CODA MAGAZINE

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SONNY STITT * AL COHN * JOHN TCHICAI * JOHN ZORN * SAXOPHONE VARIATIONS
IN THE TRADITION * JAZZ LITERATURE * IN PERFORMANCE * RECORD REVIEWS
AROUND THE WORLD * FESTIVAL SCENES * CELEBRATING OUR THIRTIETH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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SONNY STITT (Photograph by Len Dobbin)

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SONNY STITT

I first heard Sonny Stitt on the radio in 1975. I was driving my car in New York City when he came on the airwaves playing a nimble alto saxophone solo. He opened with a rainfall of notes, then explored a theme that moved from bouncy melody to quicksilver improvisation, then raced to a crest, where he hovered at the zenith, and plummeted.

I was so overwhelmed by his virtuosity that I pulled over to the side of the road and waited until the recording was over.

I met Stitt two years later during a wild jam session in a Greenwich Village nightclub. I was a young black man curious about the world of Jazz, and had been spending the past year going to clubs, talking with musicians and discovering at least a part of how they lead their lives.

Unlike some musicians, who I found could be stand-offish, Stitt was approachable and personable. On this night, I arrived at the crowded club to find Stitt sitting at a piano between sets playing a nonchalant rendition of *Round Midnight* while a small West Indian man from the audience sang along in sing-song accent. The crowd enjoyed the episode, laughing and spurring the man on.

I went up to Stitt afterward, introduced myself and asked if I would be able to speak to him later on about the world of Jazz. He was a tall, wiry man with a trim silver and black afro, eyes underlined by half moons, and cheeks sprinkled with dark freckles.

"What do you play?" he asked in a deep, resonant voice.

"I don't play anything," I said.

"You ain't a musician?"

"No, sir."

"You from a magazine?"

"No, sir."

"Then why do you want to speak with me?"

"I heard you play on the radio and think you are a great musician. I know you've been playing for a long time and wondered if you wouldn't mind telling me a bit about jazz and the jazz world," I said, anticipating his refusal.

He laughed and thought for a moment when someone from a backstage door signaled to him. "I have to get ready for the next set. But stick around and I'll try to arrange something," he said.

I waited through the next set in a star-struck daze. Now that he had consented to speak with me, I had not the slightest idea what I would say. The set seemed to take forever.

During the session, Stitt allowed a number of local musicians to join him on stage and jam, every so often staging playful cutting sessions with one or another saxophonist. At one point he had five saxophones and a trumpeter jamming together.

"This is like a jazz laboratory," one saxophonist said. "Stitt is one of the few cats who will help young musicians."

At the end of the session, I waited until the club was empty and approached Stitt as he was packing up his alto and tenor saxophones. "Oh, you're still around." he said.

"Would you be able to talk," I said.

"Man, I'm sorry, but I'm too tired to talk right now. How about some other day, 'cause right now I'm gonna put on my cowboy hat and go home to bed, ya dig?"

"When can I call you?"

"I'm stayin' at the President Hotel. I always stay at the President Hotel. Just ask for my room, but don't call too early because your daytime is my nighttime," he said. And he put on his white cowboy hat, shunned off someone who tried to help him with his instruments, and with alto in his left hand and tenor in his right, he ambled out to a waiting cab.

The President Hotel on 48th Street and Eighth Avenue in Times Square was a small seedy lodging that looked as though it might have been elegant a long time back. Next to it was a rundown restaurant that I later learned was a hooker hangout at night. Along Eighth Avenue were liquor stores, nightclubs, delicatessens, and several posh hotels.

I entered the President and asked the clerk to ring Stitt. "Yeah," he answered. I identified myself and he told me to come up. Upon exiting the elevator, I stepped over a liquor bottle in the hallway and passed a woman knocking on a room door. I knocked on Stitt's door and he asked who it was in a suspicious voice.

I identified myself again and he opened the door, saying, "Sorry, but some woman is going from room to room trying to sell herself."

He was dressed in shorts and undershirt. At 53 years of age, Stitt stood before me in middle-age splendor: handsome face, pot belly, skinny legs, and neck permanently craned forward, a result of years of having saxophones weigh on it.

In the room were a king-sized bed, a large chair, upon which was laid his suit, a bureau with his keys, change, and reeds, and a color television set, which would stay on all day. Near the bed was a gallon jug of Hennesey cognac. In the corner of the room were his horns, neatly laid against the wall.

This was the first of several talks we would have. During these times, I did not take notes of the conversations. So much of what I'm writing is based on memory and some notes that I was able to jot down when riding the subway back home.

Did you know Coleman Hawkins, I asked.

"Sure I knew Bean. He was like a father to me, and Lester Young too. Sometimes, when I would have a little too much to drink, Bean would take away the bottle and say, 'C'mon Sonny, let's go eat some fish.' He thought eating fish was a good way of getting sober. He always said that when someone drank too much.

"We were like a family, ya dig? There was also Uncle Ben (Webster), and brothers Gene (Ammons) and Dexter (Gordon). I was the youngest. We drank a lot and played a lot of music that most people never heard. We lived to hear a lot of false stories told about us. Shit, you should only know the story," he said laughing.

how about Charlie Parker, I asked. Although Stitt developed his playing style independently, it is so similar to Bird's style that throughout his career people have compared the two. When Parker became ill in 1945, Dizzy Gillespie even hired Stitt to replace him partly because of the similarity of their sound. The comparisons became so annoying that Stitt in the 1940s switched to the tenor as his main instrument.

Stitt told me the story of his first meeting Parker in Kansas City in 1943, a story that has been noted in Robert George Reisner's "Bird", a biography of Parker.

"I had heard his recordings with Jay McShann and was anxious to meet him. When I learned he was at 18th and Vine, I rushed over and caught him coming out of a drug store. He was carrying an alto and wearing dark glasses and a blue overcoat with six white buttons. I said, 'Are you Charlie Parker?' He said he was and invited me to jam at a place called Chauncey Owenman's. We played for an hour until the owner came in, when Bird signaled with a little flurry of notes that it was time for me to go. He said, 'You sure sound like me.' And I said, 'You sure sound like me.'

Over the years Stitt became one of the most prolific recording artists in jazz history, heard on dozens of albums as a leader and with the top names of his time. Stitt was one of the first saxophonists to experiment recording with an electronic saxophone, and also composed many of his tunes. In one of his last recordings, "The Last Stitt Session / Vol. 2", I enjoy his alto playing on the ballads, *At Last* and *As Time Goes By*, where he shows his skill as an interpreter of ballads.

During other conversations, Stitt talked about missing his wife, Pamela, and family and dog, Jazz, back home in Chillum, Maryland, and about his mother in Saginaw, Michigan.

He also talked about the physical and mental drain of touring so frequently, saying, "Man, sometimes I don't know what time it is. I'll wake up and not know what city I'm in. I'll think I'm in California and I'll be in New York."

Born in Boston on Feb. 2, 1924, Stitt was raised in Saginaw as Edward Boatner Jr. According to Ira Gitler's "Jazz Masters Of The 40s", his father, Edward Boatner, was a music teacher at Wylie and Sam Houston Colleges in Texas and led a one-thousand-voice chorus at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

His mother, whom he called "Big Sonny",

played and taught piano and organ. His brother, Clifford, is a concert pianist, and his sister, Adelaide, is a singer. Stitt took his surname from his mother's second husband, Robert Stitt.

Stitt began to play piano at age 7 and would later switch to clarinet, and then to alto and tenor saxophone. A major stylistic influence was Lester Young.

Stitt and his siblings helped to make his local high school band a standout across Michigan, he said, noting that "If you go to my high school, you'll find that to this day my face is the only black face on the wall among a row of pictures of the school's white achievers."

He recalled how he began playing with local bands at age 14, accompanied by his mother. He began traveling with bands at age 17 and eventually took part in a flourishing jazz scene in Detroit in the 1940s that included Thad and Hank Jones, Milt Jackson and others.

By 1945, he moved to New York and took Parker's place in Dizzy Gillespie's band. According to Gitler, some excellent solos from the period can be heard on the 1946 recordings "That's Earl Brother" and "Oop Bop Sh'Bam."

Stitt was voted the new star on the alto in 1947 by the jazz experts of Esquire Magazine. This was the same time that he experienced narcotics problems. According to Gitler, Stitt was admitted to the Federal Narcotics Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, until 1949.

Stitt would tell me of a time when he begged a New York City judge to lock him up to save himself from heroin. He recalled this incident during a talk in his room, as he sat in a chair with his stocking feet propped up against the bed.

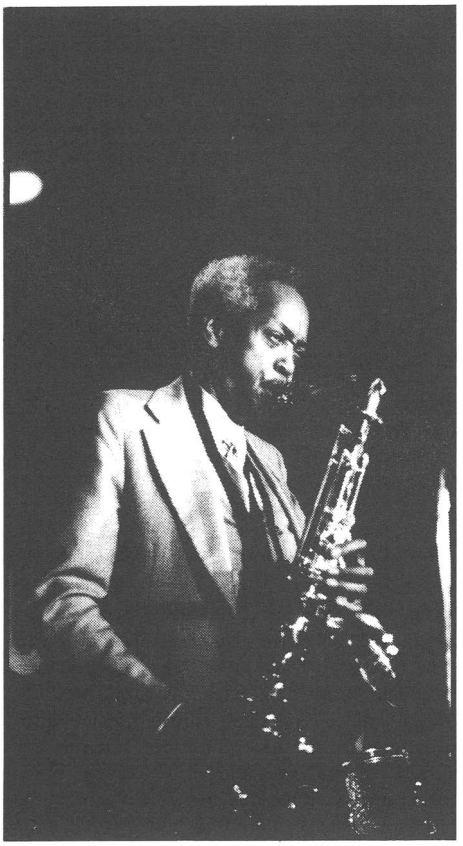
"I don't like to think about it." he said, wincing in pain. "I don't know why I got involved with it. I guess because of peer pressure, the pressure to perform well, and the need for a crutch. It was an ugly thing. I used to wake up on the floor with the needle still in my arm! One day I got up off the floor and started walking down the streets of New York.

"I must have walked 100 blocks like I was in a trance when I came to this courthouse. I burst in the courtroom and gave myself up to the judge. I said, 'Your honor, I don't want to be like this. Please help me.' He ordered me locked up for 28 days until I could clean myself out," he related.

"When I got out, I put out the word that I was clean and didn't want to see no more drugs. One day a so-called friend ran into me on the street and said he had something for me. He handed me a needle and a bag. I threw it on the ground, stepped on it, and told him to never come near me again."

From 1950 to 1952, Stitt co-led a band with Gene Ammons and the two became famous for their fierce tenor saxophone battles. From the 1950s through the end of his career, Stitt would spend the great bulk of his career touring as a single, picking up bands wherever he played. This was the case when I met him.

While waiting in his room for a gig to begin one night, I remember Stitt practising some numbers he would play later that day. In particular, I recall him standing with one foot on the bed blowing away on the tune *Tico Tico*. His fingers flew over the keys, and his stomach expanded and contracted as he blew. Then he came to a dead stop and wiped his forehead, saying, "Whew, that's a tough number."



Stitt's zest for life seemed to be as vibrant as his playing, and likewise for sharing his enjoyment of life and music with others. This was illustrated during a conversation he had with three young musicians and myself when being given a lift home from a gig. He talked about the bonding between them during the various sets, noting how the interplay was lacking in the first set, but how it had blossomed in the second set as their trust in one another grew.

When a taxi zipped by narrowly missing our car, Stitt jokingly talked about being scared into having a second heart attack. The musicians asked about the first one.

"I was in a coma for six days. That's right, I was just about dead for six days. When I woke up I was in a hospital, but I thought I was still in my house. I turned to the nurse and said, 'Where's my basement? I wanna make a drink,'" he said laughing. Then getting serious, he added, "Man, when something like that happens you straighten up your act quick."

In time, Stitt allowed me to carry his saxophones for him. To a young man, this was quite a treat. I can still see him ambling down Eighth Avenue with his cowboy hat on and a trumpeter named Sam by his side. I would stay close behind jealously guarding a sax in either hand. Hotel doormen shook his hand and people hailed him from across the street. It was quite a scene.

I accompanied him to respectable clubs and despicable dens. This was a point in his career when dates at the major clubs were not always to be had. One time I went with him to a weird nightclub in Times Square.

A doorman opened an eye-slot, looked us up and down and opened the door, slamming it locked behind us. The large room smelled of marijuana and cigarettes. In the dim light I could see men in ornate suits leaning against the wall with tired-looking women by their sides. Peeping in a crack in the bathroom door, I saw a man and woman fornicating on the toilet. One man paced the floor, hawking – "I got the finest reefer in New York City."

To make matters worse, Stitt and his band had to play on a stage where the ceiling dropped so low that you could barely see their heads. Stitt played a sad blues number and few people paid attention to him. I shared what I detected to be depression and humiliation in his song. But a short while later, seeming to have reconciled himself to the place, he began playing a hot number.

His face beamed as his lips seemed to fuse with the sax, producing inspired music even in that den. The music raced, danced, peeped, honked, and soon all heads were turned to him. Assorted "uumphs!" and "Yeeahs!" came from the crowd as Stitt blew the night away.

One of the last times I saw Stitt was just before the funeral of Roland Kirk. I went to his room and found him wiping tears from his eyes as he practised *My Buddy*, a number he would later play in tribute to Kirk. We took a taxi to the funeral at St. Peter's Church and during the ride Stitt began crying again.

"Another one of us gone. You're so young, you wouldn't understand. It's tough to watch your friends die off one by one," he said. "It's like I'm getting to be the last one, and it ain't no fun being the last one. Sometimes I get itchy to join the others on that band in the sky."

Stitt died of cancer on Thursday, July 22, 1982, at the Washington Hospital Center in Washington D.C. He was 58 years old. Sometimes, when I listen carefully to the rainfall, I think I can hear him blowing with that band in the sky.

SONNY STITT (Photograph by Peter Danson)

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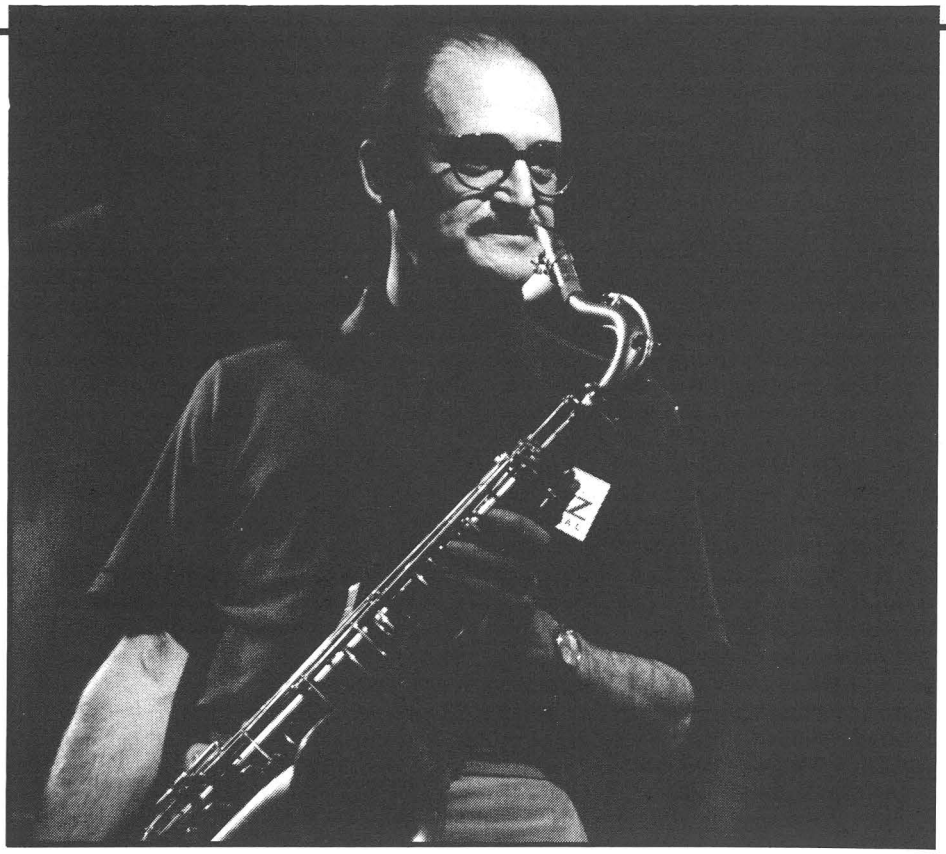
The saxophone, after several decades as the leading voice of jazz, seems to be loosening its grip. The resurgent interest in jazz these days is an eclectic one, involving an exotic mix of earlier styles, new ideas, electronic advancements, intellectual probings and fusion with everything. However, while the sax, especially the tenor, may have to relinquish its dominance, it will never lose its prominence. There are a couple of reasons for this. For one, it more closely approximates the human voice than other instruments, thereby gaining a special quality of expressiveness. For another, it's almost exclusively a jazz instrument: jazz and the saxophone need each other. A sampling of some recent record releases, covering both new and old performances, displays the power that the saxophone still has as a single instrument in a musical world increasingly interested in other sounds. In this spread of recent releases, made up of numerous new recordings and a few rare reissues, we encounter musicians of all ages, at varying points in their careers, and at different points in jazz's timeline.

Few musicians can do better at displaying a timeless quality than **Benny Carter**. Prominent since the 1920's as a composer, arranger, leader and instrumentalist, he has continued to collect experience and invest it wisely, especially in the playing of the alto sax, his primary instrument among several. On "Wonderland" he sticks to that horn almost exclusively, playing in his instantaneously recognizable sound and style. He's in typically good form as he makes his way through seven pieces, four of which are his own, with *Misty, Three Little Words* and a medium-tempo riffing blues rounding out the date. The four originals are given their first recording by their composer in this session. Recorded in 1976, when he was a youthful 69, they are only now getting their initial release. The piano-bass-drums combination of Ray Bryant, Milt Hinton and Grady Tate is present on all the tracks, with Bryant making some outstanding contributions. On three numbers the group is expanded to include Sweets Edison and Lockjaw Davis, who get some solo room along with playing a few charted passages. A multitude of jazzmen have become composer/instrumentalists since Benny Carter made his start in jazz's infancy, but, as this record demonstrates, he's always managed to do it better than most.

Turning to the tenor sax, two old masters who have turned up on recent releases are Buddy Tate and Flip Phillips. While they share the same age, both being some eight years younger than Carter, their new albums here were recorded six years apart. The **Buddy Tate** date goes back to 1981, following immediately on the heels of a pair of sessions with Jay McShann and Jim Galloway, which emerged on Sackville 3028. This group produced some highly-charged music, and the sessions that resulted in "The Ballad Artistry of Buddy Tate" were conceived as a substantial change of pace and mood. Don Thompson's bass and Terry Clarke's drums were carried over from the earlier sessions and, to add the right texture for the ballad setting, Ed Bickert's guitar was brought in. While Tate has always handled ballads with sensitivity and depth, dating at least from the late 1930's when he took over Herschel Evans chair in the Basie Band, it took till now for an album to emerge that concentrates entirely on the ballad side of his work. Though he could go it alone and make a success of anything he plays, the sympathetic efforts of his three companions provide an ideal mounting. Bickert, given a major role, elevates the results into a consistently effective series of performances. The choice of songs reflect taste and quality. *Darn That Dream, A Foggy Day* and *Yesterdays* have been done often before, but seldom better. Somewhat rarer and very welcome are *If We Never Meet Again*, one of Louis Armstrong's collaborations, and Ellington and Strayhorn's *Isfahan*. Tate exchanges the tenor for his slightly astringent clarinet to play *Cry Me A River* and, for a



closer, he takes us out of our ballad reverie with a slow-moving blues. He uses his half-century of experience to add the structure and finesse that are needed to make the playing of jazz ballads an art form of its own.

The other elder statesman in this assortment of saxophonists, **Flip Phillips**, turns up in a session that joins him with another tenor player, one from the new generation. **Scott Hamilton**, who has been on the scene for a decade now, is Phillips' junior by nearly forty years. The latter has mellowed in the decades that followed the exciting Herman First Herd period and the JATP hysteria era, without losing any of the inner core magma. The proof comes on the opening track with his highly-charged version of Sweet Georgia Brown, here called *A Sound Investment*, as is the album itself. He plays with an impressive command of his instrument and his ideas. Hamilton, now an old hand, has been sharpening his teeth for a long time and has arrived at a point where he's completely his own man. The two are a good match for each other, emerging from the same tradition and guided by the same beacons. In fact, if you don't pay close attention, you can lose track of which of them is soloing. Their tone is somewhat different, but otherwise they're a close match. If putting them together sounded good in theory, the results here must be even better. Five of the eight tracks are Phillips' originals, mostly riff patterns that form a platform for their occasional arranged ensemble passages, numerous chase choruses and extensive solos. One contribution, *With Someone New*, is a winsome ballad that dates back to the Herman days. Of the three outsiders' tracks *Comes Love* and the Goodman-Christian *A Smooth One* were built to swing, and *Maria Elena* is made to look that way with the treatment it gets. The four-piece rhythm team is the Scott Hamilton regulars: John Bunch at the piano, Chris Flory on guitar, Phil Flanigan on bass, and Chuck Riggs on drums. Bunch and Flory get occasional solo shots and know what to do about it, but its essentially a two-tenor show. Not surprisingly, the entire album has a swing pulse. The two leaders take a coordinated approach to the music that shows forethought and close attention to what each other is doing, playing both to and with each other.

Also taking the tenor duet route are **Al Cohn** and **Spike Robinson** on "Henry B. Meets Alvin G." Perhaps no one today is better known for his two-tenor work than Al Cohn, dating back to those classic years when he teamed with Zoot Sims. No comparison need be drawn between Sims and Robinson, since the latter makes his own kind of mainstream way. Just a few years younger than Cohn, his principal occupation was engineering until he retired from his job at age 56 just recently. He has found numerous occasions to play, such as at Dick Gibson's parties in Colorado, which is close to his home, and most particularly in England, where he is much better known than in North America. Now he is emerging, a late bloomer who has found the key to having something to say on his horn and is devoting all his time to it. Cohn, of course, is close to the Tate-Phillips tier when it comes to seniority, but is ten years younger than they – he only seems to have been around as long. There is considerable difference between the two tenors here: Cohn with his familiar hard tone and Robinson much airier. Cohn is in command of his abilities as much as ever, and it's a welcome experience to hear him in this two-tenor pairing. The music, recorded in 1987, has a classic, timeless sound, much like the Phillips-Hamilton date. The arranging framework, opening the way to extensive solos, is presumably attributable to Cohn. However, the emphasis is very heavy on solos and the material, though shaped by Cohn and embellished by both, is all from other sources. As a consequence, this set doesn't display the same cohesiveness as the Phillips date, but has a more varied character. The sources include Charlie Parker and Bob Brookmeyer specials, a Harry Edison blues, a Johnny Mandel tune, a ballad medley, and a couple of old standards in *Once In A While* and *Bye Bye Blues*. Their rhythm support knows their work, with Richard Wyands getting in a few sympathetic piano passages and Steve LaSpina and Akira Tana tending to the bass and drums. It's an altogether stimulating and pleasing session that brings Spike Robinson in from the outer circle. The pair seldom leave each other alone, as with Hamilton and Phillips, constantly listening to each other and playing together, whether in sequence or in joint choruses, where they bedevil the music.

If you don't try to draw the parallel lines too tightly, there are a number of similarities in the lives and careers of Spike Robinson and **Art Ellefson**, whose album, "The Art Ellefson Quartet", is his third as leader and his first since 1981. They are almost the same age, and Robinson's Colorado background is matched by Ellefson's early years in western Canada, not the most promising locations for embryo jazz musicians. But subsequent years in other locales, especially in England, have served both to good advantage. For some years now Ellefson has been settled in Ontario and has availed himself of various kinds of jazz activities while putting in a day's work with an electronics company. Going from background to musical performance, the similarities between these two tenor players comes to an end. Ellefson slices into his material with a hard edge to his tone, an urgency to his delivery, and a fondness for cascades of split notes. particularly true at high speed tempos, the characteristics are still in evidence on his ballad tracks. He roars through *Secret Love* on the first track, putting down enough notes to supply the whole album. After that, things settle down, finding a grooving medium tempo for *Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams* and a slow contemplative tempo for *Here's That Rainy Day*, a tenor-piano duet where addition of bass and drums would have been not simply superfluous but actually intrusive. *Summer Serenade*, credited to Benny Carter, is good material that works nicely. Particularly effective are *Have You?*, a ballad by his son, Lee, and his two originals, especially *Deelee's Blues*. One can't live by originals alone,

AL COHN (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

but the composer/instrumentalist combination certainly accounts for his best statements in this set. An added quality that helps distinguish this album is the piano playing of Tommy Flanagan. He contributes both deft accompaniment and perceptive solos, providing choruses to be listened to and thought about. Dave Young contributed his long experience and abilities on the bass and drummer Barry Elmes is a good fit in this group. Art Ellefson may not cut a new niche in jazz's totem pole, but he can decorate it well, as this album demonstrates.

Ellefson's compatriot, **Fraser MacPherson**, is more widely known as a result of his many club and tour appearances and his numerous recordings, of which "Honey And Spice" is the latest. He is the epitome of the mainstream tenorist, sporting a knowledge of all the jazz standards and ballads and a firm command of his instrument. Contemporary with the others under discussion here, he's been playing for decades and has a highly developed touch and understanding of his material. The tunes are familiar – but they are good old friends, not tedious bores. It's never bad to have Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Eubie Blake, Irving Berlin and Richard Rodgers in your repertoire. Equally important is having guitarist Oliver Gannon on your team. The two are long-time associates and play together as one. Steve Wallace on bass and John Sumner on drums complete the Vancouver-based quartet, providing outstanding support. The main attention, of course, is on the tenor sax and the guitar, and they never fail to stimulate each other and the listener. MacPherson moves comfortably through an idiom he knows, appreciates, and has mastered thoroughly. It's interesting to note that on all these records the leader has on hand one key player in very close support. The two tenor combinations of Robinson-Cohn and Phillips-Hamilton are obvious, but Tommy Flanagan's piano is equally important to Ellefson, as is Ray Bryant with Carter, and Ed Bickert's guitar with Tate is just as key as Oliver Gannon's is with MacPherson. While any one of them could carry a session alone, they clearly benefit from the company of another stimulating player.

When it comes to "**Marian McPartland** Plays The Music Of Billy Strayhorn", the team idea is still at work, albeit inverted. It's the piano player's date, with the added texture of **Jerry Dodgion**'s alto sax. Dodgion, like most of the others here, came on the scene in the 1950's. After spending that decade on the West Coast, he moved to New York in 1961, which has been his base of operations ever since. Working in various contexts, he can fit into different modes, which works to the advantage of this project. Here we have that risky proposition – a concept album. Done right, it can have good impact, but the chances of its falling flat are high. Never fear. Playing the music of Billy Strayhorn is an inviting idea, and Marian McPartland is a tasteful and inventive pianist. The addition of the alto sax is a natural fit. Strayhorn wrote not simply with Johnny Hodges in mind, but with Hodges' instrument in mind. That ambience is captured here, without Dodgion in the least playing as Hodges did. He plays on most, but not all, of the tracks, and never fails the music. The solos are all perceptive and the arranging touches that give structure to the music are his. Completing the quartet are Steve LaSpina on bass and Joey Baron on drums, the pair doing a stand-out job on a carefully prepared recording. *Intimacy Of The Blues, U.M.M.G.* and *Raincheck* are given a joyous medium tempo treatment that swings hard. The atmospheric nature of *Isfahan* is richly reflected, as is the delicacy of *A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing*. These slow mood pieces, like *After All*, which is a piano-alto duet, inevitably evoke the memory of Hodges, though not the sound. *Take The "A" Train* gets a quirky inventive handling that's delightfully playful. The other three tracks are reserved for the McPartland piano, two as solo and *Lush Life* with rhythm included, giving ample room for her graceful interpretations. Among jazz composers, Billy Strayhorn is one of those few at the very top, and this album reminds us in admirable fashion of just how good he was.

The records discussed so far have all been of recent origin – conceived and recorded as complete long playing albums, and led by musicians of long experience. In contrast, "Bebop Revisited, Volume 6" takes us back to a time when this form of jazz was young and so were the musicians playing with it. Also, with the LP format still to make its way into the world, it's the era of the three-minute 78 RPM disc and the four-tune recording session. Thus we're given three or four fleeting tracks by two obscure tenorists and two who already had a reputation and expanded on it. Binding the four sessions together is the presence of producer Bob Shad, who set up these dates at different times for different small labels. Least known of these players is **Frank Socolow** who, by the time of this session in 1945, had played through several of the big bands and, at the age of 22, was impressionably caught in the stylistic cross-currents of the time. The band here gets its bop coloration through the presence of Freddie Webster on trumpet and Bud Powell on piano, with Leonard Gaskin on bass and Irv Kluger on drums. *Reverse The Changes*, contributed by Webster and others, and two standards cover this date, with the fourth number lost. Everyone plays well, with Socolow sounding like Hawkins, Byas, Auld and others, and Powell sounding like Powell. They develop a nice groove that reflects well the more settled sounds of the new music developing in those turbulent times. Socolow remained active in music in the 1950's but seems eventually to have turned to other pursuits prior to his death several years ago. **John Hardee** teaches music to this day but, like Socolow, his peak jazz activity belongs to his youth. The sides here come from one of several recording sessions he made in the latter 1940's. His is a rough-and-ready approach, applied in full force to a pair of originals and tempered into a strong pulsing treatment of the two ballads. He's in the company of Al Haig's working trio of the time, that had Clyde Lombardi on bass and Tiny Kahn on drums. Haig was another pianist showing the way along the bop path and gives Hardee a solid base for working out his statements. This is another session that could be valued for its rarity alone, but happens to be good by any measure.

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Paul Quinichette, for their part, both became well-known in the jazz world. In 1947, when these recordings by Davis were made, he had several years experience under his belt, though the big years with Basie and beyond still lay ahead. Here he has the distinguished company of Al Haig once again, John Collins on guitar, Gene Ramey on bass and Denzil Best on drums. Three of the four cuts are Lockjaw originals played with his characteristic abandon. While he's in good enough form, there's plenty of him available and better. There's merit to the date, however, due to the group efforts and the contributions of Collins and Haig. This catches Davis in his mid-twenties at a time when his attack was getting firmed up; an aggressive player, there were some excesses that were the price to be paid for getting some exceptional passages. Both are here. **Paul Quinichette** is another story. A good musician who knew what he was doing, he both benefited and suffered from playing so closely in the Lester Young mode. This session, a few years later than the others on this disc, is placed in 1952, by which time the Vice-Pres had passed thirty. The maturity of both the musical style and the man's personal approach to the music are evident on all four tracks, whether it's the two ballads or the two originals. Once again, it's the pianist who forges the link to the bop world, this time Kenny Drew. It's an all-swing rhythm section with Freddie Green on guitar, Gene Ramey on bass and Gus Johnson on drums. Bebop Revisited may make a convenient umbrella title for an album, but the contents are both more and less than an all-bop festival. By any name, the performances are all worth the listening.

Situated mid-way between the young tenors working things out in bebop's springtime and the old hands making current new albums is "The Complete Blue Note 45 Sessions of **Ike Quebec**". This three-record set covers the total output of three sessions recorded between 1959 and 1962. Quebec's popularity in the 1940's was succeeded in the 1950's by obscurity, heroin addiction, and the lack of recording dates and good jobs. At the time of these sessions he was approaching 40, which would be middle years for most people but, as it turned out, in his case was close to the point of death. Blue Note brought him back into the daylight, primarily through these recordings, made expressly for issue as 45 RPM singles

destined primarily for the juke box trade. Organ combos were a popular sound of the time, and that became the context of the Quebec dates. The first session, from July 1, 1959, had Edwin Swanston as organist and a rhythm team distinguished by the presence of guitarist Skeeter Best. There was one standard played in this session and one obscure ballad, the rest being a mix of Quebec blues and a pair of pieces contributed by organist Swanston, who plays with suitable restraint throughout. Whatever Quebec had been doing during the fifties, it only served to improve his playing. His adeptness at phrasing and dynamics was used to good effect to create beautifully constructed statements. The well-conceived, well-structured solo and, indeed, whole performance of a tune were a hallmark of his playing. The best example from the first session, despite a fade-out, is *Dear John*, a second and longer version of *Later For The Rock*, where his second solo begins with power-backed understatement that builds almost imperceptibly into a full-force storm – always assertive, but always with restraint and control. It's the kind of performance that could cause aspiring tenor players to turn to another instrument. The remaining sessions – September 25, 1960, with Sir Charles Thompson playing the organ, Milt Hinton on bass and J.C. Heard on drums, and February 5 and 13, 1962, with Earl VanDyke at the organ, plus guitar and drums without a bass – were different in nature. The emphasis on blues vehicles is replaced by a stress on ballads, presumably attributable to a reassessment of the market. With only two exceptions, all the tracks are ballads and pop standards from the jazz repertoire, mostly of the superior kind. This provides Quebec with the opportunity to play sensitive structured renditions that should stand forever as examples of how to play the tenor saxophone. He plays romantically, with feeling, but with the sugar left out. The organists recognize their role and play supportively but discreetly, with Thompson, in particular, doing a notable job of complementing Quebec's efforts. It's unquestionably Ike Quebec's show, and the way he conceptualizes each performance is unfailingly striking. Most of these sides are reaching LP for the first time and some of them were never issued on the 45's for which they were intended. It's another of those great gifts, expertly packaged with extensive commentary, for which Mosaic has become justly famous.

It would be overstating the case to say that all these records are significant. But they all have something to offer, contrasting various essentially mainstream performances that display the diversity and power of the saxophone. These musicians have been captured at different points in their lives and personal development, playing in contexts that change as the idiom has developed and changed. Bound to their origins and environment, they have all emerged with an individuality that makes each listening experience different. – *Dick Neeld*

JAZZ LITERATURE

KINDS OF BLUE: Musical Memoirs
by Al Young
Creative Arts Book Company
(San Francisco, 1984)

This book is a dream come true for someone who writes about music. The author takes all of the qualities so beloved in music and puts them to use in a most literate (and literary) way. I got so excited while finishing this book that I decided to write this review out on my acoustic (i.e.: manual) typewriter because I didn't want the organic, breezy, true to life feeling to be buzzed away by the electric hum. (I even put on "Jazz at Massey Hall" to accompany me, with its version of *All The Things You Are* – but more on that later.)

There is a double message in the subtitle "musical memoirs". Mr. Young shapes each essay around a particular piece of music or experience with music or musicians as he did in his earlier, companion book "Bodies and Soul". What makes this book musical is not the subject matter so much as Mr. Young's writing. Cover to cover, "Kinds of Blue" contains some of the most lyrical writing about any subject to come along in a long time.

Writing about music is not always easy. My feeling is that you have to feel the music in order to say something truly coherent about it. That's what I try to do anyway. That is why Mr. Young's book is so inspirational. There are other styles as well. The public-relations style of music writing or the analytical/academic style. One tends to prop it up like a neon sign outside a bar, the other dissects it on the lab table. The "Kind of Blue" style works best for me because there is a big piece of the writer himself in the work.

As a case in point "Kinds of Blue" contains highly personal essays that use music as the pivot to penetrating life experiences in a creative way. Some of the pieces are highly poetic, for Mr. Young is a poet. Some of the pieces are novelistic, for Mr. Young writes fiction. Some of the works were published as liner notes and are therefore informative. They are all beautiful. (Have I said this already?!)

The chapters cover a wide spread of the author's life. "Java Jive (The Ink Spots, 1943)" deals with impressions at a very young age in rural Mississippi, where he was born. "Maiden Voyage (Herbie Hancock, 1969)" takes us on a steamer to the Iberian Peninsula. "Green Onions (Booker T & the MG's, 1962)" reflects on time spent on the job at a biology lab. Wherever, whatever, it is the music (sweet music) that comes singing through. You are reading these pieces and finding yourself playing back the tunes in your head as accompaniment and it's never obtrusive. It belongs there. I love that.

Maybe this book could have had a sub-sub title like "(a love story)" or something to that effect. Love is the quality that consistently runs like a royal purple thread throughout the book. Music and love go together so well anyway.

It is really hard to say which of these chapters I loved most (since this seems to be turning into its own love story) but I will mention "Cold Sweat", "The Sidewinder", "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love" which is really about Charles Mingus, and "But Beautiful" (about Kenny Dorham). The final chapter "All The Things You Are" really stopped me in my tracks. Listen to this:

"... I lay thinking about all the things we truly are; thinking about the vast, crystalline silence of the desert and how it restively nurtures reflections."

And this:

"Tell me about promised kisses, springtime, September, the desert, lightning storms, rain, the power of poetry and song and why the lonely winter seems long. Slowly tell me all the things you are, we are, I am – and sing it."

GO AHEAD AL! – *Brian Auerbach*

THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE: MUSICAL MEMOIRS
by Al Young
(Creative Arts Book Company $8.95)

Things Ain't What They Used To Be is the third in Al Young's wonderful series of musical memoirs. Like its predecessors, **Bodies And Soul** and **Kinds of Blue**, these 40-odd, song-titled autobiographical essays have a great deal to say about how life is really lived. Young's "petite madeleine" for conjuring up remembrance is jazz, Motown, pop songs, but mainly jazz. His essay, "Nostalgia in Times Square" begins:

"In this Charles Mingus version of urban renewal, you can hear trucks rumbling and traffic moaning and somebody's heart that seems to have gotten run over in the scramble. For me, it's all so clear, not unlike the way life is when you've just turned draft age in a world laid out for one-way wandering."

The genius of this book, these books, this form of musical memoir, is that the reader gets the opportunity to re-experience the moments and the music along with Al, whose stream-of-conscious recollections sweep down byways and back roads with refreshing unpredictability.

There's real joy here too in Young's writing – a sheer pleasure to read. Almost as great a pleasure as listening to King Pleasure's "Moody's Mood For Love". In his essay on that subject, we glimpse Al and his youthful running buddies from Hutchins Intermediate School in Detroit stepping through the streets singing Moody's Mood For Love "in loud unison with a vengeance calculated to blow grown people and other squares clean away." Within a few short pages, we also glean a felicitous history of that tune in which we are now informed how it first originated as a jazz solo, a chord progression that James Moody bounced off Jimmy McHugh's "I'm In The Mood For Love". And how Moody's solo, like so many other jazz solos, might have gone unnoticed by the world but for Clarence Beck (King Pleasure), who heard the European recording of the tune in East St. Louis and took note by writing lyrics which were to change forever the hapless face of the 'cutsie' American love song. We learn too, of King Pleasure and Jon Hendrick's first vocalese duet, and of Blossom Dearie's inimitable version of the song. Sprinkled through the text like so many nosegays are quotes from those classic lyrics, which some claim were written by Eddie Jefferson. If you're familiar with the tune you can hear those voices sing as you read, in all their sensuously ironic splendor.

Back at Hutchins Intermediate School, we meet another James Moody, a gang leader and street fighter who became so enamored of the song and its popularity, he eventually claimed a swaggering,

bogus credit for it himself. Young also introduces us to a local deejay, whose R&B radio show, Rockin' With Leroy, epitomized not only the entire musical era, but the conflict between generations as well.

Young manages to do all the above in a mere 3½ pages. Like a jazz solo of 3½ minutes, he packs a wallop of idiosyncratic personal history, nostalgia, laughter, sensuality, aesthetics, and appreciation of life's ironic quirks. He's poured the secrets of the improviser's art into his writer's craft with a musician's ear for riffs, a poet's economy, a journalist's factual clarity, and a novelist's sense of story. Having worked and taught in each of these forms, Young has developed into one of the best and freest writers in America today.

O.O. Gabugah, Young's longtime associate and alter-ego, has his say in this volume. Gabugah chronicles how Al Young, when he was just a small-fry writer getting his first pieces published in obscure West Coast literary journals, gatecrashed the Negro Writers Conference held near Monterey, CA, during the height of the Civil Rights movement.

As Young encounters his idol, LeRoi Jones, at a party held in Jones' cabin, O.O. Gabugah paints a portrait of the playwright wearing his 50¢ thrift store hat, acting as deejay for Nat Hentoff, expounding on Albert Ayler, Coltrane and Bill Dixon. Then Jones switches up and puts on the Supreme's

"Baby/Baby/Baby, don't leave me/ Pleeze don't leave me/All by my sel--elf----"

"And", writes Gabugah, "that changed the whole mood right then and there. People quit lookin' all tragic and sad and Reichian and contemporary and existential and Dadaist and Marxist and Kwame Nkrumah this and James Baldwin that and Ralph Ellison this and started havin' a little fun."

You can lay odds that's not the end of the story, nor of the fun. Yet there are serious moments in the book, especially when this mixed musical bag yields a transcript of Jazz and Letters: A Colloquy. First published in *TriQuarterly*, this panel held at the 1986 meeting of the Associated Writing Programs in Chicago, with Young, Michael S. Harper and Larry Kart, delves deep into the home truths of American cultural history. Having often resisted the impulse to throw rotten tomatoes at the overblown, pompous, chauvinistic participants of many such jazz forums, I can only say if I'd been there in Chicago in '86, I'd have gladly offered roses. Straight talk from experienced, perceptive, literate minds is an extremely rare commodity, particularly when the topic is jazz. **Things Ain't What They Used To Be** is filled with originality and intelligence from beginning to end. – *Elaine Cohen*

BOOK NOTES

Picture The Blues is Susan Antone's photographic documentation of the many blues artists to perform at the Austin, Texas, club run by the photographer and Clifford Antone. It is a testimony to their enthusiasm and dedication to the blues world. Most of the surviving innovators of the blues (from B.B. King to Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters) have performed at Antone's. The photographic history follows a decade of blues activity – and an increasing emphasis on musicians who were not part of the music's original expressive force. This is true wherever the blues are now played but Antone's is a warm and isolated spot which continues to work well for the music. The book is available from Antone's, 2909 Guadalupe St., Austin, Texas 78714. Cost, including shipping, is $18.00 (U.S.A.) and $20.00 (other countries).

Music Directory Canada '86 is an expanded edition of information about the music business in Canada. Like most of these publications, the jazz content is very sketchy. Important jazz record companies, jazz festivals, jazz photographers and jazz producers are not listed and the jazz category of the Juno Awards is not documented. But there are marked improvements over the 1983 edition and the book reflects the broad spectrum of music activity in Canada. It is available from CM Books, 832 Mount Pleasant Rd., Toronto, Ontario M4P 2L3.

– *John Norris*

JAMES MOODY (Photograph by Bill Smith)

IN THE TRADITION

Jazz's recent wave of traditionalism continues to wash forward, sweeping up younger and younger players. At its inception, middle-aged stars like Freddie Hubbard and Herbie Hancock eschewed fusioneering, at least occasionally, and returned to their post-bop roots in well-publicized ventures such as VSOP. Now, a decade or so later, Stanley Crouch may be a little behind the times when he writes that 33-year-old Curtis Lundy, with "his attraction... to swing... and the standards of the bebop tradition" is "an artist who moves to a rhythm and a tempo separate from the crowd" of his young contemporaries. Wynton Marsalis, flagleader for jazz's "young fogeys", has been joined by a brace of new players who share his deep respect for jazz's traditions.

The challenge for these young revisionists is to avoid redundancy; to succeed in imbuing old music with new vitality and nuance. These 15 albums vary in how they seek this freshness. Some allow to seep in, however subtly, influences just outside the jazz tradition. In the liner notes to Lundy's **Just Be Yourself**, for example, the bassist tells Crouch of coming to bop via the jazz-influenced R&B of Kool and The Gang and Earth, Wind and Fire. One hears this subtly reflected in Lundy's playing, which is marked by a big – almost booming – tone and a sort of funky playfulness.

Yet "jazz punks" these young turks aren't; almost to a player, they're respectful, even reverent, of older ways and older musicians. Lundy, for one, is studiously unobtrusive, even when leading. On **Just Be Yourself** his modesty allows the lyricism of Hank Jones – the

CURTIS LUNDY
Just Be Yourself
New Note NN1003

ABDUL ZAHIR BATIN AND THE NOTORIOUS ENSEMBLE
Live at the Jazz Cultural Theater
Cadence CJR 1029

BOBBY WATSON
Round Trip
Red Record VPA 187

WILLIE WILLIAMS
House Calls
New Note 1005

THE BRUCE FORMAN QUARTET WITH SPECIAL GUEST
There Are Times
Concord Jazz CJ-332

RORY STUART QUARTET
Hurricane
Sunnyside SSC 1021

JOE LOCKE
Scenario
Cadence CJR 1034

MICHAEL BISIO QUARTET FEATURING RON SODERSTROM
In Seattle
Silkheart SHLP-107

RICH HALLEY
Cracked Sidewalks
Avocet P-105

DAMON SHORT
Penguin Shuffle
Blue Room 004
(8401 Geyser Ave., Northridge, CA 91324)

MERIDIAN
Farewell to Fortune
Mosquito 1001

SUMI TONOOKA
With An Open Heart
Radiant RR5601

THELONIOUS
Thelonious
K2B2 Records K2B2-2569

HENRY BUTLER
The Village
MCA Impulse! MCA2-8023

BOBBY WATSON & CURTIS LUNDY (Photograph by Bill May)

seasoned foil to the session's other players, youngsters all – to shine through brightly, particularly on three sunny trio tracks. And a three-year apprenticeship by Lundy and drummer Kenny Washington with Betty Carter shows in their sensitive, straight-ahead accompaniment on *Funny (Not Much)*, one of two vocal tracks sung by Lundy's sister Carmen, an interesting new voice. Rounding out the line-up on this album are vibist Steve Nelson and altoist Bobby Watson, both of whom bring to the session original compositions and a certain wistfulness to their playing.

Lundy and Watson, close associates since studying together at the University of Miami, also appear together at **Live At The Jazz Cultural Theater**. Oddly enough, session leader Abdul Zahir Batin is probably the least-known member of the line-up, a veritable who's who of younger New Yorkers including trombonist Robin Eubanks, trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater and John Hicks – the latter a key young revisionist since playing on **In The Tradition**, Arthur Blythe's influential album.

From the opener, the good-timey *Libra Ahora*, there's no doubt of the tradition this album is in – it's a free-wheeling romp through 50s soul-jazz. The sound quality is rough in spots and the minimal rehearsal time left the recording with a few shaky solos and fluffed entrances. These hardly jar, though, set against the session's sheer joyousness. Zahir, no ego-laden drummer/leader, keeps things straight and simple here – no drum solos, few flashy fills – and allows the talented soloists free rein to cut loose and cook. Here's a drummer who deserves to be more widely heard, particularly as a leader.

Round Trip suggests that leadership brings out the best in Bobby Watson as well. This diverse collection of standards, recorded when **Appointment in Milan**, his last Red Record release (VPA 184), was wrapped up more quickly than expected, offers the former Blakey altoist an opportunity to prove that his Bird worship is no artistic straitjacket, and that he can flourish in a range of styles. He rapidly demonstrates same in the opening title track, written by Ornette Coleman, following up the typically eccentric theme with a soaring solo that's equally skitterish and jittery. Then Watson switches gears for a warm, lush *There Is No Greater Love*, full of the emotive slurs and glissando that are becoming Watson's calling cards. Other highlights include the meditative Evans/Davis classic *Blue In Green* and *All the Things of Jo Maka*, where Watson imposes an alternative theme over the familiar *All the Things* changes. Watson gets world-class accompaniment throughout from the Italian Open Form piano trio, whose pianist Piero Bassini contributes the album's sole original.

It was Watson who prompted Philadelphian Willie Williams to head for New York some five years ago. Williams has since been eclectic, putting in time with Blood Ulmer, ex-Weather Reporter Victor Bailey, pit orchestras and adventurous big bands, the Winds of Manhattan and the Apollo Stompers. **House Calls**, his debut as a leader, is a collection of post-bop originals featuring Ronnie Mathews on piano and, again, Curtis Lundy and Kenny Washington, certainly one of the finest young rhythm teams in New York currently. The session reveals Williams' chops to be more than adequate, but both his solos and original compositions are somewhat characterless. He'll need more time out of faceless horn sections and anonymous small backing groups to develop a voice of his own.

Bruce Forman's early albums were criticized for playing it too safe. **There Are Times**, his second venture with the sterling backing of George Cables (piano), Eddie Marshall (drums) and Jeff Carney (bass) shows a new maturity in the 31-year-old guitarist. His own playing is rooted as firmly as ever in the bebop tradition – there isn't a hint of rock influence here – but imaginative arrangements allow him to make the old chestnuts that dominate this album fresh again. *All The Things You Are* becomes a waltz, lending a persuasive urgency, particularly to its all-too-familiar theme. Dizzy Gillespie's *Con Alma* is taken at a loping 5/4 signature and the second line of Monk's *Little Rootie Tootie* is speeded up, making the already-urgent theme even more so. The "Special Guest", unidentified on the front cover, turns out to be Bobby Hutcherson. Hutcherson weighs in on about half the cuts here, playing the elder statesman role occupied by Hank Jones on the Lundy album. Here, though, the closer relationship between Hutcherson's age and style and those of the others makes for a less fascinating meeting of two jazz generations. Not that Hutcherson's work is less than superlative throughout: he's lyrical yet matches Forman and Cables for busy bebop intensity. He's particularly precious during a lovely yet perky version of *Prelude To A Kiss*.

Rory Stuart's **Hurricane** utilizes the same instrumental configuration (minus the vibes contributions), but to somewhat different ends. Compared to Forman, Stuart displays the more modern influences you'd expect from a young guitarist. Though he's often found in the company of fellow young turks Steve Coleman, Glenn Wilson and Steve Nelson, **Hurricane** features Stuart playing with the same stimulating sidemen as on his last quartet release, on Cadence Records. Bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Keith Copeland are fiery players, while pianist Armen Donelian's accompaniment and compositions show an interesting harmonic distinction. On his original *The Scattered Brotherhood*, for example, Donelian sets brooding, classical harmonies atop blues changes. Stuart's quartet has worked together for some five years, resulting in a strong ensemble sound that rarely arises from one-off line-ups assembled for a single session.

Joe Locke's **Scenario** is another album rich in collective contributions. Locke, a vibist in the Bobby Hutcherson mold, proves to be a democratic leader. Indeed, the album belongs as much to pianist Andy Laverne, who contributes several originals and a sensitive touch heavily indebted to Bill Evans. Another standout is the versatile Adam Nussbaum on drums. Bassist Fred Stone and tenorist Jerry Bergonzi round out the session.

If the success of Eddie Daniels' **To Bird With Love** has created a renewed interest in young clarinetists who are mindful of the tradition, Bill Easley deserves to be a recipient of increased attention. Though he's played mostly alto during stints with George Benson and Panama Francis and the Savoy Sultans, Easley plays clarinet almost exclusively on **Wind Inventions**. It's a wise decision on his part; Easley's clarinet playing is more interesting, if only for the delightful novelty of hearing a younger clarinetist play with such an unerring sense of

swing. Backed superbly by Mulgrew Miller (piano), Victor Gaskin (bass) and Tony Reedus (drums), Easley gives a respectful nod in the direction of Buddy deFranco yet is also inventive. A good example is *Come Sunday*, one of two Ellington pieces, which opens as reflectively as any Sunday but leaps into a galloping double-action section midway through before returning to the elegant calm of the original for the ending.

Less reverent than Easley are a cluster of young leaders, none based in New York as it happens, whose albums here reach back to the tradition from roots in more modern and free-wheeling musical soil. On **In Seattle** bassist Michael Bisio guides his quartet through tightly arranged themes that are very much "inside" before encouraging leisurely strolls into Ayler and Coleman territory during the solos. The album shares with much "free" music an almost constant sense of surprise, of unexpected twists and eddies, as well as an appreciation of spareness and space. The stark clarity of the pianoless group – alto, trumpet, bass and drums – is heightened by a superb digital recording, which was also digitally metal-mastered.

Down the coast from Bisio is another bandleader whose new album may be too good for him to remain a regional secret. Tenorist Rich Halley shares with David Murray a penchant for gutbucket horn voicings and an unfettered, soulful exuberance. Halley's writing for his sextet, which includes trombone and alto in the front line, is ambitious, as when he moves from finger-popping bebop to burlesque blues to dark spirituality in the suite *A View of The World From Third And Burnside*, named for a skid row intersection in Portland. One only marvels at how Halley, a computer programmer for an insurance company, finds time to write, rehearse and produce projects as demanding as **Cracked Sidewalks**, or to maintain the muscular tenor technique in evidence throughout the album. If they ever open a Jazz Moonlighters' Hall of Fame, he deserves admission alongside such shoo-ins as tenor-playing postman Buck Hill and Sheila Jordan, the singer and sometime advertising executive.

Less impressive than the Bisio and Halley projects, but interesting nonetheless, is drummer Damon Short's *Penguin Shuffle*. This too is a record that offers glimpses of the "inside" tradition from the "outside", if you will. Percussion is prominent in Short's freer pieces while others tread closer to the tradition in a style Short dubs "punkbop", which offers a whiff of Lounge Lizzards' swagger. The album was recorded half in Chicago, where Short was born and educated, and half in New Orleans where he spent four years in the mid-1980s. Notable among the soloists here are New Orleans reedman Tony Dagradi.

Farewell To Fortune, by Eugene-based quartet Meridian, offers further evidence of a vital jazz scene in Oregon. The sleeve photos (there are no liner notes on the album, apparently self-produced) suggest the players are, at most, in their mid-20s, making the all-originals program all the more admirable. Tenorist Barry Deister and pianist Barbara Dzuro, Meridian's composers and apparent co-leaders, are accomplished if unexciting players who flavour their post bop with dashes of ECMish austerity.

Sumi Tonooka is a Philadelphia pianist whose recording debut finds her in the more senior company of bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Akira Tana. The three form a tight-knit unit. *All That I Know*, the standout track of **With An Open Heart**, is exquisite trio work, with each player contributing equally to its swirling, meditative calm. Tonooka favours quiet and reflective material which suits the economy and sensitivity of her horn-influenced playing. She's no slouch on the album's up-tempo pieces, mind you, revealing a percussive drive that brings to mind another promising young pianist, Montreal's Lorraine Desmarais.

Respecting the traditions while simultaneously invigorating them is thornier when an album or group is conceived as a homage. Yet the sole homage here, the debut of the quartet **Thelonious**, is one of the most vital albums. Led by bassist Buell Neidlinger, who met Monk in the early 60s and later played with him, Thelonious generally concentrates on pre-1960 Monk, the Blue Note and Riverside classics from *Jackie-ing* to *Crepescule* to *Who Knows?* If Neidlinger learned the Monk book firsthand from the master himself, saxist Marty Krystall, Thelonious' junior co-leader, acquired it by wearing out old Blue Note albums to unravel Monk's tightly knotted secrets. Both men, together with pianist John Beasley and drummer Billy Osborne, have learned the dynamics and nuances of Monk material so well that **Thelonious** transcends the obvious technical challenges and actually has fun. This is no stilted clone band but a loose and swinging outfit unafraid to take chances.

Pianist Henry Butler may be the most publicized jazz newcomer since fellow New Orleans prodigy Wynton Marsalis made a much-heralded entrance. The support of a big label has helped, of course, (like his debut **Fivin' Around, The Village** is on the invigorated MCA Impulse! label) as has sharing Marsalis' New Orleans flair for the exotic and eclectic.

The Village amply justifies the buzz about Butler. A four-sided release clocking in at around 70 minutes (in deference to the CD format, presumably), this second release is less of a potpourri than Butler's debut, which ranged from gospel to samba to Coltrane performed with a string quartet. Most of the time, Butler stays within an invigorated post bop tradition – a nod to Coltrane in *Reflections*, McCoy Tyner touches in Butler's playing, the presence of bassist Ron Carter. Despite producer Ricky Schultz's decision to record much of the album live in the studio to encourage "loose, energized interplay", **The Village** also suggests the cool control that marked many classic Blue Note sessions, despite the presence of the explosive Jack DeJohnette on drums.

John Purcess, under-rated beside such as David Murray and Chico Freeman in various versions of Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, shines through on his usual array of unconventional horns and reeds – melancholic French horn on *Soft Platonicism*, oboe, soprano and flute elsewhere. In the company of fellow New Orleans eclectic Alvin Batiste, Butler wanders from the post bop path for the soulful *Music Came*, the sole vocal number and a nod to Butler's beginnings as a singer. There's also Batiste's piquant, piping clarinet on the title track and his lively trio arrangement of *The Entertainer* that seems almost irreverent set against the formalism of so many current Joplin interpreters.

The Entertainer is an apparent prelude to Butler's next project, a tribute to New Orleans R&B. After that he apparently plans to work, Marsalis-like, on simultaneous jazz and classical releases. If this restlessness threatens to blur the focus of Butler's work, his daring also sets him apart from the crowd. Whatever their merits, few of the young revisionists offer real surprises. Butler does, and his unpredictability alone makes him exciting.

AL COHN

NOVEMBER 24th, 1925 — FEBRUARY 15th, 1988

One of the great booting tenor players is gone, Al Cohn, a musician much admired by his fellow musicians but in some sense a player who often remained in the shadow of others. That almost self-effacing character stood him in good stead for it helped him survive through the 60s and 70s during which period he spent much time writing music and playing for TV and theatres.

And yet Al Cohn never lost touch with jazz throughout his life from his teenage years. He rode in on the crest of the bop wave, a musician young enough then to assimilate the new ideas without being scared of them as some older musicians were, perhaps learning to adapt to the music from one of his first employers, Georgie Auld, whose tenor playing also drifted in and out of the Young/Hawkins dichotomy. Cohn himself claimed he didn't really pick up on the new music till he arrived on 52nd Street to play in a trio at the 51 Club in 1944. "Just a corny club," he said later, but between sets he went to the other clubs: "I was young enough to be flexible. It wasn't the thing that it hit me over the head because it was something new. It was something new but it wasn't a dramatic thing."

So he listened and learned as he did the rest of his jazz life. He was part of that wild crowd that made up the Woody Herman Band – he wrote *The Goof And I* for that band to feature Serge Chaloff – and he was part of the second edition of the Four Brothers sound, though Cohn said his stay with Herman wasn't a great experience for him, as the leader gave him little opportunity to solo. Yet the other guys in the band already sensed there was something special about Al Cohn. Pianist Lou Levy remembers that particular sax section – Getz, Sims, Cohn, Chaloff and Markowitz: "When that section would play, I would hear Al Cohn, that soulful sound ... He didn't play as slick as Stan Getz but he played so beautifully and soulfully, and so melodically that everybody else in the band liked him better than anyone else. I remember even Stan, with those cold, blue eyes of his, would look over and say, 'That's it!'"

That reaction from other musicians remained in place as Cohn developed his sound. Obviously there's not much of Cohn with Herman but some Savoy sides available in reissues still feature him with some of those other Brothers.

Al Cohn could always be relied upon to make the best of most of the situations he found himself in. For instance, on a 1957 Coral album by Manny Albam called "The Blues Is Everybody's Business", after a long middle of somewhat pretentious writing with strings, Cohn contributes a hefty muscular boot to the closing movement, showing a real feel for the blues at up-tempo.

I first took notice of Cohn's playing on an old RCA album I bought in England back in the mid-50s, "The Panic Is On", by the Nick Travis Quintet. At that time I was much taken by the Lestorian mode and although Cohn was still riding inside that mode, it took me some time to cotton onto Cohn's more muscular approach, not as full-blooded as he became later on but in some ways the crisp and articulate sound of that group was pointing a little towards hard bop: some of Cohn's tunes for that date, *Nick's Knacks* and *Travisimo*, for instance, have something approaching hard bop lines with their catchy riff themes. Cohn's writing always showed flexibility, an arranger whose big band writing remained loose with straight-ahead swing but some shifting colours, a little Ellington-ish at times as on *Some Of My Best Friends* on Bob Brookmeyer's Verve Album, "Gloomy Sunday". That clear and direct style is captured in his arrangements for the Terry Gibbs Band of 1959 recently reissued on Contemporary. And his genuine feel for keeping a band driving ahead, leading it into and out of solos with one forward-moving surge is evident in his collection of material he provided for Benny Goodman's tour of Russia in 1962. Ten of Goodman's musicians gathered in the studio on their return without the leader – Phil Woods' clarinet fills in – and committed Cohn arrangements to wax. That was put out by the Emu Record Company in 1979 on the Ghent label. Cohn brings both wit and verve to some venerable Goodman tunes: *Let's Dance* emerges as a bouncy ride without damaging the original in its lovely writing for saxes. He dresses *Russian Lullaby* with sinuous writing around the theme at mid-tempo, managing a healthy kick from the limited brass of two trumpets and one trombone. He even breathes life into obvious and hackneyed swing themes like *Dark Eyes* (retitled *Red, White And Blue Eyes* by Cohn) and *The Volga Boatman* (renamed *The Solchi Boatman*).

Cohn's playing was already moving from the cooler extension of Lester Young's style that was blossoming on the West Coast in the early 50s. A 1954 RCA album set up the contrast between East and West Coasts and the East was in the hands of Cohn with his Charlie's Tavern Ensemble. Two of the tunes are simply opportunities for blowing and Cohn's tenor is already making use of breathy tones and slides, especially in his lovely ballad rendition of *Autumn Leaves* which features some rich scoring for the four-man sax section, simple but effective.

But we'll remember Al Cohn principally for that marvellous mix of the warm and full-blooded in his playing of the last twenty years. It surfaced well in his partnership with Zoot Sims. Zoot in his late years was sliding more towards Ben Webster tinges while Cohn's sound had toughened with some of the angularities of Rollins so their playing was both competitive and compatible. My own favourite albums of this pair are "Body And Soul" (Muse) – and there's a good description of Cohn's playing! – and "Motoring Along" (Sonet).

In the 70s Xanadu took up Cohn and put him in interesting contexts. Perhaps the most soulful Cohn is on his duets with Jimmy Rowles on "Heavy Love". Then for Cohn the real heavyweight contender there's his tough battling with Dexter Gordon on "Silver Blue". And that fluid, bop-inspired playing of his surfaces admirably with the piano of Barry Harris on "Play It Now".

And even as I learned of Al Cohn's death on February 15 I'd just got hold of a swinging album by trombonist Carl Fontana on the Reservoir label and there was that happy brawny swagger of Cohn's tenor.

He will be missed but at the moment much of his soulful swing is still available so we will be able to go on listening to his free-booting commitment to the tenets of open and downright swing.

– Peter Stevens

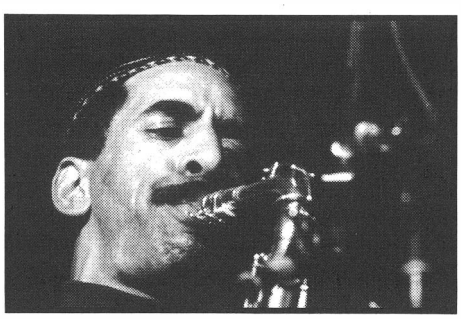
JOHN TCHICAI

John Tchicai – born in Copenhagen on April 28, 1936 – is one of the few Danish jazz musicians to reach international fame.

During his career, going back more than 25 years, he has played and worked with some of the most outstanding artists in the world. John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp and Don Cherry, to name just a few. Tchicai is currently working with, among others, the New Jungle Orchestra, the international saxophone sextet with Six Winds and his own groups. This interview was done on October 11, 1987, and I wish to thank John for his patience and kind cooperation.

I grew up in Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city, and listened a lot to the radio. In the evenings when my father was at work I took over the radio and listened mostly to the American stations in Germany, AFN (the American Forces Network). I also listened to Willis Conover's jazz program on Voice Of America. It's a long time ago but I think Gerry Mulligan and Duke Ellington were some of the first names I heard. Shortly after the war I started going to Sweden to buy records, 78s, because it was difficult to get any records in Denmark. One of the first records I got was one with Moe Koffman and otherwise I just bought what I could get. Later on I purchased records from a Danish mail order company run by Ole Vestergaard in Brande. There was also live jazz in Aarhus and as far as I remember one of the first things I heard was a concert with Lionel Hampton and his band. Another one I heard was my half-brother, Kaj Timmermann, with the Harlem Kiddies and on the local scene I listened to people like Louis Hjulmand, Hugo Hjulmand and Mogens Lauridsen who played vibraphone, clarinet and piano respectively. So I was a member of a small jazz community before I started playing myself. I was almost twenty before I started playing alto saxophone. I had several teachers in Aarhus and later on I went to the conservatory and studied clarinet for two or three years. I didn't like it too much and at that time there was no such thing as a jazz education. After Aarhus I moved to Copenhagen and was drafted into the Danish Navy. In Copenhagen one of my teachers was Ib Glindemann who will be remembered for his big band.

In Copenhagen I met quite a lot of young players and even formed my own quintet. Some of the musicians who first influenced me were Lee Konitz and the saxophone players in the Lionel Hampton band – Anthony Ortega for one. I also listened to Johnny Hodges and Benny Carter. What fascinated me in Konitz' playing was partly his smooth sound and a certain calmness and something restful in the sound. The total language of his music was very interesting. Konitz' playing has changed over the years but he's still one of my favorites. I heard him last year in Copenhagen. On that particular night he was playing standards mostly but on my request he played Monk's composition *Well You Needn't* and one of the things Coltrane used to play. When I lived in New York I went to Lee's house in Hackensack a couple of times to play. When I came to Copenhagen I heard many of the visiting American musicians who, in those days, quite often would play with some of the Danish musicians after their concerts on jam sessions. Some of the Danish musicians I would hear were Max Brüel, Jørgen Ryg, Bent Axen and William Schiøpffe. As for myself, I was at that time – and probably still am – considered an outsider. My style of playing was different from theirs and I think they felt my playing was not educated enough and that I started to express myself too early. When we played at Vingaarden, a very famous club at that time, we sometimes would have disagreements. In those days it was more common to sit in and some people could sit in and others could not ... That's the way it was.



When Max Brüel and I had our group and played at Vingaarden every Sunday afternoon for a long period of time I think we had an enthusiastic audience and created a nice atmosphere. The same was true when we played Monday nights at the old Montmartre. I remember Torben Ulrich being one of the first critics to write something that made me feel a kind of support and appreciation. That was one thing that helped me continue and not to be discouraged by too much negativism from other musicians.

In 1962 I went to New York City and stayed there for almost four years. On my request my wife applied for and got a job at the Danish Consulate in New York because I wanted to go there, to meet the American musicians in their own country and to develop my own playing. I had met several young American musicians over here, like Albert Ayler, and I felt it would be much more interesting over there. I thought Ayler had a fantastic, expressive sound and that he was very different. I didn't find his playing ugly or anything. We also played together when he came and sat in at Vingaarden. Unfortunately, I didn't tape those encounters ... When I came to New York we were together very often and he was always around sitting in and listening to the younger musicians. When I was in New York this summer with the Jungle Orchestra they had an Albert Ayler birthday celebration on the radio and played 24 hours of interviews and music by Ayler. I was also invited to talk about him but as I had another engagement I couldn't make it. New York in the early '60s meant a lot of activity and right away I got a lot of invitations to play. In the beginning it was mostly practising, rehearsing and small benefit concerts. At that time there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm among the young musicians. I remember playing with Bill Dixon, Steve Lacy, Roswell Rudd, Archie Shepp and several others. We used to meet at the Five Spot and at the Half Note I sat in with Coltrane for the first time. A little later, in 1965, I recorded with Coltrane, the "Ascension" session for Impulse. The idea of bringing several of the young musicians into the studio could have been a joint idea of Coltrane and the producer Bob Thiele. I was there, Marion Brown and Dewey Johnson were there, Archie Shepp, Freddie Hubbard and Coltrane's regular group. Recording with Coltrane was in a way a dream come true and I felt things were going the right way. I was very honored to be invited to play and

JOHN TCHICAI (Photograph by Jorgen Bo)

record with Coltrane. He just brought to the studio a few sketches and told us his ideas but he gave us a lot of freedom to solo. Coltrane was like a mentor, he helped a lot of people. I was very fortunate because at the same time I was playing and recording with my own group. I even had a job as a cook at a Danish restaurant and my wife had her job. But it was hard times for a lot of the young musicians. Coltrane helped a lot of them. I stayed most of the time within that small circle but I remember hearing Woody Herman's band a couple of times at a place on Times Square. I went to Harlem also, to Small's Paradise where I heard some blues singers and some other nice music. My own group, The New York Contemporary Five, made some recordings for Storyville and for Philips. The group was originally an idea of Shepp and myself. Don Cherry was in the group; we felt obligated to Bill Dixon who had taken us into his group and had always treated us very nicely. However, when we got a chance to go to Europe we felt it would be better to take Don. I think Dixon was very disappointed because of our decision. As it turned out we might have done better with Dixon because Don gave us a lot of trouble because of his personal problems. Sometimes when we were to play here in Copenhagen we just couldn't find him ... The same thing was true with our drummer, J.C. Moses. So it wasn't always easy to be a band leader getting established and facing problems like those on top of all the other problems. The New York Contemporary Five existed for about two years. I think the group was pretty successful and the recordings we made were too. As a matter of fact I have just written to one of those companies, Philips in Holland, asking about my royalties because I haven't received any for quite some time. I know they have recently released some of that music in Japan.

I left New York after about four years and left a hectic scene with a lot of partying and pot-smoking. My wife and I felt we needed to go back but I learned a lot in the States. I came back to Denmark in 1966 and came back to almost no activity at all. In the beginning I didn't work too much. Around that time I performed one of the first happenings here in Denmark. It was in the canteen of Radio Denmark. I dropped a tray full of glasses, I made a speech and broke my saxophone ... I was very mad at that time and the happening was my way of attracting attention and to protest to the fact that young jazz musicians were not given enough opportunity to play their music. It helped! We made a long series of concerts for the radio with a large group, Cadentia Nova Danica. That group also participated in several arrangements that had a very experimental concept. Society at that time was very open to new things and we got many opportunities to perform. I remember, for instance, one thing we did at the Montmartre with two Japanese doing a mime act, things like that. I still find it interesting to combine music with the other arts and in countries like Germany and Holland I find that many people are interested in projects like that. Around that time, the late '60s, I got interested in yoga and was doing a lot of exercises and meditation. At one point I started to go into seclusion, trying to achieve a more stable life-style. I had a job as a singing teacher for three years during which I only played occasionally and stayed at the school most of the time. I was also conducting a small saxophone workshop at a music school. I still do vocals with the Jungle Orchestra as well as on one of my latest albums, "Put Up The Fight".

Before I joined the Jungle Orchestra five or six years ago I did a lot of work with a trio called the Strange Brothers and even traveled in Germany with the group. That was my start getting out of seclusion and back to the jazz scene – around the mid-'70s. I still work with two of the musicians from Strange Brothers, the bassist Peter Danstrup and the drummer Ole Rømer. The tenor player from Strange Brothers – Simon Spang-Hanssen who is now living in Paris – was involved in forming the New Jungle Orchestra with Pierre Dørge. I joined the Jungle Orchestra a little while after it was formed and have been with the band ever since. The Jungle Orchestra played Canada and the States last year and we had a good time and a beautiful reception. We played every night and in Washington we performed at an open air festival and got a chance to listen to some of the other artists at the festival. One was Buck Hill, known as the Postman, another with Andrew White who played with his group. I also met an alto player called C-sharp, a very fine player in the Charlie Parker tradition and it was nice to meet him again. I met Archie Shepp not too long ago when I played with Johnny Dyani in a club in Northampton in Massachusetts. He was living nearby and came to hear us and it was good to see him and talk with him. We were also in the area where Roswell Rudd lives but I didn't see him and somebody told me that he gave up playing completely. I hope it's not true.

I travel a lot and play in many different connections and for the Danes it's pretty hard to keep track. Actually, I play more outside Denmark than in the country. My base is partly here and partly in Switzerland. Many of the younger jazz musicians have become very interested in the older forms of playing. I think I'm like that myself – I like to go back and find material from earlier periods of time.

The record I made for SteepleChase in 1977, "Real Tchicai" with Niels-Henning, Ørsted Pedersen and Pierre Dørge, I think gives a good example of my playing and there's the recent album, "Put Up The Fight", which is another good example of my music. Johnny Dyani is on the new album and through the years I played a lot with Johnny. He was African and I have always been very interested in African music. My father was from Africa and I have been to Africa and have played in several of the States in West Africa with local musicians. A couple of records will be coming out on which you will hear me play with African musicians. At the moment I have a request from the Swedish company Silkheart Records to do an album with American musicians and that's probably going to happen in February, 1988, and I have just made a record for another Swedish label, Dragon Records, together with a South African drummer, Gilbert Matthews. He has a trio with a Swedish bassist and pianist, Ulf Åkerhielm and Arne Forsén respectively. The trio is called Brus Trio and the record should be coming out soon also.

A new John Tchicai discography (John Tchicai on Records) has been compiled by Gustave Cerutti and is available from the author at this address: 8, avenue du Marché, 3960 Sierre, Switzerland.

OTHER PEOPLES MUSIC

Generally speaking, the notion of an "avant garde" has become an inherent part of the arts in our Century. In our Western civilization, novelty was confined to isolated individuals, who were either viewed as heretics or simply neglected. It was only in the latter half of the 1800s that artistic movements first appeared which were actively seeking alternatives to the accepted norms of mainstream culture. In Europe, the visual arts were shaken by a succession of "schools" whose names were invented by critics as terms of derision and not as self-appointed designations by the creators themselves.

In music, the proliferation of styles has indeed been bewildering: from Schonberg's atonalism to today's electronic gadgetry in "performance art", there is much to be said, both pro and con, about the sheer variety of aural experiences. Chief amongst these developments is the role of improvisation in the organization of sound. More than any other art form, jazz has consecrated spontaneity of expression as its main esthetic principle. Because of its openness, the music has also been able to question its own limits, first by extending harmonies, then by simplifying them until the extinction of traditional tonal guides. Such was the principal tenet of free jazz, at least from a purely musical point of view.

Not to be forgotten was its sociological dimension, that being a political and artistic manifesto against the established order, as expressed first by the blacks of America. But out of its cultural specificity, the Europeans of the 60s lifted the music from its context to raise it to the level of an autonomous style, dissociating it from its very essence. After all, how could white Europeans fully grasp the meaning of being Black in a segregated America? A style was borne out of this, but its raison d'etre could not be readily exported.

Twenty-five years after, the avant garde has moved on to other areas, so much so that it is almost impossible to categorize the many strands of what can simply be designated, for lack of any better term, as "New Music". Given that fact, one must refrain from any comparison, as is the case with the albums now under review.

CECIL TAYLOR
For Olim
Soul Note SN 1150

Whether one swears by him, or at him, Cecil Taylor has imposed himself as few others have. In fact, the faintest of critical slights is often dismissed as anathema by his loyal admirers. Still, there is no denying that the man is a style by himself, forbidding for some, entrancing for others. In his latest solo opus, recorded at Berlin's Free Music Workshop in 1986, Taylor seems to be refining his own playing. Those who despair at his customary fireworks should check out this album, because it displays a sense of restraint, withholding for the most part on his unabashed powerplay. With six cuts on side two, this in itself might be an indication of his intention to condense his statements, to strive for the essence in every gesture. Also of note: tonal elements are resurfacing in a more explicit way, such as the opening theme on side two (*Mirror & Water Gazing*), which sounds almost impressionistic. Whether this album marks yet another turning point in Mr. Taylor's career remains to be seen, but it will surely qualify as a benchmark. Without compromising any of his standards, the Master has reached out further than ever to a wider audience, and that is an accomplishment in itself.

RICHARD TEITELBAUM / CARLOS ZINGARO
The Sea Between
Disques Victo Victo 03

Hot off the press, this duet album, recorded last fall at the Festival de musique actuelle de Victoriaville, underlines once again the viability of small interactive units in experimental music. Richard Teitelbaum's appearance on record is long overdue, for he has been a pioneer in live (and improvised) electronics. Few people can claim to have consistently avoided the countless synthesized cliches, which have been the bread and butter of all pop music. Portugese violinist Carlos Zingaro is an amazing technician and a flexible partner. As far as pure improvised music goes, this is a successful outing, because it covers a wide range of dynamics and textures: from the barely audible to the quasi-cathartic, there is a variety within each of the three "sound events". Thanks to a clean pressing and an excellent mixing job, all of the nuances come out clearly. Maybe one day we could enjoy this even more on a nice little CD.

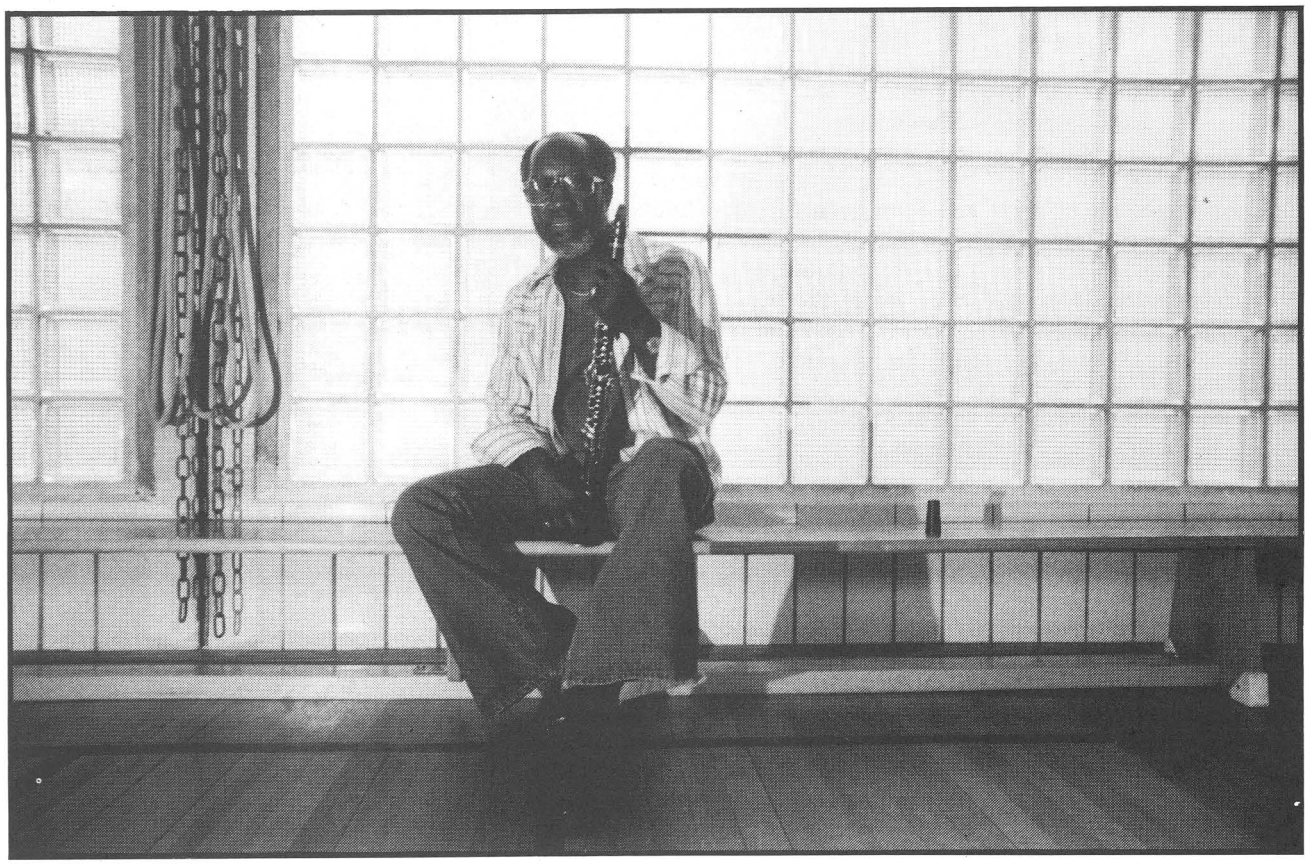
ANTHONY BRAXTON
Five Compositions (Quartet)
Black Saint BSR 106

I have always wondered about musicians who write extensive liner notes for their albums: if one has enough confidence in his or her own music, why bother explain it? Monk, for one, never felt compelled to tell us what his music was all about, which may make it so interesting to listen to and challenging to play. Anthony Braxton, for his part, cannot help but use his transmogrified prose to make the complex sound even more complicated. Undoubtedly, his circumlocutory phraseology reflects the jejune obliqueness of his sound structures in that the jagged digressions reflect a style which, to his admission, doesn't even swing (as per the liner notes). In many respects, Braxton's compositions with their totally arbitrary diagrammes are self-serving vehicles for his own idiomatic extemporisations. This, coupled with his nervous alto sound, make him readily identifiable and if these criteria suffice, then this album is for you.

STEVE LACY / ULRICH GUMPERT
Deadline
Sound Aspects SAS 013

Apart from his own sextet, Steve Lacy enjoys working in duets and, more specifically, with pianists. One thinks of his numerous collaborations with Mal Waldron. In this release, East-German pianist Ulrich Gumpert is his sparring partner. Though little known on this side of the Atlantic, he has been a very active participant in the European music scene for a good 20 years. In this duet, he accompanies the saxophonist through four of the latter's originals (*Art, I Feel A Draft, Blues* and *Deadline*). This is indeed very dark and brooding music, played at an unusually slow tempo for the most part. But Lacy has indicated to me in a recent meeting that the transferral from cassette to record was improperly done, resulting in almost a half tone difference

A SURVEY OF RECENT RECORDINGS OF "NEW MUSIC" BY MARC CHENARD



between the actual performance and the sound on the recording. Whether this makes a difference in the overall effect of the music remains to be tried out, especially if you have an adjustable pitch control on your turntable.

OLIVER LAKE
Impala
Gramavision 18-8710-1

In the last ten years, Soul Note and Black Saint have had somewhat of a stranglehold on most of the contemporary Black American music. Recently though, Gramavision has finally offered an American alternative to the prospering Italian label. From out of nowhere, this label is turning out LP's by musicians who have been long overdue for a commercial release in the States. Oliver Lake has now signed up with the firm and his first release is much more of a straight-ahead venture for him. As a straight quartet, he presents us with six originals. On the first cut, *Lef'Sided*, Brandon Ross is added on guitar (and not drums as indicated on the jacket) and Gene Lake plays drums there, Pheeroan ak Laff being on all other cuts. The ubiquitous lady of the keyboard, Gerri Allen, contributes some nice solo spots throughout. But this date clearly belongs to the leader. On the positive side, it is nice to hear him in this context, though there is a little too much uniformity in his writing, especially on side one. A good date, but not an indispensible one. Incidentally, the title refers not so much to the four-legged beast, as pictured on the cover, but more to the four-wheeled one.

JOHN CARTER
Dance of the Love Ghosts
Gramavision 18-8704-1

As part of a larger work in progress, John Carter has now completed the third of five suites, a project which he has called "Roots and Folklore: Episodes in the Development of American Folk Music". According to the titles and brief descriptions, this is highly programmatic music. Essentially, this episode evokes the spirits of the African Ancestors brought on the slave ships to the New World. Musically, the work is scored for eight instruments with added African percussionists on one track and a female vocalist on a couple of others. Each of the five cuts convey a looseness within their structures, alternating between written and open sections. In a way, one may be reminded of Mingus' organic compositions, in which solo space and ensemble work would weave in and out of one another. Not having heard the first two installments, this album makes me want to seek them out, and look forward to the yet to be recorded suites. CD owners take note: the last two albums are also available in that configuration, but no extra cuts alas!

GUUS JANSSEN
Septet 85... 86
Claxon 87.18

In this decade, a new emphasis on composition has permeated much of the new music. In Europe, for instance, extended writing has, in some cases, contained or even offset the dominant paradigm of free-form improvisation. Unlike the German or British, the Dutch have carved their own niche in this "contemporary orchestral" approach. This new recording is another example of this fact, as it presents us with a programme of eight

JOHN CARTER (Photograph by Bill Smith)

originals by one of Holland's better known pianists, Guus Janssen. In many ways, there is a relation to be established between his writing and the now familiar concept of "World Music": as examples, two cuts, entitled *Indiaan I* and *Indiaan II* evoke the Ameridian tradition without imitating it stereotypically. Through it all there is an array of ambiguous tonalities and dynamic contrasts. Once more, personnel varies according to cuts. Only one cut (*PF*) drags on a little too much, lacking the focus that characterizes most of the material. This is much more of a group-concept album than anything else, because no one musician particularly distinguishes himself above the others.

WERNER LUDI
Sunnymoon
Creative Work Records CW 1009

By the title of this album, one may think of Sonny Rollins. However, the relationship is a mere coincidence, at least by the sound of it. Produced by a small independent based in Lucerne, this recent LP features a quintet of newcomers from the Swiss front. Those familiar with the FMP might have heard of the guitarist Stephan Wittwer, but the others are not well known outside of their borders. With less than 35 minutes, one could rightly object to the lack of material, especially at today's record prices. More than that, the overall sound of this quintet is not really arresting. Personally, I have never dug guitarists who turn up the reverb and volume, so that is strike one. Strike two is the rather unengaging contributions of both saxophonists, Klaus Koch on tenor and the Lüdi himself on alto. To avoid indifference, it may be best to listen to one side, then wait awhile before putting on the other. Now, to avoid the third strike, listen to Mr. Rollins' "Sunnymoon"; I'd take that any day.

CHARLES BRACKEEN
Bannar
Silkheart SHLP-105

Upon listening to this album, one may think of Ornette's first quartet or its later reincarnation, "Old & New Dreams". Apart from a similar instrumentation, there is also a very joyous feel in all of the music in this release by saxophonist Charles Brackeen, his first in five years. With Dennis Gonzalez on trumpet, Alvin Fielder on drums and Malachi Favors 'Maghostus' on bass, this is the most enjoyable session for this reviewer's ears. The material ranges from a complete set of written pieces (*Three Monk's Suite*), a freer piece with urgent solos (*Open*), a chanted melody (*Allah*), and two very rewarding pieces on side two (*Stone Blue* and *Story*). On these two tracks, the leader is at his most convincing, conjuring echoes of Ayler within his muscular Texas tenor sound. In terms of style, one may think of another under-recorded tenor man from the Chicago scene, Fred Anderson. All in all, a sure bet for your listening pleasure.

JIM STALEY
Mumbo Jumbo
Rift Records 12

There are albums whose titles tell all and this is one of them. Now, if you like your musical "radical", then this may be the case, especially if you equate that term with "anarachy". For the performers, this might be a lot of fun, but the listener can take only so much fiddling with sounds. And to think this is a double album... In any event, you may like people like Wayne Horvitz and Elliott Sharp, Shelly Hirsch and Samm Bennett, Bill Frisell and Iku Mori, even John Zorn and Fred Frith, all of which play with the nominal leader and trombonist, but one still wonders "Where's the beef?!"

MICHAEL VLATKOVITCH
The One Who Never Stayed
Thank You Records MV 002

This is a curious album to say the least. For starters, none of the musicians are really known to me (except for Bill Masonheimer on tuba). Moreover, there is no information at all, not even a picture of the leader. If this group's intention was to surround itself in mystery, then they have certainly succeeded. From a musical standpoint, the mood is as intriguing as the night scene on the jacket cover. All five cuts seem organized according to orchestral sketches, quite frequently reiterative in their basic structure. As a comparison, the late Gil Evans' work might come to mind, as the music penned by the leader-trombonist revolves around unresolved tensions. Without being particularly challenging, this album is nevertheless thought-provoking, enough to leave one with the nagging question: and who then is this Michael Vlatkovitch?

IN PERFORMANCE

CHICK COREA AND HERBIE HANCOCK
Estadio Chile
Santiago, Chile – April 14, 1988

Five thousand and seven hundred people filled to the brim Santiago's Estadio Chile for the only concert given in the country by these superstars of the keyboard. Although many came because they expected to hear some replica of the "Elektric Band" or "Rockit", what they got instead was a performance on two grand pianos of a program which consisted mainly of standards. The artists got a thunderous ovation anyway.

During intermission, sitting in the huge gymnasium, I could not avoid some dark thoughts coming to my mind about the obvious influence of environment on art. Although they used two Steinways, the artists were heard through loudspeakers which did not render too faithfully the beautiful sound of these superb acoustic instruments. The speakers were necessary because the music, if unamplified, would not carry to the far corners of such a large hall. What worried me was the thought that not only the sound, but the very essence of a music which has to reach such a massive audience, will also slowly but inevitably change and, as the spectacular replaces the subtle, this change may not be for the better.

Mr. Hancock and Mr. Corea had toured on two grand pianos only once before, in California more than ten years ago. Two double LP albums from that tour were issued: "An Evening With Herbie Hancock & Chick Corea" on Columbia PC2-35663 and "Homecoming" on Polydor PD-2-6238, both recorded in February 1978. Since then the two keyboard virtuosos have not played together, except once in Japan and on a couple of special private occasions, such as Mr. Corea's birthday and his wedding. The Santiago concert was the first of their short South American tour, and it was interesting to witness how these very compatible performers engaged in musical games. Numbers which appear on their above mentioned albums – such as Gershwin's "Liza", Morey & Churchill's "Someday My Prince Will Come", Corea's "La Fiesta" and Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" – were included; however the artists did not play it safe: they created subtle obstacles which they then brilliantly proceeded to overcome, thus making the performance more exciting both for themselves and for the audience.

– José Hosiasson

SUN RA & THE SOLAR MYTH COSMIC JETSET ARKESTRA
Tri-C Metro Campus Auditorium, Cleveland
April 16, 1988

One of our great national treasures and world musical philosopher, the timeless Sun Ra is a myth only to those unaware of his existence. Those of us with ears have been flying with him for years, at shows and on over 200 albums, covering the 30 some years of this aggregation's existence.

The show opened up to a packed house with light down dark – 19 piece Arkestra w/3 trap drummers rumbling opening fanfare – ominous sounds, smoke clouds billowing, elephantine trombones wailing, pterodactyl calls, thunder drum cracking, until one's eyes adjusted to the dark and could discern this large black figure lumbering out of the blinds and majestically strolling among the pandemonium, until, BANG! BANG! from stage left and right, 2 giant flames of fire shot up, the house lights came on, and there stood Sun Ra center stage with his arms outstretched and his diaphanous capes swirling, a gold lame lampshade on his head! The band roared louder as the Ra stood there, the smoke rolling about him, his robes shimmering....

Sun Ra has lost none of his flair for theatrics. It was mostly a program of Gershwin tunes, with a smattering of Fletcher Henderson, and only a few Ra originals. He did seem to flub more than the usual amount of notes that are allowed in "avant garde" music, but talking with him afterwards he seemed as spry of mind as ever – once I got backstage (the neanderthalic stage manager tried to kill me). I asked tenuously, having heard rumors, "Where's Danny Davis?" and Sun Ra responded, "He's left the planet." And went on to explain about the diabetes and his last years in Japan. The new baritone saxophonist is right in Danny's shoes and relied upon quite much. Marshall Allen didn't have much of an opportunity during this program to demonstrate the frenetic qualities of his alto. Pat Patrick on various oblong woodwinds I don't recall getting a chance to do much of anything. Martin Banks in the trumpet section did a tasteful understated solo on *S'Wonderful* and on the other side of the section Michael Ray ripped the seams apart on his horn throughout the evening. John Ore's cousin did nice things to the guitar all night. June Tyson turned in the most sublime moment of the evening, sailing the lyrics of *It's Spring* with backdrop of flutes and piccolos. Most everybody in attendance, the band included, waiting anxiously for John Gilmore to get off tampering with those timbales and pick up his tenor, which he did quite often, his tone strong and individual as ever, he just didn't solo long enough, only covering maybe 2 or 3 choruses at a shot, but then again this program didn't call for long elaborations.

SUN RA (Photograph by Bill Smith)

His clarinet was also heard often. Sun Ra even sang one of his own songs, a post-apocalyptic number with Arkestra riffing behind him, singers and dancers in call and response, to the effect:

Watcha gonna do
when they push the button? x3
all the trees will be burnt x3
all the grass will be burnt x3
all the houses will be gone x3
etc. etc.
your ass will be burnt x3
you're gonna miss your ass x3
you won't have nothin' to sit on x3
you're gonna miss your ass x3
But that's why they gonna
push the button x3
because you sit on your ass x3
because you sit on your ass too much x3
they gonna push the button x3
and your gonna miss YOUR ASS!

Backstage some of the young stagehands that'd fallen under his power gathered at his feet, as he lay slouched back resting. I overheard one ask him about the significance of the numbers on top of the musical arrangements, as if some mystery lay there. Ra told them, "I just put them there, I'm up to 99 now and don't know what to put next ..." Sun Ra should've really laid it on thick and even I considered popping their bubble with the fact that Lawrence Welk numbers his sheets too. — *Mark Weber*

BILLY BANG QUARTET

An explosion hit Scotland in the middle of March, when Billy Bang brought his group to Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh. If there's a more energised musician playing jazz today, I haven't heard him. The electricity seems to flow from Billy and his violin into spontaneous outbursts of seething new music. He plays everything possible on the instrument then everything impossible. One spectator said he seemed in danger of sawing the thing in half.

Nothing sounded the same from night to night, not even the same tune. In Glasgow, Johnny Dyani's piece for Nelson Mandela was interwoven with a heart-felt rap for Dyani, South Africa, the South Bronx, and the Sharpeville Six, who were due to be executed the next day. Billy's commitment to the struggle as voiced on his violin was pure naked passion.

The togetherness of this group was uncanny, the most merged I've heard Billy lead. But then could it be any other way with Frank Lowe? He has shown this special telepathy with such as Butch Morris and Olu Dara, and here he was tuned to the same heart-beat and wave-length as Billy Bang, breathing, praying and playing together. When he first arrived in New York, Frank virtually blew his tenor saxophone apart. Today he moves from Jackson Pollock splashes to Piet Mondrian, every note seemingly inevitable. Sometimes, he reminds of a violin or trumpet's phrasing, a sound quite unique. One slow blues solo would bring tears to your eyes and raise your spirit at the same time.

And Sirone's direct bass notes scorched through. The spirit of Wilbur Ware lives on. The instrument may be acoustic but the music courses through Sirone like a powerful current. Sometimes humming the notes in-between, he plays like a natural elemental force, sign-posting the music. His is deep soul music. And then there's Dennis Charles. As fundamental to this group as Doug Williams was to the Redskins. He is the opposite of flash. His music appears wonderfully simple, just playing those beats that are absolutely essential. But the drums dance and sing, and the band rocks and swings.

Billy Bang sometimes leads a funk outfit called Forbidden Planet, but here he has a group that is at one and the same time a funk band and a brilliant new music band. In 1988, most jazz musicians, like Mr. Reagan, are looking behind them, re-living the past. But Billy and his friends are all revolutionaries, even though their music is steeped in the blues. In another incarnation they were called the Jazz Doctors. They surely play healing music. — *Roy Morris*

GUY KLUCEVSEK
Roulette, New York City
March 18, 1988

W.R.U.
The Knitting Factory, New York City
March 30, 1988

The Knitting Factory and Roulette are currently two of the more adventurously programmed New York venues. Both are small; like rooms with bathrooms attached. Neither serves supper, and only the Knitting Factory has a beer and wine license. Both have a cover charge, so you can enjoy the music without worrying about a drink minimum, for around $10. It's very refreshing.

I went to Roulette to see Guy Klucevsek, the accordion player with the most exposure during what seems to be the Year of the Accordion. (Tom Waits featured an accordion on **Frank's Wild Year,** *EAR* magazine devoted an entire issue to the instrument and its players, and there's even an upcoming accordion summit.) Klucevsek has gathered a band as diverse as his choice of music: Anthony Coleman on keyboards, Bobby Previte on drums and marimba, and David Seidel on guitar and bass. All three are culled from various corners of the downtown scene. Klucevsek avoids the French-marketplace style of accordion playing and relies on long expressive drones that are more bluesy than European folksy. Occasionally he uses the sound more traditionally associated with accordion, but grins as he does so. Klucevsek is aware that it is hard for people to take you too seriously when you have a squeeze box on your knee, and the whole show is laced with irony. I was reminded of the British humorist, Ivor Cutler.

One of the great advantages of the accordion is that you can accompany yourself, and Klucevsek began with four solo pieces that were reminiscent of church organs and film music. The full-band pieces ranged from folk dance and polka music to Reich-like minimalism. Klucevsek managed to combine the rapid changes in John Zorn's music with La Monte Young's drones. On one piece he mixed an Irish sounding folk-dance tune with a melody that conjured up images of Edith Piaf, with an underpinning tom-tom rhythm.

Bobby Previte created patterns around the beat, often allowing the listener to fill in the gaps. On *The Nova Scotia Polka*, "a delightful composition by Mr. Previte," as Klucevsek put it, the two of them played a great interacting duet, where they followed and rearranged one another's ideas. Klucevsek is playing on Previte's upcoming Nonet album. Anthony Coleman and David Seidel fill in the few gaps that the other two leave. To be honest, an hour of any instrument as intense as the accordion is enough for me, more than enough, actually, but it's interesting to hear it in a leading rather than an accompanying capacity.

Two weeks later, at The Knitting Factory, I saw W.R.U., John Zorn's Ornette Coleman tribute band. Zorn played alto, Mark Dresser was on bass, Tim Berne was on alto, and that night, both Gerry Hemingway and John Vidacovich were on drums. I was skeptical about this, but the two drummers just about managed to pull it off by sharing the aural space: Hemingway provided tumbling log-jams of beats, while Vidacovich gave a more constant, percussive accompaniment.

The horns played two separate roles even more effectively: Berne provided depth with steadier, more restrained sounds while Zorn ripped up and down the range of his alto, occasionally using more circular breathing to sustain an ostinato. These two pairs were linked by Dresser's bass. I wasn't sure if it was the microphone or what Dresser did to his instrument, but he created cruel percussive roars whenever he played hard. When he wanted a more delicate sound, he would glide in and out of the altos.

I had heard tapes of this band on WKCR and it seemed to me that the tour they had just finished had unified them. The initial barrage of noise quickly revealed itself as layers of melody firmly and precisely woven together. The players stopped, started, and changed speed together. On *W.R.U.* and *Peace Warriors*, they created shapes then chopped them down rapidly and confidently. I think Coleman would approve.

– Ben Chant

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
The Great American Music Hall, San Francisco
April 26, 1988

Astor Piazzolla is the master and inventor of the music known as "nuevo tango" (new tango). Drawn from the rich musical resources of his homeland, Argentina, Piazzolla creates a new sound rooted in the old but not enslaved to it. For thirty-four years, he recalled from the bandstand, "we have been making our music with little recognition, but we still have the music."

Piazzolla plays a national music. A music as hybrid as the nation itself. The instrument he plays, the bandoneon, is not indigenous to Argentina. The 77 buttoned fingerboards are attached by bellows resembling a large concertina but, infactically, not an accordion. The bandoneon was invented in Germany in the 19th century to play in churches that could not afford an organ. It found its way to Argentina, legend has it, via an Italian sailor on shore leave in Buenos Aires, who left it on the bar after a drunken spree. The instrument was absorbed and became the fixture of the tango orchestra.

Romantic and melancholic by nature, this music grips your soul. Its forward motion is fueled by courage. Perhaps it is here that we arrive at the stereotype of the "latin lover." A vulnerable, yet driven being. This is Piazzolla's music. His passion is transmitted to his fellow musicians like no other since Ellington. His power to state and make the listener feel like an intimate is unparalleled. While the music is tightly composed, the members of his quintet, Pablo Ziegler, piano; Fernando Suarez Paz, violin; Horacio Malvicino, Sr., guitar and Hector Console on acoustic bass, play with a collective desire that sounds and feels improvised (check it out Anthony Braxton!). Paz, with his stunning leaps and dives, wears down the skin surrounding your heart. The piano works the bass register freeing the bassist for melodic infusion, the guitarist steadily stroking rhythm. This is the most creative non-drum group I've heard.

There is a drum, if course, the heartbeat, an ever-present member of Piazzolla's Quinteto Bueno Aires. In the flash of the moment I wrote: "My heart is on the table, Piazzolla, and it is yours."

The audience was at least fifty percent latino, probably mostly Argentinians, if listening to the accents of the people was an indication. The Great American Music Hall was the perfect venue for this music, packed to the rafters, yet close enough to experience the music as if it were a private concert for one. The audience responded in kind, making every song seem like an encore. When he finally left the stage, after covering his music from early periods through to music composed for the film "Tangos: Exile of Gardel" to the recently composed "La Comora" suite, it felt like time had stopped. And it had.

Hundreds of the audience mingled outside the front door of the hall on O'Farrel Street in San Francisco waiting for an even closer glimpse. They gave the maestro an ovation that rang down the block as he so casually, so confidently, strolled out the door.

– Brian Auerbach

JOHN ZORN * GAME PLAN

John Zorn is a boyish looking 35 year old who grins constantly, even with a horn in his mouth. He's made his reputation as part of New York's downtown scene by arranging and organising music that, as he describes it, "changes very quickly and goes through a lot of different moods and genres, and includes influences from all over the place". There is no gradual shifting between these moods and genres, just bursts of sound that force the audience to concentrate as it is led headlong past Albert Ayler, through Japanese film to New York in the late Eighties.

Recently Zorn has been demonstrating his skill as an alto player in a number of groups that pay tribute to jazz greats like Ornette Coleman and Big John Patton. He has signed to Nonesuch for a six album deal, the first two of which are **The Big Gundown**, his multi-faceted arrangements of Ennio Morricone's work, and **Spillane**, a collage of detective movie and Film Noir sounds and music. In 1986 he was asked to perform the Morricone piece in the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, which he did, under the title, **Once Upon A Time In The East Village.**

I talked to him as he was preparing to leave for a European tour with W.R.U., his Ornette Coleman tribute group. We discussed some of the current New York venues for New Music.

B.C.: *It seems like the Knitting Factory has become quite a centre.*

J.Z.: The Knitting Factory is a phenomenon. It just appeared at a certain time when a lot of the people in the downtown area were getting attention and we all started playing there, and the place started getting attention. The chemistry was really good, the timing was really good, and the people running the club are really good too.

B.C.: *Are you happy to be associated with the downtown scene?*

J.Z.: You mean down here, what's going on? I'm more than happy: this is my life. It comprises of people from all over, even some people who are not from New York, but the general activity of performance and mixing and meeting and exchanging ideas happens in this downtown area. So it's as good a name as anything else. It's been a long process of turning the critics over to liking or trying to understand what we're doing. We just kept playing. In the beginning it was the critics writing really horrible things and us not going away. Then, after five or six years of that, them saying, "Hmm these guys aren't going away, let's pay them some attention." And then them beginning to understand what we were doing. I think it's really been over ten years that this scene has been around.

I dropped out of college and went to the West Coast for a little while with Philip Johnson and some other musicians and then plugged away here since '74. Year by year new musicians would come to the city and meet and we'd play and kind of have the same interests. They included Eugene Chadbourne, Tom Cora, Bob Ostertag, Ned Rothenberg, Elliot Sharp, Wayne Horvitz: the list goes on and on and on. Over the course of ten years, or even fourteen years, it's just been us getting stronger and stronger with our own musical identity and the people beginning to notice and appreciate it more. It seems that it happened overnight but it really didn't.

B.C: *You seem to be doing a lot of tribute projects at the moment...*

J.Z.: The Sonny Clark one's the oldest one and there's a record on Black Saint (called 'Voodoo'). That group's been around ten years. Then I've got the Ornette project with Tim Berne. I'm going on tour with that, and making a record for Elektra. Then there's the John Patton project which I'm really excited about with Bill Frisell and Bobby Previte. It's the perfect band: it's just smoking shit. The sound of the Hammond (organ), it's so good to hear that sound again after all the DX-7s (synthesizers). And I have another one coming up with Misha Mengelberg, the Dutch pianist who worked with Eric Dolphy on his Last Date record. Misha is very much a legend in the Dutch music scene. Really one of the grand old men, one of the original people who put a scene together. He does a large project in the Symphony Hall every year, like an opera kind of thing. He has one of the best ears I've ever heard a musician have. The guy's a genius. And in a certain way he comes from the old idea of the tunesmith. He writes like Irving Berlin, kind of out of a Monk-Herbie Nichols bag. He's writing his own melody line, his own chords in his own special way, and he's created a true legacy of compositions the way Wayne Shorter has, or Ornette has. I'm really attracted to the simpleness and the bluesy quality of his tunes.

B.C.: *Is it going to be a quartet or quintet?*

J.Z.: It's a basic piano quartet. But the tunes can be played by any kind of a group. I could do it with Bill Frisell and George Lewis. I have a trio with them, a drummerless, bassless trio and I'd do the tunes with that group too.

So it's more or less finding something that's relatively obscure, getting excited about it, and then wanting to share it with other people and pay tribute to these great artists that other people forget about.

One of the projects that I want to revive is a tribute to Dorothy Ashby, a harp player from Detroit, who lived in Los Angeles, and who also wrote really beautiful, tough, bluesy tunes for jazz harp. (He mimes strumming a real harp, not a mouth-organ.) I did that project with Carol Emanuel who worked on **Spillane** and has done a lot of projects with me.

B.C.: *I'm always reading about the "game plans" used in some of your non tribute works. Can you explain them?*

J.Z.: The game scores is a whole big spiel that could go on and on. Basically what I'm doing is writing for musicians who have developed a personal language on their instruments, something that defies notation, something that's not meant to be written down; all these noises and sounds that people are making. In order to somehow score these people in a large group I devised a way of scoring which doesn't talk about sound at all, but leaves the sound completely to the performers.

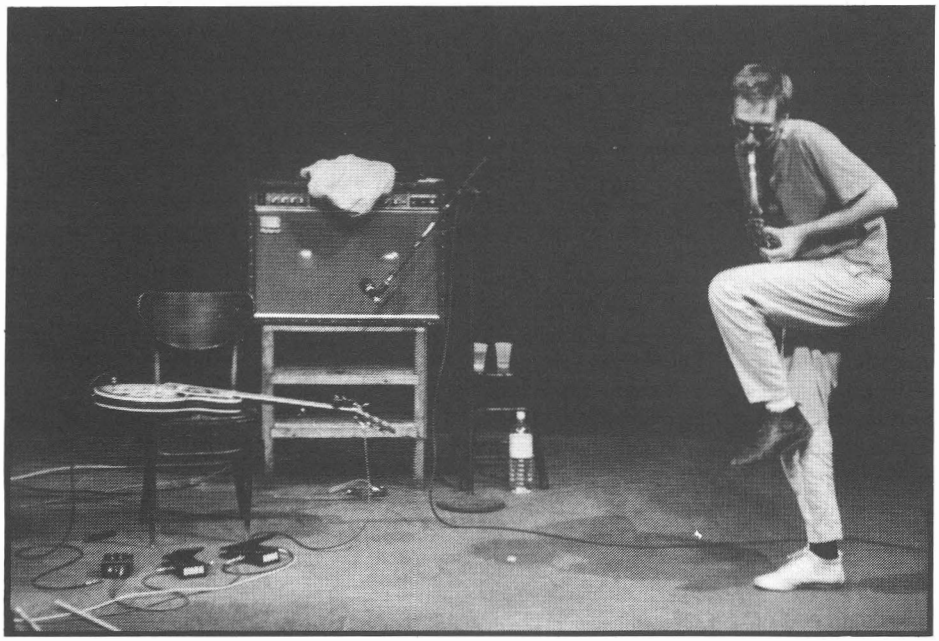
I could write a series of notes down on the page but that's not taking advantage of these people's true talents. So, ignoring sound completely, I just created a series of game situations that are like different ways of choosing when people play, and who they play with. Not the material they play, but when they play and when they don't play.

So an example of a piece would be something with twelve sections and you can go from one section to the other whenever you want and it's called by the players who are performing. They all make the decisions. One section would be a trading game where one person plays, and then you pass it to the other person who takes over for you and you stop. And then someone else does it and then someone else. Another game would be just to look at anybody in the group and do a duet, as long or as short as you want and then end it. Then do another one. Everyone can do this at the same time. Another game would be one person has a special power of telling people to stop and start whenever they want, but their power only lasts so long. Someone else has the power to take away that special privilege. Everything is written out on a sheet so that people know what's happening, but since you can go from one thing to another at anytime, I function as a communicator. People make a hand signal to me and they say they want to do this section and then I hold up a sign that says "Get ready to do this section" and then give a down-beat and we do that. Then someone else, when ever they want, after five seconds, after a minute, the most impatient person, says "I want to go somewhere else", makes another cue to me meaning "Now we'll do this section". I pick up the sign and we go that one.

B.C.: *When are you going to do something like that live again?*

J.Z.: Well, I'm working on some new pieces and it's a continuing project. I have one piece that needs six or seven players, one that needs twelve players, one that needs fifteen. And when I get a call for a concert, if the money is right, or the situation is right, I'll do that project. But with a lot of players you need more money and it's difficult for promoters to handle it. For the past couple of years it's the sort of thing I've been able to do in Europe. Here in the United States I just don't find the opportunity. Someone doesn't say "OK I can

A CONVERSATION WITH BEN CHANT



give you $6,000 to do one of your pieces." That's not going to happen, even at the Kitchen, not even at Roulette. I just can't afford to do it.

B.C.: *Do you have an overall view of the piece, in terms of musical climaxes?*

J.Z.: No. Not at all. The thing is not written in time, it's from section to section and in that sense it's being created spontaneously by the players in the group. They say "Now we go here, now we try here." I have a general idea of what's possible in the piece, the way someone who writes the rules to baseball knows there'll be so many innings and so many outs. But you don't know how long an inning is going to last and how long the guy's going to be at bat before he gets a hit. So there are a lot of variables, and it should be that way because these are improvisors and that's what they do best.

B.C.: *What about the fact that a lot of the older improvisors are Black and the younger ones are White?*

J.Z.: That's not necessarily true. The Free Jazz scene includes Han Bennink and Peter Brotzman. White/Black, European/American, younger/older, which distinction are you really talking about? I'm not a sociologist. I couldn't answer these questions. But there is mixing going on. It's not totally stratified. I mean there's players like Billy Bang, I've worked with him and Steve Coleman and Greg Osby, Butch Morris, George Lewis. I mean specifically Butch Morris and George Lewis are people I've had really close relationships with musically for many years, eight years. I don't think what you're saying is really so valid. I know what you're driving at, there seems to be a very strong area here and a strong one there and then there's a few people who are kind of mixing it up. I think it's always been that way and it may always be that way, but the people who are not afraid to leave their scene and try to work with musicians in other scenes without fear of racial prejudice or musical prejudice should be applauded; people like Butch Morris, George Lewis and Wayne Horvitz. It's not an easy thing to do and there's a lot of questions. It is an important thing and I think it's being done. It happens for musical reasons: it doesn't happen for political reasons. You don't say "Oh well I've got to have a Black person in my band or it's not politically correct." You say, "I like the way George Lewis plays. He's a great player, and we get along."

B.C.: *Tell be about Japan.*

J.Z.: It's difficult. Everyone has an attitude that you go there for the first time and you're treated like a king and you're going like it's the greatest place in the world. You have got to realise that's the first time you went and they wanted your total experience. They get the John Zorn Experience or the Ned Rothenberg Experience and then they chuck you the hell out, and you go back again and you don't get the same treatment and that's not necessarily a bad thing, that's just the way it is. I've gone back again and again and again. I've had good times and bad times and I've continued to go back. I try to spend five or six months out of the year in Japan. I love the musicians there, I love the music scene there. I love the music that they've created over the past thirty years. I really love Japanese pop music. (He gestured to the hundreds of Japanese records that were stacked floor to ceiling in his living room.)

I've worked with Folk musicians, I've worked with traditional musicians, I've worked with jazz players, classical players, blues players. I'm very fortunate to be able to tap into really great players right away because there *is* an exotic element of someone coming from the States who can speak Japanese, who lives there a lot, who enjoys meeting other musicians and playing: there's an attraction there. They're curious, they want to check you out, anything new they want to check out. They're willing to try anything. I mean can you imagine me doing a duo concert with Bob Dylan? Forget it. It couldn't happen. But the equivalent of Bob Dylan over there I *have* done a concert with. So it's a very open place. A place where things can happen. I feel like it's growing and I like that feeling of growing and going somewhere. That's a feeling I get in New York too.

B.C.: *Where are things going for you?*

J.Z.: Well it's going very good. I won't say that dreams I've had for ten years are coming to fruition but in a sense there's a certain truth to that. I was very happy every step along the way and that's what made it possible. It wasn't like I waited eight years to make it to B.A.M. I wasn't like that at all. I was perfectly happy playing Studio Henry every single time I played there. I didn't hope for anything more or less. So now I'm at the point where the Kronos Quartet has asked me to write them a new piece. I'm going to be writing something for the Brooklyn Philharmonic next year. But a small piece, maybe ten minutes, a chamber piece. I've got this contract with Nonesuch which means that I can now reach my arms out to musicians that were way beyond me: like Albert Collins (who plays on **Spillane**). This next record I'm working on, one of the pieces is a collaboration with Tom Waits. We're doing a tribute to Harry Partch using some of the original Partch instruments from Sausalito. I'm getting Tom Waits to do the singing and narration and write the text. I'm going to do a piece with Metallica, the heavy metal band, which is a great group.

I see myself moving towards movie soundtracks. I did some animation work in Japan. There's so many possibilities. It's unbelievable right now.

B.C.: *What's your involvement been with Canada?*

J.Z.: I've played in Canada. Montreal was very good to me, and Quebec. I did something in Quebec City last year or the year before. I did a short tour there with the samisen player Sato Michihiro that went very well. And I played in Toronto a couple of times. It's hard to get across the border, the money thing is very difficult in Canada. There's not a lot of money for bringing Americans up there. I know the Arts Council is very strong on Canadian artists but it seems very difficult, for me at least, to get up there and do a big project. I was supposed to go there at the end of the Ornette tour, but it fell apart because the funding wasn't there. It's too bad.

JOHN ZORN (Photograph by Ken Kaufman)

AROUND THE WORLD

CANADA – Early deadlines for the summer issues of Coda make these notes less current than would usually be the case.

Jazz comes alive in Canada in the summer months. The major festivals in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver have now come and gone. They also stimulate jazz activity in other venues. Toronto's **New York Hotel**, for instance, began its summer program with a four night appearance by guitarist Tal Farlow (May 30-June2) and this was followed by jazz bagpipe specialist Rufus Harley June 27-30. Mose Allison was up next July 25-28 with support from Scott Alexander (bass) and Keith Blackley (drums). The final booking was the McCoy Tyner Trio (August 1-4).

The international nature of today's jazz scene was well represented at Canada's summer festivals and nowhere was this more apparent than in Edmonton where a special concert series was held at **Chinook Theatre**. The featured groups were Moire Music from England, the Six Winds and the Waterland Ensemble from Holland and the Microscopic Septet and the Rich Halley Quintet from the U.S.A.

Coda editor **Bill Smith** was invited as a panelist to the three day Jazz Media Symposium at the Univeristy of Illinois in Chicago. Under the general heading of Commentary, Counterpoint And Harmony, a variety of people from the jazz community discussed and debated numerous topics pertaining to the state of jazz in this period. The event was organised by Willard Jenkins of Arts Midwest and Art Lange, the departed editor of Downbeat Magazine. The event coincided with the University's Jazz Festival that featured Dizzy Gillespie and the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Frank Foster.

Saxophonist Les Sabina was winner of the 1988 Procan Jazz Composers competition.

ELSEWHERE – The seventh annual **JazzTimes Convention** will be held October 5-8 in the Los Angeles area. The venue is the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City. The convention will address "Jazz in the '90s"... **Bill Mays** is one of the pianists who keep the New York scene alive. He often works in partnership with bassist Harvie Swartz at clubs like the Knickerbocker and occasionally adds drums for some of his gigs. Jeff Hirschfield completed the trio at the Overseas Jazz Club while Terry Clarke was present at some engagements at Cafe Gianluca. Mays returns to Toronto in September for two weeks of solo piano at Cafe des Copains... **Adam Makowicz**, another pianist who is adding weight to the New York scene, hosted four nights of concerts at Weill Hall (in the Carnegie Hall complex). There was a salute to Irving Berlin, an evening of original Makowicz compositions for string quartet and soloists as well as a program of standards by a small group. The core musicians included Charlie Haden, Cecil McBee, Al Foster and Jamil Nasser.

Martin Usherwood reports on a new jazz club which has opened in Newark:

Writer/poet/critic **Amiri Baraka** (formerly Leroi Jones) has opened up a new jazz club in Newark, New Jersey. Called **Kimako's Blues People**, the new club features what Amiri calls the "nouveau avantists" in jazz and poetry. This month's list includes alto saxophonist James Spaulding who debuts a new work called "Song of Courage" with poetess Judy Simmons reading during alternate sets. Also featured is new star trombone player Craig "Black Bone" Harris and his group playing opposite poet Sekou Sundiata reading "The State of the Art". Open every Saturday at 9 pm, there are two shows – one at 10 pm and the other at midnight. Admission is $6. Refreshments, books and "heavy conversation" are also on offer. Located at 808 South 10th Street, the new club is conceived as a showcase for local talent from the Newark area. Phone for details on Newark (area code 201) 242-1346. Owner and manager Amiri Baraka says, "We have an immensely strong jazz tradition here in Newark. I could name you 20 stars who were born here, starting with Wayne Shorter and Sarah Vaughan, with new ones still being spawned. Newark must have something going for it to produce such talent, and there's more to come..."

The Black Eagle Jazz Band continue in residence every Thursday evening at Boston's Sticky Wicket Pub. The band heads to Europe in August for appearances in Ireland, Scotland and England... **The World Saxophone Quartet** will be appearing at Jacob's Pillow August 14... Dizzy Gillespie, Sun Ra, Roomful of Blues and Emily Remler were among the artists who appeared at the fifth **Discover Jazz Festival** in Burlington, Vermont June 9-12... Sonny Rollins, J.J. Johnson, Frank Morgan, Flip Phillips, Joanne Brackeen and Charlie Rouse were the headliners at the eighth **Central Pennsylvania Jazz Festival** held in Harrisburg June 17-19... This year's **Conneaut Lake Jazz Party** takes place August 26-28... The second **Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition** takes place November 17-18 at the Smithsonian Institute's Baird Auditorium in Washington, D.C... Urbie Green, Marty Grosz, Major Holley, Walt Levinsky, Jay McShann, Marty Napoleon, Christian Plattner, Lynn Roberts and Jack Sheldon are the new faces for the **1988 Jazz Party in Minneapolis** to be held September 16-18 in the Downtown Holiday Inn... **New Music America-Miami Festival** takes place December 2-11. Featured artists include Ornette Coleman, John Zorn, Astor Piazzola and Anthony Braxton.

The Bobby Bradford/John Carter Quintet was recorded for Hat Hut Records during three nights of performances at Los Angeles' Catalina's Bar & Grill May 27-29.... **Buddy Collette** is among the participants at the 16th annual convention of the National Flute Association in San Diego on August 18-21... Dick Hyman, Ralph Sutton, Jay McShann, Mike Lipskin and Ruby Braff were participants in the first segment of **San Francisco's** "Jazz In The City Festival" June 10. The second segment (August 26-28) is a special jazz film festival while the final part (October 6-15) will showcase the best of Bay Area talent in a variety of locations.

Rob McConnell was in New York, Chicago and Garland (Texas) this summer holding auditions and clinics for prospective students for the Grove School of Music... **Idaho's Festival at Sandpoint** is sponsoring a Jazz Training Program this summer. The faculty for the two week program includes Max Roach, Wynton Marsalis, Martin Williams, Doug Richards and festival artistic director Gunther Schuller.

Rory Stuart wishes to correct some of the information given in the recent review

of his "Hurricane" lp by Arthur Bull:

"I understand that the opinions expressed are purely subjective, and Mr. Bull is entitled to his. However, he does a disservice when he calls 'Hurricane' our 'debut' record when our earlier 'Nightwork' (Cadence Jazz Records 1016) received a rave review in Coda (June, 1984), and when even a brief glance at 'Hurricane's' liner notes would have brought the earlier record to his attention. Although Mr. Bull may not care for our work, *both* of our records have been listed in your magazine among the 10 best of the year by other critics. Could you please at least call his factual error to the attention of your readers, since some may be as unfamiliar with our music as Mr. Bull is, and may not be aware of our earlier work?"

The Caribbean Jazz Federation was organised at the 1987 Martinique Jazz Festival with the purpose of bringing together the various regional institutions and groups in the area created to promote appreciation of the music. Information on the Federation is available from Tom Hinds, No. 1 The Farm, St. Georges, Barbados, West Indies.

The Red Sea Jazz Festival is being held at Eilat, Israel from August 27-30. Joe Pass, Randy Brecker, James Moody, Phil Woods, the Mel Lewis Orchestra, Dave Leibman's Quest and the Eddie Palmieri salsa orchestra will share the stage with the best Israeli groups.

Jan Scobey is circulating an updated account of her late husband's life story twenty-five years after his death in 1963. Many new facts about **Bob Scobey** are included. The trumpeter was a vital force in the revival of early jazz styles in the 50s.

Bass Line: The Stories and Photographs of Milt Hinton has finally been published by Temple University Press. David Berger collaborated with Milt Hinton in assembling and organising the material... **Benny Goodman: Listen to his Legacy** is D. Russell Connor's most recent book about Benny Goodman. It is published by Scarecrow Press... Lovers of Australian jazz will be interested in two books published earlier in the summer in that country. **Graeme Bell's** autobiography "Australian Jazzman" is available from Child & Associates, 5 Skyline Place, French's Forest, NSW 2086... Jack Mitchell's **Australian Jazz on Record 1925-1980** has finally appeared. It's an indispensible reference work which details the recording activities of Australian musicians in listings which cover more than 200 pages. The book is available from AGPS Mail Order Sales, GPO Box 84, Canberra, ACT 2601... **The 43rd Australian Jazz Convention** will be held at Sydney University from December 26-31. Information is available from P.O. Box 115, Rozelle, NSW 2039... The Basic Discography of **Frank Rosolino** has been compiled by Brazilian discographer Roberto L. Machado. It is obtainable from the author at Caixa Postal 1142, 60000 Fortaleza, Brazil. The only acceptable form of payment is a U.S. $10.00 travellers cheque payable in the U.S.A.

CHET BAKER (Photograph by Bill Smith)

Arhoolie Records has issued a 55 minute video of "Clifton Chenier: The King of Zydeco". The company's first CD is a 60 minute collection of Chenier material... **Bluebird** reissues continue to flow from the company's vaults. "Save Your Love For Me" is a compilation of Eddie Lockjaw Davis material; there are collections called "Great Trumpets" and "Classic Jazz Piano". There's a new compilation of Jelly Roll Morton material as well as the 1970 Louis Armstrong Flying Dutchman session and a Gato Barbieri session from the same company... **Elektra/Nonesuch** has made available the original cast album of "The Gospel at Colonus"... **Polygram's** June release focused on ten new releases in their Walkman series. The compilations featured Ella Fitzgerald/Louis Armstrong, Stan Getz, Joe Williams with Count Basie, Wes Montgomery, Lester Young, Woody Herman, Jean Luc Ponty/Stephane Grappelli, Oscar Peterson, Gene Krupa/Buddy Rich and Jimmy Smith. Polygram is also adding continually to the availability of ECM recordings. Another 12 titles came back into circulation in June... "Jump for Joy" is a new compilation of Ellington recordings by **The Smithsonian**. The Insitution was recently a recipient of more than 200,000 pages of documents relating to the life and career of Duke Ellington... The Welk Organisation has reissued further titles from the **Vanguard** label – including Junior Wells' "It's My Life Baby". So far they have shown little inclination to reissue the great jazz recordings made for the company in the 1950s... Buddy deFranco is guest soloist with the **Al Raymond All Star Big Band** in a recording called "Born To Swing". Al Grey is among the featured performers in the band and the recording is available for US $11.00 postpaid from Al Raymond Albums, P.O. Box 726, Broomail, Pa 19008.

Trumpeter **Chet Baker** died in a fall from his Amsterdam hotel on May 13. He was 58... Bassist **Peck Morrison** died on February 25. He was 68... **Tommy Potter** is reported to have died in early March.

– compiled by John Norris

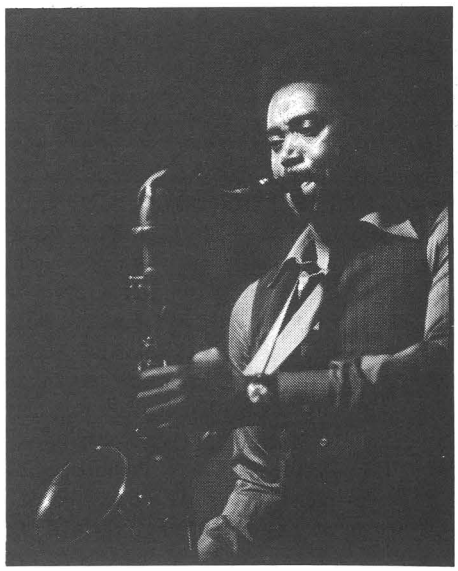
WEST COAST REPORT

The creative music scene in British Columbia hasn't looked so good in a long time. The deluge of quality international performers continues, while, at least in Vancouver, a wide variety of local performers continue to very successfully promote their own music. The focus of these latter efforts remains the revived New Orchestra Workshop. A month-long series of thrice-weekly concerts at the Centre Culturel Francophone (kudos to Regis Painchaud for his untiring support) was a sellout every night. Among the featured performers were Lunar Adventures, the Paul Plimley Trio, Kate Hammett-Vaughan and Second Sight, Bruce Freedman and Chief Feature,

and Unit-E featuring Graham Ord, along with a variety of other performers who are not members of NOW. Just when that ended, a Wednesday night series at the Grunt Gallery took over. I should also mention that pianist Plimley has finally made the long-awaited recording with his trio of Clyde Reed on bass and Gregg Simpson on drums. It's called Swinging Planets and is well worth acquiring (write to: 670 Union St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6A 2B9).

Perhaps the best indicator of the size of the audience right now in Vancouver is that on March 12th **Second Sight** filled the CCF *and* the **Willem Breuker Kollektief** filled the New York Theater. This was the first exposure for most of the audience to Breuker's gang of musical madcaps, and they responded very warmly to the mixture of mirth and musicianship. Perhaps the most impressive feature of the Kollektief is their ability to play so many styles of music without taking on the ennui of most repertory performances. Trumpeters Boy Raaymakers and Andy Altenfelder in particular shone with virtuosity and invention.

Max Roach made his first visit to Victoria April 2 with a quartet performance in front of a sellout crowd in the Newcombe Auditorium. Certainly the most successful presentation by the Victoria Jazz Society in recent memory, the three-hour concert covered a tremendous musical range – long unaccompanied solos by each member of the group, blues, bebop, Monk, Mingus, even some group inprovisation. As a matter of fact the entire first set was devoted to an extended performance of "Scott Free", a suite composed by trumpeter **Cecil Bridgewater**. Of course many of the pieces received unusual arrangements – "Blue Monk" as a waltz, "Round Midnight" as an uptempo driver, "Cherokee" at an absurdly fast tempo. I've found this group's recorded performances lacking in emotion, but there was no such problem this evening. (I later discovered a possible reason – the tone for the B.C. visit was set when virtually the entire opening night audience in Vancouver a few nights before had waited with a minimum of grumbling for over two hours when the concert started late due to border hassles.) Roach displayed all the chops we've come to expect; his energy, technical skills, regal bearing, and perfect posture belied his years. Tenor saxophonist **Odean Pope** was outstanding, particularly on an extended solo performance filled with multiphonics, split tones, and circular breathing, while **Tyrone Brown** brought some of the breakthroughs of the late Jaco Pastorius to non-fusion electric, albeit upright, bass. The only sour note was a boring risque mouthpiece solo by Cecil Bridgewater that went on way too long; he should have stuck that mouthpiece right back in his horn and played more of the quicksilver lines we enjoyed so much.



The **Steve Lacy** Sextet came to the West Coast a few nights later. Unfortunately, their performances were not at the very high level they exhibited on their last visit in 1986. They seemed a bit tired, and the group rapport and inspired solos which are their trademark were not always present, either at Open Space in Victoria April 4th or the Van East Cultural Center in Vancouver the next night. Perhaps the news of the deaths of Dannie Richmond and Gil Evans that weekend had cast a pall over the proceedings.

May 2nd brought guitarist **Bill Frisell** to Open Space along with trombonist **Jim Staley** and percussionist **Ikue Mori** for two sets of free improvisation. Frisell's style should be known to everyone by now; he shines in a format like this where he has to remain constantly on the edge. Staley's vocabulary consists mostly of smears, grunts, breathy sounds, and growls, aided by a number of different mutes, while Mori plays drumset without cymbals and drum machine. In a curious reversal, the tonal center, when there was one, was defined by the tuned drums. Frisell and Mori constantly exploited the interplay between real-time, in-the-moment, sounds, and the "just-past" sounds they manipulated with their electronics, and the more human sound of the trombone welded the music into a seamless whole. Many of the pieces ended unexpectedly, for both performers and audience, but as it turned out, at just the right moment. Perhaps the highest tribute I can pay is that the entire 90 minutes was rivetting, a difficult task indeed for free improvisation.

The Alcan Jazz Contest reappeared in Vancouver at the end of April. To me, and indeed to many of the contestants, the whole idea of a jazz *contest* seems very strange. Who is "better", Duke Ellington or Count Basie, Art Tatum or Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman or John Coltrane? It all comes down to personal preference, unless of course you are rating how well the contestant imitates a particular performer or style of music. That you *can* rate. Not to downgrade the performance of winners the **Bill Clarke** Sextet, which was excellent, it seems the preferred style to imitate is hard bop a la last year's national winners the **Hugh Fraser** Quintet. It is unfortunate that what is now styled the best young jazz band on the West Coast could virtually ignore all developments in jazz the past 25 years. Unfortunately, the under-35-years-of-age rule cut out most of the creative working bands out here, and the organisers chose to apply that rule rigorously while bending many of the others. All this time and money would serve the jazz community better if it was spent increasing the token representation of West Coast musicians at the Montreal Jazz Festival, at least to the level of support the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society and NOW give to central Canadian musicians!

But let me descend, hopefully with dignity intact, from my soapbox. The lineups for the Summer Jazz Festivals in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria have been released. The Jazz City International Festival in Edmonton runs from July 1-9, and performers of interest to Coda readers include the **Microscopic Septet, De Zes Winden** and **Loek Dikker's Waterland Ensemble** from Holland, and **Trevor Watt's Moire Music** from England. JazzFest in Victoria received a major infusion of capital this year, and the expanded program reflects it; visitors include the **Microscopic Septet, Waterland**

ODEAN POPE (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

Ensemble, the **J.J. Johnson** Quintet, **Charlie Haden**'s Quartet West, **David Friesen, Lorraine Desmarais**, and last but not least, **Ornette Coleman** and Prime Time. JazzFest '88 runs from June 24-July 2.

The DuMaurier International Jazz Festival in Vancouver, June 24-July3, continues to stake a claim as one of the hippest festivals in North America. **Ornette Coleman** and Prime Time will certainly fill the Commodore, while **J.J. Johnson**'s Quintet will grace the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse. The VECC series includes **Andrew Hill, String Trio of New York, De Zes Winden, Haden**'s Quartet West, **Michelle Rosewoman**, the **Semantics, Gary Burton, John Rapson, Vinny Golia**, and **John Tchicai**, while the Western Front hosts **Horace Tapscott, George Lewis, John Oswald**, and **Tom Cora**, among others. There are a host of club and free outdoor performances featuring many of the above, as well as **Moire Music, Jack Walrath**, and **OTB**, and many, many Canadian performers. The organizers have continued their policy of bringing in musicians for an extended period so they can be mixed and matched in interesting and different combinations; if you have lots of stamina, money, and logistical skills, a number of peak musical experiences should be available.

– *Scott Lewis*

JAZZ IN EUROPE

The festival circuit starts early in Europe. It is an annual opportunity for listeners to experience the glamour and excitement of American jazz. Both large and small communities host events which can last only one day or, in the case of Nice and Montreux, can stretch out for more than a week.

The larger festivals usually present a broad mix of musical styles but quite a number have a more specialised philosophy. Moers and Nurnberg showcase the latest trends while Ascona and Lugano are strictly traditional in their approach. Then there is Bern!

The Swiss capital city has presented a jazz festival for thirteen years. It began as a small affair focusing upon such classic stylists as Wild Bill Davison, Earl Hines, Sammy Price and Bob Wilber. It still hues closely to its original philosophy but the advent of TV coverage and the financial pressures of an expanded program and high priced headliners has somewhat altered things. But it remains an extremely well run, delightfully civilized event which is a joy to attend.

This year's event was a blend of organised bands (B.B. King, Count Basie, Oscar Peterson, Out Of The Blue) and specially assembled combinations (Ellington's Space Men, Oscar Klein's European All Stars, Tete Montoliu/Slide Hampton). There were also such bonuses as Joe Williams singing with the Basie band, Clifford Jordan added to Carmen McRae's supporting trio, the Red Richards Trio (Milt Hinton, Clyde Lucas) working with The Cunninghams (a vocal duo) and Eugene Wright and drummer Jimmie Smith giving rhythmic focus to Linda Hopkins. Dizzy Gillespie, a floater at this event, worked with both Carmen McRae and Oscar Peterson.

Each concert offered a different aspect of the jazz tradition. **B.B. King** and **Linda Hopkins** took care of the blues but there were singers at most of the concerts. Joe Williams had the greatest impact – his collaboration with the Basie band was a warm, relaxed affair. He was singing well and seemed truly pleased to be working with such a fine band. A highlight was his reworking of the C.Q. Price chart of Jimmy's Blues.

The pacing and presentation of **Carmen MacRae**'s set was changed through Dizzy Gillespie's guest presence. They joked around and tackled material neither was comfortable with. It was better to have heard Carmen at a satellite concert which took place a few days later in Baden. **The Cunninghams** are a stylised duo of singers who rework the vocalese tradition. Their repertoire is an impressive cross section of jazz tunes which have had intriguing lyrics added to them by such writers as Eddie Jefferson and Jon Hendricks. Their grasp of the idiom is good but the lack of improvisation means that each performance is a set presentation.

Maxine Weldon's repertoire stretches into rhythm and blues and she is more of a popular entertainer than a jazz singer. Europeans respond positively to the energy of black singers while Americans seem to prefer the greater sophistication of singers from the supper club tradition. Neither have much relationship with jazz music.

Oscar Peterson's virtuosity (coupled with his magnetism) was the instrumental highlight of the week. His current trio fits together like a well tuned racing car. Bassist Dave Young and drummer Martin Drew work *with* the pianist – complementing rather than competing with his imagination. The trio set was an electrifying demonstration of jazz music at its best but the second part of the concert was an anti-climax. Louis Bellson became the drummer and trumpeters Harry Edison, Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry joined the pianist for a JATP type set – complete with the obligatory ballad medley. The best moments came from **Harry Edison**. He has retained all his skills and is still a quintessential jazz artist.

Musical contrasts were offered by **Out Of The Blue** and **Ellington's Spacemen**. Out Of The Blue presented some of the best prepared music of the week. Nearly all their repertoire were recently composed tunes and were performed with conviction. The arrangements were tailored to the band's stylistic parameters – the Blue Note sound of the 1960s. Impressive solo work was heard from Ralph Bowen and Kenny Drew Jr. but it was the overall group sound rather than individual statements which helped make their music so enjoyable.

Ellington's Spacemen, in contrast, were an ad hoc group of veteran Ellingtonians specially assembled to perform Ellington tunes arranged by Bill Crook. It was the solo statements of Willie Cook, Britt Woodman and Harold Ashby which provided the best moments. The band never seemed comfortable together and the arrangements were pedestrian interpretations of overly familiar Ellington standards.

Oscar Klein's European Dixieland All Stars was another specially assembled band who paid tribute to Muggsy Spanier in their Saturday night appearance. Non Americans, after more than forty years of endeavour, are much better equipped to interpret various jazz styles of the past and this band featured reed players Christian Plattner (Austria) and Antii Sarpila (Finland), trombonist Roy Williams (England), pianist Henri Chaix (Switzerland), guitarist Lino Patruno (Italy), bassist Roman Dylag and drummer Gregor Beck.

This band had little difficulty in putting together a cohesive sound but so much of the music was an echo of other times and other bands. Only Christian Plattner and Roy Williams have a voice of their own.

Among the joys of the Bern festival have been the nightly jam sessions following the main concerts. These were held in

the cramped quarters of the Barrelhouse where up to 1,000 people squeezed into a space more suitable for 200. Live radio broadcasts each night now limit much of the spontaneity and this year the sessions were moved to a larger, more comfortable space within the Kursaal. For The Cunninghams and the Ellington Spacemen it became an opportunity to work through the material they were to present later in the week at the main stage while for the Basie Band it was another opportunity for Frank Foster's men to show how vibrant and exciting a band it has become since the saxophonist took over the leadership.

There were early evening concerts this year in this same space but few people came to hear Out Of The Blue, Maxine Weldon and Tete Montoliu/ Slide Hampton.

Sunday morning is traditionally one of the most enjoyable concerts. The Kornhauskeller is packed with families who respond enthusiastically to the traditional sounds and the spontaneous mix of musicians who show up to play. This year, for the first time, only one band – Oscar Klein's European All Stars – played the whole morning. The band sounded good (as all bands seem to in this setting) but the event suffered from the one dimensional presentation.

Consistency is the key to the success of the Bern Festival. Once again in 1988 the organising committee can be well satisfied with the results.

OTHER EVENTS

Joe Henderson was performing in many European cities prior to a tour with the Paris Reunion Band. His advertised quartet of women musicians was somewhat different to reality in Baden, Switzerland on May 7. The pick-up band included pianist Joe Haider, bassist Jack Gregg and drummer Cindy Blackman. Blackman was the only holdover from the advertised group and it was the powerhouse energy of her playing which kept the music on track. Henderson is one of the music's most gifted performers but the setting and the accompaniment didn't showcase him at his best.

Don't be fooled by the name of the club (Jazz Life) in Frankfurt's Sachsenhausen district. Jazz music is only heard there occasionally as part of its entertainment mix. The club played host to a rare public appearance of the Sentimental Mood Big Band – a rehearsal outfit which plays everything from Glenn Miller to Oliver Nelson. The 20 man band is better equipped at reading the charts than soloing. It meant that a lot of tunes were run down in their engagement on May 6.

London's refurbished Pizza On The Park is an excellent venue for the presentation of music and **Mose Allison** was in residence for three weeks in May. His inimitable style remains intact and his piano playing was particularly sharp the night I heard him with Spike Heatley on bass and Mark Taylor on drums. His early show incorporated many of his well known compositions (Swingin' Machine, One Of These Days, Mind Is On Vacation), such standards as I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues, No Special Place and You Are My Sunshine. Surprisingly only one tune from his new Blue Note recording (Gettin' There) was performed.

Peter Boizot's principal London venue for the presentation of jazz is The Pizza Express. It's a typical London cellar club – cramped, rather hot, poor sight lines and a piano which should be retired. The magical combination of **Kenny Davern** and **Art Hodes** overcame all these limitations during their collaboration on May 14 and **Colin Bowden** was an appropriate drummer to work with them. His style, rooted in the drum traditions established by Baby Dodds and Zurry Singleton, fits well with the rumbling bass lines of Hodes and the spikey lines of the clarinetist. It was an exhilarating evening.

The monotony of air travel can be eased with a good selection of jazz music on the in flight entertainment schedule. Swissair continues to utilise the talents of **Johnny Simmen** and his Dick Wellstood program was interesting enough to listen to continuously throughout the long transatlantic flight. Unfortunately the airline seem to have decided to only carry this program one way. On the other leg, instead of a more contemporary jazz program, they offer a poor mix of big band nostalgia. Air Lanka, who fly between Europe and Sri Lanka and other Asian countries has a first rate jazz program presented by Jon Ledigo. His comments are astute and the program covers a wide range of jazz music. In contrast most Canadian and American airlines remain steadfast in their determination to discourage air travel by jazz enthusiasts. – *John Norris*

RECORD REVIEWS

TORONTO WRITER STEVE VICKERY REVIEWS A VARIETY OF RECENT RELEASES

ELVIN JONES/McCOY TYNER QUINTET
Reunited
Blackhawk BKH 521-1D

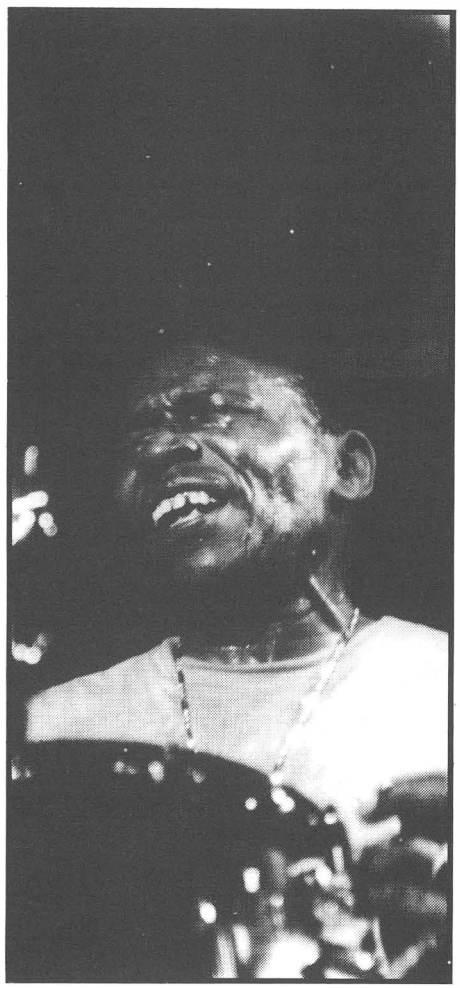
Little Rock's Blues / Hip Jones / Korina / For Tomorrow / Sweet and Lovely / Origin April, 1982

The Elvin Jones/McCoy Tyner Quintet achieve moments of sublime brilliance with the release of this 1982 recording featuring the tenor saxophonist Pharoah Sanders. Having refined the at-once distinctive voice that he first displayed alongside John Coltrane in the mid-sixties, Sanders' saxophone offers a polished resonance to this ensemble, signaling the next plateau in their sound search. His characteristic shouts and cries, absorbed and distilled into a potent forcefulness, take on a heartrending emotion on the McCoy Tyner composition, "For Tomorrow". Tyner, whose signature piano style has become part of the vocabulary of modern keyboard, equally reaches for new heights in emotional impact, both in his writing and in his playing, especially in evidence on his accompaniment to Sanders' tenor on "Korina". The succinctness and clarity he brings to this session is outstanding. Jones' driving energy, always present in his own ensembles, rings out boldly here. His empathy with bassist Richard Davis builds from their unity of purpose and shared knowledge of form into a new realm that is vital and undeniable. The addition of guitarist J.P. Bourelly updates the harmonic freedom of Tyner as loose springing guitar darts through the more complex linearity of Tyner's statements. Highly recommended listening.

PIERRE BLANCHARD
Music For String Quartet, Jazz Trio, and Lee Konitz
Sunnyside SSC 1023

Moment's Notice / Solis / Mani-Pulsations / When Slides Are Low / Chick Came Around / XVIII Brumaire Dec., 1986

Pierre Blanchard is a young French violinist whose touch on the instrument is a pleasurable amalgam of classical technique, folk fiddle, and the substantial influence of his fellow countryman, Stephane Grappelli. His North American debut includes both a string quartet (interesting but rather pedestrian in its compositional scope) and numerous ensemble selections with string section augmentation. The real point of interest for Coda readers is the participation of alto saxophonist Lee Konitz in this project. Konitz, an inventive mellifluous improviser brings a fresh clarity to this recording which comes hard on the heels of his recent collaborations with Derek Bailey at I.C.A.'s weeklong Company festival. Konitz blows mostly cool on this disc, heating up most distinctively on his own piece, "Chick Came Around". Coltrane's "Moment's Notice" is essayed by the ensemble with a solo from Konitz that seems a shade tentative amidst the sea of strings although some fine fluid piano from Alain Jean-Marie peeks through the masses. The composition, "Solis" also suffers slightly from string section overkill but is redeemed by Konitz whose laconic solo offering is hauntingly bittersweet. Definitely worth hearing for the fans of Kontiz's highly personal voice.



BUDDY DEFRANCO/TERRY GIBBS
Chicago Fire
Contemporary C-14036

Rockin' In Rhythm / Please Send Me Someone To Love / Sister Sadie / This Is Always / Cherokee / Giant Steps / Bopstacle Course / Stella By Starlight / 52nd Street Theme July 1987

Chicago Fire, recorded live at Chicago's Jazz Showcase, brings us a quintet led by Defranco and Gibbs. In what is an accurate representation of their live show, the quintet are very professional but the overall feeling that one gets from the record is that it is a shade over-arranged. Defranco's consistent tone and fluid playing swings these blues and ballads in an effortless manner, shading notes with a warm, rich texture. His facility on the standard concert clarinet is undoubtable, so much so that one wishes he would widen his playing to include the bass clarinet in his work. Gibbs' playing on vibraphone tends to blur when he indulges his fondness for the instrument's fast vibrato setting, a limiting factor that tends to cloud his phrasing on the up-tempo selections. It is only when the ensemble offer the ballad, "This Is Always", that they reach the top of their form. There is a tendency for them to overplay the faster tunes, presumably increasing the visual excitement for the audience though, on record, the effect is quite opposite. A racing introduction leads off "Stella By Starlight" which is then taken at a tempo that does not prove advantageous. Similarly, in other passages, the ensemble race along through compositions that could benefit from a more considered treatment. Chicago Fire will be of interest to fans of Defranco and Gibbs but does not hold much for the non-partisan listener.

ELVIN JONES (Photograph by Bill Smith)

THE GEORGE SHEARING TRIO with Ray Brown and Marvin "Smitty" Smith
Breakin' Out
Concord CJ-335

Just Squeeze Me / Daydream / Hallucinations / What'll I Do / Break Out The Blues / Don't Get Around Much Anymore / Twelve Tone Blues / Prelude To A Kiss / There Is No Greater Love
May 1987

Shearing's new trio is perhaps his most exciting and yet traditional project to be released in some time. Shearing's playing continues to evolve, taking on a very uncharacteristic angularity on "Twelve Tone Blues". Preferring to explore the work of the masters rather than concentrate on his own compositions, Shearing includes four Duke Ellington pieces here and creates, with the help of his rhythm section, a near-definitive reading of "Prelude To A Kiss". Bud Powell's "Hallucinations" stands out as well as an example of the unique chemistry present in this combination of players. Ray Brown and Marvin Smith swing effortlessly through these arrangements with an assurance that is refreshing. Brown's bass mastery frees the imaginative Smith from the somewhat restrictive position of timekeeper, allowing him to comment on the implied flow rather than regulating it. Smith's time and taste throughout are admirable, lending an earthiness to "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" or laying back in the melancholic "Daydream", an Ellington composition that seems to drift through the air. In view of Shearing's assertion that this album consists mainly of first takes, it remains a very rare document of the consistency and vigour of one of Britain's finest jazzmen.

RAY ANDERSON
It Just So Happens
Enja 5037

It Just So Happens / Ross The Boss / Elegy For Joe Scott / La Vie En Rose / Once In A While / Raven's Jolly Jump Up / Fatelet / Fishin' With Gramps Feb. 1987

Ray Anderson's growth as both a trombonist and as a composer has been exponential since his tenure in the front line of Anthony Braxton's late seventies quartets. This release on Enja moves forward again, overstepping the somewhat forced funk of the early Slickaphonics sound, and moving in the direction of contemporary rhythms that suggest reggae and calypso within the jazz context. This development of time as pulse has much to do with his choice of rhythm sections (Ronnie Burrage on drums, Mark Dresser on double bass) and the absence of a chordal instrument underlining harmonic movement. Anderson seems very relaxed with the tunes here, and the music (six of the eight are Anderson's originals) opens up as a result. The instrumentation he has chosen for the session also serves to give the album a lilting quality, with Perry Robinson's clarinet and Stanton Davis' trumpet covering the upper register against the breathy groundwork of Bob Stewart on tuba. The sympathetic feeling of relaxed swing on "La Vie En Rose" combines a caribbean rhythmic buoyancy with a hint of New Orleans second-line. Anderson's cadenza at the close of the composition is brash and glowing, full of esprit. Mention should be made in passing of the sound quality of this recording, made at Rudy Van Gelder's studios, as it is pleasantly free of effects and manipulation. Anderson's music is well served by this process of hands-off recording allowing the full effect of the music to capture the listener's attention.

FRANK MORGAN/GEORGE CABLES
Double Image
Contemporary C-14035

All The Things You Are / Virgo / Blues For Rosalinda / After You've Gone / Helen's Song / Love Dance / Love Story / I Told You So

The duet form remains one of the greatest challenges for the improvising performer. "Double Image", an expressive set of duets from George Cables and Frank Morgan, investigates this setting with a clear articulation based in their shared creative empathy. The choice of compositions on the album has been made with a view toward the traditional (All The Things You Are, After You've Gone) and also with consideration for the personal statements of Morgan and Cables as composers. This is a well-balanced program though with an old turn here and there. Morgan's tasteful ballad treatment of the rarely heard Wayne Shorter composition "Virgo" would be an excellent introduction for any listener unfamiliar with his work. This selection is perhaps the most evocative statement of his playing to date. His alto work on the mid to up-tempo pieces is Bird-like in technique and suppleness but maintains a personal voice that is distinctly his own. Cables is in fine form on this date, already well-adapted to the task of supporting reedmen from his extensive work with Dexter Gordon and Art Pepper. He is a suitable partner for Morgan, comping effectively and outlining the possibilities for the altoist's flights with good-natured elan, occasionally getting himself into hot water but not losing control. As a soloist himself, Cables tends toward a linear bop-inflected line, satisfying enough in itself so that the addition of Morgan's alto seems a bonus. With luck, this release won't just be a one-off encounter but will translate instead into a continuing working relationship.

JAMES MOODY
Something Special
RCA/Novus 3004-1-N

I'm In The Mood For Love / Real Feels Good / Nubian Fantasies / Transfer To Manhattan / More Than You Know / Inside Lover July 1986

James Moody presents a smoothly rehearsed program on this, his debut quartet recording for Novus. With an ear toward breaking through to radio programmers, the first selection of each side leans toward easy-listening to take full advantage of Moody's sumptuous tenor. Thankfully the tracks that follow are of a more adventurous spirit, showcasing Moody's current direction. His quartet sound is very lean and controlled, somewhat reminiscent of the late Joe Farrell's work with Chick Corea in 1972-73. Kirk Lightsey's piano is featured throughout, adding tasteful accompaniment and stretching out thoughtfully in his solo sections. The rhythm section of Todd Coolman and Idris Muhammad play these parts sparingly, suggesting groove more by implication than by statement. This recording might be a surprise for fans of Moody's early work but this relaxed contemporary quartet should be taken in the same spirit in which it is offered; engaging, entertaining, and non-confrontational. It would be a mistake to expect an artist of Moody's caliber to remain static in either his exploration of musical forms or his need to reach a wider audience with his music.

CHARLIE ROUSE & BUSTER WILLIAMS (Photograph by Mimi Rossi)

SPHERE
Live At Umbria Jazz
Red Records NS-207

Tokudo / Saud's Song / Christina / Deceptakon July 1986

With this new release on the Italian Red Records label, Sphere continue to move into the mainstream of the jazz spectrum. Buster Williams takes the reins fully on this session, steering the quartet (as well as contributing three of the four compositions) toward a melodic improvisation that is smooth without being slick and is compatible with the aims of its members; soulful, freewheeling forays that take their cue from Monk more in his spirit of searching than in point of his compositions or arrangements. Williams' bass anchors the quartet through these selections with a resilient muscular walking line that inspires and complements tenor Charlie Rouse in his animated discourse. The tenor saxophone is very much an ensemble instrument here, a role that Rouse steps beyond infrequently but with revealing candor as his solo on Kenny Barron's "Saud's Song" demonstrates. "Sphere Live At Umbria Jazz" is an example of the rare record that compels you to listen closely to catch all the nuances rather than try to knock you over with its virtuosity. Though there is no lack of the latter on this disc, Sphere prefer to invite you like any good storyteller would, with a beguiling riddle to unravel.

HILTON RUIZ ENSEMBLE
Something Grand
RCA/Novus 3011-1-N

Home Cookin' / Puerto Rican Children / Four West / Something Grand / Sunrise Over Madarao / One Step Ahead Oct. 1986

After a long apprenticeship in the bands of Jackie McLean, Joe Henderson, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Hilton Ruiz has gathered together an impressive circle of players for this release, his debut for RCA's Novus label. As a leader, Ruiz understands the art of bringing out the talents of his ensemble by writing for them as individuals. The contributions of Sam Rivers (reeds and flute), Steve Turre (trombone), and Lew Soloff (trumpet) as spirited improvisers make this record equally refreshing and inviting for the listener. Ruiz's music is soaked through with the rhythms of downtown Havana via New York City, percussively crackling with flavours of salsa, merangue, and the latin drumming first pioneered in jazz music by the late Chano Pozo in collaboration with Dizzy Gillespie. The presence of three strong drummers playing as one presents a rhythmic fabric that is directly in line with the traditions of both Caribbean drumming and the African drum ensembles that form its roots. Ruiz's playing has a crisp and vital edge to it that builds upon the tension of the drumming while contributing a harmonic complexity that surprises.

BILLY HIGGINS QUARTET
Bridgework
Contemporary C-14024

Deceptakon / I Hear A Rhapsody / Plexus / Evidence / Old Folks / Bridgework / The Theme

As is the case with Charlie Haden's Quartet West, the new release on Contemporary by Billy Higgins reflects the life's work of a musician whose creative concept has been shaped by participation in the formidable 1960s Ornette Coleman Quartet. Possessed of a lighter though not dissimilar touch as his successor and mentor, Edward Blackwell, Higgin's work here illuminates his search to uncover more of the root music, equally carnivalesque and tragic, that he first began to survey with Coleman. Buster Williams' composition, "Deceptakon" is an intriguing opener for this disc. Higgins swings with restraint, pushing the bassist/composer to reach conclusions that he might have missed given a less propulsive support. The two sides of this record, aptly titled considering that the sessions do bridge a time span of five years (Jan. 1980 to April 1986) are not at all inconsistent though the telling signs of change emerge in each side's ballad feature. With Cedar Walton at the piano for both sessions, Higgins' sound seems more spartan, almost atmospheric, on the 1986 "I Hear A Rhapsody" when it is measured against the lovely "Old Folks" from the earlier date. Walton's "Plexus", which closes the later sessions, shows the development of Higgins' polyrhythmic thinking applied to a dancing latin drum pattern. A very assured step forward as a leader.

HENRY THREADGILL SEXTETT
You Know The Number
RCA/Novus 3013-1-N

Bermuda Blues / Silver And Gold Baby, Silver And Gold / Theme From Thomas Cole / Good Times / To Be Announced / Those Who Eat Cookies Oct. 1986

Henry Threadgill's association of long standing with Chicago's A.A.C.M. and his leadership of numerous units, most notably his trio Air with Fred Hopkins and Steve McCall, lead us to expect a very spare, ascerbic writing sense as he turns his hand to composing for larger ensembles. Somewhat surprisingly, much

of "You Know The Number" is written to feature the very full sonic strength of the sextett. Threadgill's alto stretches out to good effect on "Bermuda Blues", a simple vamp that builds to a boiling point with the appearance of Rasul Sadik on trumpet. Fred Hopkins' introductory bass solo to "Silver And Gold" is slightly low in the mix but is a fine example of this largely unheralded player. It is Hopkins that acts as the cohesive element for this session, providing a center of gravity for the flurry of percussion stirred by Pheeroan Aklaff and Reggie Nicholson. The use of two drummers yields mixed results on "Good Times", the television theme that the ensemble threaten to run away with. An odd choice, not entirely successful, for a unit headed by a strong composer like Threadgill. While Deidre Murray on cello contributes some interesting textures in tandem playing with Hopkins, it is a shame that Threadgill didn't open the ensemble up for smaller combinations of players (trumpet and bass/trombone, cello, and alto). To his credit, there are many unexpected turns of phrase that swing beautifully, though too often they are marred by the weight of the ensemble's numbers and the undercurrent of rhythmic ambiguity. RCA deserves credit for releasing this kind of ambitious work.

STANLEY TURRENTINE
Comin' Your Way
Bluenote BLJ 84065

My Girl Is Just Enough Woman For Me / Then I'll Be Tired Of You / Fine L'il Lass / Thomasville / Someone To Watch Over Me / Stolen Sweets

Jan. 1961

Turrentine's quintet on "Comin' Your Way" has something of that undefinable essence that makes the early sixties Bluenote recordings (usually sessions held at Rudy Van Gelder's New Jersey studios) instantly recognizable and immediately accessible. Turrentine's work here features his quintet with Horace Parlan on piano and is solidly in the Bluenote tradition of robust blowing and ensemble arrangements that avoid fussiness. A fine saxophonist whose work with Max Roach in 1959-60 greatly influenced his conception of the quintet's potential, Turrentine's sound appeared to be moving in the direction of Don Byas and Sonny Rollins (the latter being particularly an influence on "Then I'll Be Tired Of You" than toward what amounted to a fall from grace while at C.T.I. The talented bassist George Tucker, alongside Parlan and drummer Al Harewood, is a hidden asset of the quintet, guiding the oft-recorded "Someone..." gracefully but with conviction. Tommy Turrentine, elder brother of the tenorist and a veteran of the Basie and Gillespie bands of the forties and early fifties, blows convincingly although not as often as one would care to hear him on this disc. His composition, "Thomasville", whets the listener's appetite for his bright tone, a pleasing combination of breathiness and bravura that is cut short in a round robin of solos. "Comin' Your Way" is a disc very much in the tradition of early sixties American music, certainly worth hearing for its relaxed good spirits and as a document of a young tenor coming into his own.

MILT JACKSON with John Lewis, Percy Heath, Kenny Clarke, and the Thelonious Monk Quintet
Blue Note BLJ 81509

Lillie / Tahiti / What's New / Bag's Groove / On The Scene / Willow Weep For Me / Criss Cross / Eronel / Four In One / Misterioso / Evidence

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The timely reissue of Milt Jackson's recording features the vibraphonist in various combinations of players that essentially form two distinctive units, the Thelonious Monk Quintet and the Modern Jazz Quartet. Jackson's angularity seems so well matched by the joyful impulsiveness of Monk that by contrast his work alongside John Lewis and colleagues of the MJQ appears restrained. Later recordings of the MJQ seemed to incite Jackson to a more telling lyricism as he warmed to the task set for him by Lewis' almost orchestral piano style. Jackson's touch is self assured and compelling, gliding across the songs with a dancer's precision. Very fresh and sparing in his statements, Jackson serves notice with these recordings of his position within the music as a master. His choice of material on this release is straight forward on the MJQ side (What's New, Bag's Groove) and then moves into the unusual for his meeting with Monk (Misterioso, Evidence). As a reissue, this Bluenote deserves attention. Jackson's treatments of these compositions renews their value to a new audience, and the presence of fellow travellers like Monk, Lou Donaldson, and John Lewis make the familiar journey all the more remarkable.

ART BLAKEY
AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS
Moanin'
Bluenote BLJ 84003

Moanin' / Are You Real / Along Came Betty / Drum Thunder Suite / Blues March / Come Rain Or Come Shine

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It's a cheerful irony that the current achievements of Art Blakey tend to overshadow this fine example of early (1958) hard-bop ensemble performance. "Moanin'" remains such a credible introduction of this music that it should be no surprise that many listeners would consider it indispensible, so steeped is it in creative energy. Blakey's front-line of Lee Morgan and Benny Golson set the high standards here that all latter-day versions of the Jazz Messengers would be judged by. Morgan's playing in particular is worthy of comment throughout, evoking Louis Armstrong and Cootie Williams by inserting playful half-valve effects and squeezed notes during his solo sections. Golson's tenor straddles the saxophone traditions of rhythm and blues shouting (J.A.T.P.) and the currents of individual expression (the influences of Dexter Gordon and Hank Mobley exert a substantial force upon Golson's sound concept). Bobby Timmons on piano plays engagingly, predating the popular "soul-jazz" sound that would later become associated with Horace Silver, another Blakey alumnus. All in all, highly recommended listening.

DONALD BYRD
At The Half-Note Cafe, Vol. Two
Bluenote BLJ 84061

Jeannine / Pure D. Funk / Kimyas / When Sonny Gets Blue Nov. 1960

In light of the recent passing of Pepper Adams, Bluenote's reissue of Donald Byrd's "At The Half-Note Cafe" is a timely one. Adams' baritone saxophone is featured to great effect on this live date, creating both in tandem playing with Byrd and on his own solos a lilting baritone dance that takes many chances, all of them successful. Adams' presence

on this session is a notable asset, bringing an element of distinction to what otherwise would essentially be a Blakeyesque soul-bop outing. Underlined by Duke Pearson's funk-flavoured piano Donald Byrd's trumpet rings brightly, drawing in a multitude of influences from Clifford Brown on up while retaining his own voice. The length of the selections on this recording is exceptional, reflecting a different age and attitude in recording that has since been lost with all but the best producers and labels. There is very much a live club atmosphere captured on this session, a feeling that all is well, just turn on the tape and the quintet will handle the rest. "At The Half-Note Cafe, Vol. Two" is a fine reminder of this music's durability and life.

BOBBY HUTCHERSON
Dialogue
Bluenote BLJ 84198

Catta / Idlewhile / Les Noirs Marchent / Dialogue / Ghetto Lights April 1965

"Dialogue", Hutcherson's first date as a leader, is a well-constructed effort that succeeds in partially reconciling the prevailing tension between the move toward free group improvisation and the use of highly arranged notated music. The same alchemy present at the creation of Eric Dolphy's "Out To Lunch" (recorded fourteen months earlier with the participation of Hubbard, Davis and Hutcherson) is revealed again here though the presence of Sam Rivers on reeds and Andrew Hill on piano brings about a perceptible change in the music's center of gravity. Andrew Hill is a force of considerable intensity, sparring with Rivers' tenor on "Catta" and playing with such declaratory energy on "Les Noirs Marchent" that he threatens to disrupt the evenness of Joe Chamber's composition. "Dialogue" is quite free, energy music refined and focused through the insight of Hutcherson allowing a free hand to Joe Chambers and Richard Davis who contribute a markedly subtle yet discernible pulse to the proceedings. Davis' tidal bass figures meshes with Sam Rivers' bass clarinet to create a menacing, Halloween-like backdrop for Andrew Hill whose playing moves from tense punctuation to gospel evocation in the space of a few moments. For any who have appreciated Hutcherson's gifts in the company of Dolphy, this re-release will be a welcome discovery.

FESTIVAL SCENES

DIALOGUE – A Toronto-Montreal Music Meeting, Le Grand Café, Montréal
May 12-15, 1988

Because of its vastness and sparse population, Canada has developed a rather insular fashion. Not only are we known as the land of 'the two solitudes', but the distances have fostered many more regional differences than purely linguistic ones.

In the arts, this holds true, especially within the realm of the contemporary music scene. In his recent book, *Boogie, Pete & The Senator*, Mark Miller talks of the coming of age of Canadian jazz in the 1980's. In his preface, the author not only states the fact, that there is a multiplicity of scenes in our country, but he goes on to spell out the purpose of his book as a means "to break down such insularity – to offer, if not a national sense of identity, then a national sense of common experience and perhaps common purpose." (p. 11)

But books alone cannot overcome all barriers, geographical or otherwise. Essentially, it is up to the musicians and sufficiently enterprising promoters to forge links between the diverse musical communities which dot our cultural landscape. Last March, a first of sorts took place when a group of Montreal based musicians headed west to play at Toronto's *Clinton Tavern* for a week long music meet.

Some two months later, West has now come East, so to speak, as seven of Toronto's contemporary improvisers visited Montreal for another four day happening. Given the fact, that a "dialogue" such as this one cannot be forced but must be induced gradually, the proceedings were divided into three sets nightly, the first for a Montreal group, the second for a Toronto unit and the third one being an open session for musicians from each city.

On opening night, Charles Papasoff fronted his new quartet with trumpeter Pierre LaFrenaye, bassist Michael Downes and drummer Jeff Simons. The leader was surely at his smoking best on his baritone sax, largely overshadowing the solo efforts of his generally supportive sidemen. And now that a recording session is in the works for this former student of the late Pepper Adams, there is no doubt whatsoever that he is long overdue to emerge from the 'local musician syndrome'. Equally strong was the duo of Tom Walsh on trombone and Richard Underhill (of 'Shuffle Demon' fame). Both of these Torontonians managed to make the music swing without the support of the usual rhythm section. Between the shifting riffs of the trombonist and the saxist's vitality as a soloist, their music is as joyous as it is energetic and daring.

The second night featured a quebecois trio headed by pianist Pierre St-Jak, dabbling into live electronics on that occasion, followed then by Bill Smith, with violinist David Prentice, backed up by Montrealers Lisle Ellis and John Heward on bass and drums respectively. Forced to stay home that night due to an unexpected illness, I nevertheless recovered in time to catch the last two evenings.

On the third evening, the local band was headed by drummer Michel Ratté. His quartet, 'Coronet', sounds like one of those free-fusion-funk bands which have sprouted up a little everywhere of late. After a rockish intro and theme, the music would then segue into free territory, displaying much energy though remaining fuzzy in concept. As a welcome contrast, the Toronto duo of Richard Bannard (drums) and Nick Gotham (alto sax) was more subtle soundwise and more tonally centered, the latter playing Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge* at one point, right amongst the drummer's cymbal splashes and brushwork.

On the following night, Paul Cram on tenor provided even more satisfying moments in his duet with Lisle Ellis. Just like an intense conversation between friends, the rapport between the musicians was excellent, the former displaying his strong and throaty sound, soaring at times but never overindulging, the latter conjuring up echoes of Garrison and Haden at the same time.

To cap off this festival, the last set brought together most of the participants in a twelve man 'Dialogue Orchestra'. With a minimum of rehearsal time, the band played five different pieces with varying results. The first three seemed to work out well, while the latter two were engulfed in collective improvisations which became a little overextended after a while. On the other hand, a composition by Paul Cram worked out the best, the leader conducting the ensemble through various cues between solo contributions from most everyone. With a full 90 minutes of wall-to-wall sound, one surely felt drained, once the sonic boom, that had overwhelmed the music room at the back of Le Grand Café had finally subsided into silence, or at least to the deafening piped-in music between sets.

On the previous night, the final set marked the musical return of alto saxist Yves Charuest after a two and a half year stay in Germany. Playing two of Bird's better known themes (*Donna Lee* and *Kim*), he proceeded to run through them (literally), extemporising in a fast and furious way. As the set progressed, other musicians joined in the free-for-all; even Bill Smith jumped in at the end in the free be-bop arena! Bird lives in strange and mysterious ways ...

After four nights and eleven sets, a lot of sparks had flown across the room with some invigorating moments and others less rewarding. But when one tries to achieve communication chiefly through spontaneous means, results can never be firmly guaranteed; instead, one has to rely strictly on musicianship to recognize both the strengths and, sometimes, the shortcomings of open-ended playing. Still, such music meetings are a healthy sign in the development of closer knit musical scene in our country. If this marks the start of an effective network that draws musicians and a public into a closer relationship, then there may be even better things to come in a not so distant future.

– Marc-A. Chénard

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL SOUND UNITY FESTIVAL
New York City
April 12-17, 1988

The Second International Sound Unity Festival of Third Wave Jazz was a six-day event, happening from April 12 through 17 at two alternative music spaces, The Kraine Club Gallery and The Knitting Factory, in New York City. Sound Unity was both the city's first Jazz festival of 1988 and its first Jazz festival to feature consistently diverse and fresh approaches to the music in years.

The musicians who organized and performed in the Festival started with the idea that artistic success was the goal and financial success would be a welcome but not necessary achievement. Fortunately, New York's audiences repaid the musicians for their top-shelf efforts, and the Festival proved successful in both ways. The musicians, most of whom were part of the Jazz "Avant-Garde", were encouraged by the fact that this was really *their* festival, the first one of its kind in four years. Perhaps the audiences realized that the Festival promised to be relevant to them in several ways: as an antidote to the programmatically repetitive, unimaginative festivals annually organized by George Wein; as an answer to the Greenwich Village Jazz Festival, in which the city's top Jazz clubs collaborate on a series which features very little Avant-Garde Jazz; and as an elaboration of veteran promoter/manager Horst Liepolt's Avant-Garde "Music Is An Open Sky" Festivals, which have recently been reduced from two-week to one-day events at the Sweet Basil club.

This Sound Unity Festival featured high quality performances by vocalists, musicians, and dancers in settings that ranged from solo to orchestral. As was inevitable, we were not able to partake of all 20 events of the Festival. We must mention the following events we could not review: solo recitals by trumpeter Leo Smith and vocalist Jeanne Lee; the dance & music ensembles of Cheryl Banks and Patricia Nicholson; the trios of saxophonist Dewey Redman, drummer Andrew Cyrille, and bassist Peter Kowald; saxophonist Julius Hemphill & cellist Abdul Wadud's duet; Jemeel Moon-

doc's Jus Grew Orchestra; the trio of Peter Brotzmann, William Parker and Milford Graves; and bassist Parker's own ensembles. What follows are reviews of several other events we did catch.

Saxophonist **David Ware's Trio** and vocalist **Cassandra Wilson** and her Trio opened the Sound Unity Festival at The Kraine, an attractive, theater-like performance space/art gallery in the East Village. Ware, a memorable saxophonist with a big sound and a gift for stamina, played his main instrument, tenor sax, and, early in the set, the stritch (the "straight alto sax" popularized by the late, great Rahsaan Roland Kirk). He was joined by Marc Edwards, a solid drummer with whom he had worked in one of Cecil Taylor's mid-1970s units. and William Parker, a bassist who has been with Taylor the last several years while also establishing himself as one of the most respected and versatile musicians around. Like the saxophone trios of the 1960s, this group took its direction from Ware's almost melody-less waves of emotional power, with Edwards and Parker providing shifting polyrhythms in support.

The music of Ware's Trio was tightly organized and well-executed (except that Parker's bass was under-amplified, such that it was nearly inaudible aside from his well-crafted and well-received solos). The only fault in Ware's presentation was that, with the exception of the next to last piece, each work had a predictable development, simply rising to a climax of the "emotional vamp" that began it. The next to last piece broke the pattern with the aid of the device known as interpolation. In this work, a fast-paced, emotive jam (the Avant-Garde's answer to Be-Bop's high speed jams on Blues chord changes) wound down into a bass solo leading to the interpolation of a slow, mysteriously lilting, North African-sounding theme that eventually came to an abrupt halt followed by the return of the original jam. More of this kind of variety in feeling and composition would have better framed the group's abilities and made for an even more interesting set.

Vocalist Cassandra Wilson's group has been receiving much well-deserved praise here in New York, and its work at The Kraine showed why. What Miss Wilson and company have achieved is a new approach to the traditional Jazz vocalist-plus-small-group format, by performing in a way that is multi-stylistic *and* often allows the "accompanists" to be as much in the foreground as the singer. Interestingly enough, Miss Wilson is at her most unique as a composer and lyricist. Her words are as ordinary as those of any standard, yet, like her catchy melodies, they are woven in very imaginative ways. With ease, one of her mellow lovesongs becomes an account of an out-of-body experience, and a song of lovers' remorse evolves into a reflection on destiny with musical backgrounds alternating between those of a sweet Pop ballad and a sparse Bessie Smith blues. Much of the credit for the group's achievement goes to Rod Williams on piano and synthesizer, Kevin Harris on electric bass, and Mark Johnson on drums and percussion, the accompanists who render Miss Wilson's songs in an extraordinary way. In an unobtrusive manner, Williams manages to solo his accompaniments and Harris and Johnson often improvise on the groove while somehow never losing it.

The one drawback to the group's performance was one of presentation that is also linked to Miss Wilson's one vocal shortcoming. Their set was organized with the first two-thirds favoring the slower, spacily reflective pieces that are Miss Wilson's specialty. But this tactic made the up-tempo numbers that closed the set unintentionally anti-climactic. A singer with a silky, sultry voice and a technique marked by the influence of Sarah Vaughan, Betty Carter, and Jeanne Lee, Cassandra Wilson is still a bit too soft and moody on the faster tunes, lacking the declamatory bite or joie de vivre that those three major stylists bring to brightly-paced songs. One sign that this young vocalist's grasp of swing is becoming firmer came during a very effective scat break which even ended with something that sounded amazingly close to the muted runs Miles Davis produces on an amplified trumpet. Cassandra Wilson and her Trio are a uniquely accessible, resourceful group that only needs to enhance and balance its already startling abilities a bit more.

Opening night of the Festival ended with two performances at The Knitting Factory, a club that's a cross between a coffeehouse and a loft, located just a few blocks southwest of The Kraine. Originally scheduled at the top of the bill was the amazing Drum Trio of legendary Jazzmen **Andrew Cyrille** and **Rashied Ali** and the respected South African drummer Louis Moholo. But Moholo, who now resides in Europe, was denied a U.S. visa and was replaced by veteran Avant-Garde saxophonist **Frank Wright**.

Cyrille and Ali opened the set with a series of solos, duos, and call-and-responses that alternately swung, raged, and amused, displaying Modern Jazz drumming at its best. Of the solos, Cyrille turned in the best crowd-pleaser, grooving on the drums then rapping-out West African percussive sounds on the rims and sides of the drums and even on the walls of the club! After his trademark rhythmic chest-patting and vocal effects, Cyrille took in the audience's joyous applause and he and Rashied Ali developed a polyrhythmic whirlpool into which Frank Wright soon charged with his roaring tenor sax. As is his custom, Wright played with raw emotion, substituting cries, hollers, and moans for melody. While this approach was initially compatible with the cataclysmic drumming surrounding him, the effect soon wore thin. Thankfully, Wright at one point switched to vocalization. As the drummers aptly lowered the volume but not the intensity, Wright went into an ethereal, wordless moaning that seemed all the more eerie because it came from the mouth of a man as large as he. The sound he produced conjured up the image of an unknown soldier left to starve to death in some remote prison.

Closing the first night of Sound Unity was, ironically enough, the most uplifting of the four extraordinary events heard. **Billy Bang**, widely considered the best violinist in the music today, is a man known for his originality, enthusiasm, and ability to swing even when at his most atonal or hard-driving. His Quartet at The Knitting Factory was an equally sure and

NIC GOTHAM (Photograph by Mark Miller)

enthusiastic "Avant-Garde all-star" group, with Frank Lowe on tenor sax, Dennis Charles on drums, and Sirone on bass. To match Bang's "singing violin" solos in the front line, Lowe was at his most lyrical and smooth. Sirone grooved mightily on a bass that, due to amplification and attack, sounded like a "big cello" with a fuller sound. Dennis Charles always brings a little extra to his performances with Bang, and this time was no exception as he slapped polyrhythms on his small drum set with subliminal glee.

The highlights of the Bang Quartet's set came at the middle and end of their workout. The first was Bang's tune, *Sinawe Mandelas* (Zulu for "We are with you, Mandelas"), which he dedicated to South African freedom fighters Nelson and Winnie Mandela and their compatriots Louis Moholo and the late, great bassist Johnny Dyani. This song had an insistent rhythm reminiscent of South African highlife yet with a serious-minded theme. Lowe turned in his most well-structured and impassioned solo of the night here, and Bang overflowed with creative energy as he even accompanied the other soloists with plucked violin work that brought to mind South African guitar playing. The Quartet's set-closing rendition of Ornette Cóleman's classic, *Lonely Woman*, was playfully irreverent. After a loud but true reading of the theme statement, the band went into the rising notes of the bridge with a mad delight that kept going until the tune was over. This boisterous "Lonely Woman" left the standing-room-only crowd applauding and tittering with laughter. This finale was an example of how Bang and his colleagues can entertain without compromising their art.

The first group to perform on the night of April 14th at The Kraine was the **Cooper-Moore Duo.** Most interesting about these performers was that they made many of the instruments they played: various percussion instruments, one that resembled a fife, another playfully named a "Diddley-Bo", still another that was similar to a marimba, a harp-like instrument, and so on. Among the pieces they performed were Ellington & Bigard's *Mood Indigo*, a musical setting of poet Langston Hughes' *Afro-American Fragment*, some Calypso, *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round*, and James Brown's *I Feel Good*. These choices illustrated the capabilities of the new instruments and subtly altered the songs: "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody" was made rather bluesy and hard. But this member of the audience was left feeling that original music is needed to bring out all the potentialities of new instruments. The creation of new means of sound production must be encouraged, and it was heartening to hear someone experiment in that area.

The Reggie Workman Ensemble played next. Workman played bass and wrote all the music, Joseph Jarman played wind instruments, Marilyn Crispell – piano, and Andrew Cyrille – percussion. They opened with a piece titled *November I*. Workman started, in slow tempo, with a long solo, and then the others came in with intense and mournful music. There were some balance problems: at times the sound of the piano was lost in the dense textures, the lower parts of the chord arpeggiations and scales muddied. The tempo became fast, lead by Jarman, and then settled into a two-chord pattern (on the piano) with arabesques by the rest of the group. The texture once again thickened and the level of dynamics rose. Intense, modal-like music, with snippets of melody and brief motifs, bore the piece to its end.

Ogun's Ardor was the second work. Percussion and piano dominated at first, establishing an exotic mood. Jarman came in on flute and the piece was soon lost in its introductory mood, becoming less formless and rather static. Much different was *Synapse*. A sudden, scream-like mass of scales and arpeggios signalled its beginning. Workman, one of the premier bassists playing today, showed his virtuosity as both soloist and accompanist on this piece.

The final work was *Fragments In Fabula*, inspired by various paintings by Pablo Picasso, and featuring the dancers, **Maya Milenovic** – who did the choreography – and **Genevieve Lam.** The dancers and dances captured the angularity and bleakness of the Picasso works. Violent contrast and absurdism were the dominant principles of their movements. Automaton-like actions, sometimes resembling slow motion, and frozen mask-like facial expressions were violently juxtaposed with high leaps and bounds, spasms, dashes, imitations of schizophrenic seizures, and "speaking in tongues". The athletic and the convulsive stood shoulder-to-shoulder with stasis and repeated, senseless acts on the edge of stillness. The dancers at various times toyed with thread and burst balloons, emitted whoops, moans, calls, cackles, and bird calls, snapped their fingers, and even dipped their faces in flour. The dances were, in a word, difficult, and well-performed. Workman seemed to let the music play a supporting role here. At times it was quite austere and rarefied, and admirably suited the dances. But, at one point, it did slip into Phillip Glass-like ostinatos and used chord spacings that called to mind those of Stravinsky. Workman, who has been known as one of the best accompanists in Jazz since he recorded with John Coltrane, Art Blakey, and Yusef Lateef some 25 years ago, is now beginning to display unique abilities as a composer and bandleader.

Don Cherry and Ed Blackwell performed Friday, the fifteenth at The Kraine in what was an all-too-rare recreation of the magic they produced on the LPs "MU – 1st and 2nd Parts" and "El Corazón". Two seminal, legendary figures in the music, Cherry and Blackwell first made their marks as part of Ornette Coleman's Quartet some 30 years ago. Since then, both have only gotten better, and their duets have been a testament to the way they

have broadened their musical vocabularies by learning traditional music from around the world.

During this performance (details of which we are indebted to in part from New York radio station WKCR-FM's Marc Moses), Cherry performed on his customary pocket trumpet *plus* melodica, piano, and doussn'goni (the West African stringed instrument that sounds like a cross between a heartbeat and a blues guitar). Aside from Cherry's extemporaneous lessons about musics of the world, he and Blackwell developed an unbroken stream of song. The large crowd was enthralled as the duo played various pieces, including some from their "El Corazón" LP and one of Coleman's early compositions, *The Sphinx*. Once again, Cherry and Blackwell proved why they have influenced all other Avant-Garde trumpeters and drummers, respectively. And the duo also showed that Jazz is indeed a form open-ended and vital enough to be international in scope.

The final performance of the Festival took place at The Kraine on Sunday, the seventeenth. The evening was devoted to **Bill Dixon** leading the "Sound Unity Orchestra" (an aggregation of musicians who performed earlier in the Festival). Dixon, a trumpeter, pianist, educator, and prolific and uncompromising composer, brought his extended work, *Sisyphus*, for this rare appearance in New York. The Sound Unity Orchestra, though not having had a great deal of time to prepare the difficult music, played amazingly well. The Orchestra featured a tuba, three saxophones, a bassoon, two basses, piano, three trumpets, and percussion, with Dixon conducting from inside the circle formed by the players and also played the piano. The Kraine was literally packed for this event, with several spectators having to be seated on the stage.

Dixon's music was characterized by chordal masses, a piling up of intervals, dark colors, harsh dissonances, dense textures, and huge climaxes. One huge loud chord threatened to crack the walls, or so it seemed. At times, the players were asked to perform fast, virtuoso passages in the extreme registers of their instruments, as if the soloists' tones were fleeing the chords played by the rest of the ensemble. Bassist William Parker and saxophonist David Ware stood out in this complex music that demanded concentrated listening and repeated hearings for its fullest appreciation. The audience responded enthusiastically to the forceful sounds, and Dixon spoke after the performance, thanking the players with wit and graciousness. Dixon, a major figure in the first wave of Avant-Garde Jazz and a leader of that movement's first musician-organized festival (dubbed the "October Revolution of 1964"), provided an appropriate ending for this latest stage in the struggle to present the music for its own sake.

With its varied array of talent playing to mostly capacity-crowd audiences, the 2nd Sound Unity Festival was an artistic and financial success that unintentionally proved that even the most experimental or free-form Jazz has a large following. Bassist **William Parker**, one of Sound Unity's organizers, said that the main goals were artistic and promotional, in that the events were a "showcase for music that doesn't get much coverage", so that sometime soon "musicians' self-determination and self-hiring" will be a reality and even a norm for Jazz musicians. Musicians in all areas of the music are frustrated by the lack of patronage (public, private, governmental) given to Jazz in the U.S., and are eager to see a change come that is much broader than the recent repeal of New York City's "cabaret law" – an act that serves to benefit clubowners more than musicians in the long run by re-establishing the status quo that existed a few years ago when clubowners ignored the law with impunity while too many musicians scuffled. The musicians who create and are the essential elements of the music want to see themselves employed steadily, in contexts of their own choosing and/or invention, not for the sake of profit but for artistic development and the society's cultural betterment. As successful cooperative events staged by musicians and only tangentially linked to the music industry's mainstream, the Sound Unity Festivals have renewed this struggle in the 1980s.

– Elliot & Noble Bratton

ASIAN AMERICAN JAZZ FESTIVAL
The Asian American Art Museum
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
April 22 & 23, 1988

Seven was heard to be a dynamic number for this Asian American Jazz Festival, occurring in the Chinese "Year of the Dragon". Celebrating its seventh year of continuous production this festival, one of two of its kind in the United States, presented an oval of music stretching from the pyrotechnics of pianist Glenn Horiuchi and his double bass quartet to the stark harmonies of Jason Hwang's solo violin set. Fill this out with bassist Mark Izu's Circle of Fire featuring James Newton and Jon Jang's explosive Pan Asian Arkestra and you have one of the most promising and fulfilling festivals of new music going.

The vitality of this presentation of 'living' music comes from the fluid nature of the production organization. The Kearny Street Workshop, producers of the festival, exist as a unit, with the artistic direction and director of the festival changing each year. What started out as a way of expressing self-determination and as a vehicle for performance has now evolved into a major forum for the presentation of units that might not otherwise have an opportunity to perform together.

Avotcja, long-time Bay Area radio programmer gushed, "Can you believe this is happening in San Diego?!" She was referring to Glenn Horiuchi, pianist/composer and his trio plus

one featuring M'Chaka Uba and Taiji Miyagawa on basses and percussionist Leon Alexander. The performance was a revelation in sound. Horiuchi is an active presence on piano, commanding his group through driving pieces inspired by African-American creative music and tempered by the sounds and rhythms of his culture. The work was also inspired politically and culturally by his work with The National Coalition for Redress and Reparations for Japanese-Americans who were denied their rights as American citizens during World War Two, stripped of their possessions and moved to internment camps away from the west coast of the United States.

Mark Izu's Circle Of Fire concluded the first night of the festival. This unique quintet created especially for this festival featured flautist James Newton, alto saxophonist Lewis Jordan, Anthony Brown on multiple percussion, Jin Hi Kim on komungo, an indigenous Korean instrument and the leader Izu, on bass and sheng, a Chinese mouth organ. Mark Izu's vision of cooperation between musical languages, Asian, American Jazz and that unique hybrid Asian American Improvised music, was thrilling as it was accessible, charged with rhythms and tonalities both contemporary and ancient. By building an ensemble balanced in abilities and providing quality original material, Izu presented a collective voice uninhibited in its fluidity, daring with its expressiveness. This group was built on the core of the late Bay Area group United Front (Izu, Jordan, Brown) and augmented by Newton and Jin Hi Kim playing the kumungo, a long stringed instrument with large wooden frets, struck with a bamboo stick. Although Ms. Kim was new to the setting, the interplay amongst the four others was deep as it was wide. Besides the United Front connection, Mark and Lewis perform in continuing duo and Anthony Brown is frequently performing with James Newton's group. Especially striking was Jordan's searing alto with its leaps and like a cat with nine lives, landing on its feet, only to leap again. Anthony Brown continues developing as the best of the 'younger' generation of drummers, keeping alive the African-American cultural spirit on the trap set and expanding its language all the while. The set closed with an astonishing rendition of Eric Dolphy's *Gazzolini* (minus Ms. Kim). My only hope is that this group could continue working together.

The second evening of the festival opened with a solo violin set from New Yorker Jason Hwang. Balanced on the edge of 'jazz' and a highly personal music, Hwang worked with rhythmic patterns creating foundations for harmonic exploration. He has a broad language and the technique to express it. He stretched his sound to the limits, sometimes of listenability. Hardly in need of justification, Hwang's music did not fit into a conventional 'jazz' structure. (I mention this because the event was billed as a "Jazz Festival".) He did however work in the realm of improvised music, which is an important element of jazz. His music was an evocation of colors and emotions in a wide spectrum from tenderness to the volatile, piecing fragments, creating dances, in a dazzling, poetic way.

The second act of the evening, Jon Jang's Pan-Asian Arkestra played some of the most explosive music I've heard in a long time. A five man horn section of Fred Houn, baritone and soprano saxophones and flute; Melecio Magdaluyo, alto and soprano saxophone and flute; Francis Wong, tenor saxophone and flute; John Worley, trumpet; Jeff Cressman, trombone; with a rhythm section of Jang on piano, Kiyoshi Tokunaga, bass and Anthony Brown, multiple percussion. The Arkestra was augmented by members of the San Jose Taiko Ensemble: Jose Alacron, P.J. Hirabayasi and Susan Hayase. If you are not familiar with Jon Jang and Fred Houn (who did the arrangements) now is the time! The band came out on stage wearing varieties of rice patty (my closest association), hats (worn by workers) and Houn in a bowler. The immediate connection was Sun Ra's lidded Arkestra and the energy matched. The opening number, *A Night In Tunisia* was remarkably twisted and in good humor. Jang stated that he wanted to play a "museum piece because we are playing in a museum." Especially outstanding was Melecio Magdaluyo's alto solo that soared like a bird over the Tunisian skies. They continued their ambitious undertaking with saxophonist Akira More's rich ballad *Shiranui*. Houn's *We'll Make Tomorrow* with its opening of shifting time signatures (a signature of Houn's) is a dark drama of ensemble playing built around the powerful baritone saxophone soloing. The band then took a break with Houn introducing a student of his from Stanford University, 19 year old Sarah Chan. Ms. Chan, performing with Fred and drummer Brown, performed a poem called "Allen Ginsburg, I'm Talking To Myself Again." It is a young poet's tour through New York City ... "New York/I have to escape/before I testify against you..." (My line breaks.) An enjoyable respite. The Arkestra then returned to play Jang's epoch work "Reparations Now" for ensemble and taiko drums. This could well be Jon Jang's most important work to date because it brings forth all of his abilities in a shining light. Jang is a man not only committed to his music but also to the lives of Asian rooted peoples in the Americas, their histories and aspirations. "Reparations Now" clearly states this with a force that is fresh and unified in purpose.

I found this Seventh Annual Asian American Jazz Festival to be the most successful endeavor yet. (Not a put down of the other six.) The program was the most varied encircling what this generation of Asian American's express most brilliantly. It is that if Jazz is truly America's most vital creative music, then play it not only with respect but bring something of yourself to it, which I feel is what Jazz is all about.

– Brian Auerbach

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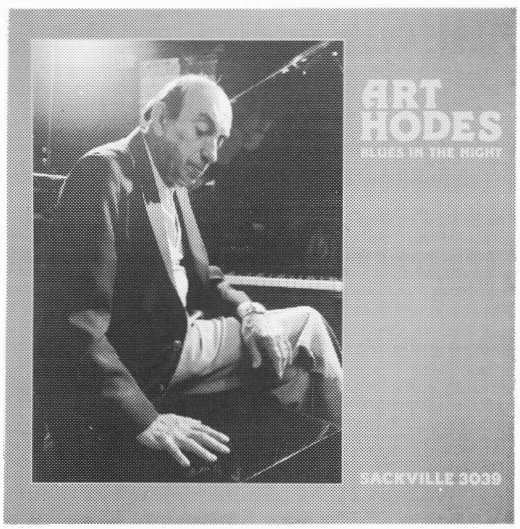

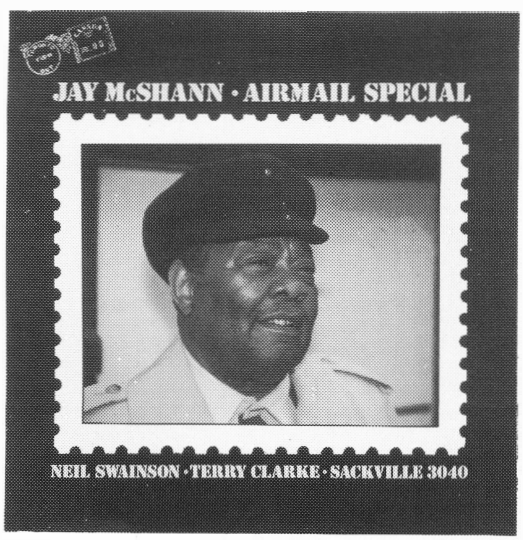

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819-752-7912

Plateforme is offering passeports, youth hostel type accomodation, a bed and breakfast-concerts special offer for the convenience of visitors.

ALBUMS FROM PREVIOUS FESTIVALS:

Victo 01: **Nous autres** René Lussier, Fred Frith
Victo 02: **Moment précieux** Anthony Braxton, Derek Bailey
Victo 03: **The Sea Between** Richard Teitelbaum, Carlos Zingaro
Victo 04: **Live à Victoriaville** Heiner Goebbels, Alfred Harth
Victo 05: **Confitures de Gagaku** Jean Derome
Victo 06: **Labyrinths** Marilyn Crispell

To receive these albums, please send 12, $ can. (or $12. U.S. for outside Canada) per album, to the above address. All payments should be made to **Production Plateforme inc.**