

# CODA MAGAZINE

THE JAZZ MAGAZINE

ISSUE NUMBER 183 (1982)

TWO DOLLARS

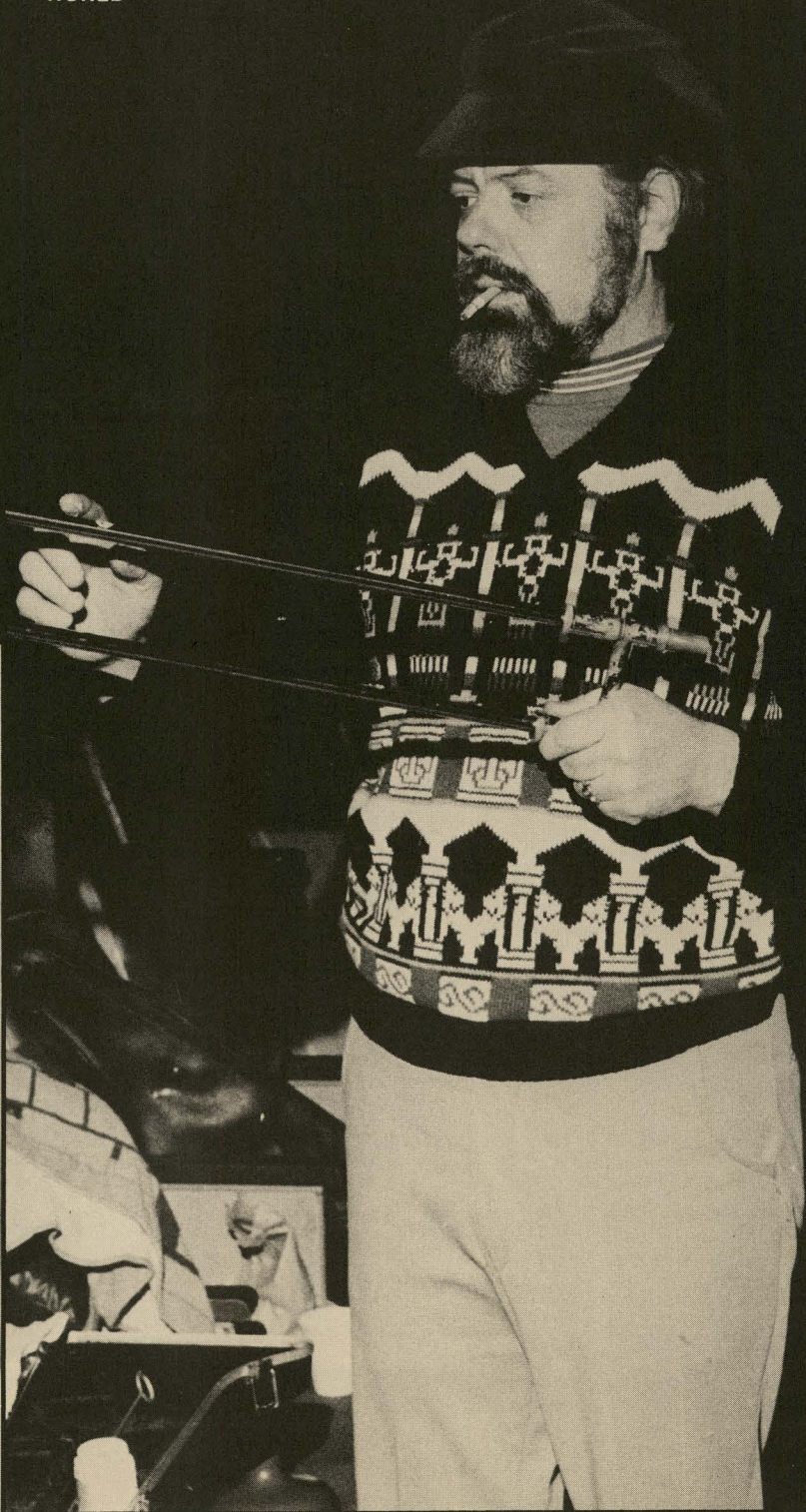
MILFORD GRAVES



ROSWELL RUDD

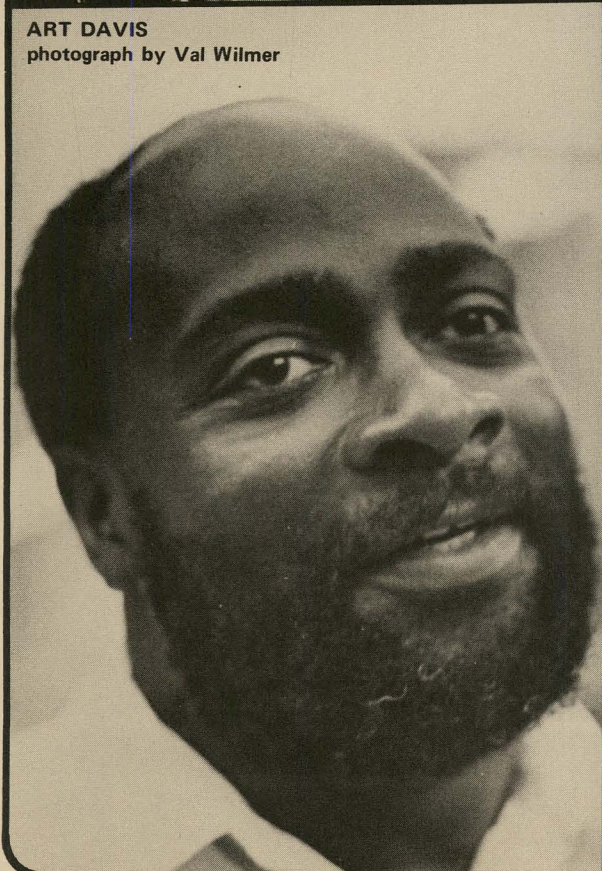
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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE - SONNY ROLLINS ON RCA /  
BLUES NEWS / RECORD REVIEWS / AROUND THE  
WORLD



ART DAVIS

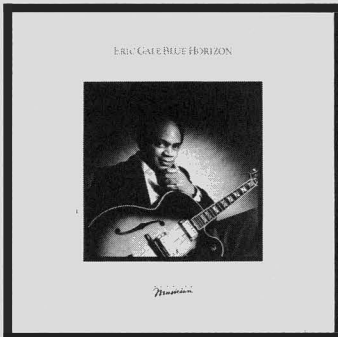
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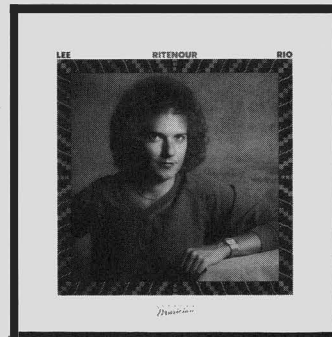
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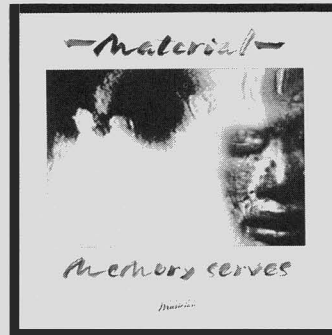
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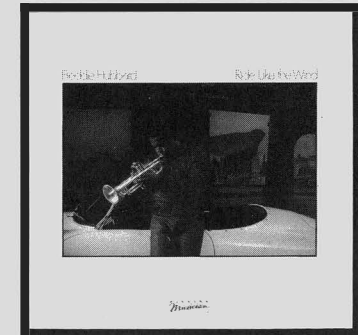
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## STAFF

**EDITORS** BILL SMITH AND DAVID LEE  
**ADMINISTRATION** GEORGE HORNADAY  
**ART DIRECTION** BILL SMITH  
**MAIL ORDERS** DAN ALLEN

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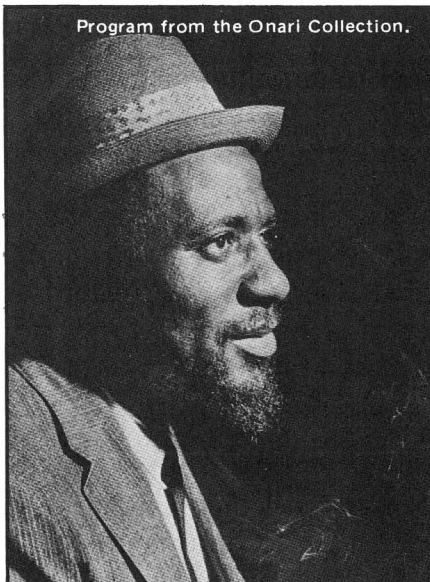
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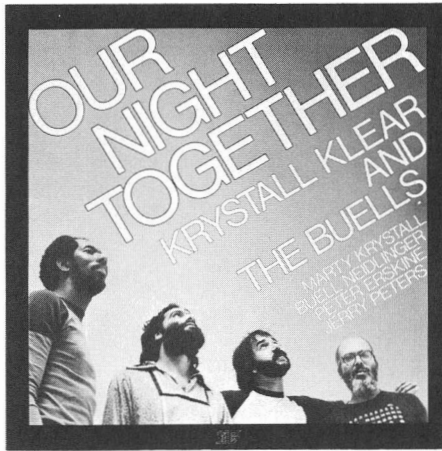
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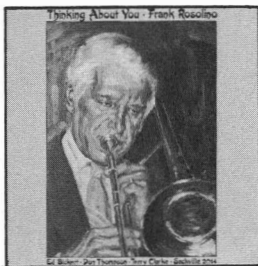
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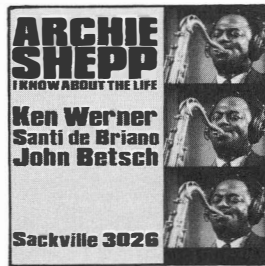
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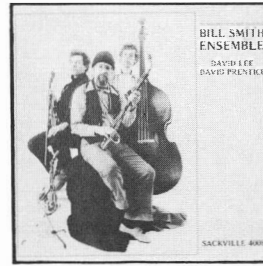
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# AN INTERVIEW WITH **ROSWELL RUDD** BY PETER DANSON

ROSWELL RUDD (photograph by Bill Smith)



**PETER DANSON:** You worked your way through Yale doing dixieland gigs, and eventually did them professionally as well. You worked with some of the music's elder statesmen: Edmond Hall, Eddie Condon, Bill Davison, Bud Freeman, Buck Clayton. What were some of the lessons you learned from playing with these sorts of musical giants?

**ROSWELL RUDD:** A lot of these people you mention were household guardians in my childhood. That was the music I played in college, at Yale, that and doing the steam tables and running an addressograph machine and some other crap, allowed me to get that education for four years. After Yale I pursued the same music, and some other music that I was finding out about. It was a big break for me, going out to Chicago with Eddie Condon and some of those pioneers. Pee-wee Russell said that if

you're having trouble finding a part in the front line always think in terms of a triad — trumpet, clarinet and trombone. Think triadically and you won't have any problem. That really helped. A lot of people said that these old guys just had a natural gift and that they were very colourful, et cetera et cetera. But actually they were bigger than life. They really had their stuff together, and they had a lot of theory going for them. A lot of them were self-educated, but they really knew what they were about: plus they were still asking questions. The music wasn't airtight to them either.

Ben Webster said, "On a ballad, don't play that harmony stuff: lay out, or let's play it in unison". To him, improvised counterpoint was no good on a ballad, but that was a different man with a different taste for the kind of sound that he was trying to get, and I could respect

it. But I got different lessons from different people. Vic Dickenson was a big lesson, for pacing and having a perfect ear, and a perfect memory for what you hear. Vic could hear a tune one time through and play it back for you, it didn't matter how long it was. He could record anything in his mind. Songs he didn't even know he could play as fast as he heard *you* play the lead, he could double it.

You have to realize that these guys had something musically *sharp* about them. It wasn't just that they were part of a tradition and they were great guys who hung out together and they had all these great influences and they had it all handed to them on a platter; it wasn't that way at all. They pioneered and made a space for themselves in their culture. Particularly in those times, they had to have a way to communicate with people. Somebody

like, for example, Bud Freeman: when the band takes a break he goes around to the tables and introduces himself to the people and makes them feel welcome and he projects a lot of warmth this way. He had a great rap when I played with him. Then he'd get up on the bandstand and tear it up! Bud was a concerned kind of guy and he cared about how his musicians felt and about how the audience felt; in fact almost to a paranoid extent! But his heart was in the right place. Those guys earned their audience; it wasn't handed to them. They were coming from Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke and all these great influences, but they still had to move it for themselves. So there were a lot of things for me to learn from them, not just about the music, but about how to treat people.

**PETER:** You mentioned Louis Armstrong as your first real jazz hero.

**ROSWELL:** Absolutely — bar none. His recordings had been in the house since before I was born, but to really find out what it was I had to go down and hear him in New York in the mid fifties. When I got the full effect of him right up there playing — I was able to hear him with Trummy Young and Barney Bigard and Cozy Cole — the lightning really struck. It was like looking at the sun and feeling the warmth and the energy emanating from this thing. I was about fourteen or fifteen years old and he sent shivers up and down my spine and made my hair stand up and I was mesmerized, really; transported to another world. I thought, boy, if I can do that for people, that's what I should be doing. I should make other people feel as good as he's making me feel through that performance.

**PETER:** When you wrote the liner notes to the Blue Note reissue of Herbie Nichols' recordings called "The Third World", you mentioned that Herbie knew Shepp and Coltrane.

**ROSWELL:** Herbie lived in his own world. That was up in the Bronx where he lived with his sister. The family was very tight, and compared to most blacks in his time he was given a good education. His parents brought in someone to teach him keyboard privately, and in school he was a good student.

I think calling that album "The Third World" was great because Herbie Nichols was definitely in his own world. He went out on tours with dixieland bands and played in the dives of Greenwich Village and uptown. When we met and Herbie said, let's get together, he started coming down to this hole I had downtown on The Battery where I first lived when I moved to New York, and bringing some of his music. That was my first introduction to real music. After college I really hadn't found that place in the musical space that I wanted to be at, where I could take all that theory and really create with it. He laid it out for me. I would bring people, my contemporaries, who I was hanging out with; Archie Shepp, Steve Swallow, and some guy from New Zealand named Don who played drums and bagpipes. But it couldn't happen informally; I would have to set it up, to schedule something so that Archie was there at a time when Herbie might show, because they probably never would have met each other otherwise. They were in two different worlds, Herbie with his dixieland bands and cabarets and in the chess parlors a lot and doing his thing with the ladies. He spent a lot of time reading and in the libraries educating himself further and further. But we did get together sometimes and we did have an influence on each other.

I remember my cousin Charles Kyle, a musician who went to Yale a few years after me, organised a concert for C.O.R.E. or the N.A.A.C.P. or something like that. I was in the city so I got together Cecil Taylor, Billy Higgins, Buell Neidlinger, Archie and a bunch of guys to go up to Yale to play for the benefit and we played some of Herbie's tunes. I think Jimmy Giuffre was on the same bill, and a real delta blues singer whose name eludes me.

Another time I went to Dartmouth College in a dixieland band with Herbie. One winter's morning we went over through the snow to the library to see what records they had there. Herbie pulled down a copy of Ives' *Concord Sonata*, the Kirkpatrick performance. When we got to the gig at a fraternity that night he was playing the music that he heard off the record. He had perfect pitch, a perfect ear. As I mentioned earlier, these guys had ears like steel traps. They could retain anything they heard that had some kind of magic for them, and instantly integrate it into their own puzzle. It wasn't re-stated literally, it would be mixed up with their own personality. You definitely had to have very good ears to play with those people because nothing was written, it was all aural. If you want to do some paperwork, you can do it in private and for scholastic, analytical reasons. When you come out to play it's just you and your ears and how you react to what the other people are doing.

Herbie was a very literate person. He spoke a couple of languages, read more books than I'll ever read, and musically was still studying and still creating when he died and making great strides. Even though psychologically he couldn't get it together. I think if he had lived he would have gone into analysis as a lot of people did, and recovered something of himself in order to survive this holocaust.

He was a very giving person, always thinking of himself as a champion for somebody else, always on a crusade for the music; but Herbie Nichols himself was the last person he would think to promote. He was aware of all the forces going on in his time. Literature, dance, chess, movies, ladies, people, humour, political events, he was really soaking it all up, and you can dig it from his music. His pieces are like cartoons, or pictures, but more than pictures. You can really hear people talking in there; their bodies in there breathing, relating. It feels four or five dimensional. It was larger than music. Monk has the same quality although his stuff is more oriented towards the compositional. Still that's the dimension of Monk; having the smells and the feel and the pulse and the heat of living in there.

The difference between them is that Monk is a metaphysician; Herbie is an intellectual. Herbie had everything Monk did, inverted and right side up. But Monk was only right side up. All his bases were root bases. All his pieces had a certain orientation, from right to left or left to right, or a real north-south orientation. As Gary McFarland described him to me once: very *deliberate*, very intentional creativity. Herbie would take all the Monk stuff which was heliocentric, with everything gravitating around a centre, and through his study and training and intuition he could take it, or anything that anybody did, and play it upside down, backwards, sideways, any way. He was a mirror — sharded, but a mirror of his times. There are people like this and you can think of them as masters in the same sense that

you can think of Thelonious as a master. But because of Herbie's sensitivity to other people he was constantly more aware of receiving influences than of giving influences. Monk was coming from a lot of people but mainly from himself; he really put it together his own way. But with Herbie it was more of an integration of a lot of different influences, from early baroque music on — so perhaps his music is a little too broad for a lot of people.

For example he was a complete master of figured bass [editor's note: "Figured bass, a bass with figures over it... to indicate the chord underlying each note;... originally used by early composers to indicate the harmonies in classical music." - Macmillan Encyclopedia Of Music]. That was the first thing he taught me: how to play changes. Going to college for four years doesn't teach you much anyway; but they did teach me a lot of figured bass; however they didn't teach me how to improvise with it, which is really what it was originally intended for. They used it as an analytical system, not as a creative system, so I had to be shown that by somebody else. Herbie really laid it out for me. He was a man of many influences, a lot of question marks, a lot of inversions, a lot of mystery and wonderings, some real flashes of brilliance and then that rhythm that saves it every time. He was really a wise man who kept questioning and went to his grave wanting to know more; he was a hungry mind.

What I did in those years was certainly right for me, even if it seemed to be in conflict with the cultural norms or with whatever was successful in that system. In those terms, I'm a failure the same way Herbie Nichols was a failure, the same way that Monk is a failure. I've been an artistic success as far as I'm concerned and will always continue to be but the rest of my life is a shambles. I have failed to "make it" in this culture in its terms of success.

My first professional recordings were with that dixieland band from Yale, Eli's Chosen Six. One of the guys in the band had gone to Yale with one of the Avakian brothers, so through the name of Yale, and boola boola, and dixieland jazz, there I was in the second year of college in a Columbia recording studio. A couple of years later we did another one with a group from the college, for Golden Crest. But it's after college that life really begins.

After college the first thing that came along in New York was the date with Buell on Candid. I made arrangements for him of Ellington pieces that he wanted to do, and the band rehearsed at my place. It was Clark Terry, Charles Davis, Archie Shepp, Billy Higgins, Steve Lacy and Cecil Taylor. Buell also had some quartet numbers worked out with Cecil and Archie and Dennis Charles.

**PETER:** How did Clark Terry get on that date?

**ROSWELL:** I guess Buell just asked him. Clark is a gutsy person; an adventurer and I think he knew Cecil and maybe a few of the other people involved. It was a happy experience. Everyone gave of themselves. It wasn't a high pressure commercial venture. We would work it out in a loft and take it up to the studio a couple of days later and do it.

**PETER:** That was one of the nice things about Candid; it was relaxed.

**ROSWELL:** It was so relaxed it went under. We never knew where that recording was for a lot of years. I never heard it until 1973.

After that there was a date with Cecil [for "Into The Hot" on Impulse]. I guess he couldn't get the original person he had in mind

and I'm glad he called me because it was a great experience. It was the first time I actually played Cecil's own music.

**PETER:** "School Days" documents a period when you and Steve Lacy were working through the Monk repertoire.

**ROSWELL:** We put in about two years there analyzing and arranging. Mainly it was a self-help project. We were educating ourselves musically in a way that we never could in an institutional sense. There was a lot of dedication and personal investment. Dennis Charles was a part of that. Bass players sort of came and went as bass players do. The guy who was there the longest was probably Lewis Worrell. The things I learned about music then are still very close to me. The dixieland thing was great, and all the classical music I learned in school was great, but I still wasn't at the point I wanted to be, until about that time with Steve, and Herbie, and playing the Monk repertoire. I was beginning to see how it was possible through composition and improvisation to create something that was about the present and about the people who were making the music. It was existential; the here and now — the ability of human beings to get together and relate through a system and really do something in this culture that was concerned with the human potential.

But there are still a lot of compositions by Monk that I remember because I can't play them, I'm still working on them and still learning from them. There will always be something from Herbie and Monk that I won't be able to quite penetrate. The Modern Jazz Quartet had done a certain thing in fusing traditions, but the really creative and the really hot and the you could almost say, *unfinished* product that was happening was not in the mainstream of the culture. The MJQ was a mainstream item for a while. They reached a lot of people, and god bless them for that — but Milt Jackson plays more music on those records with Monk than he ever did with the full MJQ. There was something going on — there was a great *intelligence* happening at that time. They said that about Trane, and now they're saying it about the New York Art Quartet, but my first awareness of it was through Herbie, and before him through older, less creative kinds of dixieland figures, and then Monk's system, trying to break that code. It really is a code; Parker and Monk had really systematized their stuff and I don't mean that it was locked in or dead but that there were cosmic formulas that climaxed at that point. Monk, Bird, and the great drummers of the time, Kenny Clarke and Art Blakey. Most of our stuff was raw, but we were coming off their formulas while they were going beyond them and starting our own process of transcending, from about 1960 to 1970. A gift from the past being carried along by the younger generation.

**PETER:** Listening to records by the New York Art Quartet, it seems that John Tchicai is definitely coming from Ornette Coleman. Was Ornette an important influence in general, or was that just John's background as an alto player?

**ROSWELL:** I think Ornette was in everyone's musical life at that time. I breathed a sigh of relief when Ornette came to New York because he brought a kind of thing with him that had to come from somewhere else; it really couldn't have developed and survived in New York. The masters of that bebop system were still transcending musically, but that kind of pure mel-



odic and rhythmic input that came with Ornette was really needed. The music was getting too bogged down in different kinds of harmonizations. People like Monk, whose thinking revolved around the piano, weren't hung up with that, even though they had brought harmonization into proportion with the melodic and rhythmic thing. But there were lesser people such as myself (I don't mean that in a derogatory sense, but Monk is clearly in a class by himself), who were getting bogged down in the changes. The chords having to be a certain way, and being notated to death. Herbie was trying to translate to the pedantics about the freedom of it, rather than the limitations of it; that you have to know it to death to transcend it, to have melody, rhythm and harmony in the right proportions. But Ornette breathed a breath of pure melody and the horizontal thing with the rhythmic propulsion and freed it. Cecil was freeing it in his own way because he was polyharmonic; he could do anything harmonically. But Cecil wasn't considered a valid practitioner at the time; the status quo considered him to be somebody who danced around the keys. To me anything I heard from Cecil was a lesson.

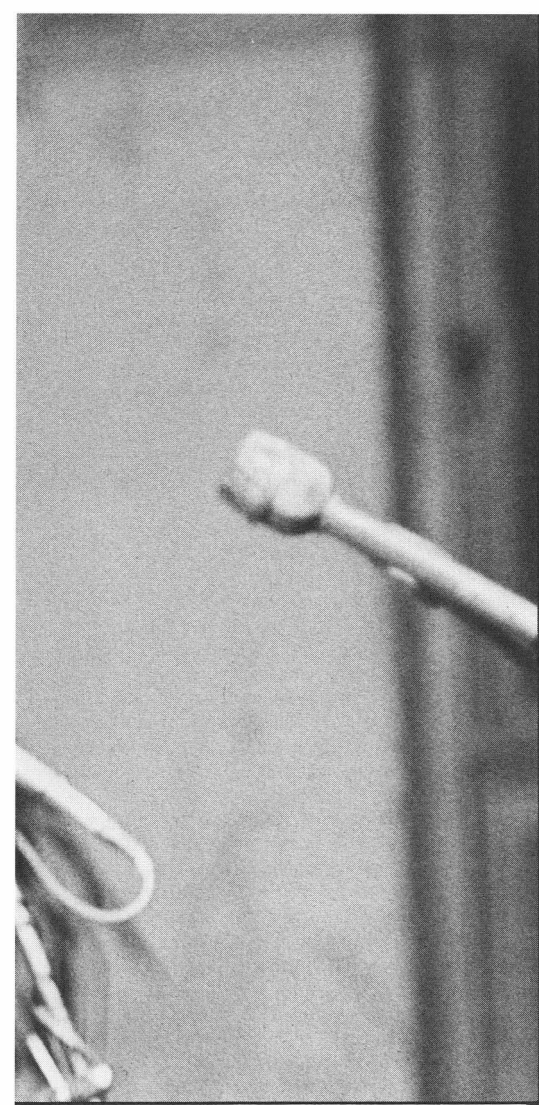
**PETER:** To a lot of people Ornette wasn't valid either, but he was more clearly out of the bebop tradition, although in a revolutionary sense.

**ROSWELL:** It was country bop; rural bop; putting an urban artform in the context of a

rural wisdom. The music needed that at the time, because the blues had dropped out of it. Through Ornette, and the people of my time, the music got put back into proportion again; we were able to weight things harmonically, rhythmically and melodically and be free. We found some freedom there, but we had to struggle like hell to earn it.

A year or so after he had played with the New York Contemporary Five, John Tchicai suggested that he and Milford Graves and I do something together. The last bassist with Lacy and Dennis and myself who ever amounted to anything was Lewis Worrell so I brought him in on the thing and John got a hold of Milford and that's how the New York Art Quartet got together. It was a co-operative and fared as a co-operative, tossed about on the seas of cultural and socio-economic chaos. We floundered about for a while but we did make some music. The thing about the New York Art Quartet that I didn't experience with anyone else at that time was the ensemble improvisation. I had heard a lot of bands — Ornette, Cecil and so forth — but except for maybe Sun Ra I had never heard a band — except maybe a dixieland band — that was doing collective improvisation. With Ornette it was him and Don Cherry soaring over that beautiful rhythm of Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins, playing Ornette's songs, but I never heard him really get involved in collective improvisation, making that a whole focus for an hour of playing, and that was something I





really wanted. I thought that if I had done it with Eddie Condon, why wouldn't it be possible now — because there was a tradition of collective improvisation, King Oliver had done it.

The further you go back the more of a framework you can see around collective improvisation. I think we took it to a point where we may have transcended measures and melodic form so that when we improvised we were setting up a preconceived form, but a form of the present. We weren't improvising so much within a form as we were creating the form as we went along. That to me differentiated the New York Art Quartet from the other bands of the time. I could really follow John's lines, Milford played as melodically as any drummer in history, and Lewis had a tremendous ear and could just home in wherever the experience happened to be. It was a listen - react - transmit - react - transmit kind of thing. It was real group therapy.

**PETER:** I heard John and Milford for the first time, in duet at Soundscape recently and it was marvelous.

**ROSWELL:** I know John and Milford are still one hundred per cent in what they do. I don't care if they did that performance on a raft on this river out here, it would still be that good — because it's about those people. Who gives more in a performance than Milford Graves? Very few people. When I played with him he was six hundred per cent, otherwise he wouldn't play. That experience in the sixties is still

happening for all of us. When I go back now to play with these guys occasionally, that thing is still there. We know each others' sound to a point and that really helps. We may not know the details of what our styles are right now, but we have a sort of gestalt memory of the sound of that person. People change, but their sound doesn't change very much and they still operate within that maxim of their sound.

If Steve Lacy ever changed his sound it would kill me. You can't get a better sound than the Steve Lacy sound; nobody can get that except him. Tchicai's the same way, he has a very special sound. That's one of the reasons these guys have been able to keep communicating with people and winning people, even if it is on the esoteric scale. They both have individual sounds that people never forget. Look at Lee Konitz — that's a sound — I'll know who it is after five seconds. That's a voice you're familiar with talking to you. It's communication.

**PETER:** How did Leroi Jones, (Amiri Baraka) come to recite his poetry with the New York Art Quartet?

**ROSWELL:** John asked him to be a part of that record. John has that kind of vision; sweeping, generous, open. And Amiri Baraka, who called himself Leroi Jones at the time, was definitely part of what was happening. What Amiri is saying in *Black Dada Nihilismus* to a certain extent is happening in our music. We are murdering and doing the most vile things to each other, but we are doing it in the right place — in the art, where it belongs. We are not taking it out physically, materially and economically on each other, because all of that destructive shit belongs in the art — and there, it's beautiful. In real life it's not.

There was a time when all that shit was in the art where it belongs and people really lived and communicated on two levels: a dream level and on a verbal and physical level. But that's gone and that is what we're trying to regain through art. Look at the state of Maine: number one in incest, alcoholism, suicide and poverty out of fifty states. Obviously there's no art here. No money either. All of that energy should be in works of art where people can deal with it. All of the vilest imaginings should be in art where they can be beautified, where people can see them and learn from them. Because any kind of energy you put into art is going to come out in a positive way. The same way that Louis Armstrong helped me. Now Louis Armstrong was a saint, but I'm sure that there were many times in his life, when he was touring and they wouldn't let him stay in a hotel where he belonged, when he must have just said, ah these fucking crackers, what do they know. But he put all his sincerity and goodness, and evil, into that music, and without the negative, it would be missing something. In art the good and the bad together can really work — can really teach people. The more of yourself you can blow down that hole the better, but you have to get your whole being in there.

**PETER:** Do you think that the Jazz Composers' Guild was a false solution for maintaining that energy?

**ROSWELL:** The Guild was supposed to be the solution to a big economic problem, namely being a creative artist in the U.S.A. We couldn't get it to that point. We had plenty of individuality and great creative energy. We were all self-taught. We managed to do a number of beautiful things musically. The rest of it was

just horrendous. It couldn't be a solution to a problem when there was that much individuality involved. People like myself and Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor and Bill Dixon paid very dearly for our own individual survival and that was all that we had to live by — so to submerge our egos for the common good: I don't think so. We were very reluctant to give this up to each other. I was willing to give it up because at the time I just wanted to learn, but for the more mature and developed artists it wasn't possible. It was very noble of Bill and Cecil to have the idea to begin with; it looked great on paper. When you're raised in America you have these illusions about the power of democracy, of everybody getting down to the common good, but that's not going to happen for the artist, not for a long time to come, because it's all so mercenary, all so tied up with business and politics. It's going to take America a long time to find its artistic worth. Although I think people like Louis Armstrong have showed America how things might be. Can you imagine Louis Armstrong as a totally free musical spirit? "Louis, here's five million dollars, just go out and do your thing. You don't have to play *Muskrat Ramble* if you don't want to."

The goals of the Jazz Composers' Guild were to get organized in order to get grants and to finance ourselves through our performances. I learned a lot of things from it I never would have learned otherwise. I might say about the Guild, that at the time I had a steady day job, and at a meeting at which I was not present — this is the thing I'll never understand — I was elected treasurer! There was no money and because I had a day job I was thought of as moneybags, so I was elected treasurer!

**PETER:** There is a claim that is in print, that Sun Ra was a misogynist who tried to have Carla Bley, as the only female member, expelled from the Guild.

**ROSWELL:** Sun Ra threatened us all with one kind of cosmic extinction or another at some time. But I think this was more of a ploy than it was something he would actually do. He's very powerful, a very wise man and I respect him. People with this great wisdom talk in analogy and metaphorically a lot of the time, and it is through these images that they communicate with other people.

I can remember some real vile stuff going down at some of those meetings. But people dig into their own personal resources to deal with the world, and that's one of the things I respect about the Jazz Composers' Guild; that people had enough guts to come out and fight with one another about some really serious issues — real racial, economic, political, crap, rat-by-the-tail things that are obstacles to the evolution of the human potential; things that are holding us all back.

**PETER:** You've worked with Carla Bley on numerous occasions.

**ROSWELL:** I got to know Carla back when I was working with Steve on Monk's music in the early sixties. I was transcribing the music of Ellington and other composers from records into scores which would be playable by half a dozen people, that would still get the sound of the original composer. I brought together some people to play some of these transcriptions, and Carla was one of them. This was 1961, '62. Then came the Jazz Composers' Guild. While the Guild was happening we also had a communal orchestra for which Mike Mantler and Carla were the catalysts. On several concerts there was an orchestra with Milford, myself,

Giuseppe Logan and a few members of the Guild, playing some of Carla's music and some of Mike's music.

The Jazz Composers' Orchestra was really the brainchild of Mike Mantler and Carla Bley. Many of us were hungry to play as much music as we could and I enjoyed it. I think most trombone players do because that's the nature of the instrument. It's been an accompanying instrument for so long that it's built into the tradition of it.

**PETER:** Do you think Carla is important in that sense of continuing and modernizing large ensembles?

**ROSWELL:** I think this is one of Carla's facets: the ability to notate a concept for a mixed bag of musicians. It doesn't matter whether they're punk rockers or classical musicians. Through the medium of her compositions people can be brought together. I noticed that when I played in her bands there was a real group sound. I think that she should pursue that idea of getting unique individuals together, as hard as it is. She's going to get more colours that way than if she gets a bunch of lemmings. Ellington proved that a long time ago. The real art of orchestration in the American tradition is to bring together individuals, each with their own identity, their own creativity, and blend them into an ensemble. And I mean right down to the creative level, with compositions coming from the individuals as much as from the main organizer. That's the life blood of the music. Otherwise you're relegated to the classical world, which is a nice world but it's not an improvising world — yet. Although it's coming along. But that will mean a rediscovery of the baroque era and some things that were really *real* about the baroque. Like, what is a free fantasia? Who played free fantasias, how were they played, when were they played and how many of them were there? Because we have no record; we only know that there were thousands of performances of free fantasias by the great virtuosos of the time, but we have no record of them. The academies always have to depend on documents; if they could transcend the documentation level and make that connection with the reality of the baroque era for improvisors — which is the same as it is now — when they can transcend the documentation level and get to the improvised level then they will be a part of the continuum. Now there are just interpretations of the same scores, and players trying to outdo themselves.

It's going to remain locked into that kind of syndrome until people realize what the performers were like then and what they were doing in order to accommodate the music. Then they will realize that there has been an improvising continuum, from the earliest times of figured-bass improvisation, right up to the present.

The jazz musicians, and the jazz composers, rescued the figured-bass from oblivion. We would not have figured-bass in America today as a creative tool if it hadn't been for Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, et cetera. They realized that was the only way to connect an African improvisational heritage to an established European cultural situation. They introduced it out of a need to combine improvisation and composition. It was the logical way to go because with figured bass there's an empty space, a space for anything to happen, which depends on the performer to fill it out completely. We probably wouldn't have lead sheets today if it weren't for the very early jazz composers and

musicians, who were getting a European education. I'm talking about the Creoles, because they got the best of both worlds. They paid a lot of dues for the job that they had to do, but they did it.

**PETER:** It must have been a lot of fun playing with Archie Shepp in that group in the sixties. It sounds loose but at the same time together and there was a lot of good blowing going on. You were doing standards and poetry and originals, and Archie was making his mark nationwide.

**ROSWELL:** The reason that we sounded as good as we did was that Archie and I had that association going right back to the Herbie Nichols days, 1961, '62. We were hanging out together, trying to get gigs, I was taking Archie to hear dixieland, the whole bit. In fact New Year's Eve 1962, at the Cinderella Club on West 4th Street in Greenwich Village, you would have found a band consisting of Steve Lacy, Archie Shepp, Roswell Rudd, with their families all there, Herbie Nichols, Don from New Zealand on drums, a weird interplanetary band. I'm just pulling that out to show you how special and unforeseen this whole tradition is. There are isolated cases, and the mainstream, but without the isolated cases you wouldn't have the rest of it.

So the band with Archie didn't come out of nowhere. When we got ready to go to California I went to a rehearsal at Archie's one night and we decided to do an arrangement of *Lady Sings The Blues*. I remember rehearsing *The Third World* with Archie and Herbie, and Archie trying to negotiate those changes. When Herbie heard what Archie was doing with those changes and the potential that was there he got very excited. Because Archie could do anything that he put his mind to. He would just work at it and punch away at it until he got it. He's one of the great workers of all times.

We worked very hard to put that music together, and I really hit some musical highs with Archie, Beaver [Harris], Grachan [Moncur], Jimmy [Garrison], Lewis, whoever was in the band at the time. There was a great intelligence and energy in the music that was unprecedented in my experience.

The club in San Francisco where we did the recording was a big old western-type night club. Prior to Archie's coming local people had played there, it was sort of a neighbourhood thing. It was getting a bit run down and that part of San Francisco was known as the ghetto, although I couldn't believe it. I went out and walked around and it looked better than the area where I lived in New York. It looked good! It was Divisadero, at the beginning of Golden Gate Park.

Archie brought a new spirit into that club and they started to rebuild it. All this energy started to spring up around us and we became a part of the neighbourhood. The gig was extended for a couple of weeks. It was great; we provided a community function, but it couldn't go on forever; we had families and we had to leave and go somewhere else and we did.

It was towards the end of the Haight-Ashbury period. A lot of strange drugs were around. People were experimenting with their consciousness and a lot of institutional chains were being broken. People were really trying to break out of whatever was holding them back; I know I was. It was an exciting period and you can hear that in the music. There were moments in the music that weren't so great; but any new

music is going to be out of synch at times. Part of the thrill of the music is listening to how they find each other, what's happening along the way. The period of enhancement and development and formulation is a very interesting area. That's sort of where I live. I was never so concerned about playing a lead with Archie because he was the lead, there was no doubt about that. That's been the role of my instrument for so many years — an accompanist is very aware of how to find a part in the situation at all times. Always in the moment. That's the challenge of it. Like the dixieland thing, to find yourself a place in the texture. A different kind of language but the same situation that you would find in a New Orleans band. From listening to what's around you, average out what you should be doing. A very democratic process — but it still requires a strong leader.

**PETER:** Are you familiar with some of the younger trombonists on the scene today, like George Lewis, Ray Anderson, Gunter Christmann, Paul Rutherford?

**ROSWELL:** These are names that are familiar to me. Gunter I know because I played with him in the Globe Unity Orchestra. Albert Mangelsdorff is another great trombone player — and that guy from Sweden, Ake Persson, he's very good too. There's a real tradition of trombone playing over there. You can feel so much more important than you do here. The trombone had originally been a part of Semitic culture. When it came to be a part of European culture it was only used for royalty and in the church. It never became a recreational instrument until very late in the last century, when it started to come out to the streets and was played in German marching bands.

But for a long time it was sacred, used in secret, cultish ceremonies and Europeans see anyone playing it now as coming out of that very valuable past. I realized that when all these guys showed up playing the shit out of the trombone. They really had a solid grounding in some kind of repertory and a role not only in music but in life, culture, and the community. Not here. An artist has a lot more status in Europe and even people in power realize that artists are important to the survival of the culture. If the person doesn't have work they create work for him and show their culture through these people. There is a lot more pattern to life there.

Here, there is a greater potential for self-discovery. You're not relegated to any one particular role. That gives you a lot of leeway, but you have to pay the dues for that in that there is no institution for you and no subsidy unless you're part of an institution; you're strictly on your own. You must create the space for yourself. Personally, I would rather be in this position and I'm in this position by choice. I could never function as the first trombone player in the New York Philharmonic. The guy that does it is great, and I love that music, but I can't have anything that nailed-down; I'd much rather sit in the audience. My whole thing has been about the ideas; musical ideas, that's where I live. I play everything: clarinet, trumpet, african percussion, piano, tuba, violin. Fortunately I've been teaching in a private school a couple of days a week so they have all these instruments. I'm actually a good clarinet and trumpet player. I should do a dixieland album by myself and overdub all the instruments.

I made a record [for Horo, in Italy] that nobody knows about because it doesn't have

any distribution. I did a lot of overdubbing of four or five trombones at once. Piano, bass, drums, singing, playing flute — whatever I had at my disposal at the time, because it was kind of unexpected.

ROSWELL RUDD (photograph by Bill Smith)

This reminds me of something. I went to Europe with some college guys in 1958, playing on the boat. In Germany several people said to me, "You know, Albert Mangelsdorff is the greatest trombone player in all of Germany."

And I believe it, but these titles never existed here in America. We don't have any pattern, no dynasty of Bachs, or Khans if you go to India. We could use some of that here, because Albert if he was here would be doing the same thing I am — driving a cab or schlepping at a teaching job or whatever. He's fortunate to be in Germany where he's provided for to some extent. His government is behind him, they know about him.

There are times when I'd like to be subsidized so I could forget about the rent and just play the music for a while. But I have more to be happy about than to be sad about. I'm still learning. I still have my family and the music. Looking back on these experiences from the past; I don't know what I would have done without those. They were totally unique, unforeseen, fantastic, innovative kinds of experiences. They gave me plenty to work off of. Herbie Nichols gave me enough in a couple of years to keep me going for a long time; helped me develop a hunger to learn everything I can, and to find out everything I could about the metaphysics of music, let alone the details he taught me. I think about taking all the music he gave me and making some kind of book out of it. Analyzing for people and making transcriptions. A form of scholarship. We're still finding out about it. I've been listening to Thelonious perform since 1955 and I still can't figure it out. I try, but I'm never satisfied. To me that's a very positive thing. I have nothing but miracles ahead of me and I manage to unlock another one every day. All the people I've been associated with in the past have given me a lot of work on.

There's nothing foreseen about what I do now.

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#### ROSWELL RUDD - A selected discography

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Since his first record in 1955, with Eli's Chosen Six on Columbia, Roswell Rudd has recorded often, both under his own name and with others. These include classic Impulse sessions such as Archie Shepp's "Live In San Francisco" and "Four For Trane", Rudd's own "Everywhere" and Charlie Haden's "Liberation Music Orchestra". He has also recorded for Arista and JCOA. The classic quartet recording on QED 997, "School Days" with Steve Lacy, Henry Grimes and Dennis Charles must also be mentioned.

Unfortunately, *all* of the above records are out of print. The following is a list of Rudd recordings which are currently available.

**with Steve Lacy, Kent Carter & Beaver Harris**  
"Trickles" Black Saint 0008

**with J. Tchicai, L. Worrell, M. Graves, A. Baraka**  
"The New York Art Quartet" ESP 1004

(reissued in Italy by BASE)

**Under his own name**

"The Definitive Roswell Rudd" Horo HZ 12

**As soloist with orchestra:**

"The Jazz Composers' Orchestra" JCOA 1001/2

"Laboratorio Della Quercia" Horo HDP 39-40

**With Cecil Taylor:**

One track on the Dedication Series Vol. VIII,

"The New Breed", Impulse IA-9339/2; originally on Gil Evans' "Into The Hot", Impulse A-9.

**With Enrico Rava**

"Enrico Rava Quartet" ECM 1122

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**For concerts, lectures, workshops, Roswell Rudd may be contacted at (207) 737-2372.**

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Thanks to David Prentice for transcribing the original tape of this interview.

# SONNY ROLLINS

This discographical listing of Sonny Rollins' RCA recordings was compiled following the release in France of "The Alternative Sonny Rollins" (RCA FPL2-7036), a two-lp set of previously unissued material from the RCA period. The performances are, for the most part, from different sessions and vary considerably in length and approach to the selections issued originally. To facilitate identification of those tunes which were performed more than once the times of the performances have

been included following the tune title.

The information was compiled from the data listed on the various record jackets as well as Jazz Catalogue Volume 6 and 7. It should be pointed out that the recording dates shown on RCA FPL2-7036 are consistently at variance with those given elsewhere. It has not been possible to obtain final verification of the dates of the recordings from the "Now's The Time" and "Standard" lps but the dates shown in this discography seem to be more accurate.

According to Jepsen's "Jazz Records 1942-1962 Volume 6" there are still two unissued tunes from Rollins' first RCA sessions: *Will You Still Be Mine* (January 31, 1962) and *Day In Day Out* (February 13, 1964).

Only the original US release numbers and the French reissue numbers (3 two-record sets) have been given except in the case of material from "What's New" where two of the titles were not reissued in France and one of them was not on the original US release!

SONNY ROLLINS (photograph by Bill Smith)



# ON RCA



## SONNY ROLLINS ON RCA - A Discography

Sonny Rollins (ts), Jim Hall (g), Bob Cranshaw (b), Harry Saunders (d).

New York, January 30, 1962  
*God Bless The Child* RCA LPS/LSP 2527, 741.074  
 same personnel except Ben Riley (d) replaces Saunders.  
 New York, February 13, 1962  
*John S* RCA LPM/LSP 2527, 741.074

*You Do Something To Me* — —  
*Where Are You* — —  
 same personnel New York, February 14, 1962  
*Without A Song* RCA LPM/LSP 2527, 741.074  
*The Bridge* — —

same personnel New York, April 5, 1962  
*The Night Has A Thousand Eyes* RCA LPM/LSP 2572, ANL1-2809, RD/SF 7524  
 same personnel plus Willie Rodriguez, Dennis Charles, Frank Charles (perc).

New York, April 25, 1962  
*If Ever I Would Leave You* RCA LPM/LSP 2572, ANL1-2809.

*Don't Stop The Carnival* RCA RD/SF 7524, 741.091

same personnel New York, April 26, 1962  
*Brownskin Gal* RCA LPM/LSP 2572, ANL1-2809, RD(SF) 7524, 741.091

Sonny Rollins (ts), Bob Cranshaw (b), Candido Camero (bongos, congas).

New York, May 14, 1962  
*Jungoso* RCA LPM/LSP 2572, ANL1-2809, RD(SF) 7524, 741.091

*Bluesongo* — — — —  
 Don Cherry (cnt), Sonny Rollins (ts), Bob Cranshaw (b), Billy Higgins (d).

Village Gate, New York, July 1962  
*Oleo* RCA LPM/LSP 2612, 741.092

*Dearly Beloved* — — — —  
*Doxy* — — — —  
 same personnel except Henry Grimes (b) replaces Cranshaw.  
 New York, Fall 1962  
*You Are My Lucky Star* RCA LPM/LSP 2725, 741.091

*I Could Write A Book* — — — —  
*There Will Never Be Another You* — — — —

Sonny Rollins, Coleman Hawkins (ts), Paul Bley (p), Bob Cranshaw (b), Roy McCurdy (d).

New York, July 15, 1963  
*All The Things You Are* RCA LPM/LSP 2712, 741.075

*Lover Man* — — — —  
*Yesterdays* — — — —  
 same personnel except Henry Grimes (b).

New York, July 18, 1963  
*Just Friends* RCA LPM/LSP 2712, 741.075

*At McKies* — — — —  
*Summertime* — — — —

Thad Jones (cnt), Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Bob Cranshaw (b), Roy McCurdy (d).

New York, January 20, 1964  
*I Remember Clifford* (6:07) RCA PL 43268,  
*Fifty Second Street Theme* (4:29) LPM/LSP

2927, FPL2-7036

Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Ron Carter (b), Roy McCurdy (d).

New York, January 24, 1964  
*Now's The Time* (15:52) RCA PL 43268  
*Django* (5:24) — —

*Fifty Second Street Theme* (14:38) — —  
*Afternoon In Paris* (3:02) — —  
*Four* (5:54) — —

same personnel and date but omit Hancock (p).  
*St. Thomas* (3:04) RCA PL 43268

*Four* (7:52) — —  
 Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Ron Carter (b), Roy McCurdy (d).

New York, February 14, 1964  
*Now's The Time* (4:02) RCA LPM/LSP 2927,  
*'Round Midnight* (4:00) FPL2-7036

same personnel and date but omit Hancock (p).  
*St. Thomas* (3:53) LPS/LSP 2927, FPL2-7036  
 Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Ron Carter (b), Roy McCurdy (d).

New York, February 18, 1964  
*Afternoon In Paris* LPM/LSP 2927, FPL2-7036

NOTE: The album notes of FPL2-7036 show a recording date of May 5, 1964 for the above four selections believed to have been recorded on February 14 and 18, 1964.

Sonny Rollins (ts), Bob Cranshaw (b), Roy McCurdy (d). New York, April 14, 1964

*Blue 'N Boogie* (5:27) RCA LPM/LSP 2927, FPL2-7036

*I Remember Clifford* (2:33) — —  
*Four* (7:11) — —

NOTE: The album notes of FPL2-7036 show a recording date of May 5, 1964 for this session.

Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Jim Hall (g), David Izenson, Teddy Smith (b), Stu Martin (d). New York, June 11, 1964

*Trav'lin Light* (12:20) RCA PL 43268  
*Trav'lin Light* (4:07) LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036

Sonny Rollins (ts), Bob Cranshaw (b), Mickey Roker (d). New York, June 23, 1964

*I'll Be Seeing You* LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036  
 same personnel New York, June 24, 1964

*Three Little Words* LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036  
*Night And Day* — — — —

add Jim Hall (g).  
*My Ship* — — — —

Sonny Rollins (ts), Jim Hall (g), Bob Cranshaw (b), Mickey Roker (d). New York, June 26, 1964

*Love Letters* LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036  
*Long Ago And Far Away* — — — —

Sonny Rollins (ts), Herbie Hancock (p), Bob Cranshaw (b), Mickey Roker (d).

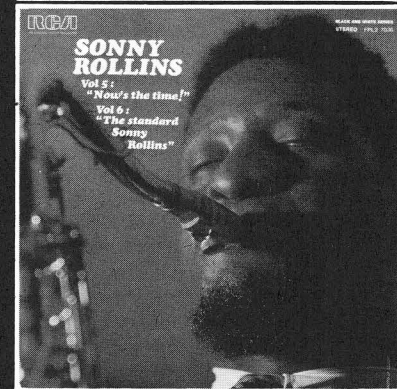
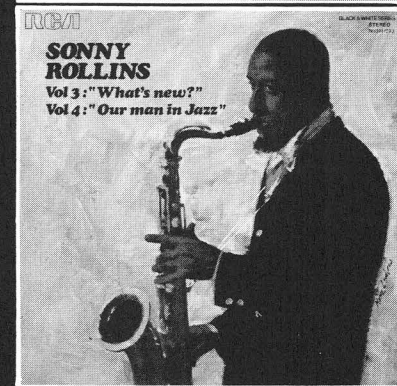
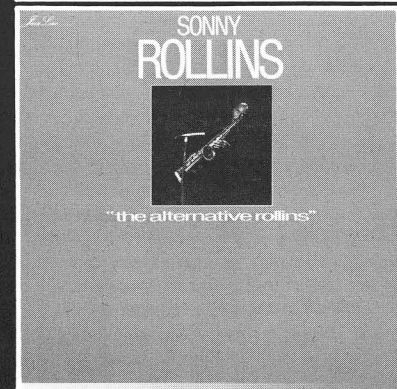
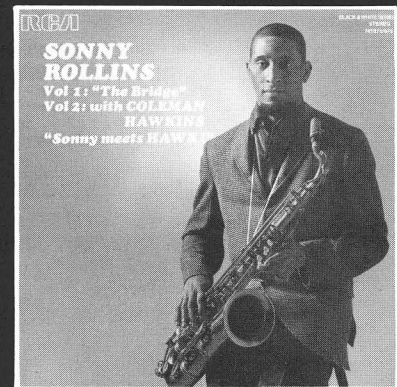
New York, July 2, 1964  
 LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036

*It Could Happen To You* — — — —  
*My One And Only Love* — — — —

*Winter In Wonderland* RCA PL 43268  
*When You Wish Upon A Star* — — — —

Sonny Rollins (ts), Bob Cranshaw (b), Mickey Roker (d). New York, July 9, 1964

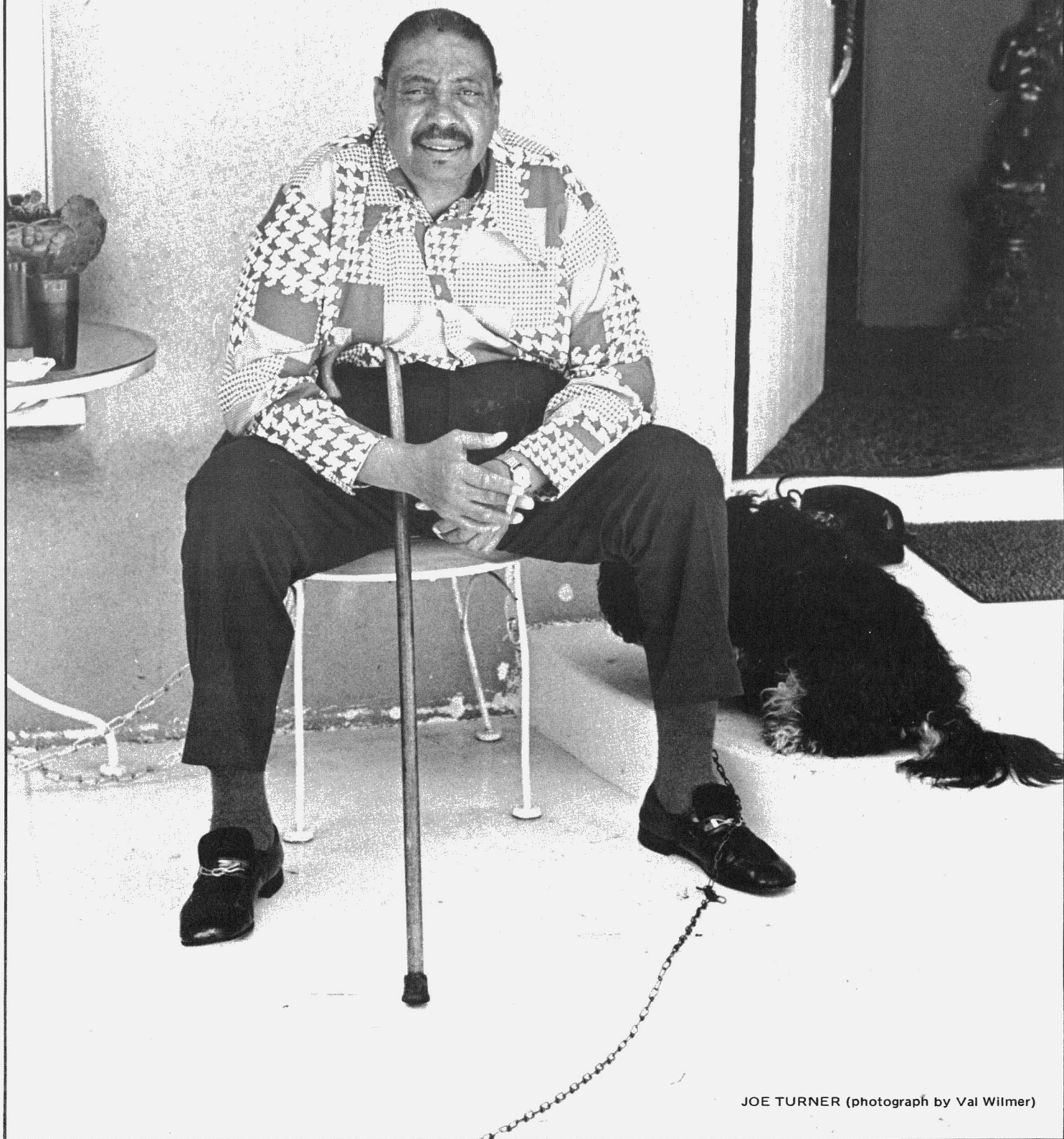
*Autumn Nocturne* LPM/LSP 3355, FPL2-7036



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# BLUESNEWS

BY DOUG LANGILLE



JOE TURNER (photograph by Val Wilmer)

I figure that **JOHNNY COPELAND: "Copeland Special" (Rounder 2025)** is one of the hottest urban blues LPs to come out in 1981. Copeland is a strong vocalist and lead guitarist whose roots are firmly planted in the blues lounges of Houston. Although a product of the Houston scene, he is currently working out of New York City. "Copeland Special" features 7 original compositions plus fresh reworkings of Guitar Slim's *Done Got Over It* and W.C. Handy's ever popular *St. Louis Blues*. Copeland demonstrates his ability to create substantial modern blues themes with *I Wish I Was Single*, *Third Party*, *It's My Own Tears* and *Everybody Wants A Piece Of Me*. Things burn like Texas chili on two instrumentals, *Copeland Special* and *Big Time*.

Copeland's biting Texas guitar and growling, emotive vocals are reinforced by the most imaginative horn arrangements I have heard on a blues LP in a while. The saxophone solos of George Adams (tenor and soprano), Arthur Blythe (alto) and Byard Lancaster (alto and tenor) add an exciting new dimension to this mix of jump and blues. There are also appearances by Joe Rigby on baritone, John Pratt and Yusef Yancey on trumpet, and Garrett List and Bill Ohashi on trombone. In the rhythm department we find a solid foundation, and for harmonica freaks there is Brooklyn Slim on the title instrumental. Hopefully, Copeland's future exposure will be in settings as fresh and exciting as the one presented on this release. The sound quality is superb, and every household should own one or two copies.

By the way, if you like Johnny Copeland, you should make an effort to pick up **RAY SHARPE's "Texas Boogie Blues" (Flying High FH 6502)**. Available from Richey Records, P.O. Box 12937, Fort Worth, Texas 76116.

Two new **JOHN LEE HOOKER** releases are pure Hooker at his mean and moody best. "**Sittin' Here Thinkin' " (Muse 5205)** presents Hooker with a small ensemble of second guitar, bass and drums. The backing is tight with superb interplay between the sidemen, especially the guitarist and Hooker. The primitive and unconventional Hooker sound prevails. Check out the particularly strong *I Bought You A Brand New House*. The 11 cuts supposedly come from a late 1950s session (nothing in Leadbitter and Slaven). The sound is exceptionally clean and good. Too good to pass by.

"**John Lee Hooker: Alone Vol. 1" (Blue Labor LAB - 4)** finds him in a solo performance recorded live at a N.Y.C. concert in 1976. Hooker is relaxed and stretches out with some familiar themes such as *Boogie Chillun*, *Boom Boom*, *When My First Wife Left Me* and *I'm Mad (Jesse James)*. He is particularly nasty on this last Hooker classic. In all there are 8 longish cuts. This LP takes me back to pre-Canned Heat Hooker when he was predominantly a solo act. "Alone" is the next best thing to a live solo Hooker gig. Hopefully, Volume 2 is not too far off.

A reissue from Route 66 features 14 sides by Atlanta vocalist **BILLY WRIGHT - "Stacked Deck" (KIX-13)**. Wright has received no previous reissue attention, and has been virtually ignored in blues and R&B literature. These Savoy sides, recorded between 1949 and 1954, showcase him as a strong, gospel-influenced blues shouter. He was a contemporary of Chuck Willis and in his heyday is said to have been a major influence on Little Richard, Otis Redding and James Brown.

The program is a mix of straight blues, jump

and blues ballads. Original compositions by Wright predominate. However, Wright borrows lyrics and themes from other blues sources. For example, *Turn Your Lamps Down Low* is a slow, sombre arrangement of *Baby Please Don't Go*, complete with muted trumpet. The backing varies from session to session, but tends to feature full horn complements. The arrangements feature plenty of hot, upfront piano and sax work. The sound quality, with the exception of one crudely recorded concert side, is not bad. Mono of course. The jacket is of the fold-out variety with detailed discography, extensive liner notes on Wright and the post-war Atlanta music scene in general and, of course, plenty of pictures. Strongly recommended to vocal blues fans who can live without a steady diet of electric guitar solos.

Also from Route 66 is a reissue of Atlantic sides by female vocalist **RUTH BROWN - "Sweet Baby Of Mine" (KIX-16)**. Ruth Brown was a fairly successful artist for Atlantic in the 1950s with hits like *5-10-15 Hours*, *Mambo Baby*, *Mama He Treats Your Daughter Mean*. The 16 sides presented here were recorded between 1949 and 1956, and include her early, unreleased demo cut with Amos Milburn - *Rain Is A Bringdown*, and an early side with Eddie Condon's N.B.C. TV Orchestra - *It's Raining*. Other sides include instrumental backing by Budd Johnson's Orchestra, and studio bands featuring Willis Jackson, plus vocal group work by the James Quintet and the Delta Rhythm Boys. The program focuses on B sides and releases that didn't connect hitwise. None of her hits are included. The material is heavily pop-oriented with a heavy dose of ballads.

The earlier material on this reissue should appeal to those who like female vocalists in the vein of Dinah Washington and Billie Holiday, while the later material should appeal to those with a fondness for poppish R&B. Also this reissue will have some appeal for big band vocal fans. Recording quality is good, and as with the Wright reissue, the jacket folds out with a detailed discography and interesting notes on Ms. Brown.

From Pablo comes the nth. LP for **JOE TURNER - "The Midnight Special" (Pablo 2310-844)**. Originally recorded in 1976, the set finds Joe in his usual good form fronting a studio band featuring several horns, harmonica and a full rhythm section. This is typical Joe Turner, enjoyable without any surprises. Side One has poppish leanings with such standards as *I Left My Heart In San Francisco*, *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, *Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter*, etc. A program like this should frighten away a healthy chunk of Joe's blues following, but likely have appeal to those on the easy listening side. Side Two should have more appeal to the hard core. Included are lengthy takes of Leadbelly's *Midnight Special* and Chuck Willis' hit of the early 1970s, *Stoop Down Baby*. Both have a jam feel to them with Joe encouraging relaxed solos from most of his sidemen. Sound quality is very good. It's typical, pleasing Joe Turner, especially good if you want an unobtrusive, relaxed, easy-listening program with a slight touch of the blues.

Arhoolie is back in the Zydeco business. **CLIFTON CHENIER's "The King Of Zydeco" (Arhoolie 1086)** was recorded live at the Montreux Festival back in the mid-'70s. Although not as hot as Clifton would be at a Louisiana Creole dance (check out Arhoolie 1059), this one is a definite crowd pleaser. Clifton is in

great form with tight and inspired backing from brother Cleve on rubboard, Paul Senegal on guitar, Robert St. Julian on drums, and Joe Morris on bass. Clifton is featured on both piano accordion and harmonica.

The program is a mix of French and English with the emphasis on the uptempo. Originals like *Calinda* and *I'm On The Wonder* are mixed with borrowed themes like *Money*, *Jambalaya*, *Hush, Hush* and *Pinetop's Boogie Woogie*. There are ten cuts in all.

Recording quality is excellent for a live recording, and the pressing is also superior. It should be noted that this material originally appeared as part of a double LP on Tomato - "Cajun Swamp Music" (TOM-2-7002) - released in 1977. It is too bad that Arhoolie did not re-release the full double LP, because a lot of hot Zydeco was left off. Oh, by the way, Clifton is sitting on some masters cut live at a Lafayette dance hall and featuring his current band. He is looking for a label.

**JOHN DELAFOSE and the EUNICE PLAYBOYS** are well established as a popular dance band throughout the Louisiana/Texas Gulf Coast area. "**Zydeco Man" (Arhoolie 1083)** presents them to a wider audience with a program of hot zydeco performed in a style closely tied to the more traditional Cajun sound. Delafosse performs mainly on button accordion with only 2 outings on the fuller-sounding piano accordion. Backing is typical guitar, bass, drums and rubboard. The program, a mix of French and English, reflects the diverse zydeco roots of blues, R&B, waltzes and two-steps. The emphasis is on up-tempo, good time dance music.

While Delafosse and his band perform in a more traditional style, their performance is by no means crude. They are professionals who cook right along at full speed. "Zydeco Man" was recorded in Mark Miller's Crowley studio in May 1980, and the sound is crisp and clean. Arhoolie gave it a good pressing to boot. The liner notes provide informative background on Delafosse, his music, and zydeco in general.

Finally there is the Storyville anthology "**THE BEST OF THE BLUES" (SLP 4023)**. While the title is somewhat presumptuous, this reissue (originally Storyville 188) does present a satisfying cross-section of Storyville's European sessions cut from 1956 through 1966. Featured are pianists Sunnyland Slim, Memphis Slim, Otis Spann, Jack Dupree, Roosevelt Sykes, and Speckled Red; and guitarists Lonnie Johnson, John Henry Barbee, Bill Broonzy, Sleepy John Estes and Big Joe Williams. The 12 cuts included here do not appear in this particular form on any of the Storyville feature LPs by these artists.

Most of the performances are solo with the exception of Estes' autobiographical *City Hall Blues* featuring the harp of Hammie Nixon; Lonnie Johnson's ballad, *Don't Cry*, featuring Spann's piano accompaniment; Memphis Slim's impromptu *Copenhagen Women* with Sonny Boy and Matt Murphy; and Dupree's *Cristina*, *Cristina Blues* including bass accompaniment. Based upon personal taste, my favourites include John Henry Barbee's straight country blues, *Early In The Morning*, the superb Lonnie Johnson/Otis Spann team up, and Spann's solo offering, *Boots And Shoes*.

The sound quality is very good, and the original Storyville 188 liner notes by Paul Oliver are included. Although there are ample servings of uptempo blues, the prevailing mood is relaxed. This is a very pleasing, strongly recommended anthology. — **Doug Langille**

# MILFORD GRAVES

MEDITATIONS AMONG US  
INTERVIEW BY ROGER RIGGINS  
PHOTOGRAPH BY MASSIMO D'AMATO

Percussionist Milford Graves first gained considerable prominence during the mid-'60s in conjunction with the infamous series of New Music concerts organized by trumpeter/composer/educator Bill Dixon dubbed "The October Revolution". Using these concerts as a springboard Graves went on to record with reedist/composer Giuseppe Logan, pianists Don Pullen and Paul Bley — and the famed, yet ill-fated New York Art Quartet (John Tchicai, alto saxophone; Roswell Rudd, trombone; Lewis Worrell or Eddie Gomez, bass). From this vantage point Graves met tenorist Albert Ayler and worked with the saxophonist in one of his brightest groups for the better part of a year (with brother Don Ayler, trumpet and, most times, bassist Alan Silva). This was, indeed, an historic union that yielded some of the most explosively creative music yet to be heard on Planet Earth.

The percussionist has always been fiercely political about his art and the aesthetic which informs it. Having met Amiri Baraka during the mid-'60s, when he was still a "downtown" card-carrying Bohemian-styled New York intellectual of sorts, the two became fast friends and worked and collaborated on a number of projects during Baraka's transitional years from the mid-'60s to the mid-'70s when the Black Arts Movement was about at its consummate zenith.

Eventually Graves found that working with certain musicians became "...very limiting..." and decided to search out players who could bend to the basic nuance of his brand of contemporary Black Art (Note: At an important concert at Judson Hall during the 1960s Graves was working with the New York Art Quartet and playing "a lot of drums". At the conclusion of the concert Rudd and Tchicai came over to the percussionist and said "...you just played too much stuff tonight..." After Graves thought about the comment, the direction of the music and his role in it he decided "...well...this would never do"). Initially using long time underground reed players Arthur Doyle and Hugh Glover Graves began to form a more personalized idea of his music in concerts and on records. Doyle is no longer a comrade of the percussionist, but Glover remains, although still in a rather questionable position in the music, and when Graves isn't playing alone these days he'll probably be in the company of this reed-splitting, quick-tongued horn player.

In 1973 Graves secured a post at Bennington College's Black Music Division. Having been asked by its director, Bill Dixon, to teach at the College (Dixon had actually asked Graves two years earlier, but the percussionist at that time declined), he reluctantly accepted this invitation by the man who remembered first hand when the two distinct paths of percussive playing were represented by the untutored "upbeat" contortions of Sunny Murray and the African/Caribbean-inspired tonal and rhythmic oscillations put forth by one Milford Graves.

Graves today seems to have stepped out of his somewhat shadowy, esoteric existence to stand full circle as an important contributor to the language — having recorded well over half-a-dozen sides under his own name and with others, the percussionist seems to be searching for a new context and setting for his explosive, physically awe-inspiring, playing. But as things stand, for now, one thing is certain — with his new release available on the Japanese Kitti label, "Meditations Among Us," Graves might have uncovered one of the oldest and least known stories ever aired in the musical sense or otherwise.

This inter/view was done in latter 1979 at Bennington College.

**ROGER RIGGINS:** In relationship to the 60's period, could you sort of re-evaluate the scene as it relates to your playing and development.

**MILFORD GRAVES:** Well, the 60's was a kind of dynamic period where I was going through a lot of changes from within. During the early 60's I was playing a lot of Latin music, African oriented music and pretty much getting my thing together. In 1961 and 1962 I would say I went through a period where I stayed predominantly in the house — reading, listening to a lot of records, being on my trap drums during brief breaks. The rest of the time I was putting on a record, listening to a tape or getting into a chapter. I would get up around seven and go till midnight. During this period, too, I didn't see anyone — I kept my shades down and my door locked.

After this period I was asked to come out and I came up to Boston in 1963 to play with this band that had Don Helias in it, Dick Masa and a Russian piano player named Vladimir. I played up in Boston with them for the summer of '63 and I met Giuseppe Logan up there around this time. In the fall I came back to New York and in latter '63 I figured that Giuseppe and I should join forces, so I told him to come to New York and that we should really try to get something together. In '64 me and Giuseppe had been doing a lot of playing and I met Roswell Rudd and John Tchicai and in the latter part of that year I participated in the "October Revolution" headed by Bill Dixon. I played there with Paul Bley, New York Art Quartet and others. I remember these series of concerts, the October Revolution, as being a take-off for New Music and "Jazz" in the international sense because there were critics there like Martin Williams and all of that.

But it must have been around '61 when I made the real change from small drums and tabla to wanting to play traps in public. A friend of mine had taken me to see Elvin Jones playing with John Coltrane. My friend said that this guy is considered to be one of the best "Jazz" drummers... everyone was talking about Elvin Jones. I heard them and said, well if that's the case I think I'm going to play trap drums. I

liked what he was doing but I felt there was a lot more he could be doing on the drum set. I started making gigs on traps here and there and people started saying "man, you're a strange drummer".

The thing is, I came out just being a drummer who showed an in-depth and basic knowledge of how to approach a vibrating skin... that's all I came out to do, to play some really good drums.

**R.R.:** So the playing situations that you confronted in the 60's didn't enhance or detract from your development?

**M.G.:** No, because I was disappointed in a lot of ways. I wasn't able to fully explore or realize my abilities on the drum set. I was always sort of contained, limited. When I say limited I mean that I had to deal with a certain rhythm or tonal structure that I thought would be a personal approach as well as a non-restrictive type of drum playing... but at the same time be within that type of environment that the music was about. But I always used to say, there's so much that could be happening, that these guys could be doing on their instruments. When I would play with certain people — a piano or a horn player — it would be like a wall between us, and appear in public that we weren't listening to each other. It was disappointing to me to find that musicians were satisfied with dealing with such a limited area as to what the music was about — although most of the people did their thing well, I thought, during that period.

**R.R.:** You would think that the music itself would lead them to a level of seeing the all-encompassing aspect of the music — but that didn't happen with those players?

**M.G.:** I think a lot of people were quite aware of what they could be doing but you see, once you spend many years doing something it can really get you down (laughter)... and then you are confronted with something it might take another five or ten years to achieve. It's like, "Am I going to be content with what I'm doing or am I going to woodshed for another five or ten years?"

**R.R.:** How are your drums tuned?

**M.G.:** Basically I tune according to the surroundings. If I'm playing with other people I try to find out what kind of music they will be dealing with and if they favor playing in an infinite variety of keys or out of a tonal center... if it's going to be about that. The other way is that I tune from a principle of what I call "mean" tuning or a "mean" frequency off the human heartbeat. Basically the frequency of my own heartbeat where I try to create a sympathetic resonance within myself and also the listener. If we talk about the keyboard we're talking about from around D to F. Most times somewhere around a "mean" D or E. For me this appears to be a very good tuning.

**R.R.:** Do you think a problem with music now is that a lot of players begin to play at points that are somewhat questionable?

**M.G.:** I feel that people in this so-called Modern Age often don't have the fundamental understanding of why they do things.

This type of thinking started me into the principles of music. I started questioning myself: who was the first one to make up a scale? How did they decide that this is an A note and this is a B note? Why am I playing music, how does it affect people? I constantly asked myself these questions. I found out that among the ancients there was a little bit more of a scientific or even spiritual line of development,





there was an understanding, a direction.

A lot of the musicians don't know the function of the music. That is one of the topics that I hear a lot of older musicians talking about today; that if we say that A is that initial primary source, then these people we're talking about are labelled C. C is not aware of A, only of B, but B copied A and they don't realize that they have to look at A. They have copied things with no understanding of what they've copied.

I've always asked myself what takes place when I manipulate my instrument and what takes place when the person listening reacts in a negative or positive way. This led me into basic acoustics, the physics of sound, how sound travels through the instrument and through what medium it travels. Why people tap their feet, why would they smile, why would they cry. I started to study the psychology of music, musical engineering, anything that had to do with the making of instruments to the way sound was conducted through a medium to the response of the listener. I found that understanding the effects of music on the biological system made me a much better musician. It gave me a better idea how to organize my work.

**R.R.:** I believe you made one historic engagement with the Cecil Taylor Unit....

**M.G.:** This happened in the late 60's in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It was interesting and I learned a lot about Cecil's music. It turned out

to be a lot more intellectual and a lot more formulated than I had thought it was.... quite frankly I was surprised. I made a lot of adjustments, I felt very academic playing this music. I was right behind Mike Mantler, trumpet and Ken McIntyre, alto saxophone and I was looking at what Cecil wrote for them. I would try to understand what his sense of sound was about and what his rhythm structure was and I would just try to write a drum line with those two instruments in mind. Intensity-wise I was able to release a lot of energy but... well, let's put it like this, there were things I think I could have done that I couldn't do... where I could have utilized my skill and ability as a drummer in a more varied way.

**R.R.:** Is the utilization of rhythms from other non-Western cultures an attempt to further understand and extend the implications of that culture to your own? In a sense your art necessitates a clearer understanding of these cultures through your music.

**M.G.:** Let me say first that I really despise people who look superficially at a drummer from Africa or the Caribbean and do recordings on Columbia or whatever — those who have done field trips to Africa or the Caribbean and didn't know the best of what's happening in those places.

It's pretty hard to neglect Africa where they have been dealing with the drums for thousands of years. Africa's drum culture is still very advanced. Now one of the major differences

between Africa and here is about the concept of community, about politics, about the tribal concept — the communal concept versus the capitalist concept or the idea of the individual versus the group. In music everything they did was said to be functional. The drum part was equally divided. The thing about African drumming is that if people would stop trying to pay attention to each part separately and just get the whole of it they would really get a better idea. The reason that the African thing didn't advance was that they thought inductively instead of deductively. But the African did understand about parts and the whole. A lot of my music comes from the ensemble concept of "Jazz" but also a lot of it from the individual concept we know as improvisation. In my role as a drummer I have just taken three or four parts that Africans would do and coordinated them together. If there wasn't a cut-off between the Black mind in America and the African mind....

**R.R.:** You could see a real escalation.

**M.G.:** Definitely, it's just a progression, not going backwards. The Africans would be moving the same way if they had the choice; if they weren't oppressed and colonized.

**R.R.:** What were the circumstances which produced the courageous and innovative music with pianist Don Pullen on the "Nommo" recording.

**M.G.:** Giuseppe Logan decided to disband his quartet (Logan, Graves, Don Pullen, Eddie Gomez) to do something else, so he said "...form your own band".

Don had been playing around with a group called The Four Souls, rhythm and blues and all and he wanted a chance to get that out of him so we got together. Eventually Don wasn't satisfied with what was happening in the music, he wasn't getting what he wanted out of it. I didn't really want to break up the band, that was Don's idea.

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Percussionist Milford Graves goes about his musical musings in a pertinacious fashion, and it is this firmness of ideology and aesthetic ability which makes him an immensely important, almost essential figure on the scene today. Many younger players would do well to take a few lessons from him in terms of this musician's dedication and tenacity towards the art in particular and towards life in general.

In Graves' music one senses that a hard battle has been fought to get his music elastic enough and organic enough to breathe, as if it were a separate physical organism itself. The percussionist once said that "...the minute I sit down the instrument's sounding...." Listen to the striking "breathing" quality in his ensemble playing on the New York Art Quartet's historic recording on ESP (especially noticeable on side 2) or anywhere on "Meditations Among Us".

What Graves has done is transfer his rhythmic findings and technique, which were initially applied and informed by small drums, African percussion and tabla to the conventional (although his set has been considerably modified) trap drum set. Because of this his work and music give the feeling that it's always happening — there is no real "buildup" or "climax", there is only constant ecstasy and rhythmic barrage.

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Milford Graves may be contacted via The Institute Of Percussive Studies, P.O. Box 329, Lincolnton Station, New York, N.Y. 10037 USA, or via Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont 05201 USA.

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Bassist Art Davis became famous in the jazz world through his work in the 1950s and '60s with Max Roach, John Coltrane, Booker Little, Roland Kirk, Dizzy Gillespie and many, many others. In 1970 he retired from music, for reasons which are explained in this interview, and devoted himself to other studies which led to receiving his doctorate in clinical psychology from New York University in 1981.

In 1979 Art Davis returned to music, recording with Dizzy Reece (on Bee Hive) and with a trio of his own on Interplay. In February 1981 he came to Toronto with Bill Dixon and Freddie Waits to appear in the documentary "Imagine The Sound", and this interview took place.

At this writing (early March 1982) Davis is contemplating a number of projects, including writing what he feels is a much-needed book on John Coltrane, and opening a private practice as a psychologist. He has been working with Arthur Blythe, Pharoah Sanders and Hilton Ruiz, with The Vibration Society (a group organized by the wife of the late Roland Kirk), and was about to play in a David Murray Quartet with Don Pullen and Ed Blackwell. His doctoral thesis will be published in the near future by one of a number of American psychological journals, and he is open to work as a bassist, with others or leading his own trio.

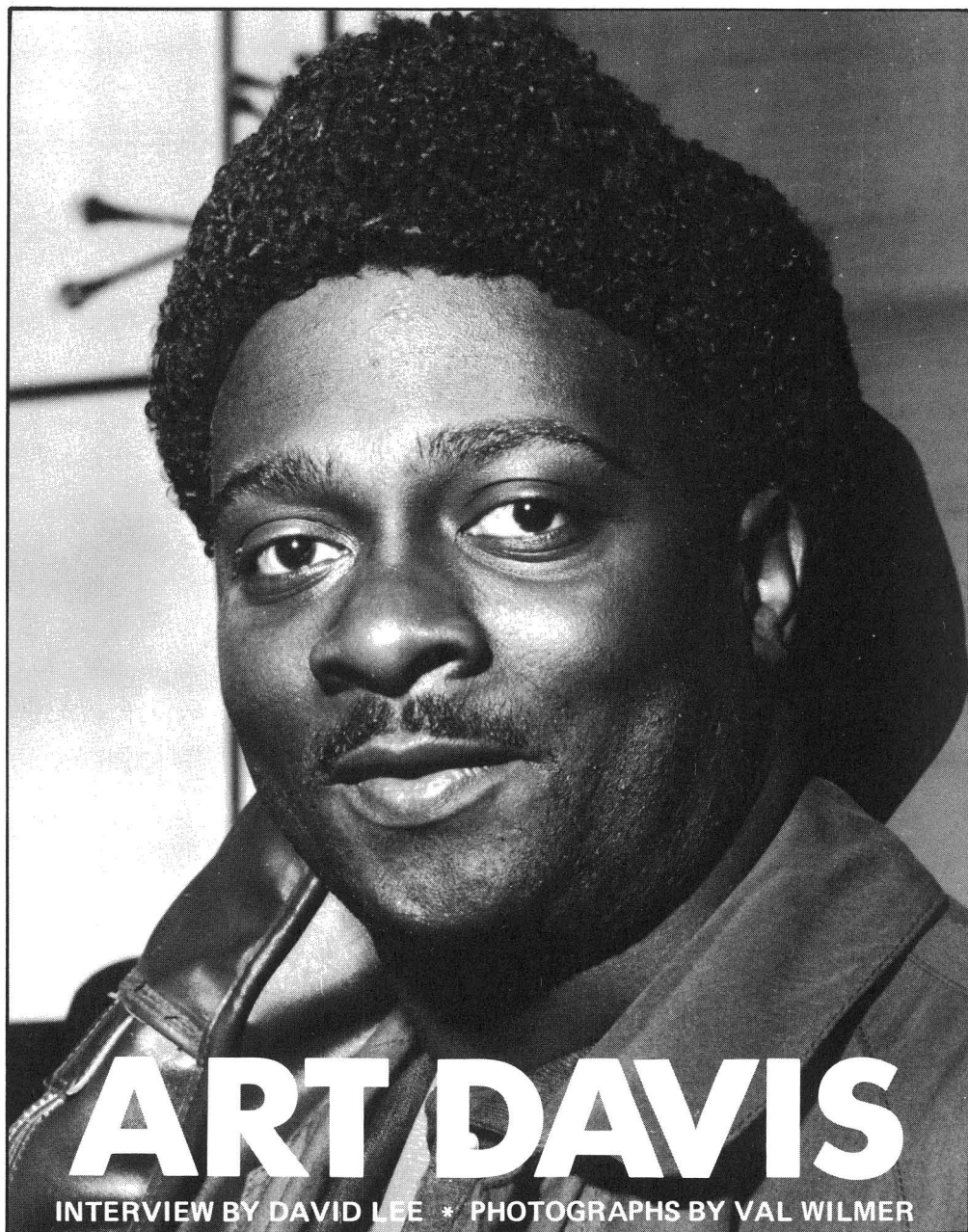
**ART DAVIS:** I'm originally from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; actually from a small village outside Harrisburg. I started playing when I was five; I studied piano without a piano. I didn't have a piano at home so I went to a lady's home and took the lesson and then made a mental picture of what to do, and practiced one day a week there. That lasted for a year or so, then I took the tuba in elementary school — because it was the only instrument left. I wanted to play trumpet or trombone, but they weren't available.

I got quite proficient on the tuba, winning prizes and so forth. Only when I was in high school did I pick up the bass. To tell you the truth, the tuba was always very much easier for me than the bass, but I decided that the bass offered more opportunities to play, and I just dropped the tuba after high school.

I studied with the high school band director, who was a bass player himself, and in a year's time he said that I had assimilated all he knew, and that he was going to recommend me for the local symphony, which at that time was unheard of; there were no blacks at all in the symphony orchestras. He and another man, the choir director, who was in the symphony himself, recommended me. I was sixteen years old at the time.

When I auditioned, they threw the book at me - but I won. For example, there was a Beethoven passage with low Cs and Ds, and they asked me why I didn't play them. I simply said that I didn't have an attachment [note: the lowest string on the bass is tuned to E; a special attachment will extend its range downward a third to C]. The conductor went before the board and said this is a fantastic bass player, just in high school. Everybody on the board said, "Great, can he be in the orchestra?" He said yes, that's the thing, I'd like to put him in the orchestra. They said, "Fine, why are you talking to us then?" He said there's only one thing: he's coloured (which was the word they used then). They fell silent and the conductor said, well, if you don't want him, then you don't want me as conductor.

So I got in.



And then I started in contests and things and won prizes in high school, then up to the national level, on both bass and tuba. Some of the bass players who I beat then are now with prominent orchestras.

You had what were called "forensics"; applying not to speech but to instruments, where you were a soloist and you competed against people in sections; first in counties, then you went from counties to districts and then from districts to state, and then from state to national. You played a piece of your own, then a standard piece which they would require, and occasionally just play scales and things before the committee which would grade you. Then they had the same thing for orchestra. I came first in each of those instances. At an audition there would be perhaps twenty-four bass players, from all over the state, or the country.

In the second year of playing bass I started to play jazz; not hard jazz, but stock tunes. Some of us kids had bands where we played stock arrangements and things. I played at the YMCA, for weekend dances, and a man came in

and heard me, who was playing with a professional band in Harrisburg. He approached me and asked me if I would like to play in it; so I auditioned and got in that band.

Then I was introduced, through records, to the music of Charlie Parker. I never heard him in person, but his music was one of the most significant experiences in my life. It was a different kind of feeling, so I became interested in bebop and started playing it.

In the meantime, when I was in that orchestra in Harrisburg I think I may have been the first black in any orchestra in the country, even though it was a small orchestra. The soloist would come in and look on in disbelief: Who's back there? But I somehow thought — the American goal — that I could overcome that, and up to a point I did. I got scholarships to Eastman, playing in my senior year in the All-State Orchestra. The American composer Howard Hanson heard of me, through his assistant, and offered me an unconditional full scholarship to Eastman.

Still, there were a lot of obstacles. After

the director of the high school orchestra said he couldn't teach me any more, I took lessons from the first bassist in the Harrisburg Symphony until he too said that he couldn't teach me any more. It was decided that I would go to Philadelphia and take lessons with the principal bassist in the orchestra there. So I went there one Saturday a month for a while; I couldn't go more often for financial reasons; we were very poor — and he was very antagonistic when I said I wanted to be a classical bassist. He accepted me as a student, but there was no kind of positive feedback from him, no encouragement. He would make remarks like, "why don't you get a degree and teach down South?" and things like that. And I had tried out at the Curtis Institute, one of the famous schools where he taught, and didn't get accepted there, but some other lesser players that I knew and that I had beat out, did get accepted.

In any event, they invited me to come check out Eastman and I didn't like what I saw there. This was in the mid-1950s. Then I auditioned for Juilliard and for the Manhattan School Of Music and got scholarships to both. By that time I knew all nine Beethoven symphonies by memory. I had to play some of the parts in the audition, and I didn't have to look at them. The conductor at Juilliard said he had never heard anybody like that — in fact said it out loud at the audition, which was not supposed to happen.

Then I took a teacher, a Frenchman, named Anselme Fortier, who was principal bassist of the New York Philharmonic. His attitude was completely different to the teacher in Philadelphia. I don't know if I was his first black student, or only black student or what, he never mentioned that. He had been principal with the New York Philharmonic for 33 years and he knew all the top conductors across the country. He wrote letters to all of them, telling them about me, that I had an exceptional talent — and only two answered. One said that he would like to hear me when I was older, because you have to age — "like old wine" he said. Which may be true, but it's not true now: the Philharmonic is getting the youngest people they can, I think the mean age is about 22. But there was a dichotomy. If you were black, if you were young, you were too young. If you were older, you were too old, they wanted younger people.

Fritz Reiner in Chicago did admit there was a problem, and said that frankly he didn't know what to do. He said there was another black bass player in his town who played very well and tried to get into the symphony but he couldn't get in. At that time there were dual unions, all-black and all-white, and to play in the symphony you would have to belong to the white union, which would be impossible.

So that was it. Fortier was heartbroken. In fact he was doing a television program called the Longines Wittnauer Hour, with the Longines Symphonette. He was the only bass player and he wanted to relinquish the job to me, but that didn't work, so that was the extent of it. I had liked all kinds of music from the beginning, but at that time I thought I'd be able to surpass the system, and also play jazz, because I was doing that while I was going to school.

**David:** How did you actually start your career as a professional jazz musician?

**Art:** First I played around Harrisburg with my own band; we worked fraternities and so on and had our own radio show. After the disap-

pointments that Fortier and I had had, and me realizing that you didn't really need a degree to play music, I came home, because my mother was ill, and my father had died when I was very young.

Sonny Stitt came to Harrisburg with his own rhythm section - Edgar Willis, who later became Ray Charles' manager, was the bass player - and I sat in and caused some stir. When Sonny Stitt came to town the next time he used me as part of a local rhythm section; so did Kenny Dorham. Also I used to go to Philadelphia to hear people; I'd heard Oscar Pettiford there and his French horn player, Julius Watkins, whom I knew from school, asked me to sit in. The next time Pettiford came to town with his trio, he recognized me in the audience and asked me to sit in and at one point he offered me a job with the band; he was playing cello.

At a place called Peps in Philadelphia I went to hear Max Roach's group. It was right after Clifford Brown died, the band was with Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley or Sonny Rollins. George Morrow was late for the set; Kenny Dorham saw me and asked me if I would sit in.

So I sat in, and the first thing Max did was *Cherokee*, at this really fast tempo. I managed that, but he sort of ignored me, as if it was a fluke. Then he called *Just One Of Those Things* at the same tempo; that made him look. We played something else; then the bass player walked in, we finished the number and I started off the stand and Max said no, finish the set. So I finished the set, and they offered me the job. I turned it down but gave Max my number. Later on he called me, but I turned it down again; my mother was still ill. About a year later I had nursed her back to health, and Max called me from St. Louis. He was forming a pianoless group with Booker Little and George Coleman, and asked me to join. He sent me the fare to go to New York, and I went to his place at the appointed time, but there was no answer. I thought it had been some kind of joke; I was standing there in the street with my suitcase and my bass, thinking how can I go back to Harrisburg, I'll be ridiculed. So I went around the corner with my bass and all, called the number: no answer. I stayed there and got a coke, went back in half an hour, still no answer. I asked around and someone told me that yes, Max Roach lived there. Finally after going back and forth all these times, I called again and Booker Little answered: "Is this Art Davis?" So we had the rehearsal and from then on I played in the big time.

So from then on I worked. We went to Birdland, there were cutting sessions and so on. Booker Little was so fantastic! At first I think he wondered who this whippersnapper was, this farmer from Harrisburg. But he saw that I could play, because we lived in the same hotel and we would rehearse after the rehearsals with Max — four or five hours straight. At first we would just rehearse and he would leave with George Coleman, because they were from Memphis together. Then one time he asked me if I would like to go out to dinner with them, and I knew I was accepted. Eventually we got to be very close.

Once at Newport, Booker by accident shut a car door on my picking finger — but I went ahead and played anyway. Everyone congratulated me on it, but I gave my notice to Max, because the thing was in a splint, so I had to use the other fingers — in fact work on

entirely different techniques. Max wouldn't accept it, and Booker, who felt terrible about it, said he would quit if I left the band. So they struggled around with me doing that for quite some time. By the time we came back to New York my finger was healed enough so that I could pick with it, so I was ready.

And there were cutting sessions where people challenged me. Mingus challenged me and backed down, and people saw that. Same thing with Paul Chambers: there was that (competitive) element because Paul had been working with John Coltrane, and I guess I was taking dates from him. He came around one night and challenged me, with reading and different things. I didn't want to do it but I did. I must give Paul credit; after I did that and showed him up he was very nice to me. Before that he had been kind of cold, but after that he was always very friendly.

But that competition thing still exists. There's a lot of jealousy among bass players. Certain bass players have used my techniques and stolen things from me and never given me credit for it. If you check out some of the things I did with Coltrane for example, certain intervallic walking, soloing, I recorded them first and other bass players have done them afterwards. A lot of the things that were done in the mid-sixties, I did in the early sixties. There's one in particular whose name I won't say. He used to call me about getting him work with Coltrane and other things, but not once has he acknowledged my influence on his playing. There are other bass players like that — somehow that seems to be one of the most jealous instruments.

The reason Bill Dixon called me for this project in Toronto comes from something that happened a long time ago, in the early sixties. Bill was working in a coffeehouse in New York with Archie Shepp, and the regular bass player, for some reason, couldn't make it one night. I lived in the neighbourhood and Archie said, well, let's call Art Davis. Bill had said, "No, I don't think he'd work with us." But Archie went ahead and called me and of course, I came right over. Bill said he was flabbergasted; he had always remembered that.

**David:** It sounds as if at one time, you tried as hard as you could to make a career as a classical bassist. Has that situation changed to any extent in the last twenty-five years?

**Art:** The changes have been miniscule. In 1969, along with a cellist by the name of Earl Madison, I instituted a class action suit against the New York Philharmonic. It got very little publicity, of course.

I had auditioned for the Philharmonic in 1961; from about fifty bass players there were six finalists including me. You'd figure that all of the finalists are capable of playing in the orchestra; it's just a matter of picking the best of those. They did pick a winner; of course it wasn't me, but all of the other finalists subsequently subbed in the orchestra; they never called me. And eventually three of those other finalists became permanent members of the orchestra.

**David:** This was the situation that prompted you to launch the suit against the orchestra?

**Art:** No, actually at that time the symphony field broke open: a black bassist was accepted into the Boston Symphony. I was in Boston with Max Roach and he came to meet me; some of the percussionists from the symphony knew Max and were talking about me so he

came by and we found we had similar feelings and we got to be the best of friends.

When Lincoln Centre was being built we wrote to Leonard Bernstein, who was the conductor of the Philharmonic, saying that those funds were black peoples' funds as well, but that in fact there were no blacks in the orchestra. First we wrote the letter, and there was no answer. Then we threatened to picket, which at that time was very unfashionable. Then we got a letter and they hired a black violinist. So we let it go. Up until 1969 that same violinist never moved up; he was last in the section and he was still the only black player.

I went before a commission and told them about that and showed them the documents. They said that somebody had to audition again, to make a record, but I didn't want to take another audition. But everybody else was afraid, so I took the test.

In the meantime there was an article written about me in the *Village Voice*, saying that I was eminently qualified, and I mentioned that I knew a lot of other black people who could play in symphonies, who should be tried. Eventually some people contacted me, and ultimately I helped crack the Philadelphia Orchestra. That's how I met Earl Madison, the cellist, because he was supposed to get the job in Philadelphia. They were looking for somebody like Jackie Robinson, who didn't smoke or drink, to be an example. But he didn't get picked, so I broke off my relationship, because I didn't want to be going through the motions, of being a token figure for them to say: "Look, this is what we've done. Art Davis has met with us." So Earl and I both took auditions for the Philharmonic and of course we didn't get accepted and we sued for class action.

The suit lasted a year. The court decided that Earl Madison and myself were eminently qualified to play — but that the conductor had the right of "artistic discretion". In other words, the conductor had the right to discriminate. But it opened the way for a couple of things; we were responsible for getting women — white women of course — into the orchestra. They have quite a number of women now, and they use them as a "minority". The other thing it opened up was substitutions. The court did *order* them to hire black substitutes, so they did go that far.

The argument used against Earl and I was that, number one, we were poor sight readers. Number two, that we weren't qualified, so that if we played in the orchestra, it would lower its standards considerably. I answered number one by saying that there is less sight-reading in the symphony orchestras than in the studio orchestras, where it's all new music — and I was making a regular living in the studios. Whereas in the symphony, you could get your score a year in advance, because they program at least a year in advance.

The case dragged on for a number of weeks. One of the things the Philharmonic would do — this was supposed to psyche me out — the whole bass section would come during the case and sit there in the audience and look; then after a while they would march out en masse. This happened every day; I was supposed to be trembling.

People in the classical field are very different from what the press generally presents. The writer in the *Voice* pointed this out, and the Commission who heard this case were shocked: this is the Philharmonic? Because some of the members who testified were like Archie

Bunkers.

They called the black violinist whom they had hired, Sanford Allen, to the stand. He testified that, not only was I eminently qualified to play in the New York Philharmonic, but that it was true you could get the music a year in advance. Even more, since a lot of what is played is standard repertoire. Even the world premieres are rehearsed and gone over well in advance.

Our answers to those accusations, both as to our sight reading and our general musicianship, was that Earl and I both challenged the members of the sections. We wanted to have it in Town Hall and invite the public; the only requirement would be that all the contestants - not just Earl and me - be anonymous while we were performing. We would just each play and let the public decide. We also suggested an international panel of judges — conductors, et cetera who had never appeared at the Philharmonic before, and let them hear it too, so it couldn't be too set up. They refused any of that.

I had already suggested that screens be used at auditions as standard practice, so that the auditioning committee - who if you're a bass player, are six to a dozen string players, the heads of the string sections, and for the finals, the conductor - could not see the musicians who were auditioning. I was laughed at at the time, but about a month ago there was an article in the *Sunday Times*, where they said that the Philharmonic had adopted screens.

They also said that previous to 1970, which was when I was involved in all of this, that there were a lot of setups going on; they had already decided who they were going to hire and that the auditions were just going through the motions; the other applicants were just patsies. Now it comes out that screens are a great equalizer. Of course, the fact that I advocated them at the time is not known or acknowledged.

As a result of the suit, I was what I call "whitelisted" in New York. They use the word blacklist I use the word whitelist. I was not able to work after this.

Up to that time I was one of the most-recording musicians in New York. I made all kinds of sessions. I did some of Bob Dylan's early recordings; Peter Paul and Mary. Country and western. John Denver starting out; he used to come to my house and rehearse; as well as jazz players, and singers: Judy Garland, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte.

**David:** Did a lot of this commercial activity end as a result of your suit against the Philharmonic?

**Art:** It ALL ended. I was doing the Merv Griffin show: I used to be featured with him singing with the bass, the two of us upfront with the orchestra. When news about the suit became public he wouldn't even speak to me; the camera stopped panning me and wouldn't even show me.

Some of the very good people, that you know as artists, stopped talking to me. Not



ART DAVIS & RAY BROWN

only white, but black as well.

You see, the people on the boards of major orchestras such as the Philharmonic are the multi-millionaires, the people who control this country, the true leaders of America. So confronting them was not like throwing stones and pop bottles. This was the whole core, the whole fabric of institutional racism, and I tackled it without any organisation behind me. I wasn't getting any government monies or subsidies to do this. Nobody took me aside and said, "Look, we'll back you: here's a million dollars." I did this on my own. Whereas the people opposing me, it was a part of their job. These people were the highest in government circles, powerful people the likes of the Rockefellers. They were the people behind the big record companies, saying "make sure Davis doesn't work." And the people behind the clubs, so I imagine both white and black musicians were intimidated by the stigma of being associated with me. When I was walking through New York, bass players would see me and walk across the street to avoid me, and look into windows as if they were window shopping. White players, black players, even jazz players whom you know of. Ron Carter was the only one to speak up — in a *down beat* interview he said that in his opinion there was no question about me being qualified for any major orchestra. And these other great bass players, never said one word; not a mumbling word, as the saying goes.

The only critic who spoke out on my behalf

was Nat Hentoff. That's why I wanted him to write the foreword for my book, because he consistently stayed in my corner, whereas so many people abandoned me. It was like going into a rundown old house, and you turn on the lights, and you see the roaches scuttling for the dark.

But I did have a lot of positive things happen as well — like Nat was a good thing; unlike most music writers Nat Hentoff is pretty accomplished as a musician and actually knows what he's talking about.

**David:** Was there ever a temptation for you to move to Europe?

**Art:** I almost did. In the classical field alone, there are more black players in European orchestras. There's a black concertmaster in the Belgian Symphony; Italy, London, different places. I could have gotten positions in Europe, I know. One of the big forces that kept me here was my wife, and Coltrane of course.

**David:** Val Wilmer's book, "As Serious As Your Life", says that when Coltrane died, you "left jazz" because you couldn't see anything happening. It sounds like this whole affair with the New York Philharmonic may also have affected your decision.

**Art:** That statement is partially true, in that Coltrane was such an influence; there was nobody else then, and even today, nobody, as creative as he was. There's nothing going on now that's really innovative, that I know of, and I've worked with some of the best.

So all that happened about that time. There were factors like that deterring me from working in jazz, but truthfully I wonder how much I could have worked. Because people ceased to call me, and the phone used to be so busy. The same jazz musicians whom I'd worked with, and knew, never called.

So I went into teaching, and my wife had a very good job; she's been the most support. I wanted to work — as I've done before — in construction or other kinds of manual work and she said "No, you will not do that" — so I didn't.

Really, there was never a question that I wanted a job with the Philharmonic — I wanted a job to open it. I was already making more money with this staff job, being on television, and doing record dates, which is actually more glamorous work. I didn't want the job for myself, Earl and I felt that we were best qualified to be the gladiators. We knew we wouldn't get the jobs; it wasn't a rash decision; we just hoped that because of our sacrifices it would open up for other people.

You know, twenty years ago I was instrumental in fighting for women's rights, through a group called the Committee of Five, which worked within the New York Local - 802 - of the American Federation of Musicians. We were responsible for getting a non-discrimination clause included in local 802 contracts. At the time we had to call it the Committee of Five because the others were afraid to give their names for fear of reprisals. In fact I used to have news about the Committee printed in *Coda*, back in the magazine's early days. I had met John Norris when I was in Toronto with Dizzy Gillespie. So *Coda* kept up a continuing saga about this, up to the time that these bylaws were passed.

If I had won this Philharmonic thing I would have stayed there until I got tenure and then resigned, so that they couldn't say "Well he was there for a year but couldn't make it."

Actually the whole thing did me good,

because, frankly, I think I was getting complacent from all that staff and studio work. When I stopped getting called for those jobs, it made me go back to school, even though that in turn caused a lot of financial problems.

My first record after working with Coltrane was the Bee Hive record with Dizzy Reece. That was my first record date in over ten years. They just called me, and afterwards they were so impressed with my playing — although I didn't solo — that I made the cover. I tell my students that you don't have to solo; if you play very well, people will recognize it.

I've had a very good reaction to my book; evidently Barry Green, president of the Society of International Bassists, recommends it and has praised it very highly; Dave Baker endorses it as well. I thought the four-finger technique I developed would take, to be honest, a good ten years for a bass player really to learn, but students really take to it, with very few exceptions, and many people have been converted from the traditional three-finger system.

Last night in the club I just used a microphone through the sound system; I don't use pickups for amplification, I've never found one that I've liked. But I can be heard. I worked with Barry Harris' 95-piece orchestra at Symphony Space and Stanley Crouch, who wrote the liner notes to my record, was there. He said he walked all over the hall, every part of it, and he could always hear me, and I was unamplified. And that's with drums, full string section, brass, reeds, and my sound cut through. For one thing, I use a very high action. As a matter of fact, my students are doing that. I don't tell them to, but they're making their actions high, which isn't very fashionable right now among young players because you can't gain as much speed that way.

**David:** So you started to get work in New York once again?

**Art:** Yes, I came to New York with my own group, and I worked with Joe Albany, and Stanley Crouch got me a job at the Tin Palace as a leader. It was fantastic; it almost brought tears to my eyes. People came by and saw me for the first time in years, and there were headlines in the paper: "The Return of Art Davis". My former students were there — Reggie Workman, Bob Cunningham, James Leary — many people came in. The reception was very warm, it made me feel good.

— Toronto, February 9, 1981

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# RECORD REVIEWS



## ANTHONY BRAXTON QUARTET

Performance 9/1/79  
Hat Hut Nineteen (2R19)

Anthony Braxton, alto, soprano, soprano saxophones, clarinet, contrabass clarinet; Ray Anderson, alto and tenor trombones, little instruments; John Lindberg, bass; Thurman Barker, percussion, xylophone, gongs.

I am honoured to be able to review this album. Firstly I had an opportunity to listen to this quartet at close quarters for an entire week at The Rising Sun just prior to its trip to Europe. At the time (see *Coda* 164/165) I referred to the music as absolute dynamite, and expressed the hope that the group would get recorded before its members ventured elsewhere. I am pleased to say that this Hat Hut twofer is a fine document of one of Anthony Braxton's hottest quartets.

This release deserves special mention because it captures the sequential flow of a typical Braxton concert with its panoply of images, colours, textures, dynamics, and free and co-ordinant designs. In a six-page booklet which accompanies the album Braxton notes that performance design is an essential ingredient for the proper presentation of his music. The

sequence in this case was worked out moments before the group's appearance at the Willisau Jazz Festival, which is where this album was recorded. Seven pieces and compositional fragments were chosen from a batch of fifty to sixty works written between 1974 and 1978. Some of the material (*69.G, 40.F, 40.I*) was recorded a few months later in a Parisian studio for Moers Music ("Seven Compositions 1978") and in this regard Braxton claims he would have chosen different material had he known this particular concert was being recorded for eventual release. Ironically the live date is superior to the studio date in sound quality.

Braxton is to be congratulated for his excellent five-page exegesis on "co-ordinant music" (his term for quartet music). He presents a detailed discourse on how he conceives of his compositions ("Structural system types") as providing a spectrum of "creative exploration areas", describes in precise analytical and methodological terms the overall architecture and specifics of the concert, plus provides some non-technical, figurative sketches of his heads and neat, diagrammatic illustrations of the performance sequence, staging and mix.

One reviewer has referred to Braxton's English as something akin to that of "a German technocrat who's not quite bilingual" who engages in "inelegant pseudo-intellectualism at its worst". Granted his terminology resembles some

of the excesses of contemporary structuralism, but I submit Braxton is no academic charlatan. Like many linguists, he has fashioned a language which attempts to break from previous (mis)conceptions and more appropriately explains his unique ideas. For me the bottom line is whether or not he makes himself understood. There is no doubt in my mind on this score. His commentary is as comprehensible as his music.

Side One is almost 16 minutes long and consists of two pieces, *69.C* and *69.E*, linked by a free "collage improvisation". *69.C* is "a medium-fast pulse vehicle for extended solo exploration in the traditional soloist-rhythm section creative music context". Lindberg bows and Barker rolls an incessant rhythm ("structural pivot pattern"), while Braxton and Anderson rework a quirky unison motif between the beat on soprano and trombone respectively. Then Lindberg and Barker move out with melodramatic accents and flashy explosions that shift the rhythmic pulse for Braxton's long, squirrely figures and gripping, climactic growls, and Anderson's fat, blaring drawl and revelry.

A brief free-form dialogue filled with pregnant silences leads into the "pointillistic" exchanges of *69.E* with its delicate group interplay. Braxton refers to this as a "post-AACM functionalism" which "creatively encourages the most balanced group involvement since dixie-



land music", an innovation he emphasises as of the greatest importance.

Side Two features an extended 19-minute version of **69.G** with solos from all the quartet. It's one of the numerous up-tempo, boppish tunes Braxton performed throughout the late 1970s. He identifies it as part of the "post-Coleman juncture.... in the tradition of alternative creativity solidified in the 1960s". It emerges out of a delicately playful "collage improvisation" which heats up into the punchy head. Then Anderson takes off with rugged, trail-blazing bluster and vocalized overblowing. (Take note of the heat coming from the rhythm section here and indeed throughout the recording – stupendous!). Barker is next. His clipped, yet relaxed precision and beautiful sense of tone combine well in a creative polyrhythmic continuity. Like many of the best contemporary drummers, Barker makes elaborate use of the depth of the bass drum. Braxton follows on alto with rollercoaster intensity mixing with peppery staccato lines and convoluted swirls capped with garbled growls and whines, and hair-raising squeals. After the head is reworked by the quartet at a horrendous pace, Lindberg lays down an impeccable string of heavy-duty pizzicato, thick strumming accents and a mean arco coda which slides gracefully into **40.F**.

Side Three is almost 20 minutes long, comprised of **40.F** and **69.F**. The former is a "principle-type composition" in which the musicians incorporate the language properties of the head into their improvisational vocabulary (as opposed to strictly improvising on the head as is the case in "thematic-type compositions"). Here the principle is chromatic. As Lindberg saws up and down his bass, Braxton (clarinet) and Anderson fall into chromatic synchronization. Once the tempo picks up, the coordination shifts about while Barker scurries above on marimba. A charming marimba/chimes interlude follows and sets the stage for some endearing, free-form antics, including Braxton's fat snorting on contrabass clarinet.

**69.F** opens with Braxton meandering about on soprano. He is joined by the others in a dainty, chamber-like motif which leads into a three-note bass figure. The others respond to Lindberg's call, and as the pitches of their replies change the liberties of open improvisation are unleashed. There is a lot of intrigue here; indeed, additional proof that the musicians' creative sympathies enable the most natural collective freedom.

Before the end of Side Three Braxton skips into **23.G**, one of his jerky boppish ditties, and switches to alto rallying his forces with a brief oom-pah-pah step. Most of the near-17 minutes of Side Four features an amusing "time-shifting" dynamic in which the rhythm section purposely play very irregular, yet clean, beats against Braxton's and Anderson's choppy choruses and gutsy solos.

No AACM-styled performance ends without an enthusiastic encore-finale. In this case it's **40.I**, an excellent march pumped out at a clipped pace, showcasing a fine balance of tight ensembles and playful call-and-response.

Needless to say I enjoyed this recording immensely. This quartet was one of the finest working bands in the late 1970s. Thank you Hat Hut for capturing the band when it was hot.

– Peter Danson

## RAY BRYANT

Hot Turkey  
Classic Jazz CJ130

This is a wonderfully varied and continuously swinging record. Recorded in 1975, it compares favourably with Bryant's more recent work on Pablo; his playing here is of the high level that we have, over the years, come to expect from such an accomplished and experienced player.

The whole of side one is given over to a trio session, with Bryant accompanied by Major Holley's bass and by Panama Francis on drums, side two being a solo "recital", as the purveyors of pretention are apt to say. Fortunately there is no such pretention contained in Bryant's music – he is upfront and honest in playing the way(s) that he enjoys, be they lush ballads, funky hard bop piano, or boogie woogie, or *whatever*. The trio material swings without let-up through the title track, which is simply a retitling of Bryant's earlier *Cold Turkey*, into Basie staple *Lil Darlin'*, and finishes with *Satin Doll*, which leads me to my only real disappointment with this record, namely that some of the material is terribly over-familiar. I don't really want to buy a new record that has yet another version of *Satin Doll*, no matter how great a tune it is, or of *St. Louis Blues* and *'A' Train*, which crop up on the solo side. Producers, or whoever is responsible, should take note that the jazz record buyer is invariably not the pushy semi-inebriate who *always* pesters the "piano player" for the same handful of tunes, the jazz lounge standards.

Nevertheless, Bryant comes through loud and clear, with his tremendous versatility and impeccable rhythmic drive. There is a hell of a lot of piano here, with echoes of Powell, Peterson, Garner and God knows who else, but I hear Ray Bryant above all else, especially in the solo things. And, to his credit, he treats the over-familiar material with imagination, particularly *St. Louis Blues*, which really receives the full treatment from Bryant. A welcome issue, especially for the solo side, and recommended to Bryant fanciers and piano enthusiasts in general.

– Julian Yarrow

## BILL EVANS

Re: Person I Knew  
Fantasy 9608

Upon first listening to this album I was amazed at why we had to wait over seven years for this marvelous material to be released. The liner notes clarify that situation. It seems that these two tracks were recorded at the Village Vanguard in New York during the same two evenings that were devoted to putting together the album "Since We Met" (Fantasy 9501). These tracks were not planned for that record as the tunes had been previously recorded on recent albums.

Well, I am absolutely delighted that it has now been issued. Bill Evans plays beautifully on every one of the eight numbers. The tunes include such Evans staples as *Very Early*, *Emily* and *Sugar Plum* to mention just a few. By the way, the title song is actually an anagram for the name of Orrin Keepnews who produced a number of earlier Evans Riverside albums.

Bill Evans is usually considered significant because of the new harmonic richness he

brought to jazz piano playing. Often overlooked is his unique rhythmic talent. Evans's playing swings strongly but with a quite different approach than one might find in the playing of someone like Horace Silver or Wynton Kelly.

The jazz world suffered a great loss with the premature death of Bill Evans. This record is a most welcome addition to Evans's recorded legacy.

– Peter S. Friedman

## TAL FARLOW

Trilogy  
Inner City IC 1099

After surviving an era of guitar use and abuse, it is welcome to hear Tal Farlow, one of the original bop guitarists, once again. Farlow's unique harmonies (which he attributes to an inability to read music) and extraordinary chord changes and clusters made him something of a phenomenon of the fifties, when he was a key-note member, along with Charles Mingus, of the Red Norvo Trio. But for some twenty years, Farlow has chosen to stay out of the active jazz scene, preferring occasional club or festival appearances and the odd recording date.

In "Trilogy," made for Japanese issue in New York in 1976, Farlow is joined by Mike Nock (a progressive pianist who fits in well with Farlow's unique progressions) and Lynn Christie (a medical surgeon and one of the best part-time bass players anywhere) to echo the Red Norvo days resoundingly. The comparison bears well, with Nock occasionally hitting vibelike chords on electronic keyboard (in *Flamingo*) and Christie's zooming bass paying ample tribute to Mingus, with pizzicato to spare.

Although the majority of the selections are familiar ballads – *My Shining Hour*, *If I Should Lose You*, *There Is No Greater Love*, *Flamingo*, *Angel Eyes* – Farlow, with Nock and Christie, embellishes them with a freshness and vigor, without sacrificing the melody, to satisfy both romantics and progressives.

One of the best tracks is a Gospel-like *The Wolf and the Lamb*, title song from an unproduced Broadway musical by the album's producer Teo Macero about "the destruction of the world." Although the theme may be destruction, the mood is creative, with Farlow and Nock exploring new frontiers of musical space, and Christie setting the pace with soaring bass.

Unfortunately, Farlow destroys it all in a tasteless descent into disco with his original *Funk Among the Keys*, with a drummer (Bob Jasje) adding to the electronic mayhem. But with eight hits and one miss, you can't go wrong with this album. Just listening to Farlow is celebration enough.

– Al Van Starrex

## GUMPERT & SOMMER

Versaumnisse  
FMP 740

Ulrich Gumpert - piano; Gunter Sommer - drums.

East Germans Ulrich Gumpert and Gunter Sommer have recorded several times for the West German FMP label as a duo and in Gumpert's Workshop Band. Theirs is a music concerned with energy and virtuosity that avoids the extramusical affectations postured in some quarters of the European free music

community. As a duo, Gumpert and Sommer operate with, presumably, semi-determined coordinates, resulting in a dialogue based in musical substance rather than conceptual guidelines. Recorded during the "Workshop Freie Musik 1979" in Berlin, "Versaumnisse" finds the duo pushing the parameters of organized sound from a heated, integral epicenter.

Though a few of his mannerisms are of a Taylorish vein — momentary flashes of Monk, Waldron, and others are also heard — Gumpert's sense of solo construction casts them, along with the bulk of his ideas, in a sufficiently distinct light. Instead of granting the music autonomy in a reverberating wash, Gumpert has a deliberate approach to transition, to which the triggering function of Sommer is very important. As on *Hombre*, Sommer can transform shadowy softness to a riveting glare with a flick of his wrists. Conversely, Sommer has the ability to anticipate Gumpert and dim the fury to a whisper, allowing Gumpert's pedaled arpeggios to seep through midway through *Scheihawa*.

Although they don't suspend their performances with half-baked theatrics, Gumpert and Sommer's music does possess a modicum of levity, as marked by the almost mandatory sounding of sirens and horns and slapstick lapses into popular music parodies. After all, even free music has its conventions.

— **Bill Shoemaker**

(Available from *Coda*, or from Free Music Production, Behaimstrasse 4, 1000 Berlin 10, West Germany).

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## BUCK HILL

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**Scope**  
**SteepleChase SCS1123**

I remember about twenty years ago listening to a Charlie Byrd record on the Offbeat label. I have never been particularly partial to Charlie Byrd's guitar playing. However, four of the ten tracks on that album featured an unknown tenor saxophone player by the name of Buck Hill. I found Hill's playing quite impressive but didn't hear of him again until quite recently.

His first SteepleChase release, "This Is Buck Hill" (SCS-1095) created quite a stir among the bebop brigade of jazz players and listeners. This attention was certainly well deserved if late in coming. Hill is backed on this session by the same trio that supported him so well on his earlier recording: the sparkling piano of Kenny Barron, Buster Williams's authoritative bass playing, and the crisp crackling drumming of Billy Hart.

Buck Hill deserves to be considered as one of the top flight of contemporary tenor players. His solos bristle with invention at all tempos. Ballads are played with grace and feeling while on medium and up tempo pieces Hill wails and cooks with confidence and brilliance. Need I say more, get yourself a copy!

— **Peter S. Friedman**

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## SIR ROLAND HANNA

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**Swing Me No Waltzes**  
**Storyville SLP-4018**

Roland Hanna is a master of the eclectic piano — which is a whole lot more interesting than the electric piano. He draws on practically every source for his artistry in this album except

electricity, which he's able to generate himself. He ranges over a variety of styles, idioms, and concepts, especially piano jazz of course, moving in and out of the older piano traditions and the new concepts.

This is a solo session recorded in Stockholm in 1979 that displays all the better qualities of his playing. All the pieces, save one, are his own. Taken in total, the album might well be titled the Roland Hanna Suite, with one interpolation from the Ellington book, *Everything But You*. An examination of the titles suggests what's going on — influences from the blues, the waltz, the folk song, the lullaby, free jazz, and on — *I Hear You Knockin' But You Can't Come In Blues, Some Kind of Folk Song, A Little Sweetnin' for Sweden, Free Spirit-Free Style, Swing Me No Waltzes, Lullabye for Cedric, Anticipation, Roses Not Mums*.

*Swing Me* has Gershwin flourishes; touches of stride turn up in *Anticipation* and *I Hear You Knockin'*; there are occasional interlacings of Garner-like flourishes; bits of down home insinuate themselves in several places — all worked into a more modern whole. With the thought that goes into this work and the keyboard ability that backs it up, this is the kind of record that continues to grow with repeated listenings. — **Dick Neeld**

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## FRED VAN HOVE

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**Church Organ**  
**FMP SAJ-25**

Unlike most FMP issues, "Church Organ" was recorded over a three-day period in August, 1979, enabling Fred Van Hove to explore the vast dynamic and timbral capabilities of the organ of St. Peter's Church in Sinzag/Rhein. The resulting program benefits from the finesse Van Hove gained over the three days without losing the striking sense of improvisation transmitted through the music. The resonances of the program range from Sun Ra to Olivier Messiaen, yet, for most of the program, the fabric of the music is readily identifiable as Van Hove's transferred piano technique.

The pipe organ has a long and involved institutional tradition which Van Hove takes several well-aimed shots at in the course of his percussive and textural improvisations. *Greetings From the Land of Amateurs (Shht — We're Still in Church)* punctuates Van Hove's skirmishes with the instrument with momentary lapses into demented hymnal fragments. Like the madcap soundtrack for a royal procession in a silent film, *Finale 79* splices a prim melody with trompeteria bursts before the whole scene is sabotaged with percussive fireworks. Though this particular instrument does not have the extreme arsenal of gadgetry some European church organs come equipped with, Van Hove is still able to come up with a cricket-like clicking and sighing pipe effects for *Between 2 Battles, the Warrior Has a Well-Deserved Rest at the Soft Breast of his Beloved Lady and Dreams of Other Despairs and Victorias*.

*Glukgat* and *Patat* round out the program in a vein that is more overtly akin to the European free jazz tradition. Masses of sound are shaped with pounding ametrical rhythms, broken arpeggios, and chromatic matrixes. Though Van Hove is in a period concerned with "inward music," the effect of "Church Organ" is anything but introverted or monastic.

— **Bill Shoemaker**

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## HELEN HUMES

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**Helen**  
**Muse 5233**

*There'll Be Some Changes Made/Easy Living/You Brought a New Kind of Love To Me/Evil Gal Blues/Why Try to Change Me Now?/Draggin' My Heart Around*.

Stylistically, Helen Humes has never been what one might call a "belter." Her voice has always retained a delicacy and swinging buoyancy reminiscent of Ella or Mildred Bailey. Compare Mildred's 1939 vocal rendition of *Changes* here, and you'll see what I mean.

My strong penchant for this lyrical quality in her voice was firmly rooted years ago by way of several now long-gone 78s with the Basie band: *Dark Rapture, Thursday, And the Angels Sing*. She cut her first recordings some ten years prior to those sessions (with guitarist Lonnie Johnson); yet her voice remains remarkably ageless despite a slight quaver on slower numbers like *Easy Living* and *Why Try to Change Me Now?*

Helen is at her best on *Evil Gal Blues*, and that line, "...the men here in New York always love me the best..." serves as an apt observation on the sidemen who accompany her.

Buddy Tate's torrid solo on *Evil Gal* and his earthy introduction on *Changes*, as well as Joe Wilder's superb muted background to *Easy Living* and his flat, open horn introduction to *Draggin' My Heart Around*, are stuff enough for praise; however, it is the rhythm section of Norman Simmons, Billy Butler, Butch Miles and (especially) George Duvivier that both complements Helen's vocals and affords the listener some delightful solidly swinging instrumental moments. Only on the closing accompaniment of *Changes*, when the group tries to live up to the title by a sudden shift in tempo (the album jacket alludes to this as "some furious funk") does that tight-moving support break down.

If her first Muse recording was indeed a Grammy finalist, this one might go all the way.

— **John Sutherland**

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## THAD JONES

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**THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND**  
**By Jones, I Think We've Got It**  
**Metronome 15629**

**THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND**  
**A Good Time Was Had By All**  
**Metronome 15644**

**ECLIPSE**  
**Metronome 15652**

**ECLIPSE**  
**Live**  
**Metronome 15669**

These four records comprise the work of Thad Jones leading two different bands in Denmark from 1978 to 1980. When Thad first came to Europe he spent a couple of seasons with the Danish Radio Big Band as leader. Following that experience he decided to form a new big band of his own which led to the birth of Eclipse.

With the exception of American trombonist

Richard Boone and Danish tenor man Bent Jaedig the personnel of the two bands is totally different. Each band has a few familiar names in it, but by and large the members are local Danish musicians not widely known outside their own country. The Danish Radio Big Band includes among its membership American expatriate trumpet player Idrees Sulieman, the highly regarded Danish trumpet player Allan Botschinsky, the great Niels-Henning Ørsted-Pedersen on bass and the previously mentioned Richard Boone on trombone.

The personnel of Eclipse includes Americans Richard Boone, Horace Parlan on piano, drummer Ed Thigpen, Tim Hagans on trumpet and saxophonist Sahib Shihab.

Both bands play clearly and with a high degree of technical competence. A number of familiar Thad Jones compositions are scattered among the four albums. There are versions of such classics as *Tip Toe*, *Kids Are Pretty People* and *61st and Rich't* to name just a few. All the compositions and arrangements are not by Thad Jones. Members of both bands contribute roughly half the tunes.

I enjoyed all four records, but if forced to choose would probably select the first Eclipse album (Metronome 15652) as my favorite. Both Eclipse records have the benefit of a "real" piano instead of the electric piano used on the two records by the Danish Radio Big Band.

All four albums will certainly call to mind the now defunct Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, or Mel Lewis's current band. Those who were fans of the marvelous Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band will want to give consideration to these recordings. — *Peter S. Friedman*

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## IDRIS MUHAMMAD

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**Kabsha**  
Theresa TR 110

Idris Muhammad, drums; Ray Drummond, bass; George Coleman and Pharoah Sanders, tenor saxophones.

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*CCCC Blues/Soulful Drums/St. M./Kabsha/Want to Talk About You/Little Feet.*

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By fueling a vigorous duel between George Coleman and Pharoah Sanders at the helm of this two-tenor quartet, Idris Muhammad would have absolved his fated flirtations with the mass market. Instead, Muhammad features each tenor in trio settings, except on *CCCC Blues*, a six-minute spar that barely brings a sweat from either Coleman or Sanders. As Muhammad and bassist Ray Drummond rarely assert more than a homogeneous presence throughout the album, Sanders continually strains to summon the spirits and Coleman seems jetlagged, resulting in a lackluster album. "Kabsha" compounds Muhammad's dilemma as a leader as the makings of a memorable session were at hand.

Muhammad's dilemma, however, is minor compared to Sanders's. As with Muhammad, Theresa Records has provided Sanders the much-needed forum through which to regear his music for his old core audience. Yet, the apostolic fervour that Sanders translated into a beautifully raw sound during his tenure with John Coltrane has dissipated into a seemingly terminal world-weariness, as the trademarks he reassembles for these performances grow less animate with each use. Of his three trio feat-

ures, only *I Want to Talk About You*, aided by Coltrane's association with the Eckstine ballad, suggests that Sanders's power is only dormant.

Except for a swinging, if subdued, Coleman on the modal *Little Feet*, "Kabsha" is an album conspicuous in its unfulfilled potential. Still, the teaming of Coleman and Sanders at full throttle is a firm prospect for an engaging album.

Theresa Records, Box 1267, El Cerrito, CA 94630.  
— *Bill Shoemaker*

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## DON MENZA

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**& His 80's Big Band: Burnin'**  
Real Time 301

This is the best big band record I have heard in quite a few years. Everything about it demonstrates quality. A well-designed album cover with clearly written liner notes on the back and fine photographs of the musicians on the inside. The pressing is absolutely first rate. This is a digital recording and I only wish all my records had such clean pure sound.

As for the music, well, now we get to the heart of the matter. There is one word to describe it and that is *excellent*. Don Menza's arrangements are a joy. *Tonawanda Fats* should win a prize for the best chart of the year. If you are wondering about the soloists, you needn't worry. Menza gets some outstanding solos. Listen to him on Ellington's *Don't You Know I Care* and a big smile will come over your face. Other solos of note are Joe Romano's alto on the title track and Chuck Findley on flugelhorn and pianist Frank Strazzeri on *Relaxin'.*

This is a studio band so we are not likely to have an opportunity to see them in person. It's too bad because I expect a live concert by this band would be quite a musical experience. Let's at least hope they cut some more records.

The title of this album is truly an accurate one. "Burnin'" will surely end up on my listing of Favorite Records of 1981. Don't miss this one.  
— *Peter S. Friedman*

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## OLE FESSORS NIGHTHAWKS

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**John - Doc & Herb (featuring John Williams, Doc Cheatham, Herb Hall)**  
Metronome 627

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*Hefty Jazz/A Little Street In Copenhagen/Little Happy Caldwell/Sometimes/Charlie's Boogie/4 O'Clock Drag/Copenhagen Strut/Doc's Lullaby.*

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It's encouraging to see younger musicians gigging with some of the oldtimers in the business, for it helps to put jazz into its proper perspective — growing and changing, yet always respectful of the richness of its past. Unfortunately, that mingling of eras doesn't quite pay off on this recording.

The compositions, with one exception, are all original, stemming from leader-trombonist Ole "Fessor" Lindgreen; the exception is *Four O'Clock Drag*, a number memorably waxed on a 1944 Commodore Kansas City Six session with its composer, Dicky Wells, on trombone. Its counterpart here is, perhaps, the best cut, charting the earlier solos quite faithfully, although in extended fashion. Nearly all get an opportunity to solo, with Lindgreen's bluesy trombone and Cheatham's short burst in front of a consistently solid rhythm background

worthy of mention.

Nevertheless, the American visitors never really catch fire. I've seen Cheatham perform and have been amazed at his transformation from a seemingly shy, soft-spoken, pipe-smoking figure in the wings to a veritable powerhouse when he plants himself on stage and levels his horn at an audience. That magic doesn't happen here, even on *Hefty Jazz*, where he is given perhaps his best opportunity. *Doc's Lullaby*, obviously well-intended, never truly develops. It is, at best, a ballad, and one feels a good singer would have better sufficed for the part.

Herb Hall, mellow and reedy on *Copenhagen Strut*, is best in duet with leader Lindgreen on *A Little Street*. Elsewhere he sounds uncomfortably out of place. John Williams is an excellent rhythm accompanist (listen to the introduction to *Copenhagen Strut*); his solo excursions, however, like Hall's, are not noteworthy here.

The problem lies with the numbers themselves. They simply show a lack of creativity, and afford little challenge to the players. The Danish musicians appear competent enough. Lindgreen is a good straight ahead trombonist, and Steen Vig certainly captures a Hawkins-like big sound on *Hefty Jazz*, plays fine soprano to Hall's clarinet on *Copenhagen Strut*, and single-handedly salvages *Charlie's Boogie* from oblivion. Also, it would be interesting to hear pianist Jorgensen in a trio setting where, I suspect, he might be more at ease.

The sound quality is excellent; it is unfortunate that the obvious enthusiasm of such a meeting was not captured in a more memorable recorded experience.  
— *John Sutherland*



## LEO PARKER

**Rollin' With Leo**  
**Blue Note LT 1076**

Leo Parker scarcely receives a footnote in most histories of the music and yet, on the evidence of this recording, he was an exciting original baritone saxophone voice. This recording and a previously issued (but now unavailable) Blue Note session ("Let Me Tell You About It," BN 84087) were the only opportunities for Leo Parker to display his talents properly. It's true he soloed on recordings with the Illinois Jacquet band and made some titles for Savoy and Prestige but the Blue Note sessions give him the space to perform in a relaxed and flowing manner.

Only trumpeter Dave Burns achieved any kind of reputation but the six piece band is well knit together and both Bill Swindell (tenor sax) and Johnny Acea (piano) play with authority and continuing interest. The overall feeling of the music is close to that achieved by Illinois Jacquet's bands in the late 40s. The music is a pleasing amalgamation of swing and bop influenced ideas with everyone contributing stimulating solos in a collection of blues-oriented riff tunes.

Leo Parker never attracted any attention when he was alive and the poor sales of his initial Blue Note release is undoubtedly the reason this session languished in the vaults. Leo Parker's playing has a fluid grace which often eluded other, better known, wielders of the cumbersome baritone sax. "Rollin' With Leo" deserves your attention. — *John Norris*

**BARRE PHILLIPS/EVAN PARKER/GEORGE LEWIS / PETER KOWALD / ANTHONY BRAXTON / DEREK BAILEY.**

**ANTHONY BRAXTON & DEREK BAILEY**  
**Live at Wigmore**  
**Inner City 1041**

Anthony Braxton: flute, Eb, Bb and contrabass clarinets, soprano and alto saxophones; Derek Bailey: acoustic and electric guitar.  
Recorded June 1974

**EVAN PARKER & GEORGE LEWIS**  
**From saxophone and trombone**  
**Incus 35**

Evan Parker: soprano and tenor saxophones; George Lewis: trombone. Recorded May 1980.

**PETER KOWALD & BARRE PHILLIPS**  
**Die Jungen: Random Generators**  
**FMP 0680**

Barre Phillips and Peter Kowald: basses  
Recorded March 1979

I am reviewing these records together because in addition to their improvised duet format, they have in common a level of excellence which leaves them simply to be recommended without analysis, explanation or reservation. The three records offer six such strongly individual players, such diversity of context and content, and such a wealth of musical events, that one must either write a short, enthusiastic recommendation, or go on about them for pages.

Each of these records features a duet be-



tween an American and a European, which if nothing else proves the growth of a community and a heritage which has little to do with locale: with which American guitarist could Braxton interact as dynamically as Derek Bailey? Similarly George Lewis, by a very deliberate dissociation of himself from the American "jazz" community, has found himself drawn towards the first rank of European improvisors. Barre Phillips is an American who has lived in Europe since the mid-1960s, and his friend Peter Kowald has recently toured parts of the U.S. and Canada in duet with Leo Smith. Along with such players as Maarten Altena and Barry Guy they are involved with stretching the vocabulary of the bass texturally, percussively and dynamically; to much greater extremes than North American bassists except for someone like Bertram Turetzsky. Evan Parker and Derek Bailey are both major innovators on their instruments. Despite their long association musically and through Incus Records, they remain distinct as improvisors in style and outlook.

The two-record set of Braxton-Bailey duets was previously issued on Emanem 601 and reviewed by Barry Tepperman in *Coda* 144 (Jan./Feb. 1976). These records include rehearsals for the Wigmore performance and we can hear the duo's progression from a more tentative, deferential attitude to an assured, aggressive musical force. The fact that a commercial, widely-distributed label such as Inner City has released these records is amazing and I would urge you to obtain them while they're still available.

The Braxton-Bailey duets have become all the more important now that the special trans-Atlantic art they pioneered is manifesting such exquisite works as "From saxophone and trombone". This record presents another definition of minimalism in free improvisation: not in the sense of players working with the most uncharacteristic (therefore often the most anonymous) areas of their instruments, but in the sense of a slow development through different zones of sound, approached often in a quite "melodic"

way, each area thoroughly explored before gradual ascension to the next. The pacing enables both players to employ the techniques of multiphonics and circular breathing that they have each developed — George in particular uses a technique of long glissandos over a ground bass, played simultaneously that is most effective — to create an extremely full sound for their duet. The slowness of the pacing also creates passages of sustained tension, eventually in some manner resolved, which mount to a singular intensity — not the convivial blandness of "agreement" but the melding of two strong individual statements into a music which is like a third entity between them — which few composers or improvisors ever attain, and if they do, only through the highest level of instrumental discipline and artistry.

The breadth of tone of the doublebass tends to make multibass combinations sound somewhat muddy, and efforts in this direction have had a low ratio of success. That "Random Generators" succeeds must be a tribute of some kind not just to Peter Kowald, but to some sort of genius on the part of Barre Phillips, whose solo bass record on Opus One remains, even in the face of creditable efforts by Turetzsky, Dave Holland, Roberto Miranda, John Lindberg, Altena and Guy, the most interesting of its kind I have heard. The secret of the Kowald-Phillips duo lies in the element of rhythm — so central to the personality of the instrument — which propels this duo over two sides of FMP 0680 without a moment of tedium. — *David Lee*  
(All of these records are available from *Coda*.)

## ART PEPPER

**Friday Night at the Village Vanguard**  
**Contemporary 7643**

On July 28, 29 and 30, 1977 Les Koenig recorded Art Pepper at The Village Vanguard in New York City. The outcome of this venture was three albums — one devoted to highlights of each night's performance. This record is the

second of the three to be released.

Side one begins with Pepper's original 5/4 blues called *Las Cuevas de Mario*. Art recorded this tune in October of 1960 on his "Smack Up" album. This version is four minutes longer and of course his playing has changed in seven-teen years. This piece has a hypnotic quality to it. Pepper, pianist George Cables and bassist George Mraz all acquit themselves honorably. Next up is a ten minute version of the lovely ballad *But Beautiful*. Art wrings tremendous feeling out of this song. Cables contributes another satisfying expressive solo while George Mraz plays a solo full of those full rich bass notes that are so often missing from the playing of so many of the current crop of bass technicians.

Side two starts off with Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol's *Caravan*. I have never been terribly enthusiastic about this tune. However, Art Pepper's performance may change my mind. We get two Pepper solos on this one. The first on alto and the second on the tenor saxophone. Elvin Jones takes his only solo on this number.

Completing side two and the album is Pepper's original bossa nova *Labyrinth*. This is a highly melodic tune and has a rather relaxed quality to it.

A word about the rhythm section is in order. Elvin Jones can sometimes overpower a record date. This is not the case here. He joins together with the excellent George Mraz to provide a perfect swinging and yet unobtrusive foundation to this fine album.

On page 467 of Art Pepper's autobiography "Straight Life" he mentions the Village Vanguard recordings. His comments certainly don't lead one to expect results as outstanding as the aural evidence of this record demonstrates. He states that he hadn't been eating, had lost about twenty pounds and had been using large quantities of methadone and coke. He wrote that he practically had to be carried to the Village Vanguard for the final night of recording. I will be interested to hear that one when it is issued. All the above to the contrary notwithstanding, this Art Pepper record is a joy.

— Peter S. Friedman

## SAMMY PRICE

### Sweet Substitute Sackville 3024

Sackville has a way with piano records. It has given us a number of the best recordings of Jay McShann. The Sackville sessions seem not only to bring out the best in the artist: they also capture the quality of the instrument naturally and with its full dignity and variety.

One of Sackville's earliest recordings was Claude Hopkins's "Soliloquy" (Sackville 3004) - in the opinion of some, the best record the label has produced. Unassuming, it remains largely unsung: yet, as a relaxed, thoughtful, melodic exploration of tunes like *If I Could Be With You* or *Indiana*, it has few equals. Sammy Price's "Sweet Substitute" is in the same vein.

There is plenty of variety here, but once again it is the show tunes that are most winning. Though Sammy Price is known as a blues pianist, this record is not, quite designedly, for the washboard addicts — or only for the "sweet men" among them. Price ranges over the jazz repertoire with versions of Jelly Roll Morton's *Sweet Substitute*, James P. Johnson's *Snowy Morning Blues* and Erroll Garner's *Misty*. His

own *Toronto at Midnight* and *McClellan Place Boogie* are in the blues vein with which he is normally associated. As with the Jay McShann recordings for Sackville, I found myself liking the harmonically more adventurous pieces better than the blues or boogie, though *Snowy Morning Blues* is a delightful reinterpretation. (Indeed, McShann, Price, Otis Spann do not seem to me to be the masters of boogie-woogie they are acclaimed to be. None of them get that lovely tight feel that Ammons and Johnson got by making the beat felt in the right hand as well as the left).

But to return to this fine record. One never finds oneself missing the rhythm section; yet, when one stops to listen for the beat, it is not always spelled out by the left hand, but is insinuated; so that, even in the slower florid passages, the music remains lightly swinging.

It is this lightly swinging quality, coupled with an unassuming but always fertile inventiveness, that makes the standards such a delight. I particularly enjoyed Price's version of the number Jack Teagarden made his own, *A Hundred Years From Today*. *Don't Blame Me*, a tune with modernist associations, comes beautifully and effortlessly from his hands.

This is not a record that requires analysis for one to hear how good it is. Quite the reverse. The self-effacing treatment of the tunes that seems to fit them so naturally is what is most engaging. If you want a record to put up your feet with, this is it. In all, a very rewarding album, showing a new side of Sammy Price.

This was evidently the first recording made in the new McClellan Place Studios by Phil Sheridan: the studio gives a fine, natural presence.

— Trevor Tolley

## FRANK SULLIVAN

### First Impressions Revelation 34

Revelation has given us some fine things, among them music by Warne Marsh and early recordings of Clare Fischer. I don't think that Frank Sullivan is going to make the hit that Fischer did with "First Time Out" for Pacific twenty years ago; but this is a recording that more than deserves attention. It is extremely engaging. This is Sullivan's first time out at the age of forty-four; and the long unnoticed career brings to mind the forgotten but equally delightful record, "Inverted Image" by the blind Chicago pianist, Chris Anderson (Jazzland JLP 957). As with Anderson, Sullivan's career has been away from the centres of critical attention: like Anderson, he is a lot better than many well touted players.

"First Impressions" was recorded at Holiday Inn West in Gainesville, Florida last September. It has a casual, nonchalant atmosphere, and the choice of repertoire is excellent. Sullivan moves lightly and inventively through well tried numbers like *Alone Together*, *All of You* or *I Could Write a Book*, and they all come out fresh. He gives engaging, springy performances of Gigi Gryce's *Minority* and John Carisi's *Israel*. Indeed, his springiness is his main asset, giving the whole album a lightness that contrasts with the lumbering impressiveness of more pretentious solo piano albums, particularly by the avant-garde.

His indebtedness is spelled out in the liner notes by John William Hardy, one of the pro-

prietors of Revelation: Bill Evans; Wynton Kelly; Red Garland. One senses the influence of Evans in the intonation and in the pervasive lyricism. In the case of Garland, it is not only his lift and bounce up-tempo that Sullivan recalls: on *Lush Life*, the subject of a classic ballad performance by Garland and Coltrane, several of Garland's phrases from that record recur. On *Beautiful Love*, and in many other places, I was reminded of Duke Jordan — lithe, lyrical, unassuming.

This record does not need to be praised as a surprising performance by an unknown player. It is a pleasure to listen to and a pleasure to write about.

— Trevor Tolley

## MIKE TAYLOR

### Why Not Now Disque l'Enclume DE-8006

Here is another record to prove that there are more riches in the world than the world is aware of. It introduces us to Mike Taylor, a very able pianist. In the world of pop and rock, newcomers to the scene are invariably youths with a lot of promotion behind them and generally only a modest amount of talent and experience. Here, as so often happens in jazz, we find that Mike Taylor has taken a half-century to reach us. No doubt lots of local jazz followers up and down the west coast from Los Angeles to Vancouver have encountered Taylor, and others have had more recent opportunity as he has migrated eastward across Canada, but only now does he have the record that makes possible wide exposure.

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# AROUND THE WORLD



## CANADA

**TORONTO** — The 1982 jazz doldrums were blown away in a surprising manner following several less than satisfactory excursions to the clubs to hear such stellar performers as James Moody and Tal Farlow. Chet Baker's chiselled features showed, at Bourbon Street, the ravages of time but the cool clarity of his voice and horn were like a mirror image of less complex times. The sophistication of his phrasing was contrasted with the simplicity of his ideas. There is musical purity attached to every phrase regardless of the imperfections in his execution. Like Miles Davis in his prime, Chet Baker is a singer of songs — and is unique. His charts were refreshing and tenor saxophonist Pat La-Barbera responded to their contours with some angular, economically phrased solos that were refreshing and stimulating.

It's probably true that Maxine Sullivan is an anachronism in this day and age for all she does is sing the melody of a song with a rhythmic lilt. But even at 70 she has a wonderful voice and her choice of material is exemplary. Her one week at the Chick'n Deli was a joyful occasion and her performances were bolstered by the equally lyrical saxophone of Jim Galloway.

The Saturday matinees at the Traders Lounge of the Sheraton Centre are still among the most enjoyable sessions to attend despite the shortage of worthwhile quest performers recently. The

best session featured guitarist Tal Farlow and vibraphonist Frank Wright with the Jim Galloway Quartet... Another of Toronto's vibraphonists who works less visibly than he deserves is Martin Franklyn. He's been performing Thursday and Friday nights at the Nag's Head on York Street with his quartet.

Geordie McDonald will present his new work for tapes and percussion sculpture, "State Of The Heart" at the Music Gallery May 1 to 3. The multi-media work will feature dancer Patricia Wynter and taped contributions by Paul Bley, Sonny Greenwich, and percussionists Ray Reilly and Peter Mosley.... York University's lunchtime sessions have continued through the winter with groups under the leadership of Richard Whitehouse, Claude Ranger, Keith Blackley and the cooperative group Time Warp which features Barry Elmes, Bobby Brough and Alan Henderson.

Bob Greene brought his World Of Jelly Roll Morton program to Hamilton Place on February 23. Ernie Carson, Herb Hall, trombonist Richard Dreiwitz, bassist John Williams and Tommy Benford completed the lineup. The band recreated some of the music of Morton and his contemporaries with Greene linking the segments with off the cuff comments about Jelly Roll. A good suggestion was made that there would be much greater impact if there were some slide projections to illustrate the proceedings and a generally tighter scripting of the program. The band also played Waterloo

and St. Catharines during its short Canadian tour.

Canada's midwest has become more active recently and Lew Tabackin's Trio was heard in concert in Winnipeg on March 11. The Edmonton Jazz Society continues its activity with concerts by Richie Cole and Jim Hall.

Oscar Peterson was profiled on the CBC's radio program *The Entertainers* on February 20.... *Windsor Star* columnist Peter Stevens took the CBC to task for its sporadic presentation of jazz in a recent issue of the paper. It seems we are not alone!

Percussionist Michael Craden died recently at the age of 40. He had been a founder member of the Nexus group and had also played with Moe Koffman and Paul Horn.

The Frederick Harris Music Company of Oakville are now the Canadian distributors for the Musicprint arrangements of Artie Shaw and others.

Don Thompson and Terry Clarke left town in March for a hectic two weeks of one-nighters with Jim Hall (a review of their Cleveland performance is on page 32). On the morning of the second day Terry slipped on ice outside their hotel and broke his left arm. He continued the tour functioning in a one-armed manner with many willing assistants setting up, dismantling and carrying his drums! Several other drummers were heard making the suggestion that he merely wished to be compared to Buddy Rich!

— *John Norris*

## TORONTO-AREA RADIO STATIONS THAT PLAY JAZZ:

**CHWO-AM (1250)** Monday through Friday nights – 12 midnight to 3 AM – “J Is For Jazz” with Jack Cole.

**CKQT-FM (95.)** Saturday 9 PM to midnight – “From Bebop To Now” with Hal Hill.

**WEBR-AM (970)** Every evening 9 PM until... with Al Wallack & the Jazz In The Nighttime Staff.

**CJRT-FM (91.1)** Monday to Friday 10 PM to 1 AM; Saturday 6 AM to noon & 7 PM to 10 PM – “The Jazz Scene” with Ted O’Reilly.

**CKFM (99.9)** Saturday 4:30 to 6 PM – “Toronto Alive” with Jim Galloway and Friends. – Sunday night 10 PM to 4 AM – “All That Jazz” with Phil MacKellar.

**CBC-FM (94.1)** Monday to Saturday – midnight to 1 AM – “That Midnight Jazz”.

**CBC-FM (94.1)** Saturday 12:30 to 2 PM – A new jazz program TBA, replacing “Jazzland”. – Sunday 11 PM to 1 AM – “Music To Listen To Jazz-By”.

**CING-FM (108.)** Saturday and Sunday 6 to 8 AM – John Nelson.

## TORONTO CONTINUED

Thelonious Sphere Monk  
That’s right  
Shout that Harlem strut  
Clear down to 52nd St.

Well, there we were, D.P., Lee and I, sitting in the draught room of the Vic, in Sault Ste. Marie, when suddenly amongst the hubbub of lounge bar environment, came John Coltrane’s picture on T.V. Weird.

Won a Grammy

It takes a certain while for acknowledgement, for all artists, that’s the way of the system. And now in the Toronto jazz world, it’s the time of Claude Ranger. With his own group, which is now the quartet of Kirk McDonald (tenor saxophone), Roland Bourgeois (trumpet) and Marty Melanson (bass), he has been appearing at Mother Necessity (the Drake Hotel, 1150 Queen Street West) and Pears (130 Pears Avenue), done a radio show at the Science Centre, sponsored by CJRT-FM, and recorded the group at Puget Sound. Looks like he will also play the Edmonton Festival this summer.

Claude, with Kirk McDonald and Marty Melanson, contributed a great deal to the success of the new Sonny Greenwich Quintet, completed by Don Thompson on piano. Their week at Jodie’s, managed by singer Jodie Drake, and located at the back of Pears, was truly a repeat occasion for many people. The music superb, the event to occur again in early April.

The two Garys still promoting outside events. Georgie Fame at the Isabella bringing back some old memories, and Ornette Coleman at the Nickelodeon, dispelling all the old memories. Times do change.

But not for Archie Alleyne. After an absence of many years from the T.O. scene, he returns with abundant joy, and vitality. His new quartet, which debuted at Pears with Frank Wright (vibes), Billy Best (bass) and Connie Maynard (piano) sure was like the gentlemen of jazz, tuxedos and all: “Let’s bring a little respect to the music, a little class.” Next time Archie, not so many singers sitting in, but I do dig, it was a debut.

Surrealist painter, and one of the finest



drummers in Canada, Gregg Simpson, was in T.O. for a week to deal with two exhibitions of his work: one at the Forest City Gallery in London, the other at Galerie Surrealiste, at which my trio played. In the time of the Surrealists, in particular Apollinaire, there was the idea called automatic writing. Improvisation? And then there is Rayner of the Lost Art.

A new venue, in the form of the cabaret theatre, has just begun at the Rivoli (334 Queen Street West). On Wednesday nights Marc Glassman and Compulsive Cinema has begun presenting music films, and on four occasions we will do cooperative promotions with them. The films will be presented as a multi-media event with the music of the Smith/Lee/Prentice Ensemble and Friends.

**Wednesday - April 7:** Jazz On A Summer’s Day  
**May 5:** Old films of Bessie Smith, Basie, Cab Calloway and Duke.

**June 16:** Modern jazz films with Miles - Trane - Marion Brown - Ted Joans - Lol Coxhill.

**July 7:** Imagine The Sound - Cecil Taylor - Archie Shepp - Bill Dixon - Paul Bley. Admission will be \$4.00.

Back to memories. Jimmy McGriff, playing a Hammond organ, was at Bourbon Street, replacing Chet Baker in his cancelled second week. Jerry Fuller (drums) and Lorne Lofsky (guitar), really helped him cook. I never realized how much I missed that scene.

The Edmonton Festival lineup, looks like it will include Archie Shepp - Carla Bley - Muhal Richard Abrams - John McLaughlin - Claude Ranger, and jazz films. To be sure you should write to the Edmonton Jazz Society, P.O. Box 255, Station 11, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E0.

Coloured girls on T.V. Great seeing you on the box, Oliver Lake.

As I said earlier, it takes a certain time for acknowledgement. **Coda** won an award.

“The Canadian Black Music Awards 1981 recognizes and celebrates the Coda/ Sackville/ Jazz & Blues Centre as A Canadian Black Music Pioneer. Your determined efforts and singular

achievements distinguish you as a pioneer and contributor to the advance, growth and spread of Black Music in Canada. Your peers at Cheer Productions, Cheer Music & Entertainment Magazine and Cheer Music Pool salute you.”

Spring is here, and can’t you hear the Bird sing.

— **Bill Smith**

## AMERICA

**ANN ARBOR** — Despite the ever-worsening economy, there is still quite a range of jazz to be heard in southeastern Michigan. Reaganomics has arrived (at least in Michigan) with the closest thing to the Great Depression that those of us under fifty have ever seen, earmarked by pervasive unemployment, numerous bankruptcies and the southwestward migration of a slice of the population.

The music has of course been affected. The Detroit Jazz Center closed last September, unable to generate sufficient ticket revenue to supplement the grants. Despite the word that saxophonist Sam Sanders had taken former executive director John Sinclair’s place, the center has remained shuttered. At about the same time Baker’s Keyboard Lounge dropped its decades-old policy of name performers (along with the cover) and began booking local musicians instead. db’s Club in the Hyatt Regency Dearborn (which occasionally booked jazz and blues artists) was replaced by a disco last year. There have been other signs that conditions are not good.

Yet there is still much to be heard. Baker’s new policy has given the local contingent another outlet for expression. The club reopened in mid-January with three weeks of saxophonist Larry Nozoro’s Quartet (the group also played with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in January). February had Mark Colby, flutist Alexander Zonjic, and Wavelength. Early March had pianists Lenore Paxton, Gary Schunk, and singer Mark Murphy. The Soup Kitchen Saloon



in downtown Detroit continues to book excellent blues on weekends. This year already they have presented Corky Siegel, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Johnny Copeland, Koko Taylor, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Luther Allison, Jimmy Dawkins, and Mighty Joe Young.

Eclipse Jazz in Ann Arbor presented Ornette Coleman and Prime Time February 18. Ornette's music has moved a long way from the days of the plastic saxophone and the catchy bop-like lines. Coleman seems to be working on a new revolution these days, one in which elements of his earlier style have been fused with the sounds of contemporary urban black culture. Ornette's horns (mostly his alto saxophone) are the only solo instruments, supported (and sometimes drowned out) by a "double trio" of Charles Ellerbee and Bern Nix, guitars; Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Albert McDowell, electric basses; and Denardo Coleman and James Jones, drums. They played one long set (about fifteen tunes) lasting some 75 minutes. The compositions were mostly drawn from the last few years (*Song From A Symphony, Mukami, Song X, City Living*).

My first and last impression of the music remains the volume: LOUD. One aspect of this new style (Ornette's band has been joined musically by Ronald Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society and James 'Blood' Ulmer's group) is its adherence to "rock volume", in which everything is played at quadruple forte. It's a problem, at least for me — music that loud (without a break) tires me out very fast; it's really difficult to listen to it for any length of time. And the density of the band quite often overwhelmed Ornette, swallowing most of what he was doing. Still, I enjoyed the concert (although it would have been better with an intermission). The compositions are as attractive as ever, showing that Ornette is still among the music's best composers. The rhythms are infectious, and they propel Coleman's solos the way Billy Higgins and Ed Blackwell did twenty years ago.

Eclipse continued in March with Spyro Gyra, James Blood Ulmer and Woody Shaw. Oscar Peterson will close things out on April 14.

Down the road a winter jazz series in the Ypsilanti Depot Town (sponsored by Eastern Michigan University's radio station) had Lyman Woodard, trumpeter Marcus Belgrave's Sextet, the Marty Gross Blues Band, Jim Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band and Misbehavior' (traditional style jazz), with Boogie Woogie Red and the Alberta Adams Blues Band April 10 and a dixieland festival in May.

There have been several benefit concerts of interest recently. In January the Vanity Ballroom was the site for "The Detroit Jazz Legacy: Music and Dance 1920-1990", a benefit for Concerts By The River (one of the local summer jazz series). On March 13 a benefit for the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts (held oddly enough at the Fox Theatre a few blocks west of the Music Hall) featured Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson. — *David Wild*

**BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON** — The winter months have not been good for the local club scene. Baltimore's blues venue No Fish Today has closed temporarily due to fire. In Washington, the newly-opened club Ibeax abandoned its jazz policy after a couple of months; the Cellar Door closed its doors, as did guitarist Bill Harris' Pigfoot. Not that things are unremittingly bleak: D.C.'s new wave HQ, the 9:30 club, has started booking new jazz. The Art Ensemble

of Chicago (minus Roscoe Mitchell) were there February 7, and James Blood Ulmer brought in his harmolodic funk on January 10.

Amin Ali's funk-rooted bass aside, Ulmer remains a heavyweight jazz improviser and composer (as well as a charming singer) and a pretty accomplished flutist; he opened his set with a written piece for flute. His superb, frenetic drummer, G. Calvin Weston, combines a funk drummer's tightness with Baby Dodds' tonalism; Weston, with his riveting, precise phrasing, articulated the melody while Ulmer and Ali spun off on tangents.

A very different guitar trio was at Baltimore's John Hopkins on the 24th; guitarist Fred Frith, drummer David Moss, and singer/trumpeter Phil Minton. Over the past three years, I've seen Frith solo, in duo and in several trios; this was by far his finest performance. For the most part he played his koto-like table-top guitars, which he doesn't normally fret. He picks, strikes and bows the strings, and pulls loose guitar strings through them. After years of working with this approach, he's brought it into sharp focus, and avoids redundant effects. Phil Minton has the most incredible set of pipes I've ever heard; enormous range, and amazing volume. As he belled flat-out for minutes at a stretch, it seemed as if the band's P.A. system might explode. He finished every taxing episode by immediately lighting a cigarette; after hours of abstract tweeting, throaty shouts, mumbling, frog-croaking and air-raid screaming, he wasn't even slightly hoarse. Watching Minton sing reminded me of watching the possessed Linda Blair in "The Exorcist"; can those unearthly sounds really be coming from that slight body? (Minton, on trumpet, recently recorded with Mike Westbrook). Moss is an intensely rhythmic and energetic player whose set-up, besides a conventional drum kit, contains a lot of extraneous/found devices (like an amplified zither and cheap microphones) of the kind usually associated with the European "junk percussionists" such as Paul Lytton and Paul Lovens. To my ears, Frith/Minton/Moss are the 80s' answer to the Music Improvisation Company's Bailey/Jeffrey/Muir. One can clearly hear how far free improvisation has come in fifteen or twenty years; its flexibility and range continue to grow as players become more at ease with organic forms. This trio's free music is more tightly organized (though no less spontaneous) and relatively tonal, although they can be as noisy as anyone. Frith put a stop to what could have been all-night encores by picking up his violin to bow a simple English melody, accompanied by Moss and Minton's typically rude commentary. The band was pleased with their performance; they have every reason to be.

At Second Story Books on the 28th, locals Kevin Whitehead (clarinet, bass, violin) and (Jackie) Blake gave back-to-back solo concerts. Blake left home his alto (which he plays in a Dolphyesque fashion in ex-Sun Ra drummer William Goffigan's ensemble) and played two extended blues for flute and clarinet. His second piece was an encyclopedia of blues licks on the clarinet, which sounded educated but never academic; he quoted from a zillion tunes, from *Ornithology* to *Rhapsody In Blue*, conscientiously maintaining the 12-bar form throughout. His dry tone and tightrope control were admirable.

At the Left Bank Society's weekly show on February 14, the inclusive music of Chico Freeman (with Cecil McBee, drummer Ronnie Barrage — sic — and the marvelous Kenny Barron)

polarized the audience. Some regulars wanted to hear only bop and ballads (Chico mollified them with a beautiful *My One And Only Love*), the more broad-minded elements wanted it all. One patron was heard to complain about Freeman's "off-the-wall avant-garde Coltrane" stuff. What year is this anyway?

— *Kevin Whitehead*

**EAST COAST JAZZ: NEW YORK** — Paul Weinstein continues to produce and coordinate Heavenly Jazz, a series of concerts held at The Church of the Heavenly Rest, 90th Street and Fifth Avenue. Now Paul has added a series of early evening concerts (claimed to be a course) at the New School For Social Research, 66 West 12th Street. Jazz At Six is presented at six until 7:30 PM on Friday evenings. A number of subway lines meet at the nearby West 4th Street Station (leave at 8th Street side) and the Path trains from New Jersey are just a short walk from 9th Street.

April 30th, 1982 is the date (Friday), Town Hall, 123 West 43rd Street is the place and it's Barry Harris at the piano with his growing concert package of rhythm, horns, strings, voices and dancers... The first concert we heard had about thirty people on stage, the last concert had over one hundred artists. Barry hopes to have close to two hundred for this pair of concerts. We enjoyed Barry and his trio featuring Paul Brown bass and Leroy Williams drums at the Angry Squire, 7th Avenue below 23rd Street. Barry's opening set consisted of Monk tunes and a tribute to his recently departed friend. Later Barry was joined by a gentleman from the audience playing a Melodica which is a small instrument with a piano-like keyboard that is blown and held like a horn. At first I was annoyed to hear what I felt was a novelty instrument being played when I could be enjoying Barry. Barry eventually stopped backing the player and gave him quite a bit to think about and I smiled. The melodica player stayed right on and surprised us getting quite a hand. When he turned around so that I could see his face I understood why he played so well and Barry happily announced Walter Bishop Jr....

The Blue Note Club opened directly across the Street from Folk City on West 3rd Street near the West 4th Street Subway Stop down in the Village. The room presents a number of Poll Winners and top stars that have been known for twenty-five or thirty years or more. Most of these artists are good players but, one misses the thrill of a new discovery every now and then. Mike and Judy Canterino of the old Half Note club are there; Big Harry on the door is a knowledgeable jazz enthusiast too so the bar is frequently a home base for New York's jazz artists... Lush Life is a new spot in the Village too right on the corner of Bleecker and Thompson opposite the Surf Maid and the Village Gate. Cecil Taylor is announced to open a Monday night big band series with his new big band as I write this column. It is not a large room, but top artists are booked.... We just saw a new publication aimed at New York's jazz community. It is patterned after the old *New York City Jazz*. It is a monthly and named *Hot House*.

Paul Murphy and Mary Ann Driscoll have a new lp. They once worked at Rashied Ali's Club and speaking of Rashied, we saw him at the Jazz Forum one night and showed him his picture in a recent issue of *Coda*. Walter Davis Jr. was at the Forum that night with Bill Saxton

playing sax... 54th Street is not the same since Roy Eldridge retired and now that Vic Dickenson is seen and heard less often. We enjoy hearing John Bunch, Connie Kay and many others at Condons but everyone misses Roy at Jimmy Ryans. Roy looks great, we see him enjoying himself every now and then. Let's hope he is able to play again one day soon.

**HOBOKEN, New Jersey** — Smallworld on 14th Street is the site of much jazz activity. This is a new site for this club which had been located elsewhere in New Jersey. Ted Curson makes this his home when he is not touring Europe and he helps line up the vast calendar of talent which appears weekends. Guitarist Jim DeAngelis is often seen here too. The Hoboken bus from Port Authority N.Y.C. lets you off in front of the club or the Path train is a short cab ride away. Live music is featured 6 nights a week, from Tuesday to Sunday.

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** — WRTI-FM seems to be reaching more Philadelphia listeners than ever. I was a guest on Gerry Hanlon's Friday Night program and was I surprised at the number of folks that heard me on the "point".... Ripley's Music Hall is a large rock club on South Street. They have had a number of fine sessions there, drawing large crowds. Count Basie, Zoot Sims, Tal Farlow were choice. The sound system is designed for rock and mass sound. We would prefer point source speakers with less phase distortion for jazz attractions; but the room is a showcase situation, not a full time jazz club, so we are grateful for whatever we get.

**WILMINGTON, Delaware** — Sarah Vaughan and her trio plus Zoot Sims and his Quartet played the Opera House. We heard Zoot's group just before the concert in New York and we heard Sarah and her trio featuring drummer Harold Jones last summer so we understood why all of the raves were heard after this show and the following nights at New York's Beacon Theater. ... Al Cohn was just grand at the Flight Deck Restaurant with Al Jackson on drums, Dave Posmontier on piano and Dom Mancinni bass. In the audience was my old friend Al Steele, tenorman who played in Elliot Lawrence's band with Al Cohn and other jazz greats. After the evening was over we had a pleasant hour over Scotch and water at Cohn's hotel listening to tapes from the old Half Note club with John Bunch and Bobby Pike playing behind Al and Zoot. Steele and I rode back to Philly still feeling good from listening to the big beautiful sound from Cohn's tenor saxophone.

— Fred Miles

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## JIM HALL

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**March 3, 1982**  
**Cleveland State University, Cleveland Ohio**

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Jim Hall, guitar; Don Thompson, bass & piano; Terry Clarke, drums.

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Jim Hall had not played in Cleveland for quite a few years. He was not born here, but did spend his school years in the city and studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music from which he graduated with a B.A. in composition. So it was old home day as many of his old friends and fellow musicians were in attendance. At the intermission a former bandmate Mike Scigliano, now president of the Musicians Union local 4, presented Hall with a "gold honorary union card". Ed London, head of the CSU music

DON THOMPSON (photograph by Bill Smith)



department, presented a certificate honoring him as did a local councilman. This was more official recognition than I have ever seen given to any visiting musician.

Hall fortunately brought along two fine rhythm mates with whom he created some subtle, laid-back music: Canadians Don Thompson and Terry Clarke. Clarke provided firm and quiet rhythmic support using brushes and light stick action. Thompson is a superb melodic bassist with speed and swing who perfectly complemented Hall's lines and took some wonderful solos usually with Hall stroking chords as accompaniment. Everyone was swinging, but in a subtle way.

The program consisted mostly of standards like *My Funny Valentine*, *Body And Soul* (Hall noted that he had first heard Hawk's version on a Cleveland juke box, and was still learning it), *Come Rain Or Come Shine*, *Bag's Groove*, *Blue Monk* and *St. Thomas*. There were also a couple of originals: *Aruba* (a bossa nova), and *Down From Antigua* (a calypso). Everything

was delivered up with thoughtful arrangements, featuring doses of exquisite chords and Hall's ringing tone when delineating pointillistic lines.

For two pieces (*Rain Or Shine* and a lovely Don Thompson original *For Bill Evans*), Thompson switched to piano and Clarke retired, as Hall and Thompson recreated the ambience of those Hall-Evans duet sessions. The audience of around 400, consisting in part of every guitarist in town, was very appreciative. Hall seemed glad to have an opportunity (provided by guitar impresario Dick Lurie) to see his old friends. It was a rare treat to see him as most of us who had never before had the chance agreed.

— Jon Goldman

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**NEW YORK** — For some years now, it has been foolish to attempt a proper survey of contemporary Afro-American music in New York without regular attendance at the "New Jazz At The Public" series. This series presents the finest artists with appropriate dignity in the Public

Theatre complex on Lafayette Street. Newer players are shown off and established legends are brought into fresh or forgotten focus. Remarkable reunions and never-before collaborations have been staged with consistently invigorating results.

The program began, not surprisingly, because impresario Joseph Papp — the guiding hand and the guiding light of the New York Shakespeare Festival and the Public Theater — has a substantial interest in the music. True to its intentions: the Public is a center for all performing arts, including theater, multi-media, music, film, dance, poetry. "New Jazz At The Public" was christened in the fall of 1978, committed to the new music which had flourished in brilliant and erratic flashes throughout the decade in New York. The first program director was Andy Plesser who, in January 1981, passed the torch to Nancy Weiss. From the beginning the Public Theater has accorded the music the honored position it deserves but rarely receives; presented it with grace and sophistication. The exceptional technical resources of the Public are applied to each concert. The sound, lighting and staging are impeccably designed and executed. It is particularly gratifying to see artists such as Charles Brackeen, Jackie McLean, Olu Dara, Khan Jamal, Sunny Murray and George Adams perform in a setting which matches the magic of their musical gifts.

The two halls used for this series are small — each seats less than 300 people — but each seems to encourage special performances. At almost every concert I have attended at the Public, the musical relationship between player and listener has been unusually acute. Ornette Coleman's first New York appearance in three years was a perfect example of such a heightened dialogue.

Nancy Weiss has assembled a team which contributes mightily to her objectives. Taylor Storer, the stage manager and technical producer and Otis Davis, the sound engineer, deserve mention. Weiss has been a jazz writer in Toronto, a radio announcer and concert producer in Boston, and a booking agent for clubs and artists in New York. The breadth of her taste is reflected clearly in "New Jazz" programming.

Many of the concerts are built on a conceptual idea. For example a program entitled "A Conversation In Rhythm" presented the Roy Haynes Quartet with the legendary tap dancer, Jimmy Slyde, whose feet take bop flights that go as fast and as far as a Bird's. On another occasion, Von and Chico Freeman were united for an exhilarating concert that turned out to be a sturdier bridge between generations than, for example, the Sonny Rollins/Grover Washington concert held in Manhattan last year. It is to Weiss' credit that she persuaded Freeman the elder to leave Chicago for a weekend (a rare occurrence) and to combine father and son in a quintet which featured Kenny Barron, Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette. Perhaps the group was inspired by the presence of Max Roach in the audience that evening.

A composers' weekend was staged to illuminate the art of writing, sometimes overshadowed by a musician's playing. Friday's performance featured a Charles Brackeen Quintet and Ronald Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society. On Saturday, the under-recognized Ambrose Jackson brought his trumpet and an all-star orchestra — Henry Threadgill, Marion Brown, Dick Griffin, Steve McCall and ten others — to play his compositions and arrangements.

Last fall, Drums Inter-Actual met at the Public and Sunny Murray, Ed Blackwell, Dennis Charles and Steve McCall rattled and rolled and excited the neighborhood with the past, present and future tenses of jazz percussion.

Some concerts are not "concepts" but merely evenings of exceptional virtuosity: Amina Claudine Myers, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Joe Henderson. Some concerts defy category: David Baker and the 21st Century Bebop Band last summer; the poet Jayne Cortez and a sextet in the fall; and the Phillip Glass Ensemble this past February.

Weiss and her cronies seem to have an attic of ideas and continually come out with great treasures while rummaging through the possibilities. They celebrated one Halloween with Sun Ra and the Omniverse Jet-Set Arkestra, and they offered the first public appearance of Hand To Hand, featuring George Adams, Dannie Richmond, Jimmy Knepper, Hugh Lawson and Art Davis.... an impressive grouping with more than an echo of Mingus.

"New Jazz" has a pack of credentials to inspire it and apparently, a wealth of plans to unfold in seasons to come. The music is held in high esteem at the Public and thus the artists and the audience are, as well.

— Stephen DeGange

#### THE FUNERAL OF THELONIOUS MONK

*"Man, you ever hear about a guy named Thelonious Monk? When I first heard that music, I understood everything!..."*

— Steve McCall, Coda 1982

The month of February is a big birthdate month for many worthy poets and writers. Starting with Langston Hughes on the first of February and James Joyce on the second, then the list has Bill Burroughs, Gert Stein, Anais Nin, Don L. Lee, Brecht, W.E.B. DuBois, Charles Henri Ford, Ish Reed, Victor Hernandez Cruz, Audrey Lorde, Melvin B. Tolson, Andre Breton, and many marvelous others (*Let's Call This/Think Of One*).

On February Seventeen the day before Andre Breton's 1982 birthdate, Thelonious Sphere Monk who was born in October 1917 cut out from the earthly scene leaving us with all the music that he created (*Bye-Ya/Raise Four*).

Monk was one of the unique individuals of the classical music that we all call by its nickname, jazz. He lived his music as natural as a bird flies, as private as a pangolin wears sharp scales and as un-weird as two okapis in the Ituri Forest (*Boo Boo's Birthday/Who Knows*).

The funeral service held on Monday, February 22, at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Peter's Church was a Monk musical ritual where libations to the deceased poured forth. In the best traditional African respect was the offering of the royal drummer Max Roach's splendid drum prayer to Monk and not to some pie-in-the-sky god. (*Straight No Chaser/Thelonious*).

Randy Weston paid his homage to his worthy monarch teacher by allowing his fingers to weep and shout on the keyboard and afterwards speaking briefly at the microphone about the truth of such a man as Monk (*Epistrophy/ Crepuscule With Nellie*).

The incredible modern abstract building at 54th Street and Lexington Avenue in midtown Manhattan that houses Saint Peter's Church

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(*Ugly Beauty/Friday The 13th*) was packed with people, a marvelous mob for Monk, even a few non-mourners were standing in the back digging the scene (*Criss Cross/I Mean You*). As we approached the architectural wonder on the busy corner (*Green Chimneys/Jackie-ing*) a sleek hearse and flower car cruised around, it was Monk, right on time for his last public appearance. As we entered, the Rutgers Jazz Ensemble was into *Rhythm-A-Ning*. This youthful orchestra played its respect by giving their renditions of the music of Thelonious Monk. Sadik Hakim joined at the piano for a sad but soulful *'Round About Midnight*. A few moments later as the coffin was being brought in, the public address system breathed *Abide With Me*, a tape of that tune which was coincidentally written by a 19th century musician William H. Monk, a hymn writer (*Played Twice/Ask Me Now*).

Many fingers were on hand to pay their hip respects to his hipness the one and only Thelonious Sphere Monk who lay in state before us on that sad but swinging high noon in New York City. There was Muhal Richard Abrams, the only avant-gardist present, Marian McPartland and Sheila Jordan, the only women musicians who contributed individual tributes to Monk, Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Ronnie Mathews, Walter Bishop Jr. and the aforementioned Randy Weston and Sadik Hakim. The other brothers were Gerry Mulligan, Charlie Rouse, Ben Riley, Larry Ridley, John Ore, Paul Jeffrey, Eddie Bert, Lonnie Hillyer, Frankie Dunlop, Abdul Malik, Lee Konitz, Patti Bown and George Barrow (the latter three didn't get to blow) (*Humph/Hackensack*). And too, there were others that should not have ventured into this sacred scene (*Locomotive / Worry Later*) and also them so-called god-spokesmen of the Saint Peter's Church, they talked toodammed much about heaven, god, religion (theirs) and other commercial jive that had nothing at all to do with Thelonious Sphere Monk. Who lay there ignoring it all. Later Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) said that when he ever passed, that he would not want anyone blabbering about some Jesus, god, etc at his funeral, and if somebody did, Baraka said he would jump up out of the coffin and confront them! (*Ruby, My Dear/Round Lights*). George Wein and Ira Gitler were on the scene and said a few tribute and eulogy lengthy words (*Well You Needn't/Off Minor*). Amongst the many faces that I recognized standing before the opened coffin were Elvin Jones, Beaver Harris, Walter Davis Jr., Joe and Iggy Termini (*Five Spot Blues/Misterioso*), Ruth Ellington, Robert Parent, Norman Bush and Jayne Cortez (*Evidence/Brilliant Corners*) plus the others of the thousand. It was a worthy tribute to the magnificent monarch of modern music, that classical music that we all call by its nickname, jazz, that Thelonious Sphere Monk laid on us forever and ever, he was a man (*Blue Monk/ Ba-lue Bolivar Ba-lues-are/ 'Round Midnight/ In Walked Bud/ Four In One/ Wee See/ Monk's Mood/ Little Rootie Tootie/ Bright Mississippi/ Pannonica/ Bemsha Swing/ Bluehawk*) and we must not ever forget that man's music. — *tedjoans, Paris, March 1982*

**CLEVELAND** — Trumpeter Don Ayler resurfaced a couple of years ago and after more than a decade of inactivity began to play dates with a quintet co-led by creative altoist Otis Harris. The quintet featured a number of pianists and bassists with Chuck Braman usually holding down the percussion chair. They ap-

peared twice at Peabody's playing Don's and Otis' compositions along with a few standards, all arranged by Otis. Later Otis moved to New York and Don formed a group with tenorist Frank Doblekar. These two went to Italy last year for a jazz festival, accompanied by some New York musicians. A recording of their performance should be available from Europe later this year.

In the last couple of years Cleveland State's Music Department has sponsored performances by the Art Ensemble of Chicago (a free concert from which hundreds had to be turned away) and David Friesen. They plan to do something again this year.... Cuyahoga Community College are planning on having Phil Woods and Max Roach this year, performing and teaching clinics during the day. Tentatively the dates are April 16 and 17 respectively.

Cleveland has a "Jazz Report" magazine edited by Bill Wahl which appears irregularly and is free. It features news and record reviews for the most part, and helps to spread the word around town. Bill moved himself and the magazine here in 1978.... Booksellers, a bookstore with coffeehouse (wine and cheese too) has featured Mike Meyers, Fred Sharp, Mark Gridley, Ed MacEachen & Bill DeArango. — *Jon Goldman*

## RELATIVE BAND FESTIVAL

### Australia's First International Festival Of Improvisation Sydney, 1982

Participating musicians (in no particular order): Dave Ellis (bass), Jo Truman (voice, didjeridu), Jim Ellender (bass), Louis Burdett (percussion), Phil Davison (saxophones), Jorg Todzy (cello), Andrew Gander (percussion), Simone de Haan (trombone), Rigel Best (bass), Rik Rue (saxophones and pipes), Jim Denley (flutes), Toni (cello), Greg Goodman (piano), Henry Kaiser (guitar), Jon Rose (violins, cello), Peter Ready (percussion), Richard Vella (electronics), Julian Driscoll (trumpet).

Of this recent series of nine concerts spread over two weeks, three were shared with more conventional jazz. The main advantage of this collaboration was a much larger audience, several hundred instead of twenty or thirty. As usual they showed every sign of enjoyment but never came back.

The Improvisation team was given the usual hard time by promoters. Promised equipment and facilities did not arrive and timetables were altered at the last minute. But working under the pressure of limited time and resources the players produced some exceptional work, showing their awareness of each other and the value of each passing second. The trio work of Henry Kaiser, Greg Goodman and Jon Rose was particularly memorable.

The remaining concerts, relaxed and informal, allowed more experimentation among different groupings of the twelve or so participating musicians. One highlight was the didgeridoo played with circular breathing by Jo Truman, who also contributed some improvised singing. The latest instrumental creations of Jon Rose, a nineteen-string cello, a "double neck" violin, and an electric violin with built-in loud hailer, also provided new interest.

A particularly revealing outcome of this intense period of improvisation was the contrast which emerged between individual players. Some

proved to be dominant while others strained to listen; not all seemed to understand the meaning of silence. Those with an effective but limited technique contrasted with those who continually worked to discover new possibilities. If there is any criterion for success in improvisation it can only be that it must always change. This is difficult enough to achieve but the players who will really stand out are those who can maintain their rate of change over individual performances and over the years. — *Paul Muldoon*

**PARIS** — As an international crossroads of culture and politics, Paris seldom has a dead moment musically. The Paris Jazz Festival continued to thrive for its second year this October, although there were few rare appear-



ances; Cecil Taylor was the grand exception. His group filled the esteemed concert hall, the Salle Pleyel (Bird played there in 1949). One could have heard a week of concerts just from the musicians who came to hear Cecil. The music was confident and powerful, the audience all attention; Cecil even came back for a bow, certainly the highlight of the festival. There is talk of an additional jazz festival in Paris, not city-sponsored, in August when half the city vanishes to the south, to tap the special audience of Parisians left behind and all the jazz-minded tourists; on top of that, lots of good musicians are over here at that time for the other festivals.

At the loft-like club, the Dunois, in late December, a French trio of seeming near-anarchists appeared by the name of Axolotl (being a strange Mexican salamander, and also a short

story by Cortazar; from the Nahuatl, "water spirit"). The Dunois performances were more casual than the refined and highly combustible performances on their record or even their subsequent performances in Belgium. Central to their esthetic is a total integration of all the lessons and elements of free music. Their record (Davantage 04), issued by the musician-produced label that has put out several albums of free music by Berrocal, should and can be had from Davantage, 40 rue Lebour, 93100 Montreuil sous Bois, France.

In January, at the club Jazz Unite (which to its credit hosted the rollicking bright colors of the Vienna Art Orchestra two months earlier), John Tchicai was due to appear with something billed as the Original Bass Clarinet Choir (with Keshavan Maslak, Peter Kuhn, and George



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THELONIOUS MONK (photograph courtesy Columbia Records)

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Bishop). Tchicai never showed, but what the other three offered was both provocative (in their jiving) and soulful (in their playing). Kuhn's was the most Dolphy-like, in tribute, while all three had richly different sounds; they ranged throughout the clarinet family, with Bishop's contrabass clarinet both growling and raucous. When they did play, you wanted to listen, Maslak's work perhaps the most urgent, wild, full of private places.

A month later, Claude Bernard's Quintet, Blue Air, did two nights at Jazz Unite. The band did not feature its trombonist, Glenn Ferris, nearly enough, due somewhat to a sort of compositional sloppiness on Bernard's part whereby the very capable pianist Zool Fleisher time and again took long solos way past the pale of his ideas, leaving not much time for anyone else to play. Bassist Jean-Jacques Avenel, who can be strong in a strong context, as he has had to be replacing Kent Carter in the Steve Lacy Sextet, unfortunately did not have the context here as his solos seemed to tire out looking for where to go; perhaps only in his duet with Ferris, on one of Ferris' tunes, did he fill the space he'd been offered. The disappointment comes, moreover, from the fact that Bernard himself is a very fine alto player, with his own expressive sound, and a serious one. He has been heard to better advantage and is worth listening to.

Space doesn't permit much about Steve Lacy's concert at the American Center in February, with Garrett List on trombone and Frederic Rzewski on piano. The latter two often work in classical music; suffice it to say that Lacy's compositions were the most stunning and that the other two musicians were most interesting when playing in trio.

Lastly, of the many underground-style 'radio libre' stations that have appeared in recent years, Radio Ivre (88.8 FM) has begun broadcasting a minimum of two hours of jazz daily, which only the state stations come near equalling. As part of that, Sir Ali and yours truly, host a weekly show called "Lazzi Jazz" (lazzi: hilarity a la commedia dell'arte), which features avant-garde jazz and improvised music of the last 20 years. Unfortunately, the government still denies the stations commercial licenses, so there's no budget for purchasing; thus, Lazzi Jazz welcomes any and all records of new music, send to this writer, 68 rue Monge, 75005 Paris, France. Thanks. — *Jason Weiss*

## ODDS & SODS

....The Contemporary Music Club of Leningrad have invited the Rova Saxophone Quartet to perform in the U.S.S.R. in the near future. Rova are looking for funding from foundations, or private individuals, to make this project a reality. Donations are tax deductible and can be made, on Rova's behalf, to the Human Arts Association, 591 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, or to the Bay Area Jazz Society, c/o Music By The Bay, Fort Mason, Building C/Rm. 225, San Francisco, CA 94123 USA. Donations of over \$50 will receive mention in programs as sponsors.

The United Nations has proclaimed 1982 the International Year of Mobilization for Sanctions Against South Africa and its special committee against Apartheid is devoting special attention this year towards generating support and participation of artists, writers and musicians in this campaign. It is actively trying to discourage

performers from working in South Africa and an initial meeting was held on March 18 in New York.

Elsewhere in New York, Fred Hopkins, Henry Threadgill and Steve McCall have celebrated the tenth anniversary of their group AIR with the opening of Air Studio at 336 East 13th Street. It's a rehearsal space for the group and they will also be organizing classes for musicians.... Bassist Milt Hinton was leader of a trio which performed in concert March 5 for International Art of Jazz Inc. Pianist Jane Jarvis and drummer Oliver Jackson completed the group.... Karen Lehrer gave a concert March 19 in the Great Hall at Cooper Union.... Sylvia Syms opened an engagement at Cafe Carlyle on March 9. Dardanelle, another vocalist with jazz leanings, began an engagement at the Horn of Plenty March 10 while Sheila Jordan was heard in concert with bassist Harvie Swartz March 13. at the Third Street Music School Settlement. ... The Akiyoshi-Tabackin Big Band and Janet Lawson's Quartet were heard in concert March 17 at Town Hall.... Free jazz concerts take place every Sunday at noon until June 20 at the Dairy in Central Park.... Where is Jemeel Moondoc? Latest reports place the alto saxophonist in Munich.... Mercer Ellington made an appearance March 7 on Charles Kuralt's "Sunday Morning" program on CBS-TV.

Vibraphonist Bobby Naughton suffered a serious eye injury a month or so ago which required surgery and the usual extensive medical expenses which face most people in the U.S. when something like this happens. He would welcome any donations from his listeners at Kettlewood Road, RFD # 4, Southbury, Ct. 06488 U.S.A.

WCUW-FM's winter jazz concerts in Worcester, Massachusetts concluded February 23 with a performance by Jimmy Lyons and Andrew Cyrille.... Detroit's spring will be enlivened by an appearance by Anthony Braxton as part of a four-concert presentation of creative music at the Detroit Institute of Arts Recital Hall. Braxton will be there April 24 with guitarist A. Spencer Barefield, drummer Tani Tabbal and bassist Jaribu Shahid.... Woody Shaw's band concluded the winter season of Eclipse Jazz in Ann Arbor on March 20.... A benefit concert for retarded children was held March 7 at the Presidential Inn, Detroit with Tom Saunders, Chuck Hedges, Al Winters, Billy Meyer, Milt Hinton and Barrett Deems performing.... Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings were among the groups who played at the Seventh Annual Central Illinois Jazz Festival March 12-14. They have a new lp ready for release.... Saxophonist Dick King and his Classic Swing Band perform regularly around Grand Forks, North Dakota recreating the sounds of the big band era.... The City of Atlanta is the sponsor of a World Music Concert series which began March 19 with Amina Claudine Myers. Dollar Brand will appear at the second concert on April 19 and Jackie McLean will be the headliner for the final concert in May.... The Tulane Hot Jazz Classic will be part of the festival activities in New Orleans this May with concerts and special events taking place May 6 to 9.... Red Norvo/Tal Farlow, Kenny Burrell, Richie Cole/Sonny Stitt, Red Rodney/Ira Sullivan, Freddie Hubbard, and Woody Shaw were among the recent headliners at San Francisco's Keystone Korner.... This year's Old Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee takes place the weekend of May 28-31 with hundreds of traditional-styled bands.

European jazz festivals are becoming as abun-

dant as European cities. Burghausen's 13th International Jazz Week took place March 17-21; the 11th Moers New Jazz Festival will be held May 28-31; Jazz Ost-West in Nurnberg June 17-20; the dates of the Copenhagen Festival have been changed to July 16-25.

It was a pleasant surprise to read Whitney Balliett's profiles of Doc Cheatham and Vic Dickenson in the New Yorker recently. Both gentlemen are overdue for something like that. ... Jazz Research 13 has recently been published in Germany. It contains essays on a variety of subjects and can be compared to the booklets published by the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers. An understanding of the German language is necessary, of course, to appreciate the contents.... "Boy From New Orleans" is the title of an extensive new discography of Louis Armstrong by Hans Westerberg. The book contains 226 pages and comes complete with a separate index of titles and artists. The set is published by Jazzmedia in Denmark and is available through jazz specialist dealers.... The International Jazz Federation Inc. can now be reached at P.O. Box 777, Times Square Station, New York, N.Y. 10108-0777. They have also changed the title of their publication *Jazz Echo* to *Jazz World Index*.

Island Records is getting into the jazz record business in a big way with the signing of the Heath Brothers, Ornette Coleman, Gil Evans, Joanne Brackeen, Phil Woods, Air and Anthony Braxton.... Bruce Lundvall's Elektra Musician label has finally surfaced full of pomp and circumstance but only the Charlie Parker lp with Bill Potts' rehearsal band will be a sure winner in jazz circles... The Red Rodney-Ira Sullivan lp and the all-star aggregation under the title The Griffith Park Collection may have some moments.... Inner City have released piano lps by Tommy Flanagan, Mike Nock, Walter Norris and Ken Werner from the Enja catalog while, at the same time, many Enja lps are being imported directly from Europe.... Stash Records have released new lps by Mary Osborne, Adam Makowicz, Dardanella, Joe Newman (recorded in 1962) and Panama Francis' Savoy Sultans.... Clean Cuts has a solo piano lp by Cedar Walton. ... Stomp Off Records (P.O. Box 342, Dept. L, York, Pa 17405) have added new lps by the State Street Aces, pianist Ray Smith, Leon Oakley's Lakeshore Serenaders, Holland's Limehouse Jazz Band and Bob Connor's New Yankee Rhythm Kings to their catalog of traditional jazz.... RCA expended a great deal of effort in the release of a promotional single containing excerpts of all the tunes on the two-lp set of Sophisticated Ladies. The single contains nine minutes of music and was created specifically for the West Coast opening of the show January 27 in Los Angeles.... Fantasy is releasing a couple of twofers of Dave Brubeck from his early days with the label.... Palo Alto Records keeps sending out press releases about their recordings but we have yet to see any of them anywhere. Their latest informs us that they have acquired unreleased masters by Jimmy Forrest and Shirley Scott, Marvin Stamm, and an lp by the Tokyo Union Orchestra which features Herbie Hancock, Richie Cole and Slide Hampton. They are also claiming they will record albums under the leadership of Tom Harrell, Elvin Jones, Jimmy Knepper and Chico Freeman.... Bobby Hutcherson has recorded a new lp for Contemporary with McCoy Tyner, Herbie Lewis and Billy Higgins. They also have a new Chico Freeman lp ready for release as well as repackages of four more of their classic lps (The Poll Winners;

Exploring The Scene; Everybody Likes Hampton Hawes Volume 3; Joe Gordon: Looking Good; Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band 1955).... Jazz Hound Records, 10581 Ashton Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024 is a new label which is projecting twelve new releases in 1982. The first two lps are "Play Song" by trumpeter Bobby Shew and "Marble Dust" by saxophonist/flutist Dave Le Febvre.... Ashland Records, 821 E. 5th Ave., Chico, California 95926, another new label, has signed veteran guitarist Charlie Robinson and a trio lp will be available in late spring.... French RCA has released lps by J.J. Johnson and Hal McKusick in their Jazz Line series and 2-record sets by Count Basie and Duke Ellington in the Jazz Tribune series.

The jazz community lost too many of its members over the winter. Thelonious Monk,

who died February 17 after several years of illness, was one of the music's major voices.... Bassist Sam Jones died in New York in December.... Blues singer/guitarist Lightnin' Hopkins died January 30 in Houston.... Trumpeter Taft Jordan died early December and Louis Metcalf on October 27.... Comedian Dewey "Pigmeat" Markham died December 13.... Barclay Draper, who recorded with Jelly Roll Morton, died November 28 of a heart attack.... Reedman Joe Hayman died in November 1981.... Record producers Irving Townsend and Dave Cavanaugh died December 16 and 31 respectively.... band-leader Charlie Spivak died March 1 in Greenville, S.C.... Blues singer/composer Tommy Tucker died January 17 in New York.... Saxophonist Vido Musso died in Los Angeles January 9.

— compiled by John Norris



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- 129 (May 1974 - Kenny Hollon, Larry Coryell)
- 130 (July 1974 - Mary Lou Williams, Jimmy Rogers, Morris Jennings)
- 131 (September 1974 - Rashied Ali/Andrew Cyrille/Milford Graves, Johnny Hartman, Swing)
- 132 (October 1974 - Karl Berger, Jazz Crossword, Johnny Shines)
- 133 (November 1974 - Charles Delaunay pt. 1, Rex Stewart, Howard King)
- 134 (December 1974 - Julian Priester, Steve McCall, Muggsy Spanier Big Band)
- 135 (January 1975 - J.R. Monterose, Armstrong Filmography, Strata-East Records)
- 137 (April 1975 - Mose Allison, Ralph Sutton, Nathan Davis, Cross Cultures)
- 144 (February 1976 - Art Farmer, Woody Shaw, Red Rodney, A Space Concerts)
- 145 (March 1976 - Betty Carter, Marc Levin, Pat Martino, Ben Webster European disco.)
- 146 (April 1976 - Delaunay pt. 2, Leroy Cooper, Noah Howard)
- 147 (May 1976 - Oliver Lake, Miles Davis)
- 148 (June 1976 - Harold Vick, Jimmy Heath)
- 150 (Sept. 1976 - Milford Graves, Will Bradley)
- 151 (Oct. 1976 - Don Pullen, Benny Waters)
- 152 (Dec. 1976 - Warne Marsh, Bill Dixon)
- 153 (Feb. 1977 - Steve Lacy, Marty Grosz, Mal Waldron, Blues News)
- 154 (April 1977 - Milt Buckner, Christmann/Schonenberg Duo)
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- 159 (Feb. 1978 - Randy Weston, Milt Hinton)
- 160 (April 1978 - Willem Breuker, Joe Pass, Enrico Rava, European labels)

- 161 (June 1978 - 20th Anniversary Issue: Julius Hemphill, Doc Cheatham, Jazz Literature, etc.)
- 162 (Aug. 1978 - James Newton, Sonny Clark, George Russell, Moers Festival)
- 163 (Oct. 1978 - Henry Red Allen, Frank Lowe, Albert Nicholas)
- 164/5 (Feb. 1979 - SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE: Jeanne Lee, Gunter Hampel, Lester Bowie, Hank Jones, Vinny Golia, Nick Brignola, Red Holloway)
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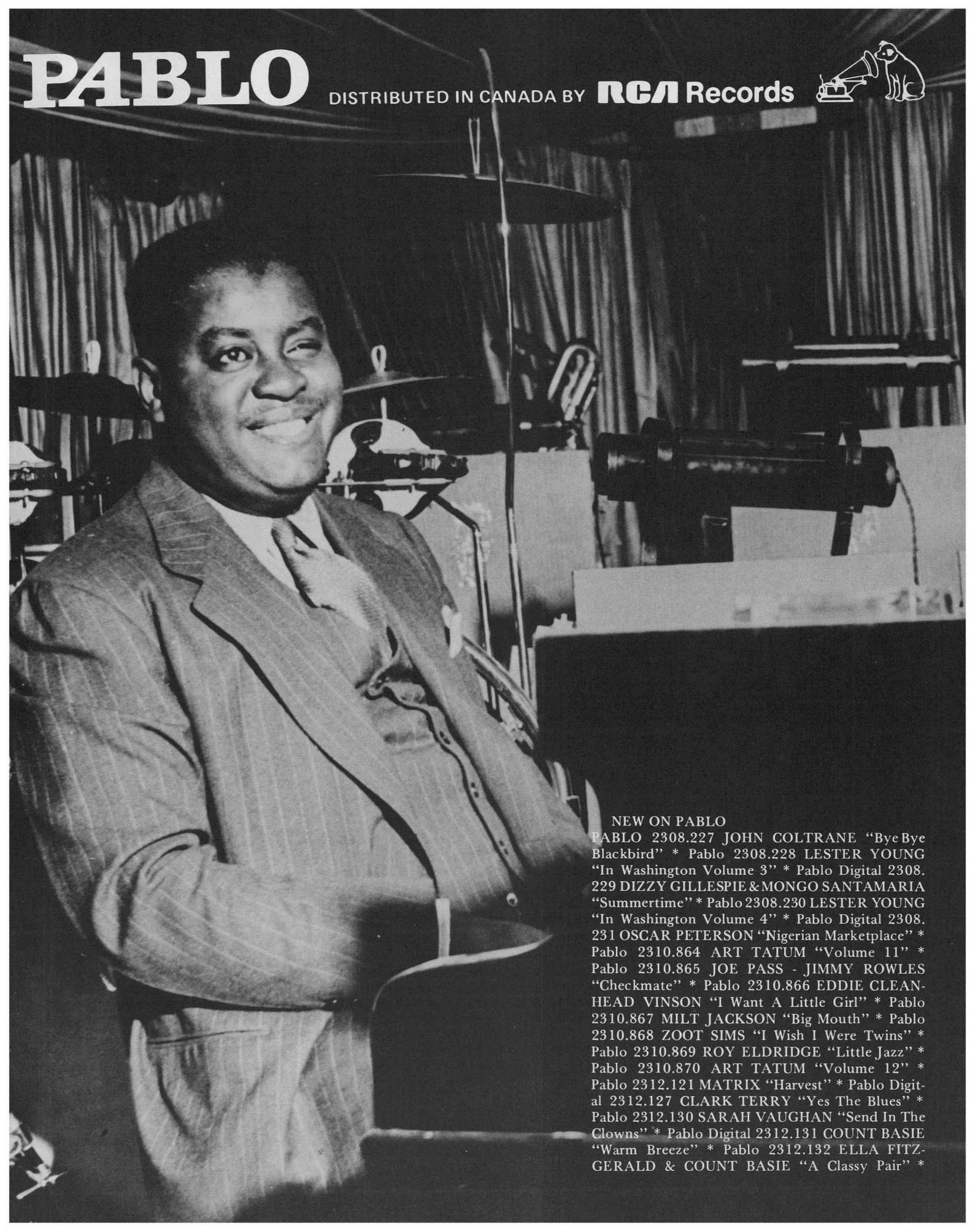
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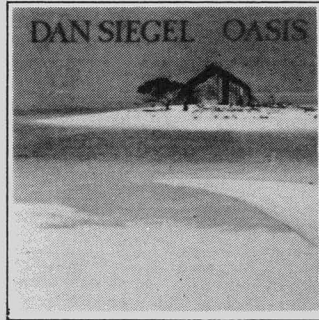
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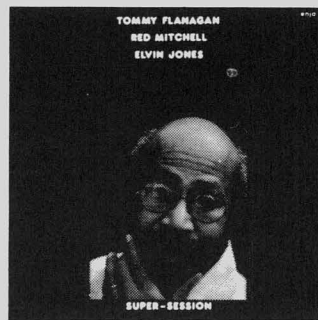
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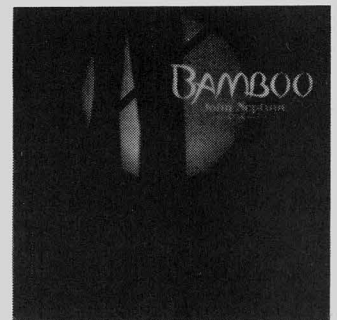
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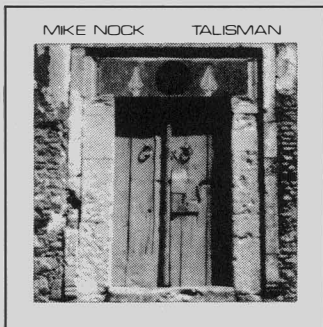
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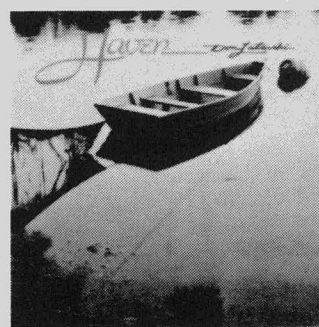
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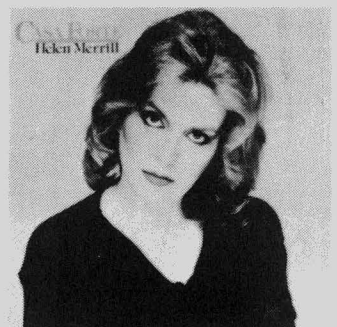
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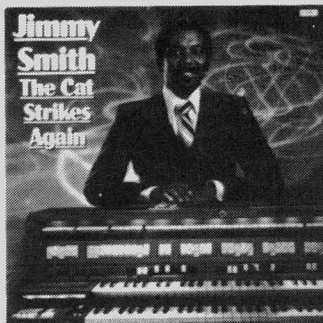
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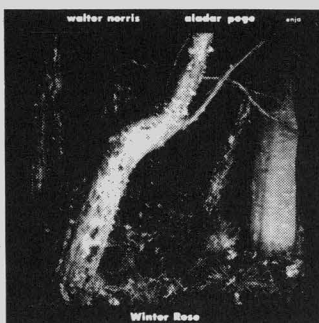
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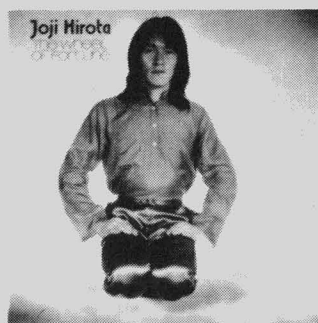
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