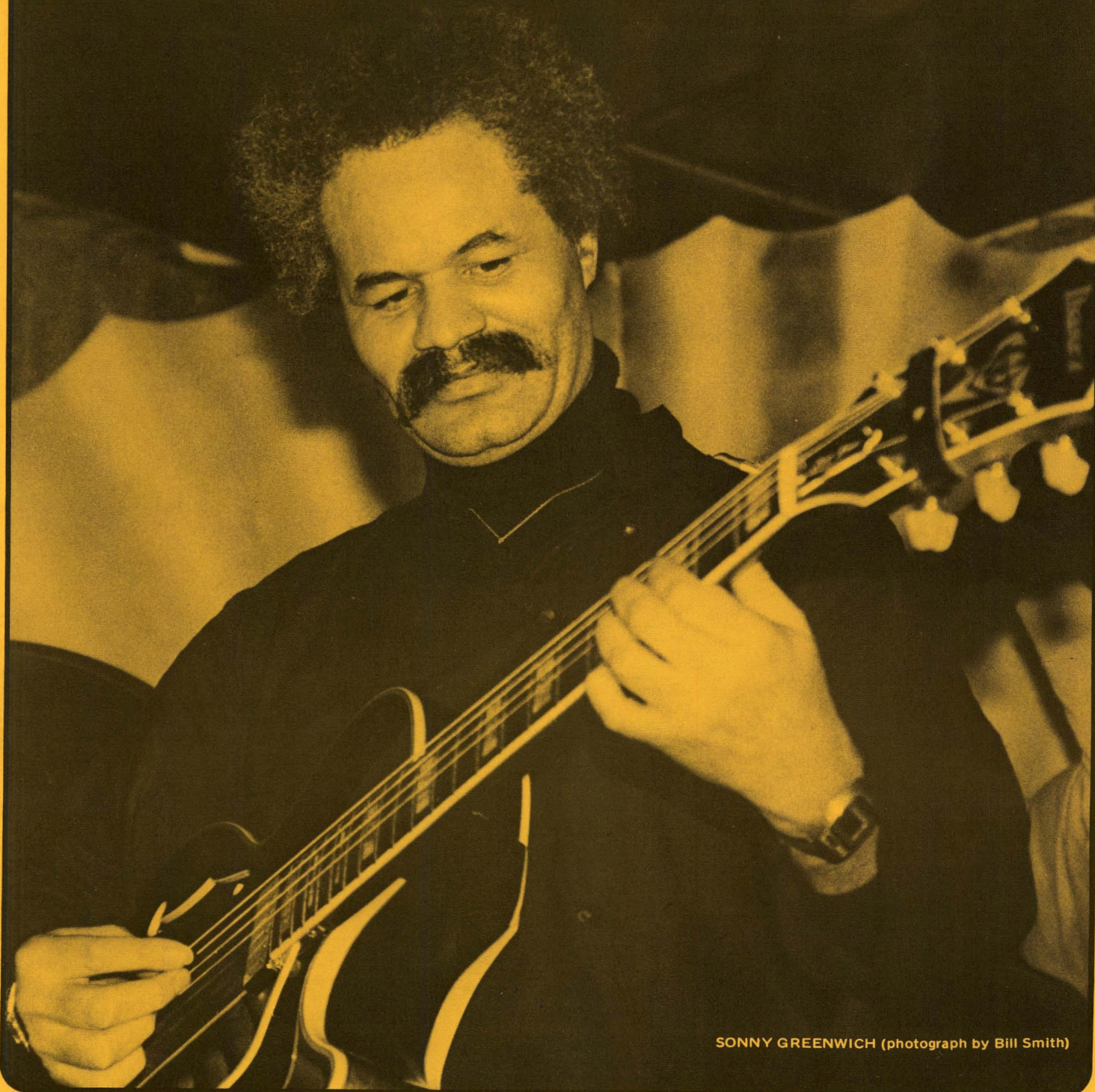


CODA MAGAZINE

THE JAZZ MAGAZINE * ISSUE NUMBER 184 (1982) * TWO DOLLARS

SPECIAL GUITAR ISSUE * SONNY GREENWICH * ED BICKERT * RAY CRAWFORD * DJANGO REINHARDT * JAZZ LITERATURE * RALPH SUTTON * GANELIN TRIO * RECORD REVIEWS *



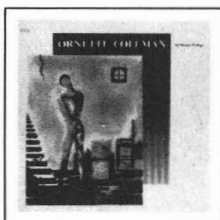
SONNY GREENWICH (photograph by Bill Smith)

Tommy Loves!

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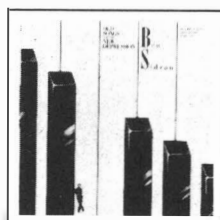
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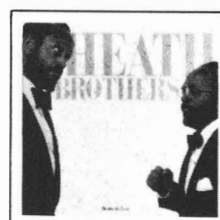
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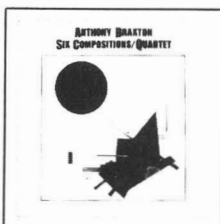
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CODA MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1958

ISSUE 184 PUBLISHED JUNE 1, 1982

STAFF

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

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CANADA - \$12.00

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CODA is published six times per year in CANADA by John Norris and Bill Smith. It is supported by its subscribers, by its advertisers, and through its sale of records and books. We also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of The Canada Council and The Ontario Arts Council. Second class mail registration number R-1134. For availability of current and back issues of CODA on microfilm, write to University Microfilms, 200 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA. Indexed in the *Canadian Periodical Index & The Music Index*. ISSN CN-0010-017X Typesetting by David Lee and Dan Allen.

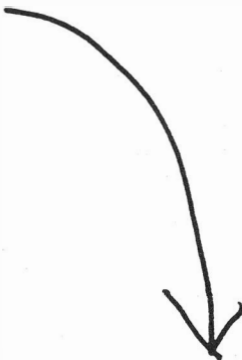
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DUDU PUKWANA
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SONNY GREENWICH



I started out approaching the guitar like a saxophone. I actually tried to play the saxophone at one time, and had a few lessons, but didn't have enough lungs for it. So guitar has really always been my instrument, but I've been influenced by saxophone, and voice — for example listening to Maria Callas helped me find out how to get the right tone out of my guitar, to make it like a voice. Johnny Mathis — because he has fantastic control — I learned a lot from those people.

I was born in Hamilton, Ontario on the first of January, 1936, but we moved to Toronto when I was three years old. My father was a professional pianist in Hamilton, but he couldn't make any money from it so he left the music and became a railroad porter. I grew up listening to the records that he had — Earl Hines, Art Tatum — and I still remember them very clearly. There was a record by Roy Eldridge, I think *Little Jazz* was one of the tunes he played, which used to be one of my favourites. My father was proud of me because I was getting interested in this music.

The first thing I really remember is when Charlie Parker came to Massey Hall in 1953. That's when I really started getting interested

in a more modern kind of jazz — even though I didn't go to the concert! I remember my father talking about it and thinking, I wonder what this kind of music is. Eventually Charlie Parker, the freedom and the feeling of his playing, had a big influence on me too.

Now I'm trying to make the guitar more like a human voice, to project myself into it. So my influences have been vocalists and saxophonists, but now I'm my own influence. When I sit down to practice, rather than relate to what anyone else is doing, in solo guitar or anything, I find my own patterns. I've not gotten around to performing solo guitar concerts, but often in the club I'll start off with a long solo, unaccompanied, or do a solo cadenza in a song.

In the rhythm and blues band, with Connie Maynard, that I played with years ago, we liked jazz but we could only exist through rhythm and blues. So we played jazz sometimes in a community centre where they gave us this room and people could come in and listen. For a living we played rhythm and blues — I must have played in every bar in Toronto, behind strippers, everything. Once while we were playing I got so sick of it I just

got up and left, left my guitar and everything and walked out. Also, when I played in those places, I'd come into a jazz club later and when I played I'd be playing these rhythm and blues licks. Finally I decided to just give it all up and play jazz. Then I got out of that word "Jazz" too, and into expressing my own music, at the Cellar Club and the First Floor Club and the other clubs that were around at that time.

In a band, there's generally a format that everyone follows musically, runs that you use to get around certain chords and so on, but I've always tried to find my own ways. I used to rip my own playing apart; if I found I was playing clichés I'd tear the whole thing apart and start over again; and what I came out with I sometimes didn't quite understand, myself. So whenever I'd get disgusted with myself I'd tear my playing apart. I did this three times; the third time I came up with patterns, which were based on the work of the artist Paul Klee. He painted in a cubistic style; so I looked at the fingerboard of the guitar as a pattern, then I was away onto a whole new way of playing. In a song I'll go out of a pattern, and come back to a pattern. The first time I used it I came into a club and

sat in with a band, years ago at the Cellar Club. I tried this pattern and I was amazed that, whatever they played, the pattern fit right through it. Since then everything that I've played has been completely original. But I need a strong band, and Don Thompson on piano, and Claude Ranger on drums, fit the bill; and different bassists — Rick Homme, Gene Perla, Dave Young. As a pianist, Don plays the kind of chords that I like; I need someone with big hands, to play big chords. Because I might go outside the chord one way or another, outside above it, outside below it, or I might go right through it, so I need a lot of room.

Nothing that I've done on record so far really pleases me, except maybe a couple of cuts on the Sackville record; but that, and the Don Thompson record, were both leased from the CBC for a certain period and now they're out of print. There's another CBC album, "Sun Song", on RCI, and now a record on PM. That's about it, except for a few tracks with Moe Koffman, one track with John Handy on a "Spirituals To Swing" concert album, a thing with a couple of other guitar players on a Jimmy Dale record for Capitol, and a small disc for the CBC, with the Rob McConnell big band with strings, which was quite a while ago, and is now discontinued.

I think one reason I haven't recorded more is because I'm Canadian. Years ago I did a lot of things with organists, in the same areas that guitarists in the States were working in, but I think I was a little more advanced, but being in Canada I didn't get a chance to record any of those things.

I did work in the States with John Handy a lot in the mid-sixties; that came about basically by getting a phone call out of the blue. It was the quartet with Terry Clarke on drums and Don Thompson on bass. The guitarist who was with them was leaving and Don had heard of me when he was still out on the West Coast. I didn't know Don at all, but I got a phone call from him and decided to do it. It was kind of a strange time for me to join John Handy, because I took over the role of playing chords behind him — just at a time when I was starting to work out more of a front-line melody of my own — so I found that it was interfering with what I was trying to do. So although he's a nice guy and everything, John would try and stop me from playing too much — because it wasn't his concept of what should be happening in the music — and we would definitely have our differences of opinion.

Right now I'd like to get some performances happening outside of Toronto and Montreal, where I usually play. I'd like to play in the States — Max Gordon has invited me to the Village Vanguard, but so far that hasn't happened. I played at the Vanguard before, after I left John Handy. I had Jack DeJohnette on drums, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and some people sitting in, like Benny Maupin. At that time I had a recording date for Milestone coming up, with Joe Zawinul on piano. We had the contracts drawn up and everything, but then my card ran out and I had to come back.

In that time, 1967, I also did a Hank Mobley session for Blue Note, with Lee Morgan, Cedar Walton, Billy Higgins; me playing their music. That record never came out until just recently, but I haven't heard it yet and I'm not that interested in hearing it either. I remember that session as being a bit un-together. It was my first session, although I knew everybody there; Kenny Burrell was in the control room; I wasn't

familiar with the music, it was something that they called me to do. But it was fun, and they were all such nice guys. Lee Morgan got me to that session; he was one of the first to push my name in the States, along with Horace Silver.

I had an offer to go to Japan with Wayne Shorter at one time, just before he joined Weather Report. From Gary Burton too, which was very generous of him, but I didn't feel that was my kind of music. And Miles Davis, but I knew that wouldn't happen because of the trouble that a Canadian musician has getting into the States, although I think that's become a bit easier now.

I think John Coltrane influenced me a lot; not just in his music, but when I met him, the first time I saw him the power in him came across to me. He had a big gallon of fruit juice that he was drinking all the time, and he was saying that he wanted to live completely cleanly and spiritually, and that influenced me a lot; I decided to do that myself. Of course he hadn't done that when he was younger, and that's the same as myself too. When I was playing all that rhythm and blues I was drinking every night and it wears you down. I felt the need to get into a more clear space, and once I began to do that I found I could go deeper inside myself, and bring out what it was I wanted to express. The more clarity I had as a person, the more I could see into the music; and the more I could relate to people. So that now I don't consider myself just a "musician" as "musicians" go — when I come out to play it's to play what I have learned, to the people, to try to give them this feeling that I've gotten myself.

I really depend on the musicians that I play with to help me in this. Don Thompson knows what I want and Claude Ranger knows what I want, and they have the ability to help me with it, and there are a number of bass players who can always do it — Gene Perla, Dave Young. They know me, so I don't even speak about the spiritual side of it, I just say this is what I've got, this time, and then we just go into it. In his own band, I think Claude is trying to go in the same direction so he's always ready for me, practicing and getting his diet together before we play.

I relate it to boxing — getting in shape to do the things I have to when I go to play. You work and train for a certain point of your ability, and find to your amazement that you have that point in you — you can sharpen yourself up. I do that before every performance. First of all I usually go out to a park or something and start right there. I start taking it all in — the nature, the sky, the trees — go deeply into it and when I come to play I've got that all there. Lately I've thought to add words to the music, so I'm writing songs, and I've added a voice — a vocalist not just to sing words, but to be a part of the sound. For example, I want to express things like *Chrysalis* — the transformation from the caterpillar to the butterfly, or a better description is from the moon side of nature to the sun side; the awakening rather than the sleeping intelligence, because it's a sharpening of your intelligence. Everything that I studied came down to a cleaning up of yourself, a sharpening of your intelligence, so that you don't get caught in the things that bog you down. I think Coltrane was saying that: it's like a cleaning of the mirror; you see more and more; if you're looking at yourself you see yourself better, and other people better.

I never did play with Coltrane — perhaps it's

better that I didn't. I sat there in the audience in Montreal for a week once and never played with the band, even though I knew McCoy and Elvin. When Miles was here in Toronto at the Colonial I played with him — some nights I would play and some nights I wouldn't, it was up to him. He's an interesting person, Miles — he can direct the musicians in his band even when he's not playing, just by sitting in the audience, through the energy that he has as a person. Maybe that's leadership quality: that's a quality I don't feel in myself, but maybe other people feel it from me.

There are times when I'm not performing, or even playing the guitar; I think of those periods as studying. Just recently for example, I didn't touch the guitar for a year and a half, and there were other times before that. I study other things, until I'm ready to put this all onto the guitar and come back again. Then, if I listen to what I did the year before, I can't stand it!

I've had trouble getting my guitar sound recorded properly, but now they have new techniques that seem to be able to handle it. I made a tape with Ed Bickert for the CBC recently, and on that it seems they've got the sound. When I made the Sackville record, years ago in Montreal, the engineer had so much trouble getting the sound that finally he put the microphone beside the amplifier instead of in front of it. For one thing, it's a very electric kind of sound; I'm not into a lot of the acoustic stuff that's happening nowadays; Larry Coryell, Phillip Catherine and that kind of thing.

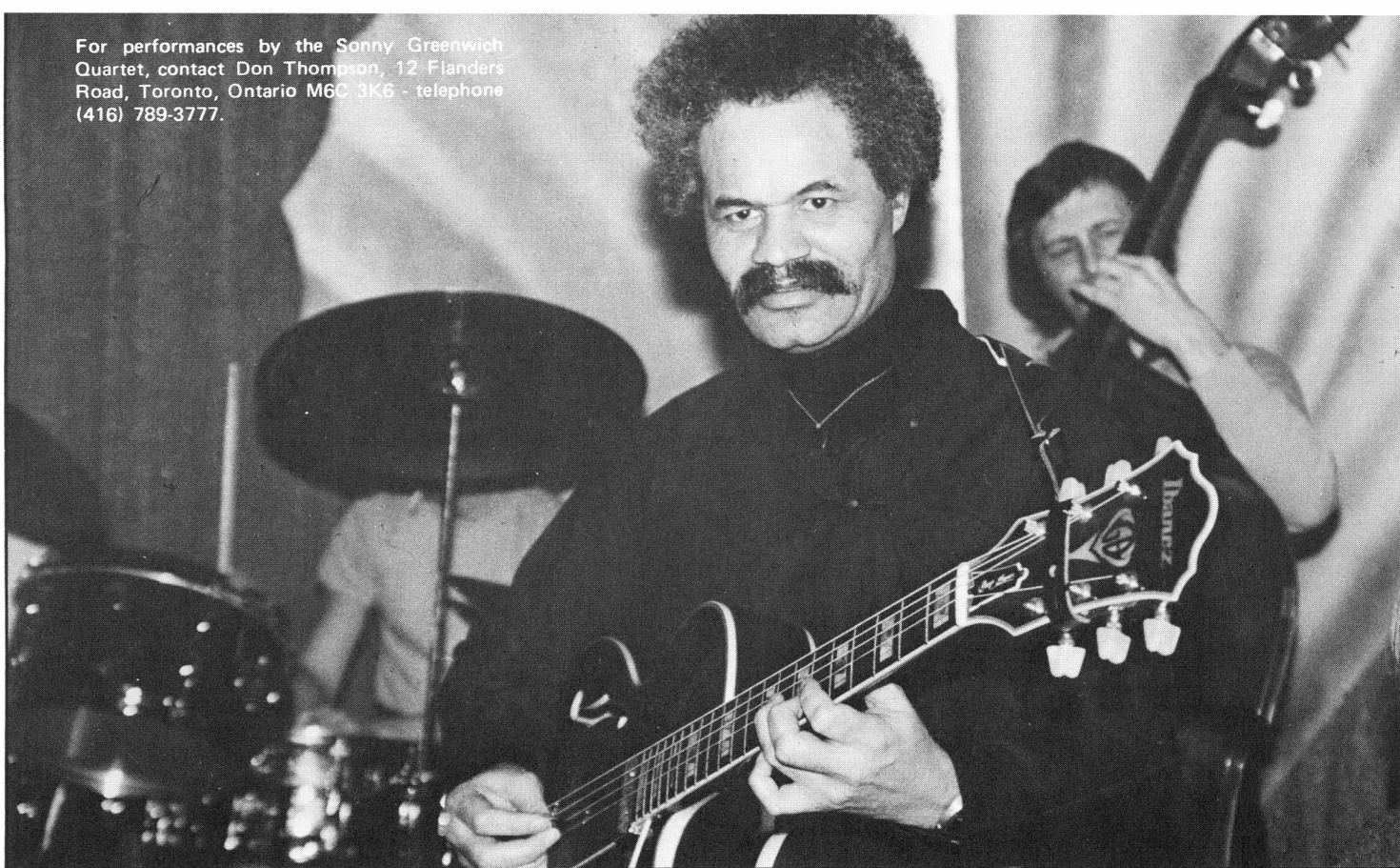
I used the same little amp for years and years because I was afraid to change it. John Handy used to try to get me to get a bigger amp — in fact he offered to pay for one — because he was scared that something would happen with this little amplifier. And something would happen, I was playing with Denny Zeitlin once in San Francisco and it blew out in the middle of a set. But I could never find an amp with the right sound. I played in Carnegie Hall with that little amp and in that hall, it sounded fantastic. But I've finally found an amp that has exactly the sound I want — a Stage amp, made in New Jersey.

So I think I've got the tone together now, but I've still got things to do with getting what I can get out of the amplifier, and working with overtones. I think I'm a very simple person, really. If you come up and ask me complicated things about the guitar, I can't tell you them, but I can play them.

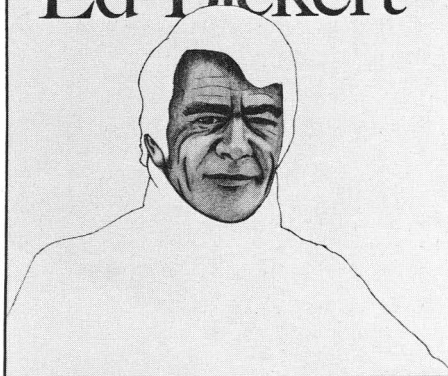
I play a wide range of music in an evening — from ballads like *Belle Of The Ball* and *It Might As Well Be Spring* to very fiery, very free pieces. It's like an ocean — you have to have the two things, the storm and the calm that comes after, and one thing helps the other express itself. That's the idea of my music, and what you give to it, as a listener, determines what you get back from it. I can't be out there just playing a "song" because life isn't like that. I play Leroy Anderson's *Belle Of The Ball* because it's a beautiful song, it should be played. So you can't pinpoint my music as avant garde, it's just music that has a spiritual basis to it — which is trying to make people happy, make them feel good. Not some kind of a preaching, but a feeling of beauty that I have, that I express so that someone else can feel it — trying to uplift them somehow.

Adapted from interviews with Sonny Greenwich done by Ted O'Reilly for CJRT-FM, on August 29, 1979 and February 25, 1981.

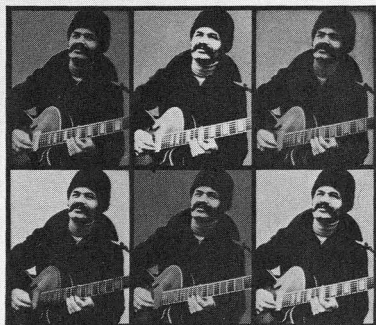
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H. RAY CRAWFORD: I remember the first impact Charlie Parker made on music. He was playing tenor saxophone with Earl Hines, and all of the guys in the band were so amazed at what was going on when he was playing that they'd just sit there and look at him. They didn't know what he was playing but they knew it was good. They knew where it was going but they couldn't figure out what it was. At the time I was playing with Fletcher Henderson's band. I was playing saxophone myself and had hopes of making some kind of name for myself as a saxophonist, until I heard Charlie Parker. Then I said to myself, "Well I'll never be an innovator, because this certainly will displace anything that is happening," and it did.

MARK WEBER: Did you ever see Charlie Christian?

RAY: No, that was before my time. See I didn't pay too much attention to the guitar in those days. I was playing saxophone with Fletcher. Clarinet and tenor. Would you believe I was playing alto clarinet, man?

MW: How did you come to get involved with Fletcher Henderson?

RAY: In 1941 or so he was looking for a band. We had a nine piece band in Pittsburgh — I was born and raised in Pittsburgh — and he happened to hear us and he made us an offer we couldn't refuse. We did a tour with him. And he added pieces to the band to make it big enough for his purposes. We traveled with him for a while.

MW: Was Sun Ra in the band at this time?

RAY: Sun Ra was just beginning his band in Chicago at the time. I don't know anything about his relationship with Fletcher at all. I know Sun Ra and I know some of the guys in the band, but I don't know about his activities musically until after he formed that band. I can remember very clearly the band because they had a very different kind of projection, musically, which I liked very much. I would always go and hear the band rehearse if I could or go hear them play because they had a very different approach to music. I would like to hear him the way he sounds now.

While I was with Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra I had tuberculosis, and I had to go to a sanatorium for two years. That ended my scene with the saxophone, and Fletcher Henderson and began my scene with the guitar because that's where I learned to play guitar. When I came out of the hospital I was able to play enough to where I could play jobs. No chords just solos.

MW (reading album cover): Ahmad Jamal says that he put together his first trio in May 1951. Was that in Chicago?

RAY: We put the trio together in Pittsburgh and then went to Chicago about the same year, or a year later. I was with him six years, then I left the group around 1956 and decided I would do some things on my own. That's when I came to New York City. I stayed in New York from 1956 to 1960, then I came to California and I've been here ever since. After leaving Jamal I played with Tony Scott, Buck Clayton, different groups around New York. I had a group of my own that played for a while at Minton's Playhouse and places like that. As a matter of fact when I was playing there Teddy Hill had Charlie Christian's amplifier. He was a personal friend of Charlie's. I enjoyed those years very much, then through my playing around New York, Gil Evans decided he wanted me to play with his group. So we rehearsed and talked about what he wanted to do musically.

This seemed like a good way to get involved with big bands, especially his band which was the greatest on the jazz scene as far as I was concerned, which was the opinion of many others too. Right then he was doing all of these great things for Miles, *My Ship* and those big-band things that Miles was doing and had already established himself as an arranger of note.

I did some things with Jimmy Smith for Blue Note in the late 50s, at least one album that I know of for sure. It was done in New Jersey, at Rudy Van Gelder's studio out on the highway at Englewood Cliffs. That's where Gil and I did our stuff.

MW: Was the band that made "Out of the Cool" a working group?

RAY: Yes, we did sixteen weeks straight at the Jazz Gallery in New York before we did the album. We played all of the tunes every night, and we played a lot of the original arrangements that he wrote for Miles. Then he wrote those things for "Out of the Cool." Before we made the album he had me sit down at his house and just play. He'd give me eight bars and I'd say "Where's the music?" and he'd say, "You don't need any music, just play." The one that I like is the *La Nevada* theme, it was my best effort with a big band. I like playing with big bands; it is more or less my orientation because I always played saxophone in sections and always felt at home. This particular album almost won me the Downbeat poll, man.

MW: How about that Lydian chromatic piece, *Stratusphunk*?

RAY: Yeah, I did a lot of playing on that. It was a 12 tone thing. You could establish any kind of a tone center in it, so I established an F tone center and Ron Carter picked it up behind me and then we started playing the blues behind it. It had about fifteen different roots, different tonics and the one that stuck in my mind was the F. Gil told me that when I started to play my solo to just establish a tone center and go ahead and blow. I said, "What do you want me to play?" and he said, "Play anything." That was written by George Russell, a nice tune, I like it. Jimmy Knepper did that thing where he sounds like he's playing under water on *Sunken Treasure*, beautiful, mournful kind of interpretation.

MW: I always thought using two drummers was a good idea.

RAY: Great idea, because he had two different things that he wanted done. He wanted those big stretches on those chords and interpretive sounds behind that which for that you couldn't beat Elvin Jones, and for just strict jazz funk time, keeping the tempo together, you couldn't beat Charlie Persip man no matter what happens, he is always right there whew! That cat is like a metronome! I can dig using two drummers, because I like hearing a drummer play fills all of the time without interrupting the flow, without messing with the meter, there are drummers who can do that. So if you have two guys, one always keeping the meter strong for you, I don't mean loud but strong, then the other cat can do the fills, which takes an imagination.

MW: Gil had a different session for each one of these compositions?

RAY: Right, he took his time doing it. What happened was Van Gelder would just set the tape and go home. He had five hour tapes. He set it at that real slow speed. He had quite a studio, it had a real high vaulted ceiling, specially designed for jazz. And the sound that

he gets out of his studio you don't get out of any other studio. When you hear it on albums you can tell it was made in Rudy's studio because of that high ceiling probably. He would set the tapes, you know make sure the balance was cool and put the mikes where they belonged, set the band up, make sure everybody was tuned up and then he would split, and from all of that they would put together the album.

MW: You were with the Gil Evans Orchestra for a couple of years then, participating on two albums, one from early 1959 and the other from late 1960.

RAY: Right. But in the meantime things were kind of disenchanting for me in New York except for this one particular point. I had been to California in 1953 for a visit and I liked it well enough and I always wanted to move back to live. So I chose this particular time to move to California (February 1960). About 1961 I went back to New York to play the job at the Jazz Gallery and then do the date with Gil.

MW: You had a record date for Candid as a leader around that time?

RAY: Yes, immediately after the "Out of the Cool" album came out they called me to do the date whom! just like that. I said, "Well when do you want me to do this?" and they said, "Soon as you're ready." So I immediately went to work and furiously wrote arrangements and this that and the other. And soon as I had the arrangements written I picked the guys that I knew that could read and could play right away and we had one rehearsal and it came out fabulous man! So we went right to the studio

INTERVIEW WITH **RAY**

H. RAY CRAWFORD (photograph by Mark Weber)



and did the album. And the cat paid us off before I left New York a couple of days later. And I came back home, and I sat around in California for months waiting for it to be released. It never did come out, except in bootleg. I've seen it in Chicago! A guy came up to me wanting an autograph, but it was the wrong title, that's how I knew it was a bootleg album. It was called something like "I Know Ray," one of the cuts on the album was *I Knew Prez*. The name of the album was "Smooth Groove," a play on words. I'd like to have a copy of that, I've tried to get copies of tapes because I just want to hear the music. It was with Junior Mance, piano; Cecil Payne, baritone; Frankie Dunlop, drums; Ben Tucker, bass; and Johnny Coles, trumpet, and myself.

I do a lot of things from a musical standpoint because I know what blends. I know the trombone will blend with the baritone, and the baritone will blend with the trumpet and guitar. And I know Cecil could play solos so I didn't need a tenor, you know, and everybody is playing tenor, and besides that Cecil is underrated. He didn't get his chance to play like he should, and he can play, man! Fantastic! And Frankie Dunlop!

During the sixties Ray showed up on many sessions, listed in the Jepsen discographies with Sonny Stitt; Lou Donaldson; Lorez Alexandria albums that include Wynton Kelly and Jimmy Cobb; a Curtis Amy Orchestra album that includes Jack Wilson and Dupree Bolton; Lou Rawls; Perry Lee; a Ben Tucker Quintet with Vic Feldman, Larry Bunker and Tommy Tedes-

co; a reunion album of the Ahmad Jamal Trio with Joe Kennedy; etc.; and in a July 19, 1962 Downbeat profile by John Tynan, Ray spoke of his group of that time, "The group is different from anything else that's been done. Its projection is in playing softly but swinging, always swinging."

MW: I saw Stanley Cowell a couple of months ago with the Heath Brothers.

RAY: Stanley used to live in L.A. (1962-63 at USC), he was in that group playing piano and John Carter was playing alto and reeds, Henry Franklin on bass. My group, my book.

MW: John has dedicated all of his time to the clarinet now.

RAY: That figures because John is a dedicated musician. We opened and played for several months at the Tiki Island Cafe. It was the same year that President Kennedy was assassinated. I've been back and forth from there many times, it's on Western Avenue just north of Jefferson at 43rd Place. It was called the Kon-Tiki Lounge, back in the 50s when I visited. Oscar Moore and Carl Perkins and Joe Comfort worked there as a trio.

MW: Carl Perkins used to play with his left forearm parallel with the keyboard walking his fingers.

RAY: I don't know if he had to do that or what, anyway that's how he played. He was a bad man! Just out of sight. This club had a Hawaiian motif, like that, and when you sat at the bar, it had a big bell back there. It looked like a ship bell. Whenever this cat would ring the bell on you, you had to buy a drink, it had

something to do with some gimmick they had going. Right behind the bar in the corner was a bandstand and that's where they would play. Oscar Moore would be playing these big pretty chords on his guitar, Joe Comfort hmmm. And Carl would be playing all of this piano.

MW: How about Wes Montgomery?

RAY: Wes was a friend of mine. He used to come and see me play. And he'd bring all of the guys with him that were guitar players. He would just sit and listen for about an hour, and then they'd go to some other place.

MW: The way he plays, with the octaves....

RAY: Well, his thing was, actually all guitar players use octaves but not to the extent that Wes used them. He used them constantly. Most guitarists use octaves for effect. Wes Montgomery had a way of feeling the instrument. The higher you go on the guitar the thinner the note gets and he knew just exactly where to double the note and make it pick up and be just as fat as the one just before it. So it made all of his solos fat and round and pretty and thick all the way up and all of the way back down. And if he was playing ballads where it was only one note every bar or something like that then he'd start doubling the note. He used all kinds of intervals, but he employed mainly the octave. Especially if you're playing with a big band and you're playing one note on an E string up around C or C sharp or D you can't even hear it. When there's five brass behind you it's hard to hear it so if you double the string and they are perfectly in tune, it's going to set up overtones and then you can hear it.

MW: What type of strings do you use?

RAY: I use D'Angelico gold wound if I can get them, actually D'Aquisto, Jimmy D'Aquisto used to work with D'Angelico before he died. Now he has his own shop in Farmingdale, New Jersey, and he makes custom made fabulous guitars. He also makes the strings to go with them, and the strings are very good on other instruments so I use his strings when I can get them. My guitar is the Tal Farlow Gibson. Right now I'm using Fender amplifiers but I'd like to switch to Polytone. I should change my strings every week when I'm playing every night, but I don't, because I tune the instrument electronically. If the harmonics are true then I leave the strings on the box. Gold wound strings are expensive and they don't last long.

MW: What did guitarists do fifty years ago? Like Robert Johnson, did he change his strings? Could he afford to?

RAY: He'd just play out of tune. Old strings just won't come into tune, man. You've got to accept the fact that modern day electronics are so exact and so precise that you can't help but see the deficiencies in things the way they were. I used to play out of tune all of the time. Why? Because I didn't have a decent enough instrument to play on, and I tuned it the best that I could, tuned the strings to one another. Before I played the second tune they'd be out of tune again. I have a chord tuner now. With this I could tune up and by the second tune it's down again, it's underneath but not enough for your ear to tell. But like tonight when I get to the intermission it's down a quarter tone almost. So it makes a difference now. Those guys played out of tune, Django Reinhardt played out of tune all of the time. Charlie Christian played out of tune, man. They didn't have any choice. If you're pulling on the string like this on the string, *ding, ding*, every time you do that, unless you have \$50 pegs on your instrument you move the peg a little bit more. Now you

CRAWFORD

BY MARK WEBER



can buy German pegs or Grover pegs that don't move an inch, they'll break before they move. They didn't make pegs like that 20 years ago.

MW: Did you ever hear Eddie Durham?

RAY: I not only heard him but I knew Eddie very well when he was musical director for the Sweethearts of Rhythm. As a member of the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra we did a tour with the Sweethearts of Rhythm. He was musical director for the band, he rehearsed the band and kept them in shape musically and all that sort of thing.

MW: He is attributed with being the first jazzman to record electrically amplified guitar, on the Kansas City Five and Six sides from 1938. And before that with the Lunceford Orchestra the first to record amplified guitar in 1935 on *Hittin' the Bottle*. He used some sort of aluminum resonator that fitted under the strings in the sound hole which was about the size of a 45-rpm record, with the microphone real close.

RAY: Really? I didn't know that, I understand he was a great rhythm guitar player. But like I said my focus back then was on the saxophone. Now if I had been playing guitar, or had thought about electrifying the guitar when I was a youngster I would have thought about putting something under the strings. Because I always figured that the strings made the sound, which isn't altogether true you know. After I became a guitarist I found out that a lot of the tone is attributable to the types of wood in the instrument. And that to electrify an instrument means to lessen its quality. It means to do something to the sound which is less than good. A good electric box does not have to be made out of good wood, it has to be made out of good electronics. With a tried and true kind of uniformity between each and every quarter and each and every note, so that things are perfectly in tune at all times. I don't think you get much sound out of wood through a string electronically, I just don't think you can.

MW: Do you play much acoustic guitar?

RAY: Well, up to a little while ago I had a Barnabe made by a student of Ramirez, it was about a \$2500 box. It was a great experience with a good instrument. Right now I'm using a Gibson, which is a good guitar, very straight neck on it, and the wood is very good in it and it sounds great. And the strings are not steel strings. They are either gut or they're plastic strings, to give the wood a chance to vibrate.

MW: It has a lot to do with the sides of the instrument?

RAY: The face, the very top of the box, and the type of wood that it's made out of. So on one side of the instrument you will either get the extremely sharp high or the extremely mellow high depending on what you like. Now if and when you cut holes in an instrument to put pickups in it you take away some of the quality. And it just doesn't seem very plausible to me to expect to pick up the quality of the wood through a steel string. What you hear is two different things. When you're playing a good instrument with pickups on it and steel strings first you are hearing steel strings and then you are hearing some of the sonoral sounds of the wood. But you're hearing two different things together. So when you put the amplification on, all you're going to pick up is strings. Now if you don't have good strings on it you're in trouble. If you have gold plated strings on it, it's going to sound like bells. Can't sound anything but good. It could be a cigar box with gold strings on it and it would

sound good, because all it's picking up is the strings. What we're supposed to look at is the box, but you and I know better, we're not looking at it, we're listening to it. So the instrument is limited. That's why I play so many other things. John Phillips recently loaned me a sax and I went nuts. Nuts! Nuts! Nuts! That instrument feels like home to me. That's the way I play guitar, like a saxophone. What I want to hear and play, that's the way it comes out. On the guitar I'm not always that sure. I can't always get what I want. The saxophone is more intimate, warmer, because you blow your breath in it. I don't think I like guitar as much as I like saxophone, to tell you the truth.

MW: That's very revealing. So you alternate the flute and the organ on gigs. Do you do much studio work?

RAY: I do some. The last studio date I did was a month or so ago with Tom Waits. We did the "Blue Valentine" album together.

MW: Does he like that life that he portrays in his songs?

RAY: I don't know if he lives that life as much as he dreams it. He's a real talented guy. Wears real slim tight pants and long pointed shoes. Man when he comes into a room he's a sight to behold! Plays guitar like this (displaying a one finger technique), and he can play! When he comes to the session he comes in and says in that voice of his, "Hey, H. Ray," and has me tune his guitar for him.

But I have turned down studio dates. I'm not one of these people who are looking forward to staying in studios from morning until night. Because I do not chase money and that is what you do that for. I'm just not that kind of musician. I prefer the creative end of music. It doesn't pay a lot of money but it does pay a great deal of satisfaction. Which makes me just as wealthy. So when I tell people on the bandstand that I'm rich I guess they think I'm talking about a lot of money.

MW: So how do you like California by and large? or jazz-wise?

RAY: I think California's great, man! I just wish they'd hang up these earthquakes! Spiritually speaking I've been more satisfied creatively here in California than I've been anywhere. My jazz experiences have been greater both monetarily and otherwise. Because in California I found out that if you could play, you could use your talent to become something here. Whereas on the East Coast, and I'm speaking mainly of New York City, the Big Apple so to speak where everything is happening it was who you knew first and what you knew afterwards. I found in California that if you could do what was expected of you, you could get what you were looking for. I know ultimately you aren't going to achieve what you're looking for here, but if you're an artist, they respect you to a certain extent. I especially like the Bay Area. But you see I'm a rural type person, I prefer the open areas. The further out I get the better I like it, but I like to be able to come back when I want to. You can't get any satisfaction playing to the rocks and the stones and the lizards you know. But I have great times in areas like that too. I like guns and I do a lot of shooting. I use 44 magnum, these are both hand guns, and a .357 magnum, and out in the open it's fantastic shooting, man! Flat shooting for at least 300 yards.

MW: So you've been with Jimmy Smith three times, in the middle 50s, the middle 60s and now in the 70s.

RAY: This last time since 1971 till now, nine

years. Five albums worth.

MW: You were in the house band at Jimmy Smith's Supper Club the whole time?

RAY: Right. Except for about three months.

MW: Who was the drummer there?

RAY: Couple of drummers, Joe Brancota or Kenny Dixon, three drummers and the guy who used to run the jam sessions.

MW: What would be some of the classical music that you listen to?

RAY: Well I have some things that I'm very partial to. And they don't point toward any particular thing. *The Fountains and The Pines of Rome* I like by Respighi. Also some Sibelius things. Some Bartok things naturally because they point toward jazz music. And of course I'm very partial toward Bach because he played a lot of jazz music. He improvised a great deal. If anybody is studying to be an improviser they should listen to a lot of Bach and play a lot of Bach. He knew what to do with chords. And Hindemith and those types of composers if you want to be an arranger, because they know what to do with chords, especially modern chords. I have some things by Mehegan who is a modernist who takes us into modern concepts of playing left hand things for piano, but this is pointed more toward jazz and improvisation. What I'm trying to say is this: they are all intermingled together, it's hard to see the demarcation lines between classics and jazz, for *me* at least. As a matter of fact, I can go from one to the other without any hesitation; I can improvise on both. Because actually classics are not built on complex chords. And if you can understand what the chordal structure is, all you have to listen to next is what's going on above it. Whereas jazz is very hard to understand because the chord line and the rhythmic conception are the hardest points to listen to, because you have two things to listen to at once — as far as I'm concerned, and I'm opinionated about this. The improvisational viewpoint in jazz is involved with all kinds of complex chords, and to analyse some of the things that you hear would amaze you that you could play some of it. If you compared this with a classical selection on the same level — you would find that the classical selection's chordal level is quite simple. I'm not saying that one is simpler than the other I'm just saying that understanding one is like understanding the other. They're both the same, all of it's music.

For the purpose of classification if nothing else I can use the word "jazz" because people will know what I am. Actually I would prefer using the term "creative musician," but then they wouldn't know if I was creating classical or what, jazz? There we are again, we're back to it. You know I have a clearer understanding of what's happening with classical music now. Whereas before I guess I was so caught up with jazz, trying to be a part of that, and trying to make a success out of it, that I just didn't really have the time to look into any other kind of music.

But I think that whoever appreciates jazz should go and hear it more often, and support it, and make sure that it doesn't get displaced by something less. Because it is a pure American art form that has always been here, doesn't belong anywhere else in the world but here. We should all try to understand it more and support it.

— Pomona, California, February 26, 1980

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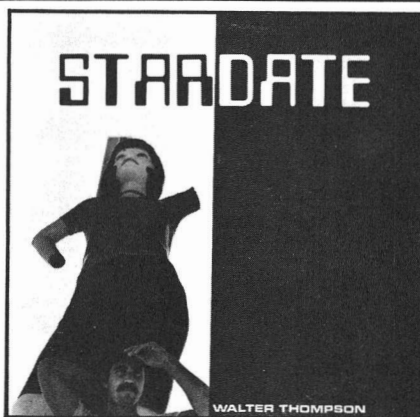
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JAZZ LITERATURE

DJANGO REINHARDT

by Charles Delaunay
Da Capo Press, New York

There are still people around who regard Django Reinhardt as a brilliant but eccentric gypsy guitarist. He was in fact not only a jazz soloist of the first rank — perhaps the greatest exponent of his instrument — but one of the great innovators of the music. His playing is in the main stream; and, had he never played, the development of the guitar as a jazz instrument would not have been the same. His work takes its start from Eddie Lang, who established the guitar as a jazz solo instrument in the middle twenties: the Reinhardt/Grappelli partnership, whatever its historical origins, surely betrays a debt to Venuti and Lang. Reinhardt was admired by Charlie Christian; and in solos like *I'll See You In My Dreams* from 1939, one can hear Reinhardt phrasing like a saxophone in a style that was so important to Christian's development of the guitar as a front line solo instrument.

Charles Delaunay's book is one that I have enjoyed for many years, continually dipping back into it for its colourful anecdotes. It gives a very strong sense of Reinhardt's personality and of its roots in the social life of his gypsy people, of which he remained a part even in his years of greatest fame. One is accustomed to jazz players of prodigious gifts being unable to read or write music: Reinhardt could scarcely read or write at all. One of the most memorable stories in the book is of Eugene Vees, another gypsy guitarist who had joined the Quintette of the Hot Club of France, carried by elevator to the wrong floor of a London hotel and helplessly searching for his room because he could not read the floor numbers in the elevator or the room numbers when he got out.

Reinhardt was an extraordinarily difficult person to work with because he carried with him from his gypsy heritage a small regard for regularity in keeping engagements and a completely unrealistic sense of money. When asked how much he would want to sign a contract to go to the United States after World War II, he asked how much Benny Goodman was

making. On the other hand, he would lose very large sums of money — generally all he had — in games of chance or skill — most often by giving ridiculously high handicaps in games of billiards. He departed for England without a passport because he considered that he and his companions were celebrities and the British would know them.

The anecdotes are the strength of Delaunay's book. He drew on the memories of a large number of people who knew Reinhardt, and much of the book is told in their words. This gives it authenticity and an immediacy of feel. However, as is often the case with books so constructed, the narrative line is not always clear, and quite a lot of important events are not dealt with. Some of the famous record sessions are remembered and discussed, but others are passed over. The great shortcoming of the book is that, while it gives considerable insight into Django Reinhardt as a personality, it gives little or no sense of what he did musically or how he came to do it.

We hear how he started to play, of his taking up the banjo, of the early groups he was with, of the fire that burned his one arm, turning inward the last fingers of the hand used for fingering. Only a few remarks give us any sense of what lay behind the playing. We are told that he could analyse any chord he heard played: his ear was quite extraordinary. He had little concern for the melody of tunes, hearing them in terms of their chords. The existence of two other guitarists in the quintet was reportedly much to his liking: he wanted to have two rhythm guitarists behind him as he soloed.

In his treatment of the tune in terms of its harmonies and in his preference for a full rhythm support as a soloist, we come close to the heart of Reinhardt's music. Moving on from Lang's example, he was the first to treat the guitar wholly as a melody instrument when soloing with the quintet. His playing has much in common with that of Lester Young; and, like Young (on the Jones/Smith *Lady Be Good*), Reinhardt emerges with his style fully formed on the first of the Quintette of the Hot Club of France recordings, *Dinah* for Ultraphone in December 1934 (available on GNP 9031).

His tone on that record is astoundingly full; and it is hard to believe, considering the way in which the notes are bent and the tone is maintained over long notes, that we are listening to an unamplified instrument (some photos show him seated with the microphone placed close to the strings of his instrument). The octave chording admired by Wes Montgomery is in evidence on this first recording; so too are many effects that are thought of as innovations that Lester Young brought to the jazz vocabulary (though Young did not record until two years later). Reinhardt will drag a phrase for a moment; he reduces the tune to a riff, and then repeats this with a variety of rhythmic emphases and in a variety of relationships to the chords of the tune; he quotes *Moten Swing* in his *Dinah* solo. So much of the Swing Era is there in Reinhardt's playing before that era had begun.

The Da Capo reprint of Delaunay's book is by photocopy of the original. This means that the exemplary discography of twenty years ago is reprinted as is. I have found it over the years an excellent reference guide, though many of the microgroove reissues listed in it have receded further into history than the subject of

the book. Max Abrams's "The Book of Django" (1973) purported to be an up-to-date biographical and certainly involved research that went beyond Delaunay's discography. I am not unfortunately familiar with this book; but its existence would point to the fact that much information on records has come to light since 1961, when Delaunay's book was first published. Unsuspected material, such as the broadcast with Ellington, has been issued since then. One third of Delaunay's book is taken up by the discography, which cannot in itself be seen as having "historical" interest, in the way in which the author's original "Hot Discography" has. The photographic reprint brings back into currency a worthwhile book — though one wonders whether anyone offering the first edition for sale would go much over the US\$22.50 that Da Capo have to ask. The book is nicely produced, though not so brightly as the original: this is particularly the case with the photographs. In all, then, one is drawn to question the appropriateness of the photographic reprint in this case, when it involves reproducing an out-of-date discography that is so large a portion of the book. Nonetheless, if you are a Reinhardt collector, you will not want to be without this book.

Note: Since the above review was written, Ashley Mark Publications in England have brought out a new edition of the book with a revised discography and eighty-five pages of photographs, many of them new. At 8.95 pounds hardcover or 5.95 softcover, it sounds like a better buy.
— Trevor Tolley

JAZZ AWAY FROM HOME

by Chris Goddard
Paddington Press, New York & London

As American soldiers returned from overseas after World War I they left behind a revolution in music. Jazz had left home at just the right time. It hit Europe on a tidal wave of social and cultural upheaval and provided the perfect musical accompaniment to an era of change. Hundreds of American musicians, dancers and singers crossed the Atlantic to play their part in Europe's jazz age.

In this pioneering view from the "other side", British musician and documentary filmmaker Chris Goddard shows that early jazz made almost as great an impact in Europe as in America. While documenting how when and in what form jazz reached Europe (with research, interviews and reminiscences of those who made it away from home), he also examines the difficulties Europeans had in understanding and assimilating the new music, particularly in France and England.

In its early days, Goddard points out, jazz provided an interesting diversion for the elite of European society, spawning glamorous night spots in Paris and London with jazz as the main attraction. Black musicians, in European eyes, were essential to the exotic atmosphere of these clubs. But white players (like the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, visiting London in 1919, and its local imitators), got the opportunities to record. While this produced a "pro-black prejudice" in Paris, Britons (depending mainly on records) preferred white Dixieland-style music — a characteristic that seems to have lingered to this day.



The standard of many of the early jazz bands, black as well as white, was very low. Drummer Bert Marshall, recalling how he joined the E.E. Thompson band in Paris in 1926, thought the band was "pretty lousy" but had to stick it because "there was a lot of pro-black prejudice in Paris. If you were black, they thought you were great even if you were terrible The band was so lousy that when we went on stage (at the Folies Bergeres with Josephine Baker) we had to pretend to play while the pit orchestra played for us and we just mimed it."

Yet "pro-black prejudice" also brought some important jazz bands and musicians to Europe, notably Sidney Bechet with Will Marion Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra. (Cook, whose band played strictly from written scores, considered Bechet illiterate, but needed him to play the new "hot" music. Six years later, Sam Wooding — whose band toured Europe — rejected Bechet because he could not read music).

Several of Cook's musicians formed splinter groups (like Benny Peyton's Jazz Kings); others worked with British bands (Goddard lists several) though recorded evidence of their contributions is negligible. (Peyton's band recorded *Tiger Rag* and *High Society* for Columbia in London in February 1920 with Sidney Bechet, but the sides were never released and the masters disappeared). In fact, it is hard to assess the influence American bands and musicians had on European groups because only a small number of Europeans recorded before the mid-twenties.

As jazz developed from a gimmick into real music, it began to decline in popular appeal... "It is ironic that hardly had jazz established itself

as the dominant new force behind European popular music than interest in the real thing waned to the point where it was just short of being a musical fringe benefit supported by a handful of musicians, critics and intellectuals." Jazz had come to stay, but on new terms.

The important fact about European jazz, says Goddard, is that it arrived by means of the gramophone record. Records alone account for the fact that Europeans were way ahead of Americans in appreciating the artistic significance of Negro music. At the same time, the fact that jazz for most Europeans was a recorded and not live experience colored their attitude toward it and governed every aspect of the way they tried to play it.

Reviews in various jazz publications — and their reviewers — were just as important. The *Melody Maker*, the first and foremost English language paper to devote extensive coverage to jazz, faithfully reflected the attitudes and opinions of European jazz enthusiasts from 1926 to 1929: Bix Beiderbecke, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Adrian Rollini and Arthur Schutt "were the finest players of this type of music." The California Ramblers produced records which were "as hot as they can make 'em — even in America!" Red Nichols' recording of *China Boy* was "the best hot record ever made"... and so on.

To the credit of the *Melody Maker*, however, it must be stated that its perspective of jazz was broadened with the hiring (in 1931) of a new hot record reviewer Spike Hughes (writing as "Mike"), an excellent and perceptive writer and musician, and (in February 1932) as its American correspondent John Hammond, who knew more about black music and its

best players than perhaps any other journalist at the time.

Hughes and Hammond, says Goddard, were almost alone in being able to keep pace with the rapid change of events. "The tight cultural ship of which jazz critics had so recently boasted seemed to founder. Then, almost before they knew it, the classical mould on which Europeans had tried to cast their jazz was literally blown apart by Louis Armstrong's arrival in England in July 1932."

Armstrong's impact on European jazz audiences and musicians has been well documented and Goddard adds to it by quoting British recording star Nat Gonella, one of several musicians who laboriously tried to imitate Louis: "My copying tactics have improved me immeasurably as a dance player. If my playing (even when I do originate) is inevitably flavored with Louis Armstrong, I am quite content. Short of being a musical genius (which I certainly am not), to my mind the next best thing is to model oneself on the lines of somebody who is."

Goddard rounds out "Jazz Away From Home" with interviews with Mabel Mercer, Claude Hopkins, Bricktop and several European jazz pioneers, who helped shape the history of jazz in Europe. Special tribute is paid to Django Reinhardt — perhaps the outstanding European jazz instrumentalist on an international scale — by the musicians who knew him best. An on-the-spot report on the Nice Jazz Festival brings things up to date. A hundred rare photos of visiting and local jazz bands and musicians add to the appeal of this book, which should be of immense interest to jazz fans on either side of the Atlantic.

— Al Van Starrex

FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT CONSENT

GANELIN • TARASOV • CHEKASIN



left to right: GANELIN - CHEKASIN - TARASOV

In October 1980 Ganelin's trio from the Soviet Union (Ganelin—Tarasov—Chekasin) gave a performance during the Berlin Jazz Days. Joachim E. Berendt wrote in *Down Beat* (February 1981, page 54): "With three musicians playing approximately 15 instruments with a breathtaking intensity, building their set to a euphoric climax, it was the wildest and yet the best organised and most professional free jazz I've heard in years."

In April 1979 Ganelin's trio had appeared in East Berlin and was recorded live. The recording subsequently found its way to the West and Leo Records had the honour of publishing it (Ganelin/Tarasov/Chekasin, "Live in East Germany," Leo Records LR 102).

The following conversation between the members of the trio and the publisher of the Soviet jazz magazine *Chorus*, Barban, took place in April 1979 in Leningrad. This conversation has been translated and published without either the knowledge or the consent of those involved.

BARBAN: Let's sum up your experience of

playing together for 8 years — it is a long time by any criteria. Has there been any progress in your musicianship, are there any problems in your creative activity?

GANELIN: As far as progress is concerned it is difficult for me to judge. Perhaps, before Chekasin's "fall" (he broke his finger in December 1978) we played even better than today; we did not work for three months or rehearse. As to any problems, we cannot enumerate them all. But the main one, probably, is lack of instruments for realisation of our musical ideas. We need, for example, tubular bells, marimba, tum-tum. We'll never get them. There is a solution: to record in a studio (because a studio has all the facilities), but there is also a problem. We recorded our second record a year ago, but it is still being "released." When we record we use methods which cannot be used in a live performance. Generally, recording in a studio solves a number of problems. Some problems could be solved by having a synthesizer. We want to have one — but at the same time we don't. There is something in it which vulgarises, it already has commercial associa-

tions, and when I listen to it it seems to me that it has a dehumanising effect.

CHEKASIN: I reckon that the standards of our music are falling all the time: the music we are playing is increasingly decadent....

GANELIN: If we are to compare it with our music of 1972, then we have, of course, changed; perhaps our music today is simply an expression of the same ideas, but the form it takes is more confident.

BARBAN: Are you a studio group or a concert ensemble? It has always seemed to me that a live performance in front of a live audience is an essential part of your creative image, that the audience response is very important for you, and that many of your artistic principles are based on the possibility of just such spontaneous stage behaviour.

GANELIN: At the moment we are recording in the studio not because we want to, but because we have no possibility of getting hold of new instruments. Recording in a studio has its disadvantages, but there are also advantages: we can make use of the technical possibilities of a recording for our artistic ends — dynamic

effects, the effects of super-imposed recordings, etc. In the studio our group expands to become more people, who do not, and never will, exist on the stage.

BARBAN: Every year you introduce new instruments into your music. Perhaps, it would simply be better to enlarge the group – take in two or three more people.

GANELIN: In a large group musical interaction is very difficult. It is possible in a trio, and impossible in an octet.

BARBAN: As we have already mentioned your second record (“Concerto Grosso”), tell me what’s happened to it and what is going to happen.

GANELIN: The director-general of Melodiya, comrade Shabanov, did not want to release this record. A meeting of the artistic committee was called to discuss its fate. The composer Eshpai was in the chair. Witnesses recount that what happened was very interesting. They sat down specially to listen to the recording. Even before he had heard it Eshpai said that he knew the music of the trio and the composer Ganelin from his operas. When the record was put on Eshpai was astounded. But even after the hearing, he did not change his opinion. He said he liked it, and that it was the music of the future. The committee supported him. Then comrade Shabanov stood up, smiled and said: “Do we really have to be in advance of the West, even with avant-garde music? No, our people don’t need this kind of music.” In short, Shabanov held back our record. “It can wait,” he said.

The record turned out to be very emotional, there is a great deal of emotion in it and no formalism at all. In this sense it is jazz. But this sort of music is possible only on a record. Even unplanned elements create an artistic effect; on one side of the record we use the effect of superimposition.

BARBAN: How do you prepare a piece for a concert?

CHEKASIN: A piece can arise spontaneously during a rehearsal, and then we polish it up; but a piece can be created mechanically: we take a structure and then work over textural elements, colouring, and special characteristics. On the whole, this is the traditional technology of composers.

BARBAN: But what about the idea of free improvisation? What percentage is there of this in your music?

CHEKASIN: We strictly control the aleatoric. It is essentially a performance of a chamber work which has already been created. Everything we play can in principle subsequently be recorded. We already have the whole piece in our heads. To tell the truth, we are not spontaneous in the generally-accepted sense of the word. Our improvisations are the filling out of the bones of the structure. The basic structural elements of the piece have always been thought out in advance.

GANELIN: Our pieces are strictly worked-out compositions. But they are ours – if they were to be performed by other people it would be completely different music. In our music the individual characteristics of the trio are a part of the general artistic effect.

BARBAN: But how would you define your style? What kind of music do you play?

CHEKASIN: Our music is fairly remote from West European jazz.

GANELIN: Our music is very remote from it. We are not at all in the mainstream of the avant-garde.

CHEKASIN: We borrow some elements not only from jazz, but also from chamber music, folk music, and other genres. Sometimes we even use “naive” childish tricks which create very interesting combinations, fresh and previously unheard. Children do it very well.

GANELIN: Children do it naturally and brilliantly. Sometimes we specially use non-musical objects and instruments, introduce into music, as it were, non-musical elements of form, and these elements fit in very well with the music.

BARBAN: But what do you call your music?

GANELIN: That is not even important. Let’s call it “musion” – an analogue with “fusion.” In principle, of course, it is in the mainstream of jazz, but we synthesise many elements from different styles.

BARBAN: So, your music, then, has the general tendency of contemporary music to synthesis?

GANELIN: I think so; of course....

CHEKASIN: A tendency to make a tendency of the tendencies transcendental... Ha-ha-ha!...

BARBAN: How do you compare your music with Western music as far as quality is concerned?

GANELIN: Everybody who is involved in some way in art thinks secretly that he alone is doing something significant and hopes to discover something previously unseen or unheard of.

BARBAN: But without false modesty.... I personally feel that many elements of your music are not “previously unheard”; some of them can be found in the music of Braxton, others in Cecil Taylor’s music, and yet others in the Bennink-Mengelberg ensembles. I don’t, of course, think that you are borrowing them consciously. The similarity arises rather as a result of common aesthetic principles by which both you and they are guided. And it is precisely these central, fundamental features of your music which bring you all together in one artistic trend – free jazz.

GANELIN: I think that the basic quality of our music is the absence of any purely rational “dry” elements. There is always an organic, natural driving force in our music, and audiences pick up very well the lack of any affectation. But it often seems to me, that in the music of Braxton, Chadbourne and Bailey there is an element of affectation....

CHEKASIN: When I am playing I could get under a table, but Braxton never could. He has a completely different approach to the spirit of music, he is too serious about what he is doing. All this inevitably shows even in the musical intonation.

BARBAN: Since when has seriousness in art been considered a defect? If you mean a certain pretentiousness in the music of the musicians you have named, then this is just exactly what is lacking in it. Pretentiousness is always the result of inflated empty-headedness – philosophising in shallow waters, creative bankruptcy, the artist’s inability to bring to life any serious intention, to realise a profound idea with the help of an original and well-worked-out form. How can you reproach a musician for being serious about his aesthetic convictions, if they seem significant, even if only to him? Of course, the real, objective value of his music is another matter. If the pretentiousness is a result of an attempt to utter banalities in a significant manner, then a classic example would be the music of Keith Jarrett – the hero of the international community of enlightened philistines.

If we are talking about parody, satire and other imitative or comic (so-called “unserious”) forms of play-acting, then it can be said that, as has been shown by the history of art, they usually proliferate at moments of crisis in the evolution of culture, at times when artistic trends are aesthetically exhausted, at times when the artist or society has lost the basis for development in terms of spiritual resources and ideas.

I think that your present style has very mannered features: elements of a mixing of genres, an intentional reduction of emotional charge, paradoxical and grotesque formulae, a heightened expressiveness (even ecstasy), “musical sophistry,” a dissonant wit – in general, an obvious escape from clear conceptualism towards dark metaphors. Affectation as a style in European art came into being at the interfaces of cultures, artistic tendencies, and was evoked by the need of art to rethink its aesthetics. Everything points to the transitory nature of your present aesthetic state.

I have known Chekasin for quite a long time and in many different situations, so I shall be bold enough to explain his passion for eccentricity on the stage. He is, without doubt, the least bourgeois element in your group. He instinctively opposes the clichés of fetishist bourgeois consciousness. His “kicks” are an obvious attempt to divide up a musical piece as an aesthetic “thing,” to make fun of the sacred values of bourgeois, philistine ideas about art as a serious artistic business, conducted by “respectable” professionals with great social prestige. It is precisely this bourgeois idea of music as a part of goods-production (trade), and the musician as an inspired priest or respectable businessman who is successfully exploiting his talents – it is this that Chekasin is defying when he blows his saxophone.

Perhaps this zeal for “playing under the table” is caused by the fact that, for you, jazz concerts are in the nature of a hobby? You all have jobs, you give concerts fairly rarely and all this is simply some sort of psychological dilettantism (I don’t mean your technical skill). What is stopping you from leaving your jobs and devoting yourselves entirely to jazz? Could you make this decision?

GANELIN: Tarasov is the only one who wants to do this. I personally am afraid of it. This kind of life has its disadvantages. And we soon get bored with our programmes.

CHEKASIN: For me our trio is not my main work. For me it is no more than collecting stamps.

GANELIN: I don’t agree. Chekasin himself plays the saxophone as a part of his main job. Perhaps for him his clowning on the stage is a hobby. For me it is not a hobby.

CHEKASIN: But you ask Ganelin – would he give up writing music to devote himself entirely to jazz?

GANELIN: Never. Chekasin also would not give up his writing, teaching in the conservatory and directing his orchestra.

CHEKASIN: Why should one live for one thing only? If a man works in many creative spheres and interested in many problems, he will be much more significant as a person.

BARBAN: So you, Vladimir, do not consider yourself a jazzman?

CHEKASIN: In principle, no, if a jazzman is a man who plays only jazz.

GANELIN: We are interested in the widest range of musical genres. A man can’t eat one sort of food all his life....

TARASOV: For a long time I have been trying to persuade them to live just by what we play. Our programmes are always under-prepared. We don't work them through — we never have any time.

GANELIN: Our compositions bore us before we have time to work them through. Jazz is not a hobby for me. It is not a hobby for Chekasin either. He is just "showing off" again — it's probably the most serious thing in his life.

CHEKASIN: For me jazz is just one of many ways of self-realisation.

BARBAN: What others are there: sex, the composition of non-jazz music, teaching, body-building, leadership.... Perhaps it's all a question of a desire for power? Perhaps you are simply suffering from an unsatisfied "leadership complex" — that's why you don't want to leave your other (or main) jobs and occupations, where you are in complete control?

CHEKASIN: That's rubbish. Neither one nor the other is true. It has nothing to do with a desire for power. Since I was 18 I have been teaching and learning, and have been a leader for many years. All my life I have suffered from the fact that everything I write is always played wrongly by everyone. All my life I have taught the musicians with whom I play, and that's why I have my "teacher's complex." The majority of the musicians can't even make sense of the printed music and can't produce the right sound.

BARBAN: Is this also true of your colleagues in the trio?

CHEKASIN: No, not them. My teaching is essentially the purest altruism. I simply am able to find satisfaction in the fact that, for example, the children in the music school are learning something from me and are beginning to play. The pay there is appalling, so I'm hardly doing it for that.

BARBAN: What kind of music do you actually write? Jazz, avant-garde, classical?

CHEKASIN: Stylistically it's difficult to classify. It's both non-jazz and half light music.

BARBAN: Is that like the trio's music?

CHEKASIN: No, in the trio we have a different approach. It's Tarasov who makes the music....

TARASOV: No, I just accompany you. Our music consists entirely of accompaniment.

BARBAN: It seems to me that I sense in your conversation a note of disillusionment with contemporary avant-garde and non-jazz music. Or am I mistaken?

GANELIN: There is a sort of stagnation of ideas. I think we need a new person to appear and announce a "new word." Or, perhaps, several people — like after Miles Davis.

CHEKASIN: This is probably only a temporary thing. Perhaps we don't have all the information we need, in fact we certainly don't. But I also feel that there is no "new word" which could really convince us. Everywhere I hear old methods being used. Obviously at the moment jazz is going through the period of waiting for the Messiah. But perhaps this is only our feeling.

BARBAN: It seems to me that you are wrongly exaggerating your own, subjective feeling of crisis, and foisting it on to all new jazz. That you see in your own situation a reflection of the whole jazz scene. But, actually, during the past few years the neo-avantgarde scene has experienced an unusual creative upsurge. There are many new original voices, and music is being created, the quality of which is quite unprecedented in jazz. It is obviously a question of the "stuff" atmosphere in which you are working,

of a certain amount of isolationism in your creative work. How do you yourselves see our jazz scene?

GANELIN: The older I become, the sadder I become. Some fishes do seem to be coming to the surface even in our jazz pond — Chizhik, Kozlov, Levinovsky... but for some reason these fishes produce no ripples on the surface of the pond.

BARBAN: During the last few years our jazz, real jazz, has been played for the first time on the stage in public.

GANELIN: But the jazz appeared on the stage in a sickly state, as if after tuberculosis and said in a quiet voice: "I am alive," and was given some medicine.

CHEKASIN: But on the whole Soviet jazz is at the moment on a real high: Levinovsky, Goloshchekin, Brill, etc.

GANELIN: But one feels all the time that there is no centre to the jazz. We need a federation. There is no stimulus for jazzmen — not to mention payment rates.

BARBAN: Look who's complaining.... I am sure that each one of you is earning three times as much as the average engineer.

GANELIN: There's no need to exaggerate. My main income in 1978 came from the music for three films. Jazz accounted for hardly a tenth of all my fees.

TARASOV: I work in a State Lithuanian Symphony Orchestra and earn less than any drummer in the most wretched restaurant. One mustn't think that quality always coincides with quantity.

BARBAN: O.K., O.K. — I take back all I said. Ganelin, you tell us what our most respected audiences can expect in the near future — what are you working on at the moment?

GANELIN: I simply can't recover after Cuba, my blood pressure has even gone up... At the moment I am finishing a symphony with a voice — a kind of "Sympholudia." Two more operas have been commissioned: one — a comic sketch, with the provisional title of "Tango," and the other "Objects in Revolt" from Mayakovsky. And, of course, we shall be renewing our trio programme.

BARBAN: And finally, gentlemen, something compromising about each other?

GANELIN: Tarasov has a passion for expensive restaurants, his pipe, coffee and some of the more "extravagant" sides of life. On the whole he knows how to live well.

CHEKASIN: Ganelin is wonderfully lazy. Totally disorganised. He is never able to concentrate on any one thing for very long. His affections and obligations do not help him at all in this matter. He writes less than he could.

GANELIN: Oh, Vladimir, my problems are entirely creative, some sort of crisis in my thoughts, ideas, feelings....

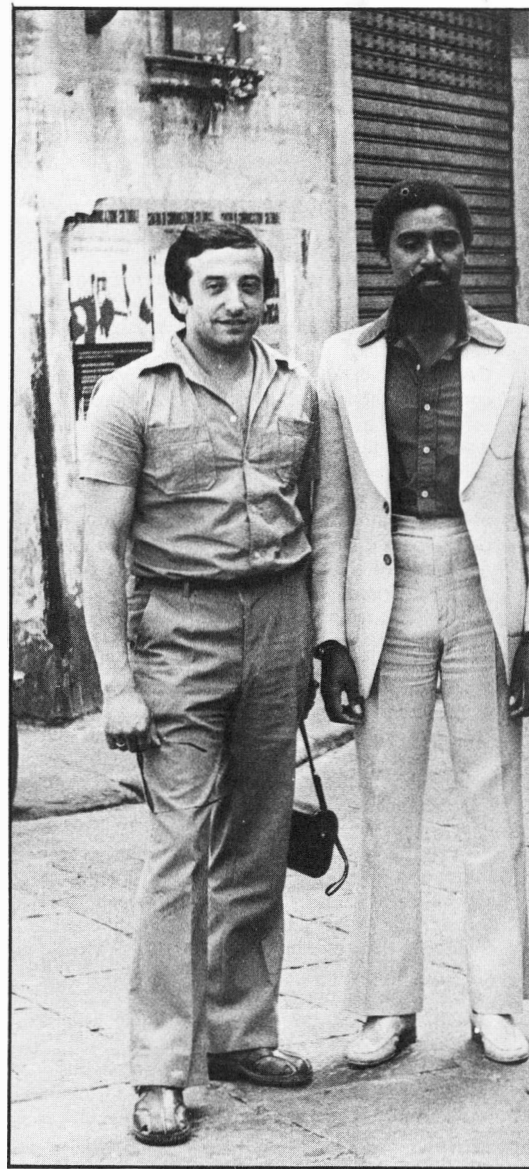
BARBAN: The most respected public is longing for details from Chekasin's private life.

GANELIN: Unfortunately we don't communicate with him much. He is a very busy person. A law unto himself. Incognito. A phantom. I can only say that he has not yet ceased to annoy us. I think that there could be a theme for a gripping novel in it somewhere.

BARBAN: Thank you for this fascinating conversation, but there is no more time — they will be raising the bridges soon. It's time to go.

(Translated from the Russian by F. Cave).

On July 27, 1981, a "historical jam session" was



organized in Florence, Italy by producer Francesco Maino, whose photograph of the participants appears above. The music from this session is due to be released on an Italian label in the near future. The musicians are (left to right): Viaceslav Ganelin Sevelovic (piano), Mustafa Abdul Rahim (tenor saxophone), Vladimir Tarasov Petrovic (drums), interpreter Stefano Scarpa, Tony Smith (piano), Don Ayler (trumpet, alto saxophone), Vladimir Cekasin Nikolaevic (alto saxophone, trumpet, clarinet).

GANELIN TRIO

Live in East Germany
Leo LR 102

The release of this album by these three immensely talented Russian improvisors presents a myriad of aesthetical, ethical, and legal issues that are anterior to any discussion of the album's content. Printed across the top of the back of the cover is the disclaimer: "Musicians do not bear any responsibility for publishing these tapes." In finer print less than a foot away from this remarkable statement, Leo Records, in reserving "All rights," informs the reader that the "Unauthorized duplication is a



violation of applicable laws." Still, "Leo Records is grateful to all those people who had the courage to preserve and deliver the tape." And there is the eerie "Engineer: unknown" credit. If "Live in East Germany" is a bootlegged recording, the question of the end justifying the means is supplanted by the larger issue of the Russians' effective lack of recourse. Even if this tape has been issued with the unmentionable approval and cooperation of the musicians, the terms and accounting of compensation to the musicians would presumably remain unverifiable.

Such issues, however, have always been of little concern to the consumer. The origins of the tapes and the compensation of the artist takes a back seat to the quality of the performance, the recording, and the pressing. In this regard, Leo Records has committed no crime save the serving of its constituency. The music of Ganelin, Tarasov, and Chekasin is news and Leo Records has broken the story to the West, complete with the ear-witness account of Don Cherry, a man whose virtues are unassailable: "Music is a spirit that exists all around our planet earth. It does not belong to no one body but all sensitive ears can understand. I believe this is improvised music (sic)." "Live in East

Germany" is, subsequently, more than a documentation of an exciting concert: it is a fingerprint. Improvised music has never experienced such cloak-and-dagger intrigues.

Interestingly, the listener who does not have the benefit of access to the accompanying interview will be at the marked disadvantage of not even knowing what instruments the respective musicians play, let alone any substantive background information: Leo Records' service is glaringly deficient in this regard. The perspectives and attitudes of the musicians, as expressed in the interview, give their music an added, pertinent dimension. Admittedly, this is a consideration not usually granted to Western musicians, but without such information the music of Ganelin, Tarasov, and Chekasin poses more questions than it answers. Not only are they an anomaly because of their nationality, but because of their music as well. A phrase from J.E. Berendt's 2/81 downbeat review of the trio's 10/80 Berlin Jazz Days appearance provides an adequate starting-point in the discussion of this recording: "the wildest and yet the best organized and most professional free jazz." A contradiction in terms or a duality that prompts further explication? Upon listening to this untitled, forty-minute perform-

ance, I emphatically support the latter.

The duality suggested by Berendt's phrase is an extension of the age-old duality of content and form. Such a duality exists in this trio's music, as represented by this performance, resulting, to these ears, in a marked contrast between the music and the musicianship. It is in finding the former not to be as nearly as impressive as the latter that substantiates the need to know their background previous to hearing their music. The interview provides illuminating insight into why the ideas forwarded on this recording vary from the engaging to the insipid, why their execution is so unwaveringly flawless, and why their music beads with a last-chance energy.

The performance begins brilliantly. After a short warmup of collective fragments, Tarasov's rolls and stickings stretch and become more limber as Ganelin's arpeggios and percussive crescendoes gather steam and Chekasin's tenor darts about one moment and bellows the next. Ganelin displays his virtuosity in a short fugal solo, introducing a theme that bears some resemblance to the frantically paced sing-song lines Coleman has used with Prime Time. As Tarasov and Chekasin reenter, Ganelin incorporates another keyboard for simulating bass lines, Chekasin, playing tenor and alto simultaneously, puts a bluesy Kirkish tinge to the theme, setting a riveting alto solo that shows Chekasin to have the superb intonation and associative prowess of Arthur Blythe: the occasional return of the second horn during the solo is perfect in projecting slapstick asides. Ganelin follows with a succinct, yet powerful, right-handed solo. Tarasov, who, until this point, has pummelled his kit in fueling the others, is unleashed for a skillfully brusque moment, until Ganelin and Chekasin filter the theme back into the foreground.

These seven minutes set a standard that fails to be surpassed for the entirety of the performance. It is hard to believe that much that ensues could be the work of the same trio, as it ranges from the pedestrian to the banal. A second, lengthier solo by Tarasov is marred by monotonous rolls and bass drum thumping. Compared with the opening ensemble passage, the ensemble work towards the end of the first side is lacking, though Chekasin's bass clarinet is noteworthy. A high-energy, two-chord theme dominates most of the second half of the performance. While the interaction between Chekasin's searing bass clarinet and Tarasov is gloriously intense, Ganelin's comping is almost too trite to be believed. It proves to be a burden that even Tarasov and Chekasin can't bear for long, as quick refuge is taken in an inventory of coloristic effects. But to no avail, as Ganelin eventually picks up an electric guitar - imagine Link Wray imitating Derek Bailey. Tarasov stokes the fires again and he and Chekasin take off, the latter playing two horns as effectively as before. Chekasin digs in on a pithy ditty, Ganelin finds his way back to the piano for a few good moments and the performance winds down with another otherworldly interlude. Incidentally, the East German crowd goes bananas.

A cherishable curio brimming with baffling music, "Live in East Germany" may provide an international forum through which the Soviet jazz community can improve their domestic situation and initiate a more regular dialogue with their counterparts in the West. Let's hope so, as I, for one, would love to see Chekasin "play under the table." — **Bill Shoemaker**

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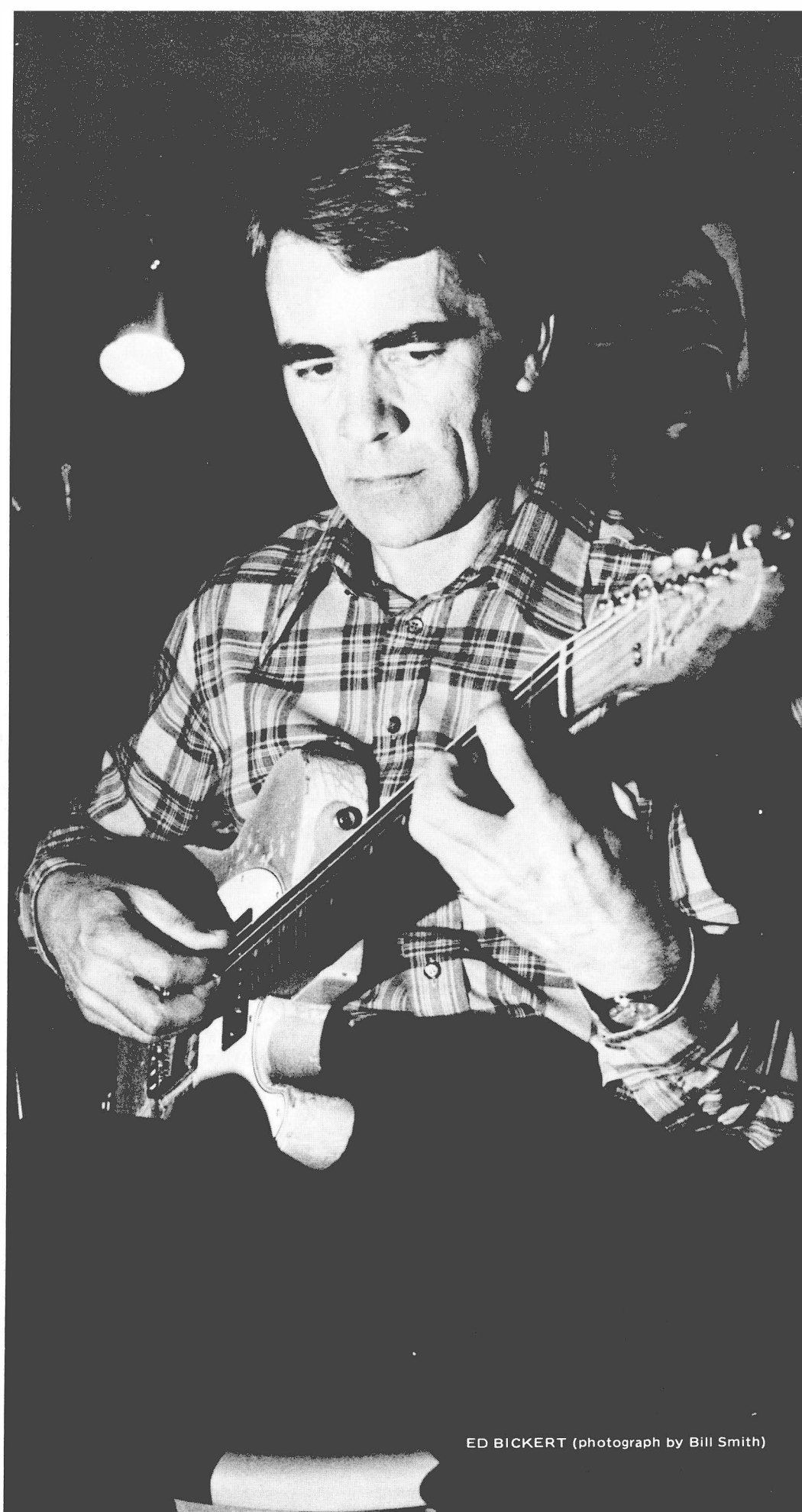
INTERVIEW BY TED O'REILLY

ED BICKERT: I started playing guitar, just playing around the house, when I was eleven or twelve, gradually learning a few more grips here and there and that's how it came about. My dad was an old-time fiddler, and mum played a few chords on the piano. They used to go out and play for country dances on Saturday night, and after I learned a few grips I joined the aggregation.

This was in Vernon, British Columbia. That's a couple of hundred miles in from the coast and about a hundred miles from the U.S. border. It was a fruit-growing and mixed-farming area, so the country folks were definitely country folks. We were just outside the city limits, the city being about twelve thousand population. We had a small chicken ranch, and my dad and mother both worked as common labourers in the orchards. I had a little taste of that in the summer holidays.

I have one brother and three sisters, and they're all musical, although they never really pursued it: although my brother, who is a little older than I am, was the one who started me on the guitar. He showed me a few of the basic holds, but he played part-time for a number of years and eventually gave it up altogether.

The interest in playing jazz started right in the home, because my father liked quite a bit of the jazz that was going on at that time: Louis



ED BICKERT (photograph by Bill Smith)

Armstrong and Duke Ellington and whatever, there were so many big bands in those days. My brothers and sisters would listen to it. Some of it was just dance bands which you wouldn't actually call jazz, but they certainly had a jazz influence. Even some of that music, and the way the guitar was used, appealed to me too.

TED O'REILLY: You must have heard Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt too, somewhere along the line.

Bickert: No — because jazz records of any kind were not readily available in my home town — so it wasn't until later that I listened to and appreciated Django and Charlie Christian. It was mostly orchestras that I heard, although there were some small groups: the Nat King Cole trio with Oscar Moore and later Irving Ashby. And Les Paul, I'm trying to remember some of the others....

O'Reilly: Would you have heard Alvino Rey?

Bickert: Yes, I heard Alvino Rey, I used to see him in those funny movie shorts. There was another side to him too, he was definitely a good player.

The bands had mostly rhythm guitar players; not a very essential part of the band, but definitely part of the sound of the day. When I first heard the electric guitar it was spectacular; it was so nice to be able to hear the thing coming through the band. My first guitars were very acoustic. I used to use heavy duty steel cables for strings and a wooden pick. I'm exaggerating, but I remember breaking a lot of strings and picks playing some of these country things: playing *Orange Blossom Special* and that kind of stuff. Even if I'd had an electric guitar it wouldn't have done any good because there was no electricity in some of these places: just Coleman lamps hanging from the ceilings. You can certainly get some stamina playing for dancers: they want to hear uninterrupted music for quite a while so they can get really steamed up, so you had to keep her going.

O'Reilly: How did you make your way to Toronto?

Bickert: In a 1935 Chev. This was back in 1952. A friend of mine out there was an aspiring writer, and we used to talk about trying to go someplace where you could get into the music and writing field and Toronto seemed to be the place to go. Los Angeles was closer, but I suppose we thought it would be a little too ambitious to get down to the real big time. I really wasn't that experienced or knowledgeable. The other alternative might have been Vancouver but there wasn't really all that much going on there in the jazz field. But whenever you spoke to any musicians, Toronto would come up sooner or later.

O'Reilly: So you had already made the decision to become a musician, to play music for a living.

Bickert: It was certainly always a very strong desire, although in school the counsellors and teachers, every time the subject came up they would say, oh you don't want to do that, you want to go on to university and use your brains and get into something respectable and all the rest of it. And maybe they were right, but the urge was always there. So we made up our minds to pack our stuff in the old limousine and head out here. I was nineteen at the time.

So we drove across the country, stopping a lot because I was the only driver, my friend couldn't drive. Sleeping in the car because we were trying to get by without spending money. I had a full size bass — or I guess a three-quarter, which is the normal size bass — which I had

been fooling around with at the time and I thought it might come in handy; and my guitar and an amplifier, plus luggage, all in this old car of mine so it was kind of cramped. We took it easy so it took us almost a week to get here.

I had been working in a radio station in Vernon, and the manager of the station gave me some names of people in the broadcasting business in case I wanted to do that sort of work here. One of the names he gave me was somebody at CFRB, so I landed a job there as an operating engineer. Even though I don't know beans about engineering. It was mainly just putting on records and tapes and that sort of thing. If anything ever broke down I'd just have to turn out the lights and go home.

I did that for a couple of years while I was getting into the music, making some connections and playing with people, and eventually got into "the biz". There used to be a place on Jarvis Street, just below Carlton in downtown Toronto, called Melody Mill. It was sort of a residence and studio space for musicians, at very reasonable rentals. That's where there were a lot of things happening, always people playing in one room or another, all day and all night in this big old house. Some of the musicians were in the same position as me, but quite a few of them were established players who had commercial gigs but who liked to go there so they could play jazz, unrestricted. There were so many people there — Norm Amadio, Ron Rully, Alex Lazaroff, Herbie Spanier, Don Thompson (the tenor player), that's where I met Rob McConnell. This was in the middle fifties. I eased into the scene here very slowly.

The House of Hambourg was an after-hours jazz spot, and there were a few other places, coffeehouses, that were using jazz groups, and sometimes we'd just get together and play at somebody's house.

O'Reilly: How well did you play then?

Bickert: I don't know, it's hard to tell. There aren't really tapes around from that time, the whole taping thing came in a little later. It was the playing that mattered, I really didn't think about recording. Certainly in jazz all that playing activity is really a good way to learn. Today's aspiring players are a little more studious and learning more about harmony and theory academically. That's all great stuff, but there's no substitute for actually getting down and playing. That's really where you learn the most. And listening to records, and I guess a lot of people start off by copying somebody else's licks and chord changes, and hopefully that leads into other things that you come up with on your own. I listened to a lot of guitar players.

O'Reilly: I hear a lot of Jimmy Raney, and Tal Farlow, in your playing.

Bickert: I certainly listened to both those guys, and a lot of others too: Johnny Smith, Kenny Burrell, Jim Hall, Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel.

O'Reilly: How did you decide you were going to get out of the radio business and into "the biz"?

Bickert: That came about a little later. I was part of a very commercial, cocktail kind of trio. We were playing for older people with lots of money in a fancy restaurant so we had to play, I hate to use the word, but it was definitely schlock. But it was a regular gig. The leader of the group was Jimmy Amaro, the father of Eugene and young James Amaro, who are very prominent on the Toronto scene now. He played saxophone and clarinet, Norm Amad-

io played piano. No bass, no drums so I had to fill up a lot of holes with the guitar, but it's all good experience and it looked like kind of a steady thing, even though it wasn't quite the music I was bent on playing. I guess with some people if they're not playing the music they want they'd rather be driving a cab; someone like Lee Konitz is an outstanding example of that.

O'Reilly: But that way, even if you're not playing the kind of music you want, at least you're keeping your skills intact.

Bickert: That's true, but sometimes while you're keeping your skills intact you can wreck your head. If it goes against the grain that much it can really mess you up. I had the chance to play jazz after hours at the House of Hambourg and other places, just to keep on the path that I had started out. Eventually I got into a couple of groups, with Ron Collier and Norm Symonds, playing original music. That was a whole other thing, having to get into some reading, which up until then I had only done in a very slow, one-note-at-a-time kind of way. I had to develop that in order to play in groups like these. Somehow that led to a couple of studio, television recording things, and that evolved until it was mainly what I was doing, commercial music, TV shows. I still played jazz when I could and whenever I wasn't too tired, but I was pretty tied up doing studio things for a number of years.

The late fifties is when I first met Moe Koffman; he had been away in the States and came back to Toronto. I first played with him at the House of Hambourg and eventually he put together a group and I've been with him off and on for 22 or 23 years. I've been on most of his records; on some of them I didn't think I was going to fit in very well so I took a pass. I know my limitations, so when there are other people available who could do something more appropriate I'd just as soon step aside.

O'Reilly: I've seen you work on record sessions, such as the Ruby Braff and Buddy Tate sessions for Sackville, where it's kind of an impromptu situation; but you seem to know all the tunes; I've never heard you stuck.

Bickert: Well I've certainly been stuck; but I guess it's how I got into music in the first place, playing the pop tunes of the day when I was learning to play; and my sisters were always singing them. A lot of those songs became jazz standards and that's how I learned them. I learned some tunes from my dad that are still being played today —

O'Reilly: Like *Honeysuckle Rose*?

Bickert: Yes, tunes of that sort. Fats Waller was certainly a favourite of my father's, so that's how that happened.

O'Reilly: Now you've retired from a lot of studio work to play more jazz, and I think your fame has spread farther afield. Yet you've stayed pretty much in Toronto.

Bickert: The last couple of years I've had a few boosts; the connection with Paul Desmond certainly got me into a few other peoples' homes.

O'Reilly: And we should point out perhaps that because of you Desmond came back playing again; he was really not playing for years after the Dave Brubeck thing. For three or four years he didn't play his horn at all; then he came back and played one little gig somewhere. I think it might have been with Jim Hall; and that it was Jim who urged him to go up to Toronto and play with Ed Bickert. He came up here and, I think, played his first club gig on his own, as a leader.

Bickert: Yes I guess it went down something like that; he felt he wanted to play again, and I think he was trying to connect up with Jim Hall, but Jim had other commitments or other plans, so Paul decided to come up and try the Bourbon Street gang and it worked out very nicely for everybody.

O'Reilly: It was after you had played with him here once or twice that he arranged for you to go down and make the CTI record....

While the sound is very good on that record, I don't know that it's *your* sound; you have a sound coming out of your speaker which is not necessarily the one that recording engineers like to hear. What kind of sound is in your mind, that you want to hear?

Bickert: It's hard to describe, but I don't like any kind of piercing, high frequencies, or a huge pedal-organ type bass either; it's definitely a middle kind of a sound. And as you say, engineers don't usually agree with that.

O'Reilly: Your guitar is an old one: a Fender Telecaster.

Bickert: It's not as old as it looks but it's had a hard life. I haven't spent as much time in cosmetic upkeep although it's still mechanically okay. From those occasional cold winter nights in the trunk of the car, and hot summers, the finish is lousy but the instrument itself is still good. I got used to the Telecaster while I was doing some of the studio work where I needed that more up-to-date sound. It has a longer sustaining quality than the more traditional hollow-bodied jazz guitars, and it travels well, because it's just a solid hunk of wood: the airlines haven't managed to mash it up yet. For years I used a Gibson hollow body guitar; the kind that Herb Ellis and Jim Hall and Joe Pass and a lot of good jazz guitarists use. I have a Gibson L5, which is a rhythm guitar for the occasional call you get to sound like Freddie Green. I have a few guitars left over from my more commercial days: a flattop and a 12-string, a classical guitar which was handy for some of the Latin things I would get called to do. I even have a banjo, and I think I still have a ukelele somewhere, because sometimes on a jingle they would want that sound. So far the

ukelele has doubled as a home for one of the kid's hamsters for a while.

Basically I stick with the Fender; I like to play something I'm used to so I don't have to think about how it works so I can concentrate on the music.

The basic elements of jazz playing as I feel them are rhythm, harmony... I think I've done more fooling around with chords than a lot of guitar players. A lot of them prefer to use it more as a horn, a melody instrument but I've always liked the sound of chords, whether it be a whole orchestra playing some gigantic chord that I could never hope to approximate, or a lot of nice things that piano players can do. I've listened to a lot of piano over the years and that's certainly where I got some of the chords that I play; even though you don't have as many notes to work with, you can pick out the essential ones. I rely very heavily on a bass player to pick out the root notes. If it's a bass player who wants to get a little fancier then I have to make some adjustments. It's not always easy because a lot of chords as I hear them definitely require that root and they require a bass player to do it, because I don't have enough fingers and strings to cover it all.

Don Thompson does it probably better than anybody I've played with. He's such an all around musician that he knows how these things are supposed to sound. Even though he doesn't play strictly the root notes all the time because that would be kind of a bore; but he plays them in the right places, because there are certain places where they have to occur.

O'Reilly: Because he's a pianist as well as a bassist he knows those chords as well. You work with a number of excellent bass players but there's a particular quality with Don I think.

Bickert: I think so too. I've certainly enjoyed working with a lot of other bass players, but it's easier with Don.

O'Reilly: You play everything from bebop-type blues to old pop tunes: what are your favourites?

Bickert: When I have my own group I'm afraid I'm adopting the Milt Jackson approach to a set. He plays the three Bs in a set: Blues

Ballad and Bop, and sometimes he'll throw in a fourth B, a Bossa. Those are the kinds of things I really enjoy playing, and that I do as well as I do anything.

O'Reilly: Now you're playing more jazz gigs and less and less studio work — is that something planned, or did it just happen?

Bickert: If I'd seen how the rate of inflation was going to go I might have tried to hang in on the studio work a little more. But I'm certainly enjoying playing as much jazz as I do, and the studio thing was a mutual parting, because I wasn't keeping up with all the new stuff that was coming along. I never got into the machinery very much, so I was getting fewer calls, and at the same time temptation to play the kind of music I started out to play was getting stronger, so the parting was mutual.

O'Reilly: Are you getting more work as the Ed Bickert Trio? You're kind of a laid-back, quiet, mellow person and I can't see you out there aggressively getting gigs for your band.

Bickert: Actually it would be a good thing if I were more aggressive. There would be more opportunities to play. It would certainly help if I had a business manager or a promoter or something, because I don't seem able to do that on my own. I'd definitely want to do it with my own group though. I think it's remarkable how some people are able to tour as singles and can play with anybody and it will still work out, because they have their own stuff together so well. I find I rely a lot on having the bass player and drummer of my choice.

O'Reilly: You've really been isolated from the real world haven't you?

Bickert: Well in some ways that's a good thing, in other ways it's not, because you can certainly get too narrowed-into one thing. Playing with different musicians is certainly a broadening experience, even when it occurs in a negative way. I've really appreciated being able to play with some of these musicians who come into town: people like Red Norvo and Milt Jackson. You can't help learning from such fine musicians.

O'Reilly: Are there musicians you haven't played with whom you would have liked to?

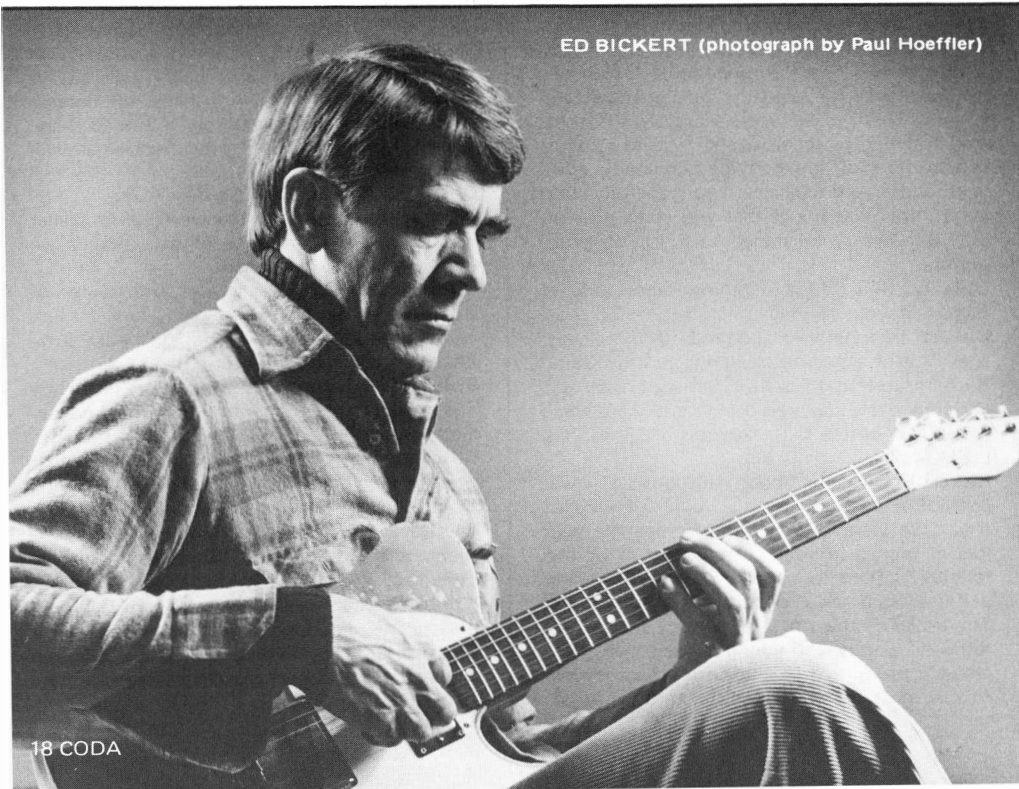
Bickert: Yes, there are a few: one that stands out is Zoot Sims, because I've always loved his playing, yet we've never been able to work together for one reason or another. Another one is Lee Konitz, whom I've never been able to play with. But those things could still happen.

This interview was recorded on November 12, 1981 as part of the program "The Jazz Scene", and broadcast on CJRT-FM.

ED BICKERT: A Selected Discography

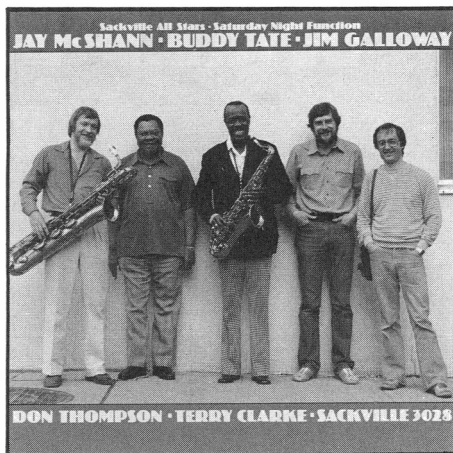
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ED BICKERT (photograph by Paul Hoeffler)

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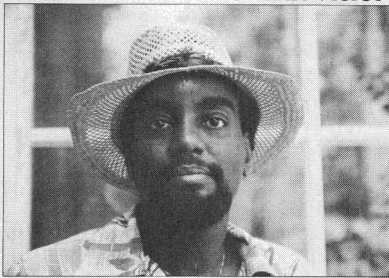
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Paul Cram (alto saxophone), Karen Oliver (violin), Ken Newby (bassoon, soprano saxophone). *Hum Over The Horizon, Marmosa, Blue Tales In Time.*

RALPH SUTTON

& Ruby Braff - Duet
Chaz Jazz CJ101

Get Out and Get Under the Moon/Think Well of Me/I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter/Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea/Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do/Tain't So, Honey, Tain't So/Royal Garden Blues/Deep Summer Music/I Believe in Miracles/Keepin' out of Mischief Now/Dinah/Ain't Misbehavin.'

& Ruby Braff - Quartet
Chaz Jazz CJ102

Shoe Shine Boy/What is There to Say/Sweethearts on Parade/I Ain't Got Nobody/You Can Depend on Me/Big Butter and Egg Man/I Wished on the Moon/Sunday/I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby/Little Rock Getaway/I Would Do Anything For You.

Sutton, piano; Braff, trumpet; Jack Lesberg, bass; Gus Johnson, drums.

The Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players Vol. 1
Chaz Jazz CJ103

Little Rock Getaway/ Am I Blue/ All Of Me/ Honky Tonk Train/Rosetta/St. Louis Blues/ Please Don't Talk About Me/Girl of my Dreams.

The Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players Vol. 2
Chaz Jazz CJ104

I Got Rhythm/I'll Catch The Sun/Dog A Blues/ Girl of my Dreams (different take)/Hootie's Ignorant Oil/Truckin'/Ain't Misbehavin'/After You've Gone.

Sutton; Jay McShann, piano and vocal; Milt Hinton, bass; Gus Johnson, drums.

& Kenny Davern Trio - Volume One
Chaz Jazz CJ105

That's a Plenty/Jazz Me Blues/Gus Que Raf (variation on Jazz Me Blues)/Black and Blue/ Take Me to the Land of Jazz/Sweet Lorraine/ My Honey's Lovin' Arms/Memphis Blues/ I Would Do Most Anything for You.

& Kenny Davern Trio - Volume Two
Chaz Jazz CJ106

St. Louis Blues/ Am I Blue/ All By Myself/ Porter's Love Song/Old Fashioned Love/Tain't Nobody's Business/My Daddy Rocks Me.

Sutton, piano (vocal on *Nobody's Business*), Kenny Davern, clarinet (vocal on *Take Me*); Gus Johnson, drums (vocal on *Sweet Lorraine*).

The Other Side of Ralph Sutton - Solo Piano
Chaz Jazz CJ107

Cattin' on the Keys/Lazy Mood/Stanley's Waltz/ Say Yes/Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?/When Gabriel Blows His Horn/Keep Your Temper/ Willow Tree/I'm Always in the Mood for You/ Bond Street/If It Ain't Love/Honeysuckle Rose.

If the greatest living stride pianist is not Ralph Sutton, I personally would like to know who it is, and why he too should not benefit from a recording venture similar to this. Independent-



RALPH SUTTON (photograph by Walt Gower)

ly produced by Charlie Baron, the Chaz Jazz enterprise is unique not only for its concentrated emphasis on one musician's talents, but for its unconventional marketing concept as well. Available only through Chaz Jazz Records, Inc., Box 565, North Hampton, NH 03862, the records in this series may be purchased singly, in pairs, or in any number up to the total of seven. However, as an added inducement, if one should be needed, Baron also offers a built-in scaled quantity discount which makes the acquisition of all seven LPs a wise business move as well as an unparalleled musical treat.

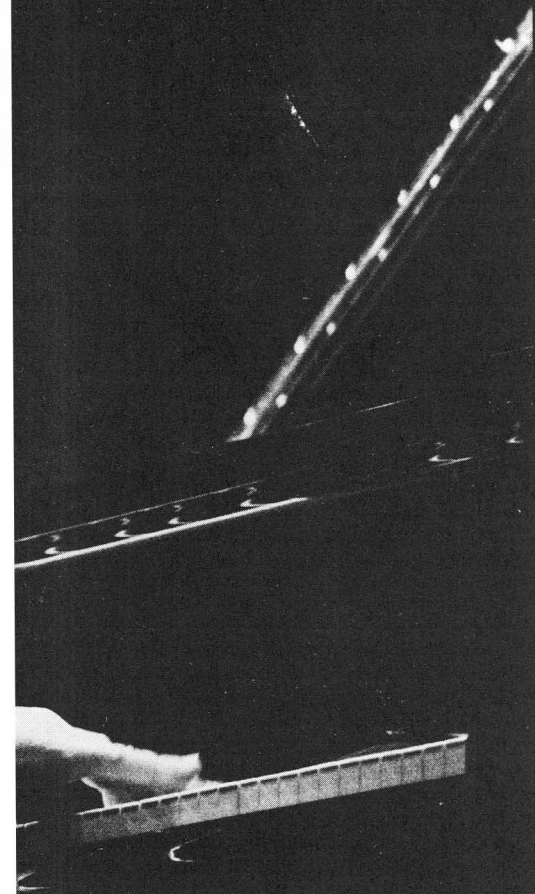
By deciding to present Sutton in a variety of musical settings, Baron made the perfect production choice, for the wide-ranging flexibility of this remarkable musician has never before been so comprehensively demonstrated on record, much less with so consistently rewarding a level of inspiration. On the first two records in the set, Sutton is paired with an artist of at least comparable stature, Ruby Braff. Long known for displaying conceptual individuality in an area of jazz too often peopled by unimaginative idolaters, Braff is here at his best. His creative vocabulary, both ideational and timbral, as well as his matured control of phrasing, makes the challenging format of duet playing

seem far simpler than it is. As annotator Dick Sudhalter, himself a respected cornetist, explains, the duo setting imposes certain problems on brassmen nowhere near as keenly felt in groups with more ample backing for the soloist. Of course, Sutton's own style of playing, with its tradition-rooted insistence on orchestral principles, makes the job that much easier for the hornman; but it should also be pointed out that only a special breed of pianist can approach the chamber instrumentation with the proper qualifications, and that, quite clearly, refers only to those with a profound mastery of stride.

However, even when released from the rigorous demands of the duo format, as they are on the second disc, Braff and Sutton can barely improve on the high standards they initially set for themselves on the first. Surely, the addition of Lesberg and Johnson frees Sutton to a certain degree, as it also enables Braff to play with somewhat greater intensity, but in no way could it be said that these two are necessarily playing any "better" than they did in the earlier, more intimate setting.

Similarly, Sutton and McShann hardly needed the support of bass and drums to help them through their two albums, but, by the same

SUTTON Record



token, the presence of Hinton and Johnson does contribute to an additional lift to the proceedings. The two pianists are admirably suited to each other; and while readers of these pages should be no strangers to McShann's continued exposure on the Sackville label, they should alert themselves, if they have not before, to the many wonders of the Sutton instrument. Beboppers especially should note the constant variety employed in both pianists' use of left hand patterns, not all of which, by any means, should be considered inapplicable to more modern forms of the art.

The trio albums with Davern and Johnson must rank among my special favorites in the whole series, not only because of the clarinetist's widely recognized musical growth in recent years, but also because of the hallowed associations of this particular instrumentation. It is not to say that there is anything inherently sacrosanct about a bass-less rhythm section, but only that when a pianist of the caliber of Ralph Sutton occupies the piano bench, there is really very little need for one. Davern's tone, technique, and feeling are as impressive as ever; however, on these sides, one also has the opportunity to savor the thrilling delights of his exceptional control in the very upper reaches of

his instrument's range, an opportunity not often afforded on his other recordings. I dare say that, on *My Daddy Rocks Me*, in particular, he even surpasses Benny Goodman's own unexpected super-altissimo D on the 1938 Carnegie Hall concert version of *Sing Sing Sing*, and with full intention and full sound to boot. It may be argued that this is but a minor musical achievement, but to my knowledge no one else has as yet soared so high nor to such satisfying emotional effect. It must be heard to be believed.

The series concludes, at least for the time being, with the long-awaited solo album of Sutton's private enjoyments. Thematically grouped, though not exclusively, around a body of material not generally heard in public or on record, the repertoire includes such obscurities as two previously unknown Stan Wrightsman compositions, Fats Waller's seldom remembered jazz waltz, *Say Yes*, Willie The Lion Smith's *Keep Your Temper*, and other rare felicities as well.

Additional credit should also be extended to writers Dan Morgenstern, Marty Grosz, and James Shacter for their highly professional annotations on CJ 103/104, 105/106, and 107, respectively. But serious students of this sort of literature should also note the seemingly diabolic relationship between Grosz's narrative and descriptive style and that of another great strider/writer, Dick Wellstood. Both, it would appear, share much more in common than merely a thirty-year-plus musical association. They even think funny the same way. And, incidentally, so does Davern! Odd? — *Jack Sohmer*

RALPH SUTTON

Quartet
Storyville SLP-4013

This is a curious album. Ralph Sutton is a gutty pianist, particularly evident when playing stride, swing and ragtime, but also when interpreting ballads and other lyrical pieces. Here, however, his usual strain has been crossed with the cocktail piano style and we end up with a mixture of glib superficial interpretations and flashes of the genuine product.

The record is the result of three sessions recorded in 1977, presumably in Storyville's home territory, Copenhagen. Six tracks are in the company of bass, guitar and drums — Hugo Rasmussen, Lars Blach and Svend Erik Nørregard — and four more are with bass and guitar only. There are also two solo cuts — Bix's *In the Dark* and a Sutton original, *Worrying the Life Out Of Me*, that is a good but brief expression of his ideas and abilities, a two-minute teaser that could well have been extended through a couple more choruses.

His accompanists, though capable in their own way, probably have much to do with the general style and effect of the playing. The guitar solos seem insubstantial, unlike the work of such guitar partners as Tiny Grimes with Tatum, Oscar Moore with Cole, or Al Casey with Waller. Perhaps it's unfair to cite the best, but then again, that's the point — what you have to say when your opportunity comes.

The album does have its moments, mostly when Sutton breaks away from his surroundings, seemingly saying: here I go, catch me if you can. This is particularly true of *Undecided* and *I Want to be Happy*. And other tracks, such as

Thou Swell, *St. Louis Blues* and *Jeepers Creepers* have their moments too.

This is a pleasant record, easy to listen to. But if you're budgeting your investment in Ralph Sutton records, you'll have to decide whether you'd rather have him in a different but diluted context like this or the hard core Sutton that is available on other records these days. — *Dick Neeld*

RALPH SUTTON

And the All Stars: *Live At The Club Hangover, San Francisco*
Jazz Archives JA-45

The music on this record originates from two broadcasts from San Francisco's Club Hangover where Ralph Sutton was in residence for one month in the summer of 1954. For the most part, this is straight ahead mainstream — good, solid, consistently swinging music, which is just what you'd expect it to be. And while one might prefer the increased technical accomplishment of Sutton's more recent work, his earlier work is hardly less deserving of the same close attention, especially when it has remained frozen in time — that is to say, previously unissued — as has the music on this record. Sutton's good humour is in evidence everywhere here, the overall spirit of the band being stamped with his highly likeable musical personality. Ed Hall, Clyde Hurley, Walter Page, and Charlie Lodice comprise the "All Stars" on this occasion, and while they are perhaps not *all* stars they play with a unity and sensitivity to each other's stylistic idiosyncracies.

There are the inevitable tantalizing references to other recorded jazz that musicians of this generation, and particularly of this persuasion, had begun to do more and more. Sutton's intro, for example, on *I Found A New Baby* quotes from Dizzy Gillespie's *Down Under* of all things, while *I Got Rhythm* more predictably ends with the same figure as Fats Waller's big band recording of the tune. And *The Sheik* begins with Ed Hall's own little clarinet and tom-toms fantasy *Showpiece*, an original that he had recorded ten or so years earlier. Not that this music is as full of rehash as one might surmise from reading these comments. There is no dearth of spontaneously swinging improvisation, especially from Ed Hall, captured here at one of the many peaks of his playing career, and from Sutton who sounds perhaps more confidently adventurous than he had been at any time in his career previous to this.

The other featured soloist, Clyde Hurley, probably best known for his tenure with Glenn Miller, blows with the fire he was never allowed to reveal with that most regimented of big bands, here paying his respects to Louis both directly and indirectly via reference to the style of Harry James. Walter Page is, of course, as solid as a rock in both solo and ensemble even at this late stage of his career. The only source of musical annoyance to be found is Lodice's occasionally "rikkety tick" drumming which is really rather out of place here.

Sound quality is generally excellent, the piano is reasonably good, and the club audience is enthusiastic without being raucous. The sole negative aspect is the repertoire which is perhaps a bit stale — or was it so stale in 1954? At any rate the musicians are undeniably fresh and lively.

A highly likeable issue. — *Julian Yarrow*

Some Time Before



HENRY "RED" ALLEN

Henry "Red" Allen/Coleman Hawkins 1933
Smithsonian R022

Giants of Jazz
Time Life J-016

Trumpeter Allen and tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins recorded together in small, improvising groups on too few occasions. They were both virtuoso jazz soloists whose widely differing individual styles converged in the overall harmony of the music they produced together.

The epochal fifteen performances included in this collection were all recorded in 1933 — an extraordinarily high number in a year of depression in the record industry. John McDonough's excellent commentary reminds us that it was the enthusiasm of John Hammond and Albert Marx (both still active as record producers) which made these sessions possible.

Most outstanding, perhaps, is the September 23 session which produced *The Day You Came Along*, *Jamaica Shout* and *Heartbreak Blues*. These were recorded for English Parlophone and have been available almost continually since the time of their original release. *Heartbreak*, in particular, is a gem with perfectly conceived solos from both Allen and Hawkins.

Much of the material was recorded for ARC and destined for jukebox play. As such there is

a "formula" to the tunes. After a thematic chorus there is a vocal from Red Allen in his highly individual vein which is full of the inflections so much a part of his trumpet playing. The remainder of the tune consists of short solo spots culminating in a trumpet ride out. Allen was to make many successful recordings in this vein over the next five years.

Standing apart from these performances are the instrumental versions of *Someday Sweetheart* and *Sister Kate*. Recorded on March 27, 1933 they were never issued originally and collectors had to wait until the 1960s to listen to them (on Sweden's Pirate label).

Completing this issue are two small-group performances (*Sweet Sue*, *How Come You Do Me Like You Do*) from the Spike Hughes sessions which were last available on England's Ace of Clubs label and long overdue for reissue in their entirety.

Apart from the obvious excellence of the music these sessions are documentation of the successful change of jazz music from its original ensemble approach to looser, more freely improvised methods. Those recordings herald the work of many musicians over the next decade. Apart from the influential work of Allen and Hawkins they also contain exceptional performances from trombonists Jay C. Higginbotham and Dickie Wells.

The Smithsonian has put together an exemplary set which should be available everywhere. Unfortunately the only certain way to obtain

this and other Smithsonian recordings is to order them by mail from Smithsonian Recordings, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336. All of the material has been reissued before on LP. Most of the selections (*Someday Sweetheart*, *Sister Kate*, *The River's Takin' Care Of Me*, *Aintcha Got Music*, *Stringin' Along on a Shoe String*, *Shadows on the Swanee*, *Hush My Mouth*, *You're Gonna Lose Your Gal*, *Dark Clouds*, *My Galveston Gal*) were part of Gaps 070 while the three selections from September 29 were on Prestige 7647/Music For Pleasure 1128. In addition seven selections can be heard in the Time Life survey of Hawkins but this is the first cohesive North American presentation of this music. Sound quality is excellent.

A much more comprehensive look at Henry "Red" Allen's musical legacy is contained in the Time Life set. Two thirds of the contents are devoted to the innovative period covering 1929-1935 when the trumpeter's audacious solo conceptions were the next step beyond Louis Armstrong's innovations. Allen's rhythmic freedom was the cornerstone of his playing — which always remained true to his New Orleans roots. It was his compelling tone, exhilarating attack and imaginative turn of phrase which has established him as one of the great masters of the jazz idiom.

The proof is in his first few recordings as a leader, *It Should Be You*, *Biff'ly Blues*, *Feeling Drowsy* and *Swing Out*. These were recorded on July 16, 1929 and are among the best

recordings from this period. There is an intensity, surging power and overwhelming rhythmic excitement which constantly hold the listener's attention.

Allen was a member of the Luis Russell Orchestra during this period and all of his early recordings were made with that organisation – whether under his name or Russell's. Twenty examples of this band's music are included in this collection and it makes a fitting tribute to a group of musicians who presented the New Orleans style in its final shape. Allen, Albert Nicholas, Pops Foster and Paul Barbarin were the dominant influences within the Russell organisation along with trombonist J. C. Higginbotham whose aggressive flamboyant solo style matched Allen's concepts to perfection. They were to be musical partners for many years but they never again quite reached the heights displayed with the Russell band.

Allen was always a searching, innovative soloist who found fresh ways to express his ideas throughout his career. This set contains examples of his work with Fletcher Henderson (*King Porter Stomp, Queer Notions, Hocus Pocus, Down South Camp Meeting*), Spike Hughes (*Sweet Sorrow Blues*), Don Redman (*Shakin' the African*), Benny Morton (*The Gold Diggers Song*), Mills Blue Rhythm Band (*Ride Red Ride*), Putney Dandridge (*Isn't This A Lovely Day*), Jelly Roll Morton (*Sweet Substitute*), Sidney Bechet (*Slippin' and Slidin'*) and Kid Ory (*I Got Rhythm*) as well as a good cross section of recordings under his own name.

The pattern established in Allen's 1933 recordings with Coleman Hawkins (none of which are in this set) guaranteed him a recording contract through the 1930s where he made many recordings in the formula already established by Louis Armstrong. Allen was less stylised a performer and there is greater charm and individuality to many of his recordings from this period. Included here are *Believe It Beloved, Rosetta, Body And Soul, Lost, Algiers Stomp* and, finally, *The Miller's Daughter Marianne*, an example of the kind of banal pop song foisted on so many performers during this period. Allen, like Fats Waller and Billie Holiday, transforms it into an enjoyable piece of music.

Despite continuing an active career as a performer, Red Allen recorded less extensively in the last three decades of his career and only a few of those sessions seemed to capture him at his best. The outstanding 1940 Decca recording of *Down In Jungle Town* is included here as well as *I Cover The Waterfront* from his 1957 Victor date. Better still, from this period is his set of ballads for Stereocraft which have been reissued recently on Jazz Groove. That session showed what Allen could still do – if he had been given the opportunity.

One of his last recording sessions was a collaboration with clarinetist Pee Wee Russell in 1966. It didn't produce the fireworks of their first meeting in 1932 where they recorded with Billy Banks. *Bugle Call Rag, Oh Peter and Margie* from those sessions are included in this set. The Impulse session (not included here) is a careful exposition by elder statesmen of the music.

Time Life has produced a fitting tribute to one of the music's true individualists. All of the music has been available on LP in the past on assorted US/European labels but the presentation, here, gives us a concentrated profile of Henry "Red" Allen's music.

John Chilton's comments on the music give the listener additional insights while Dick Sudhalter's biographical sketch brings out something of the warmth of character which was so much a part of Red Allen. — *John Norris*

THE GUITARISTS

Time Life J-12

Electricity gave guitarists the freedom to join the front line as an equal partner. Viewed in retrospect, it has also severely limited the dimensions of the instrument in jazz music. While it is true that a second three record set devoted to post Charlie Christian guitarists would offer considerable diversity of styles the tonal dimensions would be less than is offered here.

Eddie Lang, Django Reinhardt and Charlie Christian each receive one side of this set with Lonnie Johnson next in importance with five selections. Examples of the work of Bernard Addison, Teddy Bunn, Dick McDonough, Eddie Durham, Carmen Mastren, Carl Kress, George Van Eps and Al Casey complete this survey of wonderfully individual and different guitar exponents.

There are a few examples of the guitarists as virtuoso soloists playing set pieces (Dick McDonough, Carl Kress, Eddie Lang) but, for the most part, the musicians are heard in the congenial and comfortable setting of small, improvising jazz groups and there is a wonderfully varied array of music to be heard. Close microphone techniques are often used in these recordings to make the guitar a dominant voice in the ensembles – listen, for instance, to the way in which Duke Ellington uses the guitars of Lonnie Johnson (*The Mooche*) and Teddy Bunn (*Haunted Nights*). Neither of these performances would have the same quality without the individuality of these guitarists but the subtleties of their interaction with the band would be lost in a large ballroom.

It was inevitable, therefore, that guitarists would amplify their instruments. Charlie Christian's exciting jazz solo style has dominated the field since his brief career as a recording artist between 1939 and 1941 set the standard for others to emulate. His genius, of course, goes far beyond the fact of his amplification of his instrument. Christian had an unlimited repertoire of riff patterns which were the basic language of the improvising jazzman at that time. His rhythmic lines are immortalised in the numerous originals recorded while he was a member of the Benny Goodman sextet. Curiously only one of these (*Seven Come Eleven*) is included here but *Airmail Special* is included in Time Life's Benny Goodman collection. The five minute studio warmup given the name of *Waitin' for Benny* when first released on LP twenty years ago contains the riffs which were incorporated that day into *A Smooth One*. The finished version of this tune should have been placed alongside the raw ingredients, for it is an excellent way to demonstrate the manner in which jazz musicians assemble their material.

Charlie Christian's flowing solo style could build from chorus to chorus – something few musicians were doing at that time. Certainly no one was recording musicians in this manner. *Charlie's Choice*, a location recording from Minton's, was captured by the indefatigable Jerry Newman on his portable equipment and thus gives us a dimension of Christian's playing

not found elsewhere. The balance of the performance (mostly a trumpet solo from Joe Guy) following Christian's solo is irrelevant in a set such as this and could easily have been eliminated (after all the piece doesn't have either a beginning or an ending on Newman's recording) thus allowing space for further examples of Christian's riff originals with Benny Goodman as well as a ballad interpretation such as *Stardust*.

An alternative use for the electric guitar within a jazz group is exemplified by Eddie Durham's playing with Lester Young and The Kansas City Five. His playing is introspective and fully fits the needs of the music without dominating its direction. In a sense Durham is still playing acoustically. Unfortunately Durham did not develop these ideas and it was not until the 1970s that he began to be heard again on guitar – but without displaying the sensitivity and cohesion he had shown in *Good Morning Blues* and *Countless Blues*.

A collection such as this can only provide an overview of the contributions of these outstanding guitarists. Lang, Reinhardt, Christian and Johnson are well represented on LP collections but the other guitarists rarely, if ever, received the attention they deserve so it is fitting for them to be collectively acknowledged in this set.

One final thought: Lonnie Johnson is the closest to being a blues musician on this set (even though he is not heard performing in that role) but it would have widened the dimensions of this survey to have found space for such unique stylists as Blind Blake, Mississippi John Hurt and Big Bill Broonzy. Early blues guitar styles are crucial to the concepts of Lonnie Johnson, Teddy Bunn, Charlie Christian, Eddie Durham and Al Casey as well as having some impact on Eddie Lang's style. — *John Norris*

EARL HINES

Time Life STL-J11

JAMES P. JOHNSON

Time Life STL-J18

FATS WALLER

Time Life STL-J15

Oh Mercy! Looka Here Honeysuckle Rose 5001

James P. Johnson was described as "The Father Of Stride Piano" but it would be more accurate, perhaps, to say that he was the father of jazz piano. He definitely seems to have been the first to successfully translate the pianistic discoveries of ragtime into a more spontaneous piano concept – one better suited to the burgeoning creativity of such a spectacular musician.

While the essence of jazz music flowed from the unfettered spirituality of black creativity it remained a simplistic folk music until musicians like James P. Johnson allied it to the musical disciplines and instrumental techniques developed over a lengthy period in Europe. The combination resulted in the development of the unique virtuosity found in all three pianists who are showcased in these Time Life sets.

The brilliance of James P. Johnson's music is evident in the earliest recordings (from 1921)

included here — *Keep Off The Grass* and *Carolina Shout* — but the full measure of his power and single minded mode of expression is to be found a few years later in such solo pieces as *Snowy Morning Blues* and, especially, the three Brunswick solos from 1930 (*What Is This Thing Called Love, You've Got To Be Modernistic, Jingles*).

James P. was one of the best vocal accompanists of his day and his contributions to recordings by Bessie Smith (*Preaching The Blues, Backwater Blues*), Ethel Waters (*Guess Who's In Town, My Handy Man*) and Anna Robinson (*Hungry Blues*) included here show a pianist who fills out the spaces in a manner which goes far beyond the normal role of an "accompanist". He is an equal partner in the proceedings.

Johnson pioneered jazz piano by combining pianistic virtuosity with the musical expression of the blues and spirituals and presenting this music as a fully developed orchestral concept. This sense of unity pervades all of his recordings and the Time Life set is an excellent cross section of his music. It is particularly welcome today because only a fragment of Johnson's music is currently available. The set draws heavily from the now deleted Columbia lp "The Father of the Stride Piano" but also includes three of his marvelous solos for Blue Note (*Carolina Balmoral, Mule Walk, Arkansas Blues*) as well as the exemplary version of *After You've Gone* for the same company with Sidney De Paris, Ben Webster, Vic Dickenson and Sid Catlett. There are some unusual, but worthwhile performances with clarinetists Pee Wee Russell (*Dinah, Everybody Loves My Baby*), Rod Cless (*Make Me A Pallet On The Floor, I Know That You Know*) and Omer Simeon (*Harlem Hotcha*) which show the range of Johnson's accomplishments as a jazz pianist.

Fats Waller was Johnson's star pupil and a musician who became one of the most popular entertainers of his day. This obscured but never destroyed his talents as a great pianist (unlike Nat Cole) and there are many recorded examples of his skills from every decade of his career. Almost half of the Time Life collection focuses on his more popular successes (*I'm Going To Sit Right Down, You're Not The Only Oyster In The Stew, Your Feet's Too Big, The Joint Is Jumpin'* etc.) but Waller's genius transformed even the most banal of this material into something memorable. There is always an acceptable amount of his piano and the music still sounds fresh today. It is when you listen to such solos as *Handful Of Keys, Numb Fumblin', Valentine Stomp, Smashing Thirds, Alligator Crawl, Viper's Drag* and *Blue Turning Grey Over You* that you can appreciate the full measure of Waller's extraordinary gifts as a virtuoso piano soloist. These are all included in the Time Life set and are the core of Waller's legacy. Waller, like James P. Johnson, was a great band pianist and accompanist and there are examples of his contributions to sessions with Fletcher Henderson (*Henderson Stomp*), Ted Lewis (*Dallas Blues*), Jack Teagarden (*You Rascal You*), Billy Banks (*Mean Old Bedbug Blues, Yellow Dog Blues*), Eddie Condon (*Georgia Grind*) and a jam session with Bunny Berigan and Tommy Dorsey (*Honey-suckle Rose, Blues*).

The only surprising omission from the Time Life set are any examples from the two Associated Transcription sessions in 1935 and 1939. These performances are the essence of Fats Waller — a mixture of serious playing and jovial

entertaining with good instrumental support from Rudy Powell in 1935 and his band in 1939.

Most of these performances were commercially released by RCA in the 1950s and are still available on two French RCA lps. Now Jerry Valburn has reissued all of the material (including some incomplete second takes) in a three-record set which is an ideal complementary collection to the Time Life set. Between them you have the essence of Fats Waller. The Honeysuckle set is available from Marlor Productions, P.O. Box 156, Hicksville, N.Y. 11802.

While James P. Johnson established the credentials for jazz piano it was Earl Hines who transformed them into a solo style which knew few boundaries. James P. and the Harlem stylists always respected the orchestral boundaries of the music they played while Earl Hines was the first pianist to simply take the structure of a tune and turn it inside out. Hines owes a debt to Johnson, Eubie Blake and others of their generation for the dynamic strength and tonal authority they bring to the piano but his improvisatory skills are his alone. His approach has dominated jazz piano since the time, in the late 1920s, when he recorded some remarkable solo sides for QRS and Okeh. *Stowaway, Caution Blues* and *I Ain't Got Nobody* from those sessions are included in the Time Life set. Before then, however, he had already demonstrated that the role of the pianist in a jazz group would never be the same again in a series of recordings with Jimmie Noone (*Sweet Sue, Four Or Five Times, Every Evening*) and Louis Armstrong (*Skip The Gutter, A Monday Date, No Papa No, Beau Koo Jack*). This set also includes one of the most remarkable jazz performances of all times — the Hines/Armstrong duet of *Weather Bird*. The two master musicians of their time demonstrate in this fleeting collaboration that jazz music was never to be the same again.

Hines enjoyed a long and successful career as a bandleader. All of his orchestral recordings provide ample space for him to demonstrate his pianistic prowess but none of them have the same kind of intensity he brings to his solo performances. In this set, for the first time, both of his astounding 1939 Blue Note solos are reissued together (*The Father's Getaway, Reminiscent At Blue Note*) and they are a tantalizing glimpse at the possibilities of a solo career which Hines only explored (on record) many years later.

All of his most successful big band recordings are included (*Boogie Woogie On St. Louis Blues, Piano Man, Deep Forest, Jelly Jelly, Second Balcony Jump*) as well as such outstanding small group performances as *Thru For The Night* (Keynote), *Life With Fatha* (Apollo) and the extended intensity of *Brussels' Hustle* (Felsted). The prolific output of the past fifteen years is merely represented by a previously unissued version of *Apex Blues* from the Columbia vaults (it was recorded at the Village Vanguard with Gene Ramey and Eddie Locke) and *Blues In Thirds* from the Halcyon/Chiaroscuro session of QRS remakes.

A retrospective set such as this makes it impossible to include everything of outstanding merit but admirers of Earl Hines should certainly explore such recordings as "Stride Right" (with Johnny Hodges) on Verve, the Delmark session called "At Home with Earl Hines" and the Audiophile lp "Hines Does Hoagy" which includes an astonishing version of *Star Dust*.

These Time Life sets, apart from their im-

portance as first rate profiles of three outstanding pianists, also contain examples of the playing of other giants of jazz who have yet to be saluted by Time Life: Frankie Newton, Ben Webster, Vic Dickenson, Edmond Hall, Omer Simeon, Bill Coleman, Jimmie Noone.

Production of all these sets is first class but the manufactured quality of the records seems to be declining. Only the James P. Johnson set (which is a Canadian CBS pressing) is free of irritating flaws which cause the music to snap, crackle and pop. Hopefully this situation is only temporary but it is a nuisance.

LESTER YOUNG

Giants of Jazz Time Life J-13

The impact of hearing so many of Lester Young's outstanding recorded performances in the concentrated space of three LPs is overpowering. He was truly a giant and one of the few geniuses this music has produced. His improvisations hang by a thread as he weaves his magic.

All of Young's extraordinary recordings are collected together in this set — beginning with the 1936 Vocalion session which produced *Shoe Shine Boy* and *Lady Be Good*. This surely has to be one of the most dramatic recording debuts in jazz history. There are the classic Kansas City Five selections where Young played clarinet; *Taxi War Dance, Tickletoe* and *Lester Leaps In* with Basie; *Sometimes I'm Happy* and *Lester Leaps Again* from Keynote and *D. B. Blues* from Aladdin.

The selection of tunes isn't perfect, however. Only two of the Basie Decca sides are included and *Doggin' Around* provides more insight into Young's playing than the rather trite *Georgiana*. Glenn Hardman's *Upright Organ Blues*, Una Mae Carlisle's *Beautiful Eyes* and Sammy Price's *Just Jivin' Around* are not major jazz performances, despite the excellence of Young's solos.

This set also perpetuates the myth that Lester Young was washed up as a musician after 1945. It's true that he never recaptured the effervescence of his youth but Young was always a creative musician and his postwar recordings have much to offer the jazz listener. It is an injustice to suggest that his career terminated with *D. B. Blues* and then follow it with the tortured recording of *Fine and Mellow* from the "Sound of Jazz" LP from 1957 (the actual TV show performance is better).

Young's playing adjustments in the 1940s and 1950s were partially a result of the different kinds of musicians he chose to work with but to suggest, as Time Life does, that there is nothing of value is simply untrue.

The full story of Lester Young, a Giant of Jazz, has to include material from such Verve LPs as "Pres and Teddy," "Jazz Giants 1956" and the session with Oscar Peterson. At least one example from this material should have been included in Time Life's set — giving the collection the balance and perspective it so desperately needs.

The listener can then make up his own mind whether Lester Young's playing disintegrated rather than believing the views of the critical establishment who never recovered from the shock of their hero changing his ways. Perhaps it would have been simpler if Young, like Bix, had died even earlier when only his youthful classics had been recorded. — John Norris

DJANGO REINHARDT (photograph courtesy of Time-Life)



RECORD REVIEWS

DJANGO REINHARDT

Django Volume 2 (Solos/Duets/Trios)
Inner City IC 1105

The recordings of Django Reinhardt have been the material for several reissue series. There was a seven volume set on Pathe in 1960, followed later by a comprehensive multi-volume set on the same label. Of late many of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France recordings have appeared on GNP, while post World War II recordings have appeared on Everest. These two latter series are both still available (with Everest evidently taking some of the earlier recordings too).

Inner City is now bringing out a selection of Reinhardt's music. IC 7004, "The Versatile Giant," gave a cross-section of his recorded output, including some previously unissued material. The present album is one of three, evidently intended to give a representative body of his recordings: IC 1104 "Django Reinhardt/Stephane Grappelli (The Quintet of the Hot Club of France)"; IC 1105 "Django" (Solos-Duets-Trios); and IC 1106 "Django Reinhardt/Stephane Grappelli" (Compositions).

This album, "programmed" to give varied listening, in fact contains material from seven sessions: April 27, 1937 (Grappelli and Reinhardt — *Alabama Bound*; solo guitar — *Improvisation, Parfum*); September 9, 1937 (guitar

solos with accompaniment — *Bouncin' Around, St. Louis Blues*); September 29 and November 23, 1937 (Eddie South with Reinhardt — *Eddie's Blues, I Can't Believe*); December 28, 1937 (Michel Warlop, violin, with Reinhardt — *Christmas Swing, Tea For Two*; guitar solo with accompaniment — *You Rascal You*); June 30, 1939 (guitar solo with accompaniment — *I'll See You In My Dreams*; solo guitar — *Echoes of Spain*); February 26, 1943 (solo guitar — *Improvisation No. 3* parts 1 and 2).

The performances with Eddie South, among the finest jazz violin solos on record, were made under South's name and Reinhardt does not solo. He gets a more prominent role on the recordings with Grappelli and Warlop. Oddly

enough, it is the rather languorous *Tea For Two* with Warlop that is most memorable — though the uninitiated listener would have difficulty telling Warlop from Grappelli.

It is interesting to have so many solo performances brought together on one record. Unaccompanied, as he is on five tracks, Reinhardt is impressive and often breath-taking, showing his brilliantly fluent command of the instrument and his lovely sense of texture. These are generally static, meditative performances; although at times — to take one of the titles in vain — there are a few too many “echoes of Spain.”

Stunning as these performances are, we hear more of the true Reinhardt in the unaccompanied solos. *St. Louis Blues* tells us a lot about him. Like the early John Coltrane, he could not play the blues because he approached them as though they were tunes with chord sequences. Such an approach to the blues does not reveal very interesting harmonic possibilities; and Reinhardt gives a customary bravura performance that for me smothers the tune. Bob Blumenthal's liner notes find this performance extremely good, as I have no doubt a lot of other people will.

The truly outstanding track, in my opinion, is *I'll See You In My Dreams* (described as “frisky” by Blumenthal, who finds the accompaniment “rather pedestrian”). With Pierre Ferret (guitar) and Emmanuel Soudieux (bass) taking care of the beat, Reinhardt can play in a floating saxophone style reminiscent of Lester Young (though evolved by Reinhardt before Young ever recorded). Reinhardt develops a line in which there are continual subtle variations of pace and in which the tune is reduced to a series of harmonically related riffs which are played in a variety of patterns over the tune. He moves freely over the bar lines and the ends of the eight bar units of the tune. Though he does not sound like Christian (and Christian did not sound like him), we can see why Christian admired Reinhardt.

There is no need to recommend the material on this record. All the tracks are from Gramophone/HMV/Swing recordings, so that they are unlikely to appear on GNP, which seems to draw on the Ultraphone and Decca recordings. The sound is clear and natural, so the question will really be how many of these recordings you already have on earlier reissues.

The cover photograph shows Reinhardt fingering the guitar, with the wounded hand rather gruesomely prominent. Those who play the guitar will be able to judge the handicap that he had to overcome to remain the virtuoso that he was. — *Trevor Talley*

DJANGO REINHARDT **Django Volume 1** **Inner City 1104**

The international reputation and influence of Django Reinhardt can scarcely be questioned at this late date. His uniqueness is linked completely to jazz even though the idiom was very much an alien concept for European musicians in the 1930s. Django demonstrates his triumph over his difficulties on every selection in this set of twenty-seven selections by the Quintet of the Hot Club of France which are drawn from the Pathe-Marconi files.

All of the selections form part of French Pathe's Complete Django Reinhardt series of twenty records and this package includes tunes

from Pathe 16001, 16002, 16003 and 16006. This grouping is made up of popular songs and jazz standards recorded by the quintet as well as Reinhardt's *Mystery Pacific* and *Paramount Stomp*. The guitarist's more famous originals will be included in a later volume called “Compositions” while a third in the planning stage is to be called “Solos/Duets/Trios.”

Rearranging this material in this manner is a blessing. Chronological surveys are wonderful for archivists and completists but the impact of the *music* is heightened in a reissue such as this. This reissue put alongside the London sessions now available on GNP 9001/9002 constitutes a definitive collection of music by the Q.H.C.F. (missing here, of course, are the Pathe versions of *Swing Guitars*, *Minor Swing* and *Swingin' With Django*).

Enhancing our listening pleasure is the crisp clear sound which seems better than the Pathe LP mastering. Hopefully Inner City will be able to complete their series by reissuing the two volumes of *Django With His American Friends* and the *Dicky Wells in Paris LP*. The Prestige versions of that material all but destroyed the music with their muddy transfers.

This is an essential collection of music by Django Reinhardt — one of the unique geniuses of this music. — *John Norris*

JOE SEALY

Clear Vision **Sackville 4007**

Summertime; All Blues; Clear Vision; Things Ain't What They Used To Be; We'll Be Together Again; Playa Caliente; Star Eyes; It's Alright With Me.

Joe Sealy, piano; Dave Young, bass; Pete Magadini, drums.
Recorded in Toronto, May 24, 1981.

While jazz has always been considered America's only true art form, most people have tended to neglect the Canadian scene which through the years has spawned its share of impressive talents. Oscar Peterson, Paul Bley, Gil Evans and Maynard Ferguson are just a few of the more prominent names. But there are many more talented musicians who toil in the studios, nightclubs and concert halls of Canada and go virtually unnoticed.

Joe Sealy is one such artist whose new album is quite impressive. Devoid of any electronic gadgetry, it is like a breath of fresh air amid the mediocrity and just plain bad music that passes for jazz these days. His formula is simple. Sensitive, compatible partners, a repertoire of good solid material including two attractive originals, and he's off to the races. Right from the start, Joe digs in and takes care of business. Not intimidated by fast tempos, he can also lock into a nice medium groove when the situation arises and knows how to treat a ballad. His teammates Dave Young and Pete Magadini work hand in glove to provide Sealy with the kind of support he needs. Young's solo work also deserves mention. He has great intonation and with or without the bow acquits himself admirably. Magadini is rock solid and exhibits good taste and control. He is able to establish a firm steady pace and yet remain unobtrusive. Together these three men deliver a mighty sturdy jazz performance, one that I'm sure will wear well. — *Gerard Futrick*

CECIL TAYLOR

Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! **MPS 0068.263**

T(Beautiful Young'n); Astar; Enslayi; I(Sister Young'n); Corn In Sun + T(Moon); The Stele Stolen and Broken Is Reclaimed; N + R (Love Is Friends); Rocks Sub Amba.

Cecil Taylor - piano

It Is In The Brewing Luminous **hat Hut Sixteen (2R16)**

Cecil Taylor - piano, voice; Jimmy Lyons - alto saxophone; Ramsey Ameen - violin; Alan Silva - bass, cello; Jerome Cooper - drums, african balaphone; Sunny Murray - drums.

Cecil Taylor's first recordings of the eighties find him in two intimate, if unusual, circumstances - a studio solo session and a club date. Each recording reflects minor evolutions in Taylor's art that, when seen to fruition, may alter our overview of the pianist's career in the coming years. But, for now, these impeccably engineered albums offer minor diversions from Taylor's recorded output of the last three years.

Duration has traditionally been a potent cornerstone of the pianist's art, exemplified on wax by the two hour-plus “One Too Many Salty Swift And Not Goodbye” (hat Hut Two). While the new hat Hut issue recorded at Fat Tuesdays, the only New York club at which Taylor now performs, confirms that Taylor's spellbinding marathons remain his ensemble forte, the solo set is a striking departure. Of the eight performances on “Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly!” three clock in at less than five minutes (*T(Beautiful Young'n)* is a mere fifty three seconds) while *Rocks Sub Amba* is the only piece to exceed ten minutes. Yet, this durational factor would be minor were it not for the content Taylor fills these relatively small spaces with.

Since his two Blue Note albums from the mid-sixties, an intrinsic part of a Taylor performance has been voltaic surges caused by the accumulation of variegated events. Yet, for most of the solo program, there is a dynamic evenness, a tonal brightness, and enough lilting lines to be considered when compared to such aural gestalts as “Indent” and “Silent Tongues” (although the encore of the latter could be construed as a progenitor), as an incidental music, a momentary, one-time phenomenon. To say that Taylor sketches for much of the program is not a diminution; after all, we know more of Leonardo from his notebooks than from his frescoes. Interestingly, this tendency gives Taylor's torrential forays tremendous impact, as with the climax of *Enslayi*, the midpoint of the album's first side, and *The Stele Stolen and Broken Is Reclaimed*, where supple figures are periodically subsumed by cymbal-like crashes which, in turn, are over-run by pounding bass lines.

While “It Is In The Brewing Luminous” parallels Taylor's other recent ensemble recordings on many counts, the club setting seems to have endowed the music with a loose-fitting, ad-hoc freshness. There are various reunions and first meetings evident in the interplay. The stinging drumming of Sunny Murray harkens of the 1963 date recorded at the Montmartre with Jimmy Lyons rounding out Taylor's trio. The plasticity of Alan Silva's strings, which often

venture into the extreme high register, spurs a section sensibility from Ramsey Ameen that the massive bottom Sirone gave to the Unit did not promote. That Jerome Cooper strongly asserts himself without flooding or diffusing the core pulse set down by Murray's traps and Taylor's eighty-eight tuned bongos is much to his credit. As for Taylor and Lyons, let it suffice to say that they both had a hot night.

Taylor has asserted that the environment in which the music exists has lost a majestic element present in former generations. The majesty can only be felt proportionate to the proximity of the listener to the artist, emotionally as well as physically. In spite of the recorded medium, Taylor brings the listener to the epicenter of his music. — *Bill Shoemaker*

LENNIE TRISTANO QUINTET

Live At Birdland 1949
Jazz Records I

Any serious follower of the jazz scene over the past thirty-five years must certainly be familiar with the name Lennie Tristano. However, Tristano's impact has been mainly felt through the playing of his most famous students — Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh. The playing of Tristano himself can only be found on a very few records.

On this album we have five quintet tracks from 1949 featuring Warne Marsh on tenor, Bill Bauer, guitar; Tristano's piano, Arnold Fishkin on bass, and Jeff Morton, drums. There are also four short solo piano numbers dating from 1945.

The quintet tracks are particularly interesting. Tristano plays excellent inventive swinging piano; in fact, I suspect his playing here may be as good if not better than anything he put on record. Marsh was also having a very good day. His solos float with a buoyancy shared by few players. Billy Bauer also gets a few nice solo opportunities (Where is Bauer these days?). In typical Tristano fashion, Fishkin and Morton serve a limited function by just keeping the rhythm moving at a steady even pace.

Careful listening to the quintet tracks offers a richly rewarding musical experience. With the exception of the very beginning of the first two tunes, the sound quality is quite acceptable too.

The four solo tracks are gems. Tristano's linear development of solo playing is still to be found, but not to as developed a degree as on the quintet tracks of four years later. Each track contains a wealth of listening pleasure.

In the past, I have often found Tristano's piano playing to be rather cold and sterile. Too much intellectual input and not enough emotional content. This recording does not fit that model. This L.P. is far more than of historical interest. There is a goldmine of musical treasure to be discovered here.

— *Peter S. Friedman*

JACK TEAGARDEN/EARL HINES

In England 1957
Jazz Groove 001

Great jazz musicians somehow succeed in overcoming the banality of their repertoire and the repetitiveness of their playing experiences. It was certainly true for Louis Armstrong's All Stars and it is just as true for this ad hoc group

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AL NEIL: BOOT AND FOG Al Neil, piano; Howard Broomfield, percussion. Includes EP disc with Carolyn Zonailo, poet. **MGE 33**

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BOX 292, STATION A, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5W 1B2 CANADA

who toured England in October 1957.

By the time this concert was recorded they had developed into a polished band whose repertoire was tackled with authority and enthusiasm. Rarely since the 1940s have I heard Max Kaminsky play with such elasticity and drive as on this recording. His trumpet playing cuts through the ensembles with statuesque precision giving firm direction to such warhorses as *That's A Plenty*, *Royal Garden Blues*, *Struttin' With Some Barbecue*, *Memphis Blues* and *Original Dixieland One Step*.

But it is more than that which makes this performance so exhilarating. All of the musicians perform with the spontaneous energy and commitment which makes jazz such an arresting music. They use the melodic/harmonic frameworks to weave their special kind of magic within these stylistic boundaries.

Teagarden's long career was beginning to wind down by this time but he still performed with authority. He does his set piece feature of *Basin Street Blues* with surprising enthusiasm and his solos are vibrantly polished. This session follows by a few weeks his recorded collaboration with Bobby Hackett of "Jazz Ultimate," one of the landmark recordings from this period. It says much for this record that this concert performance is a worthy companion piece.

Peanuts Hucko's clarinet is fluid and expressive — just as it was on "Jazz Ultimate" — while Jack Lesberg and Cozy Cole form an assertive rhythm team.

The ultimate catalyst in this band was Earl Hines. He is showcased on *Tea For Two* and *Rosetta* — both extended solo vehicles which anticipate his rejuvenation as a virtuoso per-

former since the mid 1960s. His percussive ensemble style gives the band momentum while his solos are constantly offering surprising twists. Hines, through his experiences with Louis's All Stars and Muggsy Spanier, was at home in this format, but it does seem as if this particular band provoked his musical curiosity.

The sound quality of this concert is excellent and the music exceptionally good.

— *John Norris*

TENOR SAXOPHONES

TEDDY EDWARDS
Teddy's Ready
Contemporary S 7583

Edwards, tenor; Joe Castro, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

Blues in G/Scrapple from the Apple/What's New?/You Name It/Take the "A" Train/The Sermon/Higgins' Hideaway.

EUGENE AMARO QUARTET
The Owl
Innovation JC-0002-G

Amaro, tenor, alto, flute; Jimmy Amaro, bass; Joe Sealy, piano; Pete Magadini, drums.

Body and Soul/Lover Man/Blue Jade/Only Trust Your Heart/Clear Blue/All the Things You Are/Ghost of a Chance/My Little Boat.

There's a whole raft of highly competent tenor players, reliable, often confident soloists, usual-

ly listenable but only occasionally reaching heights of original improvisation. I'm thinking of players like Billy Mitchell, Junior Cook, Hank Mobley, even Harold Land. And I'd also include Teddy Edwards in that list. He's never established himself as a leading musician though that might be because of bouts of sickness.

This Contemporary album under review is from 1960 and it has some good solos from Edwards backed by a strong but not very imaginative rhythm section.

Edwards is best on the blues and the blues-tinged cuts — his own catchy *Blues in G* and particularly *You Name It*. He's a blunt and forceful soloist here, and Joe Castro adds direct, somewhat funky bits as well.

But there's nothing really memorable here, even though the music isn't a dead loss either. The spirits aren't lifted by this album but it's a genuine foot-tapper — the only slower piece is an ordinary version of *What's New?*

Edwards has become a little stronger and a touch more adventurous in recent years, as an album on Muse in the 1970s indicates, as well as his live performances in Japan with Milt Jackson in 1976 on a Pablo release.

I don't want to run this album down too much — it's honest, no-nonsense music, there are some felicitous moments, it swings along on a healthy beat but it doesn't convince as music with a sufficiently chance-taking or fresh character.

Canadian Eugene Amaro generates a little more gutsy atmosphere on his album, especially on that battle-cry for tenor players, *Body and Soul*. He approaches it in fast tempo in a tricky arrangement that stops just short of sounding too gimmicky.

Amaro shows up better on ballads. A medium tempo *All the Things You Are* opens with a few breathy slides in a kind of Webster feeling, but Amaro's attack is more boppish. He tends to grab the tune by the scruff of the neck — it's not hectic and pulse-shattering but it's effective, though Sealy's piano solo lets up on tension by being too light-fingered.

Amaro takes on the ghost of Chu Berry with his version of *Ghost of a Chance*, but his open-

ing statement is a nicely-judged evocation. Starting rather hard and hitting notes cleanly, his solo gradually loosens to a slippery breathiness without losing its grip on modern developments in tenor playing. Eventually it seems closer to Dexter Gordon but Amaro manages to retain a personal approach without succumbing totally to other influences.

Sealy's piano throughout is somewhat uneven. He is generally a good supportive accompanist but his soloing for the most part doesn't really take off.

Amaro plays two cuts of not very convincing alto. It's safe and sound but at times a little uncertain in attack. He plays two pretty flute tunes as well.

But it's the tenor playing that leaves the lasting impression — a solid album without being likely to cause any shock waves even within Canadian jazz circles. — *Peter Stevens*

UNITED FRONT

Path With A Heart RPM 1

Carl Hoffman-percussion; Mark Izu-bass, sheng; Lewis Jordan - alto saxophone; George Sams - trumpet.

Feel Free/Don't Lose Your Soul; And So It Goes; March In Ostinato; Forgotten Spirits; Jazz Piece: a. Now And Then, b. Here And There, c. In An Hour Or Two Days.

FRINGE

Live! Appuga 002

George Garzone - tenor and soprano saxophones; Bob Gullotti - drums; Richard Appleman - bass.

For Alicia; Improvise-Ah/Night Before; You And Me, Billy; Living Room; Gong For My Father.

The success of these first, self-produced efforts lies in the participants' accommodation of the needs of the ensemble and the demands of each composition. In addition to being capable, well-schooled musicians, the members of United Front and Fringe convey an affinity towards their craft that is fresh and un-indulgent. Unlike many young musicians who place a bloated premium on sophomoric brands of self-expression, United Front and Fringe have created pragmatically proportioned albums that underscore the fluency and the flexibility of the respective ensembles.

Beyond these merits, "Path With A Heart" and "Live!" present variants of the coalitionist aesthetic that threads the history of American improvised music: at the core of both programs is a local constituency of, presumably, diverse elements for whom the respective ensembles perform as much as they perform for themselves. United Front and Fringe's respective home turfs are the vastly heterogeneous San Francisco and Boston areas: Fringe, more specifically, has ties to the Berklee School of Music, the Brahmin of formal American jazz education. Subsequently, the music of United Front and Fringe possesses grassroots electricity and a road-tested durability.

The populist concerns of the two ensembles are well-forwarded by the openers of the res-

pective albums. Plying a lithe melody, a skeletal chord pattern, and a racing tempo, *For Alicia* is virtuosic and accessible, its ambience somewhat reminiscent of David Liebman's Open Sky trio. Articulate and emotionally forthright, Fringe manoeuvres handily through a seemingly simple piece of music that, in actuality, could break the back of an ill-equipped trio. After an atmospheric, freely improvised prelude, *Feel Free/Don't Lose Your Soul* surveys infectiously syn-copated thematic materials in a relaxed, spirited manner. Prompting instant empathy, United Front displays an adventurous, yet un-obscuring, mixing of inside and outside sensibilities that is then sustained for the entire program.

The more conceptually daring forays of the two ensembles retain a tangible connection to the jazz tradition while providing a coherent framework through which the players vent their ideas. A subtle pastiche of shifting rhythms and phraseologies, *Improvise-Ah/Night Before* swells and recedes from impressionistic coolness to Ayleresque heat, showing Fringe to be a unit that acknowledges various sources without genuflection. Utilizing a wide array of timbral shadings, the eastern solemnity of *Forgotten Spirits* remains taut, highlighted, at times, by Lewis Jordan's vibratoless alto. The self-explanatory *March In Ostinato* is an excellent stylistic contrast of United Front's abilities in this regard.

Of course, the collective strengths of these ensembles are based, ultimately, on individualistic merits. Beyond having strong chops and good reflexes, George Sams, Lewis Jordan, and George Garzone are well-versed hornmen who could easily step into established settings — the Jazz Messengers, for example, — and hold their own. The same can be said of Mark Izu, Richard Appleman, Bob Gullotti and Carl Hoffman, adding that they are all capable of assuming extensive roles as lead voices.

With these albums, United Front and Fringe prove they can tread water. Don't be surprised if they make waves in the future.

(Appuga Records are available through New Music Distribution Service. RPM Records: P.O. Box 42373, San Francisco, CA 94101 USA).

— *Bill Shoemaker*

JOE VENUTI/JOE ALBANY

Joe Venuti & Joe Albany Horo HDP 41-42

What is apparently a two-record set here is found to be on aural inspection two separate and individually sustained records which should not have been issued as a single entity. It's a pity that they can't be in some way 'surgically removed' from one another — not that one is vastly inferior to the other, but they are so different that each should be free from the other. The first is a Joe Venuti record, featuring him in quintet, quartet, trio, duo and solo performances, while the second is a Joe Albany solo piano record. They have in common only Albany's presence and their origin, a single recording session held in Rome in 1974, which produced all nineteen tracks.

The Venuti record presents the great violinist in the role of visiting soloist with 'house rhythm section,' a state of affairs that was to be the basis for the entire last phase of his career. On this occasion his accompanists were, for the most part, competent. Giovanni Tommaso on bass and Bruno Biriaco on drums play within the idiom, tastefully and unobtru-

EUGENE AMARO



sively, if rather unremarkably. Joe Cusumano on guitar, both electric and acoustic, is perhaps less rhythmically sure, although it could be that he simply has trouble with Albany. He certainly sounds much more assured on his acoustic duet with Venuti than when playing electric with the larger group. The trio (violin, piano and guitar) performance of *Easy Rider* demonstrates the problem: Venuti solos wonderfully, and is followed by Albany's and Cusumano's disastrous attempts to play together. They can't keep time together without the help of bass and drums, as their lurching, stumbling duet attests. And when Venuti comes in again he pulls them back into control by sheer authority.

Elsewhere, Venuti continues to play at his usual high level, never guilty of coasting, or of the complacency that so often renders the work of veteran musicians lifeless. Venuti, right up until the end, communicated an undiminished joy in playing, because he still had something to add to the countless hours of music that his long career produced. It is commitment that makes his playing its most delightful, here at least, when he carries the load completely on the unaccompanied solo performance, *New Violin*. His duets on *Wait, You'll See* with Albany, and *Sweet Sue* with Cusumano both show Venuti at the top of his form, and if Cusumano is no Eddie Lang, Venuti is still Venuti here. Although there seem to be innumerable Venuti records available, it's good to have this one make its appearance — he is as great here as he was anywhere.

There seem to be two schools of thought about Joe Albany. One, perhaps stemming from his brief employment as a member of a Charlie Parker quintet, is the view that he is some kind of 'bebop legend', and is a fine musician who only now is beginning to receive some measure of the recognition and acclaim that fate has so cruelly and inexplicably denied him for so long. The other view sees Albany as a disconcertingly sloppy, scrambling pianist whose previous obscurity was not at all unfounded. While neither view will suffice by itself, there is a lot of truth in each, as the music on both these records shows. On the Venuti record, Albany contributes some highly imaginative and original introductions and solos. His 'comping' is sometimes at odds with Venuti's soloing and he occasionally gets in the way, not because he comes from a different idiom in jazz, but because he is rhythmically unsteady — his time is at variance with the swing of Tommaso and Biriaco, in particular. Be that as it may, in Albany's playing, the *ideas* are there, and he is a provocative and exciting, if rhythmically erratic, accompanist.

The solo piano record more fully reveals his problems, which again are primarily rhythmic, although when he plays solo, these problems become, on ballads, metrical. Albany has a tendency in some of his solo ballad work to play, neither in or out of tempo, but *almost* in tempo, that is, with a periodic and unsystematic rushing of the beat. On a medium tempo *Ain't Misbehavin'* he is much more satisfying, creating a unique and constantly surprising swing. Playing the piano, one senses, is not 'easy' for Albany, in the way that it *was* for such contemporaries as, say, Al Haig or Dodo Marmorosa, and I do not believe that he has 'got it together' to the extent that they did. Rather, he is like a latter day Joe Sullivan in the way he constantly does battle with the piano, refusing to accept his limitations. That is why both men share the

same heavy touch and rhythmic audacity — and failure rate. One has to admire the spirit of a man who refuses to play it safe, and chooses risk. One does not sit back and relax to Albany, but leans forward with a degree of anxiety and apprehension as to the outcome of each phrase. Listening to Sullivan and Albany, I suspect, is so similarly unrelaxing because each took the highly demanding aesthetic of his primary influence, Hines and Powell respectively, musicians who were much better equipped to handle such demanding modes of expression. In any case, it is not what is wrong with Albany's playing, but what is right with it that matters, and it would be an unpardonable waste to dismiss him on the basis of his shortcomings. Instead, to investigate his strengths, his imagination, audacity, his pugnacity and so on.

Two very enjoyable records, each for its own reasons, which should have been made available separately. It is hoped that one would not be ignored for the other. — *Julian Yarrow*

GERALD WILSON

**Lomelin
Discovery DS-833**

The return of Gerald Wilson is an auspicious event for lovers of big band *jazz* music. His Pacific Jazz recordings of the 1960s were outstanding and this album is a continuation of that tradition.

Gerald Wilson's writing is instantly recognisable and his charts always serve as superior frameworks for the solo contributions of his musicians. In this collection he gives solo space to such notable performers as Harold Land, Bobby Bryant, Oscar Brashear, Ernie Watts, Garnett Brown and guitarists Shuggie Otis and Bob Conti.

California has been a fruitful location for big bands in the past decade. There have been recordings by bands under the leadership of Louis Bellson, Nat Pierce/Frankie Capp, Don Menza, Bill Berry and Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin to mention a few but none perform with the unfettered drive and nuances of this orchestra. Gerald Wilson has dug deep to tap the fountainhead of California's jazz talent and they bring to explosive life his outstanding compositional and arranging talents.

The title selection is Wilson's latest latin-tinged tribute to the art of the bullfight while *Triple Chase* is an explosive chart featuring the tenor solos of Harold Land, Ernie Watts and Jerome Richardson. *Blues for Zubin* and *See You Later* are typical Wilson charts exploring the possibilities of the blues and *Ay-ee-en* is a modal chart along the lines of *Milestones* and *So What*.

The jazz spirit is aflame in every nuance of Gerald Wilson's imagination and his band captures eloquently the inner depths of his music in this outstanding recording.

— *John Norris*

DENNY ZEITLIN

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1750 Arch Records S-1770**

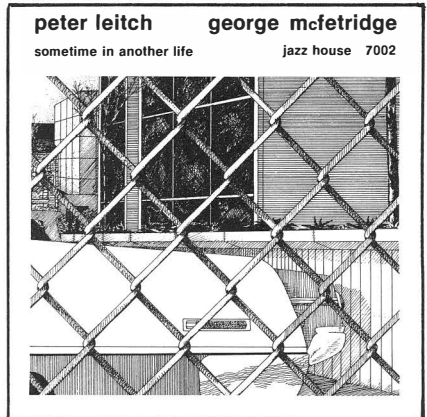
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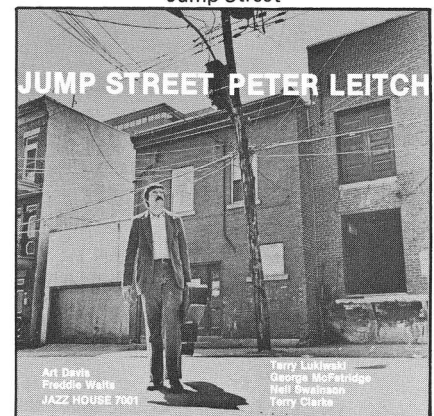
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This is not surprising, for Denny Zeitlin has a background that includes classical studies, Chicago jazz, and an interest in electronic music that goes back to the mid-sixties. A practicing and teaching psychiatrist who has played bass and drums, who plays piano and a wide range of electronic keyboards, and who recently composed, performed, and produced the soundtrack to the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Denny Zeitlin is a true eclectic.

This eclecticism is visible on "Soundings," an album of solo piano improvisations, most of which was recorded live. "Soundings" reveals a pianist with vast experience and a willingness to entertain new ideas. Zeitlin brings to his music a diverse background and a basic belief in the validity of all musical forms. Drawing on jazz, the classics, rock, funk, and the avant-garde, Zeitlin delights in creating pieces which demonstrate the universality of music. His fondness for juxtaposing seemingly incompatible styles is aimed at pointing out the similarities that are shared by those styles. *Gulf Stream*, for instance, begins in a quiet reflective mood and is played by Zeitlin with restraint. A doubling of the tempo and a shift of inflection sends it into the realms of jazz and a lively interpretation ensues. In *Prelude and Groove* he slips comfortably between classical and funk music and *Whistle Stop* is propelled with a self-sustaining momentum that owes as much to rock as it does to jazz.

His jazz roots emerge on *Through the Arcade* which moves with a dancer's lilt as Zeitlin's stride playing keeps it in a seductive groove. *Vulcan's Dolls* builds from the contemplative to the strident with an aggressive style that is firmly controlled. On the appropriately titled *Things Inside* Zeitlin explores the piano as a total instrument with a combination of keyboard playing and open string playing that utilizes strumming, plucking, scraping, and hammering of the strings.

Zeitlin's various experiences have coalesced into a sound that touches the heart of many musical styles. He is as likely to give a nod of acknowledgement to Keith Emerson or Hendrix as he is to Schoenberg, Cecil Taylor, or McCoy Tyner. It is Zeitlin who is in control however, and, from these diverse influences, he has managed to create a highly personal music.

This record is available from 1750 Arch Records, 1750 Arch Street, Berkeley, California 94709.
— Don J. Lahey

ATTILA ZOLLER

**Common Cause
Inner City IC3032**

Attila Zoller, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Joe Chambers, drums.

Hungarian-born guitarist Attila Zoller performs quite comfortably with Ron Carter and Joe

Chambers on this outing. All of the material, except Bobby Jones's *Lady Love*, are Zoller originals.

Tshitar attracts my attention largely because it is in a more contemporary vein than the rest of the compositions. It begins as a mysterious journey reminiscent of Zawinul's *In A Silent Way*. Then Zoller sails off into a clipped chase with Carter's bass buzzing like a bumble-bee. As Carter whines up his notes, Zoller decelerates into some chordal phrasing, only to scurry off into another series of runs, full of driving single- and two-note accents and Chambers riding high on his cymbals. After seven minutes or so, the proceedings come to a gentle close with a return to the opening mood.

Overall the album is pleasant, although not particularly distinctive. Those who are into the music of Burrell, Hall and Raney will certainly enjoy giving the record a listen.

— Peter Danson

ANDREW CYRILLE & MAONO

**Special People
Soul Note 1012**

Andrew Cyrille is usually mentioned in association with Cecil Taylor, but his current activities indicate that Ornette Coleman is also an important link in his musical development. Not only is Maono a pianoless quartet, its new release "Special People" features Coleman's *A Girl Named Rainbow*, plus an Ornettish original *Fortified Nucleolus*.

According to Lee Jeske's liner notes *A Girl Named Rainbow* (10:00) was written for Leroy Jenkins. The tune starts with a charming melody based on a two-note interval which enlarges gracefully. It's stated a few times with either a zig-zagging or singing vee-vee-dove-va reply, and then everyone but Cyrille solos. Whereas David Ware's tenor is effectively mournful here and Cyrille provides tastefully subtle brush work throughout, bassist Nick DiGeronimo is merely proficient and Ted Daniels's understated trumpet solo lacks drama.

Cyrille says *High Priest* (7:42) was conceived with Ware in mind. It's a loose, medium tempo piece in which everyone gets to swing. Ware bandies his rough, soulful sound, while Daniels inflects his playing with bent notes. DiGeronimo gives steady support as does Cyrille, and the latter's delicate touch on cymbals is a genuine marvel.

Fortified Nucleolus (5:08) features a walking melody characterised by momentary breaks. The muscular DiGeronimo announces the head by himself and then sustains it giving the tune a thick pulse. Ware is the first soloist and his impetuous tenor rips things up. Daniels counters in a mild, relaxed manner, but again he does not go anywhere. His light, contrapuntal phrases at the beginning of Ware's solo do, however, show compositional sensitivity.

Some listeners may be acquainted with John Stubblefield's lovely *Baby Man* (6:34) from Mary Lou Williams's recording "Free Spirits" (Inner City 2043). Cyrille tells us that he was so intrigued by it he asked Mary Lou for the score which he subsequently re-arranged for Maono. The melody is simply gorgeous, and Cyrille wisely has each of his cohorts state it a capella. Both Daniels and Ware rise to the occasion — the former with fluid sublimity, the latter with a typically Traneish temperament.

DiGeronimo comes off a bit laborious, and the final unison section seems tentative in spots.

The last tune *Special People* (7:00) is a hot, free jazz number in which the whole band cooks. Ware lets loose with gut-spilling histrionics. Daniels fashions tightly-squeezed lines with lots of flutters and jabs. DiGeronimo performs like a fine hummingbird. And Cyrille packs his only solo spot on the record with a polyrhythmic and tonal range that few contemporary drummers could match.

In a sense the intensity of this last piece dramatizes what the entire recording could have been; or should I say it indicates what the group probably sounds like in person. At times the music on this release receives clinical treatment.

Given the absence of a piano, DiGeronimo's booming bass plays an important rhythm section and front-line role, but some may find his occasionally deadpan sound monotonous.

Ultimately what is really important here is Cyrille. Not only has he proven himself a capable leader and a good writer, his taste and control, particularly in the area of rhythmic momentum and colour demonstrate real sophistication. I certainly would enjoy catching him (and Maono) live. — Peter Danson

ROBERT DICK

Whispers And Landings Lumina 003

Flames Must Not Encircle Sides; Piece In Gamelon Style; Or; Young Teeth; T=C10; Whispers And Landings; Glimpse From The Blimpse.

Robert Dick - concert flute, bass flute, piccolo.

Experience has taught me to be wary of recordings such as this one that emphasize that the performances do not employ overdubbing or electronic effects. Usually, these performances make unorthodox techniques the center of attention at the expense, or in the place, of musical ideas. Robert Dick uses many exciting unorthodox techniques, yet they are always subordinate to statements of solid musicality. Technically, "Whispers And Landings" is phenomenal, an instant investiture of Robert Dick as an important, forward-looking flutist. Yet, the real interest of this album is in Dick's integration of technique, concept, and emotion. Otherwise, all there would be to discuss is empty virtuosity.

On the one hand, Dick has extended, as on *Glimpse From The Blimpse*, voice accompaniment techniques jazz flutists have occasionally used for ecstatic emphasis. On this bass flute piece, however, Dick uses the technique for far more otherworldly delvings. Dick is also involved with timbral and multiphonic investigations that are woven into serene, as well as stark, settings. *Piece In Gamelon Style* has a solemn, ritualistic ambience that benefits unexpectedly from such explorations. Performing in a conventional mode on *Young Teeth*, a riveting piccolo solo, Dick confirms his precision to be as acute as his imagination.

"Whispers And Landings" is not a recording that can be absorbed in one listening. Robert Dick has created, as the cliché goes, his own space, and an idiosyncratic one at that. If strongly individualistic music is your preference, then "Whispers And Landings" is recommended.

— Bill Shoemaker

(Lumina Records: 236 Lafayette Street, # 4, New York, N.Y. 10012 USA).

KONDO - LOVENS

TOSHINORI KONDO - PAUL LOVENS The Last Supper Po Torch PTR/JWD 9

Toshinori Kondo - trumpet; Paul Lovens - drums, percussion, zither, etc.

One of the notable things about this record, is that Lovens must be surrounded by some thirty or forty instruments (sound-sources), and yet he has no advantage at all over Kondo, who just plays the trumpet. In fact in terms of resources they seem justly balanced. Kondo is also, in a sense, surrounded by a large number of different sources (though they are not necessarily already there in the way Lovens' are — some may be items of his vocabulary but others are improvised). He is, in other words, apparently inexhaustible in both the variety of his playing and its persistence. And even with this immense range he is obviously only using a sector of the trumpet's actual scope, for most of his playing has a "squeezed" quality which indicates a very particular technical insistence. This specialized quality, typical of most good free improvisors, this avoidance of the pure and open centre of the instrument's range, is not just modernistic defiance of the norm; it is, much more importantly, a way of seeing to it that the various resources the player achieves are *musical* resources and not just sonic effects. It is remarkable how Kondo, during this 44-minute improvisation, scatters the trumpet into a multifarious, fragmented thing, risking total disintegration of the musical texture, yet held together by a living thread of inventiveness and persistence right through.

Lovens on the other hand starts off with a scattered assemblage of artefacts and his task is to unify them into one instrument by the pressure of his personality. All percussionists develop ready methods of doing this, of course, or they'd never get anywhere, but in an extended improvisation context such as this no merely professional tricks can remain convincing. Lovens insists on quick-changing sonic variety, and though I think some of it is only an intermediary sound production, he does on the whole win through to a coherent and exciting music, partly by personal pressure, partly by attending very closely to Kondo and always matching the trumpeter's playing with something apt (by parallel or by contrast). So the record is really fascinating because these two different processes, due to the natures of the instruments, merge into each other like two cones, forming the central disc of purely musical events.

Reviewing this record recently on English Radio, Charles Fox said that with free improvised music on disc, a version of Parkinson's Law seems to operate, and while the classic jazz players had to get it all into 3 minutes, now with LPs an improvisation can be attenuated to 44 minutes, which he finds an excessive length of time to listen to what he obviously hears as all the same sort of thing. That strikes me as a strange, but very common, attitude from someone who knows a lot about jazz, as if the music were ever defined by the terms of its documentation. Those 3-minute Chicago hops in the recording studio weren't compressed essences of jazz performance; they were snippets, mere fragments of what must have been a much stronger series when it was allowed to



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MUSICAL CONCEPTS

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develop at length. But I suppose there are quite a lot of people around who mutely imagine that the classic jazz bands used to play on stage nothing but a collection of 3-minute items.

The music of Kondo and Lovens wasn't played into an empty disc, but to a live audience, and the disc merely documents the event. The 44-minute length is if anything short — there isn't the faintest sense of attenuation during it, nor of mental exhaustion at the end of it, and the continuity is an essential factor of its meaning. Like all good music it plays a constant sense of transition against a constant sense of arrival. But to do that for 44 minutes without the artificial aids of composition is indeed a rare thing. — *Peter Riley* (Po Torch Records: Couvenstrasse 13, D-5100 Aachen 1 West Germany - telephone 0241 - 507 917).

HANS KUMPF

Hans Kumpf & Anatolij Vapirow Trio
Jam Session In Leningrad
Fusion 8004

Many study groups travel to the Soviet Union nowadays. Most of them are satisfied to have visited the Kremlin and Red Square, but the West German musician Hans Kumpf sought contact with colleagues in Leningrad, off the beaten track of official tourist programmes. The result was the first historical collaboration of a Western avant-garde jazz musician with Russian contemporaries. Kumpf himself confessed that musical understanding was hindered by the difficulties which his colleagues have with improvisation. Total improvisation must be a concept which, as a consequence of their social system, is very difficult for them to realize. You can hear them cautiously narrowing the gap between themselves. The music never comes from the belly. On the contrary, they retreat into toneless bellowing and formless instrument rattling. At times it reminds you of certain intellectual English improvisation techniques. The bassoon nasalises chromatic scales wittlessly up and down. The piano broods cheerlessly for itself. But this does not mean that sensitivity is lacking. The disc has its best

moments when the four musicians spin fine webs of sound. For a very few moments they finally manage to free themselves from their fetters. It is still surprising and hopeful that a common language could be found, that of spontaneous improvisation. — *Werner Panke*

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET

More from the Last Concert
Atlantic XSD 8806

Perhaps my favorite record by the Modern Jazz Quartet is the double album set entitled "The Last Concert" on Atlantic SD2-909. That live concert recording seemed to sum up the 22-year existence of the MJQ.

We are now treated to some additional music from that very same November 25, 1974 concert at New York's Avery Fisher Hall. The quartet was in excellent form that evening seven years ago. Milt Jackson's vibes ring out with expression and passion. John Lewis blends elegance and the blues in his own unique manner. Percy Heath and Connie Kay are a disciplined yet swinging rhythm duo.

There is not a weak tune in this highly enjoyable record. The Modern Jazz Quartet may no longer exist as a musical unit, but their artistry continues to live on through the magic of recorded sound. We are fortunate to live in an age that offers us such riches.

— *Peter S. Friedman*

BOBBY NAUGHTON

Solo Vibraphone
Otic 1011

Recorded Live at the 4th Rassegna Internazionale Jazz Festival, Firenze, Italy, July 3, 1979

Vibist Bobby Naughton's relaxed, fragmented style lends itself quite well to the solo context. His subdued, natural approach and light as a feather touch enable him to play at almost a whisper. Drawing from various sources, he

creates a mood of utter tranquility which courses through much of this performance. In fact, only at the end of each side when the audience applauds, is one even aware that this is a live recording. But although a rather peaceful, reflective atmosphere is achieved, a certain amount of sameness is evident in much of the material, and gradually the listener's interest begins to stray. Naughton, it seems, is at his best in the company of like minded musicians who can stimulate his imagination and get his creative juices flowing on a more consistent level. A case in point would be his very successful collaboration with Leo Smith and Perry Robinson on "The Haunt;" an excellent LP recorded some years back on Otic 1005. This present solo offering, however, appears to lack some of the inspiration and vitality needed to make more of a profound impact on the listener. One delightful selection is the Burke-Van Heusen chestnut *But Beautiful*. Here Bobby's tender interpretation almost evokes the sound of a Swiss music box. It would be most interesting to hear him record more standards of this nature from time to time. Yet with even its occasional shortcomings, I find this a very enjoyable effort. If you are attracted to the coloristic tonal qualities of the vibraphone as I have always been, then you will most certainly want to investigate this record.

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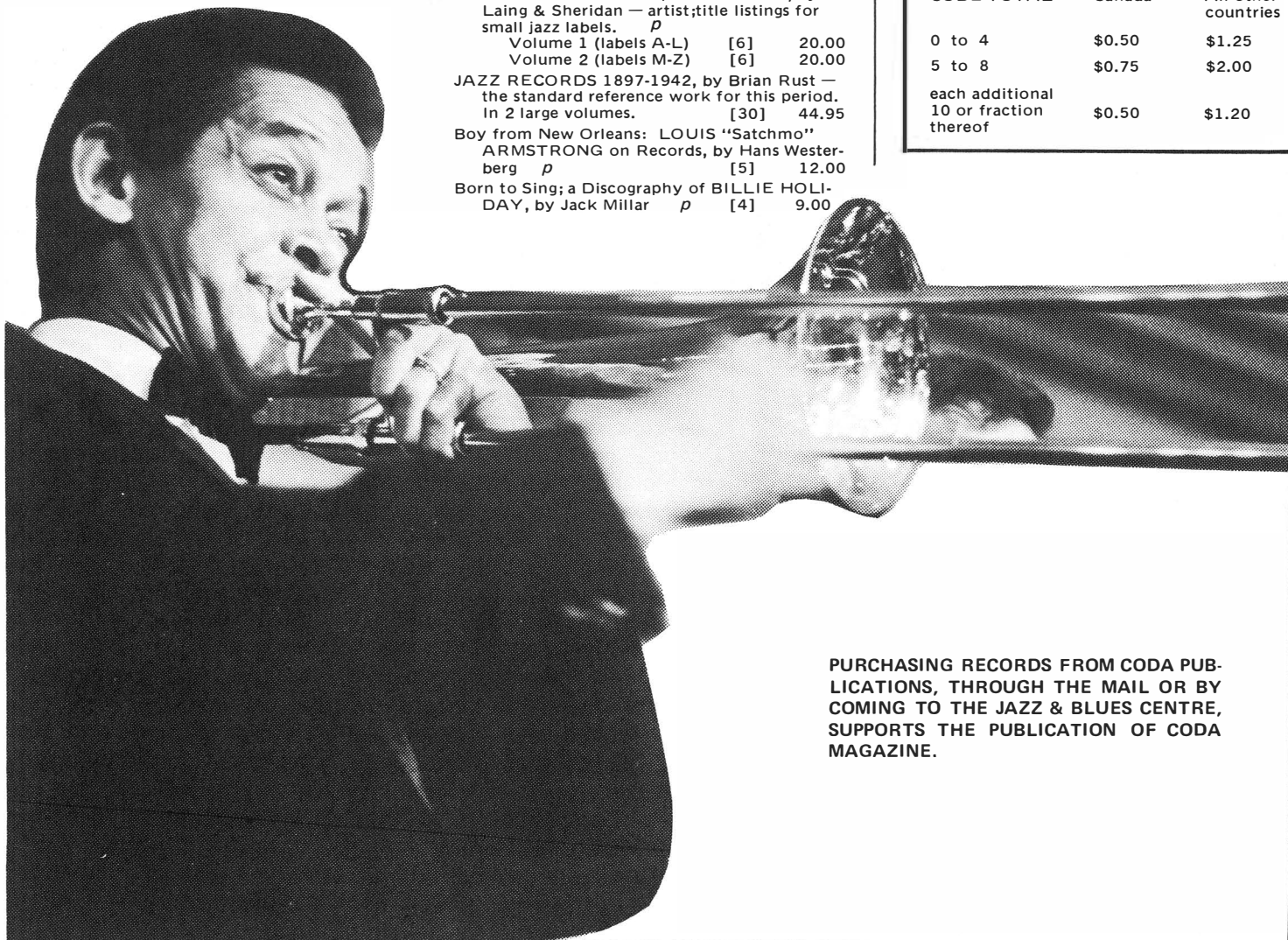
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AROUND THE WORLD

CANADA — Archie Alleyne's return to an active musical career has already been beneficial for listeners in Toronto. He has worked with Jim Galloway (notably a Sheraton Centre/CKFM gig with Rob McConnell the other featured artist) but, more importantly, he and vibraphonist Frank Wright have put together a quartet which is already showing signs of becoming a significant part of the scene. The co-leaders brought back to the lime-light pianist Connie Maynard and bassist Billy Best to complete a group of experienced musicians who gave a lot to Toronto's jazz community in the 1950s. It is good to have them back in action and their recent one week stint at George's Spaghetti House confirmed the initial reactions of people who heard them in their debut performance at Jodie's.

"Talmadge Farlow" is a sensitive film portrait of an outstanding musician whose dedication to his craft has often stood in the way of his image as a performer. This hour-long film shows the musician around his house in rural New Jersey, jamming with Lennie Breau and collaborating with Tommy Flanagan and Red Mitchell in both rehearsal and performance. While the film belabors the point of Farlow's many absences from the scene (=New York exposure) Red Norvo in one sentence demolishes the whole facade when he says that Farlow had never been away — he was always playing in some roadhouse somewhere in New Jersey. It was just that he chose not to work in New York. The sequences with Flanagan and Mitchell are outstanding. What a marvelous trio they make.

"Talmadge Farlow" was shown twice at Harbourfront (a federally funded cultural arcade) free of charge, but as is usually the case with grant-supported arts organisations, no effort was made to reach the very people who would have been thrilled to see this film. Indeed, most of the jazz community only became aware of the showing after the event and it wouldn't surprise me to know that others are now finding this out for the first time as they read these comments.

Jim Galloway's Wee Big Band has been contracted to record an album for CBS Records. A compromise was necessary, of course, as CBS is looking for something to achieve the kind of commercial success which has come the way of The Spitfire Band, a CTL creation of studio musicians redoing the hits of the Big Band Era. Compromise in the form of Jack Duffy on some vocals and repertoire choices were necessary for this project to come to fruition. Hopefully the quality of the band will be captured in this project.

This year's Juno Awards ceremony took place April 14 and the televised event managed to have rock music played behind the announcements of the jazz awards. The final nominations were "Au Privave" by Wray Downes and Dave Young (Sackville), "Jump Street" by Peter Leitch (Jazz House), "Live at the El Mocambo" by Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass (Dark Orchid), "Clear Vision" by Joe Sealy (Sackville) and "The Brass Connection" (Innovation). The latter disc, a studio band organised by Doug Hamilton comprising five trombones and rhythm playing original charts by leading Canadian musicians, was the final winner of the award.

Claude Ranger's new quartet was on display at the Music Gallery on May 15...Mother Necessity Jazz Workshop closed its doors at the Drake Hotel in April and Ted Moses took his talents to Yorkville Avenue where he is ensconced in a new club called T.O.

Dizzy Gillespie came into town to participate in a one-night benefit concert for the Ron Satok School/Art Through Awareness and Action on April 5. The performance was electrifying, by all accounts, and the trumpeter was ably supported by P.J. Perry, Ed Bickert, Steve Wallace and Jerry Fuller.

Bob Wilber will lead the Smithsonian Jazz Repertory Ensemble in concert May 12 at the Guelph Spring Festival. He will also conduct a workshop the following day.

M.T. Kelly writing in *The Globe And Mail* on March 27 has joined the body of writers who are becoming increasingly aware of the deteriorating standards at the C.B.C. The focus of the article concerned the "moronic glorification of (American) mass pap" on the Friday evening segments of *The Journal*, CBC TV's visual equivalent of *As It Happens/Variety Tonight*. M.T. Kelly rightly points out that this is an "absolute betrayal of its mandate" but this is nothing new to jazz musicians and listeners. There has been a steady erosion of programming over the past few years and has now reached a nadir with the extermination of "Jazzland." It was the final version of programs which had existed since 1954 dedicated to presenting Canadian musicians in uncompromising situations. These presentations of Canadian musicians from Coast to Coast has been largely responsible for the increasing awareness of Canadians for their own musicians. Now we are to have yet another record program in its place. The CBC has a commitment to spend a certain amount of money a year on music programs (with musicians) but with the demise of Jazzland where is this money going to be used? The CBC is in crisis. They have virtually eliminated staff positions for creative programmers and replaced them with contract positions which are notable mostly for their instability and lack of authority. Consequently there is a paucity of ideas and knowledge at the creative level of the Corporation while the administrative bureaucracy often precludes interesting ideas from being developed. It is a sad state of affairs for many who work there but it is potentially disastrous for musicians, listeners and those who look to the CBC for some kind of cultural leadership. After all, they are the only federally mandated communications organisation which has the responsibility and power to reach Canadians from coast to coast. And it is our money (the taxpayers') which funds it.

The Rising Sun has been a leading catalyst in Montreal's jazz community for ten years. It is now hanging by a thread. Dou Dou Boicel, the owner, has experienced lean times since he moved the club's location to the old Rockhead's Paradise on St-Antoine Street West. He is now looking for investors to come to his aid.

The sounds of jazz can be heard every Saturday night between 8-10 PM on CKOR-FM Penticton, B.C. The programs are produced and narrated by Ralph Tapp. Tapp is also in the process of organising an Okanagan Jazz Society.

Trombonist Alfie Jones, once an active member of Toronto's jazz community where he played with Mike White's Imperial Jazz Band, died April 21. We also have a report that bassist Ian Henstridge died in March but have

no further details.

— John Norris

ODDS & SODS

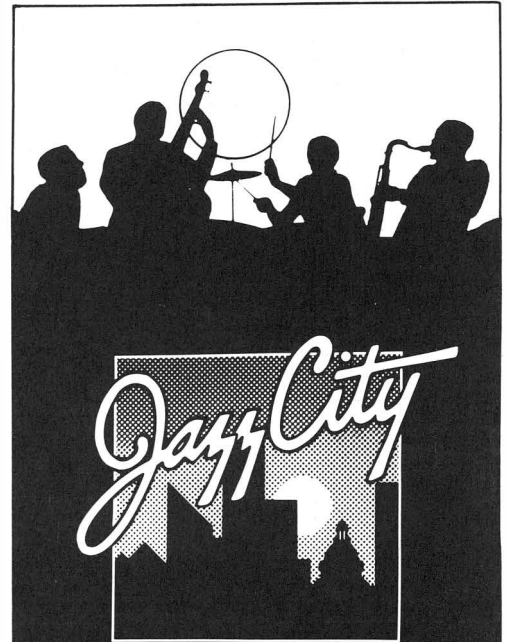
Violinist Leroy Jenkins celebrated his 50th birthday March 11 at a party held at the Outward Vision offices in NYC. He left April 1 for a two week tour of Austria and Italy...Lionel Hampton is celebrating his 74th birthday with a whirlwind tour of Europe and Japan where he will stop in 36 cities...David Baker, Chairman of the Jazz Studies Department at Indiana University, Bloomington, was honored with the "Hall of Fame" award at the National Association of Jazz Educators' convention in Chicago.

Malachi Thompson and Shamek Farrah gave two shows April 2 at Brooklyn's Gass Station Music Loft...Vibist Harry Sheppard was featured at Condon's April 18...The Harvey Swartz String Ensemble has been the resident group for the Sunday brunches at Lush Life recently...the Grace Testani Quintet with Jim McNeely, Chip Jackson, Peter Grant and Nydia "Liberty" Mata were heard April 22 at Mikell's...Drummer Jo Jones was honored April 23 at the Village Gate in an event spearheaded by Max Roach, Cobi Narita and Jamil Nasser... Bill Dixon appeared at the Third Street Music School on May 8...Sweet Basil organised a benefit for Saint Luke's rebuilding with an impressive array of New York musicians on May 3...The Universal Jazz Coalition celebrates Women in Jazz June 13-20 in various New York locations...Earl Warren is back from Europe and was heard in April at the West End with Dicky Wells...Pianist Patti Bown is active on the scene and she recently appeared at Sweet Basil and gave a concert in Central Park with Bob Cunningham and Frank Gant. She can be contacted at Universal Arts and Folklore, 463 West Street, No. 706-D, New York, N.Y. 10014... WKCR Radio programmed extensive features on Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington in April... Billy Bang, in duet and quartet with Charles Tyler, will perform at Inroads (150 Mercer Street, at Houston), July 1 to 3.

The Jazz Society of Philadelphia is holding its second annual festival July 10. Featured artists include Woody Shaw's Quintet, Rufus Harley, The Visitors and Reverie.

The Boston Improvisors Group (Joe Morris, c/o Barnes, 72 Foster St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138) is an artists cooperative recently formed in Boston. Their inaugural event was a seven day festival in various locations March 17-23... Miles Davis was scheduled to return to Boston April 1. A new double LP is supposed to be coming from CBS...Joanne Brackeen was featured April 13-14 at Studio Red Top... The Boston Phoenix published a jazz supplement March 23 with interesting articles and interviews about Anthony Davis, James Williams and Bruce Lundvall...The McCoy Tyner Quartet performed April 13 at Dartmouth College.

The Artpark Jazz Festival at Lewiston, N.Y. (Buffalo/Niagara Falls) has brought forward its weekend festival this year to August 13-15. Chick Corea and Gary Burton will be featured Friday night and the Ray Charles show will do the Saturday matinee at 2 PM. Teddy Wilson, Clark Terry, Red Norvo, Zoot Sims, Milt Hinton and Louis Bellson are the "Swing All Star Reunion" who will be on stage Saturday evening. The Cecil Taylor Unit will perform for the Sunday afternoon matinee and Mel Torme and Buddy Rich will join forces for the Sunday



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night finale. Additional jazz events at Artpark include the Boss Brass and Anita O'Day (July 27), The Preservation Hall Jazz Band (July 28) and Alberta Hunter (August 8).

The East Lansing Blues & Jazz Festival was held April 29 through May 2 with Willie Dixon, Bobo Jenkins, Jaco Pastorius, the Legendary Blues Band and Mighty Joe Young among the participants...The Sons of Bix were heard April 25 at Cincinnati's Cuvier Press Club in a concert sponsored by the Classic Jazz Society of Southwestern Ohio.

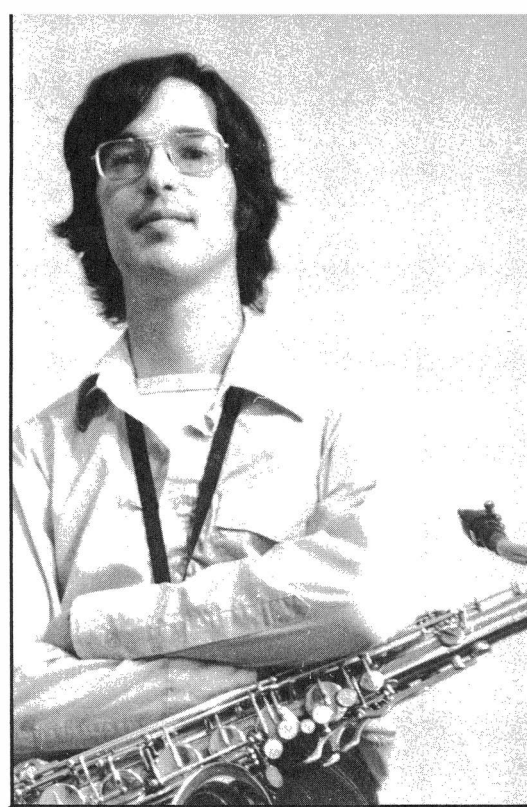
McCoy Tyner's group was at San Francisco's Keystone Korner April 20-25 and was followed by the Bobby Hutcherson All Stars from April 28-May 3. Harold Land, Curtis Fuller, Cedar Walton, Buster Williams and Billy Higgins completed the group - which was recorded live for Timeless Records...Season tickets are now on sale for this year's Monterey Festival (September 17-19). Write P.O. Box JAZZ, Monterey, Calif. 93940 for more information. Herb Wong is compiling a box set of musical highlights from the festival's previous years to celebrate the silver anniversary of the event.

Al Casey appeared at London's 100 Club April 25 with Alan Littlejohn's band as part of his British tour...Max Jones, one of the world's most respected writers on jazz officially retired from the Melody Maker recently but expects to remain active on a freelance basis.... Burton Greene's Quartet was on tour of Germany and Austria in May...Both the Moers and Groningen festivals take place May 28-30...This year's Montreux Festival runs from July 9 to 25 with jazz the featured music during the latter part of the event...Hundreds of musicians and thousands of fans will converge on the Hague for the annual summer madness known as the North Sea Festival July 16-18.

Don Tarrant, who compiled the Sonny Rollins complete discography being published in Discographical Forum (44 Belleville Road, London SW11 6QT, England) advises that the Village Gate session was recorded July 2, 1965 and that Izenzon is the correct spelling of the bassist. Finally the original issue of *Don't Stop The Carnival* should read RCA (E) RD/SF 7524. These are corrections/additions to the discography of Sonny Rollins on RCA published in Coda no. 183...Marion Brown remains an active musician and performs regularly as a solo saxophonist at a restaurant in Northampton, Mass. He recently published a cassette playing such standards as *Since I Fell For You*, *Black & Tan Fantasy*, *I Can't Get Started*, *Don't Take Your Love From Me* and *Monk's Mood/Epitaphy*. This cassette is available from P.O. Box 35, Northampton, Mass. 01061.

Yazoo Records has followed up its successful collection of Blues Cards with a 36 card set of "Early Jazz Greats." An LP will also be released soon in conjunction with the cards. They are available by mail for \$7.00 postpaid from Yazoo Records, 245 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014..."Art Pepper: Notes From A Survivor" is a 48 minute documentary film by Don McGlynn about the saxophonist. It was shown March 26 at Filmex '82 in Century City.

Coming from Fantasy this spring are LPs by Freddie Hubbard, Johnny Griffin, Bill Evans (mid-seventies solo and duo material), Art Pepper live at Maiden Voyage, Red Garland with George Coleman and a trio LP by Ron Carter, Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams...The Palo Alto jazz records are finally surfacing and the most recent release includes LPs by



Pepper Adams, Lanny Morgan, Terry Gibbs/Buddy DeFranco, Tee Carson, The Barone Brothers and Full Faith & Credit Big Band...Xanadu are readying LPs by Hampton Hawes, Kenny Barron, Coleman Hawkins, Georgie Auld and Peter Prague...Sackville now have available LPs by Archie Shepp ("I Know About The Life"), Frank Rosolino with the Ed Bickert Trio ("Thinking About You"), The Sackville All Stars with Buddy Tate, Jay McShann, Jim Galloway, Don Thompson and Terry Clarke ("Saturday Night Function") and the Bill Smith Ensemble ("The Subtle Deceit of the Quick Gloved Hand") as well as distributing a new Onari release by Paul Cram's Vancouver based band ("Blue Tales in Time")...Anthony Davis's Gramavision LP "Episteme" is now available but Oliver Lake's "Jump Up" has still to appear at this writing...Bob Szajner's Triad Productions is collaborating with John Snyder at Artists House in the production of new material. LPs by James Blood Ulmer and Gil Evans have been released but initially will only be sold through the mail (40 West 37th Street, New York, NY 10018). Planned for the future are some potentially fascinating albums: Ornette Coleman Quartet (with Cherry, Haden, Higgins); Ornette Newport '77 (2 LP set), solo piano by Gil Evans and more by Art Pepper and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet...New from The Smithsonian Institution are LPs by Art Tatum and Paul Whiteman...V.S.O.P. Records, P.O. Box 50082, Washington, DC 20024 is making available through the mail some obscure collectors' items in brand new pressings. Available now are "J.R. Monterose in Action" (1964 session), Elmo Hope (LPs from Celebrity 209 and Beacon 401) and Don Fagerquist (Mode 124)...Sacramento Jazz Records, 4900 Whitney Blvd., Rocklin, Calif. 95677 have a catalog of traditional jazz records with several LPs by the Fulton Street Band, Peanuts Hucko, Jimmie Rivers and Wilda Baughn...Alligator will be issuing an LP of new songs by Hound Dog Taylor which comes from 1971 and 1973

PAUL CRAM (photograph by David Lee)

sessions...England's JSP label is preparing a new Cleanhead Vinson LP...Gunter Hampel has released a two volume digital session of his big band on Birth Records 0034/0035...MPS has entered the Freddie Hubbard stakes with an LP called "Rollin'." This was recorded live at the Villaging Jazz Festival in May 1981.

Legendary drummer Sonny Greer died on March 23 in New York; he was 78...Bassist Tommy Bryant died January 2...Guitarist Gabor Szabo died February 26 in Budapest. He was 45. Singer Ann Richards died of gun shot wounds in Los Angeles April 1...Pianist Dave "Fat Man" Williams died in New Orleans March 13. — *compiled by John Norris*

ARTISTS CONTACT

This column lets musicians make their addresses known to those who want to contact them for concerts, workshops or recordings. Our regular advertising rates still apply to the music community in general, but musicians may purchase "Artists Contact" ads for a flat fee of \$8.00 per insertion (maximum 40 words). We also offer a single free insertion in the "Artists Contact" section to musicians who purchase a new Coda subscription. Payment must accompany order.

RAN BLAKE

Piano soloist / Ran Blake Quartet - Contact: Greg Silberman, Manager for Ran Blake, Silberman Associates, 11 Chestnut Place, Brookline, MA 02146. Telephone (617) 262-1120 X352.

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Bill Smith (reeds), David Lee (bass & cello), David Prentice (violin) - Onari Productions, 191 Howland Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5R 3B7 Canada. Telephone (416) 593-0269.

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This section is for individuals and organizations to advertise non-display items. Cost is 40¢ per word (\$8.00 minimum), *payment to be made when copy submitted*. Boxed ads \$1.00 extra per insertion. There is a 10% discount on ads purchased for 10 consecutive issues.

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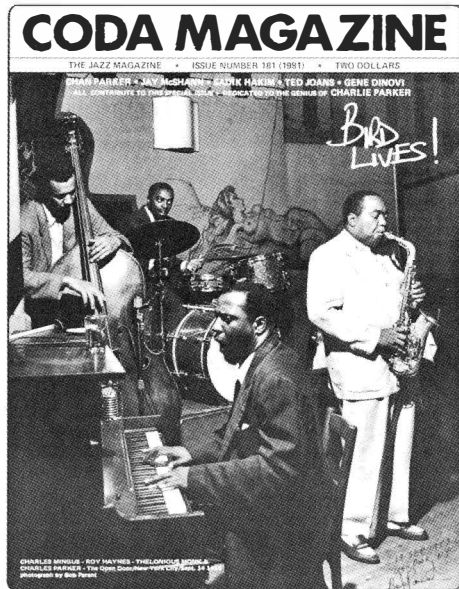


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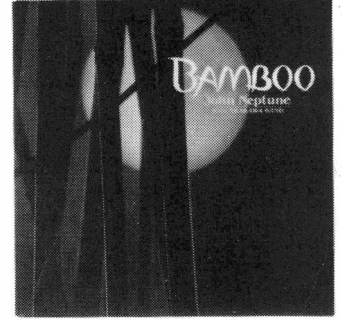
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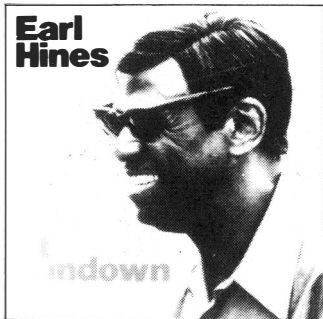
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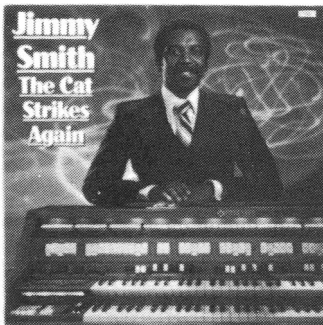
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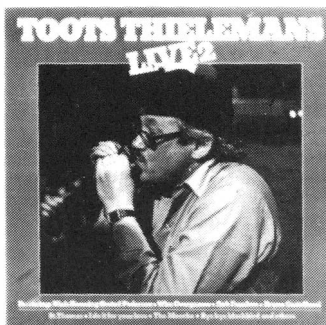
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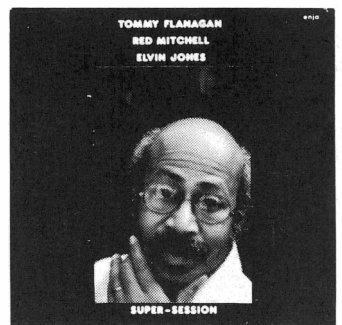
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