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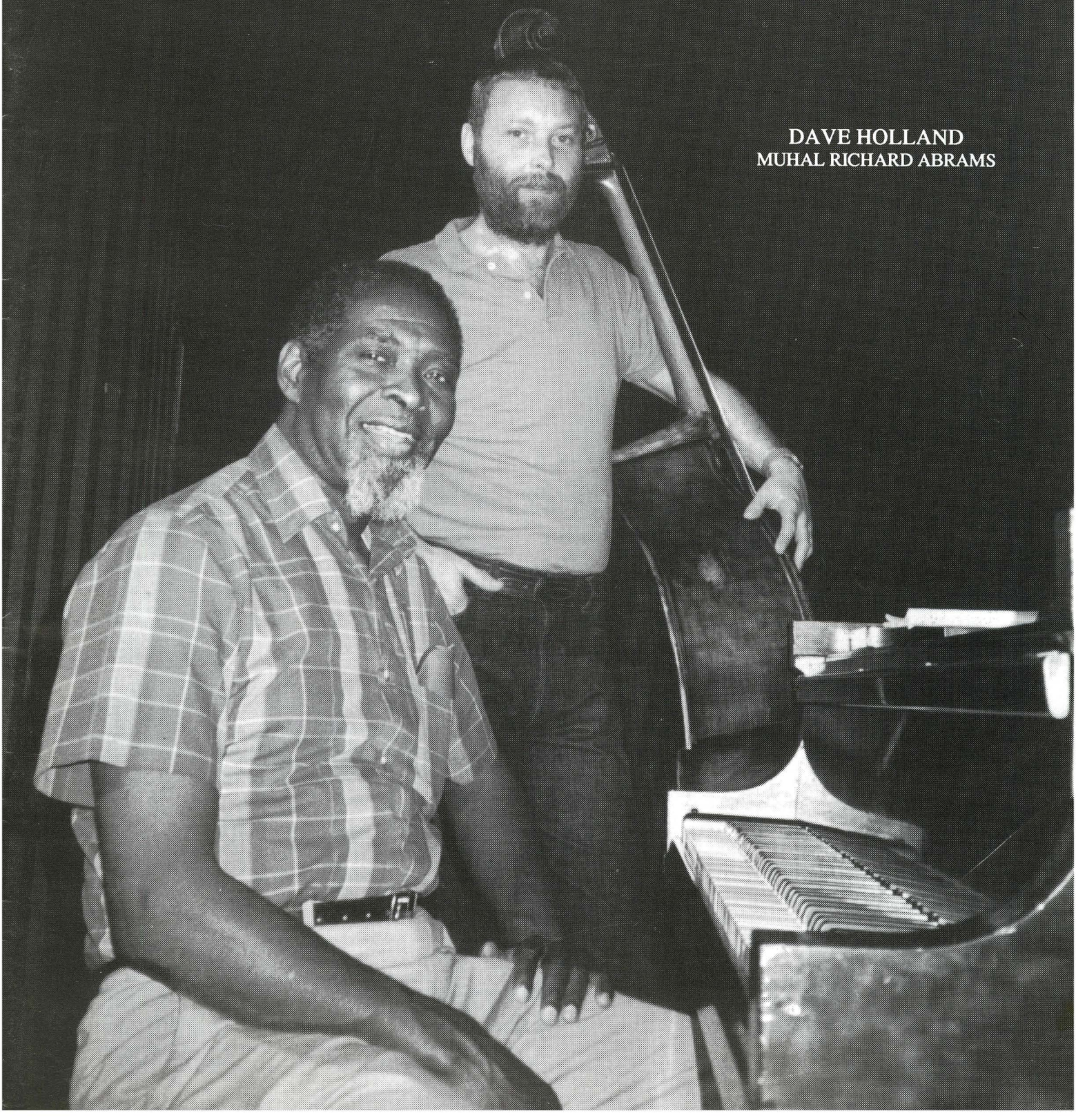

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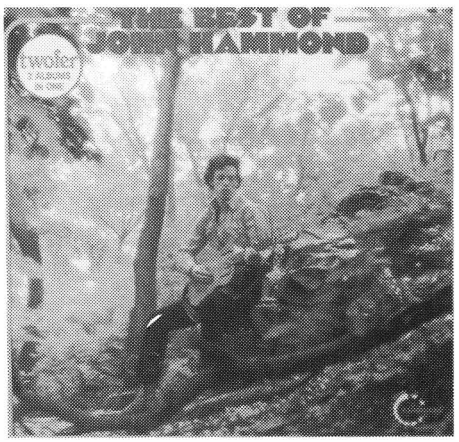

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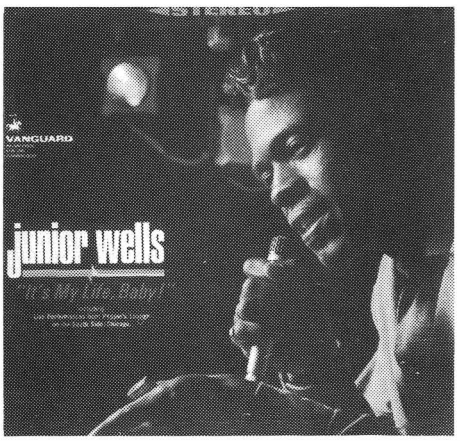

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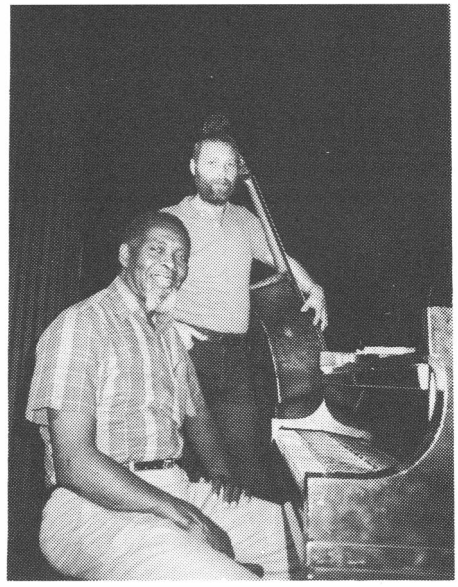

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CANADIAN NOTES

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Coda has been published on a regular basis since 1958. Over the years both the format and the publishing schedule have changed but the fundamental purpose of the magazine has remained constant.

This purpose is the belief that its readership wish to be better informed about the entire spectrum of jazz through articles and reviews which provoke fresh thoughts about the music. It is also a continuing source for information about the musicians (and the recordings they make) which are often difficult to find elsewhere.

Despite periodic fluctuations in popularity jazz remains, to a large extent, a music which appeals to a select number of people. Many of these people, at one time, played an instrument or participated in projects generated by the jazz community.

That community, through the decades, seems to remain relatively constant. It has been our experience, after publishing Coda for more than thirty years, that attempts to expand the readership through coverage of more peripheral areas of the music have not generated an expanded readership. In fact, such endeavours tend to have a negative impact on the existing readership.

Coda has changed from a news gathering monthly into an erudite journal which views the music with the same intensity and creativity as the performers. We believe that we are continuing to provide the community with a magazines which is the foremost in the English language.

Coda is a widely read periodical with more than 50% of its readership beyond Canada's borders. This is quite an achievement and has certainly assisted in the growth of international recognition for the musicians who perform the music in Canada.

More than ten years ago Coda began receiving financial support from both the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. Their support has made it possible for Coda to survive in its present form without many of the uncertainties which always plagued it before that time. Now, as we enter the 1990s, there is increasing pressure being put upon funding agencies and basically the same amount of money is being spread among an ever increasing number of applicants. Funding is on a yearly basis and government agencies are looking ever closer at the viewpoints and attitudes of the organizations they support. Coda has not escaped their scrutiny. This year it was suggested that Coda's coverage of Canadian events should be much greater.

While this might seem to make sense it doesn't take into consideration that the magazine's readership is international. An inwardly nationalistic magazine would seem doomed to extinction in a country with such a small population.

Coda, as a commercial magazine which accepts advertising, is in a peculiar situation. Most magazines are supported to a considerable extent by their advertisers. This income is a direct reflection of the circulation of the magazine within the region where the magazine is published.

Coda has always received the support of the many smaller independent companies who are in the vanguard of documenting this music. But these companies face the same financial restraints which afflict such magazines as Coda.

Major companies usually choose only to promote their products in large circulation magazines and the same is true, of the many jazz organizations who have grown sufficiently large to enjoy extensive international distribution.

Nearly all the recording companies in Canada are branch operations of larger international organizations and this small market is no incentive for them to place advertising in a magazine like Coda. Conversely the American parent, while it might acknowledge the US readership of Coda, is unable to overcome company policy to place advertising in foreign publications.

Overall advertising revenues make up a small percentage of income so, inevitably, the readership carries a larger part of the financial load than is usually the case with consumer magazines.

Coda has evolved into a journal which examines in detail many different aspects of the music. Unlike similar journals published in the academic world it is unable to enjoy the resources available to such publications. It is also not the intent of Coda to limit is circulation to such a restricted audience. We want each generation of jazz enthusiasts to discover the wealth of knowledge contained within its pages.

As we move into the 1990s it seems certain that additional government funding will not be forthcoming. It also seems reasonable to assume that our readership will not dramatically increase.

What is changing though are the ever increasing costs associated with the publication of Coda. Big city living is becoming a nightmare for more and more people who work as creative artists. Compounding the situation for small circulation magazines is the intent, in Canada, to make the Post Office self-supporting and, for the first time, to impose a tax upon reading. This new tax, to be introduced in 1991, is a value added tax which is expected to raise prices in Canada by at least 15%.

What is certain is that the partial removal of the postal subsidy has already increased our postage costs by approximately 20%. The rumour mill is predicting further reductions in this subsidy as free trade builds up steam.

We are committed to the continuance of Coda. We feel, in fact, that both the appearance and content have shown marked improvements recently. Reader response and the continued loyalty of our subscribers seems to tell us that this is so.

The new rates include the large postal increase as well as the continued spiralling of other costs. We have also built into the rates a margin which should give us a breathing space until the implications of the new tax are truly determined.

We will continue to offer for sale books, videos and recordings. These sales help considerably in our financial stability. While our choices are selective we hope to expand this area of activity in the near future.

We appreciate the continued support of our readers and hope that you will remain with us in the future.

New 1990 Subscription Rates

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CANADA

The euphoria of the summer jazz festivals seems to have left the Canadian jazz scene exhausted and battered. Only such cities as Vancouver and Edmonton have

weathered the storm sufficiently to move into the winter season with strong positive programs. This is primarily due to the energizing force of **Coastal Jazz and Blues Society** (Vancouver) and the **Edmonton Jazz Society**

Organizations such as this are the only way to go. The traditional outlets for the music have fallen upon hard times. The high cost of entertainment coupled with indifference on the part of club owners, concert promoters and booking agents has virtually shut down Montreal and Toronto as showcases for jazz artists.

There is the occasional exception to this scenario. **Café des Copains**, in Toronto, has forged an international reputation with its solo piano policy but even there, market forces can affect its policies with the big city syndrome having an adverse effect upon people's listening habits. Too many lifestyle choices make too many people complacent. Before long there are no longer any venues presenting the music they are so anxious to hear.

Both Deep Blue and The Jazz Bar briefly flickered but neither of them is still involved with music. **George's Spaghetti House** continues its 30 year tradition of jazz music despite a variety of ownership changes since Doug Cole sold the business ten years ago. **Moe Koffman** remains in residence on a regular basis and other recent performers have included **Time Warp, Doug Watson** and **Sam Noto. Barry Rombert** will be there the first week in December with **Mike Slim** to follow. **Don "D.T." Thompson** will bring in the New Year.

CJRT-FM's "Sound of Toronto Jazz" is now in its fifteenth season. The popular Monday night concert series from the Ontario Science Centre is also heard over CJRT the following Saturday evening at 7 p.m. The **Dave McMurdo Jazz Orchestra**, the **Barry Romberg Group**, the **Charlie Mountford Trio** and the **Bill Goddard/John Gittins Quartet** have all appeared. **Don Thompson** and the **Banff Jazz Workshop** band will perform December 18. **Carol Welsman** (January 22), **Diana Kroll** (February 5), **Music In Monk Time, Glen Hall Octet** and the **Perry White Quartet** make up the second half of the series.

James Pett (Photograph By Joanne Hovey)

The Music Gallery offers listeners an extraordinarily wide range of musical experiences. Much of it only relates peripherally to the styles covered by this magazine but there is always something worthwhile taking place. Erstwhile Coda associate editor **David Lee** was heard there October 19 with electronic composer **Chris Melanche**. **Reiner Wiens** presented **Archie Shepp**: A Jazz Master of the Avant Garde on October 22 and **George McFetridge** and **Sam Noto** were heard there October 28. Both **Barry Rombert** and **Jane Bunnett** led groups in November while **John Abercrombie** and **Graeme Kirkland** shared a concert December 2.

Acoustic Guitars, a Danish trio, were heard at Harbourfront on November 12. This was a joint presentation with Stunt Records...The new edition of the **U of T Jazz Ensemble** under the direction of **Phil Nimmons** will be heard December 9 at the Edward Johnson Building...**Hilary Kyro's** painting exhibition, "A Portrait of Men in Film Jazz and Sport," was on display in September at Abundance Restaurant... **James Pett** wrote the music score for ***Stealing Images***, a 30 minute drama film shown at this year's Festival of Festivals...The Ragtime Society held its annual "bash" October 13-15 at The Cara Inn...If you're looking for out of print jazz recordings you should make a note of the next "Records & Related Collectibles: Show to be held March 25 at the Queensway Lions Centre (Kipling and The Queensway). There's always a good selection at reasonable prices.

Edmonton's **Yardbird Suite** kicked off the Fall season with a strong roster which included **Henry Butler, George Robert/Tom Harrell**, the **Edmonton Jazz Ensemble, Jay Clayton, Gord Towell** and **Bob Stroup**.

The Vancouver scene was kept on the boil through the end of summer with appearances by **Pat Metheny** and **Etta James, Jim Hall**, and a special presentation of the "New Wave of Women In Jazz" highlighted the fall season. **Marilyn Crispell, Irene Schweizer, Joelle Leandre** and **Maggie Nichols** were the participants. Local music lovers also got to hear some excellent music at the **grunt gallery** (209 East 6th Avenue) and the **Glass Slipper** (185 E 11th Ave.). **Lisle Ellis' Freedom Force Ensemble** was at the latter venue in July while **Paul Plimley, Lunar adventures, Unity** and **N.O.W. Orchestra** were heard in September/October.

Composer/guitarist **Tim Brady** will be in New Zealand in January where he will be involved in transforming New Zealand author Keri Hulme's novel ***The Bone People*** into a chamber opera. **Jane Bunnett** was in New York in August for an appearance at Sweet Basil and a new duet recording with **Don Pullen**...**Oliver Jones** appeared at the Cork Festival before embarking on a three week tour of Spain, Portugal and France. He returned to Canada for a one week engagement at Café des Copains in Toronto. **Oliver Jones** is also the subject of a 20 minute profile on CBC-TV's new program, **Sunday Arts Entertainment**. The segment, produced by Sam Levene, will be aired on December 31...**Jon Ballantyne** is the pianist with **Joe Henderson's** group for a one-week stint at Tokyo's Blue Note December 4-9...The **Denny Christianson Big Band** and vocalist **Ranee Lee** received sponsorship from Canada's External Affairs Department for a summer tour of England, Finland and Sweden...The **Climax Jazz Band** will spend a week aboard the s/s Norway January 13/20. The **Rent Party Revellers** and **Spiegle Willcox** will also be aboard...Guitarist **Sonny Greenwich** received the 1989 PROCAN Jazz Award...**Jim Howard** received Berklee College's Distinguished Alumnus award for 1989. The CBC released new recordings by the **Edmonton Jazz Ensemble** and the **Bernard Primeau Jazz Sextet**. Justin Time Records should enjoy greater international attention for their recordings of **Oliver Jones** with **Clark Terry, Dave Turner** with **Ronnie Mathews** and **Jon Ballantyne** with **Joe Henderson**. Look for new piano recordings (in CD and cassette) on Sackville by **Junior Mance, Red Richards, Sammy Price** and **Art Hodes**. - *John Norris*

CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS

Roscoe Mitchell, Kenny Wheeler, Julian Priester, Hugh Frazer & Don Thompson (Photograph By Bill Smith)

The following introduction is an excerpt from an interview that I conducted with Dave in 1973, and is from an out of print issue of Coda Magazine...

Prior to playing the string bass, I played bass guitar. I was listening mostly to popular music, and around that time in England there was a traditional jazz boom which I think over here (USA) they call Dixieland. I took off on all these people, and of course, as I was involved in pop music, I came across (jazz) music, and I listened to it, and I was very interested in the sound of the acoustic bass. I was getting bored with what I was playing on the bass guitar. I wanted more, and in fact there were points where I was considering doing something other than music. Music had always been there in my life, but I had never considered doing it for a living. It was something I just enjoyed doing. When I heard the acoustic bass, I decided that I would have to buy one, so I went out and bought this brand new plywood bass, all shiny and glossy. I practised it a little bit, had some lessons with a local bass-player, who I thank very much for his guidance, although he wasn't a great bass player, but he helped me. The rock band that I was with went to Germany and as I was still under eighteen and couldn't work in German clubs, I had to find some work during the summer. I had just started going to a jazz club in my home town of Waltham where I spoke to the tenor player. He was taking a band up to a place called Scarborough, which is a British resort area, and I went to play bass with the band. After that, I didn't want to go back to bass guitar. That was it. I played a lot that summer, practising a lot, and got a job in London, and started studying the bass at the **Guildhall School of Music**. My ambition then was to become a studio musician. I thought I enjoyed playing lots of different kinds of music so I decided I would study classical music. When I finally got to be a real musician I could really attend to business. I went to the Guildhall really with that in mind. I thought: I can play pop music, pretty well, play the bass guitar, and was sort of getting jazz together, so the only thing left was classical music. I hadn't really listened to classical music very much until that time, and I really started to get into it. There was an experience I'd had at a concert that I did with a very large orchestra, of ***Symphonie Fantastique*** by Berlioz. I was very moved by the whole spectacle of this gigantic orchestra and this very emotional piece of music that I had got very involved in doing. And at that point I said, "Anything I can do as an improviser can never live up to that, and therefore what I must do is give myself up to performing music of such great consequence." I was very much in love with Bartok and felt it wasn't even worth my trying to match his ability. Luckily I saw that no matter what I did, if it was mine and honestly offered, it didn't have to be a great work of art. If it was just real, then it was worth doing. As I came through that one, I wanted to play my own music more and more. Gradually I met more people: **John Surman** was a very important person that I met, because we played a lot together in London at that time. I had really firmly decided to play improvised music, because by this time I was also working with people like **John Stevens** and **Evan Parker**. I was playing some 20th century music in small chamber orchestras and was beginning to get an idea of just how far this thing could go. It was at this point, in my last year at college, that I was quite active in London, I was doing recordings, some studio work, I was at college, then playing with Surman, and I took a month at the Ronnie Scott club because **Bill Evans** was going to be there with **Eddie Gomez** and **Jack DeJohnette,** and I had a gig in a supporting band backing a singer. During the last week that Bill was there, **Miles** came into the club, to see Bill and Jack, because they both worked with him, and offered me the job, and that was the beginning of that whole thing. I feel good about the way it developed. I didn't have too much anxiety during the development. I just enjoyed doing what I was doing, which I think is very important. I think too much weight put on the goal that you're trying to achieve stops you from moving anywhere. Because one has to be living and experiencing what's going on now in order to learn, which is how we move to another place. So if you're sitting, just thinking about where you want to go to, you're not even here, you're in the future, thinking about where you're going to go. So I think it's very important for musicians, artists, for anybody, to try and experience the "now" as much as they can, and not worry about the goals that they're trying to achieve. These goals will happen very naturally if you allow the flow to happen.

Although the preceding excerpt, from our conversation, took place some fifteen years ago, it illustrates that what has unfolded in Dave Holland's life was already in place in his head. My experience with him has continued over these years, and to hear his music from those times move through Miles Davis, into Circle with Chick Corea, Barry Altschul and Anthony Braxton, the marvellous quartet of Braxton, with his early

friend Kenny Wheeler, Sam Rivers, the Stan Getz quartet, once again with Jack DeJohnette, and on into this period when he is the leader of his own bands, has been, to say the very least, an education in itself. I had not seen Dave for some time, and when I was invited to be a guest of the Banff School of Fine Arts, in the mountains of Alberta, I was delighted. For Canada, and possibly for anywhere, the Banff school is a unique situation, so we started off our conversation talking of the difference between what it was like studying music at the Guildhall in his youth, and now being here as the artistic director of the jazz workshops...

Dave Holland: Well first off the Banff experience is very different to an institution, the way this school is run and the kind of emphasis that's placed, and I'm not just talking about the jazz program, but I would say the whole. Everything that I observe here is geared toward performance level study. Mostly people who are coming, work next to prominent and very creative people in their fields, and it's viewed more as an exchange of ideas rather than a school. It's a place where people can come and get advice on the work that they are actually involved in now. It's not something where you learn to play a C Major scale, but to try and get some inspiration for direction. Just to get some feedback about that. Compared to my experience the school that I went to was a classical music school, and the experience that I had in learning about improvisation was all from the opportunity to play with other people. The advice that I got from all the other musicians. Unfortunately, I think in jazz institutions for the most part, they fall short of creating that type of context for learning.

I'm quite concerned about the direction that jazz education is taking in the schools, because it's tending to be a paint-by-numbers system, where you learn to fit the right lick on the right chord, and you become a jazz player and get your diploma. There is a lot more, as you know, to it, trying to draw out the creativity and individuality in the player, at the same time as giving them a foundation in the tradition of the music, and giving them something to build on. Because we don't want to see people just trying to do things in a vacuum, we are trying to present at Banff a broad spectrum of alternatives and ideas. It's not a program which tries to put forward one singular idea of what improvisation is, but rather present a broad spectrum of it.

It also seems to me that the standard idea of jazz education has created a clone-like situation, and has managed to stifle creativity. So knowing all of that, how do you decide, at the beginning, which people are allowed to come here to study?

It's a very difficult process actually, because obviously it's based on performance. Most of the people that come here send tapes to the Banff Centre, and at a certain point in the year, usually around March, I am sent a box full of tapes, and I sit down at my tape recorder and listen to them, and evaluate. With a lot of reviewing, over and over again, I try and decide based on certain criteria. People might disagree with the criteria I use, but I just listen for musicianship and their ability to play their instruments. To me, there are certain levels of requirement for that. But also I look for individualism in the players. At the same time, just for the sake of the program, we've tried to keep the main thrust of the program to do with the jazz tradition as we understand it to be. The lineage of jazz from Louis Armstrong through the great players, and to keep that as a general focus for the program, rather than to try and make it a world music, third stream, everything's included type of situation. Because I've been involved in a few things like that and I found that it diffused the energy a little too much. One of the things I wanted to do to make the program strong, was to have a central idea of what we're trying to do. Even though that centre can be interpreted in many, many different ways. We've had players from Cecil Taylor through George Russell, through Anthony Davis, Anthony Braxton, and on the other side Dave Liebman...I've tried to be objective in terms of impartiality, presenting as many different views as I can, over the eight years I've been involved here.

I've talked to a number of students over the past few days, and there seems to be some confusion among some of them, considering that the teachers are you, Roscoe Mitchell and Muhal Richard Abrams, for example, than when they actually play in groups the music is sounding very conventional, and yet the musicians that have been teaching them are much more contemporary. Is this because of the workshop groups, or is it the students' mentality that makes this occur?

Basically I think most of us here, as teachers, are trying to deal with the students on their own ground. Rather than trying to impress upon them a single way that they should be going, we try to look at where they are at this point. How we can help them move on and maybe broaden their horizons. But these things don't happen in four weeks. So what we find mostly happens is that the people that come here as participants are already focused on certain things that they want to do, and whatthe program does is expose them to other ideas. The music that is played is not really standard repertoire, we don't hear fifteen versions of *Stella By Starlight* (it's a beautiful piece) but what we hear are their own compositions mostly. When you go to the Blue Room in the evenings to hear the students perform, most sets are original music, and this I think is great. Rather than trying to dissuade them from doing these things, I would rather let them have the opportunity to externalize these things that they want to do themselves.

To me the learning process is helped by that, by them being able to bring out the ideas that they have and to look at them, to compare them to what they hear some of us do. Some of the ideas that are discussed in the classes are certainly personal ones of the faculty, and sometimes even contradictory, which we don't mind at all. I think it's healthy. So, they are exposed to our ideas, but to expect that in a few weeks they would quickly transform them into a performance is unrealistic. I'm happy with the results that we have, really. There are some participants that would like to work in different types of areas to what the majority want to work in, and these are people that we try to spend more time with, and discussions with, and try to encourage their own directions. Everybody has the opportunity to put together special projects, so nobody is denied the opportunity to do something their own way.

With the faculty itself, the actual people who are working here to teach the students whatever they can, it seems to me that most of the people have been very closely associated with you in the past and even played in bands with you. Is there a real purpose to why it's like this, and why it is not just a bunch of odd fellows?

Well again for the sake of unification. I think if you look at the music of Muhal Richard Abrams and then at the music of Kenny Wheeler, you see two quite different polarities. Now I just happen to be a musician who has chosen in my life, to play with a wide diversity of people, and I think that's one of the things I've been able to bring to this program, that I have been associated with quite different types of musical situations, and therefore have been able to call people up and say, 'look would you like to come and be part of this and have it work.' I see

myself as a person that can bring people together, and I've tried to use that idea to make the program work. You know there have been musicians here that I have never worked with: Cecil Taylor, Anthony Davis, we haven't really worked together that much. Muhal and I have not worked together that much, we did some duet concerts a year or two ago, but I've a great deal of respect for him and we always have stayed in touch with each other in various ways. It's not a coincidence that that's the way, but on the other hand, let me say this. You can only do what you can do best, and I don't want to be everything to everybody.

I'm trying to bring together the people that I've had positive experiences with, and that I feel can have a high quality communication with other people. Now that does not include every musician. As you well know, some musicians are great players but they are not great communicators. So I've tried to look at the music in the most objective way and I think you can see that the program does not reflect my single approach to music. It reflects some criteria that I believe are important, which is to have conceptualists here, people who are all leading people in their field, in the area they have chosen to work in, and people who have built on the tradition in one way or another, not people who have come from some other type of orientation.

One of the situations that has happened while I have been talking to the students is, because some of them are very young, and as youth are often very opinionated about who they are, I find that they have little or no real connection with the history of the music. They are not like you or me, who have spent years listening to all those records, reading about it, and being part of it, because they have not yet had time to do this. So is there somewhere in the period that they are here, some kind of connection with the history? Are there talks about how the history worked, records, films, books recommended...?

Well actually, just to address that question of the young, you and I were also young at one point, and opinionated, and I remember when I was a nineteen year old musician, the music I was listening to was the immediate five years of what was going on. I was not much interested in Duke Ellington. To me it was "old" music. It was only after I had bought *Such Sweet Thunder*, when I was about twenty or twenty-one, that I had a rude awakening to the fact that these players were tremendously creative and I started to fill in the gaps. I think we have the same phenomena here. You know, young people basically are looking at their contemporaries, and we have an extensive record library here, for a start. We also have a collection of jazz videos which represent people like Thelonious Monk and Coleman Hawkins, and we have talks about the videos, sometimes play them at discussions, and so on. I can't speak for every teacher, but I know a lot of them use as a reference point, people in the past. If we are talking about improvisation, the balance of improvisation and composition, we might use Duke Ellington as an example. Often I'm encouraging them to look at styles which have not been absorbed into the mainstream, and so I will say to the saxophone players, listen to Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, or somebody like that. Somebody who is coming from a different point of view to the popular styles that were assimilated. So there is a reference point there.

How did you first become involved at all with the Banff Centre? How did you actually decide to be on the teaching staff anywhere? Why as a musician have you decided to go into education? I understand that you also teach somewhere else.

Yes, I'm teaching at the New England Conservatory in between touring. Well, the involvement here at Banff started in 1981. I came here with a pilot program that actually became the Creative Music Studio, or at least people that were involved with the Creative Music Studio. Karl Berger put together a collection of people that included Ed Blackwell, Lee Konitz, Sam Rivers, and others and we came up here and did about ten days around Christmas time. The following year we were invited back to do a two week program in the summer, and at the end of that I was approached by Michael Century to see if I would be interested in heading the program. At first, the responsibility was a little bit intimidating. I did not know whether I really wanted to take it on at that point. But the opportunity here seemed so special that I decided I would give it a try. I was motivated mostly for the reasons that we were talking about earlier, that I was concerned about the way jazz education had been going, and I thought, 'well if you're so concerned why don't you get up and do something, instead of complaining about it.' So I said, 'well, let me see if these ideas that I have, which I know some of the other musicians share, to create an environment for learning but one that encourages individuality and creativity, see if this works.' So that's why I took it on. The New England position was more that I had come to the end of a five year period of working with my quintet, and I wanted to have a period where I could do some research myself, and teaching is a great aid sometimes to externalising your ideas, trying to make them clear. I saw it as an opportunity to do that, and I also have an ensemble up there that I have been writing music for. It's a way to get a quick feedback on music that you want to write. So it was a good experience. I have trouble, I must admit, with the situation of having the confines of the schedule, in terms of seeing everybody for one hour, and then the next person comes in. That's a difficult way for me to teach. I've been spoiled by the situation in Banff, and this for me is really the ideal kind of situation where we can create a forum for discussion.

Do a large percentage of the students come back to the school again?

We do get a lot of students coming back. I don't know what the percentage is, but I often find that the people come here the first time, and they don't quite know what they are going to get, what's going to happen, and many people feel that the second visit they can be more prepared and really get a lot more out of it by that type of preparation.

Have any of the students in your experience, in the eight years that you have been here, gone out into the real big world and actually become known musicians?

Oh yeah, of course. Renee Rosnes, from Vancouver, is one; Hugh Fraser was someone that came here earlier and he is now actually on the teaching staff. Many of the Toronto musicians seem to be active, people like Jim Vivian, Mike Murley, Stich Winston, also we get professionals. The ages, we talk about young players, and I guess the youngest we have here is often sixteen, but on the other end we have players coming here in their forties, too, people who are looking for some other ideas to put into their music. I would say the average age is probably around the mid-twenties, twenty-seven, something like that. But we have noticed that a lot of the musicians playing the jazz festivals this year are in fact players who were here at one time or another. Another one is Phil Dwyer. There are many people that do go on. It seems normal, I wouldn't say that Banff has to take all the credit for it, but it seems natural to me that somebody who is searching and curious and dedicated to the music, will come here because this is one of the sources that they can draw on. Then these people, will of course, because of their nature, go on to create some situation and visibility for themselves.

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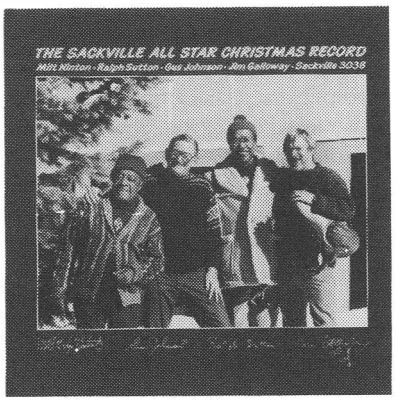

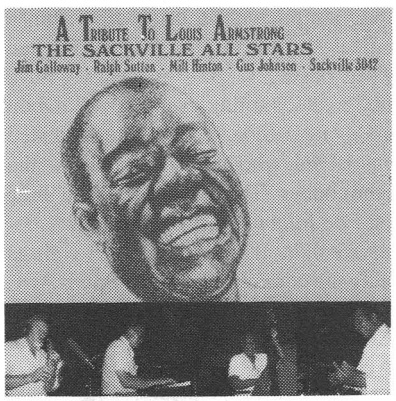

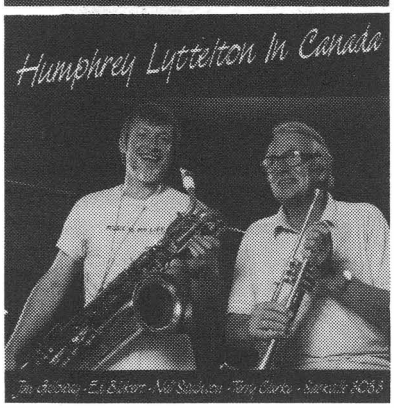

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MUSIC STILL INTACT

We are all familiar by now with the idea of using music as a means of promoting political issues and movements. Whether it is a singer-songwriter who espouses a particular cause or a whole rock tour devoted to fundraising, it has been one of the most familiar musical manifestations of the 80s. In most cases it is motivated by a sincere commitment to change; often it has been a positive force in the struggles against oppression based on gender, class and race; its strength flows from the degree of commitment of the musicians as well as their audiences. But this also points to a contradiction: the music itself is often much less interesting than the message it carries. The commitment to change and creation of new forms to freedom is not reflected in the music itself. This is partly because the popular music industry itself is part of the system that is being criticized,

With improvised music there is the possibility of a different kind of relationship between music and politics. Because of its flexibility, its freedom from the demands of commercial marketing (the blessings of marginalization!) and the implications of the music itself, improvised music tends to be by its very nature a political force for change. Take **Irene Schweizer's INTAKT** records. This is an independent label, owned and run by a woman who is also one of the leading players in the music. It puts out records which specifically address issues such as racism in South Africa and is focal point for a range of projects like the **Women's Improvised Music Festival** or the **London Jazz Composers Orchestra**. These kinds of projects present radically alternative versions of what music can be. By its very existence, **INTAKT** Records is a political statement and force for change. That is not to say that all these six records, are explicitly "political" in their presentation, but taken as a whole they point to alternative cultural forms as well as social relations.

Canaille was recorded at the 1986 International Festival of Women's Improvised Music in Zurich. This festival is presented in a different city each year and is organized by a different woman, who is an improvising musician, each time. Each of the nine pieces has a different combination of the 13 players who were present at the festival, ranging from duets to quintets. What is immediately striking is not only the variety of ways of improvising included at the festival, but also how well they all interact together. Some of the players, like **Maggie Nichols, Irene Schweizer, Lindsay Cooper** and **Anne Marie Roelofs** have been active in new music for some time, others like **Marilyn Mazur** come from a jazz background, others (**Maude Sauder, Mariette Rouppevan der Voort, Flora St. Loup**) come from a classical background; rock is even represented by bassist **Petra Ilyes**.

The resulting pieces cover a lot of different ground, on *Vind Santo*, Leandre and St. Loup spontaneously compose a song which turns the whole idea of the song form inside out. A duet with Lindsay Cooper (bassoon and electronics) and Maude Sauer (oboe) use repeated figures to create an almost North African double reed feeling. Other pieces range from jazz *(Gaat Um Gang)* to abstract improvisations (*Discovery*).

This record and the festival it documents raise important questions about feminist aesthetics and the value or risk of having a separate category of women's music. In the face of the music on this record these questions fade, the music speaks for itself, needing no justification whatever.

If **Canaille** embodies an implicit political message, the duet of **Irene Schweizer** and **Louis Moholo** is entirely explicit in its message: support of the struggle against the racist regime in South Africa. Recorded at the Zurich Jazz Festival 1986, it is part of a project of Schweizer's to record with a number of the most interesting drummers around. The focus throughout the record is on South African struggle. On side one, *Free Mandela* and two tunes by **Dudu Pukwana** are compositions based on the feel and form of "Township Jazz," played in the context of improvised music. In a number of places, Schweizer plays repeated two or three chord vamps and Moholo improvises freely, effectively reversing the traditional roles of piano and drum. (Interestingly enough, Schweitzer is also a drummer.) The lilting simplicity and drive of the tunes moves naturally in and out of the faster free improvised passages. Side one ends with a powerful and haunting version of Dudu Pukwana's *Angel*. Side two is a suite dedicated to Johnny Dyani, who had recently died at the time of the concert. The title is *Exile* with three sections: *For Johnny Dyani, Africana Memories* and *We Will Win The War*. As well as expressing the commitment to the South African struggle, there is evocation of the experience of exile which has befallen so many of South Africa's best artists. The playing here is more sustained, with Schweizer sounding jazzier and Moholo's distinctive drumming providing a rolling groundswell. He gets one of the nicest *sounds* on the drums of any drummer around. The fact that this music works so well is a testament to the musicians' ability to fuse their political commitment with their art, resulting in a music of great power and beauty.

Irene Schweizer's duet record with **Gunter Sommer** is a very different, but equally compelling, kind of dialogue. Sommer is a very melodically inventive player who continually generates new ideas rather than just accompanying Schweizer. The result is a continual rapid fire of unfolding, interweaving and transformation of ideas between his drumming and Schweizer's percussive piano. Both these players bring a sense of irony to the music which seems very European: most of the shorter pieces are based on rhythm in very "straight" time played so relentlessly that they seem to parody the whole idea of regular rhythm. One result of this is that the free pieces seem to surge forward with even more energy when they go into more energetic free passages. Side two is a single performance in

Barry Guy (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

which both players demonstrate their uncanny ability to develop ideas simultaneously, not just in one after the other but into a single formal whole which is remarkable for an improvised music.

This ability to shape and link musical ideas into larger forms is one of the notable characteristics with all of Schweizer's playing. There seems to be a breaking down of the line between improvisation and composition if we think of the stereotype of improvisation as being always atonal, arhythmic and without a larger formal structure, the overall shape being a kind of chance sum of the parts. Schweizer's playing brings a sense of the larger form and structures to this without losing any of the immediacy and spontaneity. This approach can be related to that of other post-Cecil Taylor pianists and it would be easy to say that she has extended the language of Cecil Taylor. In fact Cecil Taylor is the only person who speaks this language: Irene Schweizer has invented her own. That it includes the regular metres, tonal harmonies and a sense of "composition" gives it a wider technical and emotional range. These formal elements seem to fit into her music as she needs them, and not the other way around.

The Storming of the Winter Palace is one of the most amazing records of improvised music I have heard in a long time. It is the record of concerts at Moers festival in 1986 and in Zurich in 1988 of "taklos," a quintet consisting of **Maggie Nichols** (voice), **George Lewis** (trombone), **Joelle Leandre** (bass) and **Irene Schweizer** (piano). The Schweizer/Sommer chemistry is equalled by the overall chemistry between all these players. Each of them has developed a distinctive music of their own with a wide range of sound resources. Each is a brilliant improviser in his or her own right. Together they shape a kind of music that is coherent without submitting to any external controlling authority. One sequence follows another in a kind of dramatic progression that abolishes any divisions we would put between composed and improvised music, between virtuosity and playfulness, between formal development and direct emotional force or between entertainment and art. It is very inclusive music: at the most unexpected moment, Nichols goes into a weird inner monologue (there's one about jumble sales) as an integral part of what's going on; or Schweizer and Sommer set up a regular rhythmic pulse, or, as in several places, the whole ensemble swings into tunes that seem to come out of nowhere. The result is a rich layering of sounds and language. Leandre, Lewis and Nichols all manage to enrich the texture of the group without ever forcing it into a bass/drums/piano behind horn/voice format.

Side one consists of a single piece. It's easy to understand why the crowd were so enthusiastic at this event, there is such unrelenting energy and invention. Side two is subtler, more contained and intense in a quite different way. On *Living On The Edge,* Joelle Leandre has a particularly powerful presence.

Although **Joelle Leandre** and **Irene Schweizer** make up half of **The Paris Quartet**, it is quite a different band. They are joined by **Yves Robert** on trombone and **Daunik Lazro** on alto sax. For one thing, the pieces are much shorter (there are 13, mostly less than 5 minutes long) and each one works as a distinct "composition." Although the group has a strong, unified sound as a whole, to my ears the most interesting sections are the duets and trios. *Conversation Intime* with Lazro and Robert and *Intime Conversation* with Schweizer and Leandre are particularly effective.

This group points to a different approach to improvised music than what we are used to: short pieces, characterized by melodic clarity, quiet intensity, deliberation and wit. If it is true that the 70s and 80s produced various national styles of improvising, then it may be that this record defines what the French style is.

Joelle Leandre's presence is particularly strong on this record. She finds all kinds of new resources in the sound of the bass and her soprano singing is a riot. There is something wonderfully strange about hearing this kind of vocal improvisation in French, instead of English.

The London Jazz Composers Orchestra Live In Zurich is in fact two records, one composed and directed by **Barry Guy** and recorded in 1987, and one composed and directed by **Anthony Braxton**, recorded in 1988. The London Composers Orchestra has existed since the early 70s and has gone through a number of transformations, in terms of both players and music. This latest version is made up of some of the most interesting players on the British and European scene.

The **Barry Guy** record, entitled ***Polyhymnia***, is built around a number of extended solos and duets punctuated by Guy's written sections for the whole orchestra. There are so many strong passages on this record, it is only possible to mention a few. Of particular note is the bass playing of Guy himself and **Barre Phillips**, in which their very different approaches to bass playing work together wonderfully. This leads into a passage of inspired group improvisation featuring trombonists **Radu Malfatti, Paul Rutherford** and **Alan Tomlinson, Pete McPhail** and **Trevor Watts'** high energy free jazz saxophone playing. Of particular note is **Phil Wachmann's** electric violin work on Side one, where he energizes the proceedings with his unique fusion of acoustic and electric sounds. The solos move in and out of Guy's written sections, punctuate them and inject work to build their intensity. This is particularly effective during Trevor Watts' saxophone solo as well as Wachmann's.

Anthony Braxton's pieces manage to get a completely different sound out of the orchestra. Where Guy's writing is primarily chordal, Braxton's is more linear, based on more extended melodic inventions. The ensemble manages to play these lines with a kind of looseness that defines their shape, while avoiding the pumped-up Wagnerian sound that this kind of ensemble has sometimes fallen into in the past.

The individual playing is outstanding throughout, especially the two drummers, **Tony Oxley** and **Paul Lytton**.

On both records there is a clear line drawn between the improvised and written parts, and there is usually little doubt which you are hearing. This contrast is heightened by the wide variety of original improvisational styles. Interplay between the orchestral structures and the individual ways of playing is never really resolved and it is one of the things that gives this record an interesting edge. At any rate there is a lot of good music here. It's one of those records that you keep near the top of the pile for a long time.

Canaille International Women's Festival of Improvised Music
INTAKT 002
Irene Schweizer Louis Moholo
INTAKT 006
Irene Schweizer Gunter Sommer
INTAKT 007
The Storming of the Winter Palace
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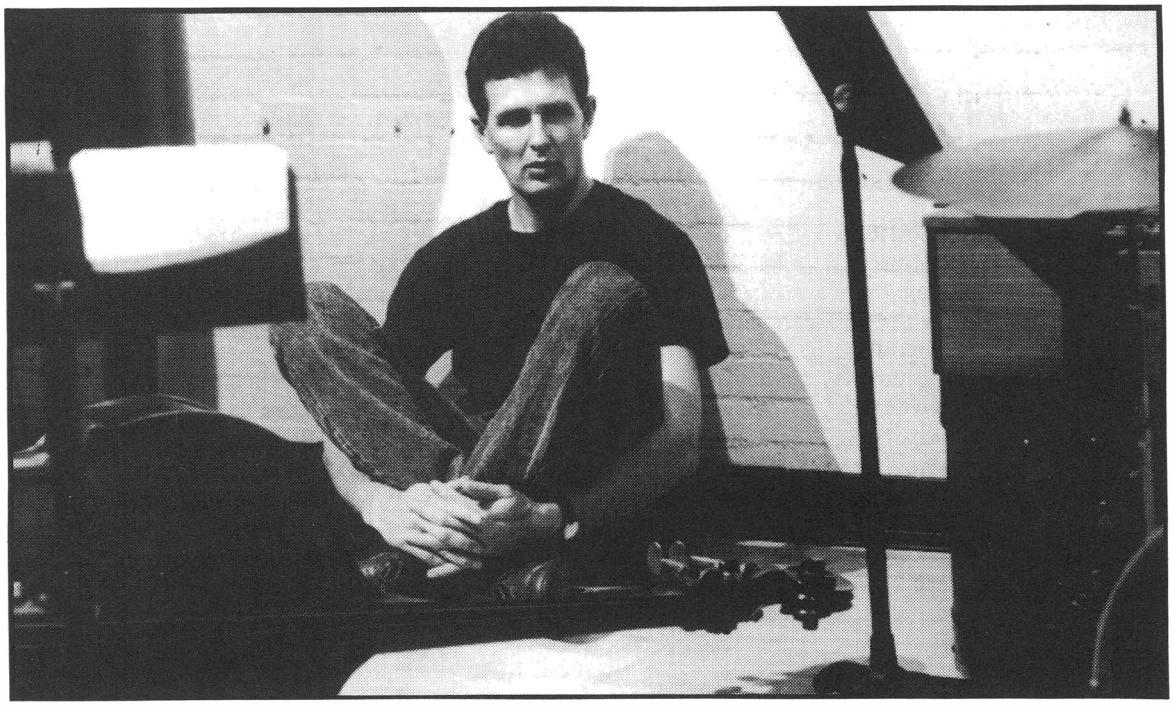

As much as one can appreciate the rapid evolution of jazz over its 80 year history, it is equally fascinating to notice how much wider the spectrum of styles has become in the last 2 decades, the proof of that being the numerous trendy terms compounded with the word "jazz." In Europe, for instance, the very nature of improvised music has been redefined since the late sixties: whereas earlier generations were basically following in the footsteps of the Americans, a younger breed of musician appeared then that was more than eager to break away from that comfortable arrangement.

Curiously though, the rebels of those days were also influenced by another specifically American style, Black Free Jazz. Attracted by the radical principles of that music, they were now poised to "tear down the walls," to use the turn of phrase attributed to Belgian pianist Fred van Hove, one of the leaders of that emerging style. In retrospect, this coincidence of events literally threw the scene open to an intense period of open-ended improvisation with a highly energetic way of playing.

Nowadays, the expression "post free jazz period" has crept into the terminology as a means of describing the diverse orientations which have grown out of the breakthroughs of those times. Essentially, each country has developed its own particular strand of improvised music and of these, Holland presents one of the most interesting venues in terms of originality and daringness. In contrast to their German and British neighbours, Dutch improvisers have been focusing their efforts on compositional frameworks which usually go beyond the familiar confines of the song structure. Even well established musicians like Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink, who were at the forefront of the free movement in the sixties, are now using written material to a greater degree, a case in point being their latest ICP orchestra recording of the music of Herbie Nichols.

With the notable exception of Willem Breuker, no one musician better typifies this performer-cum-composer trend than bassist Maarten Altena, now minus the "van Regteren" for obvious reasons of simplification. Once an active participant in Free Music circles, he is now making his mark as a composer and bandleader. Currently his main (but not exclusive) creative outlet is his octet. But this change in his artistic pursuits was not a sudden one; instead, it came about as a gradual realisation of the insufficiencies of free improvisation.

I started composing because I had been so acquainted with free playing that I began to feel it had become over-stylised; in fact, it had become a cliche in itself. So, I had to find an answer that would be more satisfactory to me. That is when I first started to write out banal melodies, so as to make it clear to myself that I wanted to do something else.

As far as free music goes, he feels that his involvement in it was merely a phase in his own musical growth.

I felt more like a participant in a certain kind of circle, though I must say that it helped me to find my own identity. [...] It wasn't until ten years ago that I first started coming into my own, and what helped me a lot there was my own solo playing. Of course, this hold true for the most players, because it is the best way of getting your mind together and to start organizing things in terms of what you want to do. [...] As for my own musical identity, I really discovered it when I began forming my first bands.

In the late seventies, he joined an ensemble of string players with live electronics. In that group, he first met keyboardist Michael Waixvisz, and their friendship eventually blossomed into a full-fledged business partnership. In 1979, both men established their own record label, **Klaxon Records**, which they maintain to this day. In recent years, though, they have chosen to follow separate paths in their musical endeavours. As a matter of fact, Maarten Altena says that this divergence does not hinder their work but it only gives them the space needed to better concentrate on their own projects.

This creative split, so to speak, is also made clear by the bassist's own outlook on the use of electronics in music. With his present group, he works in a purely acoustic format; so much so, that he prefers to play concerts without any on-stage amplification. On both of these points, his attitude is quite clear, as expressed in the following statement:

I am not at all attracted to [electronics], but that does not mean that I do not like it; I just do not have anything to say with it. I prefer "old-fashioned" instruments, because there is still so much do with these. [...] What

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

A PROFILE OF DUTCH BASSIST MAARTEN ALTENA

I dislike more than that is the heavy amplification of acoustic instruments. For example, I have never liked a pick-up for the bass, simply because it is an acoustic instrument. If you want to amplify, then I would rather have a bass guitar. [...] You see, there is a tendency towards this more heavily amplified rock-like sound, and I don't think it really adds to the dynamics. Quite to the contrary, it tends to even them out. Basically, it's just a way of impoverishing the possibilities of acoustical dynamics.

Without a doubt this last comment mirrors his preoccupations as a composer, an activity where the attention to detail is paramount. By his own admission, he also believes that his future lies much more in that field than that of the mere performer. In the last couple of years, he has been working on commissions from chamber orchestras and soloists alike. Ever since those days of writing "banal melodies" he has perfected his craft through private studies with prominent Dutch composers like Louis Andriessen, an important name in that country's contemporary music field. Because of that, the bassist has been drawn into a more systematic investigation of sound and texture, at least in contrast to the more intuitive approach prevalent in the jazz idiom. Yet, in forming his concepts through the written medium, he has in effect returned to the classical music tradition in which he was reared. At 14, he was pursuing serious cello studies, unquestionably the most "classical" of all instruments. Soon thereafter, he was more than immersed in the rigorous discipline of a conservatory training.

Nevertheless, it was at that very time that the sound of jazz first caught his ear. In the early sixties a steady flow of American jazzmen were touring the continent. Not far behind were their latest releases which would trickle in as eagerly awaited imports in specialty shops. Remembering that period, he recalls that the big names were Gerry Mulligan, the Modern Jazz Quartet and Miles Davis, all of whom had a decisive influence on him at that early stage.

From that moment on he was smitten. Not before long, he had switched to the double bass, an instrument which was a viable alternative to his cello as well as a better suited choice for jazz playing. At the same time, his formal training yielded to the discovery of jazz through those new recordings from the States. Diligent practice ensured and, after months of fine tuning the required pizzicato technique, he took the plunge into the jazz arena. Of course, the coveted prize was always to sit in with these visiting musicians, some of whom chose to grace the scene as beloved heroes. On a few occasions, the aspiring bassist was backing such notables as Ben Webster and Don Byas; in fact, he even played one gig with the legendary Bud Powell, though he admits having a very vague memory of it, the reason for that being a bad case of the jitters. More vivid though is his recollection of playing as a sub one night in Misha Mengelberg's backup trio for Eric Dolphy, a treasured moment for sure in his formative jazz years.

From these early mainstream jazz gigs, Maarten Altena was soon swimming in the turbulent waters of the New Thing which was now starting to wash up on the European shores. At that time too, the seeds of discontent were already starting to bud and people like Mengelberg, percussionist Han Bennink and reedman Willem Breuker were ready to challenge their fellow musicians to stop imitating and start inventing their own music. As noted earlier, the input of American Free Jazz was crucial to them, a fact that the bassist fully acknowledges in his assessment of those heady days.

Well, I think the records of Cecil Taylor, and Albert Ayler too, were a big influence for [those of us] who were trying to do something original, who were just trying to add something new to jazz music. As far as I am concerned, jazz in Holland had always been a very boring imitation type of thing, at least up until that time.

Based on those early experiences as well as his subsequent association with free music he became known as a "jazz musician." But that label now has very little relevance to him; and when one considers his own playing with his octet, one notices that he employs the arco technique much more than its pizzicato counterpart, yet another telling sign of his affinity for classical music. Not only that, but he reinforces this perception when he states that his music is not as well received in "jazz festivals" as in concerts where the audience is more classically oriented.

Even though he has branched out from the jazz path, he still recognizes its intrinsic values; what he retains from that music are its underlying principles, and not its basic forms or playing styles.

To me jazz has always been a living music coming out of certain individuals getting together and producing something that could be new, fresh sounding and that would also be exciting to the ear. But there is a general tendency now, and it seems to be in keeping with the times, in which everything is more backward oriented than 20 years ago. [...] When I do listen to today's jazz, I do not find it particularly stimulating to hear the thousandth version of some old standard; in fact, I find it sometimes more enjoyable to put on a record of one of today's pop stars, someone like Prince for instance. So I must be honest and say that I do not look to jazz as my main inspiration, because I do not find much music around now that can be considered as "jazz", at least in my understanding of what it should be.

Since jazz does not suit his own artistic aspirations any more, one could assume that the contemporary classical genre now has a greater bearing on his work. And this surely seems to be the case because he has made friends with these composers, who attend his concerts as much as he goes to theirs. As for influences in that area, he has great respect for the work of Xenakis, **because the architecture of sound he builds (is) replete with tension and violence which make them so vivid in themselves. But there is also an incredible rhythmic potential in his music, which can also be found in the best of jazz.**

All of these elements come together in his present work as a composer, an activity which he calls **addictive**, because **it requires a kind of discipline that needs to be worked on regularly.** Unlike the late-nights and scattered gigs which befall the lot of performers. The lifestyle of a composer offers more relaxed working conditions and less difficult working hours, two benefits which he clearly appreciates.

Of equal importance to him are his duties as a bandleader. After first leading a quartet in the early eighties, he has doubled it since to the current eight. To his credit, he has recorded three albums with this band, the latest being ***Rif***, a first-time CD release on his own label. As for the instrumentation, he says that he **"wanted to have an equal number of reeds (Michael Moore and Peter van Bergen), brass (Mark Charig and Wolter Wirbos), strings (himself and Marrtje ten Hoorn on violin) and percussion** (Peter Vatcher on drums and Michiel Scheen on piano)."

Working with larger ensembles presents certain advantages and drawbacks as well. **"With eight musicians involved in their own projects, it is hard to have regular rehearsals, which is very important because my music demands a lot of precision. When**

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BY MARC CHENARD

Willem Breuker brings in a new piece, he works on it with his musicians for a month. I never have that much time at my disposal, so I have to make the best of the time I can get from my musicians."

On the positive side, he has many different personalities to deal with, and that in turn guides him in his writing. In the best of jazz traditions, his music is created for specific people and not just for instruments. Yet another characteristic which likens him to the jazz concept is the degree of flexibility in his compositions; be they at the rehearsal stage or over the piece's lifespan in the repertoire, they are neither closed in their forms or contents. Much discussion takes place regarding the interpretation of the written parts; as for the open, or improvised segments, they are assigned in a set manner to one or another of the performers.

"I write in such a way that certain individuals act as leaders in a given part. I have a piece called *Quotl* where Mark Charig does that. It's a kind of sound piece with a very abstract melodic line running through it. Also, there is a retrograde movement played by the piano, which acts as a transition to a middle part and so on. I do this kind of piece with Mark in mind, because he is such a master at sound playing. In another one, which is played very quietly, I use overtones in a way that is reminiscent of early polyphony, and that leads into a clarinet solo by Michael Moore. You see, there are solos here and there, but it is not the main part of my music. What I like more is to have all members of the group perform different activities on stage. And to do that well, you have to play with a lot of colours; it has to be like colour in action, so to speak."

For this year, he already has a second CD in the works, and by all indications he seems to have chosen this configuration for all future releases on his label. Even though the costs of production are much higher and that the demand for this type of music is much smaller, he finds this recording medium muchmore appropriate for his music. As for the initial CD, he explains the reasons which led him to this change.

Well, recordings are losing ground, so there is a purely opportunistic reason behind this. Having said that, I must also add that they sound better, at least for me. They have no surface noises. Of course, it's expensive to produce them, but I was lucky to find someone who was interested enough in the music and willing to sponsor that recording too. This was back in 1987, the year Amsterdam was chosen as the cultural capital of Europe. In December, the disc was released as a gift to all the countries that participated in the concerts staged throughout the year. This coincided with an evening finale where we performed a work which was to be the forerunner of a new programme in Berlin, last year's cultural capital. For that occasion, I was commissioned to write some new music for the octet as well as a setting for bass, chamber orchestra and improvisational group."

From his early days as a committed improviser to his present status as a full fledged composer, Maarten Altena sees his work realistically. With a minimum amount of conjecture, he put his music into context most succinctly when addressing the perennial question of "what is new" and "what is not."

"You can say that music is always made of old things, and I'm not pretentious in that way of talking only about new things. I do my work and it's up to the listener to decide if it is old or new."

MAARTEN ALTENA
A selected discography

With the Octet
RIF (1987)
Quick Step (1986)
Tel (1983)

With the Quartet
Rondedans (1984)
Veranda (1982)
Pisa (1981)
Op Stap (1980)

On other labels than **Klaxon**:

On **Incus**:
Company 1/5/6/7 (1976-77)
Pisa 1980 / Improviser's Symposium

On **ICP**:
Orkest de Volharding (1972)
(With Willem Breuker)
The Message - Instant Composers Pool (1970)

Solo albums
Papa Oewo (1981) **Klaxon**
Tuning the Bass **ICP**

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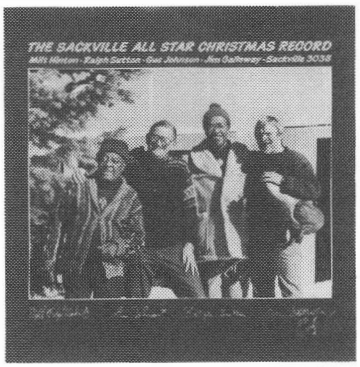

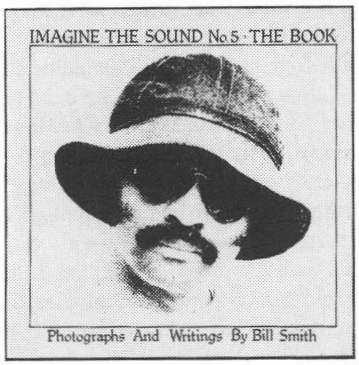

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TALMAGE FARLOW
STEVE LACY: LIFT THE BANDSTAND
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BARRY HARRIS—PASSING IT ON
NEW MUSIC (John Carter)
SHELLY MANNE QUARTET
PERCY MAYFIELD
AN AMERICAN SONGSTER (John Jackson)
BIG CITY BLUES
MUSIC OF THE UNITED FRONT

A CHICAGO LEGEND

For over three decades Bob Koester's Delmark Label has been in the forefront of documenting the richly diverse jazz and blues scene of the "Windy City." Not only has the company been instrumental in recording many important blues artists, it has also touched on several eras of jazz and was among the first to sense the early rumblings of the AACM. Consisting mostly of reissues, this current lot runs the gamut from traditionalism to swing, through bop, post bop and into the more esoteric arena of the avant garde.

Active since the 1920s, pianist **Art Hodes** has lived through as well as participated in a nice sized chunk of jazz history. His long and momentous career has been marked by a fruitful relationship with trumpeter **Wingy Manone**, associations with the likes of **Frank Teschemaker, Gene Krupa** and **Bud Freeman** and a score of solo performances to boot. A staunch supporter of traditional jazz, Hodes put in a stint as a disc jockey and even published his own jazz magazine in the 1940s.

Recorded in 1968 on two separate visits to the studio, ***Bucket's Got A Hole In It*** affords Art the opportunity of getting together with the former Ellington-Armstrong clarinetist **Barney Bigard**. Of the eight selections listed, four from the first session feature a quartet that includes bassist **Rail Wilson** and drummer **Barrett Deems**. The other half benefits from the addition of trombonist George Brunis and trumpeter Nappy Trottier. The sextet numbers pack the greater punch as Brunis' cantankerous horn gets to strut and bellow through still another rendition of Tin Roof Blues. His vocal on the title cut is also joyous and unrestrained. A strong lead player, Trottier has plenty of space to let it rip while Bigard's warm, woody tone offers a well defined contrast to the rough hewn sounds of the brass. When Brunis and Trottier are absent, the mood becomes considerably more laid back, allowing Bigard's sly, luxuriant playing to enhance such familiar pieces as *Sweet Lorraine, Makin' Whoopee*, and *Three Little Words*. Obviously in high spirits, Hodes is at the top of his game, effectively taking care of business throughout. A rare meeting of two outstanding jazz voices.

By the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, big bands for the most part were in a steady state of decline; a stark reminder of a rapidly changing musical climate. Of the ones continuing to hang on, some sought to gain greater public acceptance by incorporating a stronger RnB feel into a repertoire that also consisted of satin smooth ballads as well as good timey novelty tunes. Such is the case with a good bit of the material to be found on ***Big Band Jazz (Tulsa to Harlem)***. Taken from three different sources, side one opens with four cuts by a 1950s edition of the **Cab Calloway** Orchestra. The band had its share of top notch talent (**Doc Cheatham, Keg Johnson, Milt Hinton** to name a few) and there are momentary glimpses of superb musicianship (the deep bottom supplied by baritonist **Al Gibson** coupled with tenor man **Ike Quebec's** solid support on Misty Morning and a nice spot from another fine tenor saxophonist **Sam "The Man" Taylor** on *Shotgun Boogie*) but most of the time as was usually the case with Calloway, it was used as a backdrop for his overexpressive, highly extroverted vocal stylings. Although these offerings are pleasant enough, there is much better Calloway to be found elsewhere.

Also on the A side are two lovely readings (*Love Comes But Once* and *Tattooed Bride)* by the longtime Ellington clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton heard here on tenor saxophone. Backed by a unit recruited from the aggregations of Red Saunders and Duke Ellington, his silky toned ballad statements alone are worth the price of admission.

The Tulsa based territory band of Ernie Fields takes up all of side two. A favourite with black audiences of the day, it was never quite able to attain national acclaim. Aside from Leroy Cooper's run through of *Baritone Shuffle*, the meaty tenor of Elton Watkins, some bluesy alto by another ex-Ellingtonian **Harold "Geezil" Minerve** and several lacklustre vocals there is not much to write home about. While this recording may not become an essential historical component to anyone's jazz collection, it is nevertheless an attractively offbeat memento of a golden era that was already sinking into the setting sun.

Honkers and Bar Walkers zeroes in on that transitional period when the RnB sounds of performers like **Louis Jordan** were gradually giving way to what was soon to become known as early rock'n'roll; a time when the wailing, gritty, highly visual

Bucket's Got A Hole In It
Barney Bigard/Art Hodes
All Star Stompers
Delmark Ds-211

Big Band Jazz/Tulsa to Harlem
(featuring Cab Calloway, Ernie Fields and Jimmy Hamilton)
Delmark DL-439

Honkers and Bar Walkers Volume 1
Delmark DL-438

Somebody Done Stole My Blues
Chris Woods
Delmark DL-434

I Remember Newport
The Leon Sash Trio
Delmark DS-416

Blue Stroll
Ira Sullivan/with Johnny Griffin
Delmark DL-402

Shock Of The New
Brad Goode
Delmark DS-440

Last Trio Session
Wynton Kelly
Delmark DS-441

Three Compositions Of New Jazz
Anthony Braxton
Delmark DS-415

Young At Heart/Wise In Time
Muhal Richard Abrams
Delmark DS-423

As If It Were The Seasons
Joseph Jarman
Delmark DS-417

brand of tenor saxophone spotlighted on these sides was very much in vogue. Taking their cue from house rockers like **Illinois Jacquet, Big Jay McNeely** and **Harold "Cornbread" Singer**, the individuals featured here as well as countless other saxophonists met with more than a fair amount of success plying their trade mainly in the black neighbourhoods of America's larger urban areas. In fact, the short duration of these tunes indicates that they were more than likely aimed at the then-thriving juke box market. Outside of **Jimmy Forrest**, who gets things rolling with his crowd-pleasing classic, *Night Train*, the only other familiar names would probably be those of **Fred Jackson**, who recorded for Blue Note in the early '60s, and **Paul Bascomb**, brother of trumpeter Dud Bascomb, who gigged with the bands of **Erskine Hawkins** and **Count Basie** and who had a previous Delmark release (**Bad Bascomb**) all to himself. The work of hornmen like **Fats Noel, Cozy Eggleston, Jimmy Coe, Roy Abrams** and **Earl Johnson** borders on the obscure, however this does not mean that it is any less exciting or enjoyable. Serving up plenty of gutsy, virile tenor combined with several amusing vocals, this is one of those records you find yourself returning to time and time again.

A grossly underrated artist, Memphis-born reedman **Chris Woods** sharpened his skills in the St. Louis-based bands of **George Hudson** and **Jeter-Pillars** before moving to New York and finding employment with such respected names as Clark Terry, Duke Pearson, Ernie Wilkins and Buddy Rich. Making his way to Europe, he soon gained considerable stature as a soloist and often collaborated with American trumpeter **Ted Curson**. Originally released by United Records in the early '50s, the bulk of what is presented on ***Somebody Done Stole My Blues*** comes from a small group session piloted by Woods and manned by a competent if not particularly polished crew (trombonist **Arthur "Pete" Redford,** pianist **Charles Fox,** bassist **Eugene Thomas** and drummer **Nathanial "Pee Wee" Jernigan**). Relying on bluesy riffs, jump tunes and a couple of standards, they come across in a direct, uncomplicated manner. Woods, a fluent, soulful improviser with a bright, sassy tone, completely overshadows his bandmates. This also holds true on the tracks where as a member of Tommy Dean's "Gloom Chasers", Woods again livens things up, especially the adequate but unimaginative vocals of Ms. Jewell Belle. While any release bearing the name of Chris Woods is cause for celebration, this particular disc is not representative of his best work. To experience Woods in more inspired surrounds, one is urged to seek out his European recordings, his encounters with Ted Curson and especially ***Modus Operandi*** (Delmark DS 437).

Clark Terry, Flip Phillips, Barney Bigard & Vic Dickenson
(Photograph by Jack Bradley)

Perhaps due to its connection with polka parties, small town amateur contests and the like, the accordion has never been fully accepted into the jazz fold. There are nevertheless a small handful of stout-hearted souls (Matt Mathews, Art Van Damme, Tommy Gumina and Frank Marocco come immediately to mind) who have exhibited the kind of fortitude and determination necessary to prove the improvisational capabilities of this most unwieldy of instruments. Add to their ranks the name of **Leon Sash**. Blind since the age of eleven, he most certainly knew a thing or two about overcoming adversity. In addition to excelling as a musician, he also engaged in such unlikely activities as ice skating, bowling, fishing and swimming. Unfortunately, ***I Remember Newport*** turns out to be a lukewarm, run of the mill affair consisting of a string of overworked standards with one original (the title piece) thrown in for good measure. Receiving dependable, low key assistance from **Lee Morgan** (a bassist not the trumpeter) and drummer **Ed Ulig,** Sash demonstrates a considerable amount of skill at coming to grips with the "squeeze box," as his single note lines effortlessly glide over the buoyant rhythmic accompaniment. It is when he switches to a chord base attack that the sound of the group begins to stir up images of wedding receptions, tourist motel cocktail lounges etc. This set takes a bit of getting used to and may make some listeners feel slightly uncomfortable, however it does offer a brief respite from the unending flow of hornmen that seem to be flooding the mainstream these days.

Sharing the front line with that speed demon of the tenor saxophone **Johnny Griffin,** multi-instrumentalist **Ira Sullivan** plays it fast and loose on ***Blue Stroll***, a spunky hard bop romp that originally appeared around 1959. A stellar Chi-Town rhythm section (**Jodie Christian,** piano, **Victor Sproles,** bass, and **Wilbur Campbell,** drums) is on hand to insure a constant feed of crackling energy. *Wilbur's Tune* benefits from Griffin's swift tenor and Sullivan's Clifford Brown-flavoured trumpet. There is also a melodic solo by Christian and Sproles gets a chance to walk before a brief round of fours leads back into the head. Griff lays out on *My Old Flame* and Ira is heard on baritone sax demonstrating his usual verve and finesse. Closing out side one, *Blue Stroll* returns to the standard trumpet-tenor plus trio format. A *tour de force*, Bluzinbee covers the entire B side and features Sullivan and Griffin in a series of smoking exchanges that has each man continuously switching axes. (Sullivan: baritone, trumpet, peck horn, alto; Griffin: alto, tenor and baritone). The fact that the tune ends unexpectedly at the beginning of a drum solo in no way mars the overall excellence of this extremely satisfying record.

Shock of the New signals the debut of young trumpet prospect **Brad Goode**. Still in the process of developing an individual

voice, Goode already has a firm handle on the be-bop vocabulary while displaying a pure, sleek tone and an ability to effortlessly execute his ideas. It is when he attempts to reveal his versatility as a composer that he runs into minor difficulties. The titlepiece, for instance, is a whacky patchwork of sounds (the buzz of an alarm clock, the annoying chatter of a DJ, some flighty tenor from **Ed Peterson** and **Farred Haque**'s rockish guitar licks) that never really gets off the ground. Goode is at his best in a straight ahead setting (*Tribute to Clifford and Sonny, Stew's Blues, Old Folks, The New Blues*) matching wits with journeyman saxophonist **Lin Halliday**, whose husky tenor helps to set the gears in motion. The ubiquitous **Jodie Christian** again turns up on piano, this time in the company of bassist **Dennis Carroll** and drummer **Jeff Stitley**, who is replaced on one track by **Bob Rummage**. As on the opening track, Goode cannot resist giving in to his eclectic tendencies. Using a section of strings to good advantage, he does a splendid job with *Winter Song* (a charming original) and that old familiar standard, *You Don't Know What Love Is*. When he finally manages to iron out a few wrinkles, Goode should have little trouble in rising to the top ranks of his chosen instrument.

After serving as Miles Davis' rhythm section from the late '50s until 1963, **Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers** and **Jimmy Cobb** struck out on their own, working as a trio and eventually joining forces with guitarist Wes Montgomery. During their lengthy alliance, these outstanding individuals evolved into one of the most durable and respected threesomes in the history of jazz. Recorded in 1968 and previously available only in Japan, the record at hand is supposedly Kelly's last session as a leader. It is for the most part a rather routine offering with the choice of material leaving a lot to be desired. The briefness of the selections allows little room for extended improvisation and most of the weight falls on Kelly's characteristically funky piano. Conspicuously absent is the inventive solo work of Paul Chambers, especially his dazzling virtuosity with the bow. When functioning collectively however, the near telepathic interaction between the members of the group does succeed in transcending the triteness of such tunes as *Say A Little Prayer For Me, Light My Fire* and *Yesterday*. A real cooker, *Kelly's Blues*, makes the strongest impression. Although far from equalling their most distinguished efforts (check out ***Blues On Purpose*, Xanadu 198**), this record still deserves a spot on the shelf of any serious jazz listener.

Revered by some, maligned by others, the music of Anthony Braxton has always generated a considerable amount of controversy. An iconoclast of unswerving conviction, Braxton has struggled long and hard to gain acceptance on his own terms. Over twenty years have elapsed since ***Three Compositions Of New Jazz*** initially appeared. Weathering the passage of time extremely well, it stands as a glowing tribute to his artistic vision. Introduced by a mixture of wordless vocalizing, whistling and miscellaneous instruments, the opening composition gradually draws the listener into an ever-expanding vortex of sounds and textures. Of all the instruments brought into play, the violin of **Leroy Jenkins** sticks out most prominently, serving as the perfect foil to the horns of Braxton and trumpeter **Leo Smith**. Braxton's angular attack is brought into sharper focus on side two as the turbulent piano of **Muhal Richard Abrams** helps to heighten the intensity. Besides utilizing the minimalist leanings of its composer to good effect, Leo Smith's *The Bell* gives everyone a final chance to stretch out, including Abrams who is also heard on cello and alto clarinet. This is timeless music that should not be overlooked.

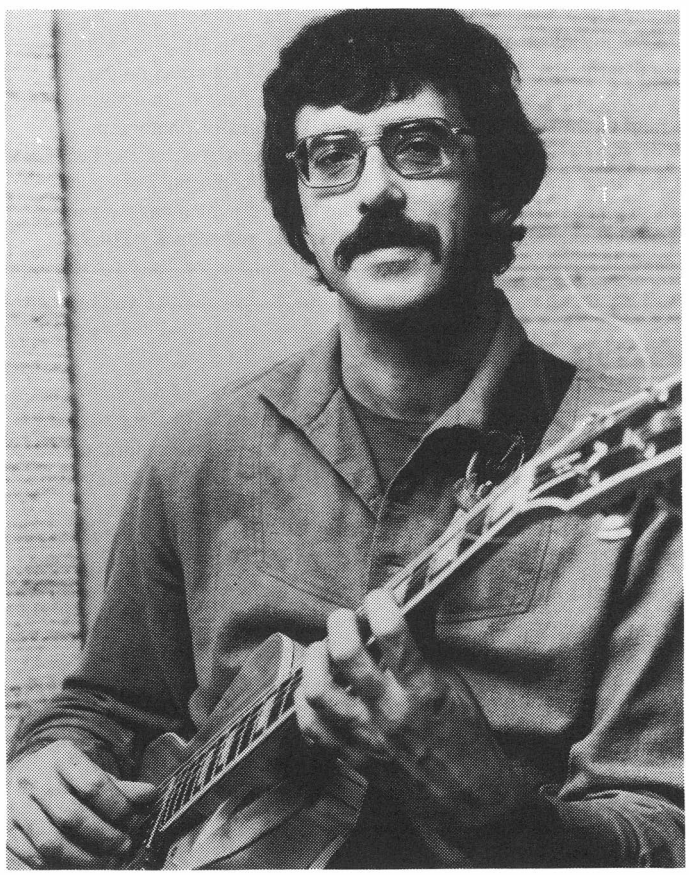
Scholar, teacher, poet, musician, composer, arranger and band leader **Muhal Richard Abrams** is a true renaissance man whose deep respect for tradition is intertwined with a bright and innovative outlook of the future. Since moving to New York in the mist-70s, Abrams has continued to function in a variety of settings (solo, small groups and large ensembles) while also recording for a number of different labels both foreign and domestic. ***Young At Heart/ Wise In Time*** was his second outing for Delmark and it still ranks among his finest efforts. A long, reflective piano solo, *Young At Heart* is notable for its strange, lyrical beauty. Beginning quietly, it slowly develops into an intricate blend of seemingly diverse elements moving from dark, brooding chords through cascading arpeggios to dancing syncopations, all of which are shaded now and again by flourishes of stride and dissonant tone clusters. *Wise In Time* features a quintet made of such AACM luminaries as **Leo Smith, Henry Threadgill, Lester Lashley** (on bass instead of trombone) and percussionist **Thurman Barker**. Delicate inside the piano strumming combines with wind chimes, small bells, percussion and Smith's icy blasts to create a dreamlike atmosphere that eventually explodes into a thundering onslaught which is touched off by Threadgill's frenzied alto and is sustained by Abrams' rumbling piano, Lashley's steel-fingered probings and Barker's supercharged eruptions. As the fire storm subsides, the piece reverts back to the tinkling of bells and the clanging of gongs, ending in much the same way as it began.

Joseph Jarman's *As If It Were The Seasons* is yet another typical **AACM** product of the late 1960s. Akin in many respects to the experiments conducted by Jarman and his Art Ensemble of Chicago associates, it inches its way through various stages of development before ultimately emerging as a bold and prophetic statement. On side one Jarman is joined by vocalist **Sherri Scott**, drummer **Thurman Barker** and **Charles Clark**, a well respected bassist who passed away not long after this recording was made. Serene and meditative at the outset, *As If It Were the Seasons/Song To Make The Sun Come Up* proceeds at a leisurely pace, its fragile sounds and muted colours hinting at African origins. The mood, however, begins to change midway through the first side with the appearance of Ms. Scott. Sounding at times like Jeanne Lee, her vocal contribution incites Jarman to snatch up his alto for an agitated but controlled solo. A solo that trembles with urgency and tension. As things settle down, Clark's droning bass helps to bring up the rear before the proceedings finally come to a close. *Song For Christopher* is dedicated to the memory of pianist **Christopher Gaddy**. Here the quartet is augmented by such AACM heavies as **Muhal Richard Abrams**, flautist **Joel Brandon**, tenor saxophonists **Fred Anderson** and **John Stubblefield,** trumpeter **John Jackson** and **Lester Lashley**, this time on trombone. Weaving in and out of several directions, the composition culminates in a traffic jam of horns and percussion, abruptly giving way to Scott's high-pitched vocalizing as it hovers over the peaceful ripple of exotic and unconventional sound effects. Overall, a most rewarding musical experience.

AROUND THE WORLD

Television redeemed itself this summer with the showing of a series of outstanding programs on PBS under the banner of "American Masters." Seen for the first time on TV was the **Gary Giddins** production of ***Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker***, which has been available as a video for more than a year. Giddins' most recent production was equally enthralling. ***Satchmo*** is a ninety minute salute to one of the undisputed giants of this music. It was a visual and aural triumph which will permanently erase the bad taste left by James Lincoln Collier's attempted assassination of Armstrong's reputation. Equally compelling were the documentaries on **Aretha Franklin** and **James Baldwin**.

Scheduling these brilliant programs at the height of the summer inevitably meant that many potential viewers missed them because of vacations and other summer activities. Hopefully, PBS will be able to repeat this series during the winter at a prime viewing time.



Peter Leitch

USA

The **Harper Brothers** were recorded September 8 and 9 during an engagement at the Village Vanguard. Their initial Verve recording has already drawn considerable attention to this exciting band...Guitarist **Peter Leitch** toured the midwest in September with the quintet who appear on his new Criss Cross recording (James Williams, Bobby Watson, Ray Drummond and Marvin "Smitty" Smith). The guitarist returned to Canada in October for gigs in Montreal and Toronto...**Andy Laverne** celebrated the music of Bud Powell in a concert setting at CAMI Hall on September 27...**Craig Harris** and Friends were at the Jamaica Arts Center on October 6...Billy Taylor's trio opened the winter subscription series in Long Island of the International Art of Jazz...Vocalist Lisa Sokolow was at the Westbank Cafe October 14 with guitarist David Gonzalez and bassist William Parker... Saxophonist Bob Kindred was at the Fortune Garden October 17-25 with Lee Musiker and Jay Leonhart...Sweet Basil showcased the talents of the **Timeless All Stars** (Bobby Hutcherson, Harold Land, Cedar Walton, Curtis Fuller, Buster Williams, Billy Higgins) October 17-22. They were followed by the **Jim Hall** Quartet and the **Art Farmer** Quintet...At presstime it was unclear whether Stanley Turrentine would be able to make his scheduled Sweet Basil gig from November 14-19. The saxophonist was hospitalized in early October with fluid on the lungs.

Rutgers University has established The Morroe Burger-Benny Carter Jazz Research Fund to provide grants for jazz scholars to study at the Institute of Jazz Studies, to publish the results in the Institute's journal and to lecture at the university. Carter made an initial contribution of $10,000 to the fund and the Berger family is among others who have also made contributions.

Trumpeter **Idrees Sulieman** and bandleader **Sabby Lewis** were among the performers at the IAJRC's convention in Boston last August...The **Glenn Horiuchi** Trio performed at Brown University in Rhode Island on November 4.

Michael Nastos reports on the 10th edition of the Montreux-Detroit Jazz Festival:

Two buzzwords that relate to jazz are individuality and personality. Those were in full evidence at an historic and fast-paced 10th annual Montreux-Detroit Jazz festival at Hart Plaza over the Labor Day weekend.

It is primarily due to the high degree of musicianship that an individual sound, "Detroit jazz" sound if you will, earmarks the festival as consistently interesting. These musicians truly rival any the rest of the world cares to compare them to.

Slide Hampton may have his World of Trombones ensemble, but Detroit now has bassist **Ken Kellett's Bop Foundation**, featuring eight trombones.The rich textures, punchy dynamics and joyous swing of this group, making its world premiere at the Pyramid stage, provided a highlight of the weekend.

Diane Schuur was a knockout with the **Jimmy Wilkins Orchestra** Thursday night, but Detroit has its own knockout jazz singers, and **Kris Peterson** did it to death with pianist **Chuck Robinette's** trio at the Pylon Stage. Whether it be belting blues, precisely sung jazz or roundabout, rolling scat, Peterson, an unsung heroine on the local scene, gave a remarkable performance.

Sonny Rollins and **Michael Brecker** played ear-shattering tenor sax at this festival, but Detroiter **Steve Wood** can go head-to-head with them in terms of inventiveness, sound and accessibility. His quintet, featuring the clean, unusually lean tuba phrasings of **Brad Felt**, made it clear why they won the Detroit leg of the Hennessey Cognac jazz competition. Their stirring bop-oriented original music kept the crowd challenged and attentive.

Jazz drummer **George Goldsmith** and his group, **An Endangered Species Lives**, played their hearts out, swinging hard and long for their hour set. It was the best performance this writer has heard from Goldsmith, as tight, harmonically perky and powerful as one could want.

But the most endearing moments were left to wheelchair-ridden

COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS

Jimmy Stefanson, who led an octet on the Pyramid stage. A saxophonist in the 60s, and now a band leader, he also plays biting yet lilting harmonica. He fronted a band that featured his personal brand of original post-bop laced with counterpoint and unison melodies and Latin tinges that were irresistible. Hats off to Stefanson for a job well done.

One of the most remarkable scenes occurred at 11 a.m. Sunday morning when drummer **Max Roach** conducted his Southeastern Michigan Jazz Association (SEMJA) Jazz Academy clinic, **The Art of the Drum Solo**. Over three hundred people hung on Roach's every word as he talked about the instrument, and his life and times in jazz.

Max Roach is one of the most approachable figureheads in any style of music. He seems to always have time for an autograph, conversation, or a tip for young musicians. He has a million stories to tell, and has no traces of bitterness about the business.

But when Roach heads for his "office," the drum kit, it is all business. His trademark riffs, precise control and unflagging swing make him the most prolific drummer in improvised music.

Almost all the other drummers at the festival, even the more rock-oriented bashers, have assimilated Roach's style, and, at times, even paraphrase Roach's signature rhythms.

Another intriguing and somewhat disturbing occurrence took place when modern technology bit **Michael Brecker**. His Midi "brain" for the EWI woodwind synthesizer was damaged in transit. Brecker and his technical advisors fumbled with it, making his set, and invariably the rest of the Labor Day concert schedule, run 30 minutes late.

Some like the sound of the EWI, but I find it quite whiny. Why doesn't Michael Brecker just stick to tenor sax, where he has one of the most appealing sounds on the instrument?

Stars shone brightly at the festival, but once again it was **Sonny Rollins** who stood head and shoulders above them all. The band with Rollins featured **Bobby Broom** on guitar, and drummer **Tommy Campbell**, replacing Jerome Harris, and **Lewis Nash**. But there was "Newk," blowing hard and strong. My only complaint was that the same songs were on every set, and as good as Rollins is, it tends to get well worn. Nonetheless Rollins remains a juggernaut of jazz.

Other international stars made the festival this year. **Vaughan Nark**, one of a handful of true virtuoso jazz trumpeters, played, as he usually does, with the **U.S.A.F. Airmen of Note**. The world class percussionist **Ray Mantilla** was in with **Roy Brooks** and the **Aboriginal Percussion Choir**, and former Detroiter **Rod Williams** was the pianist for **Cassandra Wilson** on two of her three nights at the St. Regis Lounge of the Westin Hotel.

Wilson proved one of the most unusual, extraordinary vocalists, combining the bawdiness of Carmen McRae, the cutesy scat of Betty Carter, and the low slow cry of an Aminata Moseka.

Other singers were up to the lofty standards of Wilson, in particular **Cloe Martin, Kim Weston** and **Naima Shamborguer**.

There were so many high points: trumpeter **Marcus Belgrave's** trio evoking ethnic sounds, no doubt due to his recent Indonesian tour; the powerhouse sets of the **J.C. Heard Memorial Orchestra** and **Roy Brooks'** 50-piece Aboriginal Percussion Choir; and the flawless sets of Rollins' Sextet and Max Roach's Double Quartet.

This year's MVP goes to drummer **Tom Brown**, who must have played in 10 groups, followed closely by fellow stick man **Dan Spencer**, whose brightest moment was firing the Heard Orchestra.

. . .

SEMJA's fall concert series in Ann Arbor began September 30 with Jim Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band. Kenny Cox and his Guerilla Jazz Band followed on October 28 and Bess Bonnier completed the series on November 25.

The Howard Alden-Dan Barrett Quintet were at the Riverside Inn in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania on November 17. Chuck Wilson, Frank Tate and Jackie Williams completed the lineup...**Johnny Griffin** and **Benny Bailey** were among the guests for the University of Pittsburgh's nineteenth annual seminar on jazz...The Jazz Information Committee (P.O. Box 39013, Indianapolis, IN 46239) hold monthly meetings where many different aspects of jazz are discussed. Contact them for more information...**Tommy Flanagan** and **George Mraz** were heard in concert November 18 in Dayton. It was the third concert of the season presented by Cityfolk. Earlier concerts featured a homecoming for **Snooky Young** (September 9) and a Detroit Summit with **Charles McPherson** and **Marcus Belgrave**...The **Anthony Braxton** Quartet (Marilyn Crispell, Mark Dresser, Gerry Heminway) gave the Ravinia Festival a different flavour this summer with their performance on August 28...**Patrick Hinely's** photographs were on display at the duPont Gallery in Lexington, Virginia from September 18 to October 8...Jack Simpson's Labor Day weekend jazz festival was held once again at Cocoa Beach with Laxzlo Gardony, Ira Sullivan, Nathen Page and Dave Valentin among the participants...Jane Ira Bloom's *Rediscovery*, a New Music suite for Orchestra and Motion Electronics, was given its premiere at the Kennedy Space Center on September 29...Wilton Felder, Billy Harper, Dennis Gonzalez, Ellis Marsalis and David Newman were among the participants at the Houston Jazz Festival which took place August 24-26...The 1989 Paradise Valley Jazz Party will be held March 10-11 at the Camelback Inn in Scottsdale, Arizona...The **Art Davis** Quartet were at the Costa Mesa, California Orange Coast College on October 21.

Brian Auerbach presents a pre-earthquake report of San Francisco Bay Area news:

Koncepts Cultural Gallery, the Oakland based arts organization and performance space, is moving into its fifth year as an organization and is just about to complete two full years at their new facility at 3rd and Washington Sts., near Jack London Square in downtown Oakland. The organization continues to thrive based on its commitment to presentations that would not normally get the attention of the more commercially based establishments in the bay Area or for that matter anywhere else in the U.S.A.

The new facility was inaugurated in November of 1987 with James Newton's quartet and since then has presented a virtual encyclopedia of "Jazz" from **Steve Lacy** and his sextet, **Muhal Richard Abrams** with **Andrew Cyrille** or **Anthony Braxton** presenting an evening of the tradition with Ed Kelly and others to recent performances by **Walt Dickerson** playing vibraphone as a soloist, duets and audience interaction with **John Carter** and **Bobby Bradford** to **Arthur Blythe** and a stunning quartet comprised of **Bob Stewart** on tuba, **Kelvyn Bell** on guitar and **Bobby Battle** on drums. Upcoming events include a weekend with **Oliver Lake** followed by **Mal Waldron** with **Chico Freeman**. Both of these programs are in November. The weekend of December 16 and 17, Koncepts will present James Blood Ulmer with Jamaladen Tacuma and Calvin Weston.

To mix it up just a bit, on July 29, the people at Koncepts pro-

grammed an evening of North Indian classical music with two young masters, Krishna Bhatt on sitar and Zakir Hussain on tablas. This presentation was such an overwhelming success that the organization has decided to continue occasionally in this direction. On December 9, they will feature the master of North Indian Kirana style vocals, Pandit Pran Nath.

The continued vitality of this arts organization comes from the fact that they continue to program Bay Area artists. Examples include an interesting three day festival produced by Sound Affects (an independent production organization fiscally attached to Koncepts) and a recent memorial tribute to bassist, musical spirit **Donald Raphael Garrett** who died in August in Chicago. At this tribute, besides an array of friends, students and collaborators of Garrett's, were friends **Don Cherry, Bobby Hutcherson, Herbie Lewis, Eddie Moore** and **Sy Perkoff**. Talk about your local musicians! These players swung with a liquid-like looseness that projected their own enjoyment in playing and thereby enhancing the enjoyment of those assembled to listen. Although I left this event early, word is that they swung well into the night.

Friday, October 13 begins the Seventh Annual Jazz in the City Festival at locations throughout San Francisco. This eclectic mixture of music runs the gamut from *La Evolucion de la Musica Afro-Cubana* featuring among others, Carlos Santana, Chocolate Armenteros, Armando Peraza at Davies Symphony Hall to a night of Bebop at Slim's, featuring **Joe Henderson's** Big Band and the **Ed Kelly** Organ Quintet; an evening entitled East/West Fusion spotlighting the San Francisco Taiko Dojo and **Rova Saxophone Quartet** in collaboration and **Mark Izu's** Circle of Fire with **James Newton** (reported in **Coda** last year from the Asian-American Jazz Festival). One very special event during this festival is the premiere of Don Cherry's *A **Mass for All Religions*** featuring Nana Vasconcelos and Peter Apfelbaum at Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill in San Francisco. Remembering last year's concert with Pharoah Sanders and William Henderson, I know this music will be an incredible experience in acoustic sound.

Other events include a jazz cruise, a lunchtime, outdoor concert featuring the Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble and Malcolm X Elementary School Jazz Ensemble. There will also be evenings of the songs of George Gershwin and Latin Jazz/Dance at Bimbo's 365 Club, and finally the last night of the two week festival, a second anniversary celebration at the Great American Music Hall of Jazz in Flight, a nonprofit organization that has consistently presented Bay Area music in a variety of venues.

All in all, not a bad way to close out the eighties, good music and diversity of presentations, keeping the Bay Area sonically very healthy.

Vocalist Scotty Wright is to begin work soon on a movie role as Bill "Bojangles" Robinson in a biography of the late dancer/entertainer. A short tour of England and a New York appearance followed his performance at the Monterey Festival in September...Mike Abene and Bill Kirchner were in Taiwan in late August for performances at the *Second Promenade Music Festival.*

BLUES NOTES

The fourth annual King Biscuit Blues Festival was held in Helena, Arkansas on October 13/14...That same city is to be home for a museum paying tribute to the contributions of blues legend Sonny Boy Williamson. The Sonny Boy Blues Society has acquired the building where the singer used to

live for the purpose of turning it into a museum...The 10th annual Blues Music Awards Show took place in Memphis on November 5...New blues releases include Alligator recordings by Katie Webster and Tinsley Ellis and, from Delmark, a collection of archive material from Magic Sam and a newly recorded album by Professor Eddie Lusk.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Muhal Richard Abrams is to be awarded the 1990 Jazzpar Prize. It will be awarded at a concert to be held on March 31 when Abrams will conduct the Danish Radio Big Band performing his compositions and arrangements. Danish tenor saxophonist Fredrick Lundin, pianist Thomas Clausen and Swedish tenor saxophonist Joakim Milder will be among the soloists.

Dick Grove and **Rob McConnell** were in Norway in late August/early September for concert performances and radio broadcasts with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra..."Barclay A Hundred Years of Jazz" was an exhibition tracing the development and evolution of jazz which was on view in Amsterdam from August 1 to September 10...The **Phil Woods** Quintet are at the Blue Note in Tokyo December 11 to 17...**Mike Westbrook, Sun Ra, Chick Corea, John Carter** and the **Vienna Art Orchestra** were among those at the Willisau Festival in Switzerland August 31 to September 3...**Cecil Taylor** was in Berlin November 1-4 for FMP's Total Music Meeting...the third Red Sea Jazz Festival took place in Eilat, Israel August 26-29.

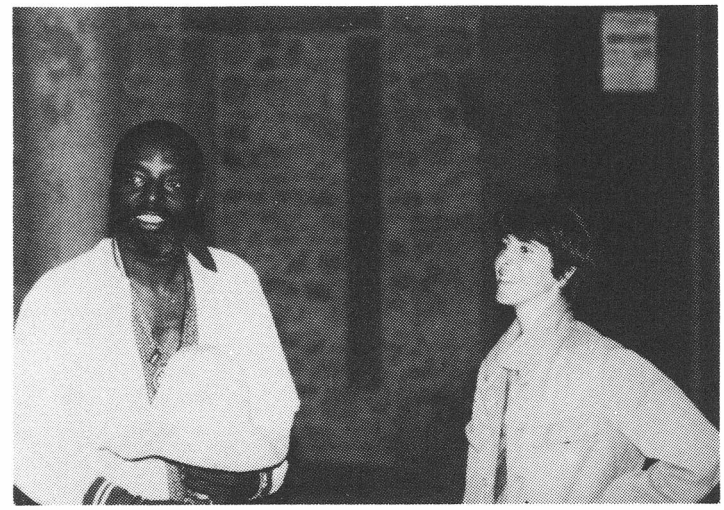
There was a major festival this past August in Sao Paulo, Brazil and we have this report from Pépé Hosiasson.

Although the **Free Jazz Festival** included performances by Cecil Taylor, one of the originators and leading exponents of "free jazz," the word FREE in this festival's name did not refer to any style, school, or concept: it was simply the brand name of the cigarette company sponsoring it! The event itself was quite eclectic: it included plain jazz, folk, pop, rock and avant-garde.

As befits the largest and most populous country in South America, the affair was rather big. Eleven "name" acts came from the USA and thirteen groups covered the vast gamut of Brazilian popular music. The Americans played both in Rio and in Sao Paulo, while the Brazilian groups were different each night in each city. The venues at both locations were similar. In Rio, the event was staged at the night club of the post Hotel Nacional and in Sao Paulo, it took place at the Palace, a hall which seats about seventeen hundred at tables where beverages are served.

The program featured acts of indisputable jazz quality. Under **Frank Foster**, the **Basie Band** has become again the superb swing machine it used to be in Count's heyday. **Max Roach** is a master drummer and a living legend. His quartet, with **Cecil Bridgewater** on trumpet, **Odean Pope** on tenor sax, and **John Snyder** on bass, played engaging music, even if it sometimes became a little dry and difficult to digest. Of course, the music of **Cecil Taylor**, who chanted, danced, played on the sides of the piano, on its top, inside, and finally on the keyboard, accompanied by two drummers and **William Parker** on bass, was even harder to digest. However it was visually and technically spectacular and, although some of the audience left the room, in Sao Paulo a hard core of enthusiastic fans claimed - and obtained - an encore!

John Scofield, abetted by **Tony Cox** on bass and **John Riley** on drums, proved that stylistically he has come a long way since his days with Miles, and that he is fast becoming one of the most articulate voices of the contemporary guitar. **Horace Silver** raided the OTB group to assemble the excellent young quintet he brought to Brazil: **Michael Mossman** was on trumpet, **Ralph Bowen** on tenor saxophone, **Willis Drummond** on drums, and **Jimmy Genus** on bass. The clear and logical lines of Silver's compositions and piano solos were enhanced by the playing of these youngsters, however, the performances were partially marred by the vocals of Andrew Bey's insipid baritone. **Branford Marsalis** came with **Kenny Kirkland** on piano, **Bob Hurst** on bass and **"Tain" Watts** on drums. As was to be expected, this all-star group played brilliantly throughout (in spite of the out of tune piano that was supplied for their Sao Paulo show).



Rafael Garrett & Zusaan Fasteau (Photograph by Albert Ciampa)

Alto saxophonist **John Zorn** appeared with a quartet of leading anti-establishment musicians (**Wayne Horvitz** on keyboards, **Bill Frisell** on guitar, **Fred Frith** on bass guitar, and **Joey Baron** on drums) and performed a program of provocative and irreverent epigrams built with rock effects. Some of these minimalist pieces, Zorn said, were based on old film and television scores.

John Lee Hooker, accompanied by a young rock group, delighted the audience singing, playing guitar, even dancing, some of the classic blues which stem from his background in rural Mississippi. British bluesman **John Mayall** shared the bill with Hooker and performed competently on harp, organ and guitar. He was, however, upstaged by his supporting guitarist, **Coco Montoya**, who, without even a particularly striking stage personality, managed nonetheless to come across on the sheer strength of his music.

Among the Brazilian groups that I managed to catch, the "jazziest" was the one led by young saxophones and flute player **Mauro Senise**, with **Hugo Fattoruso** on keyboards, **Luiz Alves** on bass, and **Robertinho Silva** on drums. The most complete and creative of the local musicians that I was privileged to hear was an artist whose music was closer to the Brazilian tradition: the sensational guitarist **Sebastiao Tapajos**, who performed in a duo format with pianist **Gilson Perazzetta**. Another impressive Brazilian performer was percussionist **Joaozinho Paraiba**, who appeared with **Alemao's** group playing music inspired in the folklore of the many different regions of Brazil.

The event also included commercial attractions whose performance had at best a remote relationship with jazz. **George Benson's**

music was more fit for musak than for a jazz festival. The romantic songs of Brazilian vocalist **Nana Caymmi** should have been performed in a nightclub and not on a jazz stage. And the performance of Brazilian guitarist **Victor Biglione's** group would have better been included in a rock festival.

In spite of some failures, the FREE JAZZ FESTIVAL 89 was reasonably well organized and run. It always started on time, intermissions were short, and its last day's program, with Mauro Senise, John Scofield, and Branford Marsalis, was musically satisfactory even for the most demanding jazz fan.

Bvhaast Records has released a new CD by the J.C. Tans Orchestra entitled ***Around The World***...Discus is a new jazz and improvised music label based in Sheffield, England. Their initial release features Mick Beck's innovative improvising group, Feet Packets. The company can be reached at 9 Broomhall Road, Sheffield S10 2DN, England...Cecil Taylor is to tour the USSR in March, 1990 with appearances in different cities with Russian musicians.

AN OBSERVATION

Stanley Dance writes regarding the well received article about Wardell Gray:

I enjoyed Mark Ladenson's *Remembering Wardell Gray* in the Aug-Sept issue (#227). We certainly don't know nearly enough about that great saxophonist, but a period partially documented on records is scanted by Mr. Ladenson, as by Gunther Schuller in **The Swing Era**.

The lament about the non-existence of records by the 1943 Hines band has become tiresomely familiar, but Gray was a part of it after Parker and Gillespie had made their exits. In fact, he was still in the band when it recorded seventeen titles for commercial labels. Some of these, like *Spooks Ball, At the El Grotto, Let's Get Started, Throwing the Switch, Trick a Track, Straight Life, Bamby* and *Blue Keys,* are first class. Besides the leader, Billy Douglas (trumpet) and Benny Green (trombone), Wardell Gray is heard to excellent advantage on several tracks, notably *Blue Keys* and *Let's Get Started.* Elsewhere he is easily distinguishable from Kermit Scott, who favoured a heavier tone and more vibrato.

Fourteen of these recordings were originally issued in the U.S. on 78s and reissued in France as an LP, Mode 9733, the label being a Vogue subsidiary. Several years ago, Don Schlitten's plans for U.S. release of a similar LP fell through unfortunately, but the music is of such artistic and historical importance that agitation for its reappearance, from whatever source, should be encouraged.

LITERATURE

The University of Illinois Press has published a new edition of Lee Collins' life story, ***Oh Didn't He Ramble,*** Bud Freeman's newest autobiographical opus (with an assist from Robert Wolf), ***Crazeology***, and the life history and selected sermons of Reverend C.L. Franklin under the title ***Give Me This Mountain***. The book was edited by Jeff Todd Titon...The Women's Press has published Val

Stanley Dance writes regarding the well received article about

under the title, ***Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This***...Oxford University Press has a new collection of Witney Balliett articles, ***Bradley, Barney and Max*** as well as James Lincoln Collier's look at ***Benny Goodman and the Swing Era***...One of the most comprehensive catalogs of jazz recordings is published on an annual basis in West Germany. The "Bielfelder Katalog Jazz 1989" is compiled by Manfred Scheffner and is available by mail for US$18.00 from Postfach 600732, 8000 Munchen 60, West Germany.

The Detroit jazz scene is covered in **Jazzscene Magazine**, 369 W. Webster, Ferndale Mi 48220 and the Southern Arts Federation, 1293 Peachtree St NE, Suite 500, Atlanta Ga 30309 has begun publication of **Jazz South**, a quarterly magazine pertaining to the music's activities in its region...Both Al Cohn and Bill Evans now have magazine-type newsletters dedicated to perpetuating their contributions to jazz. **The Note** is published by the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection, East Stroudsburg University, Music Department, East Stroudsburg, Pa 18301. **Letter From Evans** is the creation of Win Hinkle and the initial issue costs $4.00 from 2712 Cady Way, Winter Park, Fl 32792-4856...Arne Astrup has completed The Gerry Mulligan Discography and it will cost US$23.50 from Bidstrup Discographical Publishing Co., 15 Runebergs Alle, DK-2860 Soeborg, Denmark.

JAM is the name of Brazil's first publication devoted to jazz and blues. The initial issue (24 pages) appeared in August and is available from R. Mainique, 172-Casa 11, Vila Manana-SP, Sao Paulo, CEP 04037, Brazil..

Yugoslavia's Ljubljana Jazz Festival has published a commemorative book documenting the 30 years of festivals in that city. It outlines the performers for each year as well as including many photographs. It's possible that copies of this booklet may still be available from Cankaroev Dom, Kidricev park 1, 6100 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

RECORDINGS

New Bluebird reissues include titles by Bennie Moten, Joe Morello, Louis Armstrong (1930s big band) and a swing compilation by Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter and Ben Webster. Much of the material on this latter collection is already available on other Bluebird reissues...There's nothing new in the five volume retrospective series of Blue Note recordings celebrating 50 years of the label's activities. Perhaps it will introduce new listeners to the music. New Blue Note CD reissues include Milt Jackson and Thelonious Monk compilations as well as Jazz West recordings by Paul Chambers, Kenny Drew and Lawrence Marable.

Cadence Jazz Records Fall releases on vinyl include **She's Back** by The Heroines, a post-bop trio of Jan Labate, Victoria Trent and Sybil Glebow; William Hooker's ***The Colour Circle;*** duet performances by Paul Flaherty and Randy Colbourne in ***Endangered Species***; Errol Parker's solo piano in ***Compelling Forces*** and tenor saxophonist Ellery Eskelin's ***Setting The Standard***...Summer releases on Concord included notable recordings by Howard Alden, Ruby Braff, Ed Bickert, Scott Hamilton, Marvin Smitty Smith and Jim Hall.

DRG has issued a new recording by Anita O'Day called ***In A Mellow Tone***...New ECM material is available by Keith Jarrett (***Personal Mountains***), Terje Rypdal (***The Singles Collections***), Ralph Towner (***City of Eyes***), and John Abercrombie (***Trio*** with Marc Johnson, Peter Erskine)...New Enja/Tutu releases are ***Art of the Duo*** with Jim Pepper/Mal Waldron, and Simon Nabatov's ***Nabatov, String Gang & Percussion***.

There are many new releases by Fantasy of material from Pablo, Prestige, Riverside and Contemporary in their OJC and related CD series. Two newly minted "from the vault" issues on Pablo are a 1969 London JATP date and a 1972 concert performance by Joe Turner with the Count Basie band. The resurrected Howard Rumsey Lighthouse All Stars has a new session on Contemporary. You'll also be seeing new recordings by Carol Sloane, Art Farmer, Frank Morgan and Tom Harrell.

The Complete Galaxy Recordings of Art Pepper is a 16 CD only set which contains 53 selections never previously issued. It documents the saxophonist's 1978-1982 affiliation with Galaxy. CD reissues of blues twofers include material by Jimmy Witherspoon, Memphis Slim, Lightnin' Hopkins and McGhee and Terry. Fantasy has signed organist Jimmy Smith while Tommy Flanagan will make an appearance on Sonny Rollins' next Milestone album. Fantasy also distribute Landmark Records and their newest release showcases young tenor saxophonist Ralph Moore and the final statements by Charlie Rouse from a Thelonious Monk Birthday concert in San Francisco.

Musicmasters has new material by Benny Carter (this time with an all saxophone ensemble) and a Dick Hyman-led group from his 92nd Street Y series of concerts. Buddy Tate, Waren Vache, Joe Wilder and Urbie Green share the spotlight in ***The Kingdom of Swing & The Public of Oop Bop Sh'Bam***.

Polygram has been busy making available large portions of the ECM catalog in the US so you might have missed the Emarcy releases of the Helen Merrill/Ron Carter ***Duets*** and John Lewis' ***Midnight in Paris***. There are new Verve recordings from a series of concerts at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles which have a broad mix of artists. Geri Allen's first date for Verve is a trio outing called ***Twilight***.

Stash Records has issued two CD volumes of Charlie Parker's classic Dial recordings. All the original master takes are included as well as some additional material. From the same company there is a new recording by the Sherrie Maricle-John Mastrianni Quintet with Peter Appleyard, Roger Kellaway and Michael Moore.

Art Pepper

Stomp Off Records has ready ten new recordings which are highlighted by previously unissued Turk Murphy material, a solo piano recital by Ray Smith and small group sessions by Chicago Rhythm, the High Society Jazz Band and Bent Persson's London Stompers... Telarc International is making a fresh bid to build a jazz catalog. Its initial release is a newly recorded trio date by André Previn with Ray Brown and Joe Pass. This session picks up from where Previn left off with Contemporary 30 years ago...WEA is marketing the second set of five CDs of the Private Recordings of Duke Ellington. If anything they are even more exciting than the first collection.

Independent productions continue to make an impact on the jazz scene. New from AsianImprov is Glenn Horiuchi's ***Manzanar Voices***...BlastFirst Records has issued Sun Ra's ***Out There A Minute***. It's a collection of rare and unreleased material from the sixties...Discover Systems (7001 Discovery Blvd., Dublin, Ohio 43017) has issued a recording of Stephane Grappelli under the title of ***How Can You Miss*** on the Rushmore label...Empathy has issued a CD of Chuck Wayne and Warren Chiasson called ***Point-Counterpoint***...The Mel Brown Sextet's bebop band won the Hennessey Jazz Search and have now issued a sampling of their music (from the Portland Oregon area) on Gleeful Records called ***Gordon Bleu***. City Hall distribute the record and the band can be reached at 321 NE 33rd Ave., Portland Or 97212...The University of Northern Colorado Jazz Lab Band has released a CD of their music on NightLife Records, P.O. Box 11267, Glendale, Ca 91206-7267.

The Smithsonian Institution has issued a six lp (or 4 CD) overview of **Jazz Piano** which spans the music from Jelly Roll Morton to Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock. An illustrated booklet comes with the recordings (68 different selections) and the set is available from the Smithsonian for$54.96 plus $4.76 for postage (within the US) from Smithsonian Recordings, Department JP, P.O. Box 23345 Washington, DC 20026...Sovereign Records (1697 Broadway, Suite 903, New York, NY 10019) is releasing on CD and cassette a recording of the Lew Anderson Big Band under the title, **Feelin' Good, Yeah**.

Theresa Records newest release is **Feelin' Good** by Joe Bonner...The Bopera House's third recordings has just come out on VSOP Records. This hard bop group from New York co-led by trumpeter John Marshall and pianist Tardo Hammer achieved notoriety after being sued by the Metropolitan Opera, who resented the group using the name in a jazz context.

OBITUARIES

Will Bradley died July 15. He was 78...Record producer and long time friend of jazz Nesuhi Ertegun died July 15 in New York following cancer surgery. He was 71...Trombonist Jimmy Buxton died June 28 in New York...Bull Moose Jackson died July 31 in Cleveland...Fats Waller Jr died July 15 in Jamaica, NY at the age of 61...Donald Raphael Garrett died August 14. He was 57...Tenor saxophonist Bill Barron died in September in New York.

DEADLINES

The deadline for the next issue of Coda for all materials, including advertising, is December 15, 1989.

All writers who have contributed to Coda in the past 12 months are invited to submit their list of the year's ten best records for Issue 230. (Deadline December 30, 1989).

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THELONIOUS MONK: STRAIGHT NO CHASER

A DOCUMENTARY FEATURE MOVIE PRODUCED BY CHARLOTTE ZWERIN AND BRUCE RICKER

Too few movies capture the intangible essence of jazz. They tend to be artificial and too formally structured to reflect the ever changing persona of the music.

Straight No Chaser is an exception. At its core it draws upon television footage from 1967 when Monk's quartet and Octet were touring Europe. The same crew also filmed the pianist/composer in a variety of settings in New York. Supplementing this material are clips from other films and television programs along with filmed interviews made especially for the film in the years since Monk's death.

There's an unceasing flow to the movie as it follows Monk's path from location to location in a cascade of images which mirror the restless beauty of Monk's music. Within the frames of the film we get to hear (and see) portions of many of Monk's famous compositions. The ever changing scenario prevents us from becoming bored with the performances. Almost without exception, we only hear extracts of the tunes, but somehow it seems as though we've experienced the entire performance.

Monk's highly charismatic presence dominates the entire film. It's fascinating to be able to see him in action at such close range. The way in which he creates his solos, his technical skills at the keyboard and the intensity and emotional drive surrounding everything he plays seep you up and into his music.

We hear Monk in action at the Village Vanguard, where he manages to extract marvellous sound from the club's somewhat battered instrument, as well as in various European locations. We hear the polished familiarity of the quartet (Charlie Rouse, John Ore, Ben Riley) as well as the octet struggling to find cohesion in Monk's orchestrations. The composer himself seems oblivious to the difficulties of his sidemen. He simply expects it to resolve itself.

Monk may have been eccentric but there's a remarkable clarity to his music and when he chooses he can be as erudite as the next person. This film also shows us a man whose sense of humour is highly tuned.

As in **Round Midnight**, we witness the peculiar role still forced upon the jazz musician at that time. Harry Colomby, Monk's manager, may well have believed the view, so often espoused by the bebop generation, when says of Monk, "He saw himself as modern. He liked to use the word "modern." A modern jazz player. Blacks who were listening to that music saw an expression of independence and pride and strength. Thelonious Monk just represented that. The earliest example of the black revolution, of a black uprising in a sense, was in music, was in the bebop period. Where the musicians weren't obviously trying to please an audience but they were playing their music their way, it was a real independent expression."

And yet, Monk had to have a white manager, a white record producer (Teo Macero) and needed **Time** Magazine to popularize his music. The film captures Macero in action in the recording studio with Monk. Their relationship is far from perfect. At one point, Monk says, "Why nobody just don't want to do what I ask them to do?"

Monk and his peers found a way (a different one perhaps) to function within the white business society, just as James P. Johnson, Duke Ellington, Johnny Dodds and many others did in earlier times. In fact, each generation helped pave the way for change in the next one and it is simplistic to believe that any one generation has had a stranglehold on the seriousness of its creations. Everyone wanted and was seeking for dignity, respect and recognition. As Monk says in the film about his music, "I want it to be easy as possible so people can dig it, you know. All my songs are like that."

Straight No Chaser will help many people become comfortable with his songs just as more people understand Picasso after seeing his "work in progress" documentary from 1956 and can relate better to Cecil Taylor after seeing **Imagine The Sound.**

Monk had to carry the weight of "The Genius of Modern Music" in the same way that Ornette Coleman has had to live with "The Shape of Jazz to Come," and while this film makes us amply aware that we are, indeed, in the presence of a genius, it also draws us into the warm humanity of Monk as well as experiencing ninety minutes of his wonderful music.
- John Norris

Photograph by Bill Smith

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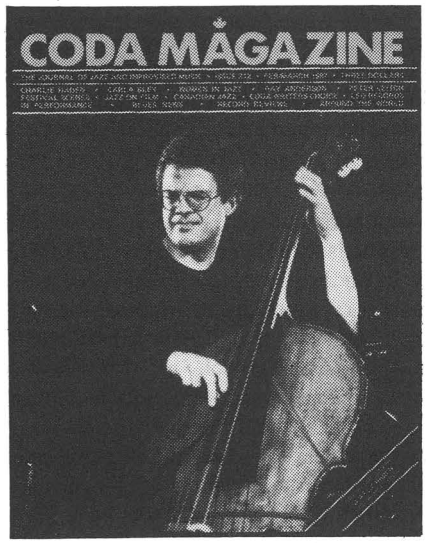

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OUT OF THE PAST AND INTO THE PRESENT

As much as jazz is an aesthetic pursuit, it is equally a sociological experience for every performer. Be it in small interactive units or in larger settings, the "music" is defined as being the sum of the parts rather than their separation into distinct voices. In other words, it is what happens "in between" the participants that determines the level of interest in a performance, be it emotional, restrained, even lacklustre, or, in those special moments, "inspired." More importantly, achieving clarity is always an important concern, but since the paths to that goal never cease to expand, that very concept of clarity is essentially a subjective one, hence the notion of creativity.

Of course, as the numbers increase in a musical situation, the complexities of those "in-betweens" also increase for the listener. Infallibly, someone in the group takes charge of it, not only by leading it, but also in organizing the material in his capacity as a composer or arranger. Even though large improvising units (or collectives) have attempted to focus their efforts through entirely democratic means (or "anarchic" according to one's perspective), there always is one personality who still acts as a catalyst: as a case in point, the **Globe Unity Orchestra** has asserted itself in that manner, yet **Alexander von Schlippenbach** remains the figurehead of that ensemble, both as a leader and arranger of its (mainly) orchestral sketches. Interestingly enough, he is now busy with another band, the Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, for whom he does far more writing than in the GUO days.

As a music of many, focused by the few, "orchestral jazz" has been equated with "big bands" and the bigger they are, the more precise the writing becomes. Yet, that first term also includes smaller groups too, such as mid-size combos (sextets being a baseline here), small orchestras (from 9 to 13) and the customary big band (14 and more). In the remainder of this piece, some of the characteristics of each of these sub-categories will be discussed in relation to a selection of CD releases, featuring both old and new material.

Out of the past come three reissues on the once venerable **Impulse** label. (And don't we all remember those innovative gatefolds emblazoned with "The New Wave of Jazz is on..." at the back! But let us not wax nostalgic...) Of the early vintages, two titles have now resurfaced on CD, these being **John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* (formerly A-6** for **volume 1** and **9273** for its **second volume** of alternate takes, now combined on **MCAD 42001, 67:32)** and **Gil Evans'** ***Into the Hot*** **(A-9** originally, now **MCAD 39104, 41:34)**.

The first of these two sessions marked the debut recording for the saxophonist on that newly created label, circa 1960. And what an auspicious beginning it was fronting a medium to large size orchestras as the featured soloist was a radical departure for him, who had produced a series of albums as the leader of his then new, but soon to be legendary, quartet. But this was no isolated attempt on his part either, since he had already tried his hand at larger formats as on **Prestige 7105**. More revealing, though, is the fact that his last **Atlantic** date (***Ole***) was a septet session with two bassists, and it was realized two days after the recording of some of the material for the ***Africa*** album.

As an orchestral work, the Impulse date belongs to the category of the "one-opposite-the-many," in that the band acts as a mere backdrop for the headliner. Such a juxtaposition was (and still is) most commonplace for singers, but any interaction between the two is rather minimal because of the usual confinement of the ensemble to precise annotations. So, inasmuch as the lead performer could wanter at will, the accompanists had to stick to the letter of the arrangement, leaving them little or no leeway at all in the interpretation of their parts. Overall, this Coltrane session fits those terms. When listening to **Eric Dolphy's** charts (the only ones ever recorded for a large group), they are mainly limited to chord tones, as evidenced by the sostenutos or the customary punches to underline some of the climaxes during a solo. However, the title cut offers more than the other tracks because it establishes a climate as suggested by the various imitative jungle sounds. Yet, it would not be proper to raise them to the level of Ellington's unique contributions in that domain. Even though Coltrane, the soloist, shines throughout, there is an obvious period feel to the music, albeit a very nice one.

Another point of interest to this release is the booklet which not only contains all of the original liners, but also reveals a number of discographical discrepancies. While *Song of the Underground Railroad* and *Greensleeves* were cut on May 23, *Africa* and *Blues Minor* stem from a separate date which took place on either June 4 (according to A-6) or June 7 (as in 9273). More problematic is the personnel: while the latter volume lists 4 French horn players, 2 reed players, a tuba player and three bassists (Art Davis and Jimmy Garrison as well as Reggie Workman), the original mentions only Dolphy on reeds, two trombonists and trumpeters rather than one of each, no French hornists and, as a second bassist to Workman, Paul Chambers! No doubt about it, discographers will have a field day with this one!

Much clearer on that account is the **Gil Evans** package, but it too has its side story. Most of us have heard Amiri Baraka's quip that the "leader" was merely serving the sandwiches in the studio, while two very different groups were doing all of the work. The truth of the matter was that Evans was seeking a way out of his two-record contract with the company, having produced ***Out of the Cool*** **(A-4)** a year previously, so he found his way out of the fold by lending his name as a "promoter" of two composer-performers who, according to Down Beat terminology, were then TDWR (Talent Deserving Wider Recognition).

When I purchased my vinyl copy some 15 years ago, I was struck by the odd pairing of **Johnny Carisi** and **Cecil Taylor** under one cover. Over the years, this mismatch only seems to have been magnified: on the one hand, the slick orchestrations of the trumpeter-cum-Hollywood composer sound like jaded period pieces, while, on the other, the rough-and-tumble approach of the pianist are significant links within the black American tradition. The gruff solos of a young **Archie Shepp** and the rather tame drumming of **Jimmy Murray** (in his pre-'Sunny' days) still rumble with a sense of urgency. In the ensuing years, we can now put this date in perspective by saying that he was here on the brink of a breakthrough which was to happen in his Copenhagen appearance the following year. Only after his two more controlled sides for Blue Note was he set to break loose into his maelstrom performances of the late sixties and onwards. As for this disc, it is an important artifact for the Taylor part, while being a mere museum piece for Carisi and friends.

As Coltrane was shaking the foundations of jazz in the sixties, **Sonny Rollins** was charting an erratic course, disappearing and resurfacing at period intervals. After his association with RCA, after his retreat to the "bridge" so to speak, he too was lured to **Impulse** in 1965. But, unlike Trane, his association with that label was an unhappy one, even though the three albums produced at that time are significant items in his work, especially when one compares them to his present day releases.

Coincidentally, he also recorded an album with orchestra, that one being the soundtrack for the movie, ***Alfie*** **(MCAD-39107 33:17)**.

Now, all film scores that contain some form of jazz remain problematical because of the conflicting demands of the visual and aural media. As a rule, the latter has to act as an adjuvant of the former, hence the necessity for a measure of restraint. After all, the music cannot overtake the image, as that would defeat the very purpose of the project, i.e., to make a film. Very rare then are the occasions when the music stands by itself and when it does, it usually happens because of an unusually talented composer or else a gifted performer, Sonny Rollins being a good example.

From the opening theme, he establishes immediately his mastery, spinning an unusually long solo (6 minutes) for a soundtrack. For years, this has been one of my favourite pieces, because it remains a fine example of losing oneself in the music, yet never getting lost. As for the orchestra, **Oliver Nelson's** charts are like shells which envelop Rollins' excursions, and of the remaining sidemen, only pianist **Roger Kellaway** and guitarist **Kenny Burrell** dabble into some ad-libs. Still, Sonny dwarfs them all with his slashes and whirls, which almost become reckless as in his shorter solo during the reprise of theme in the film's finale. However good the music may be, one will surely think twice before picking up this disc, the main reason being its very short duration. And those who have seen the film will tell you that there is more music in it that is not included in the package, so why not have included some of those missing bits to fill up this half used surface? In any event, all Impulse reissues have no extra takes or bonus cuts, so what you first heard on LP is what you get on CD. Period.

As mentioned earlier, orchestral music implies a wider array of group sizes than just the usual big band. Whatever the numbers may be, its most interesting aspect is the way in which all of voices are meshed together. In the jazz idiom, ensemble playing offers a wide range of approaches, delineated at one extreme by a very calculated procedure (as in thoroughly annotated and precisely interpreted charts) while taking the form of very schematically designed material at the other.

Given the strength of today's mainstream, one encounters countless rereadings of those acquired concepts and because they have been assimilated and defined through repeated interpretation, they are now codified, which draws them closer to the calculated procedure strategy. As an example of this, the recently formed octet **Superblue** has produced such an "update" of the hard bop tradition. **(Blue Note CDP 7932-46:56)**. Thanks to the transcription skills of trumpeter **Don Sickler** ("Mr. Ears"), this medium size combo plays a mix of trademark pieces from the label's glory days (**Tina Brooks's** *Open Sesame*, **Golson's** *I Remember Clifford*, **Mobley's** *M&M*) one standard (*Summertime* - one more time!), a **Curtis Fuller** original, *Time Off*, and three originals for the date. With a topnotch lineup in tow, including stalwarts **Bobby Watson, Mulgrew Miller, Billy Pierce** and promising newcomers trumpeter **Roy Hargrove**, trombonist **Frank Lacy** and bassist **Bob Hurst**, one would expect a high quality outing. For all of the good blowing and all of the well-polished charts, there is still a stylistic uniformity, if not conformity to this recording. Listening to the opening number (the Brooks tune), one will surely enjoy the sparkle of the group and its flawless execution, but as one goes from one track to the next, the same level is maintained, showing a lack of variety or surprises overall. Mind you, the music has no pretensions, but the material is too well moulded into one groove. But then again, such a problem is inherent to all sessions where all of the material is composed and or arranged by one person.

As the term "orchestral music" can be stretched to include medium size combos, big bands are its main focus. Even for such larger groups, there are many nuances with regards to the methods of organization, as specified above. Two recordings which clearly give prominence to the written also have other points in common, the most important one being the inclusion of a well-known musician as a guest soloist. The first of these is the 16 piece **Jazz Garden Big Band**, led by trombonist **Dave Eshelman**, who also acts as arranger and composer of most of the material. In ***Deep Voices*** **(Sea Breeze CDSB-2039-2 63:46)**, the program includes 9 originals and two standards, which feature the guest, tenor saxophonist **Joe Henderson**. By his own account, he was whisked off to the studio in Menlo Park right after returning home from one of his many tours in Japan, which most likely explains his incidental and rather workmanlike contribution to the final product. Once again, this stylistic conformity reappears because all of the arrangements are penned by the leader. Because of his very tidy orchestrations, every cut is too well confined and no soloist really seems willing to explore or take any chances with the material. The title cut, incidentally, is a two-part suite based on humpback whale songs, which were slowed down and transposed for different combinations of instruments. As interesting an idea as it is, it is nowhere similar to **Charlie Haden's** dramatic imitations on his bass, but then again, one does

John Coltrane (Photograph by Joe Alper)

BY MARC CHENARD

not need to copy faithfully the sounds of nature to make a personal statement. But it would be rather difficult to make the connection were it not for the explanation given in the liner notes. In passing, three cuts from the band's first album, issued as **Jazz Mind**, some five or six years ago, round off this CD, a somewhat dubious procedure too often used to fill up the remaining space available on these discs.

From San Francisco, we leap back East to my own home base, Montreal, Canada. For the second disc, the **McGill Jazz Ensemble** has chosen another soloist of distinction, soprano saxophonist **Dave Liebman**. Unlike Henderson's incidental participation, Liebman is prominently featured here playing on four of the eight cuts and composing three of them, including the title track of the set, ***Day & Nite*** **(McGill Records 750033-2 54:36)**. On one level, this session is reminiscent of the featured performer with orchestral backup, but the remaining cuts still give us the chance to hear these 19 aspiring jazzmen. And since this is a University orchestra, it would not really be fair to judge these musicians according to the more demanding standards we apply to professionals. However, the variety of the repertoire, stemming from different arrangers, as well as the sharp contributions of the guest give it as much substance as variety. In fact, Liebman's own piece *Omission by Fault*, is a more abstract sound piece, closer to the idiom of contemporary music, and that in itself is quite unusual for the conservative norms which characterize such student jazz orchestras. As in the Eshelman session, this band also chooses Ellington's *Sentimental Mood* as a vehicle for the headliner, who, in this case, chooses to stretch it out of its balladic mood. As a footnote, the **MJE** participated in a University Jazz Band competition in the US and though they finished first with a 99% grade, they did not receive first prize because they were not an American band! Quite obviously Free Trade has not reached the jazz arena yet...

As we move on now towards the other end of the spectrum, the line between spontaneity and preparedness becomes hazier. While the writing takes on a more schematic character, more room seems to be allotted to the individuals to either improvise over the structures or to solo at greater length. One now has the impression that the composer distributes the parts to each musician, instructing them to play around with them, rather than just playing them. In that case, the material develops by itself during the rehearsal or recording stages, rather than being set in advance on paper. All of this leads to much more unpredictable results, whereby success or failure are dependent on the energies of all participants. As much as the 'written' approach gives the music a context by means of its charts, the more 'schematic' one uses the material as a pretext for a more situational type of music making.

All of this discussion brings us to a couple of examples, the first one being the new recording of **Julius Hemphill**. Simply titled ***Julius Hemphill Big Band*** **(Elektra Musician 9 6083-2 60:39)**, this is the first release for the saxophonist as leader of a big band, 16 strong to be precise. All of the previous criteria apply here, and in the solo department, all but three make their own statements. With only one track lasting less than 8 minutes, that one being a feature for the leader, the remaining 5 cuts average about four soloists per tune. Above all, it is the energy that counts here and the orchestral parts smoulder with a level of pent up emotion that pours out when the soloists step forth. As a result, the music has a greater immediacy and given its reliance on the moment, there is a share of hits and misses throughout. On Hemphill's solo spot *(Elora)*, he plays in a fluid and lyrical way , one of many hits on that disc. In contrast, though, there is one major miss, over 18 minutes long in fact, that being *Drunk On God*. Based on a rather lengthy semi-mystical poem by **K. Curtis Lyle**, the music meanders aimlessly throughout the recitation and none of the five soloists seem to give it a sense of purpose. Unfortunately, this lengthy journey seems to spoil the last cut too, Bordertown, where the altoist and guitarist **Bill Frisell** do the blowing. So, the choice is yours: either you go for the first 32 minutes and bear the next 28, or you pass on this one, if you think the odds aren't good enough. Notwithstanding that, this still is today's music and, for all its imperfections, its vitality surely makes it a worthwhile item to listen to.

In my previous big band piece (Issue 218), I was taken by the first album of the ***Either Orchestra*** **(Dial E)**. Lo and behold, this twelve man outfit from Cambridge Mass. is back again with a CD package **(*Radium* - Accurate Records AC 3232 69:12)**. All in one, there is Mingus' *Moaning*, with an extended baritone sax intro, sandwiched between two originals by the band's (nominal) leader, tenor saxophonist **Russ Gershon**. Of the other cuts, **Roscoe Mitchell's** *Odwallah* is treated seriously (no perceptible jokes here), while **Monk's** *Nutty* sounds even crazier when coupled with... *Ode to Billy*

Joe (of all things...). Rounding out the package are two more Gershon originals as well as a lengthy treatment of *Willow Weep For Me*, throttled out at the end by guitarist **John Dirac's** neo-Hendrix licks. Looking at their very serious faces on the group portrait only seems to confirm their put on of sorts, and a very clever one at that. To carry one's humour over with little or no visual theatrics is not that easy, but they manage the trick quite well. As for solos, no one musician steals the show, so their best asset remains that underlying sense of mocking seriousness, and that is always welcome while in the pursuit of "higher" or more "creative" forms of artistic expressions.

More than ever, jazz and its extension, loosely known as "improvised music," are internationally recognized phenomena, performed in almost every corner of the world. As much as jazz has clung to its American roots, it has grown far beyond its cultural bonds. The European influence, for instance, can be traced back to its earliest days, for jazz was the meeting point of a non-western folklore and an imported harmonic tradition. Nowadays, the concept of improvisation has opened up much new ground over there and the historically recent evolution of free music has been central to its own aesthetic. More recently, there has been a confluence between the myriad of compositional techniques borne out of contemporary music and the constantly alluring challenge of improvisation. Such is what we see now in this approach of "composing with holes." As the American tradition relies more heavily on cyclical harmonic patterns, whereby the holes are blocked by a canvas on which the soloist can "paint," the "post-free" European scene seems to leave the hole completely open to the improviser's imagination. Put in other words, the musician has a choice between "painting" his own melodies or even "sculpting" sound textures, independent of any harmonic requirements.

To that effect, the last two items in this survey give much credence to these observations. Both from Holland, a country which seems to have acquired a reputation as a breeding ground for composers, the following discs are quite representative of the European tangent of orchestral music, be it "jazz" or "improvisational." ***St-Juttemis Live*** **(vpro Productions KCD 1988.17 47:07)** is one of those releases that, unfortunately, will be overlooked, because it has been conceived as a product for a local market (and the liner notes, all in Dutch, are sufficient to prove my point). This is in fact a special issue that commemorates the premiere of pianist **Leo Cuypers'** *Zeelandsuite* in 1977. To that effect, a series of artistic events were organized in some of the country's provinces, winding up with a three part concert featuring a solo set by its composer, then a performance by this group and, finally, the two together. The music chosen here was culled from the latter two parts of that evening. Leading this small band is soprano saxophonist **Dies le Duc**, who also wrote all of the music. All five pieces are interestingly devised, as they combine a strong rhythmical drive and distinctive sound textures provided by a five saxophone section, complemented by a trombone, a female tuba player (who also vocalizes) and a percussionist. All in all, this group's music allies discipline and originality, thus proving the point that creativity need not necessarily be radical to be convincing.

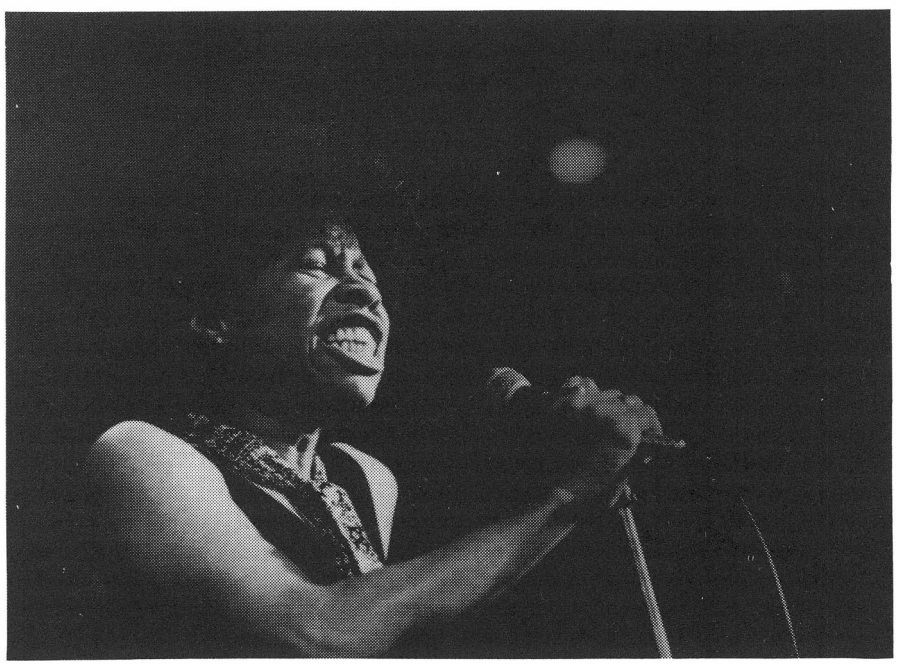
Last, but certainly not least, is this long-talked about **Herbie Nichols Orchestra** project led by the **ICP's** guru par excellence, pianist **Misha Mengelberg.** **(*Two Programs* ICP 026 72:23)**. This is really a double treat, because we have six pieces of Monk and seven of Nichols. Recorded at different locations, these are excerpts from concerts given all over Europe between 1983 and 1986. Without a doubt, this is a masterful piece of work, the main reason being the leader's brilliant orchestrations of the material at hand. Fusing European and American traditions seamlessly, he brings out all the edges of the tunes, constantly redistributing the parts to his musicians in always surprising combinations. With soloists like **Steve Lacy** (on the Nichols part only), **George Lewis, Mengelberg** of course, **Paul Termos** and **Sean Bergin** (only to name a few), it is hard to go wrong.

To my ears at least, this recording is even more interesting than the two quintet outings on ***Soul Note (Change of Season*** and ***Regeneration)***, because the larger ensemble allows Mengelberg to explore hitherto untapped dimensions in those melodic and harmonic lines. Repeated listenings will always bring out new details and subtleties, just as it was with many of those classic Gil Evans recordings. By the way, more material from that band is to be found as part of a set of four vinyl records issued by the Transcription Service of Radio Netherlands. Alas! It is not available commercially, but for radio broadcast only. What a shame it is to keep such musical pearls out of the public's reach. Please, offer us a volume two, asap.

SINGERS AND SONGS

A lot of the most avid jazz fans are very leery about admitting the viability of jazz singing. While they may make the admission that yes, Billie Holiday is a major jazz artist, that Bessie Smith was a supreme blues singer, that Satchmo raised scatting to an almost instrumental peak, that Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald are the prime singers in modern jazz, all but a minority will not venture any further into the treacherous critical currents flowing around the art of jazz singing.

It's probably because much of what passes for jazz singing smacks of commercialism and because many of the songs appear to them to be trite. Then there's the question of improvisation, though the great masters of instrumental melodic jazz usually claim that knowing the words of a song is important to them. **Dexter Gordon** often goes to the trouble of quoting the lyrics of ballads he plays and most musicians refer to the art of soloing as "telling a story."



So why can't we apply our critical judgements to jazz singing? The problems involved go beyond commercialism into fad and fashion and popularity, and there's the holding-on to the belief in the crassness of the so-called "thrushes" in the big band era, and, let's face it, many of them were not good singers of anything.

How can you include in the realm of jazz singers who have reached some popular fame, someone like **Mel Torme**, for instance? Torme has often been lumped into that crooning world of the late 40s and early 50s and yet he never quite divorced himself from jazz: there were those great collaborations with Marty Paich (recently reunited) and now in his Concord albums he has shown a remarkable affinity for the real elements of jazz. ***A Vintage Year*** **(Concord CJ-341)**, his collaboration with **George Shearing**, does veer towards a more pop conception but it's still an enjoyable album. It contains some cutesy moments and a medley that has some odd humour but doesn't let Torme deal with the songs. On the other hand, Torme has his moments, especially on the ballads: *Out Of This World* has an eerily suspenseful quality with the singer poised above spacious piano chording, making the most of his occasional bending of the melody. *Midnight Sun* also gets a melodic rendition. In both of these Torme is like a Stan Getz or a Dexter Gordon, paying attention to the melody accurately yet accomplishing a jazz feel by a concentration on sound, lingering around and stretching out some notes without losing the song. Shearing has two splendid moments on his own, insisting on his own piano sound, his special way with harmony. The final item raises that question about the quality of song. In spite of Torme's protestations, the lyrics of *Little Man, You've Had A Busy Day* are corny and overly sentimental, yet the melody has lovely falling chord changes that Shearing makes the most of and Torme takes both words and music seriously. Again there's that emphasis on sound, together with the occasional liberty without losing the melody, a clever use of hesitation and the beat, and witty interjections by Shearing with his use of another rather sentimental piece, McDowell's *To A Wild Rose.*

Torme has often acknowledged his admiration for **Ella Fitzgerald**. Ella has had an illustrious career in jazz, perhaps too long. I have found her singing over the last fifteen years or so has been at best uneven, at worst indifferent, relying on mannerisms and irrelevant novelties. But ***Ella In Rome: The Birthday Concert*** **(Verve 835 454)** catches her in top form in 1958. Almost everything she did around that year and through the 60s represents her peak. She opens with an exuberant version of *St. Louis Blues,* pushed into high speed with her patented swinging scat, reaching into held notes set against fast articulate jazzing. Her ballads are very instrumental in approach, that is, her voice is like a fine jazz musician's horn musing around the melody, the tune still in place, subtly charged, best delayed occasionally, with an alternation between sweetness and full-throated openness in the singing. Throughout, her accompanying trio, especially **Lou Levy**, prods, lays back to allow Ella to swoop and dally and unleash her downright infectious swing and stroll. Levy is adept at picking up mood and bounce in Ella's treatments.

She excels in those mid-tempo lopes riding on the solid bass of **Max Bennett** and **Gus Johnson's** exemplary on-the-spot drumming. *That Old Black Magic* avoids the usual dramatic approach: its understatement, its marvellous rhythmic looseness makes its own dramatic point. The same can be said of her version of *Just One Of Those Things.* In fact, the whole performance is relaxed without ever letting the mood flag: bounce, lilt, good humour, nothing milked too long, this is prime Ella.

Carmen McRae's career in a sense has developed in a dramatically opposite direction. Her singing over the last twenty years has generally been superb and continually improving. The title of her latest album, ***Live At***

Betty Carter (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

Birdland West: Fine And Mellow **(Concord Cj-342)** evokes the image of Lady Day, and McRae has always acknowledged that presence in her singing. But to me where she's been heading in the last decade is back into the all-encompassing ambience of Bessie Smith, and of course Billie Holiday always said her idea of singing came out of Bessie.

Carmen McRae's voice has taken on the authoritative richness of Bessie, the bluesiness implicit, though like Holiday she rarely sings the blues. She shows she can sing the blues here with her version of the title song. She has that earthy directness that can move around the melody easily, even drifting into lighter tones. She's very comfortable with all manner of songs: she sings a Bessie song, *My Handy Man*, gives real emotional depth to *These Foolish Things*, using some seldom-heard lyrics and lets loose the "truth" as she says introducing *Black And Blue*, then struts her stuff on Just *One More Chance*. She is in such fine fettle here that she leaves space for some hard blowing from **Red Holloway's** tenor, **Jack McDuff's** gutbucket funkiness on organ and the best guitar work I've ever heard from **Phil Upchurch.**

These are commanding and dynamic vocals, tough and solid, yet sensitive, melodic with her occasional "talking through" parts of the songs, in control, stopping this side of mannerism. In comparison with Ella, Carmen McRae comes across in more starkly dramatic terms, with more depth, more insight into the lyrics, though she can't come through with that fleet and light-textured floating swing that Ella produces. Still, this album, together with Ella's, is the pick of the bunch here.

Betty Carter is a singer whose reputation stands up there now with both Ella and McRae and yet she has had an extraordinary zigzag career, a vocalist whose albums some fifteen years ago were extremely difficult to find even though one kept coming across criticism that rated her very highly. I remember hearing her in a Detroit club about a year before she broke through to a wider audience: there were about five of us there to listen. In talking with her then, I discovered she was very bitter about her lack of recognition and about the rotten deals she had had with record companies. Then she issued some albums on her own label, and then she was suddenly rediscovered.

And now she's riding high. The performance on ***Look What I Got*** **(Verve 835 661)** is a typical example of her present singing. It concentrates mostly on little known songs, three of them her own. There's that wandering quality that floats and swoops around the melody, stretching the lines so that the song sounds oblique in structure. And further, she takes off into her own patented scat. At times this unique style veers into mannerism, the notes smeared and flattened excessively, the vowels elongated, the melody lost in bent swirls and out of focus phrasing. It's all very clever but too often it is the cleverness and not the feeling that comes across. And her articulation sometimes makes her sound coyly erotic (if that contradiction makes any sense).

But it's still true that she slots in and around her fine accompanying musicians (especially good are pianist **Benny Green** and **Don Braden** on tenor) so that she is confident in approaching the songs in this extensively improvisatory manner, pushing and prodding around, convincing when she hits stride. Her ballads tend to amble around, finishing with rhapsodic out of tempo cadenzas. Her version of *Imagination* becomes so loose as to sound eccentric. And on this album there's not much of that unerring straight ahead swing that she can unleash - bits of the scatting reach to this.

I've been hard on her singing here because when I set this album against her other albums, they contain more of the real essence of her jazz singing. In fact, some of those older albums made just before her re-emergence sound better to me. That performance I heard in Detroit I remember as very fine and an album on Roulette catches her like that, with the superb **John Hicks** on piano. With Hicks she turns the unlikely *Wagon Wheels* into an amazing vehicle, and there's certainly nothing like that on this album.

Esther Phillips was more well-known for her r & b and soul side but she did some jazz singing. ***Confessin' The Blues*** **(Atlantic 90670)**, a reissue on the **Jazzlore** series, has an apt title as she concentrates on the blues, accompanied by a big band in 1966 on Side one and by a rhythm section with pianist **Jack 'Wilson** on Side two in a live performance from 1970.

She is on the Dinah Washington side of jazz singing, the emphasis on blues shouting and on the slower ballads in that deep soulful sound. Butit's all tingedwith blues feeling. The singer words both sides of her voice: the hard belting swing and the little-girl-lost-innocence side. Most of the time she brings it off well. She isn't overwhelmed by the band in arrangements by **Onzy Matthews** who keeps everything simple with smooth cushions of saxes behind the singing and brass punctuations every now and again. **Sonny Criss's** alto has some highly charged moments and **Herbie Ellis** offers his Texas-blues-tinged guitar, in these versions of mostly classic blues and bluesy tunes.

She also does a medley of three blues during her live performance, two of them associated with Dinah Washington. She adds three standards: she pushes a little harder here, shouting the songs out at a receptive audience, occasionally milking the songs too much, repeating phrases and words, using that talk-song technique that Carmen McRae sometimes uses. Maybe all this is looking back to Bessie Smith. This album is energetic in its lively singing. Jack Wilson plays good piano, both in his comping for the singer and in his solos.

Over the past few years **Meredith D'Ambrosio** has been going her own quiet way of singing, precisely articulated, slightly suspenseful in its whispery, wispy approach, attentive to detail. She has always been careful about her choice of songs and that is especially true of ***The Cove*** **(Sunnyside SSC 1028)**. Only about three of these could in any sense be classed as known songs. Interestingly, though, some of the others are composed by jazz people: Al Cohn, Marian McPartland, Bill Evans and Kenny Wheeler, so it's obvious her singing is geared to jazz.

Mostly she hits the notes accurately, moves only occasionally away from the line of the melody. Her sense of timing and phrasing is clear, her own piano playing on three cuts shows the same lyrical, almost pensive turn. She rarely loosens up and sometimes this seemingly tight control limits the song for in some songs the lyrics nod towards a more expansive mood. There's no real up-tempo singing so the album falls toward evenness. In mid-tempo her voice takes on a slightly perky edge; I could have done with more of that. Still, this is gently interesting music, with some good prompting piano from **Fred Hersch** (what a fine pianist he is showing himself to be these days!) and D'Ambrosio's voice fits into some crystalline counterpoint with **Lee Konitz** on several cuts.

It is difficult to put one's finger on the appeal of **Carla White's** singing on ***Mood Swings*** **(Milestone M-9150)** but appealing it is. It is not a particularly rich voice but somehow that title sums up her ability to deal with songs in radically disparate ways. She has an uncanny sweetness on *The Night We Called It A Day* and *Love Came On Stealthy Fingers* and yet *You're My Thrill* has a fuller timbre, slower, edgier, balancing dangerously close to being overdramatic. She can also scat in a swooping and scattered manner. In a way, the appeal of

her singing comes from her taking chances, running full tilt into a song, opening her throat with huskiness or dampened to a stark simplicity, so it's almost as if she's going to lose the tune, go flat, intonation askew so she has to rely on emotional raspiness but somehow she's out there on a thin, paradoxical tightrope of assurance and vulnerability, and she rarely loses the balance and poise: a song here, *The Gentleman Is A Dope*, is admirably suited to this quality in her singing.

She is helped by the choice of songs: some classics (*If Dreams Come True* and *Yardbird Suite*, though this latter is rarely sung), and some standards not quite in the top rank of goods songs nevertheless (*For Heaven's Sake* and the aforementioned *Dope*). Her articulation is good and she is well supported by **Lew Tabackin's** tenor. This context is good for him for I've always felt he's not a good pacer of himself in solos, getting ahead of himself too often, hitting emotional highs too soon. Here his bluster and bite in short spurts is a splendid counterpoint to the crystal-acid Carla White uses on some songs. For me, she is better at ballads; her readings of the slower tunes are full of a held-in emotion that threatens to break out of control so that tense tightrope effect takes over, an edginess that enhances the song. That's especially true of *You're My Thrill* and *For Heaven's Sake*.

But perhaps the best cut is a mid-tempo romp through *Love Me Tomorrow*, a fine Vernon Duke song I've not heard before, because her adroit manipulation of tenseness and devil-may-care, almost throw-away delivery helps the wit of the odd, vaguely cynical lyrics. And it's on this cut that pianist **Peter Madsen**, responsible for all the arrangements, plays his best solo.

Carla White's approach takes a little time to get used to but it's worth spending time with these songs. She certainly has the right attitudes and the technical abilities in a variety of moods and contexts, a singer with the right stuff, unique, clever, imaginative, inventive.

Finally, two albums on which the instrumental side has as much space as the vocals. On ***Hollywood Heroes*** **(Concord CJ-339), Jack Sheldon** has good fun singing old standards, sometimes evoking a Waller-ish feel by adding comments and aping the lyrics slightly, slap-happy, agreeable music. Sheldon's trumpet is brash and extroverted in mid-tempo and his voice always has a happy tone to it. **Ray Sherman's** piano offers the best solos, coming out a Teddy Wilson style. In fact, this album is much like those swing-time small groups of the 30s, a little anachronistic, a little too obvious, adding up to nothing more than pleasant but ordinary music-making.

Ellyn Rucker is an entirely different matter on ***Ellyn*** **(Capri 10187)**. Side A concentrates on her piano playing with the full-bodied scurry and wail of **Pete Christlieb's** tenor. Her playing comes out of the lyricism of Bill Evans but her fingering is a little harder, so the piano sounds more percussive. The soloing is thoughtful and soulful, especially on the ballads: the simple but lusciously melodic dueting with Christlieb on *Close Enough For Love* is a good example. The expressiveness of her piano is further pronounced on her own composition, *Nadine's Waltz*, with that same direct approach to tunefulness, letting the melody speak for itself, no technical grandstanding, no hammering insistence on the beat. And yet it's not understated; it is forthright and honest. She also shows a heady way with the blues, pushing Christlieb with well-paced, heavy chords, then heading into straightahead playing, touched with funky twists.

She sings just one song on Side A, a fast, crisply articulated *One Morning In May*. Most of Side B concentrates on the singing. As in her playing, it is direct and honest, a slightly whispery quality at the lower end, rising to a richer, sweeter tone. Even when she reaches for emphasis, her voice retains a slightly mysterious mood, almost as if she's inviting the listener to share a secret, a voice that takes you into its confidence. That's what happens on *Round Midnight*. *The Night Has A Thousand Eyes* builds up a fine head of steam in the hard soloing of both Christlieb and Rucker, yet her vocal never takes up any belting, hell-for-leather tones. She retains that open-hearted feel of her ballad singing. That openness is very apparent in the medley that closes Side B. She plays full-chorded, unaccompanied piano on *Prisoner Of Love* and *Body And Soul*, giving full weight to the tunes but underlining them with an especially firm left hand. Then the tempo moves to a comfortable lope for *Wonder Why* with the same deft, melodic touch, the same left hand which takes over the strongly rhythmic push as she scats along with her single fingered improvising right hand: just one chorus of that before she returns to a lovely closing chorus of piano. This is an impressive debut, enough to put Ellyn Rucker on my list of singers deserving wider recognition: Anita Gravine, Carol Sloane, Sue Raney, the late Irene Kral.

Carla White (Photograph by Jim Marshall)

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

Umbria Jazz '89
July 7-16, 1989, Perugia, Italy

Culturally and socially, Italy's a curious and wonderful place: not that I'm prejudiced by the Sicilian half of my ancestry, mind you. It's just that the pleasures of Perugia, in particular, an atmospheric town built on and around a high hill, surrounded by breathtaking scenery, and heir to nearly two thousand years of art, architecture, and antiquity, are multiplied each year by 10 days of high-quality jazz. Primarily because the performance sites are scattered around town, I'd be hard-pressed to think of another such festival which so involves a music listener in the host city's environment. Just by walking from one concert hall to the next, one realizes there's an art or history lesson around every corner.

Rich setting aside, the music at the **Umbria Fest** is always a mixed bag. Afternoon concerts feature local groups (there's never enough Italian musicians on display for my taste, however, the Italian music scene is remarkably varied and voluminous); evening performances highlight big-name American artists; after hours "nightclubs" showcase feverish blowing sessions. Though the programming straddles the fence between bebop and electric (sometimes stumbling into "pop") sensibilities, the choices usually fall onto the conservative side of the ledger. There's seldom any honest-to-goodness "New Music" to be heard, but if you like your music to swing there's a lot to choose from.

This year's activities were no exception. For the second year in a row, the opening concert proved that *"Gospel is alive and well in New Orleans,"* and in the process pointed out that the music's influence on more secular styles (the bluesy guitar and stomping organ accompaniments suggested such influences have been reassimilated as well). **The New Day Baptist Church Choir** aimed for high energy and exuberance, but poor sound balance stymied them; still, they swung their shared experience songs on sheer spirit and repetition: *Jesus Is A Rock*[100]. **The Famous Zion Harmonizers** cut a striking figure in white suits and a dignified demeanour; the sextet's beautiful control of harmonies showed where groups like the Ink Spots and the mills Brothers came from. **The Desire Community Chorus** turned the flame up a few notches, led by the conducting, coaxing, admonishing, exhorting James Brown-ish showmanship of **Alvin Bridges**, who at times resembled a lion tamer, putting the assembly through some rigorous routines, then strutting proudly.

What a chasm of contrast between the **Zion Harmonizers** and that evening's openers,, **Moore By Four**. The latter's Las Vegas lounge shtick--lots of glitter and flash and posing, and a four-part *a capella* spiritual interrupting *It Don't Mean A Thing* (!)--probably would have seduced cabaret-goers better than a crowd primed for **Dizzy Gillespie**. Fortunately, Diz, with a sextet of "all-stars" in tow, filled the bill. This set of Gillespie standards may not have told us anything we didn't already know, but it was nevertheless nice to hear a boppish groove performed with a mastery and assurance that projected **through** the music (something that youngerneo-boppers can't quite match...they try too hard). Vibist **Bobby Hutcherson** seemed more **up** than of late on *Shaw'Nuff*, and **Phil Woods**, too, impressed, with slow and casual, spicy, coy solos on *Birk's Works* and his own *Goodbye Mr. Evans*. As for **Diz**, he can no longer live in the stratosphere and, at least on this occasion, found a way to stay in the trumpet's comfortable midrange while incorporating surprising slurs, tonal effects, and exploring notes between the notes. If not so flamboyant, he remained wistfully expressive... possibly proving he's mortal after all.

Among the afternoon Italian groups, the **Lares Jazz Composers Band** proved to be something of a misnomer; a seven-piecer concerned less with intricate compositions than sustaining long solos within commonplace material (post-bop horn lines over a restrained yet fusiony rhythm section). Any textural or colouristic device (brief measures of a tempo free polyphony or exotic synth chimes, for example) was simply dropped in as flavouring, or perhaps food colouring, and not used as a structural basis for substantial writing. The solos were, as is frequently the case with younger players in Europe **and** the U.S., based on easily recognizable American models. Though such playing is, of course, derivative, in Europe, separate from the proximity of the stylistic originators, this takes on a different tinge. Assuming that the musicians and audience agree to share common values, when the guitarist, say, betrays a particular influence the audience acknowledges it, tacitly believing, *"I like John Scofield's playing, you like John Scofield's playing; we agree to enjoy this music."* Such a shared experience can be pleasant enough, but is hardly challenging or inspirational to either instrumentalist or listener.

Other Italian groups I caught this trip reinforced this: the **Jazz University Orchestra** did survey some thickly scored, multi-themed, alternately impressionistic and expressionistic suites, but interest dropped during the solos (save those of guests **Paolo Fresu** and **Maurizio Giammarco**). Ditto the **Marco Tamburini Sextet**. All in their early 20s, seemingly (the enthusiastic youthfulness of many Italian players *and* audience members bodes well for the scene's future), they have synthesized their sources well enough... witness the fluid, Woodsy altoist and the trombonist's touches of Turre (even to the point of a conch shell solo). Curiously, the trumpeter traded his brass for a wind-synth only on the group's sole non-original *(We'll Be Together Again)* but chose a tone that reminded me of a fellow Italian, one of Johnny Puleo's Harmonicats.

Back to the evening sets. The collaboration of **George Benson** with **McCoy Tyner's Trio** (bassist **Avery Sharpe** and drummer **Aaron Scott**) promised more than it provided. Following a trio turn on *Monk's Dream* (with echoes of a funky stomp, à la Ramsey Lewis, between the huge crashing chords and waves of right-hand runs), Benson came out with an up *Stella By Starlight.* **Very** up, so that you could barely catch the Charlie Christian interjections, but too fast to allow any breadth of phrasing. Then a blues in B flat, but again, no relaxation, all push, sell, chops working overtime. Coltrane's *Cousin Mary* was served a hi-octane cocktail, kicking McCoy into keyboard heaven albeit all-too-briefly. It was especially disconcerting to see McCoy reading Benson's arrangement of chords behind the Nat Cole-ish vocal on *Stardust.* With megahits, This *Masquerade* and *On Broadway,* as encores, it's easy to see how McCoy's talents were misused.

The next evening allowed a nice contrast of guitar styles. In fact, there's a great contrast of styles on display in **John Abercrombie's** playing alone, from a wry Bill Evans-ish introspection on standards like *Alice In Wonderland* (where **Marc Johnson's** acoustic bass was often more energetic than Abercrombie's subtle swing of **Peter Erskine's** lively yet deftfully underplayed presence) to his aggressive but harmonically and melodically simpler guitar-synth work. To my taste, it's disappointing when Abercrombie forsakes his personal guitar tone and elusive, engaging lyricism for the monotonal, monotonous guitar-synth, with a sound that alter-

nates between fog horn and steam calliope.

Even on a raveup like Johnson's *Furst On Ice*, Abercrombie is seldom as flashy as today's flock of fusioneers. **John Scofield** is another guitarist who has been unfairly lumped in with such high-speed axe stranglers. **His** opening *Stella By Starlight,* a probing, direct attack with a grittier edge than Abercrombie's, emphasized the attitudinal flaws in Benson's version of the previous evening. There's also more metal and mettle in Scofield's sound, with a trace of c&w twang on one tune and a jolt of the blues on another. *On All The Things You Are*, he unravelled lines of seemingly endless length which stopped in unexpected spots or terminated in bursts of notes. Scofield's trio (**Anthony Cox** on acoustic bass and **John Riley** on drums) was more traditionally supportive than the flexible interaction of Abercrombie/Johnson/Erskine, but billing the two groups together was an inspired decision.

The best of the evening concerts, for me, belonged to the **Mingus Superband** (an expanded, 12-man edition of the variable **Dynasty**). This is the first of the posthumous groups to do justice to the full nature--multi-faceted, sometimes contradictory--of Mingus' genius. The Superband doesn't restrict itself to Mingus' "greatest hits," it tackles the ambitious, grand, complex, multi-sectional compositions. The knowing charts by **Jimmy Knepper** provide moments of planned chaos, in the Mingus tradition, in amongst the rich themes, and the band played them with sincere spirit and **drive**. *The Moanin'/Jump Monk* medley roared; *Meditations On Integration* (a.k.a. *Meditations On A Pair Of Wire Cutters* and *Praying With Eric*, et al) proved alternately dream-like, sinewy, lush, rough & tumble, as **George Adams** wailed a powerful tenor solo and **Nick Brignola's** baritone scorched; on **Duke Ellington's** *Sound Of Love*, **Craig Handy's** tenor took on a measure of Paul Gonsalves' warp and woof, while **John Handy's** alto embraced Johnny Hodges' mellow romance. An inspiring, exhilarating experience.

One specialty of the **Umbria Fest** is the after-midnight set. This year, such groups as the **Kevin Eubanks Quartet, Paquito D'Rivera Sextet**, and **Bucky, John** and **Martin Pizzarelli** were in-residence at six "nightclubs": some small club-like rooms, but also including the La Scala-in-miniature Theatro Morlacchi and the partially dilapidated but atmospheric San Francesco church. Residency over the 10 days of the fest allows you to club-hop from night to night, hearing a variety of groups or revisiting a particular band over a few nights to chart their progress. For example, one evening I walked out on **Stanley Jordan** as he opened his set with an insipid ballad, and moseyed down to catch **Carmen McRae**, whose hairpin dynamic curves and hushed, worldly-wise demeanour on *More Than You Know, My Foolish Heart*, and *Yesterdays* were all the more affecting even as she was dwarfed by the spectacular shell of San Francesco. After which, back up the hill, I returned to hear the last bombastic strains of Jordan's version of *Stairway To Heaven*.

Mulgrew Miller's quartet, ensconced in a shoebox-sized club, boiled over on the two nights I heard them. The pianist enjoys an impressive facility, and employs a steady stream of ideas, some developed more thoroughly than others. He shared the front line with vibist **Steve Nelson**, who seems to be building upon Bobby Hutcherson's fervent 60s style: out-of-tempo lines that push hard, then stop dead, arhythmic patterns, and a tart harmonic sense. *Summer Night* was a typical performance by this foursome (bassist **Peter Washington** and drummer **Tony Redus** completed the quartet); a rubato solo piano intro, Nelson attacking the vibes, then the pianist goading the rhythm section into alternating a relaxed triplet feel and a faster 4/4. Nicely done.

The grand finale of my Umbria experience this year was viewing the **Christian Blackwood/Charlotte Zwering/Bruce Ricker** film, ***Thelonious Monk: Straight No Chaser***. A devoted Monkophile, I was in heaven watching the concert and verité footage; there's an abundance of music and amazing images. Though interviews with Monk's friends and collaborators are included, the film doesn't attempt to explicate or even introduce Monk to a new audience. It's primarily a long, loving, curious look at an awesome, curious creative genius.

Due to an impending medical situation, I was forced to cut short my festival-going and return home to Chicago after only four days. Thus I missed nearly a week's worth of Umbria: **Miles, Stan Getz, Ahmad Jamal, Art Blakey, Clark Terry** and the **Ellington Spacemen**, more Italian musicians, Italian food, Italian sunshine, Italian ambience. **Perugia's** a glorious place, and the music during the Umbria Fest is only one of its charms. - *Art Lange*

11th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival August 30th - September 3rd

My first visit to the Windy City, nearly twenty years ago, happened at the end of an extended trip that had taken me across Canada, down into California (in search of the Kerouac dream), and back across the United States. A hippy trek in a rusty old station wagon, to discover, as we went, a more intimate association with our land. Always as you travelled, the meeting of peoples from all different walks of life, enlarged your dreams, and often was the introduction into social orders that may not always have been readily available to the stranger.

And so it was when we arrived in Chicago.

Everyone who has ever loved blues music is aware of the legend of this wonderful city, and in more modern times of the outstanding

Martial Solal (Photograph by Mark Ladenson)

number of great players that have originated there. What would our history be without the likes of Johnny Griffin, Andrew Hill, the old time religion of the traditionalists such as Art Hodes and Bud Freeman, cosmotology invented by Sun Ra, the formation of the AACM, the Art Ensemble, Anthony Braxton and on... only to mention a few. The musician in 1970 who was an integral part of this Chicago "sound," that befriended us and welcomed us into his world, was the drummer **Steve McCaul**. Sat in his garden, the sun enlarging the feeling of companionship in this music, sharing food with other friends, Ran Blake and Jeanne Lee, creating one's own situation, made me as a foreign white visitor unaware that we were located in the black section of an American city. The South Side. Even the tourist map, abundant in hotel rooms, ends its information far north of this zone, and yet for us jazz and blues fans, this was the district that we had heard about throughout the years.

August the 29th - I had arrived one day early, and the message in my room at the Blackstone Hotel read - I'm in room #802. Meet me in the lobby at 6PM - OK? - Kenny P. (Pickering). And so my visit to Chicago begins with a friend. Some Mexican food at a north side bistro, and then the first set of the **Ritual Trio** consisting of percussionist **Kahil El Zabar**, the tenor and soprano of **Ari Brown** and another old friend, **Malachi Favors** playing bass. **Lower Links Hall** is a perfect venue to present contemporary music, its funky bohemian atmosphere and intimate physical size allow one to become part of the event, instead of, as is so often the case, a mere observer. **Ken Pickering**, who is one of the organizers of the Vancouver Festival, due to his early arrival, had already "sussed" out the scene, and with the help of **Davida Fineman**, one of the avant warriors who help so much in the promotion of contemporary music in Chicago, we once again headed for the "legendary" South Side. This occasion is once more to do with **Steve McCaul**, but the sun is not shining for this gathering of friends, who on this night have come to pay tribute to Steve, who had passed from this world just a few short weeks before. It is not entirely sadness in the bar of the **New Apartment Lounge**, as this is not a funeral but rather a tribute to his greatness. As one would assume, apart from his family, many of the friends in attendance are musicians, and indeed what better way to say goodbye to such a man, than with music. In my heart I have my own private feelings towards him which are not for publication, so I will only say that the joyous music was provided by his people from the neighbourhood. **Shirley Scott, David Murray, Douglas Ewart, Edward Wilkerson, Reggie Nicholson, Willie Pickens** and **Pat Patrick** were among the ones that I recognized. All mixing together playing music with no intellectual boundaries. A celebration lifting him toward his destiny.

Officially on this Wednesday night, the Chicago Festival had begun with a club tour, made physically possible by a bus that at fixed intervals arrived and departed to and from the various club locations. A brilliant idea, that not only created an initial spirit of festivity, but on a personal level gave me the opportunity as a writer to make contact with all the other journalists and photographers that have arrived for the weekend. Before the evening evolved into the South Side memory, we had heard once again the **Ritual Trio** at **Off The Tracks**, and managed a set of the interesting bebop trumpet player **Brad Goode** at the **Green Mill**.

One of the great fears of an outdoor festival is of course the weather, and as though sent to test us all, it rained and rained and rained the night of the first presentation. Hundreds of brave souls battled the elements of the park, and for myself with a small privilege in the form of a back stage pass we heard some very fine music. From Italy as part of an exchange (let us not forget Chicago's Italian heritage, in what ever form you remember it) was the **Giovanni Tomaso Quintet**, pleasant enough in an old Miles imitative kind of way, and really only working as an early warm up for the **Benny Carter Further Definitions** ensemble. What a joy to hear those charts again from 1961 (Impulse Records), this time in live performance. Just the rhythm section would have been enough, with **Jodie Christian, Milt Hinton** and **Gus Johnson**, so imagine what it really sounded like when enlarged by **Benny** himself, **Frank Wess, Eddie Johnson, Phil Woods**, and **John Collins**. The rain and the stage hands have now forced us from our private listening area, so I returned to my hotel and listened to **Betty Carter** and her trio on the radio. Relaxing on the bed with a glass of cognac, slightly damp but content, thankful that in spite of the weather conditions it is possible to complete this opening night because the festival is broadcast coast to cast by satellite via **National Public Radio. Neil Tesser** from **WBEZ** wished me goodnight.

From here on the weather changed into almost tropical temperatures, the daytime outdoor stage becoming the new meeting place. Surrounded by beer and food tents, souvenir stands and the Jazz Record Mart's booth, it very quickly gained momentum and the festival quite suddenly became what all hoped it would be: a holiday celebration.

As always with a festival that is catering to a more general public the music is stylistically very mixed, except that this year, by intent or not, the focus was for the most part quite mainstream, making its highlights seem even more so. The local bands of **Damon Short, Franz Jackson** with **Art Hodes, Bunky Green** and **Fred Anderson** with **Billy Brimfield** on trumpet, continued to remind us that the quality of what is called local music, the real force of jazz, was of a very high calibre.

There were moments of interest from the **World Saxophone Quartet, Sam Rivers**, and the **Freddie Hubbard/Joe Henderson** Quintet, but for me the most enjoyable music came from the **Dizzy Gillespie United Nations Superband** which featured such players as **Jon Faddis, James Moody, Slide Hampton, Steve Turre**, and once again **Sam Rivers**, and the startling solo piano performance of the Frenchman, **Martial Solal**. Solal in fact was the most unusual and interesting performer of the whole festival, making one wonder about the real direction the music has taken in its native land. Ironic, eh!

As always I question the real intent of corporate music productions that seem to remove the focus of the music into circus-like attitudes, but I must say that although the music was not entirely to my taste, and when on such a large scale is it, the Chicago Festival is a fine event. Plus we must not forget that it is not only the music that draws one to this city, for as a physical situation it is one of the more interesting architectural cities in America. Modern as it may be on its waterfront, there are, as you walk around, splashes of the history that has made it so. Wrought iron art surrounds many of the buildings erected since the great fire, the elevated trains, a great museum, neighbourhoods that still hold their ethnicity and an open friendly people. Plus the street music is truly great. You should check it out next Labour Day weekend. - *Bill Smith*

HOMAGE TO TWO SHADES

Let us begin with a paraphrase. We have come to praise Charles Mingus and John Cassavetes, not to bury them. Eulogies can be such weary occasions, and those two were rarely tiresome, or trite, or dreary. If anything united them, it was their feistiness, their anger. Each had a passionate commitment to work. Both progressed from an individual success – Mingus as the premier be-bop bassist, Cassavetes as a highly regarded Method actor – to become full-fledged artists.

For Mingus, that meant studying and experimenting with formal musical writing methods until he became a brilliant orchestrator and composer. For Cassavetes, it meant reworking the Method from an individual performer's perspective into a fully realized cinematic style. By 1959, they were both ready. The result was that unique improvisational hybrid, ***Shadows***, Cassavetes' first directorial effort, for which he employed Mingus as the film's soundtrack composer.

Shadows was a revolutionary work for its time. The narrative dealt, in part, with an affair between a black woman and a white man, then a shocking notion. It was during this period that Vladimir Nabokov, in his sardonically witty defense of ***Lolita***, could state unequivocally that three love relations which Americans could not abide were between (1) happy atheists, (2) nymphets and adults and (3) an interracial couple. Leila (Goldoni), Cassavetes' black female lead, was given the onerous motivation of racial self-loathing. Rejecting her own heritage, Leila passes for white at a Greenwich Village party. She has a passionate fling with Anthony (Ray), a white bohemian, who leaves her when he encounters her older brother, Hugh (Hurd), a dark-hued jazz musician. Their other brother, Ben (Carruthers), who could also pretend to be white, refuses to do so and ends up losing a fight with other violent semi-hipsters. Ben, Leila and Hugh all desire desperately to leave their emotionally (and financially) impoverished existences, As the film concludes, none of them has succeeded in rising above their initial drab circumstances. Hugh, the surrogate patriarch of this family, takes a gig at a Grade Z nightclub.

If ***Shadows'*** creator John Cassavetes had contented himself with simply relating this narrative, it would still be an interesting, if dated, piece. His intention was, of course, much more complex than that of merely detailing the existential dilemmas of a black urban family in late fifties America. Cassavetes had been trained in the Method, the school of theatrical philosophy that insists on the authenticity of the actor's approach to the material. A Method actor assumes the identity of the character he or she is playing on the stage or screen -- as much as is humanly possible! Cassavetes believed in the training approaches employed by drama teachers like Lee Strasberg. He stressed improvisation in his own performances and those of his colleagues.

Cassavetes hired people for ***Shadows*** whose lives bore a

Charles Mingus (Photograph by Bill Smith)

relationship to those of the fictitious protagonists in his plot. The Method, he felt, was dependent on a true correspondence between the characters on the screen and the people playing the filmic roles. This is not to suggest that Leila, Hugh and Ben were actually playing themselves in ***Shadows***, just that they were encouraged to collaborate with Cassavetes in the creation of each of their adopted personas.

Shadows is a true jazz film due to the organizing principles established by Cassavetes for its production. The film was shot essentially without a script. Each scene was established by Cassavetes but the dialogue and tone of many sequences are a recording of a spontaneous creation between the actors and their director. Much like Mingus, Monk and (even) Ellington, Cassavetes created a structure, then let his principle players perform within it, to the best of their abilities. Rarely has a director understood the methodologies of modern jazz composition in the organic way that Cassavetes did for his debut film.

This kinetic appreciation of jazz, with its abrupt transitions from romanticism to harsh-urban-dissonance, helped to put Cassavetes in sync with his musical collaborator, Charles Mingus. Early on in the film, Cassavetes shot a short scene in which Mingus wields his enormous bass through a bustling New York City street scene. Implied in this sequence is Cassavetes' respect for Mingus' indomitable power to press through any opposition in order to make his (artistic) point. Throughout ***Shadows***, the powerful saxophone of Shafi Hadi blasts through, providing a counterpoint to the occasionally melodramatic proceedings.

The tale of how Mingus got the assignment to compose the music for ***Shadows*** reveals much about the creative (and rather naive) atmosphere that existed then in New York. Mingus had been working with the actor/disc jockey Jean Shepard on an extended piece called ***The Clown***. Shepard was a unique radio personality, an intellectual who loved jazz and relished controversial exchanges on the air. He had an enormous following, which included among his listeners not only Mingus but also Cassavetes. The dynamic young actor was already raising funds for ***Shadows*** in 1957 when it occurred to Shepard that he could do both Cassavetes and some jazz musician a favour by putting them together. According to Mingus, Shepard had "his listeners send money and write in ideas for a movie. They chose me to do the music (quoted in ***Mingus: A Critical Biography***, Brian Priestley, DaCapo, p. 90)."

Mingus was inspired by his meetings with Cassavetes to write *Nostalgia In Times Square*, a wonderfully evocative blues piece. Scored for a miniature big band, this soundtrack composition featured Shafi Hadi (tenor sax), Jimmy Knepper (trombone), Horace Parlan and Phineas Newborn (piano), Dannie Richmond (drums) and Mingus on bass. Regrettably, the rest of Mingus' score for ***Shadows*** was not recorded due not only to budgetary problems but also, according to Knepper, the fact that "it was written so precisely--it was all eight-note triplets and sixteenth note triplets--and they wanted to record all the music in one date. But we took so long over this one tune (*Nostalgia In Times Square*) that it never did get finished." (Priestly, op. cit., pp. 90-1) The rest of ***Shadows'*** soundtrack features Hadi's inspired improvisations, which make their own statement, along side those of Leila, Hugh, Anthony and Ben, the main protagonists.

Made for the amazingly low sum of $15,000, **Shadows** was released to great acclaim. It won the First Independent Film Award, an honour which was later accorded to such worthies as Robert Frank, Michael Snow, Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage and Andy Warhol. ***Film Culture's*** editorial board, in giving the prize to the young actor-director, wrote, in part, "Cassavetes in ***Shadows*** was able to break out of conventional molds and traps and retain original freshness. The improvisation, spontaneity and free inspiration that are almost entirely lost in most films from an excess of professionalism are fully used in this film." (***Film Culture Reader***, ed. P. Adams Sitney, p. 423)

Parker Tyler, then one of the most influential film critics in the world, described Cassavetes' talent: "Human beings slip from kindliness and romantic softness into unconcealed anger, cruelty and cynicism, without realizing, apparently, that transitions are taking place. This is a sizable contribution to naturalizing the film's imaginative view of contemporary life." (Tyler, ***Film Culture Reader***, p. 117)

After ***Shadows***, Cassavetes departed for Hollywood where he made two commercial flops. He then retreated from directing until 1968 when, again through his own financing, he produced ***Faces***. It, like ***Shadows***, revealed the odd, touching, angry emotions of a number of intriguing characters living their marginal existences "on the edge." Cassavetes continued to pursue his improvisatory art, with his stock company of thespian friends, including Peter Falk, Ben Gazzara, Gena Rowlands and Seymour Cassel, for the rest of his all-too-short life. (Cassavetes died this year.) He, like Mingus, functioned as a rebel, always fighting imagined, or real, Establishments. Both pursued their art with an admirable devotion and maintained an integrity in their work methods that can stand as models for future artists to emulate.

EUROPEAN SMORGASBORD

European musicians working in the jazz and improvised music tradition face a formidable challenge in their creative work: while working in a musical tradition which is largely not their own, they have to develop their own voice and yet maintain their links with the tradition. The answers offered to this challenge vary a great deal, of course, and the records reviewed here offer us a fair sampling. From Norway comes the last recording of the late **Thorgeir Stubo**, who died in 1986. This record, ***The End Of A Tune,*** **(Cadence Jazz Records CJR 1036, 1988)** is the work of a guitarist who stayed close to the American tradition. It also features two US musicians, who represent that mainstream as well. **Art Farmer** is his usual lyrical self, **Doug Raney** a seasoned guitarist, and Stubo performs well in their company. The repertoire largely consists of standards, and the music is pleasant enough; it would fit well in the Concord catalogue, which is quite a merit. (Maybe it is telling that Cadence is a US company.) It suffers from a few small defects, but can certainly be recommended to listeners who like, say, Farmer and Jim Hall records, or the album put out by Concord.

From Sweden comes ***Life in life*** by yet another formidable tenor saxophonist from that country, **Joakim Milder (Dragon DRLP 166, 1988)**. Milder's music is more contemporary than Stubo's, somewhere around V.S.O.P., but he has found his own distinct sound, albeit in a cool Swedish tradition, and the record features many of his own compositions. On one side Milder plays with a trio, with the impressive bassist, **Palle Danielsson**; on the other with a quartet sometimes augmented by the trumpeter **Jan Allan**. Allan has a nice breathy tone, and he is well matched with the leader. Milder's expressive moods range from the thoughtfully lyrical to the forceful, all the while retaining a wonderful tone. The other musicians are of a similarly high calibre, and this is therefore a commendable album.

In Europe the commissioned long piece for a festival or a broadcast is considerably more frequent than it is in North America; the second record from Sweden is an example of such a commissioned work. ***Eight pieces*** contains a long suite composed for an octet by bassist **Anders Jormin (Dragon DRLP 165, 1988)**. Unlike many of these made-to-order pieces, Jormin's work stands up well to repeated listening. The ensemble sections are pleasant and well structured, with a modern sound all their own, and the soloists, such as saxophonist **Thomas Gustafson** and trumpet player **Staffan Stevenson** highly capable of retaining our interest. The ensemble playing in the lilting *Burkina* has a nice African sound to it, a perfect backdrop for the soloing altoist **Thomas Jaderlund**. Stageband conductors desperate for new pieces to play take note!

The next commissioned piece is not band material by any stretch of the imagination. This music, recorded in 1980 for a BBC programme, is still the most advanced and the most impressive of the albums reviewed here. ***Stringer*** contains four pieces for orchestra composed by the bassist **Barry Guy**, and played by the **London Jazz Composers' Orchestra**; it was issued by the German company **Free Music Productions (SAJ-41, 1983)**. The roster of the LJCO reads like a Who's Who of European avantgarde music: **Kenny Wheeler, Evan Parker, Peter Brotzmann, Tony Oxley, Barry Kowald**, to cite just a few. The music is remarkably fresh and challenging, consisting of shards and fragments of collective playing between more individual solos. Music of this calibre is scarce, and this record is a must for every serious listener trying to understand the European avantgarde in improvised music.

The **European Jazz Ensemble's** ***Live*** album **(Konnex ST 5015)**, issued in Germany, also boasts wellknown names, including **Tony Oxley** once again, but also **Manfred Schoof, Gerd Dudek**, and many others. However, this music is considerably more sedate and less adventurous. That in itself is perfectly legitimate, but unfortunately the result, to my ears, is quite uneventful music which is merely pretty at best; whatever avantgarde elements can be found seem unnecessary and incongruous.

We now move geographically full circle to Finland; musically, however, we continue our journey. ***Krakatau*** by guitarist **Raoul Bjorkenheim** is unusual in Europe, dominated by acoustic music, as it is distinctly amplified. It is also exceptional in that this music is not cerebral, but instead highly rhythmic and full of energy. Bjorkenheim has written virtually all the music for this **1988 KR1** album, and they are quite distinctive, although in some distant ECM mode. Apart from the leader the band consists of two saxes, a bass, and two drummers, including Canadian **Michel Lambert**. This is not a pale imitation of some American jazz-fusion band, but strong music that still shows a unique local style. The album has done very well among Finnish jazz fans, and it shows another possibility for a European sound that has more than regional validity. This is music worth listening to.

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Gerd Dudek (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

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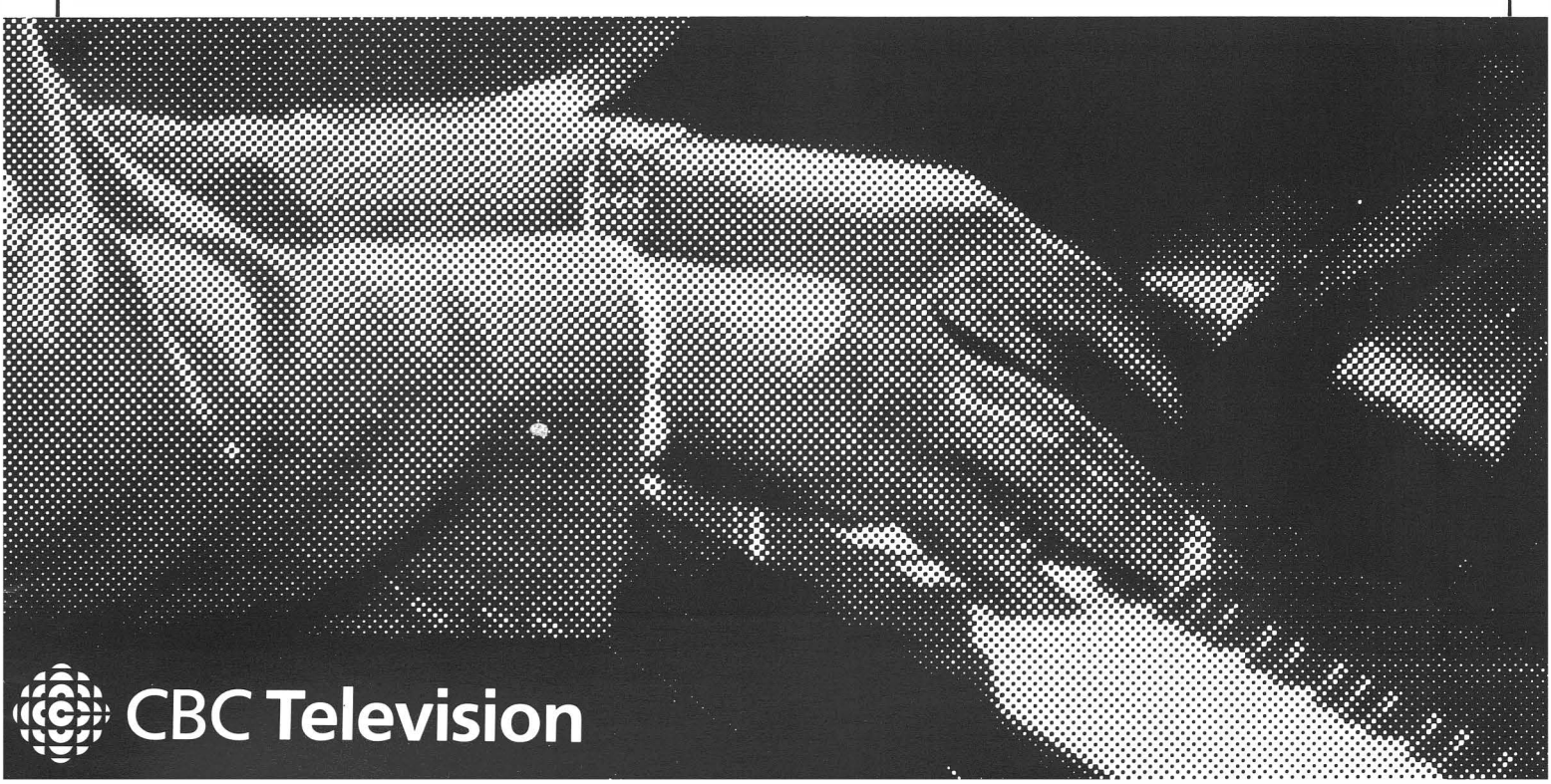

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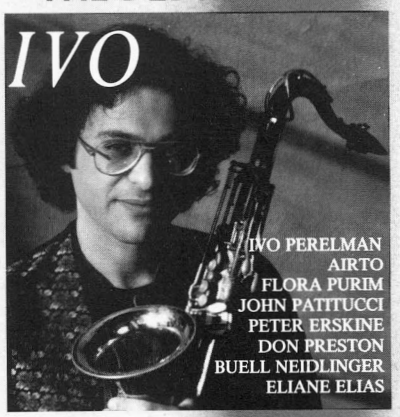

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