was capped by his exploratory look at the possibilities of ***Bye Bye Blackbird***.... Both Teddy Wilson and Benny Carter open two week stints in Toronto May 25 — Teddy is at Bourbon Street while Carter is at Lytes. Joe Pass follows Carter and will be performing solo — two shows a night, Ella Fitzgerald will be at the Imperial Room of the Royal York Hotel from June 16 to 27.... Dr. McJazz was the Sunday afternoon attraction during May at the Valhalla Inn's Mermaid Lounge.... Wild Bill Davison was in good form at the Chick'n Deli in April when he shared the bandstand with Jim Galloway. Bud Freeman was back at the same club in early May and Phil Antonacci was a frequent guest.

Chico Hamilton has been signed to write the music for a new Canadian film called "By Design".... Saxophonist Eric Stach toured the Maritimes in April before returning to his regular Tuesday night gigs at the Embassy Hotel in London, Ontario.... Calgary's jazz musicians have a chance to display their talents every Sunday evening at Shenanigans.... Ed Bickert and Don Thompson will be appearing in Windsor June 22.... CBC Merchandising (Box 500, Station A, Toronto M5W 1E6) has a new catalog available. It lists the many jazz recordings of Canadian musicians which can ***only*** be purchased by mail from the CBC. It's worth checking out.

— John Norris

TORONTO — Over the years, certain writers in ***Coda*** have helped establish the quality and style of our publication, and so, when one of them leaves, because there are still manuscripts not yet published, it takes a little while to realise the loss. Of course I am talking of Art Lange. Some months ago he stopped writing for ***Coda***, and moved on to the position of associate editor of ***down beat***. Rather than be distressed by this action, I have come to understand its significance. It simply meansthat Art will continue his quality opinions in a mass circulation magazine, thus enabling the spirit he infused in ***Coda*** to reach a new, and hopefully, expanding audience. Thanks Art.

Sometimes the finest music in Toronto is not always found in the most obvious places. A chintzy, but moderately priced restaurant called the Bloor Street Diner, was for some months one such establishment. The music was performed by Terry Forster (bass) and Gary Williamson (piano), and the high quality of performance attracted a number of "sitters-in". Among them saxophonist Glenn McDonald, pianists Ian Bargh and Loek Dikker, and the young guitarist, whom I suspect we will hear much more of in the future, Reg Schwager. Regretfully I write this in the past tense, as this occasion has ended. There is however still the solo piano music of Diane Roblin taking place there.

We have had an abundance of visitors to ***Coda*** in the last few months, among them Dutch pianist Loek Dikker, and the Dutch painter Paul Simons, Julius Hemphill, and from Vancouver pianist Paul Plimley. Some pleasant surprises.

The Music Gallery, in cooperation with the Goethe Institute sponsored an evening of German improvised music with the duet of Gunter Christmann and Detlef Schonenberg. I have had the fortune of hearing this duet several times before at the Moers Festival and in 1979 I toured Canada with Christmann. The music this time was much more restrained, and a great deal of the interest came from the articulate and sensitive percussion work of Schonenberg, who illustrated clearly what should happen with the expanded drum kit.

In late October-early November The Music Gallery will sponsor the yearly 'Ear It Live Festival, which this year will take place in Toronto, Peterborough, Kingston, London, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Sherbrooke. Phone Al Mattes at The Music Gallery, (416) 598-2400.

The Edge continues with its Sunday evening jazz sessions, and have included Claude Ranger's quintet, Peter Leitch's quintet, Silk Stockings, and the Roscoe Mitchell Sound Ensemble. With Roscoe was Hugh Ragin (trumpet), Spencer Barefield (guitar), Jaribu Shahid (bass) and Tani Tabbal (drums). Unlike the surreal music often associated with Roscoe Mitchell, this quintet leaned more towards Mitchell's Art Ensemble image, but with considerably more variety. The program of continuously linked compositions ranged from downright funk to beautifully dreamy ballads. A most wonderful evening, that will hopefully occur again later in the year.

PETER LEITCH (photograph by Paul Carignan)

On one of my rare visits to George's Spaghetti House, the music was the new Jim Galloway quartet, with Peter Leitch and Steve Wallace, presenting Jim in a more modern concept than is usually associated with him. Check out this group!

For the latter four Wednesdays in July, The Cabana Room in the Spadina Hotel (corner of King & Spadina) will become the summer home of the new Jazz. Artists appearing will be myself, David Lee, David Prentice, Rainer Wiens, Jerry Berg, Bill Grove, Rick Bannard, Ann Lindsay, John Oslansky and even more. Come check us out, we are the future.

— Bill Smith

THE BILL SMITH ENSEMBLE
BILL SMITH (reeds)
DAVID LEE (bass & cello)
DAVID PRENTICE (violin)

PRESENT FOUR WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
OF NEW MUSIC * JULY 1981

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:

Wednesday, July 8
Peripheral Vision: Rainer Wiens (guitar), Jerry Berg (trumpet), Bill Grove (alto sax)

Wednesday, July 15
White Noise: Bill Grove, Jerry Berg with Rick Bannard (drums) & Derek Pantling (bass)

Wednesday, July 22
Air Raid: Bill Smith, Bill Grove, Jerry Berg & John Oslansky (soprano sax) * & Risquet: David Prentice, David Lee, Ann Lindsay (violin)

Wednesday, July 29
Maury Coles solo saxophone

$3.00 Admission * 9 PM * An Onari Production

EDMONTON — March 20th and 21st at the Palms Cafe the Mingus Dynasty rolled in for what should have been one of the most exciting concerts of the year. Instead the audience received a short set and for the most part a rather disturbing coolness. Disturbing in that Charles Mingus's music calls for a good deal of feeling, not the precise, clinical performance that, for example, Randy Brecker gave. Clifford Jordan played adequate tenor solos without ever really pulling out the jams. Restraint is to be complimented, except in this case where it lent even more of a technical feel to the music, rather than the desperately needed compensation to Brecker's coldness.

On piano, Sir Roland Hanna was hard-pressed to warm up this chilly night. Expressive piano player that he is however, at his best he brought spring into the music, slightly offsetting the horn section's winter.

Mike Richmond and Billy Hart were a wonderful rhythm section. Richmond executed contrapuntal lines with marvelous dexterity, speed and incredible intuition, weaving about Hart's ferocious drumming. Hart was a veritable tiger, drumming with liberal rimshots and fills, alternately soft and hard when the music

called for it. Next time out with the Mingus Dynasty, hopefully we'll be treated to a longer show with a thawed-out horn section.

The Palms came alive March 24th to 28th with the superb Johnny Griffin Quartet. What a treat this was; the type of concert you never want to finish. Effort was the key here; the point being there didn't seem to be any. The music flowed like a fine wine, smooth and easy. Perhaps brandy is the proper fluid, for the fire in this performance was extraordinary.

The speed and coordination of young Kenny Washington was an example for all drummers. Without shedding a drop of sweat he worked his way around his kit drumming baffling polyrhythms. His being a bit overpowering at times was the only flaw in his performance.

Ray Drummond was phenomenal; his bass textures were dark and heavy, meandering in and around the music, startling suddenly with an exceptionally fast run. On piano, Ronnie Mathews didn't waste a single note. His fingers strolled effortlessly along the keyboard, and his solos with their odd honky tonk tinge were very enjoyable.

On top of this, Johnny Griffin injected a joy that is rare to hear. Griffin poured out notes, taking his playing right to the edge, always with enough restraint to hold it there. The multi-layered rhythms twisted through the club, the band's sound not only hot but majestic in its totality. In a very elegant version of Ellington's ***Prelude To A Kiss***, Griffin showed that he can play it cool too. Without a doubt the most exciting concert of the year.

Down at the Banff Centre's Jazz School this year, Dave Holland, Kenny Wheeler and Lee Konitz are among the teachers. This brings the promise of some good concerts this summer.

*— **Charles Mandel***

MONTREAL — The most exciting event these past months occurred at the Musee des Beaux Arts in March, where capacity crowds saw two dance films: Christian Blackwood's "Tap Dancin' " and George Nirenberg's "No Maps On My Taps", plus a live performance by veteran tap dancers Charles (Chuck) Green and Howard (Sandman) Sims.

"Tap Dancin' " investigates a wide range of past and current talent. It begins with Phil Black teaching a class of kids the shuffle, pull-backs, brakes, poly-rhythms and the like. During an interview he explains that a tap, like an instrument, creates a music to be enjoyed. For this reason, he points out, accents, shadings and off beats are of primary importance.

The Copascetics are caught in their act, sporting black derbies and checked pants, keeping the art form alive. The film captures the African beat and its accompanying dance rituals, which are said to be the historical roots of tap dancing. Honi Coles recounts his 1921 voyage from Charleston (South Carolina) north to New York City on a cotton boat, plus his fond memories of the Hoofer Club where he first saw Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and "Buck And Bubbles" (both of whom are presented in some old Hollywood footage).

An interview with John Bubbles is absolutely priceless. He explains with regret the experience of the black face, whereby he and others had to darken their faces so as to appear like whites made up as blacks. He also makes a distinction between the white and black tap dancers. Whereas the former reads, that is counts, the beat mentally, the latter feels the rhythm in the soul. The Nicholas Bros. are also featured, and a Ms. Richman and her Jazz Percussion Tap Ensemble present some contemporary versions of tap dancing. Ms. Richman is a particularly articulate student of the art. Amongst other things, she talks about how the tempos and complexity of bebop tended to make tap dancing obsolete (with the obvious exception of Baby Laurence).

"No Maps On My Taps" documents the personal history and art of Chuck Green, Sandman Sims and Bunny Briggs. All three are caught rehearsing, jiving in the streets, reminiscing, and performing with Lionel Hampton at Small's Paradise. Bunny Briggs recalls how dancing was part of his childhood and helped pay the rent. And on the art, he emphasizes the importance of improvisation and freedom.

Sandman Sims refers to the street as his school, and speaks of the importance of competition in drawing out the best in a person. Chuck Green, from the famous "Chuck And Chuckles", recounts the evolution of tap dancing, from the southern plantation to the asphalt jungles, while lamenting the debilitating effects of rock music.

Although "Tap Dancin' " is a more extensive documentary, it could have done with some editing. "No Maps On My Taps" is a more modest effort, and as a result is more coherent as a film. Both are essential documents, and should be considered required viewing.

Ultimately, it is the live performance which captures the essence of the art. 70-year-old Chuck Green and 50-year-old Sandman Sims, accompanied by a piano trio, presented brilliant renditions of such classics as ***A Foggy Day, Caravan*** and ***Take The A Train***. Chuck Green's agile designs of swinging sound completely defied his tall, lanky stature and innocent grin. Throughout Sandman Sims mimicked and cajoled, but when his turn came the hokum evolved into a flashing dandyism, especially on his famous sand board where he recreated the sounds of an accelerating locomotive. Together Green and Sims presented their craft with the enthusiasm of youngsters a third their age. The audience was thoroughly captivated and enthralled. Encore! And thank you Patrick Darby of the Musee.

Coincidentally, Le Ballet National du Senegal was in town at Place des Arts the same weekend, so I personally had an opportunity to catch a whole lot of dancin'. To top things off, Uptown Records of Montreal (3355 Queen Mary Rd., Apt. 427) has just released John Bubbles' "Back On Broadway".

Evelyn Dubois of Specdici organised a Quebec tour for the Miroslav Vitous Group - Vitous (acoustic and electric bass), Kenny Kirkland (electric piano), John Surman (baritone & soprano saxophones, bass clarinet), and Jon Christensen (drums). Concerts included stops at Quebec City, Rimouski, Plesserville, Vaudreuil, Granby and Le Transit in Montreal.

The winter / spring programme at Rockhead's included a whole host of mainstream jazz and blues. The summer billing begins with Jay McShann (June 3-7), Phil Woods (June 10-14), Eartha Kitt (June 16-21) and Big Mama Thornton (June 25-28; July 1-5). Doudou Boicel has decided against another Festijazz, but plans to showcase Ray Charles July 9 and 10 at Place des Arts. CBC's "Quebec Report" is currently making a documentary on Doudou which includes footage of Dizzy at Rockhead's.

Len Dobbin celebrated his sixth year on the air (Jazz 96) and began a Thursday column in the ***Gazette***, the only English daily in Montreal. This column is long overdue, and provides a good deal of the local information listed below.

Ivan Symonds' Jazz Bar remains THE place to sit in, and with the installation of an upright piano, bookings have grown. Nelson (Ivan's cousin) and his trio play there regularly, as well as pianists Billy Horne and Kenny Skinner, tenor saxophonist Joe Burrell, Toronto guitarist Peter Leitch, violinist Harry Enlow and trumpeter Bernie Brien.

Pianist Roland Lavallee and his trio of Richie Paris (tenor) and Jean Cyr (bass) moved into Le Rolet, a bar in the Hotel Meridian, while altoist Dave Turner and his trio of Tim Jackson (piano) and Dennis James (bass) replaced Roland at George's, a restaurant/bar on Crescent Street.

Nick Ayoub presented his Provincial Conservatory Jazz Ensemble at the Bibliotheque Nationale, while McGill University's Gerry Danovitch led a trombone and tuba workshop/concert with Ian McDougall from Toronto and Bill Watrous from Los Angeles.

Jean Beaudet and Robert LeRiche spent the better part of November in Bordeaux, France on a cultural exchange, and performed their free improvisations at Vehicule Art here in Montreal on April 29, as did Eric Stach on April 26.

*— **Peter Danson***

CHRISTMANN/SCHONENBERG

SAW Gallery, Ottawa
April 7, 1981

Gunter Christmann was back in Ottawa at the SAW Gallery on Tuesday, April 7th. He gave an exciting concert before an audience of 80 people that filled the gallery. It was a heartening change from his last appearance in the area at one of Bernard Stepien's legendary concerts in Hull: there only a modest audience turned out to hear him. It was a change musically, too, from that first appearance. Then he was beginning a tour with the New Art Music Ensemble; at SAW he was with percussionist Detlef Schonenberg, and he gave a more forthright, driving performance than before. As he explained to me, as an improvising musician, he had to adapt his playing to that of the New Art Ensemble, whose style is subtle and quiet.

Christmann employed more extensively the traditional sonorities of the jazz trombone and many of the most traditional effects of the instrument in jazz — smears, glissandi, a rough shouting tone. There were stomping, up-tempo passages with Christmann riding above Schonenberg's drums in a style at once contemporary and old-fashioned. At the other extreme, one piece opened with Schonenberg stroking the cymbals with a bass bow, while Christmann produced breath effects on his muted trombone.

Schonenberg's assembly of percussion instruments was extensive but not exotic. When he stood up to move around, gently stroking the cymbals or pressing on the drums for unusual effects, he was in the best tradition of avant-garde percussion playing, with its air of a sensitive, sometimes precious, savouring of sounds almost too delicate for the audience to hear. When he sat down, however, to his two bass drums and his many side drums, we were much closer to ***Skin Deep*** and ***Sing, Sing, Sing***.

There were many exciting moments in this evening of free jazz: the high pitched sound of a reed blown within the trombone piercing the air over a sea of cymbals; a long, continuous

drone of circular breathing accompanied by brushed drums; dramatic surprises when the trombone ripped forth in the midst of sonorous musings.

For one piece, Christmann played bass. Once again, there were unusual effects, as in the opening when he made the bow skid over the strings. Some of the sounds, such as tapping the side of the bass, were commonplaces of avant-garde music making, where variety of texture is constantly sought and rather ordinary noises are accepted because they are unexpected. There is a great distance, that has not of late always been observed, between a good saxophone player messing around with a tambourine, and the developed, integrated sound of a Max Roach or a Sunny Murray. Listening to Christmann on bass was for me like hearing Ornette Coleman play trumpet or violin. It made a change, but the mastery on the main instrument put it in its place.

The concert was made possible by the generosity of the German government's Goethe Institute in Ottawa. It is a pity that other cultural attaches are not as adventurous.

— Trevor Tolley

AMERICA

ANN ARBOR — The Detroit Jazz Center, which seemed to have ended earlier this year, reopened in April with weekends of performances by Donald Byrd, Leo Smith and Bennie Maupin (Maupin and Byrd used local jazz musicians assembled by music director Sam Saunders; Smith brought his own group, New Delta Ahkri). May was to feature Detroiter Allan Barnes, Jackie McLean, the Mandingo Griot Society, Ernie Krivda with the Charles Boles Trio and Ben Sidran. June 5-7 will see guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer, June 26-27 the Air Trio, and in July Sam Rivers will lead a large ensemble. All performances take place in the Center's first floor World Stage Cafe, which now features full food service (lunch and dinner) under the direction of Charles Henderson. The Jazz Studies Program is back in operation as well (on the fourth floor of the former Women's City Club). The Center has employed some unusual methods to survive the twin chills of the depressed economy and Federal funding cutbacks — director John Sinclair notes "We're heavily into barter".

Meanwhile things are looking more promising at Baker's Keyboard Lounge on the city's west side. As we go to press trumpeter Red Rodney and multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan are making a rare appearance. Ahmad Jamal was scheduled the latter part of the month; Sonny Stitt and the Claude Black Trio are in residence June 5-21, with Barney Kessel's Trio featured June 25-28.

This summer Eclipse is expected to repeat its annual series of free outdoor concerts in various parks and plazas in Ann Arbor. In Detroit there are two different concert series planned. The Ponchartrain Hotel's P'Jazz series will be back for its tenth consecutive year, with 23 concerts (on the second-floor terrace) between June and September. A similar series (with fewer concerts and a more commercial tilt) is scheduled in the Detroit Plaza Hotel in the Renaissance Center. There will probably also be some free concerts in the downtown Washington Boulevard mall.

The Montreux-Detroit International Jazz Festival is slated to return for its second go-around September 2-7. The advance publicity lists a lot of interesting names, although I suspect there will be some changes. Currently scheduled are vocalists Betty Carter and Sarah Vaughan, pianists Marian McPartland, Joanne Brackeen, McCoy Tyner and Adam Makowicz, saxophonist Archie Shepp (with Mal Waldron, who will also play solo), Moe Koffman's Quintet (graced with guitarist Ed Bickert), pianist Herbie Hancock and others. There will also be a number of local performers included in these concerts. Such richness does have its drawbacks — the University of Michigan's Eclipse Jazz group has cancelled the Ann Arbor Jazz Festival which has occupied the last weekend in September for the past three years. The Detroit-Montreux was cited as one reason, along with tight finances and the difficulty of getting such a large event underway so early in the school year. However, Eclipse may produce a mid-winter festival instead, which would be a nice antidote for the cold.

Finally, we should note that Carmen's in Detroit now offers afterhours jazz on Sundays (3AM to 6AM) with drummer P.J. Valerina's Quintet. The band includes trumpeter Herbie Williams, saxophonist Charlie Brown, pianist Todd Carlan and bassist Robert Allen.

— David Wild

BALTIMORE — Owing to the recent demise of my automobile, I haven't been able to get to Washington recently, but there's been more than enough good music to hear to keep the listener's ears full. At the mercilessly chilly Red Door Hall late in the winter Joe McPhee declared his intention to "move the molecules around and see if we can heat this place up." It was so cold his soprano sax effectively froze, but that didn't stop him. His ***Images*** suite built from a quietly intense, slowly building valve trombone/spit manipulation movement to the thermal sparks of his tenor finale. Of all his instruments, it's the tenor on which McPhee is most emotionally direct and powerful: first in whirlwind motion, then muscularly keening in a wide vibrato that kept the different tones spinning in your ear — a sure sign he'd gotten the air moving at least.

At Morgan State University a couple of weeks later, Chico Freeman covered an impressive range of material. On tenor he was gentle on Cecil McBee's lovely ballad ***Close to You Alone***, and a firebrand elsewhere; on bass clarinet he tipped his hat to Dolphy (***Swing Out***), and on soprano played two instrumental parts, high and low, of a spirited rag. He was joined by McBee, whose high-register solos consist of complex chromatic runs that talk, too; by Dennis Moorman, a crowd-pleasing and mature pianist who gravitated toward the high end of the keyboard; and by whipthin and irrepressible Dannie Richmond who with the bassist propelled the quartet with his jittery drive, and popped up front to scat, in a surprisingly high boy-alto voice, along with Chico's alto flute on ***Peaceful Heart, Gentle Spirit***. Freeman, lounging off to stage right while the other players soloed, seemed to enjoy his band as much as the enthusiastic audience did.

The Left Bank Jazz Society has been holding Sunday evening concerts for eighteen years. At the Famous Ballroom on 22 March, Reggie Workman's Top Shelf presented the mainstream postbop sound the Left Bank favors: Horace Silver tunes, some Messengers-era Wayne Shorter, a little Latin (one member of the band confided Reggie had told them not to play too far out because of where they were playing). Hulking young tenorist Arthur Rhames created a local sensation, and seemed uneasy with the crowd's adulation. He slips 32nd note flurries into his lines; he's obviously following Trane's tracks, but his tone isn't close enough to Coltrane's to be obnoxious. He showed that he's a fine Tyner-meets-Tatum pianist too, better in fact than the band's regular pianist Donald Smith. Strong, clear sounding trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater risked, and pulled off, a congested solo on a Miles Davis tune (***All Blues***). Workman and Steve McCall are a perfect rhythm team, dispensing with the other players for a pair of duets. McCall as always 'told a story,' made extraordinary use of extreme dynamic contrasts, and bustled even on the ballads; Workman plucked bass notes as long and full as if they'd been bowed. Solos were short.

REGGIE WORKMAN (photograph by Valerie Wilmer)

Easter Sunday (April 19) the Left Bank's attraction was Ted Curson's Big Eight, a successful, rich sounding unit due to three percussionists and contrasting soloists, with Nick Brignola's bop-drenched baritone (reminiscent of Booker Ervin's tenor in a passionate moment) at one extreme and Ryo Kawasaki's wailing, effects-laden electric guitar at the other. Ryo displayed careful, pedal-manipulated tonal shadings on a bluesy solo from ***Please Please Please Don't Put The Pigfoot In The Kreplach Soup***, but at other times he lapsed into rocky bombast. Pianist Jim McNeely's solos were consistently substantial, from his hard attack on a pentatonic blues (***Kreplach***) to his perverse

runaway stride (*'Round Midnight*). Ted's tropospheric streaks, rapid fingerings, vocal half-valve smears and interpolations (including a timely quote from ***Easter Parade***) were strung into long lines. His compositions, many of which feature one note, are similarly elongated, containing intermittent backing riffs, acapella solos, and spontaneously orchestrated duos. ***Snake Johnson*** is an elaborate blowing vehicle that allows for solo choruses of varying length.

No Fish Today on N. Eutaw St., a bar too disheveled to be really trendy, has become the place in town to see national blues acts. A favorite is Koko Taylor, who on April 15 followed Luther Allison's appearance the previous evening. Her Blues Machine, fronted by guitarist "Maestro" Sanders, was slightly more rockish than in previous incarnations, a reminder that Chicago blues is an evolving form. While Koko rested from her typically spirited romps through the Chicago blues book, Maestro stepped out; from his repertoire, but not his playing or singing, it's apparent that B.B. King is a model. Sanders however seems to have found his own voice.

The oddest thing to be seen locally was Eugene Chadbourne's "free improvised country & western bebop" band at Johns Hopkins on March 7. The quartet's exceptionally tight and entertaining; standard C&W tunes, wackily arranged, were introduced and bridged by overlapping, wavelike free improvisations. Chadbourne's hillbilly singing is rather self-conscious, but his outside flatpicking was hot. In ensembles, cellist Tom Corra impersonated acoustic and electric basses, violin, a string section and steel guitar, but he soloed in a distinctively scattered manner. Organist Mark Kramer echoed Eugene's atonal breaks, mumbled in a quasi-CB radio voice and joined Chadbourne in toylike fun with little instruments. Drummer David Licht rounded out the foursome, which combines free playing with unusual good humor and an unconventional and unashamed celebration of Chadbourne's cultural roots.

— ***Kevin Whitehead***

CHICAGO — The two most exciting events in traditional jazz in Chicago this year have been Bud Freeman's move back home from London and Jabbo Smith. The recognition suddenly given Art Hodes is great but not news to us here in Chicago, although perhaps we can be accused of taking him for granted for too long.

Bud was booked by the Jazz Institute for the second annual Grant Park Jazz Festival where he played with Hodes, Wild Bill Davison and others. He went back to London to wind things up and then returned to an apartment off Rush Street. He did a concert for the Jazz Institute at the Congress Hotel and another for the Good Time Jazz Club in the North West suburbs, and we assume will do another for Illiana (South West suburbs). His logical club booking would be Rick's and we understand it's scheduled soon. He'll also probably do an LP soon.

Jabbo Smith returned to Chicago as part of the cast of "One Mo' Time", which still runs in New York and (I think) New Orleans. Jabbo sings two songs in the show and works in the band with another trumpeter Art Hoyle (former Lionel Hampton, Sun Ra, etc.), a clarinetist who can't improvise his way out of a paper bag and others ranging from a visual-only banjo to worthy piano and drums (the band is at the mercy of the Theater-contractor system). Lars Edegran was brought in to make the best of the talent and did a splendid job — you are so hypnotized by the excellent repertoire (2 Jabbo originals, 3 traditional instrumentals and 23 classic Bradford-Williams-Rainey-Bessie-Butterbeans & Susie etc. blues), the excellent singing (keep the name Sandra Reeves Phillip in your bonnet) and dancing. We had had bad reports of some of the other history-of-black-music shows, but of course we went to hear Jabbo, and were not disappointed. But Jabbo didn't get a chance to blow very much in the play and may have grown tired of the same tunes every night.

His singing of those two songs deserves a paragraph. After being introduced he slowly makes his way to a vintage mike, flaunting his age. But by the time he's finished with his number, he's got the whole audience in hand, rather like Mel Brooks in "High Anxiety"'s cocktail lounge scene.

The Jazz Institute assembled an all-star group featuring Jabbo for a concert which also featured Jump Jackson's band; a modern Gospel group, Nirvana (Buddhist?) which sounded as if they had last played a Holiday Inn lounge, and the marvelous (AACM) Ethnic Heritage Ensemble. But I came, again, to hear Jabbo Smith, this time in a more propitious setting. Franz Jackson served as leader and played alto and tenor sax; Preston Jackson was brought in from New Orleans on trombone; Art Hodes, piano; Ikey Robinson, banjo/guitar; Duke Groner, bass; and Kansas Fields, drums, spelled by Bobby Christian for a couple of numbers. Jabbo really delivered — he may have played better in 1929 but he's still fabulous today. He sparked a great set that also produced the best Art Hodes and Preston Jackson performances I have ever heard! Jabbo scatted here and there and sang the heck out of ***Talk Of The Town***.

The party at Hackney's in Glenview, honoring Ikey Robinson's fiftieth year in show business was a real gathering of the clans. Some young blues-rock guitarists who sit in regularly were surprisingly good at working with Ikey's excellent blues piano and among others attending were Franz Jackson, Jabbo, various Salty Dogs, John Otto, Andy Johnson, William Mahone and other members of the old Francois' Louisianans (a black trad group we didn't know existed), Joe Johnson and others.

Jazz At Five at Andy's on Hubbard continues to grow, with a different band every night of the week and a Sunday brunch. The Thursday and Friday night groups seem the best (featuring Eddie Johnson, Johnny Board, Bobby Lewis, Truck Parham); Joe Johnson's piano sounds better every week and Eric Schneider (Hines sideman who still lives in Chicago) sits in regularly. Andy's swings from 5 to 8 PM.

The suburbs are where most of the trad fans seem to live so that's where the work is. Jim Beebe's jazz brunch at the Holiday Inn/O'Hare-Kennedy has become an institution. The Old Hunt Club (where I used to go to hear George Lewis, Natty Dominique) is now Fitzgerald's so Berwyn has jazz and blues for the first time in 20 years. Currently the Chicago Footwarmers (Salty Dogs sans Lou Green) and a John DeFauw (I think) group take a few nights and the Jazz Members (the only big band working here that's not totally involved with ego-intricate arrangements) take another. John's Buffet in Winfield is a delight (and cheap) with the Winfield Society Hot Jazz Orchestra on Fridays and Doc Kittrell's King Jelly Jazz Band on Saturday. Doc's comparable to Natty Dominique at his best and features U.K. trombonist Roy Rubenstein. Franz Jackson fronts trombonist Steve Mengler's band at the Rib Exchange Thursday to Sunday in Schaumberg and I believe Ted Butterman (remember the fine trumpet on the Little Brother Riverside LP?) still is in the Village Tavern band in Long Grove, where The Old McHenry Novelty Orchestra's Sunday gigs will eventually get me out of the inner city out of pure curiosity.

But the classiest gig in town goes to the guy who deserves it the most. Art Hodes plays Wednesdays to Fridays at the Lobby Lounge of the Mayfair Regent Hotel on East Lake Shore Drive next door to the veddy exclusive Drake Hotel. There goes the neighbourhood.

If you come to Chicago, do it during the first week of September and catch the FREE Grant Park Jazz Festival. Bound to be someone you won't want to miss. The committee is cooking up a great Basie night and I assume the Duke night will be repeated. Prior to that (late July, early August) there's the inexpensive Chicagofest on Navy Pier with separate stages for every kind of music and entertainment imaginable including jazz, blues, country, humor, etc. And we can expect the June Night weekends of jazz, dixieland and blues (among others) at that mile-long facility.

Finally, pick up a ***Reader*** when you get here. It's free and weekly and interesting and up-to-date and thoroughly lists every music and film event in the city and suburbs, from ghetto bars to you-name-it. — ***Bob Koester***

NEW YORK — Elvin Jones and his Jazz Machine returned from a soldout tour of Japan and Italy to play at The Village Vanguard for six nights. As always, his drumming was brilliant and arresting and his band kept up with his fire all the way. Ari Brown (tenor, soprano) and Andrew White (tenor) took up the front lines and Andy McCloud was more than impressive on bass. Note: Jones has had to "escape" North America to find a harmonious recording arrangement. He has found several labels in Japan.

Music cannot be played any better than it was on April 3rd at The Public Theatre. Von Freeman finally left Chicago for a weekend to play in New York with his son, Chico and Kenny Barron, Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette. Von, of course, plays in all shades of jazz and blues, true to the Midwestern school that he and Gene Ammons and Johnny Griffin founded. His reunion with Chico and one of the finest rhythm sections of all time produced a sea of exquisite music.

One of the best instrumentalists to emerge from the Basie band was trombonist Benny Powell. Recently returned from Paris, London and Los Angeles, he played in late April at Greene Street — one of New York's least sympathetic jazz rooms. Powell worked with Bob Cunningham (bass) and Bross Townsend (piano). His playing was solid and thoughtful but not as complex or unorthodox as it can be sometimes. One of the night's best moments was Powell's handling of Ellington's ***Come Sunday***... a jazz hymn, a spiritual, a dirge, a blues, a gloriously sad song. He also interpreted Bob Cunningham's ***Town Hall Boogie*** with great style and intelligence. Without doubt, Cunningham is one of the modern arco masters on bass. Powell is scheduled to make a new album with Clifford Jordan, to be called "Highest Mountain".

On April 10th, at Soundscape, Bill Smith (soprano, sopranino saxophones, alto clarinet) and David Lee (bass, cello) performed in New York City for the first time. Violinist David

Prentice completed the trio. The group is all about explorations and finding new modes for European classical concepts and American classical/jazz concepts. They challenge traditional rhythmic structures and go on out into new territory. The second tune of the night, ***Little Boo***, was as ethereal as you please. The next tune, ***Up (A Love Song) For Captain Robot*** (dedicated to Steve Lacy) made clear that the three Toronto-based players are working on an enlightened and complicated level. Individual parts do not always fit evenly into the whole but the group is well on the way to creating a new and important voice.

A few more notes: Bill Saxton took a night at N.Y.U. Harold Mabern sat in on piano and proved again and again how great he is. Saxton is a young tribute to Coltrane.... At Jazzmania, Sal Nistico lent his ever-expanding tenor saxophone voice to vocalist Roseanne Vitro's. Nistico opened for the singer with a splendid version of Sonny Rollins' gem, ***Airegin***.... And at the West Boondocks, Sadik Hakim and Esther Blue divide up the nights of the week with piano playing as smooth as pearls.

— Stephen DeGange

SOUNDSCAPE

MARILYN CRISPELL (solo piano)
Soundscape, New York City, April 2, 1981

This concert by composer/pianist Marilyn Crispell, along with other recent musical events at Soundscape, provided a good example of what "free improvisation" has come to mean to young players Stateside; also a substantial glimpse of what might become one of the dominant paths open to improvisors who are not attracted to strict "formalism" or to conventionally derived "idiomatic" playing situations.

On the evidence of this concert, it seems as though Crispell exclusively hears and thinks in the atonal realm. Her pieces are, as violinist Billy Bang once remarked, "...not really into time..." but into a sort of jagged dense oblique sound forest that seems in constant danger of being "accidentally" upset by melody. Her first improvisation was simply awe-inspiring for exactly this reason. The piece began with thickly textured clusters of notes that were like waves in a stormy sea – yet, and brilliantly so I might add, the ***focus*** of her music was always kept clear and lucid, allowing the astute listener an immediate awareness of her visionary musical logic. The work concluded with bits of the melodic line from ***Somewhere Over The Rainbow***, emphasizing once again how endemic, even at such an early age, her musical methods really are.

Crispell said at the beginning of her presentation that her concert would be a blend of "...written and improvised material..." – yet it seems that her writing is so firmly integrated into how she hears music, that one soon forgets about such distinctions, making this age-old "categorical" stumbling block of musical procedure organically fade away in the process.

MILFORD GRAVES/JOHN TCHICAI DUO
Soundscape, April 17, 1981

Percussionist Milford Graves and alto saxophonist John Tchicai were both members of the legendary New York Art Quartet and have not played together since 1966. Their first set was understandably tentative, but after an intermission they took the 150 or so in attendance through a free-wheeling ceremonial expedition which was both profound and exhilarating.

Graves began his rites in the prone position, pounding his limbs on the floor. As the room percolated with nervous queries and laughter, he shifted his rhythms on to a free-standing snare drum and cow bell. Once the beat warmed up, a percussion assistant took over the snare drum duties, while Graves growled and whistled as he danced into the crowd. Bodies, already rocking to the magnetism of his presence, swayed more compulsively; once a female spectator leaped to her feet, shaking in vocal ecstasy.

Now that his audience was properly engaged, Graves proceeded back to the stage where he initiated two unsuspecting fellows into his uninhibited tribal procession. He manoeuvred them both onto his back and shoulders, while continuing to beat on his snare.

Collective anticipation climaxed as Graves lowered his load and performed shivering movements over it. He then shuffled back to his drum set where he dished out streams of beautiful polyrhythms – and by god, what round, vibrant tones from such a seemingly basic drum kit!

John Tchicai stepped in at this point with a "repeat'after me" routine. In his affectionately meek voice, he commanded "Milford... MILFORD!" (chorus)..."Graves... GRAVES!" (chorus)... "Stop the percussion... HA!HA!HA!" (chorus)... "I said stop... NO!" (someone hollered back). With a serious glance, Tchicai pronounced that no improvisation would be tolerated. Then he changed tracks by uttering the letters B-L-E-A-K. This call and response went well until he squeaked "Bleak". The audience again bucked his lead – no one was feeling particularly bleak. Again Tchicai warned against improvisation. He finally won our hearts and compliance with a series of instrumentalized vocals. Everyone threw themselves into a variety of hilarious unison choruses. Another communion was heating up.

Voices peaked in rousing, improvised harmony which was a signal for Tchicai to begin his eastern chant on alto. Graves rolled in under the sounds with a crescendo of rich tomtom rhythms and a cool wave of gongs and cymbals. As this sequence neared meditative monotony, Tchicai swung into ***As Time Goes By.***

I cannot remember what followed. I was enjoying myself too much. I know my two uninitiated friends were completely bewildered in their excitement by the evening's end. They and others will certainly return to Verna Gillis' Soundscape. You cannot go wrong when the beer is only a buck, the ambience is genuinely relaxed and friendly, and the spring/summer programme includes Marilyn Crispell, Jeanne Lee, Jimmy Lyons, Steve Colson, Marion Brown, Gunter Hampel, Roy Haynes, Joe Lee Wilson and David Chertok's jazz films. *— Peter Danson*

LOS ANGELES – Sun Ra and his 14-piece Omniverse Arkestra were here April 1 for their first official performance in L.A. And a fine show it was, downtown at Myron's Ballroom where full use was made of the dance hall's glass glitter globes, smoke cloud effects and apparatus to fly a spaceman around the ceiling of the double-tiered audience. After this concert they went to San Francisco where they have been doing gigs for years, but after such a great response it looks like L.A. is now on their agenda too.

Lou Levy is one of my favorite piano players. We always catch him out in North Hollywood at Donte's or Carmelo's, or any of the other evolving clubs out that way. Lou, like many of the other consummate players in these clubs, winds up as a participant in many various units. Just over the last year he has worked with Jack Sheldon, Stan Getz, the Lanny Morgan-Jack Nimitz Quintet, Teddy Edwards, Supersax, Bob Hardaway, recorded with Al Cohn for Concord, backed up singer Pinky Winters with his Trio (Monty Budwig, bass and John Dentz, drums) and made the recording date of the sax battle between Art Pepper and Sonny Stitt. His short-lived group The Bebop Preservation Society of a couple of years ago included John Dentz, Frank Rosolino, Fred Atwood and Conte Condoli. You will remember that Lou was a part of the first bebop band to tour Europe, in 1947 with recordings available on Xanadu 120. Other influences were revealed when we got to talking about a 1951 Georgie Auld Quintet he recorded with (with Tiny Kahn, Frank Rosolino & Max Bennett). "Tiny Kahn was sort of the guy that showed me the way when I was young. He told me about Al Cohn, and he told me about my other favorite Johnny Mandel, the great composer." Then when he was expounding on the merits of certain innovations in the music, "I wish I could have met Bach, but at least I met Bird and played with him a couple of times."

Alto saxophonist and vocalist Vi Redd has become more active hereabouts lately, having cooled-out her work for the Los Angeles public school system. In January she held down a week at the Parisian Rm with Ernie Andrews. March 1 she appeared at the Music Center's Mark Taper Forum with Art Hillary, piano, Bruno Carr, drums and Richard Reed, bass.

Speaking with Horace Tapscott, he telling me that practically everybody's writing in L.A. comes out of Gerald Wilson's. For the last 11 years Gerald has been teaching his jazz history class Monday and Tuesday evenings at Cal State Northridge and doing sporadic gigs with his orchestra. In early April he conducted the Tucson University Orchestra at the annual jazz festival put on there jointly by the Tucson Jazz Society and the college. Gerald tells me that Jeff Haskell and Pat Paterson deserve credit for the workings of this event. You will be excited to know that three of Gerald's out-of-print Pacific Jazz albums were re-issued by Capitol/EMI in April. Most exciting of all is that he has signed a contract to do three albums for Albert Marx's Discovery label. One was recorded in late March, composed of all new material and using veterans of his previous orchestras (though trumpeter Rick Baptiste is new) such as Jerome Richardson, Harold Land, Jack Nimitz, Bobby Bryant (Gerald's contractor), Snooky Young, Cleve, Mike Wofford, etc., and Gerald's son-in-law Shuggie Otis on guitar.

Other exceptional happenings: Saw the new excellent Joe Albany film by Carole Langer with several minutes of new Bird footage; KCRW changed antennaes in mid-March and now all of L.A. can receive their great jazz shows with many interviews and broadcasts; at Dooto's Music Center, a large auditorium on Central Avenue at 135th, owned by Dootsie Williams who put out Dootone Records in the '50s, several R&B shows a year are put on. April 18th included Jimmy Witherspoon, guitarist/vocalist Curtis Griffin, Sonny Green, guitarist Ray Brooks and the ubiquitous Lowell Fulsom; Sunday afternoons at Gilberto's in Cucamonga with

JOHN TCHICAI (photograph by Enrico Romero)

Bud Shank, Jack Sheldon, Conte Condoli, Bobby Shew and Al Viola; Kenny Burrell working everywhere but usually at the Jazz Safari, Howard Rumsey's Concerts By The Sea and the Parisian Rm; Sunday evenings during March the new jazz restaurant Mulberry Street in North Hollywood presented Charlie Ventura.

The downtown Japanese-owned Maiden Voyage is fast becoming L.A.'s most exciting club with Pharoah Sanders performing there in April with John Hicks, Idris Muhammad and Walter Booker. The Dadesi Quartet performed there April 1 & 2, a group comprised of Horace Tapscott alumnus Arthur "Dadesi" Wells, tenor, Robert "Kaeef" Crowley, piano, Kamonta Lawrence Polk, bass and Greg Adams, drums. The saxophonist from the Ray Charles Orchestra, Rudolph Johnson has played there, as well as the Nu-Bop Trio with Louis Spears, Dave Tucker and Thurman Green, The Fowler brothers' group Airpocket with Chester Thompson, The Les DeMerle Transfusion featuring Charles Owens, Richie Cole with the Enriquez Qnt, and the perennial Monday night jams with the Freddie Redd Trio and Sundays with the big bands of Leslie Drayton and Wade Marcus.

— Mark Weber

SAN FRANCISCO — At some minimal level, jazz in the Bay Area appears to be flourishing. Keystone Korner has grown into one of the world's major jazz venues, a club even the musicians like. A major new club, the Jazz Palace, opened in North Beach in March, and the Great American Music Hall continues to feature top jazz artists in its diverse programming. Any number of smaller clubs are offering jazz from one to four nights a week, where audiences can hear artists ranging from Abbey Lincoln or Bobby Bland to talented local players.

InterPlay ("A Bay Area Magazine for Jazz & Related Music") published their first issue in April. Subscriptions are $12 a year, available from 3905 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, Ca. 94611.... A change of ownership at the 24-hour jazz station KJAZ looks promising. Organizations like Bay Area Loft Jazz, the S.F. Bay Area Jazz Foundation, and the Oakland Jazz Complex are doing important work.

Loft Jazz sponsored their Third Annual Jazz Festival at a number of locations the first week in April, given added impetus by an unprecedented proclamation from the mayors of SF, Berkeley and Oakland, urging support and declaring the week "Bay Area Jazz Week". Featured artists at the Festival included Eddie Marshall (with Eddie Henderson and Larry Schneider), vocalist Bobby McFerrin, Larry Vuckovitch with Eddie Moore and Hadley Caliman, Mary Watkins with Linda Tillery, Idris Ackamoor and Cultural Odyssey, the John Handy Trio, Jessica Williams with Vince Wallace, Muhammad Tsafiotsom Kaal, Ed Kelly, Bishop Norman Williams, and Pharoah Sanders with Idris Muhammad, John Hicks & Walter Booker.

Sam Rivers performed twice in March, one night at the Music Hall and the next at UC opposite Arthur Blythe. Rivers' performances were controversial, to say the least. Leading a group consisting of bassist Skip Bay, drummer Steve Ellington and electric guitarist Jerry Bird, Rivers dove headlong into sounds that tragically reminded one of Hubert Laws trying to get funky. Ellington was magnificent, but Bird's guitar was just clutter. Whither Rivers?

Blythe performed two sets at UC, then played a week opposite Horace Silver's new group at Keystone. He was in sensational form. His quartet included Bob Stewart on tuba, Bobby Battle on drums, and Calvin Bell on electric guitar; they were one hot, tight band.

For over two years George Sams (trumpeter-composer with the group United Front) organized an outstanding series of weekly concerts at SF's New College, featuring many of the most exciting and original players on the scene. Finally in February the series ran out of steam, but not before three nights that may have been the most exceptional of all: Horace Tapscott, John Carter, Bobby Bradford and James Newton from Los Angeles, and from the Bay Area, Gerald Oshita, Mel Graves, Eddie Moore, the Robert Porter Quartet, and Karl Hester's Contemporary Jazz Art Movement, a large ensemble that included many of the top Bay Area players.

SF's rock club, the Old Waldorf, had Sun Ra returning in April. Maybe Ra communicates to the Waldorf's rock audience for all the wrong reasons, but who cares? His performances are spectacular, from acoustic piano variations on ***Deep Purple*** to virtuoso synthesizer journeys. John Gilmore and Marshall Allen are as good as ever, transcendence occurs before your very eyes. Ra may bring this bitter earth around even yet.

— J.N. Thomas

CHET BAKER

Camden Jazz Festival, London, England
March 20, 1981

Chet Baker (tpt, vcl); Sal Nistico (ten); Szilard Lukacs (g); Rocky Knaur (bs); Llana Kovacev (d).

The rhythm team Baker used for this date was notable for its cohesion and flexibility rather than for any individual enterprise. As such it provided an elegant foil for the leader's probing trumpet, complementing his finely honed lyricism with discretion and reticence, yet taking collective advantage of a somewhat recherche repertoire which, embracing such themes as ***Nardis, Conception*** and ***Milestones***, confirmed Baker's longstanding admiration for the Miles Davis of an earlier era. Sal Nistico's late inclusion proved a double surprise: known for his swashbuckling approach, which might have been thought to jar with Baker's austere refinement, he proferred instead a highly disciplined mode characterised by careful yet relaxed surveys of the thematic substance.

In the event, then, Baker was free to concentrate on the essence of his music, an intensely personal campaign to wring the last scintilla of beauty from the material under review. His improvisations were held within a close dynamic compass, so that intermittent emphases of tone made for unexpected impact. Extended rests in the line were frequent, for he clearly abhors the commonplace, preferring silence to triviality. The overall impression I took away was of unremitting musical density, the quality of his variations being satisfyingly high and his tonal inflections consistently and penetratingly expressive.

Only in one item, ***Just Friends***, did Baker sing. His rendering of the lyric was followed by a chorus or two of wordless improvisation, and this whole sequence served to show that, as with other trumpets partial to the vocal art, his work in this vein is very much of a piece with his instrumental conception. This tune also drew from Nistico his most urgent solo of the night; and when Baker returned on trumpet later, he displayed invention and decisiveness in measures to suggest that for the genuine improviser themes of this type can still supply impetus powerful enough to outweigh their familiarity.

— Michael James

USSR

LENINGRAD — This year Leningrad's Contemporary Music Club (CMC) made their first attempt to organize a new jazz festival. The event was too modest to be called a festival so it was announced as "Spring New Jazz Concerts". In fact there were only two, on April 19 and 20, but these two featured a considerable number of groups and soloists from Leningrad, Moscow, Vilnius and Smolensk.

The Sunday (19) concert was opened by Anatoly Vapirov's trio from Leningrad. Recently the trio's performances have become rare. Pianist Sergei Kuriokhin and bassoonist Alexander Alexandrov often appear in other settings and the musicians seem to have lost intercommunication. Their incongruous and sometimes even incompatible playing disappointed the audience, although there were some bright moments in the solos of the leader, who no doubt is one of the two or three best reedmen on the Soviet jazz scene.

They were followed by a duo of Vyacheslav Gayvoronsky (flugelhorn) and Vladimir Volkov (double bass). While the trumpeter has been playing jazz for some fifteen years now, the bassist is just about 20 and has not concluded his studies in the conservatory as yet. In spite of this difference in age and experience, both musicians have found themselves in this setting. Their untitled pieces are usually short, but elaborately and tastefully structured. The music is often closer to the classical tradition than to jazz and often they sound more convincing than on more jazzy pieces. Nevertheless the duo, which is known exclusively to Leningrad audiences (they do not tour as Volkov is still a student and Gayvoronsky makes his living as a surgeon) proved to be one of the most serious and creative units in Soviet new jazz.

The Sunday concert was closed by Sergei Kuriokhin's Quintet: Kuriokhin on piano, Vladimir Dikansky - violin and flutes; Igor Butman - tenor saxophone; Alexander Mosharsky - bass and Igor Golubev - drums. They performed the leader's "Concerto Minimumo". Sergei Kuriokhin is one of the most radical figures in Soviet jazz and he professes spontaneous music improvisation. Unfortunately, he is seldom lucky in finding partners who can match him.

The result often appears, as was the case this time, not very convincing. Though there were some good moments of interplay between piano and violin, piano, violin and bass which proved that, rehearsed, the same music would have sounded much better.

On Monday the concert was opened by a duo of tenorist Igor Butman and guitarist Alexander Pumpyan — the weakest point in the two-day programme. Most of the time these musicians play traditional jazz and their attempt to play avant garde turned into a chaos of absolutely unorganised sounds.

Cellist Vladislav Markarov's (with Eleonora Shlykova on piano and Alexander Kondrashkin on drums) was much better. It was the first time these musicians had played together and the collaboration proved to be fruitful. Markarov's harsh, rigid playing contrasted well with impressionistic passages by Shlykova, backed by Kondrashkin's confident and steady drumwork.

The energetic Cecil Taylor-like and at the same time very charming solo playing of a young pianist from Moscow, Artiom Blokh delighted the audience, as did the sweet ***Song Without Words*** performed by the duo of Alexandrov and Shlykova as an intermission between the first and second parts of the concert.

The second part featured reedman Vladimir Chekasin, the enfant terrible of Soviet jazz. His programme here was similar to what he presented a month before at the Yaroslavl Jazz Festival — an amalgamation of free jazz, musical theatre, clownery and absurdist play. The leader playing trombone, alto and tenor saxophones (often blowing both horns at once), two pianists (Kuriokhin and Shlykova) who in the middle of the show took accordions to accompany themselves and Chekasin singing texts from phrase-books in different languages, half a dozen trumpeters and tuba-players who were sitting among the audience and were conducted by the leader from the stage — it may seem strange, but all this mess resulted in the brightest of shows, with very interesting music.

The concert was closed by a duo performance of Vladimir Chekasin and Anatoly Vapirov who sounded like a World Saxophone Duo.

One more thing is worth mentioning. During the festival the hall and the stage were a place for an exhibition of two avant garde painters: Gleb Mogomolov and Yuri Dyshlenko.

The Contemporary Music Club is going to make this event regular. The impression of this first one was somewhat spoiled by technical drawbacks, but in spite of this the importance of the first avant garde jazz festival in the Soviet Union is no doubt great.

For contacts with the CMC write to: Alexander Kan, Apt. 22, Energetikov Pr. 60, Leningrad 195253 USSR. Tel. 225-12-51.

— Alexander Kan

ODDS & SODS

From New York, the news spread quickly.. Miles Davis sat in with the Mel Lewis Orchestra at The Village Vanguard recently and blew a blues in F!!! Still no word on when or if Miles will add his trumpet parts to the music already recorded by his band for CBS. Apparently it's unadulterated disco so perhaps it doesn't matter.

George Wein has officially buried the Newport Jazz Festival. It's now known as the Kool Jazz Festival. I guess the money helps. This year's schedule is out and the festival will be held between June 26 and July 5 in various New York City locations as well as weekends at Waterloo Village and Saratoga Springs. Brochures giving all the details are available from the Kool Jazz Festival, P.O. Box 1169, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023 or by calling (212) 787-2020. The central New York box office will be located in the lobby of the New York Sheraton after June 1.

The Rockefeller Center lined up noon hour concerts during May and among those featured were Paul Sullivan, Mike Peters, Ricky Ford and Jack Walrath.... Melba Liston and Ted Curson were the headline bands at a Town Hall concerts April 18, presented by Universal Jazz Coalition.... Gunter Hampel's Galaxie Dream Band was at Soundscape April 24.... Pianist Marilyn Crispell was heard in concert May 15 at the Loeb Student Center, performing with Billy Bang, Wes Brown and John Betsch.... The Third Street Music School presented Ed Blackwell's Trio, with Charles Brackeen and Dennis Irwin, on May 16.... Forest Park in Queens is the location of a series of free concerts this June which culminates June 27 with a performance by Steve Tintweiss' Space Light band.... Jemeel Moondoc returned recently from a successful tour of Poland with his band and appeared May 30 at Greene Space with vibraphonist Khan Jamal and Ellen Christi (voice).

Sandy Berman's Jazz Revival has reopened in Beverly, Massachusetts for the summer season.... Melba Liston and Company performed at Jazz Celebrations on May 3.... The New Black Eagle Jazz Band is one of the leading traditional jazz bands and they continue in residence at Boston's Sticky Wicket. Out of town dates are increasing and after the Sacramento Bash on Memorial Day weekend they head north to Vancouver for appearances at the Hot Club, July 17-19 they are in Holland and the following weekend they are guests of the Climax Jazz Band in Toronto. Late in August they will be appearing at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. ....The World Saxophone Quartet appeared in concert May 2 at Dartmouth College's Hopkins Center.... The Widespread Depression Orchestra appears in concert at Artpark in the Niagara Peninsula on August 9.

The Soulphonic Jazz Orchestra is the creation of Wade Marcus and it made its debut March 15 at Hollywood's Maiden Voyage. This is the first of a series of concerts presented by the band which, according to Marcus "is intended to bridge the gap between classical and jazz music".... Season tickets for the Monterey Jazz Festival (September 18-20) are now on sale from P.O. Box Jazz, Monterey, California 93940.

Seattle's Cornish Institute presented the Composers and Improvisors Orchestra on April 12. The personnel included Cornish jazz faculty members James Knapp, Julian Priester, Carter Jefferson, Dave Peterson and Chuck Deardorf. The orchestra will also make an appearance May 30 at Seattle Central Community College when it will be conducted by Anthony Braxton. This will be a world premiere for Braxton's latest composition for contemporary chamber orchestra.

PBS's "Jazz Alive" was awarded the 1980 George Peabody Award for entertainment. "Jazz Alive" continues to be the only regular network broadcast outlet for live jazz in the U.S. Its thorough coverage of the music continues this spring. Heard already were highlights from the 1980 Montreux Jazz Festival, Art Pepper, Elvin Jones, Ahmad Jamal and their groups, Tommy

Flanagan with Will Austin, and performances from the Manassas Jazz Festival and the Friends Of Jazz Festival in Laguna Beach. The month of June closes out with new music from Detroit with Roscoe Mitchell and the Griot Galaxy followed, a week later, with music in the Charlie Parker tradition by a band co-led by Louis Hayes and Frank Strozier. Some of these performances have been aired before but are worth listening to again.

Jazz historian Dick Allen is best known for his many years as archivist and resident jazz guru at Tulane University. Now he is available for lectures and presentations — complete with live music. Contact Peggy Wilson, 618 Audobon Street, New Orleans, La. 70118 (504-866-1689) for more details.

Europe's jazz festival schedule becomes fuller and more complicated each year. Here are the dates of some of them: Groningen (June 5-7), Stockholm (June 11-14), Konigsberg (June 25-28), Copenhagen (July 3-12), Montreux (July 15-19), Molde (August 3-8), NOS Jazz Festival, Amsterdam (August 7-9). All of these festivals present strong lineups combining internationally known bands with regional groups.

Big changes seem in the wind for jazz in England. Such record-buyers' institutions as Dave Carey and Doug Dobell disappeared from view. Doug has relocated to 21 Tower Street which is only two minutes walk east of Charing Cross Road. All that was left of 77 in April was a large hole in the ground. The whole block was flattened! Ronnie Scott's club is up for sale and the 100 Club was almost sold, although the deal fell through at the last minute. Peter Russell has closed his retail store but will still service collectors through the mail. John Kendall, an institution at Dobell's, is now operating his own used record business from 20 Oppidans Road, London NW3 3AG (phone 01-586-2563). Visitors to London will find that both Mole Jazz and Collet's have excellent selections of jazz records, including many bargains.

New books on jazz continue to be published. Trumpeter Ian Carr has written a critical biography of Miles Davis. It's published by Quartet Books in England. Also from England comes a collection of writings by Sandy Brown under the title of "The McJazz Manuscripts".... The Theodore Presser Company has acquired worldwide distribution rights to the catalog of jazz method books, arrangements and compositions by Adolph Sandole.... The Greenwood Press has published the first volume of "The Encyclopedia of Black Music".

Pre-recorded cassettes have always been viewed with suspicion by most jazz listeners. This is slowly changing due to the improved quality of both the hardware and the tapes themselves. Inner City has taken the initiative in packaging an initial selection of close to 30 titles from their large catalog on high quality chromium dioxide tapes which will have the same sticker price as the lps.... JAM is a new record label from Washington, D.C. which is being run by Richard Spring with key input from Bob Weinstock and Michael Cucsuna. They have released lps by Jimmy McGriff, Michal Urbaniak/Roy Haynes and have acquired the rights to the Toshiko/Tabackin lp "Farewell" which was originally on Ascent.... Stomp Off Records, 549 Fairview Terrace, York, Pa. 17403 has issued two lps featuring Terry Waldo as well as introducing to North American listeners several top European traditional jazz bands: The Peruna Jazzmen, Scaniazz and the Canal Street Jazz Band.... New from Choice are lps by guitarist Bruce Forman, tenor saxophonist Lenny Popkin and a solo set from Adam Makowicz... Revelation Records plans to release albums by Clare Fischer and Lennie Kesl in the fall of 1981. They also recorded pianist Jack Reilly in April.... Uptown Jazz Records has recorded Dicky Wells with Buddy Tate, Dick Katz, George Duvivier and Oliver Jackson.... Johnny Hartman's new lp on Bee Hive is called "Once In Every Life".... Alligator Records is releasing an lp by guitarist Tony Mathews, who is best known from his seven year stint with Ray Charles.... Singer-guitarist Larry Davis has recorded for Rooster Records....

United Front consists of George Sams (trumpet), Lewis Jordan (alto saxophone), Mark Izu (bass), Carl Hoffman (percussion). Their new lp "Path With A Heart" is on RPM Records, P.O. Box 42373, San Francisco, California 94101.... RCA has released the soundtrack of "Sophisticated Ladies", the Broadway show featuring the music of Duke Ellington.... McCoy Tyner has moved to CBS from Fantasy, while Freddie Hubbard has gone to Fantasy from CBS.... New from Galaxy is a Stanley Cowell date "New World" which has overdubbed horns on top of his trio performances. "Five Birds And A Monk" is also on Galaxy and features one tune each by saxophonists Johnny Griffin, John Klemmer, Joe Farrell, Art Pepper, Joe Henderson and Harold Land.... Lavenham Records (10604 Democracy Lane, Potomac, MD 20854) is a new label which has recorded vocalist Judy Willing and a group known as Polarities. ...Polintra Intercords, 4000 Dusseldorf 1, Lindemannstrasse 22, West Germany is an international record club connected with the International Jazz Federation. Their first six lps all feature East European artists such as Edward Vesala, Tomasz Stanko, Adam Makowicz and Zbigniew Namyslowski.... MPS has released Cecil Taylor's "Fly, Fly, Fly, Fly, Fly" as well as a live session from Montreux with Albert Mangelsdorff and lps by George Gruntz' Orchestra and the Hi Los....New from Enja are a digital Montreux date by Dollar Brand, a collaboration between Phil Woods, Tommy Flanagan and Red Mitchell, more Mingus from Europe in 1964, a solo set by Mal Waldron and lps by the New York Jazz Quartet and Hannibal Peterson.... French RCA has announced a new series "Jazz Line" and has issued ten lps from the RCA and Flying Dutchman catalogs.... Professor Longhair's London concert has been released by JSP Records. ...Finland's Leo Records have released two more lps, "Loaded" by the Quartet (Leo 010) and "Music from Taj Mahal and Karla Caves" by Tomasz Stanko (Leo 011).

ERRATA: We regret two errors which appeared in recent issues of ***Coda***. In issue 177, page 33, Kevin Whitehead's review of Newer Music Production's December 13 concert should have read: "...and the controversial guitarist Loren ***Mazzacane*** from Connecticut, playing his deeply personal hypnotic blues which I found quite affecting". In issue 178, page 20: The Art Ensemble of Chicago's "Full Force" is issued on ECM 1-1167.

Composer J.C. Johnson died February 27 in New York. He was 87.... Drummer Red Saunders died in Chicago March 25.... King Pleasure died in Los Angeles March 21.... Guitarist Carmen Mastren died of a heart attack in Valley Stream, L.I. March 31.... Vocalist Edith Wilson died March 30 in Chicago following a stroke. She was 76.... Composer/arranger Eddie Sauter died of a heart attack April 21 in New York.... Trombonist Joe Yukl died in Los Angeles in April.... Trumpeter Cat Anderson died April 30 in Los Angeles. ... Pianist Gene Russell, who founded Black Jazz Records, died May 3.

— compiled by John Norris

SMALL ADS

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CODA is initiating an "Artists Contact" column, based on the idea that creative music can only benefit from its audience — including listeners, concert promoters, producers, club owners, et cetera — knowing how to readily contact the musicians. "Artists Contact" ads will appear in the format seen below, and are limited to the essential information as to the musician's services and whereabouts. Our regular advertising rates still apply to the music community in general, but "Artists Contact" ads can be purchased for a flat fee of $8.00 per insertion (maximum 40 words). As an extension of this special offer, we offer a single free insertion in the "Artists Contact" column to musicians who purchase a new Coda subscription.

LOEK DIKKER

And the Waterland Ensemble with Leo van Oostrom, Gerd Dudek, Mark Miller and Martin van Duynhoven will be touring North America in late October/early November 1981. Contact Loek Dikker, Hoogte Kadijk 155, 1018 BJ Amsterdam, Holland (ph. 020-223221)

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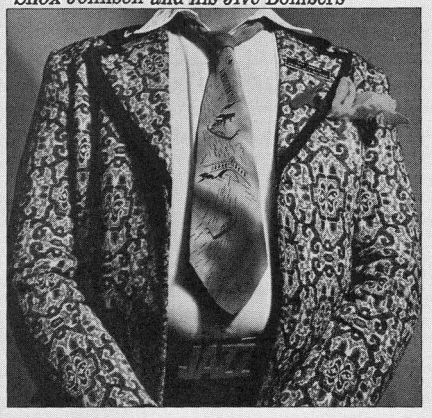

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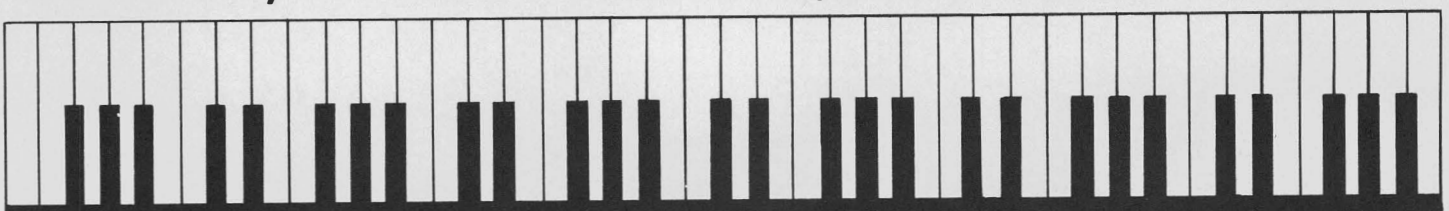

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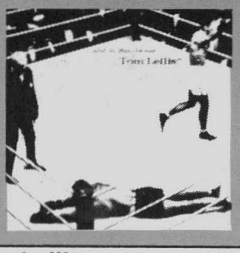

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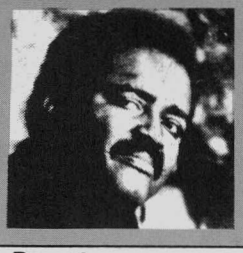

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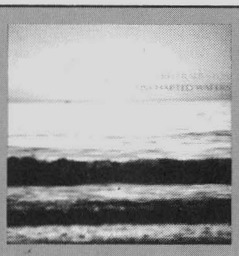

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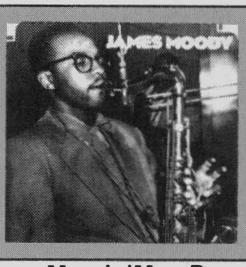

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