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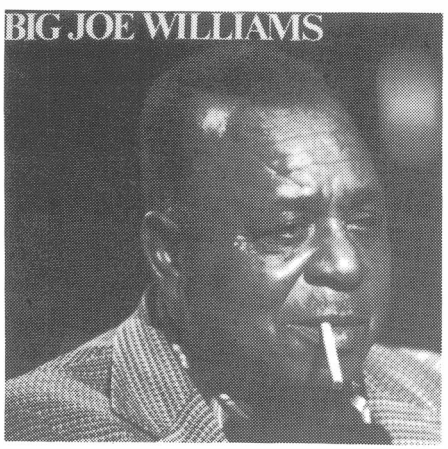

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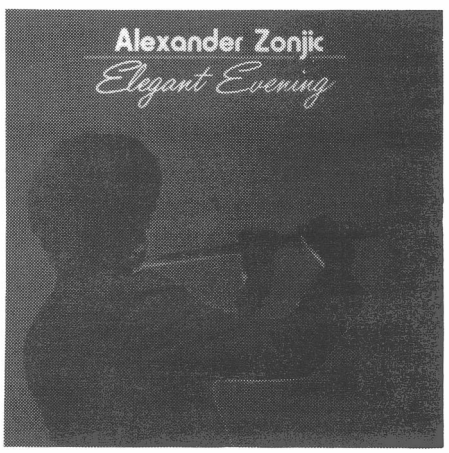

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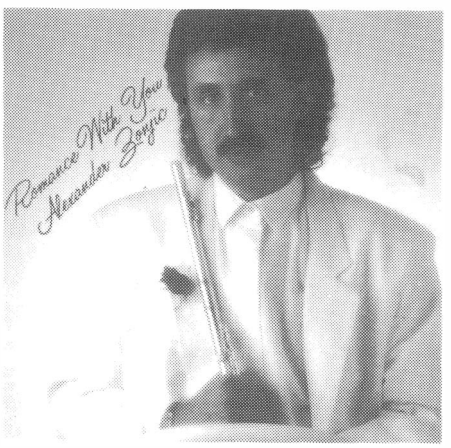

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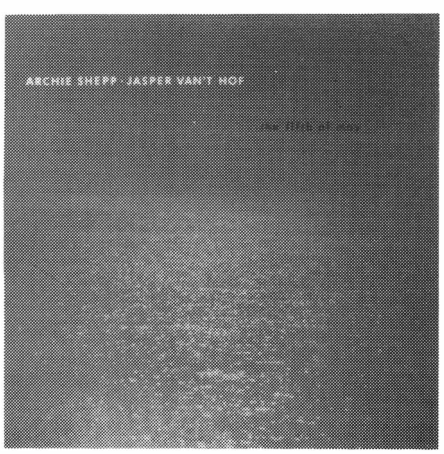

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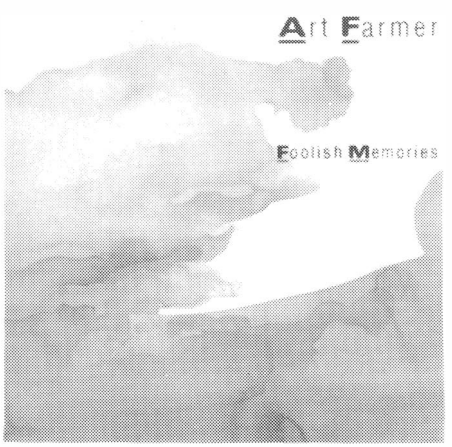

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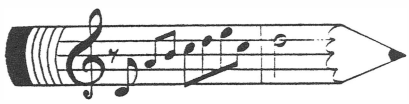

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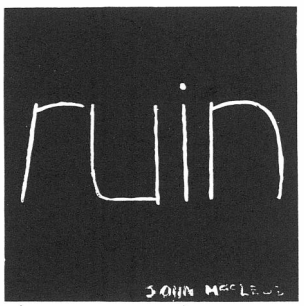

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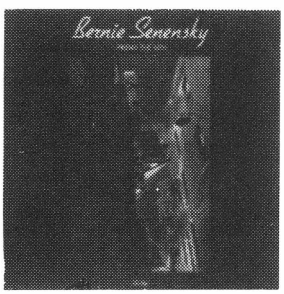

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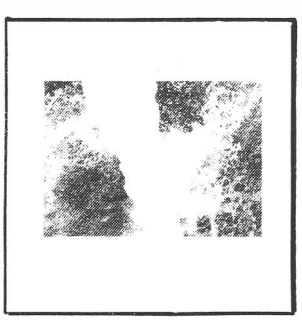

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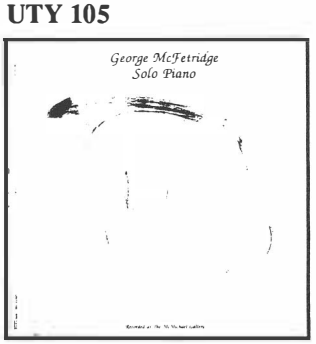

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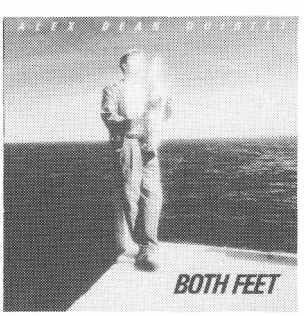

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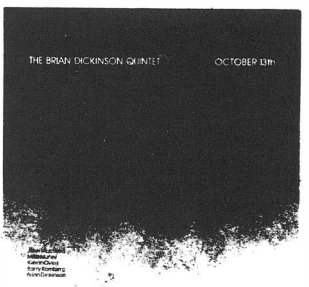

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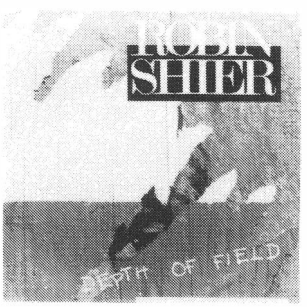

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CANADIAN NOTES

PLEASURE

French social philosopher Roland Barthes identifies two kinds of pleasure we can derive from a work of art: *plaisir*, roughly translatable as pleasure, that well-worn enjoyment which is affirming to past experience; and *jouissance*, roughly bliss, that enjoyment which is new to our experience, which challenges our accepted aesthetic standards, which results from the unexpected. Of course, it all gets rather confusing these days, when one often expects to be challenged or shocked, but I think this distinction underlies many of the debates about the retro craze we have witnessed in jazz circles in the last decade. To oversimplify, the Marsalis brothers generally offer us *plaisir*, reaffirming past musical practice, while the avant garde generally attempts to offer us *jouissance*. Like most fans of music, I can derive both kinds of pleasure, sometimes from the same performance. What I really go for, though, is *jouissance*, and luckily for me, so do the programmers of the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, as evidenced by most of the improvised music on display this last fall in Vancouver.

The local musicians who seek to offer us bliss are organized under the rubric of the **New Orchestra Workshop**. Unfortunately, their attempts at maintaining an ongoing improvising orchestra have been fraught with difficulties involving money, venues, commitment from musicians and rehearsal time, and these problems were evident in their late September performance at the Glass Slipper. The first half of the performance, involving 11 musicians, was not successful in realizing the compositions of **Coat Cook**, who also played saxes and conducted. The second half of the performance, consisting of a long piece by **Roger Baird**, was more successful, the drums (Baird and **Greg Simpson**) and **Clyde Reed's** bass achieving a great impetus, and more listening on the part of the musicians allowed quieter elements like **Kate Hammett-Vaughan's** vocals and **Roy Styffe's** alto sax to come forward. Each of the five saxophonists contributed an outstanding solo: the spirit of Albert Ayler was raised this night. A good measure of *jouissance* was on offer.

The **Glass Slipper** is a new artist-run venue set downstairs in what was reputedly a jazz club in the fifties. The sound is good and the setting suitably bohemian; no dinner jazz here! It formed a perfect setting for a mini-festival of improvising women in early October. The headliner was pianist **Marilyn Crispell**, who has developed quite a following locally, and *jouissance* is definitely her forte. The woman plays from the heart, improvising her way to an emotional impact on the listener which belies her impeccable technique. Her solo performances covered a standard, a Monk tune, powerful versions of Coltrane's *After the Rain* and *Dear Lord*, anxiously awaited by those in the audience familiar with her work, and a widely varied group of originals, mostly quiet and reflective. Crispell's concerts are becoming more varied as her purview widens: her playing easily ranges from Bill Evans to Cecil Taylor without sounding like either.

I caught only the first of her performances with bassist **Paul Blaney** and percussionist **Baird**, and as with the NOW Orchestra's performance, the intermission provided a qualitative division. During the first set, the over-busy rhythm section seemed to force Crispell's hand, leaving her sounding somewhat like McCoy Tyner attempting to deal with the whirlwind of Elvin Jones. The exception was a ballad whose name I didn't catch, full of feeling and sensitivity. After the break, Blaney and especially Baird listened more, allowing the music to flow naturally. The trio functioned as a trio, aided by a better-balanced sound mix. From Crispell's poetry plus music, through free-blowing sections separated by lush ballads and a series of duos and solos, this was a wonderful performance to witness and hear.

The other guests in this celebration of women improvisers were vocalist **Maggie Nichols** and pianist **Irene Schweizer**. Joelle Leandre was unable to attend as scheduled, but the two

VANCOUVER UPDATE BY SCOTT LEWIS

functioned so well as a duo, it was hard to imagine them with the addition of their missing partner. At first the novelty of Nichols' polystylistic vocals, ranging from breath sounds through scat singing through psychobabble raps, was the attention grabber, but gradually the cleverness and wit of Schweizer's accompaniment came to the fore, making one realize how well the two complement each other. In this setting, the pianist eschewed the more aggressive playing I'd heard in her older recordings, working through one nugget of a musical idea and then moving on, sometimes inside the piano but usually remaining on the keyboard. Nichols' sense of fun and quick wit allow her to come across as much less mannered and more passionate than Meredith Monk, probably the closest to her in vocal timbre.

Just ten days later, another festival, the second annual appearance of **Time Flies**, began with **Lunar Adventures** opening for the **Oliver Lake Quartet**. Though the personnel never changes, you never know which Lunar Adventures you're going to hear on a particular night: this time it was a very relaxed, swinging sound, keyed by drummer Simpson. They provided an excellent warmup for Lake's quartet, featuring **Eli Fountain** on drums, **Santi Dibriani** on bass, and the very post-modern **Anthony Peterson** on guitar. Lake has produced many fine quartet recordings, and this group proved a worthy successor to those earlier versions. Lake has an unmistakable blistering sound, especially on alto sax, which he varied with a 6/8 feature for flute and an unaccompanied soprano solo while Peterson looked for some music backstage. Fountain's polyrhythmic precision, reminiscent of Max Roach, powered the group through some very intense originals, a fine cover of Eric Dolphy's *Prophet* (the spirit of Mr. Dolphy was much in evidence the entire night) and the closer, a rollicking romp through Mingus' *Fables of Faubus* highlighted by a breathtaking alto solo from Lake.

The next night saw the return of the **Walsh / Underhill** duo, who played here during the summer. Richard Underhill is better known as the leader of bop-rockers, the Shuffle Demons, but partnered with versatile trombonist Tom Walsh, he reveals a rather different persona. Each can produce a variety of timbres, each is comfortable providing a rhythmic backdrop for the other's improvisations, and each has interesting compositions, often riff-based, to contribute, leavened with a comfortable dose of unforced humour. The headlining group brought together L.A.'s **Vinny Golia** and his panoply of woodwind's, pianist **Wayne Peet**, and bassist **Ken Filiano** with Ottawa's **Rob Frayne** on tenor sax and Vancouver's **Claude Ranger** on drums for a wide-ranging program. In spite of limited rehearsal time, this group quickly pulled it together once Ranger had become familiar with Filiano, who is generally more concerned with melodic variation than with providing the rhythmic underpinning. Frayne more than held his own with the multi-talented Golia, the evening's highlight being a big breathy duet à la Ben Webster with Peet, who showed a greater muscularity and range than on previous visits to Vancouver.

These seven, along with eleven of Vancouver's finest, came together the next night to form a northern version of Golia's Large Ensemble. Again a lack of rehearsal time showed early in the evening, but Ranger soon took charge to power the ensemble through Golia's charts, which ranged from a rousing big band piece all the way to free blowing. Many players took fine solos in a variety of styles, and the musician's smiles grew broader and audience response stronger and stronger until the Ensemble just plain ran out of music to play. The encore was part of a piece they'd already performed that evening! Many of the audience then headed over to the Glass Slipper for a late show by **Unity**.

The headliner next night disappointingly offered only *plaisir*. **Joanne Brackeen's** set was rather lacklustre, drummer **Akira Tana**, a last-minute replacement, failing to generate any drive until the last few numbers of a too-short concert marred by poor piano sound. Thankfully, **Chief Feature** pulled out all the stops later that night at the Glass Slipper, showcasing their members individually, in duo and as a group. With the addition of Claude Ranger, the quartet (**Bruce Freedman**, tenor sax; **Clyde Reed**, bass; **Bill Clark**, trumpet) has become perhaps Vancouver's finest improvising group, a mixture of virtuosity, invention, and distinctive compositions. A special treat was **Paul Plimley** sitting in for a number, adding his special mix of instrumental power, humorous invention, and lyricism.

Plimley's frequent partner, bassist **Lyle Ellis**, spent several months in town this fall, and he headlined a trio at the Slipper the next night. He managed to harness the talents of percussionist Roger Baird and the "wildman of the baritone," **Dan Kane**, to good effect, his immense presence toning down their sometime excesses to great effect. Ellis is a very physical bass player, rooted in the bottom end, unlike Filiano, yet he is also a great melodicist. The textures of the performance constantly shifted, from solo to duo to trio, yielding a truly satisfying helping of *jouissance*.

By now **Max Roach** has been at the top of his profession for so long, it is hard for him to offer a jazz fan anything truly new, but he tried with his **Double Quartet**, augmenting his regular group with a string quartet led by his daughter. Needless to say this offers a great variety of textures, a violinist and the cellist even contributing solos, but for me it came off as neither fish nor fowl. I missed the all-out passion of his jazz quartet appearance a few years ago, and the intellectual interest and novelty of the string quartet did not make up the difference. Perhaps the fact that this was the first of two performances that night had something to do with it.

December brought a much-anticipated appearance at the **Town Pump**, a local nightclub, by guitarist **James Blood Ulmer**, bassist **Jamaaladeen Tacuma**, and drummer **Calvin Weston**. Sparked by his appearances with Ornette Coleman and the primal punk-funk of the first Music Revelation Ensemble recording, I expected something "on the edge", offering *jouissance*, but was somewhat disappointed after the first three songs all sounded like funk versions of *Sweet Home Alabama*! Realizing that what we were being given was funk (*plaisir*) I turned off the intellectual part of my brain and proceeded to join the packed dance floor for some all-out get-down funkifying. The lousy sound made it impossible to ascertain what Ulmer was up to on his guitar anyway.

The return of hometown heroes, the **Hugh Fraser** Quintet to the VECC just after the new year showed how much pleasure

MARILYN CRISPELL (Photograph by Bill Smith)

well-trodden paths can offer. The sellout crowd ate up the sophisticated post-bop provided by the band, crisp and driving as the result of being near the end of a tour. The program was a mixture of material from their first and recent second recordings, offering a wide range of tempi and moods to set off the capabilities of the soloists. Tenorman **Phil Dwyer** and trombonist Fraser also play piano, and **Campbell Ryga** alternates between a Bird-derived alto and a more Coltrane-influenced soprano, so a wide range of textures are available for Fraser's clever arrangements. Ryga, whose facility and smoothness sometimes overwhelm his creativity, is a great partner for Dwyer, who is willing to "play ugly" on tenor, while the addition of the fiery **Blaine Wikjord** on drums has solidified the rhythm section with the expressive **Chris Nelson** on bass.

Highlights this night included *Postlude*, a cleverly-constructed slow piece which generated very emotional solos; several movements of *Sanctus*, a five-part mass composed by Fraser and recently recorded by Fraser's big band VEJI, of which the entire quintet are members, and the closer, a version of *Hymn for Her*, both the title and the music showing the influence of fraser's association with Kenny Wheeler by capturing the feel of Wheeler's ECM labelmate Keith Jarrett's European quartet of the late seventies, Dwyer broadening his sound to achieve the majesty of Jan Garbarek's playing during that period. Overall, this was a very satisfying helping of *plaisir*. ■

. . .

Major conferences seem to be displacing gigs as the focus of attention for growing numbers of jazz listeners. **The University of Toronto** is hosting the **Sonneck Society Conference** April 18-22 with seminars taking place in the Edward Johnson Building and the Westbury Hotel. Presentations relating to jazz disciplines include David Joyner on *The French Connection: Jesse French and Mississippi Valley Ragtime;* Mike Montgomery on *The Kings and Princess of Canadian Popular Piano*; Thomas Riis on who wrote the first black musical; John Graziano on *A Black Troupe in Great Britain*; various aspects of Duke Ellington will be discussed by Anthony Brown, Andrew Homzy and Mark Tucker; a program on *Early Jazz* will have presentations on Johnny Dodds (Gene H. Anderson) and Howard Spring will assess Don Redman's big band style in the 1920s. There will also be a live performance by the **Phil Nimmons Jazz Group** on the evening of April 18. Call Joanne Harada at (416) 978-3751 for more information.

Mike Montgomery will also be a participant in the one day **Canadian Collectors Conference** to be held April 21 at the Ramada Hotel located at 1650 Wilson Avenue. Other presentations will be given by noted collectors Trevor Tolley and Dick Raichelson and a selection of vintage jazz films will also be shown. More information can be obtained from Gene Miller at

(416) 231-4055.

Ottawa is hosting this year's **Ellington Conference** and four days of presentations and music performances have been arranged by the organizing committee. Contact Lois Moody (613) 237-3014 for more information on an event which will feature Alice Babs, Harold Ashby, Butch Ballard, Kenny Burrell, Wild Bill Davis and John Lamb as well as the Andrew Homzy Jazz Orchestra.

Summer is a good time to visit different parts of Canada and there is an added incentive for travel in late June/early July. This is when Canada's major jazz festivals are held. Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria all host events which include a substantial amount of open air events with no admission charge. Characteristically it must be noted that no information on scheduled performers was available at the time this column was being written. By the time the June issue of **Coda** hits the streets the festivals will almost be upon us. We have confirmed dates for several of the events: **Vancouver** (June 22-July 3), **Saskatoon** (1989 Saskatchewan Jazz Festival - June 28-July 2), **Montreal** (June 29-July 8) and **Toronto** (June 22-July 1).

Young Canadian jazz musicians have been sharpening their skills this winter in anticipation of the annual **Alcan Jazz Competition**. The audition tapes had to be in the hands of the CBC by April 4. Three groups from the five regions of Canada will be selected to perform in venues in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto (Clinton's), Montreal and Halifax on April 26, 27 and 28. The five winners will perform at the Montreal Festival with the ultimate winner receiving a cash award, a trophy and the chance to perform an opener for the final concert of the festival. Additionally, their winning performance will be released on record.

A look at the current schedule for George's Spaghetti House is a reflection of the changing face of jazz in Toronto. Not since the 1960s have there been so many promising young musicians performing across the city. **Jeff Johnston,** Doug Watson, Phil Dwyer, **John MacLeod,** Reg Schwager, Robin Shier and **Alex Dean** are among those you should be checking out. These musicians are also the backbone of the jazz programming at The Clinton and Sneaky Dee's new uptown location (1954 Yonge Street) but these are one nighters with little money and the exposure they receive is almost as small. You should also check the BamBoo listings. The Don Thompson Quartet was there on January 15 and **Dave McMurdo's** Big Band drew a capacity audience to its CD launch at the club on February 19.

The McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg continued its Sunday afternoon concerts in March with performances by **John Arpin** (4), Memo Acevedo (11), Frank Wright (18) and **Trudy Desmond** (25)... **Rick Wilkins** led a 32 piece orchestra performing the music of George Williams at Hamilton Place on March 9. Peter Appleyard was a featured guest soloist at this benefit concert for the family of the composer... Vocalist **Maureen Meriden** was presented in concert at the Euclid Theatre on January 27 with instrumental support from Rob Frayne, Jeff Johnston, Jim Vivien and special guest David Mott... Pianist Charnie Guettel has been performing Friday and Saturday nights between 8 and 10 p.m. at Charnie's Books, 449 Church Street in downtown Toronto.

Toronto's blues community is excited about a new venue for their music. "Blues and Cues" is located at 3477 Kennedy Road (just south of Steeles) in Scarborough with **Junior Wells** on hand for the grand opening in January. The Kinsey Report and Snooky Prior are among the promised out of town talent... The **James Cotton** Blues Band did a one nighter at The Brunswick on February 27.

Montreal's major piano talent, **Oliver Jones,** is spending April in Europe with concerts in Spain, Portugal and France, including a two week stint at the Paris Meridien. The year began with a tour of Western Canada and an appearance at the Paradise Valley jazz party. The pianist is also working on a solo recording to be released this summer. Jones will be in Winnipeg in early May before heading to Baden, Switzerland for a "Piano Summit" concert with Kenny Drew and John Celianni.

Fraser MacPherson's Quartet performed in Ottawa, Kingston and Montreal prior to recording a new album for distribution by Justin Time Records. Oliver Gannon, Steve Wallace and John Sumner were the other participating musicians.

The Jazz Association of Montreal presented more than 20 concerts during its first year of activity. It now has its own newsletter. You can obtain more information about the society and its newsletter by writing JAM Session, 6852 Chemin Holland, Montreal, Quebec H4W 1L6.

Edmonton's Yardbird Suite showcased Lee Konitz, Lorraine Desmarais and the Denny Christianson Big Band as it launched its 1990 program year.

Paul Cram organized a quintet for a year end engagement in Vancouver at the Glass Slipper (December 28/29). Early 1990 performances by Hugh Fraser, George Adams, The Dirty Dozen Brass Band the Desmarais/Christianson package kept the Coastal Blues and Jazz Society busy. The award winning jazz documentary **Imagine The Sound** was shown February 15. Barry Harris, Courtney Pine and **Jane Bunnett** were due in town in March with the Tony Williams Quintet (4), The Harper Brothers (8), Steve Lacy (10 and 11) and Egberto Gismonti/Hermeto Pascoal scheduled for April. There was also a special late night concert at The Golden Slipper on March 20/31 with **Roger Baird's** Sirius Ensemble featured on Friday and Free F'all on Saturday.

Fraser MacPherson was at the Alma Street Café on February 14 with guitarist Oliver Gannon, bassist Torban Ohbol and vocalist June Katz. Saxophonist **Cambell Ryga** was also in residence each Saturday during February.

Vikrama's Hands On album (Unity 105) is now available on compact disc. **Alex Dean** has a new CD produced for the same label and the Dave McMurdo Big Band's new recording is now available on Innovation Records.

Who's Who Of Jazz In Montreal is John Gilmore's biographical catalog of musicians who have contributed to Montreal's jazz scene over the years. This new book complements Gilmore's history of jazz in Montreal called ***Swinging In Paradise...***

Mark Miller's long-awaited book, ***Cool Blues,*** has finally overcome production problems and is now available. It's a fascinating glimpse at two brief Canadian visits by Charlie Parker in 1953. There's a lot of newly discovered information as well as many photographs which have never been published. ■

THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE RECORDINGS

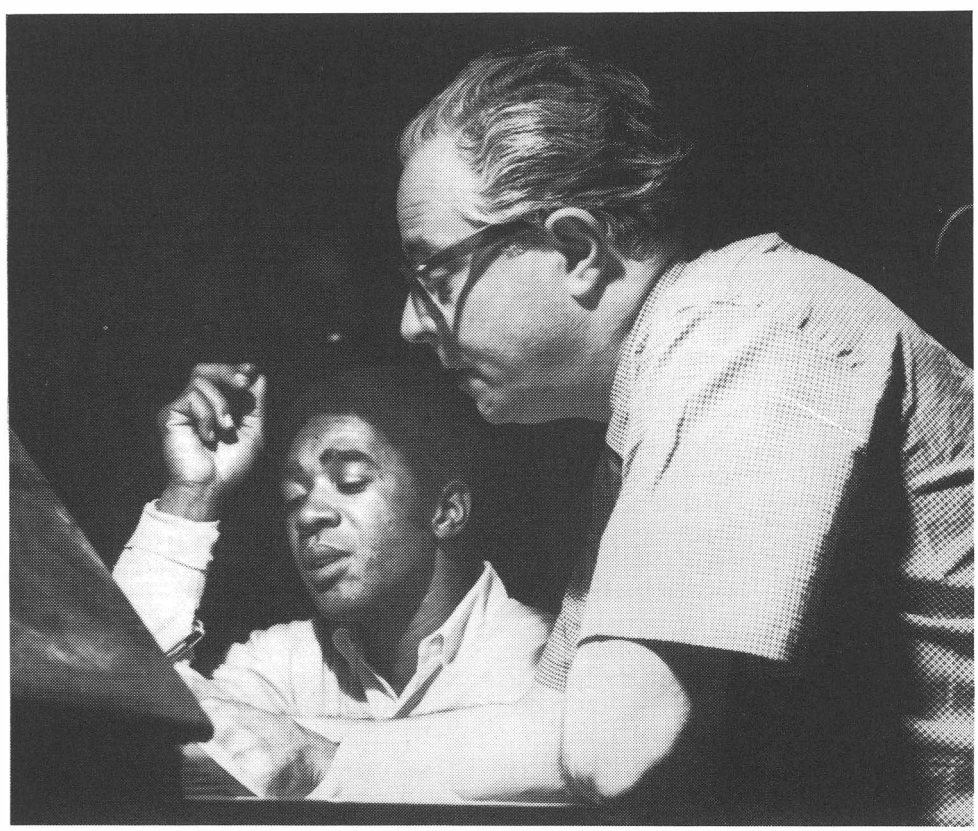
The annals of jazz history abound with tales of legendary giants and unsung heroes who while commanding the respect of fellow musicians as well as an inner core of critics and devoted aficionados have never fully captured the attention and veneration of the jazz audience at large. Pianist Freddie Redd most certainly qualifies as a prime example. A native New Yorker, Redd began to make an appreciable impact in the early 50s gigging in a variety of situations with people like Oscar Pettiford, vibist Joe Roland, Art Blakey, Art Farmer, Gigi Gryce and Charles Mingus. Over the years however, he has seemingly preferred to lead a rather shadowy existence. A globe trotter of sorts, he has been known to turn up suddenly and unexpectedly in any one of many places throughout the world. Performing and recording sporadically, his handful of releases are by now prized collectors' items cherished the world over. Included among these recordings are two exceptional Blue Note sessions dating from 1960, ***Music From The Connection*** and ***Shades of Redd.*** A third date never previously released was recorded in early 1961. Now thanks to **Mosaic Records**, these two classic offerings plus the third unreleased disc are available as ***The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Freddie Redd*** **(Mosaic MR3-124)**. In keeping with Mosaic's consistently high standards, the three records are handsomely packaged in a sturdy box complete with a booklet containing extensive liner notes, discographical information and a smattering of first rate photographs.

Music From The Connection materialized as a result of Jack Gelber's off-Broadway production of the same name. A play about drug addiction, the plot revolves around a group of junkies waiting for their connection to show. Gelber wanted jazz as a backdrop and after meeting Redd through a mutual friend, it was decided that he would compose an original score. Forming a quartet, Freddie and his sidemen not only performed the music but took on acting roles as well. Eventually Alfred Lion and Francis Wolf of **Blue Note Records** approached him about doing an album. Redd went into the studio with the same personnel he used night after night during the stage production's lengthy run. Since everyone was already familiar with the material and had by this time developed a close musical relationship, the end result is a free flowing, evenly balanced program. Particularly outstanding is the overall contribution of alto saxophonist **Jackie McLean**, his sharp, wailing streetwise sound lending a tinge of authenticity to the proceedings at hand. Redd has plenty of his own to offer. Owing a stylistic debt to Bud Powell and to a lesser extent Thelonious Monk, his well-constructed solos alternate between fleet, single note lines and solid, full bodied chords. Bassist **Michael Mattos** and drummer **Larry Ritchie** round out the group. While Redd's music sits firmly on a bop foundation, his tunes possess an appealing unpredictability that allow them to rise above the ordinary. Beginning with the brisk, melodic *Who Killed Cock Robin?* and closing with the appropriately titled *O.D.*, this album shimmers with a strong, passionate drive and a sense of excitement that is hard to surpass.

Shades of Redd, on the other hand, fits the typical **Blue Note** mould more comfortably than its predecessor. However instead of employing the customary trumpet-saxophone combination, Redd opted for a front line blend of alto and tenor. Joining McLean is tenor saxophonist **Tina Brooks**, a somewhat obscure musician whose untimely death robbed the jazz scene of a very promising up and coming young talent. (For an in-depth look into Brooks' brief but productive career you can turn to another indispensable Mosaic package, ***The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Tina Brooks*****, Mosaic MR4-106.**) Once again Redd's skills as a composer and small band arranger help to bring out the best in his associates. McLean's tart, penetrating tone contrasts nicely with Brooks' smooth, soulful muscularity. Both men have ample opportunity to prove their agility and resource-

OF FREDDIE REDD

fulness on *Thespian*, a piece that begins in a slow, sombre mood then suddenly accelerates in tempo. *Blues-Blues-Blues* lives up to its title as all hands pitch in to carve out a distinctive groove. Here as elsewhere, there are moments when Brooks brings to mind the sadly underrated Hank Mobley. *Shadows* stirs up feelings of pain and desolation. Both reedmen bare their sentiments accordingly as does Redd and bassist **Paul Chambers** who along with drummer **Louis Hayes** combine to function as a sturdy, dependable timepiece throughout. Playfully optimistic, *Melanie* bounces along in a carefree vein. Chambers leads off with a spry solo followed by Brooks, McLean and Redd. *Swift* is a boppish speedway with plenty of thrilling hair pin turns while the self-explanatory *Just A Ballad For My Baby* pays heartfelt tribute to a very special someone. Decidedly in a Spanish mood, *Ole* benefits greatly from the sizzling stickwork of Louis Hayes. As an added bonus, this latest edition of ***Shades of Redd*** contains two alternate takes (*Melanie* and *Ole*) that were deleted from the original release.



For his third and final **Blue Note** session, Redd decided on a sextet that included expatriate trumpeter **Benny Bailey**. Except for a change in drummers (Hayes is replaced by **Sir John Godfrey**, a Jamaican drummer who was active around Brooklyn at the time), the group remains unchanged from the one heard on ***Shades of Redd.*** The decision to bring Bailey aboard was a wise one. Having since developed into one of today's more uniquely personal stylists, at the time of this recording he was still to some degree under the spell of such celebrated trumpet titans as Gillespie, Navarro and Freddie Webster. Nevertheless, his lightning attack and finely crafted lines bring a certain flair to Redd's half dozen originals. The fact that these sides remained in the can for nearly 30 years is truly unfortunate, for I think it can be safely said without going into a detailed description of each and every track that the level of performance on this date is at least equal to and in some instances exceeds that of its two preceding companions. This is hard bop at its best and considering Mosaic's policy of limiting each collection to 7500 units, it would make sense to take advantage of this marvellous opportunity at once. - *Gerard Futrick*

Mosaic Records
35 Melrose Pl.
Stamford CT 06913-0170

FREDDIE REDD & ALFRED LION (Photograph by Francis Wolff)

PAUL PLIMLEY

With a customary twinkle in his eye, the man whom Vancouver writer Alex Varty has called "perhaps the finest performing pianist in Canada today" turns to the piano keyboard and begins a series of lush chords peppered with fast single note runs. Before you know it, layers build on layers, and the flow of ideas becomes almost overwhelming in intensity, but embedded with almost surprising moments of lyricism. Like the best of the "post-Taylor" improvising pianists, Paul Plimley has technique to burn, but eschews virtuoso displays in favour of personal expression. I've always pictured him as dancing at the keyboard and indeed he has recently been re-exploring collaboration with dancers.

Above all, Plimley is a ***performer***, with a sense of theatre reminiscent of European improvisers like Han Bennink and Willem Breuker. His best performances feature a strong connection with audience, cemented by his puckish sense of humour. I've seen him accidentally break a key on an inferior piano, and just as quickly balance it on top of his head and continue to spin out dizzying strings of notes. Paul has that uncanny ability to make each member of the audience feel a personal connection with his music.

Like so many improvising pianists, Plimley has been flattered by the comparisons to Cecil Taylor, but dogged by them as well. There are elements in common (the unceasing creativity, the cascades of notes, the ability to juggle a number of themes simultaneously) but there are great differences as well. Where Taylor's touch is muscular and aggressive, Plimley's tends to be more delicate and lyrical. And when he does "attack" the keys, it is with a slyness and wit rarely apparent in the welter of notes produced by Taylor. Mind you, they are certainly brothers of the keyboard, united in their admiration for each other's work and that of the many great pianists who have preceded them.

It is only in the past few years that Plimley has concentrated on solo performance, usually of his own compositions. He also performs standards and originals in a variety of settings, enjoys a ten-year association with now-Montreal-based bassist Lisle Ellis, writes rather romantic charts in the spirit of Ellington and Mingus for an octet which is unfortunately dormant at this time, and is a pretty mean vibraphonist, drummer, and percussionist.

Plimley was born in Vancouver 36 years ago. His paternal grandfather played classical violin and paternal grandmother classical piano, and music was always his greatest interest, the inevitable piano lessons starting at age seven. But no matter how much he loved the music itself, music education has never been one of Plimley's greatest loves. European classical, African-American, and classical Indian remain his favourite musics, but as to those lessons...

I went till I was 11 and then I quit for five years. After I stopped taking lessons for good, when I was 20, I felt that I had to undo a lot of the values and ideas which were transmitted during those piano lessons, which concerned European classical music. I wanted instead to play the music which would express what I most deeply feel.

Stints at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University in Vancouver resulted neither in a music degree nor a great deal of satisfaction. At least at SFU the academics recognized and supported the development of the compositional gifts that set Plimley apart from many of his peers in improvised music. His pieces are not just heads designed to lead into long improvisations, but glow with feeling thanks to his gift for beautiful melodies and interesting voicings. As well, at SFU began the collaborations with theatre and dance, and an exposure to electronic music which opened his ears to the new possibilities of sound.

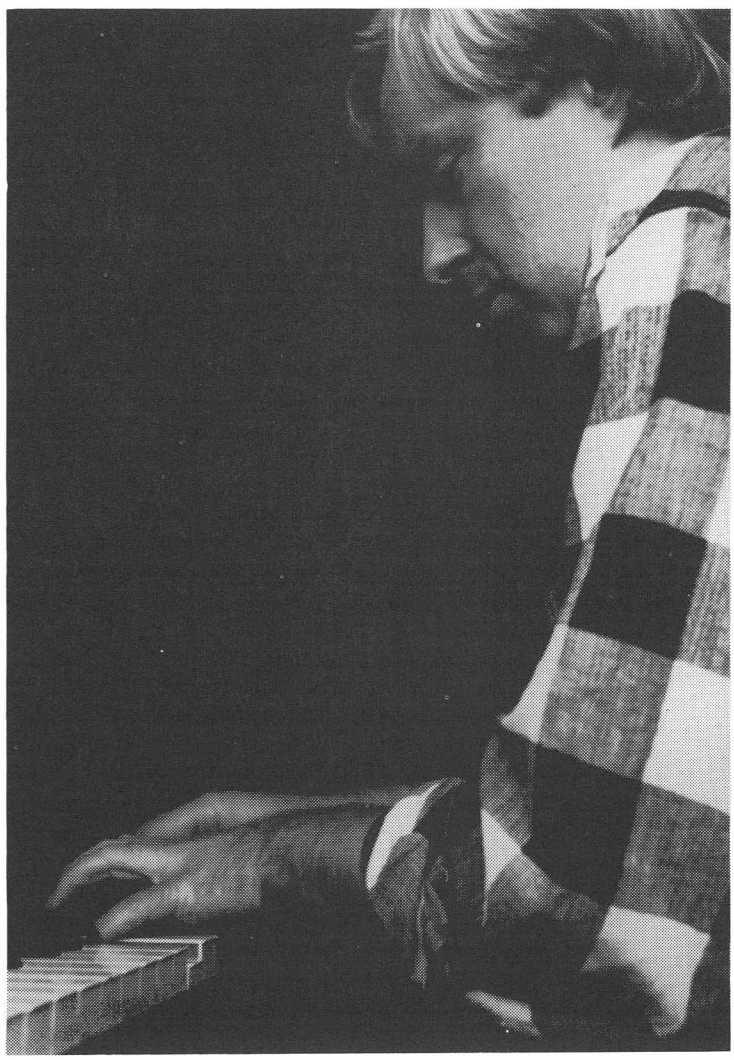
Still, improvised music was a godsend to Plimley, allowing him the freedom to express what was inside without any restriction but his own physical limitations. Even in conversation, you can tell that he's a born improviser. The verbal byways and ideas multiply, but somehow the original conversational spark is returned to after innumerable verbal detours and usually at least a few puns. Actually, something Paul has been working on for a few years is editing that whirlwind of ideas when he sits down at the keyboard so as not to more clearly reveal the logic of their unfolding.

Plimley discovered the improvised music scene in Vancouver at just the right time, as the "children" of the legendary

pianist/poet/visual artist Al Neil, people like Gregg Simpson and saxman Ross Barett, came into artistic maturity. Plimley was soon a founding member of the superb New Orchestra Quintet with Simpson, Lisle Ellis on bass, Paul Cram on reeds, and trombonist Ralph Eppel. Besides recording a very good album, ***Up Til Now***, these players and others founded the New Orchestra Workshop, a co-operative with an emphasis on performance and education.After putting together a 15-piece orchestra called CORD (Community Orchestra Research and Development), setting up an office, and producing many workshops and concerts and several recordings, NOW fell prey to the seemingly inevitable tensions of underfunded volunteer organizations and disbanded in 1981. Luckily, however, NOW was reformed in 1986 with some new blood as well as "oldtimers" Plimley, Simpson, saxophonist Coat Cooke and bassist Clyde Reed, and continues to this day to be the vital force on the West Coast improvised music scene.

After playing vibes and piano on Paul Cram's Sackville recording, ***Blue Tales in Time***, Plimley spent some time travelling before returning to Vancouver to work on his compositions and put together his octet. Besides his work with NOW, his view remains pointed outwards. He has spent time in Europe over the past few years, performing solo on Dutch and Belgian TV and with the Cecil Taylor Orchestra in Berlin, and enjoyed the chance to play with Steve Lacy in Paris. Paul has found Europe an extremely cogent environment.

You're exposing yourself to a completely different cultural stimulus and history. You've got a group of nations whose history goes back so much further. The climate there is artistically such that people are beckoning you to express yourself without conforming to media expectations. People are looking for the individual. Art transcends being merely entertainment for passive consumption. Of course, it's important to say that music that is entertaining is not per se a negative experience, but the concept of the market mentality...



Plimley still takes on students when he's in town, but the media attention and opportunities for performance are steadily on the increase. He has recently recorded with master percussionist Andrew Cyrille in New York, and with Lisle Ellis at the Banff Centre, concerts in Montreal and Victoriaville with Cyrille, Ellis, and bassoonist Karen Borca, and he is coordinating an exchange between NOW and the Knitting Factory in New York for the fall of 1990. The early part of 1990 promises a collaboration with New York-based dancer / choreographer Dianne McIntyre, a tour of Texas with innovative trumpeter/composer Dennis Gonzales, and a project with irrepressible guitarist Henry Kaiser. Vancouver is a good home for an improvising performer, with a loyal audience and supportive media, but Paul Plimley has reached a level where his music deserves to be recorded, and listened to, around the world.

The primary focus of my energies and aspirations is making music, and central to this is being true to the feelings that made me want to play in the first place. You must maintain that truth inside yourself in spite of external obstacles which come from the realities of the music industry, the media, even the opinions of your musical peers. My first priority will always be the continuing development of the music itself rather than my career as such.

Available recordings: Besides the New Orchestra Quintet and Paul Cram records, presently available on cassette from the artist are a fine octet session from a few years back called ***Hidden Shades***, and a recent recording with the trio, ***Swinging Planets***, whose effervescence and spirit easily overcome an indifferent piano and budget production values. A CD of duets with Lyle Ellis will soon be available from Nine Winds, as will a limited edition cassette of duets with Clyde Reed from the artist himself. Write P.O. Box 69665, Station K, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5K 4W7. The Paul Cram recording, ***Blue Tales In Time***, is available from Coda Magazine for $10.00 pp.

JAZZ LITERATURE

THE NEW GROVE DICTIONARY OF JAZZ edited by Harry Kernfelt (2 vols; 1400pp. Grove's Dictionaries of Music, New York, $295)
THE SWING ERA: The Development of Jazz, 1933-1945 by Gunther Schuller (919pp, Oxford University Press, New York, $30.00)
THE BIG BAND YEARS by Bruce Crowther & Mike Pinfold (208pp. Facts On File Publications, New York, $24.95)
SATCHMO by Gary Giddins (239pp. Doubleday, New York, $24.95
LOUIS ARMSTRONG: The Louis Armstrong Story 1900-1971 by Max Jones & John Chilton, 303pp, Da Capo Press, New York, $10.95

Jazz books continue to pour forth from American presses for our edification and, in most cases, entertainment. Some of these are in (what the trade calls) "blockbuster" range and display varying degrees of scholarship and dedication, from the multiple collaborative efforts of some 250 writers in the pricey ($295) ***New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*** to the heroic one-man study of ***The Swing Era*** by Gunther Schuller that is even more impressive and twice as perceptive (at one tenth the cost).

In physical terms ***The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*** is truly impressive: in two handsome volumes of 1400 double-column pages are over 4,500 entries on every aspect of jazz you'd ever want (or don't want) to know, from a scholarly 26-page keynote essay on Jazz by James Collier, around which this megawork is built, to detailed biographies of over 3000 performers composers arrangers that include representative first-issue recordings, careful analyses (and sometimes musical examples) of their work and a selective bibliography for cross-checking. Of particular interest are short articles that define jazz terminology, theoretical examinations of such topics as Arrangement, Form, Harmony, Improvisation, illustrated features on jazz instruments and instrumentation, overviews of jazz in films, jazz singing, and the record industry, including 350 individual labels and companies.

A brave attempt has been made at impartiality and fairness in the balance between eras and areas, no easy task considering the fixed opinions and lazy research of some of its writers. Its 250 contributors range from distinguished authorities like Gunther Schuller (Ellington, Arrangement); Martin Williams (boogie-woogie); Dan Morgenstern (Chu Berry); Frank Driggs (swing era, most of the 220 photos); William Russell (New Orleans musicians); Leonard Feather (singers); John Chilton and an army of stringers reporting from all over the world, from Buenos Aires to Sydney, Bolton (England) to Barcelona...Which leads to this reference giant's shakier underpinnings.

In its efforts to internationalize its scope and throw as wide a global net as possible, the Grove tome lists artists and their habitats (nightclubs and such) in cities and countries of mostly regional interest. Not bad in itself, but this is done often at the expense of American performers and groups of greater significance to jazz as a whole, which puts the competence of the book's selective board into question. In one glaring example, we have a detailed entry on Yoland Bavan from Sri Lanka (ex Ceylon) who has been in semi-retirement as a singer (with Lambert-Hendricks) since the 1960s, and **no mention at all** of Peggy Lee, who is still very much active as a premier song stylist and star. There are numerous other omissions, in favour of home town favourites (such as Bhumibol, the ruling King of Siam) and those of questionable stature even in their own neck of the woods.

In keeping with its global sweep, Grove lists jazz festivals and other events in such spots as India, Rumania, and Cuba, no doubt to boost the local tourist industry, and judging from the ephemeral nature of the business, its 70-page listing of nightclubs in Australia, Argentina and elsewhere is as much historical as geographical, and not all reliable. Toronto fans for instance will be surprised to learn that at Malloney's Club, "The Australian pianist Graeme Bell led a band of Canadian musicians there in 1975 under the name Climax Jazz Band..."

In the megabook category but on a different level, Gunther Schuller's massive 919-page survey of ***The Swing Era (The development of Jazz 1930-1945)*** takes up where he left off in his landmark ***Early Jazz*** nearly twenty years ago, and is a monument to sheer endeavour and dedication. It's also possibly the biggest single book on jazz: and modestly priced at that.

With golden ear and near-platinum perspicacity, Schuller (a distinguished composer -conductor-orchestrator in both classical and jazz fields) spent "tens of thousands of hours" listening to **every recording** of every artist, orchestra or group discussed (and there are literally hundreds) to put one of the most fruitful periods of jazz history into a new and revealing perspective. (Such an approach has its obvious setbacks of course, like "listening fatigue," and

records often do not give an accurate reflection of what a musician or group really sounded like live, but Schuller bravely plunges on.)

Schuller opens his book with a 43-page chapter on Benny Goodman, because Goodman "epitomized the Swing Era" for most people, who still see him as its "king." But he quickly makes clear that Benny was in no way any kind of "king" and that his performances of arrangements by black musicians like Fletcher and Horace Henderson were inferior to earlier versions by black bands, one reason being that Benny's soloists were outclassed by such artists as Bobby Stark, Rex Stewart, Henry Allen, Benny Morton, Dickie Wells, Coleman Hawkins and others who performed them originally. Ultimately, Benny's success was the result of a shrewd packaging mix of familiar pop material and black musical "seasoning" marketed by a white band for a white commercial audience.

Schuller gives greater prominence therefore to Duke Ellington (110 pages) and to some extent Louis Armstrong, though both artists ironically "never really participated in the swing era" despite their major contributions to its evolution, Armstrong "having virtually invented and certainly perfect swing." Ellington's music on the other hand transcended eras and categories but the 1930s was a period of intense activity and musical development for Duke, during which he perfect his orchestra's unique style and sound. Schuller delineates how those sounds and rich harmonies were achieved with 63 musical examples transcribed from Duke's great recordings of the period.

It was only when he took to composing extended works that Ellington demonstrated his shortcomings, says Schuller, though his contention that Ellington's attempts at extended composition after 1940 were inferior to a number of later works (by George Russell, Tad Dameron, Bill Russo, etc.), including his own, may raise a few eyebrows (if not hackles). Schuller is quick to point out however that Ellington composed incessantly to his very last days. "And in twentieth century music he may yet one day be recognized as one of the half-dozen greatest masters of our time."

Schuller also summarily dismisses Louis Armstrong's later recordings of the period (with Oscar Peterson, Ella, the All Stars) as inferior to his earlier 1930s material that included several masterpieces despite poor accompanists and bands (Luis Russell being an exception). Armstrong, he says, was one of those "fortunate few" who at most times could play his very best regardless of who's backing him, "and who often enough could play even better in defiance of a poor accompaniment." What is strange and a little sad, he adds, "is that as the swing craze broke, so little recognition was given to Armstrong as its true progenitor."

The bands of Jimmie Lunceford and Count Basie are wisely paired as representing *The Quintessence of Swing* in a chapter under that title, with particular attention paid to Basie's rhythm section and the heat it generated. Schuller, though, criticizes the Basie style as suffering "from considerable neglect of dynamics and lack of harmonic invention...a melodic/thematic paucity (that) remained unsolved to the end."

A particularly perceptive 30-page study of Earl Hines crowns a chapter on *The Great Black Bands*, with thorough re-evaluations of Fletcher Henderson, Andy Kirk and others. In a chapter on *The Great Soloists*, Schuller examines the weaknesses and strengths of Art Tatum ("whose awesome technique was his Achilles' heel"), Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Eldridge, Berigan, Teagarden, Billie Holiday, Henny Allen (Schuller finds him "quirky:), and several others.

In fact Schuller covers so much territory in these and other chapters (*The White Bands, Small Groups*, even *The Territory Bands* of the Mid-West) that the mind boggles, the senses reel at so much revealing information, at so through a critical assessment and freshly thought-out ideas on just one era of jazz. If ***Early Jazz*** was a hard act to follow, ***The Swing Era*** is one you can't afford to miss.

On a decidedly lighter scale is ***The Big Band Years***, a generously illustrated and sprightly written history of the swing and dance bands that dominated the era by Bruce Crowther and Mike Pinfold. More a coffeetable offering than a serious study, this British-produced book evokes the nostalgia of the period with excellent photographs from the archives of Frank Driggs, its pictures editor, and more recent colour studies, all of it laced with pertinent (and impertinent) quotes from the musicians involved. Fifteen chapters cover big bands from the 1900s through the swinging '30s and '40s to today's "Keepers of the Flame" and tomorrow's talents in the big band arena. In all, a pleasant journey.

In ***Satchmo***, an inspired mix of text and pix that gloriously justifies its sovereign subject, Gary Giddins, author of the much acclaimed ***Celebrating Bird***, finds new ways of celebrating Louis Armstrong by drawing generously on a treasure trove of previously unpublicized letters and snapshots in Lucille Armstrong's Collection at her husband's home, as well as other archival material.

Louis was a prolific writer, as imaginative and entertaining as his music, and his letters, notebooks (a number written for Belgian biographer Robert Goffin and not all used) and manuscripts for an intended autobiography throw new light on Louis' formative years in New Orleans and Chicago. Giddins illuminates all this with fresh compelling insights into Armstrong's remarkable career, including careful assessments of his music and records. Two chapters could tell the whole story: *The Entertainer as Artist* and *The Artist as Entertainer* (reflecting respectively Louis' early small band career and later global glory), the latter clearly refuting the currently popular theory held by Collier and others that Armstrong chucked it all in the '30s in favour of fame, and that nothing he played or recorded after 1932 was of any intrinsic value.

But Giddins goes further, to skilfully illumine Armstrong's genius both as artist and entertainer, whether thermoforming *Potato Head Blues* with his Hot Seven in 1927 or interpreting *Chim Chim Cher-ee* in his unique fashion in a children's album just before he died. As Giddins observes: "Every great improviser is a great editor. It's easy to run scales up and down the horn; but picking out the notes that mean something is hard. Interpreting a phrase in a way that makes it personal is the work of a master."

For yet more of Satch, a paperback reprint of ***The Louis Armstrong Story 1900-1971*** by Max Jones and John Chilton remains one of the most intelligent books on the master, with a warm new introduction by Dan Morgenstern.

SIR ROLAND HANNA

Roland Hanna was born on February 20, 1932 in Detroit. The son of a preacher, he played in the bars and clubs of Detroit in the late forties. In 1954 he went to the Eastman School of Music, and later to the Juilliard School of Music. In 1958 he was on stage with Benny Goodman at the Newport Jazz Festival and in Europe, then he joined the Charlie Mingus Band. In 1959 he was heard as a leader of duos and trios in New York. In 1966 he played with the Thad Jones - Mel Lewis Band. During the '70s he was the main organizer of the New York Jazz Quartet. He has recorded under his own name, with Benny Goodman, Charlie Mingus, etc.

Annemarie: Roland Hanna, let me lift up the curtain, let me have a glance behind it. First of all let me know what you meant some time ago, when you talked about those new forms you were working on.

Roland: When we talked about new forms, I was trying to develop a way of writing music that would move in a direction (using the old forms) using the sonata and the dance forms, the suites and the larger forms, but finding ways of expressions that would be much closer to painting or poetry, you know, by having various lines or musical thoughts that were not necessarily thematically connected, but rhythmically connected. So that you may hear a rhythmical idea which would represent a theme, and then hear a musical idea. Then later you would hear this rhythmic idea developed instead of a musical idea. For instance, when you listen to a sonata: the word itself means **sound**, it's a sound poem, it's a sound piece:'' Sonata. Well, if we try to think of a sonata in the terms of rhythm, then we get a kind of confusion because people are not capable of assimilating rhythmic ideas in an order. Certainly we listen to a Max Roach or Elvin Jones and we hear them playing a solo, but we don't know that they are playing a very definite form, when they play these solos. So it's different than when we listen to a musical idea. When we listen to someone playing an instrument like a piano or a guitar or a trombone or whatever, we can always relate what he played before to what he plays after: we can hear the symmetry. But my point is to try to interrelate musical thoughts and rhythmic thoughts. And that's what I meant when I said **new forms**.

Could those statements be compared to mathematics as well?

Of course, everything can be compared to mathematics! Almost everything, except our psyches, but if we do that, then we lose that certain human musical element that is important. The only composer I know who ever thought in these terms was **Camille Saint-Saens**. Camille Saint-Saens spent some time in North Africa, just as Pablo Picasso did. And during that time he learned some innovative ways of writing rhythms with music. He wrote a very large work called ***Suite Algérienne***.

Camille Saint-Saens learned, just as Picasso, from the Africans. I understand that he learned from something that was there already, that was native and basic?

It may have been basic, but he was able to collate it, to put it together. In each painting, **Picasso** was able to take something that was already there and to put an identity, a Picasso identity, on the particular African element that he used to express his ideas. The same thing with Camille Saint-Saens, who was able to take these sounds, African sounds, and put them together with the European tradition and make an identity that became Camille Saint-Saens. You understand what I mean... which is the same thing that I'm going to do with this idea.

You mean, you just point out the same idea they did, point it out in another way?

Yes, that's all. That's all any of us can do. You know, when anything happens in culture, it happens only because someone comes along and finds that there is a certain way to look at things that we haven't noticed before as human beings. And someone comes along and denotes the things, puts them down. Everyone can get the benefit from it and that to me is the purpose of each

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

person developing themselves. So the benefit of what you do with your life work can be passed on to the rest of the human beings in the world.

So new forms is not the right title for it. It is there and we find new ways to show it?

That is exactly what I mean. We need to find new ways, so that we don't have to deal with such things as boredom or lack of interest, especially where music is concerned. You know, we live in a different time, in a different age. This decade that we are living in has had more change in just a few years than the last 200 or 300 years. You know, all the new technology that we have. And so when a human being begins to present ideas, these ideas are affected by all of this technology. Everytime someone comes up with something that's a little different, so many other people have input, that eventually these ideas expand tremendously. And this is why I'm saying that we, each, everybody has to do this, in their own way.

The experience that we are involved in now is new for me, we are creating musical forms I have never met before. When you have ***new blood***, your band comes up with new ideas, and this music that is going on now is totally different for me. And this is the same thing that I intend to do with the new forms. I intend to try to put older things together, but to come with something that's fresh.

Now we have been talking about old forms, new forms, your forms, and I would like to find out how you feel about being categorized, for example when the European jazz critic Jo Berendt categorizes you by saying that you are coming from Bud Powell. How do you feel about that?

It is unfortunate that we have to depend on music critics for a musical information, because often our music critics have not done the proper homework. Or they already have given impression of what they want to hear. Jo Berendt and I have known each other for a long time and maybe at the time he heard me play, that was 25 years ago, he may have thought that I did sound like Bud Powell. I would think that my life is a life of layers. If you relate me to any pianist, the first pianist would have to be art Tatum, because we all come from Art Tatum, and from Bud Powell as well, you know. Even further we have to think, well, Art Tatum must have had some place to come from, he must have listened to Jelly Roll Morton. Certainly Jelly Roll Morton or Fats Waller would have been an influence on Art Tatum. So Jelly Roll Morton has had an influence on me as well. And Fats Waller has had an influence on me. Not to mention the people that I listened to on purpose, to get information from them. The most direct influence on my pianistic life is Tommy Flanagan. When I was a child I watched Tommy play and so I tried to play like Tommy Flanagan. Now maybe Tommy Flanagan was directly influenced by Bud Powell. Bud if the influence came through Tommy Flanagan, so be it! Hank Jones was an influence on me because he was the best pianist in Detroit area, and he left long before I really knew what I really wanted to do. But I heard him many times, when I was a young man.

Was there a time when you wanted to be anything else but a musician?

I really can't say that, I really don't know whether there was ever any time I wanted to be something else than a musician. When I say, "before I knew what I wanted to do," I mean before I knew whether I wanted to do music just as an avocation or to study some other means of making a living. You know the decision to play music as a job, as my work, wasn't made until I was 21 years old. I always knew I wanted to play music, but the decision to become a musician professionally wasn't made until I was 21 years old.

More about the person Roland Hanna: usually musicians are more of a soloist or more of a rhythm section man. But you do both. Are you an introverted or an extroverted person?

Again I would say both! Because there are many times when I find myself becoming the aggressor. And many times, when I have to lay back and listen and find out what the other person is talking about. But there are many times when I am the aggressor, so that's when I'm the extroverted person. You know, I accompanied Sarah Vaughan for three years. I finished Juilliard, I went on the road with Sarah Vaughan, and in those three years I learnt what it meant to be an accompanist. Sarah is such a marvellous leader, you know, her musical gift is so grand that she can lead you just with her voice. She doesn't have to tell you what to do, she can just sing the note and you intuitively know what should go with it, if you aren't a good musician, you're gonna be lost anyway.

Tell me whether giving this support is just as great a joy as being the soloist?

You see, that's all part of being a complete musician. You can't be a complete musician if, when the time comes to complement a musical statement given by someone else, you don't try to complete that statement by your best ability. You are not listening to the whole sound of the music, you see? If you are only thinking, "how can I make my voice the strongest voice," then that's not what music is about. Music is itself an entity, and you are the vessel by which music is being heard through other ears. If you allow yourself to get in the way, music will choose another channel to go, you see? And you won't get the benefit of the musical sound.

I wonder whether you could transpose that way of thinking and looking at the music into you as a person, just you, as a private person?

Yes. Whatever you feel about music has to be in some way a reflection of the way you feel about everything in life. If you have an ordinary manual labourer's job and you consider your job an unimportant one, then you are doing a disservice to yourself, because you are not recognizing your value as a human being. Whatever you have to do must have a place in the whole scene of a whole relationship to everyone else. And if you pull aside what you do and think it's not important at all, then you are leaving an empty space. So other people have to fill that space, you see? It's like, let's see, when you have a situation in a community where the farmer has grown old and he decides he doesn't want to be a farmer any more. Someone has to grow the food. If he doesn't grow the food, then someone else has to come and do that. We can't all be machine builders or musicians or office workers. Somebody has to do some of the things that people don't like to do.

But you don't do what you are doing just out of necessity, but mostly out of love, I feel.

Yes, but I have the feeling that to do what I do is more like a gift. Everyone has got some diatheses, it's as if a power has chosen me to do this, because it has given me a certain kind of special proclivity for doing this, I guess that's the word. Some predilection for playing music. I find that I have a

real need to carry my cello with me and to practise it. If I don't practise my cello I go kind of bananas out here. Years ago I used to have to practise the piano. I would leave my hotel room, no matter what time it is. If I could get into the place to play, I would do that. And even if people were eating, I would be playing, and sometimes the manager would come and say, "Look, can you stop playing now?" I would have to do whatever I needed to do, to play music.

So this is something that I have no control over. That's when I realize that had I been chosen to design automobiles, or been an engineer, or a painter, or if I was a person who was meant to be a carpenter and make the beds for hotel rooms or whatever, I would make sure that I had the desire to do that.

I would do this if I didn't have a love for it. I would develop my love for it. Because I'm sure that this is important for every human being.

I happen to know that there are many people who choose a completely different way: they take all of this gift, strength, vitality and love, and drown it in some drugs like alcohol and so on.

That is a sad thing. But it happens so many times, especially with musicians. After a while, if you had lived a productive musical life for maybe 30 years and then suddenly you don't have an audience anymore, or there doesn't seem to be as much need, or the people don't call for you as much, then you tend to turn to alcohol and drugs. It's a kind of weakness. And it has unfortunately taken the lives of many great players, because they became depressed about not being able to play in front of an audience or to be able to be with musicians. You know, I play solo most of the time, and the reason I play solo is because I find as much pleasure playing my piano just for myself as I do playing for an audience. The great pleasure is not playing music in front of thousands of people. That is sort of like the icing on cakes for me. The great pleasure is to sit down and play an instrument, just to hear the sounds myself.

I think the most important element in jazz music is the freedom of expression. The fact that people of different and diverse ideas can come together and have a music that is just like a unification, like a oneness. This is in my opinion the most important element in jazz. ■

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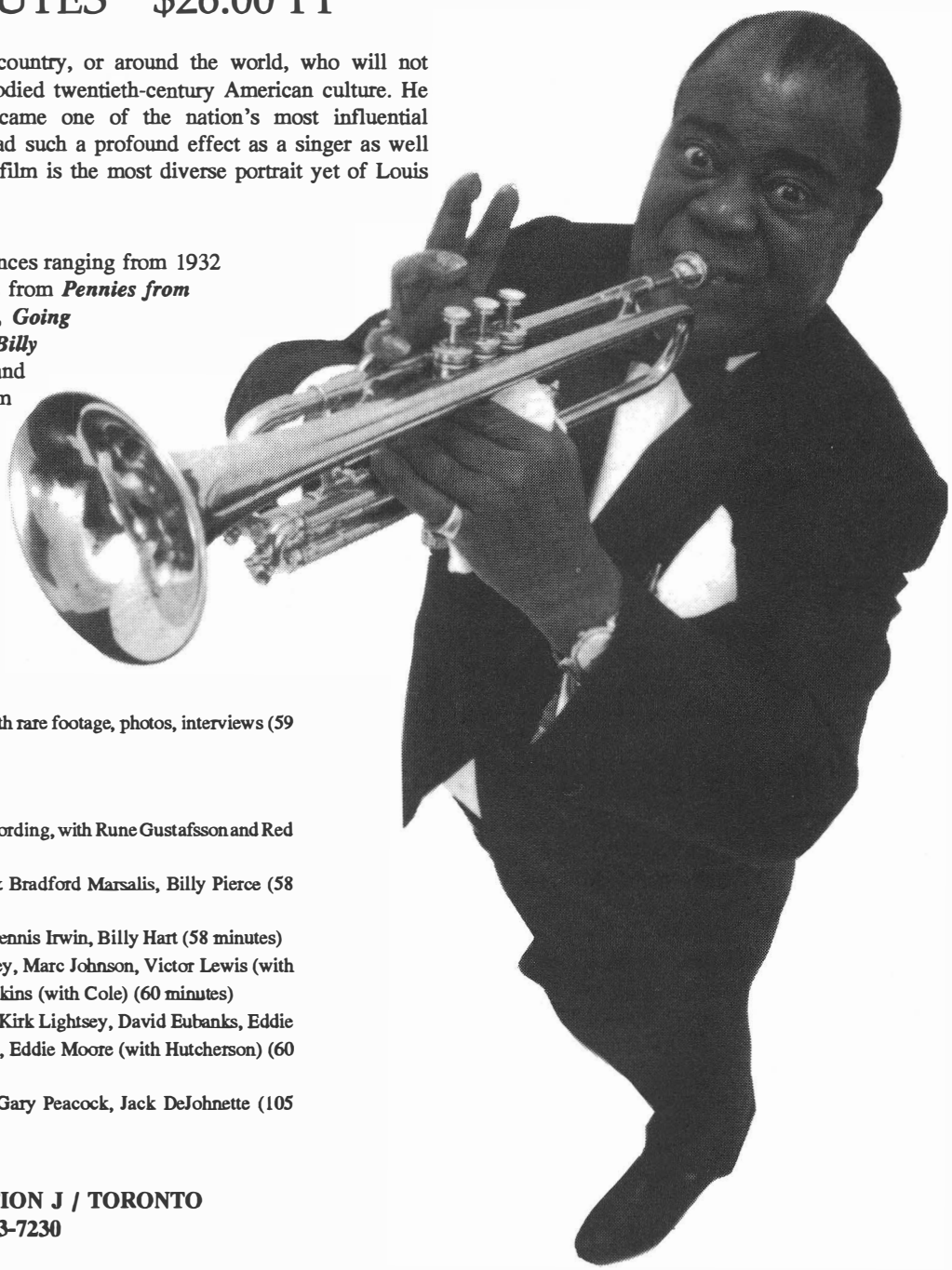
The film was written and directed by jazz scholar Gary Giddins, who has also authored a book of the same title.



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COMPACT DISC REVIEWS

The Modern Jazz Quartet
For Ellington
East West 7 90926-2
(51 minutes, 58 seconds)

There is nothing unusual about jazz musicians recording an album of compositions by Duke Ellington. However, when the Modern Jazz Quartet recorded this album in early February 1988, it resulted in something special.

The selection of tunes was a positive sign right from the start. We don't get to hear *Sepia Panorama, Jack The Bear* or *Ko-Ko* played very often unless we are listening to Duke Ellington recordings. *It Don't Mean A Thing* is given a highly unique treatment by the MJQ and it works beautifully. *Rockin' In Rhythm* is another case where a familiar tune is played in a different manner with successful results.

Alongside the seven Ellington compositions are one original apiece from John Lewis and Milt Jackson. The title piece, *For Ellington*, by Lewis is a haunting tune in 3/4 time that moves to 4/4 and back again to 3/4. Bags wrote *Maestro E.K.E.*, which is a beautiful dedication to Edward Kennedy Ellington. Both originals deserve to be heard many times.

The music on this recording is sensitive, swinging and thoughtful. I recommend you turn the lights down low and listen attentively to the wonderful results of this Ellington - MJQ merger.

Ricky Ford
Saxotic Stomp
Muse 5349
(49 minutes, 42 seconds)

This is the ninth album under the leadership of Ricky Ford. In my judgment, it ranks as one of his three best recordings. Seven of the eight compositions are by Ford with Thelonious Monk credited with the one exception. Ford leads a sextet through these compositions and they form a tight knit group that suggests a fraternal brotherhood of musical arts.

Charles Davis on baritone sax and James Spaulding on alto sax and flute join Ricky Ford's tenor on the front line. The sparkling rhythm section is composed of Kirk Lightsey, piano; Ray Drummond, bass and Muse Records house drummer Jimmy Cobb. They are in top form for this September 1987 recording session.

The spirit of Charles Mingus pervades a few of the compositions, with the title number *Saxotic Stomp* perhaps the premier example. The sound of Ben Webster is also in evidence: listen to *Ben's Den*. Lightsey and the rhythm section also shine brightly on that one.

It's not clear if the writing or the playing deserve top marks on this excellent compact disc. Let's just declare it a draw.

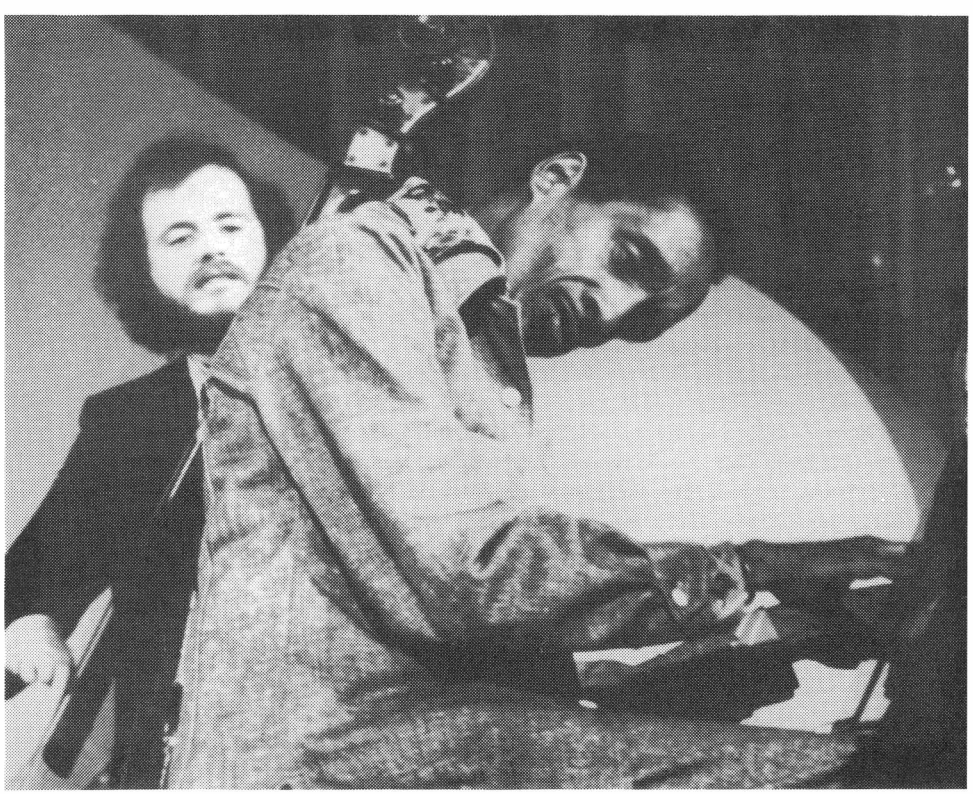
I recently had the opportunity to hear Abdullah Ibrahim's group live and was particularly impressed with Ricky Ford's playing. This recording confirms that he is now a significant musical force that should continue to make a major impact on the jazz scene.

Cannonball Adderley
In Europe
Landmark LCD-137-2
(50 minutes, 36 seconds)

Cannonball Adderley recorded a series of very fine albums for the Riverside label from July 1958 through July 1963. Orrin Keepnews who produced the original sessions was able to arrange to re-issue a number of the albums on his Landmark label. The compact disc under review here was originally issued as an LP in Europe but has never been available previously in North America.

It turns out to be an outstanding jazz recording. The material comes from August 5, 1962 at a concert in Belgium. Cannonball's exuberant alto playing can be heard in good form. The solo honours however are shared by Yusef Lateef and Joe Zawinul. What most people focus on when Lateef's name is mentioned is his playing of a range of instruments such as the oboe and a variety of flutes plus his interest in Eastern music. In my view, his strongest suit is his large toned, straight ahead, bluesy, swinging tenor saxophone playing. He is vastly underrated in this realm. Just listen to his contributions here on P. Bouk and Gemini.

These days Joe Zawinul is most closely associated with the group, Weather Report, and is known for playing a number of electronic keyboard instruments. To my ears, his best jazz playing is to be found on acoustic piano with Cannonball's group. He gets into a groove in his solos and they seem to unfold with interesting ideas. He plays the blues with a natural feeling that is surprising for a man who spent his formative



Milt Jackson & N.H. Orsted Pedersen (Photograph by Jacques Biscaglia)

years growing up in Austria. His solo work on *Gemini* and *Trouble In Mind* are fine illustrations of his earthy and creative playing.

Mention needs to be made of the superb rhythm section. Bassist Sam Jones and drummer Louis Hayes form a unit that aids and supports the front line players in a manner that would be hard to beat. They performed a vital role in making the Cannonball Adderley Quintet and Sextet such a success.

It is now over twenty-five years since this recording took place. It is too bad we had to wait so long to hear it, but that in now way diminishes the current pleasure it can provide.

Bill Holman Band
JVC JD-3308
(59 minutes and 2 seconds)

Bill Holman first came to the forefront as a tenor saxophonist and writer for the Stan Kenton Orchestra in the early 1950's. His saxophone playing has never been anything special. It has been his composing and arranging that has earned him recognition.

It seems hard to believe that Holman's last big band recording under his own leadership took place back in 1960. Prior to that there were two other Holman big band issues. His best was originally released on ***Coral*** in 1957 and re-issued at a much later date on ***Sackville***.

The current 1987 recording does not surpass the one from thirty years earlier, but is nonetheless a worthwhile contribution. Three of the eight selections are originals, but in truth, I prefer his arrangements of material by others to his own compositions on this particular disc. The West Coast musicians on this band include such familiar names as Lanny Morgan, Bob Summers, Don Rader, and Bob Enevoldsen. Drummer Jeff Hamilton does an especially fine job of providing a driving rhythmic impetus to this 18 piece musical aggregation.

Holman creates especially nice arrangements of Monks' *I Mean You*, Stevie Wonder's *Isn't She Lovely*, and *The Moon of Manakoora*. The highlight of the disc is *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*, written by Charles Mingus. Holman's arrangement manages to remain faithful to the original spirit of the Mingus composition while at the same time allowing for the Holman identity to also creep subtly into the picture. Bob Cooper takes top solo honours for his lovely tenor saxophone playing on this piece. (Cooper is playing better than ever and deserves to be heard from much more often.)

This well put together big band disc has good sound quality and should please those listeners who have been waiting a long time for Bill Holman to release his next recording.

Preceding Reviews by Peter Friedman

. . .

Keith Ingham/Bob Reitmeier
A Collection of Fred Astaire
Jump JCD 12-15
The Music of Victor Young
Jump JCD 12-16

Pianist Keith Ingham and clarinetist Bob Reitmeier have been favourites for some years now at Joe Boughton's Conneaut Lake jazz parties. Thus, it was a natural for Boughton, upon his acquisition of the Jump label, to match them in a recording studio, together with bassist Frank Tate and drummer Vernel Fournier. The result of these March 1989 dates is a 48-minute CD of tunes associated with Fred Astaire and a 65-minute CD of Victor Young compositions.

Lots of pluses here. This is polished, restrained mainstream chamber jazz that's easy on the ears and swings comfortably. The titles are quality numbers seldom assayed in jazz style. Best of all, the relatively unknown Reitmeier, whose dry, clear, vibratoless tone gives him an understated presentation that somewhat masks his abilities, definitely rewards close listening. Though he has technique to spare, Reitmeier is making each note count, always telling a story, and delivering solos that contain a nice mixture of density, angularity, use of space and exploration of ideas. Tate, given much less solo time, also uses it well, tending to produce melodic improvisations vs. the rhythmic approach more commonly favoured by bassists.

If you're only buying one, the Astaire set has tunes that apparently appealed more to the players as jazz vehicles, yielding a generally higher level of creativity and originality. Price for either (in U.S. dollars) is $15.00 plus $2.00 shipping charges from Joe Boughton, 283 Jefferson Street, Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335.

Reviews by Tex Wyndham

SERGEY KURYOKHIN

The great Russian novelist Tolstoy once spent twenty minutes dusting his room without having a single thought in his head. For him, this was a crime. He was embarrassed, caught with the trousers of his consciousness down, so to speak, and equated the state to not existing, being dead. The incident, years later, gave rise to the theory of otstranenie, or de-familiarization, which Soviet literary critic Vikto Shklovsky described as destroying the habitual logic of associations, a deliberate cultibation of the unexpected, of dissonance, the world of everyday reality becoming more perceptible in the process, objects restored from mere "recognition" to actual "seeing."

All well and lofty and good, but what does any of this have to do with Soviet improvisational pianist Sergey Kuryokhin? Well, everything.

From the moment I walked into the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz on the night of Sunday, October 23, I was plunged into a world of de-familiarization. For one thing, it seemed I'd come on the wrong night. I'd been informed, just a day before, that Kuryokhin was in town, for a solo piano venture, yet the stage was filled with various wood flutes and saxophones, some violinists, a contra bass clarinetist, a cellist, inverted lampshades, a slender rose-packed glass vase perched atop an amp, a giant Chinese gong, assorted sound specialists, a synthesizer (both machine and human performer) plus a host of other electronic devices, the most intriguing of which seemed to be a red ice chest with enough cords running from its back to resemble brain circuitry or a map of the New York subway system. In the midst of this the boy charged about, energetic yet fey as a street urchin, sporting a striped longsleeved T-shirt, shocks of brown hair drumming on his forehead, frantically crying out, in thick Slavic syllables, for his translator.

This boy was 35 year old Sergey Kuryokhin.

"Sharp! Sharp! He wants it sharp. It should be very sharp in contrast," the translator advised the group of musicians on stage, as she came charging up from the back of the hall.

What, exactly, had Kuryokhin said? I couldn't catch it. The versatile Russian language has many words for "sharp:" **ostrii**, as in pungent; **zorkii**, as in keen or acute; **rezkii**, as in harsh or biting; **shustrii**, as in clever or astute; and plain old musical **diez**, for a sharped note. Each of these words fits the person, music and cultural heritage of Sergey Kuryokhin.

American critics are fond of pointing out the new Soviet music's roots in everyone from Archie Shepp to John Cage to the Art Ensemble of Chicago, but the land of Mussorgsky, Scriabin, Stravinsky and Shostakovich (of innovators such as Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov in poetry, Bakst and Exter in theatre design, Kandinsky, Rodchenko, Tatlin and Malevich in the visual arts) need not feel wildly beholden to anybody, even in the area of jazz, which Kuryokhin once said he found "aesthetically dead" anyway. Inconsistency is Kuryokhin's virtue, one in which he places great store for artists, for he has also said (in interviews printed in **Cadence, Jazz Forum** and Leo Feigin's book, **Russian Jazz New Identity**) that he'd once been "stunned" by the keyboard mastery of McCoy Tyner (heard on VOA broadcasts), yet also claimed the piano was an "anachronism," an instrument that no longer interested him (he was then into saxophones, an instrument he plays at). The pianist, or antipianist, has also claimed that, ideally, his improvisational method requires a choir, a zoo, a symphony orchestra, a gypsy camp, circus a lot of synthesizers and a host of other stuff he felt, at the time of the interview, he'd never have. His current translator, Naomi Marcus, told me that Kuryokhin, who once played piano for morning ballet classes and exercise sessions for athletes, is now supplied with a full military band for his "happenings," complete, as he wished, with epaulettes. At a "breakthrough concert" at the Great October Concert Hall in January of 1988, he employed that band, plus a chorus of pigs and chickens, saxes perched on scaffolding and trumpets in the balcony.

Indeed, the session I'd stumbled into was beginning to resemble the setting Berlioz imagined for his Funeral and Triumphal Symphony, originally scored for a modest chorus of 2000 men, 1500 children and 500 women with an orchestra of 400 performing a work expressing all of the ideals nurtured by the human heart. Yet the Kuumbwa Jazz Center stage also resembled one of those frantic family reunions we are all all too familiar with: an event fraught with every sort of independent impulse, gesture, except these musicians were strangers to one another, being coached by a man who couldn't say "sharp" in English.

Part of the group the pianist was working with is called UT GRET (pronounced "Oot Greet"), one with its own but compatible

ideology of "pan-idiomatic free improvisation," and a range of instruments to prove it, everything from steel guitar to koto. While the contra bass clarinet grackled over what sounded to me like lush Rachmaninoffian lyricism, the interplay was invaded by two violins, a cello and a flute.

"Now vee play vary seem-pal ... one note **C**," Kuryokhin said, "one note **C**, oop to abzolutely eenCREDible ... like echo ..."

I'd stumbled into a rehearsal, the boy Kuryokhin at its heart, seated, and not so seated (he kept rising from the piano bench, as if he'd just made contact with a whoopee cushion), legislating, wholly intuitively it would seem, his wild gestures denoting universal enthusiasm but not necessarily conveying any specific instruction.

"Many ... many," he cried, jumping up and prancing around. This must have meant "more, more," the words soliciting richer more vital timbres, more of everything: a cello bouncing to the leader's staccato bent, squeezed violins, suggestions of sneezing, wheezing, ripped paper bag or sliced throat, some basil synthetic sound at the centre of it all, a carnival of tonalities that left one residing in shock and awe.

"How 'bout gee-tar?" Kuyokhin cried and, getting that, "Give mee somethink radi-cal in meedle ..."

A light vamp and some straight blues on piano lasted about a millisecond, then turned bacchanal.

"Next part," Kuryokhin cried, "One, two, tree, four ... after zat ...ZIS ... LOUD!"

The pianist made a grand swooping gesture, but from the ground up, no descent but a plane pursuing some prey into the sky.

"What you've just seen and hear is a rehearsal of the third set," one of the UT GRET group announced, in English. The rehesarsal ended, as impulsively as it had begun.

"I don't know how much of this we're all going to remember by 10:30. but ...," one member of the musical coalition said, passing by me.

"They're like lists, his directions," another replied.

If one attempts to describe Sergey Kuryokhin's music, the words become as varied, odd, unique as the music itself. His work contains percussive force (a legacy from McCoy Tyner?), relentless insistence (repetition, at times, devoid of increment), a punishingly short attention span, incredible speed (the result, no doubt, of that virtuosity and technical brilliance which he has called "the Russian disease"), a host of anything-goes associations, naivete, anxiety, collision, conflict, wit, humour, arch romanticism, self-mockery, audience-mockery, an amazing continuity of movement and, at least on the night I heard him, considerable joy. Plus distinct dramatic effect, intensity, purpose (a difference, I think, which marks him off from the duo, David Stilley and Mark Bradlyn of UT GRET, that preceded him yet very much set the stage of expectation).

"I don't know what you're going to hear tonight, but I can guarantee that you've never heard it before," Bradlyn said, and he wasn't just whistling Dixie, by a long shot. The sonic offerings of Stilley, on digitals and contrabass clarinet, and Bradlyn, on everything from trans-sense chanted syllables to ukulele, conjured up, in me, the following associations: Sugar Ray Leonard sparring with a marimba, the L.A. Freeway (at rush hour, which is all the time), finding oneself massaged by a cello in Katmandu, Radio Free Pittsburgh, castrati accompanied by the Mormon Tabernacle Tambourine Choir, slack key guitar, the discovery of static electricity, dueling boredom and the stunningly positioned two soft brown moles on the back of the young woman seated in front of me (just above the semi-circular dip of her orange and yellow cashmere sweater). A part of the music? Why not. I had given up tickets to **Parsifal** for this, and felt mildly cheated, having traded one composer who didn't know when to quit for two others. But it was interesting, and I include this fairly lengthy description of what **preceded** Kuryokhin because it has much to do with him, and much that does not, as I hope to show later.

"I like it... it's different," the young woman with the moles said to her companion. "They're friends of mine," the other said. "They were actually more musical tonight than they usually are."

Sergey Kuryokhin, pianist, antipianist, acrobat, actor, creator, clown, honorary gypsy, holy fool, was born in Murmansk in 1954. He liked operetta at an early age, which is important, for he laces his performances with it. The family moved to Leningrad in 1971, where Kuryokhin played with a rock band, also important, for he also spices performances with King Crimson. He was kicked out of two conservatries, and proud of it, but did manage, when he attended classes, to study piano and conducting. He encountered jazz by way of McCoy Tyner, Anthony Braxton, Cecil Taylor and Monk, and has worked with excellent Soviet saxophonists Anatoly Vapirov and Vladimir Chekasin. Kuryokhin's first recording, **The Ways of Freedom**, was released in the West in 1981, with a stipulation that read, "Sergey Kuryokhin does not bear any responsibility for publishing this tape." This was no idle Dadaist joke, but the result of political expediency. Until recently, Kuryokhin has by no means enjoyed official status.

The album opens with a section called "Theory and Practice:" a single distant "plink" establishing irony at the start, the rest an impressive display of lush musing and stern rapid fire street urchin survival, an encyclopedia of pianistic devices, left and right hand abandoning their customary jazz chores, giving way to cascading clusters which, like the hands, refuse to stay in any one place for long. Not content with the piano's exterior, its keyboard, Kuryokhin also scrapes and plucks away at interior strings, these techniques combined with thick chordal brooding and wide open slashing attacks outside.

Other sections of **Freedom** bear titles such as No Exit, The Wall, Rules of the Game, the whole expansive and claustrophobic by turns: Archipelago crowded with swooping divergences, reiteration, trills, passages inhumanly accelerated (a producer's negligence or sound engineer's whim cited as cause, but unnecessarily, perhaps for Kuryokhin is inhumanly **fast**, and proud of it. (I can always **see** Don Pullen or Cecil Taylor's hands, no matter how fast they play, but the Soviet pianist's convert to hummingbird wings.) A nerve-twittering attack is coupled with "relief" or silence sliced with percussion: what sounds like the pianist smashing a cardboard box with his fists, semaphoric reflection, the rasp of sandpaper, a knock on the door, small noises like someone winding a watch or unwrapping a stick of gum. A last portion, The Other Way, attempts to assemble the shreds, and does, as much as the disruptive approach allows: a vertigo inducing outcry laced with more "little" percussive inter-

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ludes, sudden but trapped impulses, choked desires building to a logically dramatically consistent but "crackers" ending: forced entry into temporary light, a punishing circumlocution: a predictable idyll, some **pensées** at the end, shattered by metallic glissandi. It's exhausting...

And interesting to compare this work with a later, 1986, piece called Popular Zoological Elements, which contains a lot of piano, 39 minutes worth, its gentle ostinato opening giving way to all the moves, and moods (some of them actually sustained for a time) of the quick change artist, the intrusive aspects less belligerent or locked-in here, more relaxed: blues and bop riffs, a nod toward the Gershwin of Rhapsody in Blue, accessible (if you wish) motifs, some mock stately tromping, marches, even cocktail piano breaking into wild stride (à la James P. Johnson), down home front stoop "banjo" (à la Stephen Foster), frog croaks, cat whimpers, a mocking Liszt Liebestraume overdubbed with laughter, music hall melodrama, a calf's small cry, and out...

Other albums, such as ***Sentenced to Silence***, were made with saxophonist Anatoly Vapirov, this one containing abundant Kuryokhin solo work, but also "comping:" fine dots etched in an expanse of copper behind Kapirov's solemn bass clarinet and bassist Vladimir Volkov's mournful arco, lively dissonance when Kapirov goes gospel Rollins Rahshaan Kirkish with double saxophones on Images of Time. On another Vapirov album, Kuryokhin offers deft pianistic and customary "small thing" woodpecker busy percussion behind the vocal effusions, growls, snores and snarls, sometimes too mousey tricks or gratuitous syllables (shades of UT GRET), of Valentina Ponomareva on Invocations of Spirit, a summoning forth that continues through Fire and Water as well, cosmology, to my taste, too often reduced to what sounds like a bagpipe with a slow leak. "Can we actually 'know' the universe?" Woody Allen once asked, and replied, "My God, it's hard enough finding your way around in Chinatown." I think I prefer, in spite of Vapirov's earnest approach and agile improvisation, the here and now of Spontaneous Composition (on Ponomareva's album, **Fortune Teller**): the vocalist's gypsy love beckonings, her sly scat and near sated breathing in sync with drummer Sergey Belichenko.

The new Russian music has occasioned Messianic claims: "**the** art of the decade," the highest, or next highest, evolutionary stage of what was once known as jazz, but I'm not sure they're merited, or necessary. The decade seems to house room for just about anything (as this music does), and Kuyokhin's art, in and of itself, is exciting, fascinating, de-familiarizing. Steeped in suite and symphonic traditions, containing wit and hard drama, his music is, at its best, true, painful, purposeful, offering abundant evidence of what William Faulkner called "the human heart in conflict with itself." When it doesn't the music can seem tedious, pretentious, obligatory, or just plain silly (funning without philosophy), musical objects fighting to dominate a listener's attention but cancelling each other out in the proces, a conspicuous use of technique for the sake of technique, surprisingly uniform for all its busyness.

However, one thing Kuryokhin, and the new Soviet music, is **not** is culturally deprived, a victim of isolation (and therefore "catch up" imitation) as some Western critics have implied. Russian cultural history supplies abundant precedent for what Kuryokhin does: all the way back to 14th century **blagovestie**, or the ringing of bells in old Moscovy, a mode of rejoicing that James H. Billington describes as "an overlapping series of sounds similar to that which was used in the 'many-voiced' church chant, producing an effect that was at the same time cacophonous and hypnotic," a direct appeal to the spirit. Kuryokhin's independence and singularity of devotion (to music) might be traced all the way back to 14th century Hesychasts, the Holy Fools, **Skitalets** (holy wanderer), right down through Boris Pasternak, the poet whose thoughts on the creative process, his belief that the cardinal aspect of art is its **conception**, that the world's best creations, "those which tell of the most diverse things, in reality describe their own birth," sound surprisingly close to Kuryokhin's own: creativity as spirit liberated from "the burden of matter," the real essence of art "found outside art", contained in the creative process itself.

The pianist's on-stage antics, which consist of everything from removing the legs of a grand piano and playing it, seated, on the floor, or (at The Knitting Factory on his American tour) crawling around one

with legs and, lying flat on his back, lifting the piano with his own limbs and, just as suddenly, letting it fall, this theatricality, what he calls behaving "in a paradoxical lunatic way," is right in line with the 1920's Futurist "inverted dandyism:" artist David Burlyuk's multicoloured coat with silver buttons and top hat, or Vladimir Mayakovsky suspending a grand piano from the ceiling while he recited his *Poemts* (the poet Osip Mandelstam once reminding him that he was "not a Rumanian orchestra"), a wooden spoon or carrot in the lapel of his yellow suit coat. A tradition of conscious absurdity laced with a keen, revolutionary sense of what's "new" (and satirical underpinnings) extends through the hinged-wood pantaloons (which flexed and shut as an actress walked) designed by Alexandra Exter for the film ***Aelita***, and books with titles such as ***The World Backwards*** printed on wallpaper.

Kuryokhin's musical intentions bear a strong resemblance to the Oberiu manifesto of 1928, a literary group whose leader, Daniil Kharms, built a machine that did nothing whatsoever, and employed, in his own work, devices found in Kuryokhin: odd juxtapositions (a boy eating "some sort of loathsome thing" from a spitoon beside a long line of people waiting for sugar, the piece called Symphony!), sudden reversal or "Switcheroo," reduction (the great poet Pushkin just standing around throwing rocks), gratuitous and often violent nonsense, pratfalls, disconnection as emphasis and peculiar resolution (characters hiccuping on stage in a play, then just leaving, a little girl walking out to say her father asked her to tell the audience that the theatre is closing because "we all feel sick"). Kharma "**is** art," a friend and colleague of his said, and the same holds true of Kuryokhin, whose music also has affinities with the "Za-um" movement in poetry ("beyond meaning"), which employed made-up sounds, united in a manner free of referential meaning, or, in the hands of the Oberiu, a collision of meanings.

Kuryokhin's music recalls a host of pre and post-revolutionary artistic movements: the "mass play" theatre of Sergei Radlov, Vsevolod Meyerhold's theatrical salads incorporating athletes and acrobats, circus and music hall effects, the monumentality of Vladimir Tatlin's proposed tower straddling the Neva River in Petrograd; the iconoclasm of painter Kazimir Malevich (the Mona Lisa incorporated but crossed out in his own painting), the Suprematists' search for "a mystical icon for the new age," the Constructivists' (another visual arts group) obsession with both structure and isolating materials, **presentation** rather than representation; and, in film, the quick splices and fades, cutting as a rhythmic device, of Daiga Vertov and Eisenstein. One should also mention members of the classical avant-garde who emerged in the 60s: Edison Denisov, Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina.

I've dwelt on this much background at some length because I think it's **there**, in the music of Sergey Kuryokhin. He's not just some quixotic and belated Neo-happening American avant-garde clone, but a unique cultural "entity." "We could talk about Russian spiritual tradition," he has said. "I'm a nationalist-chauvinist, you know." And: "The mechanism of the influence of tradition is hidden somewhere in the subconscious." Kuryokhin also echoes his fellow countryman Scriabin's desire for "action in total harmony," stating that "all areas of art are equal." Some musicians couldn't care less about literary and artistic traditions, but the Soviet pianist is not one of them...

Whatever his antecedents, Kuryokhin was mostly himself when he officially walked on stage at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in California, having been introduced as a "key premier keyboard artist," the statement prefaced by, "It's amazing that he's made it to the United States; incredible that it's here in Santa Cruz." The "premier" pianist then set about divesting us of "tasteful predilection," to de-familiarize, making the world perceptible again, restoring us from "recognition" to "seeing." He did so as we had expected, by employing "the whole arsenal of musical means available," yet in a manner that was slow, cautious, classical at the start, moving from mock drawing room piano to a sizzling fusion of notes, slapping his sides like a seal, flapping his arms, wheezing vocalizations: sheep's bleat, the birth of kittens, back to mock sullen Volga boatmen folk tunes (evolving to stride, or just nodding off to sleep through the weight of sentimentality), stubborn ostinato, hammering: the anticipated variety and surprise yet none of its quite when and what you expected, Kuryokhin setting the tone, and clues, advising us, musically, as to just how much of this we should take seriously, and how much not.

Kuryokhin was joined by Andrew Voigt, formerly of the ROVA Saxophone Quartet, a rich exchange, from liquid piano and pretty sax to high-kicking Can Can to a wild gypsy dance that, cuaght in the dervish swirl, made me want to pick up tables with my teeth: cavorted Barok, wedding joyous, a cellist (who had joined them, along with some wild violins) bowing **beneath** his bridge, a Ben Webster fuzz to Voigt's tenor now, the music edging toward some happy apocalypse, and not so happy, growing ominous, Kuryokhin conducting with constricted shoulders, switching to a pop vamp you could clap to, ending with an overdose of lush Russian lyricism and rolling sax R&B, beyond pathos, tragedy, heroics and into that "sincerity of the comical" which he claims alone cannot be doubted, along with the search for improvisational freedom.

A surprise, off record, off vinyl, is just how **joyously** free this music is. And how purposeful. That, I think, is what can distinguish Kuryokhin from a group like UT GRET: presence, force, focus, intentionality; the difference between inner freedom, spirit, and a mere Macy's display of gratuitous goods. Not that he's not capable of the latter (GUM's?)...

Back in the USSR, Kuryokhin, the eccentric who once wandered through the streets of Leningrad, hippie hair, a bright and witty manner, scat-singing in time to a Walkman, "his dog, his pet," a "baby of the cassette boom," an unofficial artist running the risk of "parasitism," is now, quite simply, a "star." He fills the 4000-seat Great October Concert Hall, leads his group appropriately dubbed Pop Mechanics, scores movies for Lenfilms. "Lots of our friends' fates haven't been so sweet as his," I was told by his translator. "An original, an original in the modern world," Kuryokhin, apparently, has made going his own way stick. Will success spoil Sergey Kuryokhin? Not, it appears, if he maintains his difficult balance, juggling the spontaneity, mystery and parqadox he loves: characteristics of his music. Pianist, antipianist, Chaplinesque clown, acrobat, wise fool, he's managed for 35 years ("It's very important for him to be cool"), having discovered that, able to do "anything on a piano," he had to make it all "interesting for himself." And us. ■

SUN RA * SWING AND A MYTH

Jazz, as we know it, has always given a greater allowance for individuality, especially in its performative aspect. Some musicians assume it in their instrumental style, others in their stage presence, many more in a relative mix of both. However, few have pushed this notion to its limits than one Hermann 'Sonny' Blount, a.k.a. Sun Ra. So much so, that he has been dismissed at one time or another as a mere eccentric, a 'freak' even or, worse still, a 'charlatan.'

Like him or not, one has to acknowledge the unconventional nature of the man, but also his importance as a creative institution of sorts. On the one hand, his artistic vagaries are pursuant to his mystifications regarding his background ("My Zodiac sign is Gemini; Month of May; arrival zone, U.S.A." - year of birth estimated anywhere between 1914 and 1924), while, on the other, his metaphysical and other-worldly concerns place him in an unusual creative orbit, one of Mister-Re (or Mister Ra at least).

However diffuse, contradictory or self-serving his world views may be, Sun Ra has unarguably been the first black musician to effectively elevate his music beyond the level of entertainment, even art, and right up then to a quasi-metaphysical plain. As far back as the late fifties, when social and political consciousness was brewing amongst the American blacks, Mister Ra had already left the planet, so to speak, and the titles of his compositions over the next decade are indicative of his greater awareness of things universal, *Saturn, Sun Song, Nebulae, Cosmic Chaos, The Star Gazers, Friendly Galaxy...*

Because of his cosmological preoccupations, a misunderstanding has ensued, one which has cast the pianist as being an important figure of the New Thing of the 1960s. This belief has been predicated much more on the outlandish aspects of his appearances with his **Myth Solar Arkestra**, to use but one of the varying designations of his musical congregation, than of the music itself and the man behind it all. In his early days, he had worked as band pianist and arranger for Fletcher Henderson before winding up in Chicago in a big band of bassist Eugene Wright at the Club De Lisa. It is there he met both **John Gilmore** and **Marshall Allen**, who remain with him to this day.

By 1956, he had formed the nucleus of his Arkestra, developing its own repertoire of a decidedly hard bop nature, though not devoid of rough edges which would eventually lead him to increased freedom in the sixties. By the time of his **E.S.P.** recordings like ***The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra*** in 1965, he and his charges were riding the wave of Free Jazz. Yet, his comments of that scene show little affinity to the ideological and radical politics of that era. In a ***Jazz Magazine*** interview published in 1971, he talks about his association with the **Jazz Composers Guild**, which he left after a short period, mainly for philosophical reasons. In his words: *"People like Shepp and Taylor had their own music, but they were not talking about Space or Intergalatics...They were talking only of Avant Garde or New Thing."* (Emphasis added.) Furthermore, he went on to say that all of those people from that movement were adamant in their claim that they would never sell out to the majors, but all of them did eventually, except him.

But that was back in 1971. Some 20 years later, fate would have it that he too would join the fold of a major label, this one being **A & M** records. Just last year, ***Blue Delight*** **(SP 5260)** was released, an album which confirms his status as a traditionalist for all intents and purposes. This, coupled with his two **Black Saint** issues (***Reflections in Blue*** and ***Hours After***) are clear signs that his once free wheeling intensity has now subsided, at least in his studio sessions. By the same token, the level of playing has also ebbed, which is most apparent with tenor man John Gilmore.

Not only is this apparent on record, but also in the concert setting. Just last February, the Arkestra played in Montreal before a sellout crowd in a new concert hall at Concordia University, offering a lengthy but not always uplifting show. Of course, there were energetic moments, in the beginning mostly, but the performance focused mainly around a repertoire of tunes, both original and standard, interspersed by solos. Once again, Gilmore seemed laconic, taking three brief solos in over two hours, two of them on clarinet, while altoist Marshall Allen coasted after a few of his patented outbursts early in the programme. Add to that **June Tyson's** vocal and dance leads as well as the leader's neo-boogie piano intros, and one gets a fairly accurate picture of a patented but otherwise undistinguished evening of "joyful noise." If Mr. Ra indulged at the beginning like Mr. Hyde, then he changed gear to take on a more sedate Dr. Jekyll attitude for the remainder.

Undeniably, the show is part of the music, not a mere adjunct to it. But that

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

poses a problem in terms of his recordings. As they like to engage in ritualistic chants, repeating phrases ad nauseam, all of the fun is in the visuals, the costumed regalia, the whirling dances and percussive drones to maintain the mood. However, because of the record's limitation to sound, then the music thins out considerably. Proof of that can be found in two recent live releases on **Leo Records** (***Love in Outerspace*** and ***A Night in East Berlin***). In the former, the title cut stretches out for 19 minutes, 15 of which meander in a static drone of percussion. Short numbers like *D.27* and even *Round Midnight*, offer something of substance in terms of solos and ensemble work, but this mix of tunes and rituals is pretty well part for the course these days. The same can be said for the latter album too, though its recording quality is reminiscent of the product put out on their own **Saturn** label. Check out the compilation CD, ***Out There a Minute***, issued by **O.V.C. Productions** in England for that matter, it comprises a selection of performances by the band in the late 60s, unquestionably the best period for Mr. Ra and his charges.

Over the last few years, it now seems apparent, that a split has occurred in Sun Ra's output. On the one hand, his studio dates are leaning more and more towards the mundane, tinged with an obvious sense of (self?) parody, and one needs to look at his treatments of mouldy oldies like *Out of Nowhere*, or the tawdry *Days of Wine and Roses* on the **A & M** album to get the point. In contrast, his live concerts revolve around a collective sense of showmanship, not unlike the Black bands of the thirties and forties. Because of that, live albums remain inconsistent at best.

Clearly then, time seems to have caught up with Mr. Ra and in more ways than one too. Gone are the days, when the Arkestra caused major uproars, such as the (in)famous Montreal gig of 1962. An unsuspecting club owner hired the band, thinking only that it was some kind of a dance band! Confusion ensued on opening night, resulting in a police raid. For a while thereafter, a number of musicians around their leader spent some time north of the city, playing a bit, while their legal problems were being sorted out. Not long after, the band settled back in the U.S., taking residence in Philadelphia where they have been ever since.

Gone are the days of his cosmic collectives of high energy improvisation (the **Shandar** and **Byg** releases from 1969-1970 being the best examples). What is left now are disparate pieces from different eras, sewn loosely together in an unusual quilt of sounds, effects and emotions. In fact, he gives the best insight on his present day focus: *"From now on, our melodies are going to be fully recognizable, but the harmonies will be celestial and the rhythms will be more than fantastic because they will be polyrhythms."* Whether those rhythms swing or his philosophies are myth, one thing is sure: Sun Ra is not yet ready to strike out!

IN PERFORMANCE

Marian McPartland and Jay McShann
February 3, 1990
The Folly Theater
Kansas City, MO

Marian McPartland has achieved a high level of visibility through her Piano Jazz Program, which airs weekly on National Public Radio in the United States. The list of her guests throughout the life of the series is a virtual Who's Who In Jazz. On each segment the format is as follows: (1) selections by the guest, (2) two or more works played by Ms. McPartland and (3) two or three duets by the guest and the host. Most of these duets come off in fine style, especially so since there is very little opportunity for the performers to play together on an extended basis.

Jay McShann, in 1979, was a guest on Piano Jazz. The great Kansas City pianist / stylist is often referred to as a blues pianist, and he is. Jay also has had big band experience, his own, in the 1940's. In addition, Mr. McShann has performed and recorded with many small jazz groups.

The biographical statements on McPartland usually include her studies in classical music, with emphasis on the piano at the Guildhall School of Music in England. Similar accounts on McShann typically exclude his studies in classical music, including the piano, at the Music Conservatory of the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

McPartland has a background in Dixieland ensembles, which added immensely to her ability as a 'comper.' Jay has backed several vocalists, over the years, who have demand of him the skill which he honed back on Vine Street in the late 30s and early 40s.

Place these two on the same stage and one recedes in the seat in anticipation of a very unusual experience. The audience not only was not disappointed, but was probably aroused to new heights of musical ecstasy.

The 1989-90 12th Street Jazz Series presented the McPartland-McShann Piano Duo in concert before a sell-out audience. The crowd itself bears description. These were jazz lovers, a few jazz musicians, old friends of Jay McShann, radio listening followers of Marian McPartland, and surprisingly, a few younger faces. Needless to say, the enthusiasm for the music and the musicians ran high.

Preceding the concert, the **Carol Comer Trio** entertained the ticket holders with a concert in the lobby. Amidst a bar, book and record sellers and the 'haven't seen you for a long time' friends, the music set a tone for what was to come. Ms. Comer played an electric piano with dials set to a soothing, mellow, pleasant range. She sings in a jazz manner and most of all, she swings. **Milt Abel** and **Tommy Ruskin**, bass and drums respectively, were a part of the trio. Milt and Tommy also appeared in the first set of the concert. They had just arrived for the lobby set from the sound check which came after a three to six gig. If this were not enough, they left the concert to play a gig at the Allis Plaza Hotel. These jazz specialists needed six arms and three sets of instruments. The latter they did have in cartage.

The Program: **I The Jay McShann Trio:** *Willow Weep For Me, Jump The Blues, Georgia, Big Noise From Winnetka (bass and drums), Hootie's Ignorant Oil, Hootie Blues, Crazy Leg and Friday Strut.* **II Marian McPartland, Solo:** *Take The A Train, Prelude To A Kiss, When Lights Are Low, Windows, All The Things You Are, Ambience, Things Ain't What They Used To Be.* **III Marian McPartland - Jay McShann Duo:** *Deed I Do, I've Got The World On A String, All Of Me, Blues Untitled, St. Louis Blues.*

There was a continued level of artistry to the concert which becomes difficult to verbalize. Jay began the first number with an intricate rubato chorus that the typical McShann would hardly recognize. What followed was an exercise in harmony that shook up the audience. After the first work, composed by Ann Ronnell, Jay went to work on the people and never let up. His singing was infectious. His playing was rhythmic Kansas City at its best. His accompaniment on the bass solos was of the best fit. Abel had his bass amplified in a sense of naturalness. He was able to use the best of his sound to provide an undertone to Jay's playing that kept you in a way from trying to notice that Milt Abel is another one of those great bass players who never left home.

Tommy Ruskin, as is the case for Abel, had played with Jay before this concert. Ruskin obviously had listened to Gus Johnson, the soulful drummers from New Orleans and then brought them all into a contemporary gestalt. Jay could not help but swing so hard with such competent companions.

Marian McPartland rendered a wonderful definition of solo playing. She can set an audience at ease with the patter which she has polished so well on her radio program, Piano Jazz. Her rich sense of harmony is a reflection of her early classical training. McPartland seduces the listener through a succession of key changes, difficult chord progressions and complex time alterations that leave one feeling that a great performer has graced the stage.

The duo performance was a rich experience. Both of these pianists are master compers. There was no attempt to outdo or upstage. There was, however, an exciting attempt to outswing.

In just over two hours of solo, duo and trio performances, all present were warmed-up and ready to relax and listen to more. Lo and behold, the concert was over.

The evening will live on, however; the concert was recorded for later airing on the Piano Jazz program as one of a live series. The McPartland-McShann duo has the honour and privilege of setting the pace. Watch for the announcement of the new format.

It is my feeling that the public reaction will be something that accorded the classics a la Goodman and Ellington at Carnegie Hall, The MJQ at Town Hall, Parker, Gillespie et al. in Toronto and the early JATP in Los Angeles. Jazz history was served well in Kansas in 1990 at the Folly Theater. - *James F. Condell*

The Underground (Jazz) Festival
The Tracks Club
Chicago, Illinois

This is the tenth annual underground festival. Originally implemented as an alternative outlet for the Chicago musicians

who were being ignored by the city's jazz festival (most notably those of the AACM), it has blossomed into one of the most anticipated and pre-eminent events of the year. However this year, it becomes particularly judicious, serving not only as a celebration of Chicago's jazz culture, but as a timely reminder that Chicago is once again preparing to burst afresh onto the world's jazz scene.

Moving amongst and listening to the musicians, the feeling that something is about to happen is unmistakable. The current generation of home grown excellent (**Ed Wilkerson, Kahil El'Zabar, Hanah Jon Taylor**, to name but three) speaks for itself, and the exodus of musicians from New York is growing by the month. This month alone saw the arrival of Pat Patrick, Malachi Thompson and Darryl Jones.

It's early winter and outside the snow traces zebra patterns across the tarmac of the car park. Inside the heat rises off of the stage and drifts in rhythmic passage towards the windows. **Hanah Jon Taylor** and the **Everyday Heroes** glide through the crowd to take their positions. Taylor's ability to turn up with a different group of tightly-drilled and talented musicians, practically every time he performs, is no longer remarkable, it's assumed. On drums there's **Hamid Drake**, on percussion **Zim** and on bass **John Price**; together they represent the virtues of a powerhouse three-piece rhythm section, and provide a complimentary foil to Taylor's flute and soprano sax virtuosity.

Working out on their own version of 'moroccan' funk, Drake and Price's groove-orientated patterning applies itself to Taylor's allusive 'eastern' swing style sax. Taylor swaps the sax for a flute and brings the tempo down low, emphasizing the off beat. Drake runs out from behind his drums to rap out a chord on the piano with his fist, to which Taylor responds by sitting on it. Taylor again hastens the tune and his increasingly chromatic excursions are counterpointed by Zim, who picks up another flute and answers with a repeated half octave scale.

The Heroes can build a rhythm, solid and strong, composed of assenting timbres, and Taylor can let loose over the top, sliding in between its beats, its cadences. Ever watchful of each other, the Everyday Heroes play with a delirious sense of animation, the sheer enjoyment of their craft continuously spilling over. Taylor's enigmatic presence, his quizzical almost roguish grin, concentrates their enthusiasm, allowing the praxis of their art to appear compellingly simple.

The intensity, and the intention, of the **Kahil El'Zabar Quartet** is made obvious by the very first breath of their opening number, *Aneka Rising*. A long and slow drawn out melody, which builds, rising from **Ameen Mohammed's** trumpet and **Ernest Dawkins'** alto sax, yet is firmly tethered to the motivating rhythms of El'Zabar's drumming and **Thomas Pullmer's** bass. It pulls you into the music, the feel, the texture, the tactility, urging you to give yourself up to the music, to the spirit of the music.

Of course El'Zabar freely admits to the influence that Coltrane's spiritual legacy has had upon his composing, but listening to *Angels* becomes a testimony to those sentiments. The purely kinetic impulse, the harmonic intervals, the modulations, the stellar diversity of tone.

Ameen takes a solo, his trumpet speaking in strangled, rasping tones, his body bending backwards, swaying from side to side, dreadlocks tight against the side of his head, the funnel end of the trumpet darting about like a firefly in an August night.

A Warrior's Choice starts with whistles and shouts, cymbal and tom tom heavy African drumming, the rising melody of the trumpet and the sax fusing in harmonic convergence. Propelled by a hypnotic, circling bass line through call and response vocals and wild brass solos, and all the time El'Zabar's sticks are constantly moving around the kit, his arms dancing a semaphoric ballet.

A crusading set from the Quartet, fearlessly expressive and deeply communicative. Defining the point where melody meets rhythm, balancing the yin and the yang; if there is anything that can be found (philosophically, spiritually, musically), it can be found in this music.

Von Freeman, a Chicago god-father of the tenor sax, can almost single-handedly define the idiom of expressionist bop, but when he is more than ably abetted by the likes of **Robert Shy** (drums), **Mendi** (bass), and **Jodie Christain** (piano), there is no almost about it.

It's like listening to the perfect rendition of a circle. A bass run, a tap on the snare, a chord from the piano, a sax blowing deep and holding it down. Everything following on and fitting into the spaces, before Shy explodes into a drum solo. Literally awesome, frighteningly powerful, he's like listening to a thunder storm in your front room.

Freeman returns, effortlessly discharging seamless lines of melody from his tenor, launching into solos of tremendous depth and finesse. He starts a blues and transcends it inside four bars. The man has such a distinctive voice of his own, melancholic yet gracefully celebratory, he is quite simply, masterful.

One of the most awaited sets of the festival was that of **Darryl Jones**. Having graced the albums and touring bands of such notables as Miles Davis, Peter Gabriel and Sting, and having made somewhat of a name for himself in New York, he has returned to Chicago (his birth place) to test himself afresh. Tonight he's doing just that, performing (and debuting) a solo electric bass set: one man and his bass, now there's a tightrope walk. But whether he's transposing a lick into a delay and playing along with it, or taking a short solo for a long walk, Darryl Jones is pure groove. Lying somewhere between Marcus Miller and Robbie Shakespeare, this is a man whose adventures should be watched closely.

Closing out the festival are the **Ritual Trio**, another of El'Zabar's ensembles, this time featuring the virtuoso talents of saxophonist **Ari Brown** and Art Ensemble bassist **Malachi Favors**. A deliberate fusion of talent and intuition, imagination and skill, this trio have been playing weekly residencies in Chicago for the last 18 months and it shows. Blasting straight into *Where Do We Go?* (one of Brown's tunes) the chemistry is obvious: a hard hard bass, relentless exhausting congas, searing horn taking flight on an effortless excursion into rhythm. Intravenous rhythm... like Mingus in your blood.

The trio always play with an impulse, a beat, a feeling that moves tangibly through the tune. Sometimes, as with *Dreams*, it will be El'Zabar's voice, deep and incantatory, falling into you like a spiritual. Other times, it will be the synthesis, the alchemy of the three

instruments gathering momentum. Favors' hands sliding up and down the bass, notes hanging in the air, softly speaking a circular beat. Saxophone and drums fighting for the tune, Brown dragging it sideways with discordant angular blocks of melody, El'Zabar pulling it back, coaxing at it with rim shots, nudges on the cymbals. Slowly the intensity wanes, rhythms melting into one, the nomadic balance of Brown's horn catching the tune with both hands as it rests slipping into silence.

A fitting end to the festival's proceedings. Sublime in the embrace of their music, the Ritual Trio, as it is with so many of the Chicago performers, carry the music before them. A guiding torch of free born spirit held aloft into the night. - *David Litchfield*

International Association of Jazz Educators
17th Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana

"The Republicans think that ours is a trickle-down economy, but the truth of the matter is that our culture trickles up." - Francis Davis, **Outcats**, Oxford, 1989

Interesting how the music of America's so-called minority culture has gradually insinuated its way into the majority culture, transforming its methods of music education and placing its stamp on the minds of its youth. Interesting how a music once (and still by some) associated with vice, decadence and corruption has become appropriated by the sacred halls of academe and touted as a remarkably effective way of teaching the elements of musicianship. Not surprising, really, when one considers the music's richness and its irresistible pulls at the heart and imagination. Not surprising when one considers that the music inspires young musicians to invest countless hours in disciplined practice and rehearsal; how it inspires educators to teach tens of thousands of students at the middle school, high school and college levels; how it leads scholars to conduct research into its history and theoretical underpinnings.

All of these aspects of African-American music were brought forcibly home to the two thousand students and teachers who attended the 17th annual conference of the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE), held January 11-14, 1990 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Research

No fewer than 20 research papers were presented by scholars pursuing everything from "Hazel Scott: jazz pianist," to "MacJazz: integrating Macintosh software in jazz curricula."

New Orleans jazz historian **Dr. Karl Koenig**, for example, presented his "History of New Orleans Jazz" slide show / lecture with images of displays at the Louisiana State Jazz Museum. He also shared the fruits of his digging around in the archives of hinterland newspapers.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn described the holdings of the Hogan Jazz Archive collection at Tulane University, while Richard B. Allen discussed the archives' oral history collection and Don Marquis summarized the materials held in the New Orleans Jazz Club Collection of the Louisiana State Museum.

Clinics

Young musicians' eyes widened as their musical idols stood before them and lectured on the state of the art.

Drummers, for example, heard **Ndugu Chancler** and his electronic rhythm box demonstrate "Practical applications for today's well-rounded drummer." Next door, **Carl Allen** performed a Max Roach-inspired solo and explained his own rhythmic concepts. A somewhat bleary-eyed **Jack DeJohnette** demonstrated the art of improvisation at the ungodly hour of 10 a.m. (after a midnight-to-2 a.m. concert the night before) with an impressive and impromptu one-hour-long drum solo which inspired the packed room to a standing ovation.

Band leaders saw **Alvin Batiste** demonstrate the principles of metric relationships in his "Metric cell system" clinic. He demonstrated ear-training techniques and led young musicians in call-and-response exercises.

The **Phil Woods** quintet conducted an articulate and informative discussion of the dynamics of small group jazz. Their performance of the Phil Woods original, *Clinology*, prefaced their individual discussions of the roles of front line players and rhythm section players.

All in all, the articulate and engaging clinicians discussed composition and arranging, jazz history, improvisation, instrumental techniques, the music business, the rhythm section, technology, and vocal ensembles.

Information sessions

Willard Jenkins Jr. showed that the projects and services of the National Jazz Service Organization, of which he is executive director, can help musicians and music support agencies. Regional arts administrators, such as the Southern Arts Federation's **Bill Anschell**, discussed the services and programs they offer their state regions.

Representatives of the Smithsonian Institution shared their enthusiasm for their new collections, including the Duke Ellington archives, and their initiatives to preserve and perpetuate jazz as a national treasure. The Institution plans to make the Ellington collection a "living collection" through exhibitions, fellowships, re-

cordings, publications and historical performances. The Institution is proud of its "History of Jazz" collection and the Jazz Masterworks publishing projects.

Joe Segal, owner of Chicago's Jazz Showcase, presented "Reminiscing in Tempo," selections from tapes of performers he recorded over the years at his long-lived club.

Artist manager **Helen Keane** and composer/ drummer **Barbara Borden** led a discussion of "The music business vs. the creative process." The question for the day was, "Power or excellence: are both possible?" The session considered the music business from the perspectives of the artist, producer, teacher, manager and booking agent.

Sarah Warner of the National Endowment for the Arts attracted attention by telling musicians and presenters how to get money from the Endowment.

Concerts

We did more than talk, though, and were treated to free performances by the **Donald Harrison** Quartet, the **Algiers Brass Band, Dukes of Dixieland, Ellis Marsalis** Quartet, **The New York Voices**, the **Four Freshmen**, the **Maynard Ferguson** band, the **Mel Lewis** Orchestra, the **Jack DeJohnette** Special Edition, **Jon Hendricks** & Company, the **Phil Woods** Quintet,the **Clark Terry** Quartet, the **New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA)** Jazz Ensemble, the **Alvin Batiste Band**, the **Don Menza** Quartet, and the **Peter Erskine** band.

Those venturing a few blocks over into the French Quarter sampled an even greater variety of music (and other activities).

Exhibits

The rather large Music Industry Exposition opened Thursday evening with a party, and conventioneers nearly gorged themselves on the complimentary cajun food: gumbo, jambalaya (and cash bar), accompanied by a concert by the marching Algiers Brass Band.

A video resource centre offered more than 100 jazz video titles for viewing and purchase.

Panels

Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) sponsored a panel called "The Jazz Composer," in which **David Baker**, Alvin Batiste, **Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis** and Mel Lewis addressed the creative aspects of jazz composing and the business aspects of the craft.

A special IAJE panel discussed the progress of the ongoing project to expand the jazz education network across the globe.

Ceremonies

The Jazz Education Hall of Fame award was given this year to **Louis Armstrong, Rich Matteson** and **Clem DeRosa**. The award honours those "whose musical contributions and dedication to jazz education over the past 25 years have created new directions and curricular innovations for jazz education worldwide." Last year's recipients included Count Basie, Louis Bellson and Jamey Aebersold.

The 1990 Humanitarian Award was given to Louisiana pianist and educator **Ellis Marsalis**. The award honours IAJE members "whose dedication to the teaching of jazz exceeds, in very large measure, the usual student / teacher relationship at school and whose love for teaching transcends the usual academic environment."

The Young Talent Awards were given to pianist **Ethan Iverson**, age 16, of Menomonie, Wisconsin; trumpeter **Michael Leonhart**, age 15, New York City; and pianist **Jeff Babko**, age 17, Valencia, Cal.

IAJE President-Elect **Bunky Green** will be installed at ceremonies in July 1990. Green teaches at the University of North Florida.

Observations

To summarize, it was indeed invigorating to mingle among the many hundreds of jazz performers, students and educators who convened to talk shop. The mammoth event was well organized for the most part.

My only reservation lies in the educators' evident bias toward the jazz of the bop and swing eras, with little demonstrated interest in later (not to mention current) idioms. It has, evidently, taken 40 years to document and analyze the music and to present it in a manner readily assimilated by young musicians.

Which names were invoked most often? Easy. Charlie Parker, Lester Young and Duke Ellington. Today's educators gear their playing styles and educational methods toward the bop era, and seem unconcerned with exposing their students to anything more recent.

Would it not be possible (and perhaps advisable) to develop methods of teaching music that reflected African-American music that is not already 40 years old? As each year goes by, the corpus of what most consider "jazz" grows increasingly less relevant to young student musicians. Of course, students need to be made aware of the history that precedes them, and yes, teaching methods need to begin with elementary, easily digestible lessons.

But this is 1990, not 1950, and the music that's being taught does not reflect that as it should. - *Paul Baker*

IT'S AFTER THE END OF THE WORLD

Sun Ra and his Arkestra played in Calgary on Saturday afternoon, June 24, 1989 outdoors at Prince's Island as a part of the Calgary International Jazz Festival. He was interviewed backstage following the performance.

I'm really pleased to have you here with me and really enjoyed the show today. What are your impressions of Calgary?

Oh, I like it very much. I like the trees. I really love trees and fresh air; I'm a Gemini and I like to go different places. I would say the world is my area now. Everywhere is home, in a sense, because I'm just a visitant to the planet. I don't belong here really. I just came as a visitant, not as a visitor, but as a visitant, not to try to help the planet, but to achieve the impossible as far as getting people coordinated and harmonized, a totally impossible task. Something that God couldn't even do. Since I'm in human form, possibly I can do it, because they can see me, they can hear me. I can cuss them out and talk about them and maybe they might listen.

Speaking of the people working together in harmony, several of the players in your band have been here for years: tremendous loyalty to the cause and true love for your music.

Oh yeah, well they're in the Ra jail. I'd say everyone is in some sort of jail. They're in the best jail in the world: a Ra jail, because they're on distant planes. Other people outside are free, but in my band they're not free because they have to listen to me and try to improve themselves. I'm not interested in them as individuals the way they are. I'm interested in their potentials and because their potentials are so wonderful, then I deal with that. But if they are just going to be themselves like when I met them, well I can't use that. That's the past, that's a yesterday thing. I'm not in the yesterday department. I'm in the tomorrow department, it never came. They said tomorrow never comes. Well, at least I'm a representative of tomorrow, and I'm here representing tomorrow. I'm here representing some other things, too. Like I told a fellow that made me slightly displeased, I told him, "Well, hell couldn't wait to meet you. I'm hell on wheels. Hell came to meet you instead."

I want to ask you a bit about the past: the experience with Fletcher Henderson and the impact on yourself?

Fletcher was really part of an angelic thing. I wouldn't say he was a man. I wouldn't say Coleman Hawkins was a man, because they did things men haven't done, and hadn't done before. And they didn't learn it from any man. They just did it. So therefore it came from somewhere else. A lot of things that some men do (that people do) come from somewhere else, or they're inspired by something that's not of this planet. And jazz was most definitely inspired, because it wasn't here before. If it wasn't here before, where did it come from? It came from somewhere else, just like the nuclear warhead, it came from somewhere else. Man didn't develop that. He doesn't use but 5% of his brain, so he couldn't possibly, but something used him like people use a tv set or telephone to communicate. Something, some particular being, used them to do things, inspired them so much, worked them so much, they had to do it.

It's just like me. I just really like composing, particularly for the piano. I like that, better than I do playing for the general public. In order for them to really appreciate me, I'd have to educate them, because they

Photograph by Irm Siering

are not for me, with what I'm talking about. You have to teach Man like a little child. Sometime it takes ten thousand years to catch one idea. He's just like that, because he's sort of afraid of the unknown. Man is a very big coward. He's afraid of the unknown. He likes to cling onto things that he's trying to prove are alright. But gathering from the condition of the planet, well he's just dreaming. He has to face reality now, another type of reality. He has to realize that whatever he's doing is not profitable.

So of course he has to reach out to something different. I'm something different. I'm saying I'm another order of being, from another dimension. Of course they might not want to believe it, but I don't care. They will have to consider me. You see, they have to face the music now. Let's me and you face the music, let's me and you face the truth. So if you face something unknown, that's what you should look to, because they said that truth is stranger than fiction. That's the unknown. And I'm dealing with that in my music, in my talking in my equations, in what I'm doing, it's totally unknown to me. But it came from somewhere else, from some being that actually just is called "The Nameless One." This planet knows nothing about it and that makes it difficult for me to tell people about something they know nothing about, something that's never communicated with them.

The world would be in a much better place if they knew the name of the landlord of this planet, because it was here when man got here. Surely, truly, someone else owns it. But the landlord never shows up. Now, my idea is to induce the landlord of this planet to appear to people, to talk to them, because you know they haven't paid any rent since they have been here. And if I get the landlord to make me one of his agents, I would have to give them all eviction notices. I'm thinking that if I gave them eviction notices, they might wake up and realize "this is my home and I'm gonna treat it properly," because they're not treating the planet right. They're not treating the trees right, not the birds, not the bees, not anything. They can just go so far, and the landlord is going to make his appearance. That's what I'm warning this planet about. Be careful, because someone owns this planet, and they've been silent a long time. But man is going too far, slaughtering elephants, it's gone too far. It isn't necessary. They're not supposed to do unnecessary things. They are supposed to be doing the necessary things to try to survive, and to try to elevate themselves, in a spirit sort of way, without thought of righteousness and all of that.

We were talking about the music earlier today and you were saying how you wanted to do a lot of different things in music. In observing your recordings, for instance *Heliocentric Worlds*, it is more of (if I can use the term) a free jazz style. Your performance today and recent recordings and even an earlier one, *Sun Song*, have much more of a swing content. Tell me about your directions now and the performances you are doing.

Well, you know, I have a lot of enemies in the music world, a lot of musicians, and I know I have. They have been like that a long time. But I have a lot of friends, millions of people that are not musicians. Of course, it's not the first time it ever happened that an innovator in music was treated in a disrespectful fashion by musicians and was talked about the way they talk about me. But I have got the people, millions of people in different countries and I just laugh up my sleeve at those musicians. One day they'll wake up and find out that I have got all the people, because I'm fighting a battle and I'm doing it very subtly.

Something like the Voice of America had me on tv, he ask me, "They say that you are the boss of the underground." I say, "No, I'm farther down than that. I'm the boss of the sub-underground." And I meant it too. So you see that when I hear ***Heliocentric Worlds*** and those things, it was something totally different. But I'm going to continue it, like they say Star Wars 1,2,3,4 and they don't put them out just right after one another. They wait awhile. So I waited probably fifteen, twenty years to continue ***Heliocentric Worlds*** and then these messages from the cosmos and other things, I didn't want to disturb people's sleep, because they've been sleeping a long time. So I decided I just wouldn't play, just play it for me.

So whenever I see the condition of the planet is so horrible, I run and I look at my treasures of sound and I play it and it works on me, and I know it'll work on other people if they have this music. Of course, commercial companies, they don't see it that way, and I'm asking them to put this music out, but they don't want to put it out, so eventually, very soon, I'll have to put the music out of (I would say) the Ra treasure house. And for twenty years, I was talking about putting a record called ***Music from the Private Library of God***. A lot of people have written and asked me about it. And then I put out ***Lotus, A Fireside Chat with Lucifer***. That kind of frightened a lot of people. Like I say, Man's a big coward.

And why not ***Fireside Chat with Lucifer***? I think maybe they should hear his side of the story. We should be fair about everything. We should hear not just one side of the story. I think they should have a fireside chat with Lucifer, even with Satan, because a lot of them are going there, so they might as well take the chance.

I want to come back to what you said earlier about swing. The latest recording I have is *Reflections in Blue* and virtually the whole album is a swing album.

Yeah, just about. I still didn't feature the piano the way I can play it. I was holding back on the piano too, because a lot of piano players would be stealing my stuff, so I got on electronics. But now, I don't care, because I got me a lot of infinity styles, and they won't be able to catch up. So I'll start featuring the piano again.

But it's swinging more than some of the other albums.

Oh, yea. But the last one is on A & M. You haven't got that one yet.

Tell me about it.

It's called ***Blues Delight***; that's the blues. I don't play unhappy blues, you see, so that I want to tend to get people to see that their blues doesn't have to be moaning and groaning because I haven't lived that kind of life, with the sex and the dope and all that kind. I don't need to sing about that, because I haven't lived like that.

I live a sort of spirit existence. It's not religious, nothing like that. I'm not allowed to participate in those things. That's for Man. He's like a baby, he's got to have a bottle to chew on. It ain't nothing but a bottle, you know. Anyway, this album's getting a lot of nice reviews.

They're disturbed because I'm not playing what you call the smooth jazz. Fletcher Henderson, all his things were rough, because jazz is supposed to have the rough edge to it, just like diamonds, you know. You don't find a diamond all polished and

all like that. Nature doesn't do that. You have to go and you take and you do something to it.

In this case, with my music, then you have to do something with your spirit. And then you take it and you shape the way it's suitable for you to fit into your needs. Therefore it can go all kinds of ways, it can actually heal people. It can do all kinds of things. It can inspire them in a way they've never been inspired before.

And that's where I have to be careful because I'm not trying to get people to follow me, and it's a possibility. They might get that idea. But I'm gonna tell them, don't do that, because I move fast. And if they stand still, I'll leave them. I'll desert them. So it comes down to the fact, it's more like I'm a coordinator and adjustor, and I do things with a sense of humour.

Like the other day, I was coming up from Birmingham. And on the road, I went into a store and I saw two paddles, one of them with a fanny, bottoms up, and the other was an attitude adjuster. So I bought it for the band. I showed it to them. I said, "Now get your attitude straight. I got my attitude adjuster." Nobody wants me to try it out on them, so I haven't been able to get anybody to volunteer.

I want to ask you about a couple of tunes that I really enjoy from *Reflections in Blue*. One was *State Street Chicago*.

Yes, that was done while I was in Chicago. Are you talking about the one on the backside? That's *State Street No. 2*. And I've got a *No. 1* that I did in earlier days too. But that's the focal point, State Street in Chicago. I got some more numbers about Chicago that I've never put on record.

I've got so many songs, you see, and sometimes it's difficult for me to say which ones I'm gonna put out for the public. But then I really got myself, when I get bored with musicians playing the same thing, I run into my treasure house and I play one of my tapes and I don't have them marked. I get pleasantly surprised. I did it today. I picked up a tape. I was a little amazed, because I tell the musicians, play this and play that. I write it down. But this was really what I did, very fresh and not recorded smooth.

But that's not important in jazz. The main thing is to feel it, and the feeling is there. I'm gonna put some of the rough things out, diamonds in the rough, you might say. I'm gonna put them out because I know that the public will feel what I'm doing.

I want to ask you about one of the other songs in *Reflections in Blue, Yesterdays*.

Oh *Yesterdays*. I like what Jerome Kern is doing, Cole Porter and all of those. And every now and then, sometimes in New York, I have a concert playing nothing but those compositions. Irving Berlin had a concert doing that. I'm always doing something like that. New York is a focal point and they understand when I say Cole Porter, I'm just gonna play all his compositions arranged my way. They're surprised when I play a tribute to a person that I play nothing but their compositions, because I got all these ideas, and I just can't hold them in. I've got all kinds of ideas.

For a particular composition, sometimes I have five and six arrangements, because I'm not satisfied with one arrangement. That makes it kind of difficult for musicians. But I can say they are doing a good job being with me. And I would say to them, "You don't belong with me. I'm not a man, and you might not be able to keep up, but I hope you do."

Because it's possible, but you have to tell all this strange stuff and all this trivial stuff. And that's what I tell them: it's not about religion. It's a matter of them being their true selves. I'm telling them, "If you're not true to yourself, how can you be true to me? And how can you play the music if you're not true to yourself?" So I'm telling them things that are very relevant and very simple, and the music is getting simpler for them and more difficult, because they might be playing, and I say, "No, no, no, you're not playing that note right." That means, as far as I'm concerned, there are probably a hundred ways to play one note. Now, this way they have to be at rehearsal. If they are not at rehearsal, they will be playing one note wrong, it destroys my message.

It's like for us in the music of language, if you're talking to somebody and you mispronounce the word or something like that, they won't understand what you're talking about; it causes confusion. And musicians, if they play a note wrong, it can destroy the message. And I don't want that. I want people now really to hear the message. At one time, I didn't particularly care, since I wasn't trying to be a leader or anything like that. It kind of threw some people off, and I knew it was gonna do that. But now they have to have all their bass notes right,they've got to be restricted to play the note I want to play. The note I want to play might not be in the chord. It might be in a whole different key. And they have to be taught that. They've got to hear these styles.

I've got an instrument now that I can play quarter tones on and makes scales on and all that. It fits right in with what the mission where I came from. It's all right. But this music uses only twelve notes. I can use all kind of notes and I can express all kinds of things.

Well, I need master musicians, you might say, masters of the spirit. And I have to reach it like tonight where you saw what happened when the Brazilians were performing. They were improvising and they were very happy like they'd been with me all the time. It goes that way for other musicians. They have to be like they belong. People can see something they don't see in the average band. They look like they are happy.

People are not used to seeing musicians like that. They are used to seeing them very serious looking and very proud. "Look how well I can play, look how I can execute:" and they are executing and all that and then they don't play nothing because they be with the technical thing and don't have no spirit.

AROUND THE WORLD

February is Black History Month. In Canada its focus is on the various transplanted Caribbean cultures which now play a prominent role in the Canadian mosaic. In the United States, it is often the only time in the year when any widespread attempt is made to showcase various aspects of black culture in a meaningful way.

Television is the most widely observed information/entertainment conduit. It far surpasses print as a way of reaching large numbers of people. Each February Public Television offers its viewers programs which acknowledge contributions by individuals and groups from its black communities. ***Eyes On The Prize 2*** was this year's main focus, giving an overview of various personalities and organizations from the Civil Rights Movement of the past 25 years. The series focused on political activity and their impact was made more meaningful through the powerful music used to dramatise the story lines. Yet nowhere are there any credits for the music used. Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Jimmy Witherspoon and Count Basie were among the jazz artists whose music was appropriated but not acknowledged.

In many ways the documentary on the Landis Family of Creedmore, North Carolina offered a more positive and culturally exciting viewpoint than other, more fashionable programs. ***A Singing Stream*** was a portrait of two generations of hard working, independent farm entrepreneurs. What makes the family notable to the outside world is their ability as gospel singers. The one hour film allows us to share in their music and the social interaction of a large scale family reunion which drew members back from all parts of the US. Their music still has all the power, potency and purity which made gospel music such a significant contributor to so many streams of Black American Music before being diluted through absorption into the mainstream of Corporate America.

This documentary supports the principle points of Nelson George's stimulating book, ***The Death of Rhythm and Blues***, where he maintains that integration has resulted in the collapse of black communities and the diminution of ethnically distinct music.

VINNY GOLIA & BOBBY BRADFORD (Photograph by Mark Weber)

The National Endowment of the Arts American Jazz Master Fellowships for 1990 were awarded to **George Russell, Cecil Taylor** and **Gerald Wilson**. All are worthy recipients of the $20,000 grants... **Vinny Golia, Mark Harvey** and **Walter Thompson** each received a $6,000 Jacob's Pillow commission for their joint project, *Jazz Expansions: An East-West New Jazz Interchange*. These new works were performed by Vinny Golia's Large Ensemble on March 3 and will then be interpreted by Mark Harvey's Aardvark Jazz Orchestra on April 20 in Cambridge (MA) and on April 22 in New York by Walter Thompson's Big Band. The Jacob's Pillow premiere takes place August 23 in Lee (MA)... The City of Los Angeles declared January 23 "Buddy Collette Day" and a special celebration took place in the Grand Avenue Bar of the Biltmore Hotel where Collette's Quintet is heard on Tuesday evenings.

Toshiko Akiyoshi continues the struggle to support and maintain her orchestra, the outlet for her creativity as a composer. There was a brief West Coast tour in February while in March the band was in Kansas City for a one nighter (24). April 13 is the date for a concert at New York's Manhattan Community College. On July 4 the band will be at NYSU in Binghamton (NY).

The annual convention of the American Federation of Jazz Societies was held March 23-25 at the Marriott resort in Hauppauge, L.I. Delegates from societies across America attended the event which honoured trumpeter **Doc Cheatham**. These organizations are primarily organized by affluent people whose tastes tend to represent jazz styles from the distant past. The audiences at their events tend to support this observation. Choosing expensive locations for their conventions eliminates the possibilities of many grass roots groups participating in the growth of such an organization. The need is there for organized jazz groups to take up the administrative and entrepreneurial sector of jazz as traditional venues continue to shrink. But many organizations do not have hundreds of spare dollars to fund delegates to events such as this.

Vibraphonist **Teddy Charles** was at Gianluca Cafe December 29/30 in New York City... Pianist **Michael Weiss** was at Bradleys for the week of January 29 with bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington... Japanese bassist **Motoharu Yoshizawa** is being heard in New York in a variety of settings. On February 17 he was at St Paul's United Church with Ralph Blauvelt (keyboards) and Brad Graves (reeds); on February 28 he gave a solo recital at P.S.I. Museum in Long Island and on March 12 he was at Roulette with vocalist Takehisa Kosugi, pianist Borah Bergman and trombonist Masahiko Kono... The **Rick Stone** Quintet was at The Blue Note on March 5. With the guitarist were Junior Cook, Richard Wyands, Michael Formanek and Leroy Williams... the fourth annual festival of Women Improvisers took place March 8-11 with performances at Roulette, Henry House Settlement House and Prospect Park Picnic House. Fostina Dixon (reeds), Zusaan Kali Fasteau (reeds, piano), Marion Brandis, Jeanne Lee and a large ensemble were among the participants... The Musicians of Brooklin Initiative (MOBI) premiered works by **Lester Bowie** and **Earl McIntyre** March 9 at Town Hall with a 40 piece orchestra... William Hooker gave a solo percussion concert March 11 at La Mama Galleria... The Amsterdam String Trio performs April 10 at Washington Square Church... The **Muhal Richard Abrams** Quartet was at Long Island's Staller Center for the Arts at SUNY Stony Brook on February 24.

The Doctors of Rhythm were presented in concert by the Tri-

State Jazz Society February 25 at the Cherry Hill Radisson Hotel. The society publishes a listing of upcoming jazz events in their area. Write TSJS, Box Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 for more information... **Jack Walrath** and Michele Hendricks were in Lake Placid for the Adirondack Jazz Series February 17 and 24... **Max Roach's** Music for Brass and Percussion will be premiered April 27 at Penfield High School. While in the Rochester area Max Roach will also receive an honorary doctorate from the Eastman School of Music and the University of Rochester... Jazz Seems to have all but disappeared from the Art Park roster. Cab Calloway (July 24), Ray Charles (June 20), a Tribute to Stan Kenton with the George Beck Orchestra (August 4) and a package with The Woody Herman Orchestra, the Four Freshmen, Buddy DeFranco and Kay Starr (September 3) float around the periphery of the music but on June 21 there is a concert with **Jack DeJohnette** and Friends: Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland and Pat Metheny.

The Allegheny Jazz Society is presenting vocalist Nancy Nelson, clarinetist Bob Reitmeier and pianist **Keith Ingham** in concert May 4-6 in Meadvill, PA. Upcoming August 24-26 will be the ninth Conneaut Lake Jazz Party.

An update on the New York scene by correspondent Kevin Whitehead:

There were moments in **Ralph Moore's** excellent first set at the Village Vanguard on December 20th that seemed straight out of a what-if fantasy. What if Coltrane and Clifford Brown had played together? Not that the whole set raised the question, or that it got on your nerves for raising it. There is a lot of middle-period Trane in Moore's tenor conception, but his tone is a little different, more deep and brown, and he draws on Sonny Rollins and Booker Ervin's blues cry too. He doesn't come off as a super-Trane caricature, as Courtney Pine sometimes does, nor does he pingpong back and forth from Coltrane to Rollins homages, like Branford Marsalis. Trumpeter **Roy Hargrove** has some of Brownie's youthful vigor and crackle, but he has his own idiosyncrasies, starting with a powerful attack (you expect to feel the notes popping from his horn) and a dry, pungent sound. Pianist **Benny Green** keeps his foot off the sustain pedal, one way he sidesteps the almost-all-pervasive Tyner strain, and swings like mad. **Victor Lewis** doesn't let his complex syncopations undermine his pulse either; he meshed beautifully with bassist **Peter Washington** (as an admiring bass player in the house observed, he even **looks** like Paul Chambers). The quintet is the most deeply bluesy and deeply satisfying postbop/traditionalist band I've seen in a while.

For three nights at the end of January, the 92nd Street Y played host to ***The Worlds of Max Roach***. The last night, which I missed, was Max collaborating with video-artist **Kit Fitzgerald**. The second was a typically schticky performance by **Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy**, whose perennial Sade and Whitney Houston covers I would gladly never hear again. Max sat in with them for a couple of encores (though the band already had two drummer/percussionists, **Don Moye** and **Vinnie Johnson**). The first night featured the **Uptown String Quartet**, led by violist **Maxine Roach**. They sounded a lot looser than on the album of blues, spirituals, rags and jazz tunes they recorded last year. **Eileen Folson** walks her cello like an able bassist, with a good feel for time and harmony; like Roach and violinists **Diane Monroe** and **Lesa Terry**, she can solo with swing, bluesy conviction and authentic chops. Unlike other string quartets that are classically trained and polyglot, as **USQ** is, they don't play jazz with a funny accent. At encore time, Max walked on stage carrying a drum throne, a snare drum and brushes, for a soloist's romp on his *A Little Booker*.

One of the first cellists to popularize the instrument over the last 15 years, **David Eyges**, produced a string series in February, in the basement of the dance-oriented Pyramid Club on Avenue A. On the fifth, Eyges and **Byard Lancaster** had to compete with the thunderous drum-thump coming through the ceiling from upstairs: an involuntary jazz-disco fusion. The sound of Eyges' skeletal electric cello, filled out an octave lower by a harmonizer, was pretty muddy when he walked, but that axe brought out the Delta blues in his sound when he strummed nasty chords. His compositions are a good springboard for longtime duo partner Lancaster; their unison passages (the few times Eyges used a bow) were seamless. Byard deftly manipulated his alto sound, from a soft ballad sonority to Sanborn-y hardness. His lines tended to move in corkscrew turns and insinuating repetitions: he'd work figures over without boring you. His conception is as strong as his radiant sound.

New and Used are a typically atypical postfreebop NY jazz quintet. Four of the members contributed tunes to their December 15 set at the Lower East Side's Ward-Lawrence Gallery. (The band is **David Douglas**, trumpet and baritone horn; **Andy Laster**, alto and baritone; **Mark Feldman**, violin; **Kermit Driscoll**, electric bass; **Tom Rainey**, drums.) The writing's agreeably busy (the non-soloists always had something to do behind an improvisation) and every piece had several sections, yielding fresh approaches from minute to minute. On part of Douglas's *Cows*, for example, a thick alto and violin unison line opposed an irregular, staccato horn and baritone thicket. Rainey and Driscoll gave the sharp angles a beat. There was a bit of a bizarre but pleasant country and/or summer-bandshell flavour to a couple of episodes, no surprise: Lester toured recently with Lyle Lovett; Feldman's trying to forget he ever toured with Loretta Lynn.

Tom Rainey is also part of bassist **Mark Helias's** quintet, with **Herb Robertson** on trumpet, **Tim Berne** on alto, and **David Lopato** on piano, at Visiones February 1st. Helias (unlike Lester Bowie, say) doesn't like to repeat himself. At Visiones last summer, he had a band that included two basses, violin and cello. This time, his quintet played some fairly straightahead neo-bop, although Berne's serpentine lines, frequent soaring long notes and oblique approach to the harmony kept the music quirky; the altoist sounded unusually strong. Robertson was about to begin an a cappella into to one piece when a carhorn sounded outside. He immediately made it the text of his solo; he began with an imitation of the blast, in the right key, then moved on through other car sounds (different horns, grinding gears) before winding his way through a catalogue of effects (gargling, spitting, half-valving, yammer-

ing) and ending abruptly with dramatic Satchmo high notes. It was the funniest, and one of the best, trumpet solos I've heard in some time. And it's a tribute to Helias that he brings out great performances.

The same band, with **Anthony Davis** on piano, played at a marathon benefit for the ailing **Ed Blackwell** at the Knitting Factory in January. Ed's medical bills are covered by insurance, but his living expenses aren't; you can send donations to **Ed Blackwell / World Music Institute, 49 W. 27th St., #810, NYC, NY 10011.** The best set during that long day of music was the first: a stunning, continuous, blue but varied free improvisation from drummer **Andrew Cyrille**, bassist **Anthony Cox** (a benefit organizer) and flutist **James Newton**, who at one point was blowing two notes through his mouthpiece and intermittently humming a third, during a long cycle of circular breathing, no less. Who says free improvisation is moribund?

William Parker's sextet set at the Knit on January 21st featured: his multifaceted small-group orchestrations, full of inventive recombinations; **Alex Lodico**, the world's loudest tailgate trombonist; some truly extraordinary bass work. Parker has always been an arco master. On this night, his bowing ranged from the delicately nimble and rapid to the grindingly forceful; he'd bat the end of his bow between stopped strings, getting percussive quasi-electronic sounds. When one horn player soloed, the others, altoists **Rob Brown** and **Dave Sewelson** and trumpeter **Lewis Barnes**, would cue each other to come in with some backing figure or strategy, an apparent modification of Butch Morris' conduction techniques. (**Jackson Krall** played effective ashcan-school drums.) Parker's last/only album as a leader was recorded in the 70s; I'd say he's due for a sequel. ■

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The Twin Cities' **IMP ORK** is featuring **Ernie Watts** as guest soloist for their concert April 29 at the Fine Line Cafe in Minneapolis... Dakota State University's annual jazz festival was held the last weekend of January in Fargo. Rich Matteson and the New England Ragtime Ensemble were among the visiting artists... The Creative Opportunity Orchestra recorded their second album of eclectic, original jazz music February 25 before an invited audience at Bates Recital Hall in the University of Texas, Austin.

The **Bobby Bradford Mo'tet** shared the stage with Lawrence Lobo and her Little Big Band at Los Angeles' Cafe Largo on January 19... The surprise of Bill Muchnic's third annual **San Diego Jazz Party** was the delightfully irreverent and hip songs by bassist **Jay Leonhart**. He and **Dick Hyman** performed twice during the weekend event at the Downtown Marriott and completely captivated the audience. Some of these songs can be found on Leonhart's Sunnyside recordings but his presentation of his material is laced with an informality and infectious hipness which is hard to translate into the studio setting. The Howard Alden / Dan Barrett group demonstrated exceptional breadth of scope with tunes drawn from widely differing sources and presented in original settings. Their obvious desire to find new ways to interpret older material is highly commendable but the repertoire sounds as though it needs further performance to make the interpretations grow beyond the written scores. Individual highlights included the piano duets by Dick Hyman and **Ralph Sutton**, the solo work of **Kenny Davern** and **Plax Johnson** finally getting around to playing a blues on Sunday afternoon. **Marshall Royal** was heard from too briefly and there were programming flaws which prevented musicians like Johnson, Royal and Al Grey from presenting music which most represents their talents. The balance between ad hoc jam session groups and combinations which displayed greater individuality was particularly appealing.

San Diego has become home for a growing community of well known musicians. According to **Jazz Link**, the local jazz newspaper, greater San Diego is now home for Barney Kessel, Mundell Lowe, James Moody, Mike Wofford, Charles McPherson, Jeannie and Jimmy Cheatham, Bob Gordon, Bob Haggart, John Best and Rocky Cole. These musicians are more likely to be heard elsewhere but it was a pleasure to find **Mike Wofford** subbing a Saturday afternoon gig at the brand new Hyatt mausoleum. His shimmering piano harmonies resonated around the fake marble walls, pillars and elevated ceiling (around 50 feet above the floor) of the hotel's lobby. It was a gig but hardly a venue designed to attract listeners. The hotel's entertainment lounge has been featuring flutist Holly Hoffman and guitarist Mundell Lowe. Perhaps that setting has a better musical ambience.

Elario's nightclub in LaJolla certainly feels like a jazz spot and there was an attentive and appreciative audience for the guitar of **Kenny Burrell**. Bob Magnuson and Sherman Ferguson worked smoothly with Burrell in a program of familiar jazz standards.

The San Diego scene is covered by **The Jazz Link**. It's a monthly newspaper which helps keep people in touch with local activities as well as containing items from other jazz locations. You can probably obtain a sample issue from 9662 Canright Way, San Diego, CA 92126. It's a free giveaway locally but is also available through subscription... Los Angeles Radio Station **KLON** publishes **Jazz Magazine** on a monthly basis. It is sent to the station's membership and contains articles, reviews and information as well as monthly program highlights. **Coleman Hawkins** graced the cover of the February issue and anyone within range of the station's signal should support KLON. They can be reached at California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, CA 90840-1801.

Those who think that jazz parties only cater to the upper age levels of the retirement population should check out the Otter Crest event. It's to be held May 3-6 and includes **Hal Galper**, Gene Harris, Roger Kellaway, Joe Beck, Alan Dawson, **Nick Brignola**, John Clayton, Harry Edison and **Carol Sloane** among the participants. It's tough to find accommodation in the area but there still might be space if you write Sound Ideas Inc., P.O. Box 148, Salem, Oregon 97308... Just a little further up the coast is Port Townsend. They held their annual Hot Jazz weekend February 23-24 with a broad mix of traditional, blues and swing groups from the area.

Jazz education continues to involve a greater percentage of many touring musicians' calendar. Bassist **Milt Hinton** was the lead off artist to visit North Texas State University for their 1990 Lecture Series. The bassist also has a scholarship fund in his name which this year will award scholarships to three acoustic bass students. The awards will be made June 23, the day of Milt Hinton's 80th birthday.

Chuck Wayne, Curtis Fuller, Charli Persip, Lanny Morgan, Clifford Jordan and Dick Hyman were the other participants in the North Texas program this year... The Simon Rock of Bard College Jazz Ensemble left on a three week tour of India, Pakistan and Turkey in January.

West Coast blues fans are well served by **Blues Notes**, the publication of the Cascade Blues Association, P.O. Box 8872, Portland OR 97207 and through blues presenter Marlee Walker on Tacoma's KPLU Radio station.

The **Phil Woods** Quintet will be at Fat Tuesday April 10-15 before leaving on a three week European tour. At the end of May they will be at Blues Alley in Washington (DC) before heading west for a week at Jazz Alley in Seattle.

The Royal Viking Line is once again featuring jazz on its cruise ships. These summer cruises head for Bermuda and Alaska as well as a limited number of longer cruises to the Orient. A different group is featured each week. A full schedule is available from RVL, 95 Merrick Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134.

The third **Aruba Jazz Festival** takes place on the island June 15-24. This year's event is a continuous 10 day affair and offers a greater proportion of performers from the music's central traditions. You will be able to hear **Dizzy Gillespie**, Hilton Ruiz, Arthur Blythe, **Kenny Barron**, Sonny Fortune as well as **Kevin Eubanks**, Atrud Gilberto and Spyro Gyro plus several groups with a more specific Latin focus to their styles. More information is available through the Aruba Tourism Authority, 521 Fifth Avenue, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10175.

ELSEWHERE

Early news on the European Jazz Festival Circuit has confirmed dates for the North Sea Festival (July 13-15) and Montreux (July 6-21)... **Enrico Rava, Enrico Pieranunzi**, Space Jazz Trio and Lanfranco Malaguti were the Italian musicians of the year as selected by the writers of **Musica Jazz**. **Henry Threadgill**, Bill Frisell, **Wynton Marsalis**, George Russell and **Geri Allen** headed the foreign section... **Jukka Perko** and **UMO Big Band** were the favourites of Finnish listeners in a poll conducted by **JazzIt Magazine**.

The **George Gruntz** Concert Jazz Band has a new recording on Enja and is preparing a tour of Europe and Israel in May. From May 28 through June 8 the orchestra will be in Zurich recreating the jazz opera, **Cosmopolitan Greetings**. A Chinese tour is planned for November... The Dutch Swing College Band headline a four day festival (May 4-8 of traditional jazz at England's Pakefield Holiday Centre in Lowestoft... The 12th International Jazz Festival of jazz at Rive de Gier, France took place at the end of January and the beginning of February with various European bands as well as **Paul Bley**, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian and a group featuring John Abercrombie, **Kenny Wheeler** and Dave Holland... Jazzbo 90 in Bologna, Italy celebrated the spirit of Bud Powell in February with pianists **Kenny Drew**, Barry Harris, Walter Davis and Walter Bishop. Also shown was **Dance of the Infidels**, Francis Paudras' documentary film about **Bud Powell**... A major showcase of **Ornette Coleman's** music is planned for presentation in April at Reggio Emilio involving Ornette's compositions for string quartet, Skies of America and a reassembled Original Quartet. That group is definitely announced for a concert April 28 at Teatro Astoria in Ravenna. Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins will perform with Ornette. Gary Burton and Ralph Towner were in Ravenna March 9 and the Andy Sheppard - Nana Vasconcelos Group are expected in May... **Klaas Hekman** has been touring Holland with trumpeter Roy Campbell with a live CD release coming from one of the dates... Swing Session was the title of a concert package presented in Baden Switzerland last November. **Oliver Jackson** fronted a group with Irvin Stokes, Norris Turney, Nat Pierce and Jimmy Woode. Warren Vache, Ralph Sutton, Milt Hinton and Gus Johnson along with special guest Jim Galloway were the other group... Bern, Basel and Zurich were cities who participated in the TAKTLOS Festival March 29, 30, 31 and April 1. Ten different groups rotated between the three cities.

LITERATURE

Books covering various aspects of both jazz and blues continue to pour forth from the world presses. **Da Capo** is still the most energetic of those republishing in paperback classics from the past. **Paul Oliver's *Blues Off The Record*** gathers together many of the liner notes

and magazine articles by the noted English author. **David Evans'** ***Big Road Blues*** on the other hand attempted to cover the broad spectrum of early blues styles in an original manner. It was first published in 1982 in hardcover. Da Capo has also resurrected, once again, the **Max Jones / John Chilton Louis Armstrong Biography** which first appeared in 1971. Another New Orleans trumpeter, **Lee Collins,** tells his life story in ***Oh Didn't He Ramble,*** a book which first saw print in 1974, some fourteen years following his death. It contains many useful insights into early New Orelans musical culture and is now available as a paperback from The University of Illinois Press. ***Stormy Weather*** is one of several books focusing on the role of women in jazz. This new Limelight paperback edition is a reprint of the original 1984 hardcover. ***The Death of Rhythm and Blues*** by Nelson George is now available in paperback. The 1989 book focuses its attention on the manipulation of black artists in a white environment and covers a broader musical area than that usually found within the pages of this magazine. The new generation of jazz listeners continues to be served with new biographical studies of the music's major figures. Rarely do these books offer the experienced reader new insights but they do serve a useful purpose for those who have recently entered the arena. Universe Books in New York are republishing various volumes originally commissioned by Spellmount Books in England. Among the recent volumes are Fats Waller by Alyn Shipton and Dizzy Gillespie by Barry McRae.

Scarecrow Press has published **Chip Deffaa's** ***Swing Legacy,*** a series of profiles of prominent musicians who contributed to the growth of the music during the Big Band Era... Upcoming from Oxford University Press is ***Jazz Anecdotes*** by Bill Crow... **Sammy Price's** autobiography, ***What Do They Want*** is now available through the University of Illinois Press... ***The Cadence All Year Index 1976-1978*** has been compiled by Tom Lord. It has more than 21,000 entries and will be much used by researchers and other jazz historians. It's cost is $34.00 ($37.00 outside the US) from Cadence, The Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679... The National Jazz Service Organization has begun publishing a quarterly called NJSO Journal. Write them at P.O. Box 50152, Washington, DC 20004-0152 for more information.

RECORDINGS

The Schwann Catalog's new magazine size publication, ***In Music,*** contains far more information on new releases than has been found in the past in the regular Schwann Catalog. You should be able to find it at the same locations which sell the Schwann catalogs.

Peter Friedman missed the ***Coda*** deadline for his favourite records of the year. As his list is quite different in spirit to many others here are his selections:

Frank Morgan ***Mood Indigo*** Antilles; Tommy Flanagan Trio ***Jazz Poet*** Timeless; Ted Brown ***Free Spirit*** Criss Cross; Junior Cook Quartet ***The Place To Be*** Steeplechase; Lee Konitz ***The New York Album*** Soul Note; Ned Otter Quintet ***Focus*** Ned Otter; Sphere ***Bird Songs*** Verve; Nathan Davis ***London By Night*** D.I.W.; Pepper Adams ***The Adams Effect*** Uptown; Spike Robinson/Sweets Edison Quintet ***Jusa Bit'O'Blues*** Capri.

Saffire, ***The Uppity Women Blues*** is a new group to be recorded by Alligator. The company is also working on a new **Koko Taylor** recording to be called ***Jump for Joy***... Many of the classic **Arhoolie** recordings are being repackaged into 60+ minute CDs. You can obtain an Arhoolie catalog from them at 10341 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. It costs $2.00.

Already out on Blue Note are new recordings by Freddie Hubbard, Eliane Elias, Stanley Turrentine, **Renée Rosnes, Bobby Watson** and Tony Williams. The long delayed Capitol reissues of **Miles Davis'** ***Birth of the Cool,*** Stan Kenton's ***New Concepts*** and Benny Goodman's ***BG in HiFi*** should now be available as well as Lou Rawls / Les McCann's ***Stormy Monday*** and ***Cannonball Adderley In Japan***... Reissues from Roulette include ***Maynard Ferguson '61*** and Coltrane and Bud Powell packages... Jazzline is a new label which features releases by **James Newton** and **Alphonse Mouzon**... Delmark has made available on CD junior Wells' ***Hoodoo Man Blues*** and **Magic Sam's** ***West Side Soul.*** New Pearl lps contain a mix of blues and jump music from small labels in the 1950s. This material is assembled on three separate records... New on Enja are recordings by **Sathima Bea Benjamin** (***Love Light***), Barbara Dennerlein (***Straight Ahead***), **Michelle Rosewoman** (***Contrast High***) and Jerry Gonzalez (***Obatala***)... **Courtney Pine's** newest Island release was recorded in the US with Ellis Marsalis, Delbert Felix and Jeff Watts... ***Dreams*** is the debut recording of Danish pianist **Niels Lan Doky**... The **Folkways** catalog (or part of it) is being repackaged for CD through Rounder. Among the initial release are collections by Big Bill Broonzy and Leadbelly... ***Blues At Newport*** is a new Vanguard repackage of material originally on three separate lps.

Look for CD releases on Alacra of **Mario Pavone's** ***Equal Voices,*** plus his quintet session with Dewey Redman and Eddie Henderson. A catalog of Alacra Records is available from 19 Chandler Drive, Prospect, CT 06712... Detroit reedman **Wendell Harrison** has a new CD release on Rebirth Records (81 Chandler, Detroit, MI 48202) entitled ***Fly By Night***... Michigan saxophonist **Vincent York** has released an album entitled ***Blending Forces***. It's a quintet date featuring **Marcus Belgrave** on trumpet. It's available from the artist at 730 Miller, Ann Arbor, MI 48103... British saxophonist **Tim Garland** is featured on ***Points On The Curve,*** a new release on Future Music, 150 Grasmers Ave., Wembley HA9 8TH, England... Switzerland's **Intakt Records** has released CDs by Barry Guy and the London Jazz Composers' Orchestra, Direct Sound and Hans Koch (Box 468, CH-8024 Zurich, Switzerland).. The sixth release by the **Kolner Saxophon Mafia** is called ***Saxfiguren*** and is available from Jazz Haus Musik, Venloer Strasse 40, 5000 Koln 1, West Germany... The **Klaus Ignatzek** Group has released a new recording and it is available directly from Klaus at Deelweg 12, 2900 Oldenburg, Federal Republic of Germany.

OBITUARIES

Saxophonist **Earl Grubbs** died in Philadelphia October 6... Saxophonist **Sahib Shihab** died October 24 in Tennessee... English trombonist **Jeremy French** died Nov. 11... Saxophonist **Georgie Auld** died January 8... drummer / bandleader **Mel Lewis** died February 2.

DANCING ON THE CEILING

To fully appreciate the capabilities of the piano one must hear it in a variety of settings. Equally adaptable to the needs of the soloist, the trio leader and the big band player, this hybrid of percussion and strings can express musical concepts of orchestral proportion as readily as single lines of melodic thought.

One need search no further than Earl Hines to hear the instrument's full range; Hines's pianistic concepts remain as valid today as when he originated them at Chicago's Grand Terrace Ballroom. But by also listening to someone like Marilyn Crispell, we hear Hines's concepts developed, altered, expanded. Hines, in fact, speaks through all the pianists reviewed here, from Erroll Garner up through Bill Evans, Hal Galper and even Hilton Ruiz.

But rather than reviewing these recordings according to chronological developments, we'll compare the instrument's role in similar contexts from artist to artist, beginning with the trios.

As you might expect from Phil Woods's pianist, **Hal Galper** offers tasteful interpretations of standards in polished yet dynamic performances. Bassist... and drummer **Victor Lewis** help steer the trio's direction and they interact tightly, emphasizing dynamic contrasts and articulating decisively.

Galper's understated, warm-textured music in ***Naturally*** invites one's attention, rather than demanding it. In fact, he keeps nudging the volume down. His penchant for understatement, though, does not prohibit an occasional roar. *Cottontail*, for example, is almost too intense, but Galper's abstract arrangement offers much of rhythmic interest and serves as a showcase for **Lewis**.

Galper could easily function as Betty Carter's pianist, with his feel for dramatically delayed resolutions and unexpected turns of phrase. He enjoys making terse statements and shifting dynamics suddenly. When he stumbles upon a quirky idea, he develops it, then follows it with florid runs. His love of contrast leads to alternating rich textures with two-note trills; sketchy block chords with strident bombast; florid arpeggios with dense Hines-like voicings. Galper imports some of his soul and gospel feeling, not doubt, from his residency in Cannonball Adderly's group.

It's satisfying to hear musicians with a thorough command of their instruments and their material engage in playful interchange.

Hal Galper
Naturally
BlackHawk BKH 529

Bill Evans
You're Gonna Hear From Me
Milestone M-9164

Tommy Flanagan
Nights at the Village Vanguard
Uptown UP27.29

Denny Zeitlin
Denny Zeitlin Trio
Windham Hill WH-0112

Laszlo Gardony
The Secret
Antilles New Directions 7-90694-1

Erroll Garner
The Erroll Garner Collection 2. Dancing on the Ceiling
Emarcy 834 935-1

Art Lande
Hardball!
Great American Music Hall GAMH-2702

Marilyn Crispell
Labyrinths
Victo 06

George Shearing & Hank Jones
The Spirit of 176
Concord Jazz CJ-371

Earl Hines
Piano Man. His Piano and Orchestra
Bluebird 6750-1-RB

Hilton Ruiz
Strut
Novus 3053-1-N

Galper's predecessor, the late **Bill Evans**, encouraged such musical exchanges and, like Galper, adhered closely to the standard repertory. But on *You're Gonna Hear From Me*, Evans deflates our expectations by using devices such as sudden key changes (*You're Gonna Hear*), altered meter (*Waltz for Debby* and *Someday My Prince*), and transforming ballads into exercises in intensity (*Round Midnight*), yet he never abandons his trademark pastel shadings (*Time Remembered*).

Eddie Gomez's percussive playing in this 1969 recording contributes at least as much propulsion as **Marty Morrell's** drumming. There's a thin line, though, between playing music and showing off one's virtuosity, and **Gomez** sometimes transgresses this line. But such intrusions don't prevail, and when he takes an unaccompanied solo on *Nardis*, it's fun to hear Gomez unaccompanied.

Morrell had joined the trio in 1969, only a year prior to this recording, and this may explain his tendency to follow rather than lead. And his solo style sounds strangely out of place: the booming bass drum and loud, marchy snare drum work would be more appropriate in a big band. He doesn't always hold tempos, either. *Who Can I Turn To* picks up speed and *Nardis*, brisk to begin with, accelerates until the musicians lose control, scuffling to execute the notes. As on the previous release of performances from this date (***Jazzhouse*, Milestone M-9151**), Evans's tempos tend generally to be brisk, perhaps reflecting, and certainly inspiring, the enthusiastic response from the audience at the Jazzhus Montmartre.

In another performance recorded live, **Tommy Flanagan** brings to bear his gentlemanly, dignified disposition on a set of tunes for ***Nights at the Village Vanguard*** as he interprets tunes by Monk, Golson, Thad Jones, and others, his style always suiting the context. It's easy to see why Ella Fitzgerald employed Flanagan as her pianist and music director for more than 15 years. For Monk's *San Francisco* Holiday, he employs chromaticism and percussion, and for Thad Jones's *A Biddy Ditty* and *Like Old Times*, he becomes alternately innocent and ribald. Generally, though, Flanagan prefers a low-key, melodic approach and induces sensitive interplay from bassist **George Mraz** and drummer **Al Foster**.

Like Flanagan, **Denny Zeitlin** enjoys standards, but he adds some originals in a frisky trio setting for ***The Denny Zeitlin Trio***. Most of Zeitlin's material takes surprising turns. He dresses *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat* in R&B-gospel garb, plays *All the Things You Are* as an uptempo romp with a waltz-time bridge, and interprets Ornette Coleman's *Turnaround* as an un-Ornetteish relaxed blues.

Zeitlin's own tunes include the samba, *Brazilian Street Dance*, and a quintessential Windham Hill piece, *Rolling Hills*, a land-

scape of autumnal watercolours created with skilful use of the sustain pedal. Perhaps the most striking, though, is Zeitlin's beautiful Laura Nyro-style ballad, *And Then I Wondered,* which certainly has Top 40 potential, and I mean that as a compliment. The melancholy *Shaver Grade* builds to a funky intensity worthy of Chick Corea, and the voicings and feel of *On the March* also resemble Corea's.

Zeitlin leads his responsive fellows to dynamic swells and peaks. Bassist **Joel DiBartolo** plays lyrically, and his command of the instrument's high range reminds one of Gomez and Pedersen. Drummer **Peter Donald** plays effective short solos, but on his extended *All The Things* showcase seems to flounder a bit.

Like Zeitlin, **Laszlo Gardony** has composed some fine pieces. The Hungarian native, now an instructor at Boston's Berklee School of Music, plays with authority, sensitivity, and imagination on ***The Secret***. He employs Adam Makowicz's lightning high-register runs, Chick Corea's avant-Latin writing, and Keith Jarrett's lyrical, spacious sound.

Gardony's sidemen, **Miroslav Vitous** and drummer **Ian Froman**, show a real passion for playing. You know Miroslav, I trust. Drummer Ian Froman proves himself a powerful force with whom to reckon. The men interact as equals, as did Bill Evans's trio, whether on abstract ballads (*Edith*), acoustic rock (*Emeralds*), or straight-ahead swing/bop (*Free*). No matter what the setting, though, Gardony establishes mood effectively. The excellent recording fidelity makes listening an even greater pleasure (too bad the album runs only 36 1/2 minutes).

Hard to imagine that **Erroll Garner** substituted for Art Tatum in Tatum's trio for a while: their styles contrast pretty starkly. Like Tatum, though, Garner got his message across in strong, individual fashion. Garner's playing on ***Dancing on the Ceiling***, with his rock-steady left hand, generally renders a bassist and drummer unnecessary. He could, like Milt Jackson, create the illusion of bending tones and of bending time through his use of grace notes and his complicated off-beat chords. He contrasts stabbing digital attacks with lush, creamy block chord phrases and effectively builds tension with extended two-handed tremolos. Despite his technical prowess, he keeps it in check, playing ballads with appropriate subtlety, as in *Don't Blame Me, After You've Gone* and *What Is This Thing.*

ERROLL GARNER

Bassist **Eddie Calhoun** plays in staccato fashion, so that the trio sometimes seems to march in a New Orleans second line. Although high-spirited Calhoun and drummer **Kelly Martin** attack with glee Garner's prearranged eight-bar shout choruses, they allow the blues, *Like Home*, to drag noticeably.

Art Lande follows in the great tradition of solo pianists. Terms such as precise, measured, and Aristotelian suggest his pristine music. Despite his somewhat out-Landeish forays into the brooding ECM landscapes of the mid-1970s, Lande shares his love of standards on ***Hardball*** which, with its companion album, ***Melissa Spins Away***, shows Lande to be a happy camper in the mainstream.

And a broad stream it is. Lande has lived and created in Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, Switzerland, and Germany. His music reflects his appetite for variety. *The Wiggle* recalls Randy Newman, his *Round Tripper* suggests Horace Silver and Mose Allison. The exuberance of *Stompin' at the Savoy* contrasts the pensiveness of Gershwin's *Summertime*. Always rhythmically attentive, Lande plays *Ain't Misbehavin'* in 5/4 metre and *Willow Weep For Me* in 3/4.

If Lande represents melody, **Marilyn Crispell** advocates percussion. Thinking with blinding speed, she keeps both ends of the keyboard busy, often suggesting two pianists. Levelling her melodic lines and accompaniment into a single sonic plane, she often deconstructs her own thought experiments with brief, angry interjections that interrupt like radio static. Some of her inclination toward polytonality seems to come from the Arnold Schoenberg/Alban Berg school, and she has certainly mastered some of Cecil Taylor's vocabulary--two-fisted pounding, repetition of percussive clusters, and rapid jumping from one brief phrase to another.

Crispell's tunes on ***Labyrinths*** include *Still Womb of Light*, a dense, polytonal essay in non-lyricism; *Labyrinths*, an abstract, broken calypso riff; *Au Chanteur Qui Danse* (for Cecil T.), which creates a Stravinsky-esque sound ballet, and *Encore*, whose pugnacious splashes, digs, boxes and cuffs build to the point of excessive smashing. For the standard, *You Don't Know What Love Is*, Crispell pricks the wires inside the piano to suggest the stings of Cupid's arrow.

She also interprets two Coltrane tunes.

Lazy Bird grows out of very fast single-note lines and into improvisation over chord changes, while the melody of *After the Rain* glows faintly through all the abstraction. Crispell's name does not yet appear in any of the reference works, but it no doubt will. Her work with Anthony Braxton and now her own releases show her to be a talent with staying power.

Two talents who have certainly stood the test of time are **Hank Jones** and **George Shearing**. Having a world-class pianist as an accompanist could only inspire another pianist to a creative zenith, freeing him to conceive and execute ideas possible under no other circumstances. Both Jones and Shearing enjoy that fortuitous circumstance as they joust in gentlemanly fashion for ***The Spirit of 176***, whose title refers to the number of keys they collectively control.

Both men walk a musical tightrope, balancing available liberties with the restrictions necessary to avoid clouding up the texture with gratuitous notes. Although each has developed his own style, here they meld seamlessly. Jones, like Tommy Flanagan, has accompanied Ella. He and Shearing play tunes they have doubtless played dozens and scores of times before (Mary Lous Williams's minor-key Latin groove *Lonely Moments* probably qualifies as the least familiar "standard"), but they render the familiar melodies with a new twist, setting *Star Eyes*, for example, somewhere out in the cosmic void by creating wispy resonances and nebula-like textures.

Shearing's tune, *To Hank Jones*, recalls Jones's style less than it does that of Shearing's early groups, even while its harmonic explorations go fairly far afield. The only disappointment on this set is that the rather vanilla rendition of Monk's *I Mean You* lacks Monk's de rigueur piss-and-vinegar vehemence.

A satisfying balance of solo performances and big band recordings make up **Earl Hines's *Piano Man: His Piano and His Orchestra***. Although recorded primarily between 1939 and 1942, these performances speak clearly, thanks to the clean-up technology that helps doctor up vintage recordings. So it's safe to say we are hearing these performances pretty much as did Hines's contemporary audience.

Hines's formidable style incorporated two-fingered drumming, staccato left hand articulation, amazingly clean stride and the florid embellishments of Art Tatum. As an accompanist, though, he is selfless (particularly as he supports **Sidney Bechet** through *Blues in Thirds*).

For the big band sides, **Budd Johnson** serves as Hines's right hand man, not only because of his woodwinds solos, but because he wrote many of the arrangements, in which the light ensemble plays syncopated interlocking ensemble choruses between horn solos. *I Got Rhythm* chord changes set the order of the day, forming the harmonic underpinnings for *Grand Terrace Shuffle, Father Steps In* and *Riff Medley*.

Hines's own tunes include *Child of a Disordered Brain, Blues In Thirds, Piano Man, November 19*, and his first big hit, *Rosette*. *Grand Terrace Shuffle* honours the Chicago venue where Hines opened at the ripe old age of 25 and continued to play for the next 10 years.

The tight rhythm section owes its cohesion largely to the capable playing of bassists **Quinn Wilson** and **Truck Parham** and drummers **Alvin Burroughs** and **Rudy Traylor**.

While we're on the subject of right rhythm sections it's appropriate to bring up that of **Hilton Ruiz**, who creates extremely tight grooves, Afro-Cuban style. His thick chords and florid runs fit seamlessly into the tight percussion section, which boasts the hand drumming of **Mongo Santamaria**. While his boastingly funky chops occasionally rely on noteyness and flash for effect, as does Adam Makowicz, Ruiz uses more repetitious figures and riff patterns. His gigs with Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, Clark Terry, Jackie MacLean, Roland Kirk, Betty Carter, and Chico Freeman have lent him considerable breadth of response, so that he can play not only flashily but also sparingly, as in *Soca Serenade*.

Saxophonist **Sam Rivers** sounds somewhat straitjacketed in this funkified context, yet he spins out fluid lines to match **Rodney Jones's** Mahavishnuesque guitar. Trumpeter **Lew Soloff** fits in among them, playing sometimes sparely, sometimes stridently, sometimes recalling vintage Fats Navarro and Clifford Brown.

Contributions to the band's book includes Rivers's 12-bar *Bluz*, set as a samba; Griffin's jubilant Latin ballad *All My Love Is Yours*, and Ruiz's vamp-based *Goin Back to New Orleans*, rather thin as a composition but a nut-buster of a groove. ■

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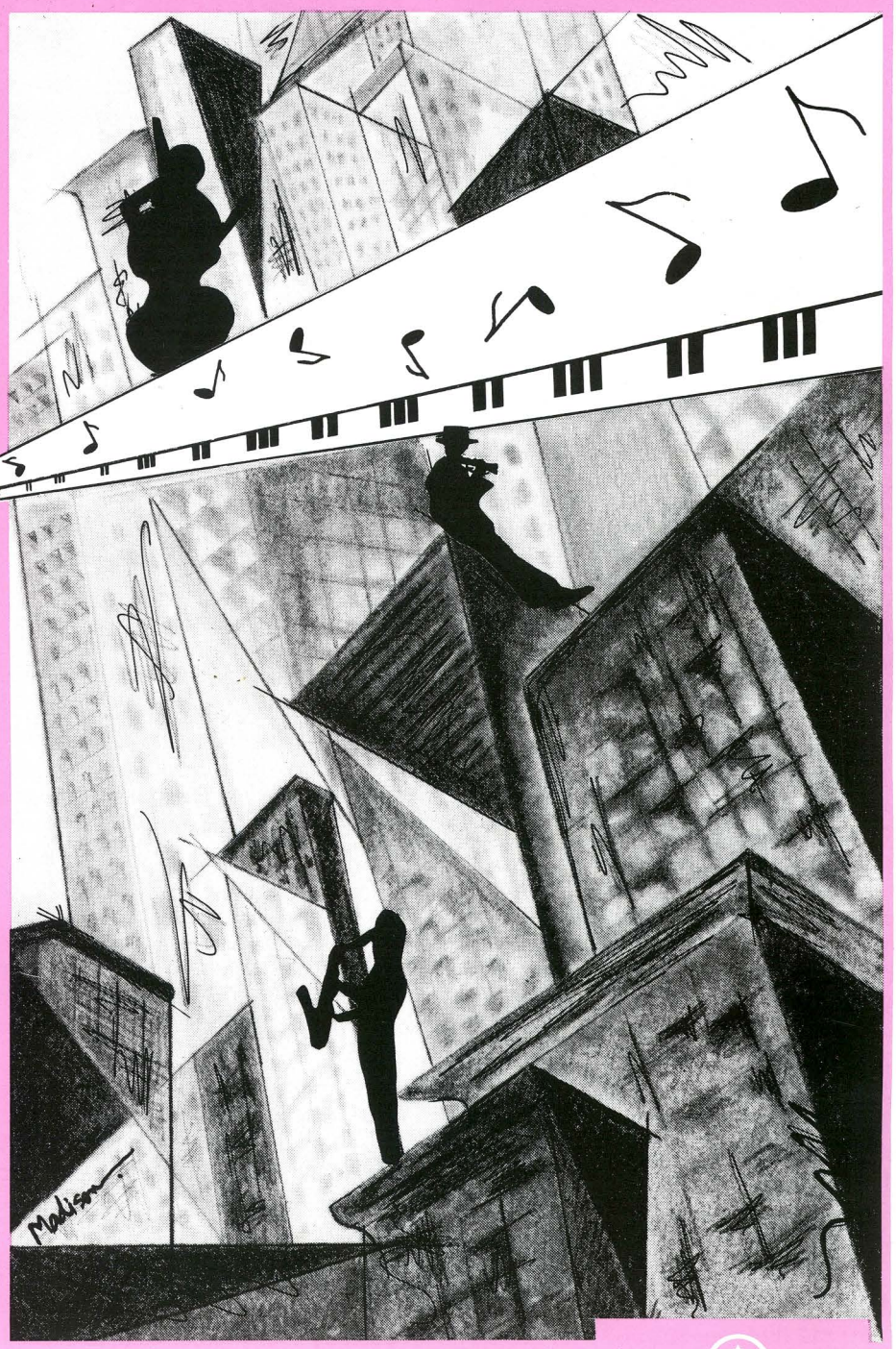

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