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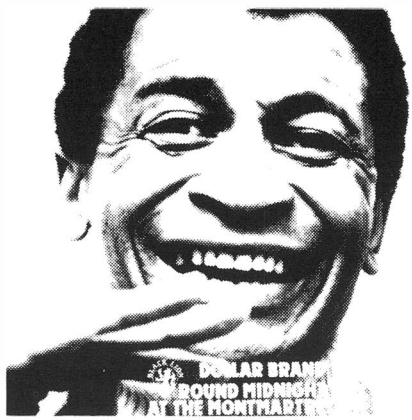

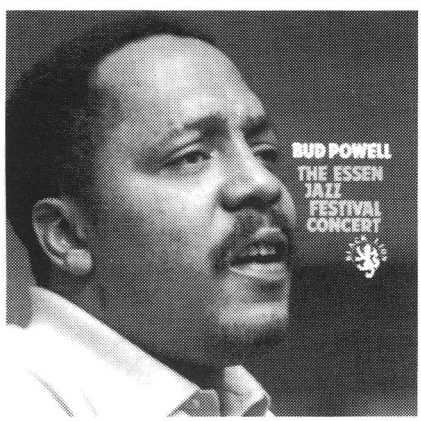

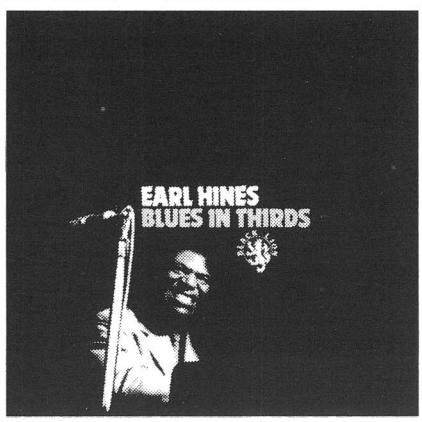

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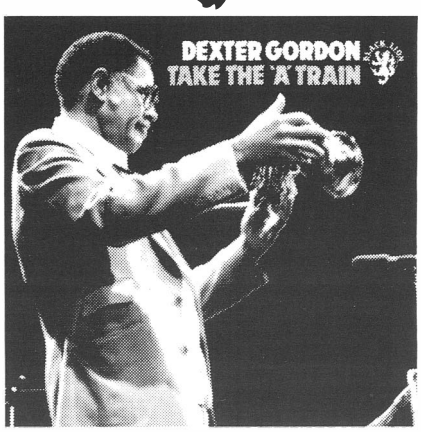

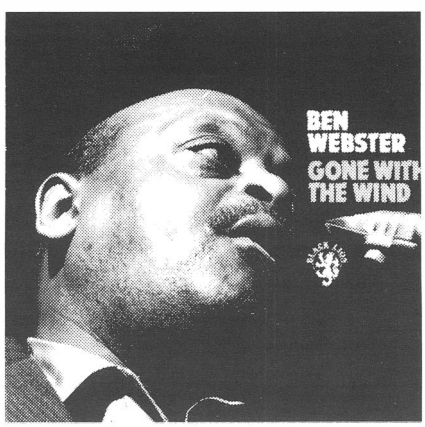

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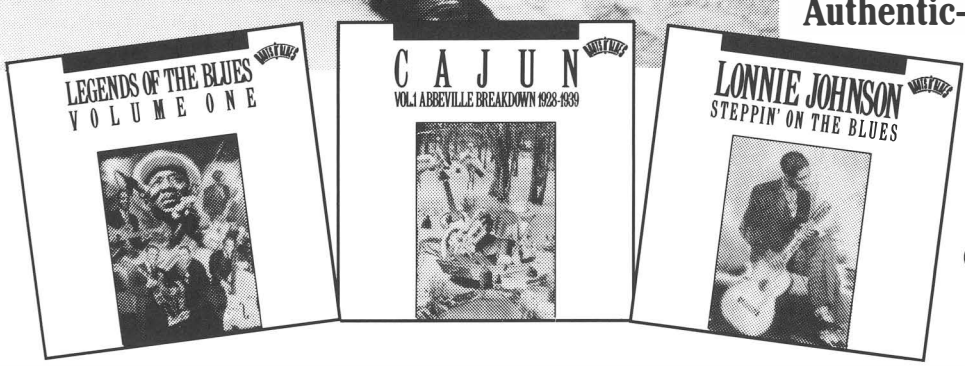

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NOTES ON DAVID AND GOLIATH
Festival international de jazz de Montreal
June 29 - July 8 1990

In an age of mass consumerism, marketing strategies have become more essential than ever as a determinant of success. Nowadays market exposure is an imperative in all forms of artistic endeavour, so much so that mere talent or creative ingenuity has been taking a back seat to the promotional blitzes of corporate image makers.

But as markets are created, they must be maintained too, so the goods must also be showcased. And in the field of music, festivals have become the principle tool to that end. Generally speaking, the bigger the event, the more impressive the showcase, at least in terms of media visibility. Nowhere has this strategy been so successful in Canada than at Montreal's own international jazz festival.

After its first decade extravaganza last year, the question to be answered this time around was what next for 1990? For starters, the whole festival site was concentrated around one single location, which made for some uncomfortably tight squeezes around the five outdoor stages. Particularly frustrating were those outdoor gatherings around one stage on a street corner that made it next to impossible to get from one of the indoor concert halls to another one just across the street. But this was one of the few logistical shortcomings in an otherwise flawless organizational coup.

What is more important, though, is the music itself. When first unveiled, the program had received a rather lukewarm reception from the knowledgeable minority, a.k.a. "the specialists", to use a term not devoid of a disdainful connotation. On the other hand, the assorted local media generalists heaped the usual praise of wonder struck neophytes. Headliners like Corea, Zawinul, Shorter, Jarrett and DiMeola typify the marketable commodity trend, but serious questions should be asked when other big names like Larry Carlton, Anita Baker and even Shirley Bassey (!--a has been pop star if ever there was one) get top billing. In fact, a promotional CD release for the festival read like a current day roster of one of the majors (who overall are certainly not the most reliable purveyors of today's jazz). Before you ask, Pat Metheny was there again, this time around with his Parallel Realities in tow, a perfect occasion for this reviewer to attend another concert instead.

But one must not conclude that there was nothing of real interest to be caught. The secret rather was to be more selective, and that is where being a "specialist" helps, incidentally. In the schedule, the **Piano Plus** series offered (at least by the lineup) the most consistent choice of jazz shows indoors. Starting things off on an upbeat note was **McCoy Tyner** who performed a solo recital commensurate to his recent releases on Blue Note. Effortlessly he translated the past and the present in his own stylistic vocabulary, achieving personality in his unquestionable virtuosity. The following evening featured the tandem of **Don Pullen** and **Jane Bunnett**, a soprano saxophonist and flutist from Toronto who, thanks to her mainly lyrical originals, kept the pianist from overindulging in his "cluster-shtick". Much less successful was the pairing of **Randy Weston** and **Billy Harper** since the former's very angular style constantly seemed to throw off the latter (who is at his best behind very driving rhythm sections). Somewhat lacking too was the duet of **Joe Henderson** and **Jon Ballantyne**. Despite their excellent recording (***Skydance*** on Justin Time), they struggled along to find each other, hence a number of lacklustre moments in the performance. Of note was a solo piece by each, which, in Henderson's case may have been an unusual (unique?) occurrence in a live setting. Like his trio collaboration in the Charlie Haden series last year, this duet of his was starting to gel by the last piece. . . and then it was time to go.

Next to the piano series, **Jazz dans la nuit** had a promising slate of solid jazz acts. Not seen but unanimously praised by those in attendance were **Tommy Flanagan** then **Arthur Blythe** with his tuba unit (**Bob Stewart** playing the big horn). Caught though was **Elvin Jones** and his (predictably) post-Coltranian Jazz Machine, though the leader and **tenor** saxist **Sonny Fortune** (no misprint here) lifted the bandstand, while tenor partner **Pat LaBarbera** coasted along in a decidedly less impassioned groove. The next evening, **Archie Shepp** was heard rumbling in and out of tune, breaking in on **Ronnie Mathews'** consistent soloing, while "using" a local guitarist on three numbers with rather dispensable vocal shouts on the leader's part. Working out on his tenor first, he would invariably switch to his soprano to close the number, coming in

McCOY TYNER (Photograph by Marc Norberg)

ahead of the chorus. By contrast, though, trombonist **Ran Anderson** was a delight, both musical and entertaining without becoming hackneyed about his showmanship. An ear-opener too was his pianist **Fumio Itabashi** whose steel-edged fingers dug into the keys without abusing them gratuitously.

In the early evening **Jazz Beat**, only two shows were of some interest, the first by the currently well mediatized piano phenom **Michel Camilo**, the second by the wily old vet **Art Blakey** and his umpteenth edition of the Jazz Messengers. The young Dominican, like all Latin musicians, demonstrates a lot of flash, laying on his lightening fast block chords pretty thick in spots. However, he can display a lot of sensitivity and discipline in mid-tempos and ballads as well. As an encore, he finished with his own transcription and perfect rendition of Art Tatum's version of Moonglow, no mean feat to say the least.

Then there was the Blakey show. Were there a concert that would best be described by the word 'strange', this one was it. A late start, rambling speeches throughout by the headman, a long interlude featuring **Jeff Keezer** (a fine pianist), who played solo and trio, apart from backing vocalist **Lodi Carr** during one rather disquieting number, were all jumbled together in a ragged performance of his seven man unit with the dual tenors of **Javon Jackson** and **Dale Barlow**. According to the script, there was a trumpet feature too, this time by **Brian Lynch**, who was equally strange in his mix of Clifford Brown technique and Harry James taste. Ending it was yet another version of the beleaguered *Theme* with Blakey chatting away once more about the virtues of jazz. . .and, well, you've heard his perorations before. If music can do such a thing, one couldn't help but having a stale aftertaste in one's mouth by end of this affair.

Not to be overlooked either was the whole outdoor scene. As was the case last year, the discoveries were to be made there out on the street. Totally uplifting (and crowd pleasing as well) was the quartet of Czech flutist and saxophonist **Jiri Stivin**. Slavic folk melodies, hard swinging jazz grooves (*Worksong*, for one) and quasi free solo work were tossed in by the leader (arresting on flute especially) and his three heavy duty sidemen, the bassist **Frantisek Uhlir** especially. Their second performance a couple of nights later was mostly a reprise, which might be indicative of the fact that they play according to a pretty set routine.

Of all concerts heard, the most original one was that of the **Quartetto Italiano Marangolo**, by far the most daring musical act at this year's event. The leader, **Alberto Marangolo**, pays the bills as the musical director of **Paolo Conte's** band, yet his own group is unusual for many reasons, the first being its instrumentation of saxes, trumpet, cello and latin percussion played in a very non-latin way. Though all but the last musician were reading parts, one had a hard time in determining what was written or improvised in this sophisticated mix of contemporary chamber music, free improvisation and distant echoes of Neapolitan folk melodies. As yet unrecorded, here's hoping for them to get their music down in some definitive form.

On this international beat, Danish pianist and composer **Jorgen Emborg** lead his seven piece band **Keyword** for two performances. While his soloists were its best suit (tenor man **Thomas Franck** in particular), his own material emphasized melodic prettiness at the expense of showing off some raw nerve.

In contrast, nerve wasn't missing in **Mike Westbrook's** recreation of the Beatles' *Abbey Road*, a fun performance spiced by the vocal team of **Kate Westbrook** and **Phil Minton**. Still, Mr. Westbrook has produced more substantial fare than this more populist work. **Onaje** was this year's participant from down under, Melbourne to be more specific, and their second performance did not pack much punch (or much less than their first show the night before).

Finally, Hungarian born reedman **Yochk'o Seffer** opened that whole series with an eagerly awaited show that most regrettably bombed for reasons beyond his control.

Scheduled as a quintet, he arrived from France two men short (no trumpeter or bassist) and, worse still, pianist **Siegfried Kessler** was totally **Brahms and Liszt**, to use some cockney rhyming slang. Shouldering the burden was the leader and drummer **Barry Altschul** who after three tunes, called it a night. The next day, though, the pianist didn't show up for the reprise, but local bassist **Sylvain Gagnon** filled the void in a most able manner .

All told, the Montreal festival has clearly evolved into one big musical happening, in which jazz is taking a side (if not back) seat to a wide array of musical genres (be it world beat, fusion, blues or what not). In fact, what once was the very purpose of this event, is now becoming but a mere pretext. Realistically then, there would be nothing wrong at all in calling the FIJM the **Montreal Summer Music Festival**, because that is the very course that it is now charting. For those of us who have a deep seeded interest in the music, hyphening all sorts of extraneous styles with the word jazz is not doing much of a service to any of those labels and neither to jazz for that matter. There is much room indeed for many styles and approaches, but lumping them together under one term is a typical marketing ploy which further confuses an already fuzzy musical set known as jazz.

Ottawa Jazz Festival
July 13 - 22 1990

To paraphrase an old song title, 'What a difference a festival makes. . .' As the Montreal Goliath retires for another year, the little David in Ottawa comes alive ever so discreetly. In contrast to the FIJM's well-oiled machine, organized by consummate businessmen with some interest in the music, the Ottawa Jazz Festival reverses those priorities in a way that your organizers are keen on the music while managing the business side of things with the best of intents, though not always with the required public relations polish. For a first time visitor, it is not easy to find the places where the action is happening given its decentralization and lack of signs for guidance. However, one soon gets the hang of it. One of its best attributes is its relaxed pace and only on two occasions in the whole nine days did two shows coincide. Moreover, there was frequently time

to spare between shows, so one could walk leisurely from one site to the next, such as from the auditorium of the National Arts Museum to Confederation Park, the main outdoor site. Lest we forget too, that all of this is yours for a mere 5 dollars, for which you receive a program and a badge that gives you access to all shows indoors and those in the enclosed perimeter of the park.

As for the content, the program choices reflected a somewhat more traditional bent, though there was room for a few musical ventures too. Topping the headliners was the saxophone colossus himself, **Sonny Rollins**, who performed before some 10,000 spectators jammed in the park. In many ways, it was a surprising show because he gave more than token solo space to his nephew, trombonist **Clifton Anderson**, and pianist **Mark Soskin**. Of course, Calypso tunes were heavily represented (even his stalwart anthem, *St-Thomas*, gave Sonny the opportunity of trading fours [ad nauseam I would say] with **Al Foster**). Otherwise Rollins was at his best, inspired without overstating his encyclopedic knowledge of the jazz lore.

At the same location, there was more straight ahead action in store, in particular a sterling performance by pianist **John Hicks** as a sideman for guitarist **Peter Leitch**, an Ottawa native now having gone on to bigger and better things in the Apple. Holding this unit together was the imposing bassist **Ray Drummond**, a perfect foil for those two solid citizens. Fate would have it that the performance on the following evening would be a tribute to the late **Walter Davis Jr.** who was slated to play with altoist **Bob Mover** at this event. Instead, it was the other **Walter Jr. (Bishop** that is) who officiated at the piano. After the intermission, he read a couple of his very hip but no jive be bop poems, one of them dedicated to the departed pianist, the other to the very living Roach named Max. Overall, the music per se had a number of rough edges, but the spirit was there, shining through in the leader's playing and those of his front line partner, tenor saxophonist **Kirk McDonald**, a no nonsense swinger, albeit less audacious in his forays.

Also featured in the pleasant outdoor venue was the **Microspic Septet** whose tongue-in-cheek pieces, like the one entitled *Lobster Leaps in* , began to wear thin after a while. Classic jazz was served by **Al Grey** and his son on dual trombones, the latter playing second slide to his father. Two Montreal groups also came across quite convincingly early in the evening, the first being a solid quintet lead by bassist **Normand Guilbeault**, the other under the auspices of drummer **Pete Magadini**.

A sampling of indoor concerts at the pianissimo series yielded some variable results. The most engaging one heard was that of Ottawa native **Jean Beaudet**, a long time Montreal resident. Mastering the language of the tradition, he segues effortlessly into more challenging harmonic territory, balancing the "in" with the "out" in a consistently creative and well designed musical blueprint. More impressionistic was the Hungarian born **Laszlo Gardony**, who rambled at times onto some Jarrett turf, though he scored some points on a couple of standards, like Strayhorn's *A Train*.

Several notches below, however, was Torontonian **George McFettridge** who proceeded to play two half hour sets of rambling practice runs interspersed with many of his own (undistinguished) compositions. It was like listening to a technically sound musician practising a series of runs. On the bottom of the heap was **Don Pullen**, who, by himself this time, spent more time rubbing off the lacquer from the keys with his fist than necessary. Having repeated the same scenario in three consecutive numbers, it was time to split. And besides that, ankle bells and stomping feet on the floor did not help matters much either. Some may have been amazed by the bravado or the "nuances", but I wonder if those people were at the same concert that I was.

New to the festival this year was a series appropriately entitled **With an Edge**. As per the title, a little more adventure was in store for its trial run of three concerts. First off was the trio of rising tenor saxophonist **Yannick Rieu** who showed strength and reflectiveness as well as a strong sense of interplay with his cohorts **Michel Ratté** and **Normand Guilbeault** once more. The second performance here could have been billed as **Evening of the Tristanoites**. Spearheaded by pianist **Connie Crothers** and tenor saxophonist **Lennie Popkin** -- the next best thing to Warne Marsh! -- the quartet also featured the late mentor's daughter **Carole**, drumming away in a manner reminiscent of the late Nick Stabulas, with the steady bass of **Cameron Brown** anchoring the proceedings. Originals from the co-leaders were heard with two added free pieces, one of them building from four distinct solo statements to all duet and trio combinations with a final tutti. The pianist's work at constant reharmonization of melodic lines was particularly fascinating, effective in its control and sense of structure in its shapes and textures. Lastly, saxophonist **Ned Rothenberg** proved his unfailing sense of structure and rhythm in his multiphonic displays on alto sax and bass clarinet, a rewarding concert for those willing to be drawn in by his very personal sound scapes. Basically then, this was a most successful trial run and it should be repeated, maybe even expanded for next year.

As for the whole event, a spirit of friendliness exudes from the chief organizers and all of their support staff. Quite remarkably, it just celebrated its tenth anniversary and time has not spoiled it one bit. Resisting the temptation of grandeur, it can best be described as a festival with a human face, and that alone makes it worthwhile for a visit. Like the pause that refreshes, the Ottawa Jazz Festival is a breath of fresh jazz air in a city usually known for its abundance of hot air. And for just 5 dollars, what more is there to say?

SONNY ROLLINS (Photograph by Peter Danson)

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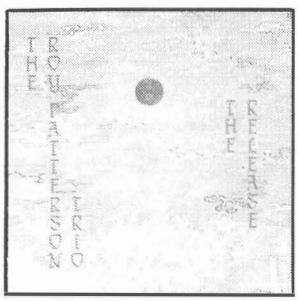

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It is uncanny how the music swirls, possessed by rhythms, **his** rhythms, yet he, Andrew Hill, remains calm, stoical, a statue with fingers moving slightly perhaps, at the centre of the tempest, at the piano of the Knitting Factory.

Elliott Bratton: How old were you when you first started playing piano?

> Andrew Hill: It's a thing where one day my folks got a piano. Because one reverend had a dream. He said, "I can see a point when this boy's hands will be flyin' all over the piano." I was two years old, maybe. . . So we got a piano and I sat down and played it. I had technical facilities, and I was playing melodies, so we thought we'd get a teacher. I used to disturb the teachers, because I always got the teachers to play whatever they could play and do their best things in front of me, and then I would go to the piano and do it. They would put the music up, but they saw I wasn't reading the music, and I put it [the music] in different keys.

Andrew Hill has been a pianist for all seasons and directions; he has worked extensively as a vocal accompanist and as a bandleader in the thick of the "new Jazz" of the 1960s. He has written pieces as abstract as *Spectrum* and *Strange Serenade,* and as down-home funky as *The Rumproller* and *Soul Special*. The musicians Andrew has led in recording studios include such stellar talents as Eric Dolphy, Lee Morgan, Kenny Dorham, Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson, Richard Davis, John Gilmore, Joe Henderson, Roy Haynes, Tony Williams, Ben Riley, and Elvin Jones. In fact, starting with his 1963 album, ***Black Fire***, Andrew recorded better than an lp a year for **Blue Note Records** during the '60s (and he has estimated that about ten more were never released by the old Blue Note label). As with other, better-known Blue Note "regulars" of the era such as Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, and Lee Morgan, Andrew created distinctive albums that were comprised mainly of his own works. Each album used different players, different arrangements, and different panoramas of mood and texture.

* * *

I've mentioned "Andrew Hill" to several people. . . they were befuddled. They said, "I don't know 'Andrew Hill.'"

> Well, that's an unfortunate thing about life. Some people aren't aware of what exists, all the possibilities which could be recreational and therapeutic.

It was **October 29, 1984,** and the occasion was Andrew Hill's first performance in New York City in too many years. The setting was the **Sweet Basil Jazz** club. Musicians, critics, Andrew's devotees and the just plain curious had nearly filled the place a half-hour before the first set began, and this on a drizzly Monday night. Andrew was tuxedoed and ready. He had brought with him: Jimmy Vass, a multi-reedman and long-time associate; Rufus Reid, a veteran bassist whose work Andrew admired; and Ronnie Burrage, one of the youngest and most energetic drummers on the scene.

The air was vibrating with the silent smoke of nerve-endings of individuals

Photograph by Enrico Romero

straining to be part of a ceremony materializing before their eyes. With a puckish grin and a gait quickened by the cause, Andrew made his way to the piano. Somewhere in the overtones of the rising applause one could hear those not in-the-know asking if this was the legend. Andrew sat down, and, by watching the piano's keys, he invoked silence. In the absence of sound, one may have noticed the essence of the shadows in this room was royal blue; against the walls, above the musicians' heads, and between the crowded tables there was a hungry transbluesency, a transparent blue light form calm as a lake yet possessed by the will of the shark within it.

Andrew looked at his comrades to gauge their readiness, and then came the brewing of songs: spritely melodies like the seventies' Hill original *Snake Hip Waltz,* along with more sombre recent works, yet no piece retained the same mood from beginning to end. In fact, the quartet, following the paths cleared by Andrew's piano introductions, transformed one tune from a stately overture in the first set to a lusty waltz in the second to a double-time march in the third. Vass sang with economy on his horns, and Reid was resolute even though he hadn't played this intricate music before. Young Burrage had fire to spare and, as a last-minute addition to the band, sounded a bit more comfortable than he looked. At the music's end, the still large audience paused in recognition, in acknowledgement, of the rare gift of Andrew's sound, and then there was a thunder of applause.

Let's talk about your background a little bit. You were originally born in Haiti?

Let me stop you on that. A funny thing happened. I met Leonard Feather when I was first thinking about going to New York, and the way he thought I spelled my name [with an "e" at the end], he said, "You've got to be Haitian!" Well, he didn't collaborate with me on the money he made as a writer, basically enough for me to negate it. So then I hear, "Andrew Hill: Haitian." It's funny, I came from a period where, because of my rhythmic interpretation of things, they'd say, "He has to be other" than what he is, someone born and raised in Chicago.

I remember reading that you were born in Haiti and came to Chicago as a very small child.

Well, that's what happens when you're literate.

So that was a fabrication?

I can't say what it was. Using a parable, it's not even like I was "passing" for white. But then, maybe, I was opportunistic, because they hadn't become so physical with their weaknesses.

I see what you're saying. So it was an angle?

Well, I had nothing. . . I wasn't selling the product. And the artist, if he's really an artist, he's so involved in his music that he's just happy that the music is visible. . . It's beautiful if a person wants to have that fantasy as far as me being from Haiti. I'm a kind person. I don't blow no one's bubble.

But your family background is Haitian?

No. What might have done it is, I met Andrew Cyrille in the first days [in New York City], and he was and is a beautiful human being, and one of my strongest associations, and with me having a strong profile for a dark person, they said, "They're hanging together; he has to be Haitian." The story mushroomed but the dollars didn't mushroom with it. . . [It] has never made me no money or allowed me to express my creative self.

Because that's Cyrille's background?

Yes, Cyrille's background is not mine.

Born into the black Chicago of the early 1930s, Andrew Hill recalls a childhood that included: playing piano to a teenage John Gilmore's clarinet on *Flyin' Home*; private composition studies with the renowned theorist and educator Paul Hindemith; and with Stan Kenton Orchestra trombonist/arranger Bill Russo; and playing accordion and tap dancing for money on a Chicago street when a passerby named Earl Hines asked him to come play some piano for him, liked what he heard, and told young Andrew, "I should be your master."

Gene Ammons was in town, Oscar Pettiford (when I was ten) was in town. . . and the musicians at that time would always take me to someone. They'd say, "You ought to hear him play." As a teenager, my first job was with Charlie Parker. He was passing through Chicago and Bruz Freeman, Chico Freeman's uncle, said, "Charlie Parker heard you and wants to play with you." So I just went on and played. That year I played with Coleman Hawkins, too. They always made sure there was a backroom I could go into and study. I had a deal worked out with my teachers at the time that if I did the work, I could miss a class.

Both during and after his years at Wendell Phillips High School, Andrew attended the challenging university that was the Chicago Jazz scene of the late-1940s and early '50s. He also spent a semester on Swing Street when he went to New York as the legendary Dinah Washington's accompanist. Andrew made his first album as a leader, ***So In Love,*** with a trio that included Malachi Favors on bass, in 1956. He finally relocated to New York in 1960 while accompanying another vocal legend, Johnny Hartman.

Well, then, I had just gotten over a traumatic emotional experience.

So you wanted to leave Chicago?

Well Chicago actually wasn't terrible, because I was really working. Hank Crawford was reminding me at the BMI party recently how I had Chicago sewed-up at the time.

You were the piano-in-demand?

Yeah. Well, I did the stage shows with a fellow named Red Saunders. He worked with all the singers who passed through. He got all the superb Jazz jobs and was working salon parties in the suburbs. So much so that around 18 hours of my day was totally committed to music.

And the other six were sleep?

Yes, but then, I was neglecting something. You know, everything is cause and effect. It led to me coming to New York for awhile.

Somewhere a glass fell onto the night's sidewalk and smashed, and only in that state was its form crystalline and geometrical, and its purpose clear. The last set at **The Knitting Factory**, a New York club specializing in Avant-Garde musics, was about to begin. It was **June 30, 1988**, Andrew Hill's birthday, and he was at the piano, silent. A bass rested on its side at centrestage and a trap drum set waited mutely at stage left. Andrew's jacket was brown like the remains of a chocolate birthday cake Reggie Work-

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man had brought in only minutes before. Andrew had grinned and magnanimously encouraged the audience to eat of his cake, but now, onstage, his expression was dark, a fold of skin knotting in his forehead, his mouth set and lipless, his eyes burning from an inner fire. The walls around Andrew seemed a dim yellow, like a lightbulb browning-out.

Hearing a starting-point somewhere in the silence, Andrew began ruminating lowly, searching the piano for the remains of his old melodies. After some minutes, and without an obvious signal from Andrew, Stafford James climbed onto the stage and lifted his bass while Vernell Fournier rose to sit with his drums. There seemed to be no clue for them as to where to join Andrew's music; there was only a dense area of piano tones thickened by rhythmic patterns that were long, deep, and obscured like an obsession. Vernell jumped at the glimmer of a regular pulse and held onto it, his riveted ride cymbal sizzling desperately against the dim yellow background. Stafford gradually entered, swinging into an erratic walk that fairly fit the cause. Stafford's bass-work was unusual and appropriate, like that of Alan Silva on Andrew's ***Strange Serenade*** album from 1980. Throughout his ruminations, Andrew's face remained absorbed with concern, immobile as a broken wall.

The music ended as abruptly as it had begun. Vernell and Stafford strode off the stage and into the departing audience, their faces serious yet glazed, puzzled, like those of warriors sent into the labyrinth to kill the minotaur who decided to leave after finding only the cave's dark interior and a strange smell that betrayed neither the nearness nor the vitality of the beast. If Vernell had been trying to recapture the Andrew of the '50s, from their common breeding ground of Chicago, then this veteran mainstream drummer's awakening had been particularly rude. But the hunt was more familiar for Stafford, as he had worked with Andrew in the '70s, at a time when the pianist's music and career were particularly clouded with enigmas.

To break through the enigmas of Andrew's life in the '70s one must be either a super-sleuth or a clairvoyant. There are the albums Andrew recorded in that decade (at a rate that was about half of the rate at which he recorded in the '60s), but their liner notes generally contain false information about his activities. For example, some liners state that Andrew studied and taught at Colgate University, but this has been denied by Colgate itself. From Andrew, who has been inordinately vague about this period, we learn that his Blue Note contract ran out around 1970, that the Hills moved to somewhere in upstate New York soon afterward, and moved to their current home in Pittsburgh (near San Francisco), California, in 1977. But his career is a mystery in the '70s, with the only clues being several lps made by an artist who no longer had a working band and rarely performed in clubs or concerts. Intriguingly, Andrew's solo ***Live at Montreux*** lp from 1975 is his most consistent recording of the decade in terms of style and feeling, yet it is also perhaps his (or any other pianist's) most emotionally anti-climactic and introspective public performance.

Months before his return to The Knitting Factory, word had spread that Andrew's quintet would be recorded after this engagement by the new Blue Note label (released as ***Eternal Spirit***). Rumors flew as to probable sidemen, with Joe Henderson and other famous cohorts form the '60s being mentioned. With this unopened gift came the hope among many Hill fans that this creator of albums that ranged from the invitingly melodic to the atonal and percussive, that this most original of the young composer-pianists to arrive on the scene in the '60s, was back with more amazing pieces just like when he recorded for the old Blue Note.

On Sunday, January 29, 1989, The Knitting Factory was standing-room-only, and waitresses slid around drinkers, gazers and other zoomers with daredevil speed to avoid an accident. Even though it was the last night of Andrew's week-long engagement, interest was still at a peak. Lee Konitz and Dick Katz came straight from a Roy Eldridge birthday tribute at St. Peter's Church, Geri Allen was carrying flowers for Andrew, and even Roy Haynes (the drummer on the first lp the pianist led for Blue Note), was making a rare club visit.

Andrew had assembled the following players for his music: bassist Rufus Reid, with whom he had recorded (the ***Shades*** lp) since their first encounter at Sweet Basil in '84; Ben Riley, a drummer who also worked with the pianist before and is best known for

his years in Thelonious Monk's quartet and the group SPHERE; Greg Osby, one of New York's most promising young alto saxophonists, whose off-beat rhythmic approach would complement Andrew's; and, playing on the same stage with Hill since 1968, Bobby Hutcherson, the premier vibraphonist who produced some of his most memorable playing in their Blue Note meetings (Hill's *Judgement*, his own *Dialogue*, etc.)

Silver, for nostalgia, yet also for anticipation, was the colour of the clouds hovering above the bandstand as the new Andrew Hill Quintet swung into an avant-bop jam of the type that could be heard in an East Village Jazz club 25 years ago. The song was oddly familiar, but the familiarity was in the chord changes, because the melody had hardly been hinted at. It was as if we had all come into the club in the middle of the tune. Then came a lively trading, almost a round-robin, of 8-bar, then 4-bar, then 2-bar breaks between the alto sax, the vibes, and the drums. On the last drum break, Riley changed the tempo, the rest of the band joined in, and we heard the melody for the first time: it was Tadd Dameron's Jazz standard, *Lady Bird.* At the end of the tune the audience was Andrew's, applauding his well-woven mystery and climactic revelation.

The silver clouds were multiplying, by mitosis, the offspring treading noiselessly backward from their birth above the stage to rest over our heads. Andrew led the quintet into his new ballad, *Spiritual Lover,* which featured long, subtly angular solo statements from Hutcherson, Osby, and the composer. The next tune, *Golden Sunset,* and the last of the set, *Pinnacle*, while also being recent Hill creations, somehow fully evoked the sound of the leader's Blue Note ensembles from 25 years ago. The same energy, the same on-the-verge tension, soothing, enchanting release, and dramatic conclusions were in these melodies and solos as when Andrew conversed with such departed stalwarts as Dolphy, J.C. Moses, and Booker Ervin. Bobby Hutcherson was affected by this invoking of spirits in *Golden Sunset;* his mallets struck with the same rhythmic abstraction and luminous attack as on those Blue Note lps. Fellow vibist Jay Hogard stood back by the entrance, shouting, exhorting Hutcherson to continue his flight over steel keys, and we were all gleeful under silver.

The next-to-last tune they played was Andrew's Jazz-Reggae delight, *Samba Rasta,* so named because the Reggae beat was sometimes interrupted by Samba sections. The alto moaned in a blue mood, while the vibes chanted softly, marimba-like, the bass and drums spread the Reggae and slow Samba around, while Andrew somehow made the piano imitate the hesitant electric scratch of a Reggae rhythm guitar behind the different soloists. Somewhere during this journey, those clouds began to drop silver rain in straight lines, like the curtains of pearls in Erté's paintings, falling in soft Reggae rhythm.

For some reason, I sat there recalling the first time I had spoken to Andrew Hill. It was a few days before our interview in '84, and I had reached him by telephone. During the conversation I was made ill at ease because, during every statement he made, Andrew would suddenly stop talking, hum for a minute, then resume his statement. As I patiently listened to this process, I realized that he was actually developing a melody, composing in his head, as he talked! Finally, I asked him if it were a new piece he was working on, and Andrew confessed that it was and gave an embarrassed chuckle. Only much later would it occur to me how similar Andrew's hesitant staccato speech was to his rhythmic approach to the keyboard.

> Charlie Parker told me, years ago, he said, "There will be a day when you will be the keeper of the flame."

On this January night, Andrew sat there at the piano, his face an unmoving mask, as usual. But then he rose from the bench and stepped back, his hand stroking his jaw with concern. His eyes moved from one musician to the next, while the coordinated actions of the members of his group made the instruments sing his thoughts and emotions. Each of the four musicians was like a mirror, reflecting some aspect, some shade, some disposition of Andrew. From behind his glasses, Andrew's eyes reflected wonder, and he watched his feelings and thoughts dance in four views.

Note: All interview segments in this article are taken from the 10/24/84 interview with Andrew Hill conducted by Elliot Bratton and transcribed by Ted Panken for WKCR.

CANADIAN FESTIVALS

duMaurier Downtown Jazz
Toronto, Canada
June 22- July 1, 1990

The full range of jazz was on display this year at duMaurier Ltd Downtown Jazz and much of the music was widely accessible to the audience. Many major jazz personalities performed free of charge at the open air concerts in Berczy Park and at Harbourfront while the expanded club presentations allowed audiences to experience the excitement of the music close at hand at a more reasonable cost than would have been the case at high profile concert venues.

Bringing the music to the people seems to have been of primary consideration in the planning and presentation of the music which made this year's event so exceptional. In a way, though, there was an embarrassment of riches. Many high profile artists went head to head with each other, necessitating difficult listening choices being made.

The high profile American artists were the icing which held together the festival but it was the large contingent of Canadian performers who were the backbone of the event. This was a bonanza for out of town listeners who were able to discover the exceptional talent to be found here.

The fortuitous scheduling of pianists **Gary Williamson** and **Charlie Mountford** is a prelude to John Lewis' solo piano at Cafe des Copains was a revelation for many people. Both pianists have worked through their influences and are now excellent stylists whose abilities draw the listener into their music. Their festival performances have become a prelude to one week showcases for them at the same venue in December.

Guitarists **Ed Bickert** and **Lorne Lofsky** shared both the stage and the elements at Berczy Park in a concert where they shared the billing with **Bernie Senensky's** Sextet. Both groups, in their different ways, are excellent examples of the maturity of the music here. It was also revealing to hear the reed section of **Jim Galloway's Wee Big Band**. The tonal blend and joyous sense of swing gave renewed life to charts gleaned from the recorded works of major jazz bands of the past. **Jay McShann**, the showcased guest, was reunited with many of the arrangements from his landmark band of the early 1940s.

Another era was also evoked by the **Jeannie & Jimmy Cheatham Sweet Baby Blues Band** who quickly made a Saturday noon hour crowd feel right at home. The band had energized the audience the night before at the Bermuda Onion with its unique mix of jazz, blues and show business but there seemed to be an extra dimension to this (for them) early morning performance. Central to the success of the band is the groove established by Jeannie Cheatham. She is almost alone, today, in her ability to play the kind of blues-based jazz piano which was once commonplace. Her antecedents include Pete Johnson, Count Basie and Albert Ammons as well as the still performing Jay McShann and Sammy Price. Ray Bryant is one of the few other contemporary performers who can set the kind of groove so essential for this music. Bassist **Red Callender** and drummer **John "Ironman" Harris** combined with Jeannie to lay the foundation for the five horn front line ensemble. The charts, created by Jimmy Cheatham, are an adroit mixture of the R&B styled bands of the late 1940s/early 1950s and mid Forties jazz combos. **Curtis Peagler's** highly charged alto solos were electrifyingly functional but it was the overall feel of the band and its recharging of the blues language which was so satisfying.

The blues is never far from the surface when trombonist **Ray Anderson** performs. His gutbucket tonality and muted effects were the central focus when his quartet took listeners on an extended trip through many different moods in a set which never left the fundamentals of the music. His Berczy Park concert was one of the week's highlights.

Equally effective but quite different was the delicate touch and urbane thoughtfulness of **John Lewis's** solo piano creations. His two nights at Cafe des Copains were a rare opportunity to hear one of jazz music's foremost composers give us interpretations of his music stripped down to its core. Superficially he is a creator of attractive melodies but underneath the exterior is a fascinatingly complex organization of evolving musical thoughts which draws the listener along. Much of the repertoire was drawn from his recent series of recordings for Philips.

Understatement was also the key when **Dave McKenna** and **Ed Bickert** performed together at Cafe des Copains. Their music was developed subliminally from basic song frameworks. There was no charted direction for this material. It was simply a matter of one of the musicians taking the lead, pointing the music in a direction which could be taken up by the other. It was an exquisite evening of spontaneously conceived music, but always controlled by the parameters within which they chose as the framework for their portraits.

High energy has always been the forte of both tenor saxophonist **George Coleman** and pianist **Harold Mabern**. They were at The Underground Railroad for several nights with bassist Neil Swainson and drummer Jerry Fuller. These musicians were working hard! What was always evident was the great control the soloists displayed over the extended length of their statements. All the random elements have long been distilled out of their playing so that the listener is never put on hold in the middle of an improvisation. It was an impressive dissertation in post bop improvisation.

More laid back, but just as compelling, was the tenor saxophone of **Plas Johnson**. He showcased himself on a gorgeous ballad feature the night I was able to stop by the Chelsea Hotel's music room. The rhythm section of Ian Bargh (piano), Dave Young (bass) and Archie Alleyne (drums) was smooth as silk and gave both Plas and trumpeter **Spanky Davis** the underpinning they needed.

Scheduling conflicts at Harbourfront shortened the weekend festivities of traditional and modern jazz sounds. The Shipdeck Stage again showcased a specially assembled package under festival musical director **Jim Galloway's** direction. **Ralph Sutton** and Jay

RAY ANDERSON

McShann did their two piano thing with support from **Jack Lesberg** and **Gus Johnson**. They were then joined by Galloway, Spanky Davis (on Friday) and violinist **Claude Williams** (Saturday) for a set of informally jammed numbers. Claude Williams continues to generate extraordinary audience response for his biting blues-tinged jazz violin. His music epitomizes the uncompromising swinging ideals established in Kansas City in the 1930s.

Looking again at the schedule it is hard to believe that I wasn't able to hear Ernestine Anderson, McCoy Tyner, the Rebirth Brass Band, Bob Mover, Connie Crothers, Alexander von Schlippenbach, Wynton Marsalis, the Concord all Stars (with Sweets, Monty Alexander and Scott Hamilton), Betty Carter and Clifford Jordan.

Perhaps some of them will be back another year. One thing seems certain. The festival is now on a sound footing and is building towards the future. There are few better places to be the latter part of June than Toronto. This festival has managed to find a good balance between upscale gala concerts and spontaneously conceived events in small venues. Films, exhibitions and suburban community concerts add to the overall enjoyment. - *John Norris*

INTRODUCTION

For the jazz folk of Toronto it has become a catch phrase in recent years, to persist in referring to the Montreal Festival as a comparative image. The perfect city festival.

And yet isn't the old adage "That all is greener in the other's garden."

As for my own reviews, in reflection they seem to have read much the same as the preceding attitude. Perhaps not citing Montreal as my dream, but indeed Bracknel, Moers, Vancouver and Victoriaville have been hoisted onto the preferential pedestal.

A QUOTE OR MORE

"Opening for the guests, the local **Avant Garde Revival Orchestra** proved with little delay that they too had arrived at a satisfying harmony. Leader on soprano horn was **Bill Smith**, with **Barry Livingston** on keyboard, **Craig Noseworthy** on alto and flute and **Richard Bannard** on drums.

"Other than in the first item in their almost uninterrupted four part set, they were much more melodious than is common in Smith ensembles, and even in that initial segment a compelling piano and drum plateau was raised.

"The third part, played by Smith, Livingston and Bannard, floated on a lyricism only rarely arrived at in improvisational jazz such as this. In the final segment, Noseworthy had an opportunity to shine in a composition of his own.

"Obviously the Pacific air has given a creative boost to Bill Smith, who now lives in British Columbia." (Val Cleary, Special to the (Toronto) **Star**.)

AFTER THE RAIN

Living, as is my privilege, on the very edge of a rain forest, brings into one's consciousness a whole series of feelings as to what music means. It has often been suggested that the energy of cities is what has produced jazz music, but in my more recent experience, that energy has proceeded to become unrelenting noise.

The silent nights, enveloped by rural darkness, are illuminated by the moon posing over the Forbidden Plateau. The magnificent sky, always a detail different, filled with the stories of the stars. To lay quiet under a red cedar roof, the rain drummers spattering their rhythms as I pass into sleep, gives me a moment to join with a part of nature's pulse. The Silent Nights. And so, with even so small a description, it becomes apparent, that to participate in the Toronto Jazz Festival, in whatever capacity, was done so, for the (my) first time, as a visitor. I now live in the "other greener garden." This occasion, the "greener" being the opportunity to play my own music with friends in public, and to listen to, in a relatively short time frame, a most amazing array of wonderful music. Strange, how one's perception of things change, when it is no longer an everyday event to be enveloped in the maelstrom called city.

THE FESTIVAL

In past years there had been two main venues that had been my focus, and again this was to be the case: the outdoor stage at Berczy Park and the du Maurier Theatre located in the Harbourfront complex. At the latter our band had opened the festival's first night, in a double bill with **Azimuth**. (**Kenny Wheeler, Norma Winstone** and **John Taylor**).

There had, however, in my absence, been the opening of two new clubs, the instigation of a jazz policy in an existing one, and the continuance of jazz at George's Spaghetti House, Toronto's oldest jazz establish-

ment. Over its ten day span, I managed to attend fourteen festival events in this variety of locations.

Greeted almost at once by the negative tension that seems these days to shroud the large urban centres, made me decide not to allow the constant complaints of this and that to intrude upon the reason for my visit, and set about compiling my schedule to experience, what turned out to be ten days of joyful noise.

Someone had suggested that I was drawn toward the more eclectic forms of our art, however rather than this, I find my curiosity is aroused by musics that I have slim chance, under normal circumstances, of hearing; and with such a vast choice of styles it seems necessary to not only dwell in those old memories, but to be excited by the newer, more creative innovative forms.

The Top O' The Senator is one of the two new clubs, and proved to be a delightful surprise. Designed out of an empty space with the purpose of presenting live music, was part of the pleasure, for it meant one could hear and observe the music / musicians with clarity and comfort. Both of the events that I attended were organized under the auspices of saxophonist **Jane Bunnett**, and were continuing projects of her active imagination. **Dewey Redman** and **Don Pullen** were her guests. For the evening of Dewey Redman, a quintet had been organized, which performed most of the material that had been recorded on Darklight Records two years ago. Although the players were not always "in tune" with each other there were many fine moments. To hear Dewey Redman's Texas blues tenor is always a treat, but special mention must be made of pianist **Don Thompson**, who "played his ass off," in a music slightly "outside" his "normal" style.

The night before his performance, Don Pullen and I had spent the late evening listening to the happy swing music of **Spanky Davis** and **Plas Johnson** with the **Ian Bargh** trio, in the bar of the Chelsea Inn, the official hotel of the festival. His performance in duet with Jane was a concert to be truly excited about, as I had already heard them together on their recent CD release. (***New York Duets***, Music & Arts CD 629). They are so complete, due for the most part on Don's ability to always rhythmically be there, feeding those gorgeous unexpected chords and tumbled out solo lines in harmony with Jane's lyrical, pure, Steve Lacy influenced soprano. Buy this recording!

The **Betty Carter** Trio also appeared for five nights at the Senator, but regretfully I was unable to attend.

The Harbourfront complex is one of those waterfront pleasure palaces that seem to have appeared all over out planet. Sometimes, by government officials, they are referred to as - revitalization of unused lands. Basically, in a crass, pseudo arty way, they cater for the beer and hot dog crowd. However, housed among all this prohibitive steel, brick and glass is the du Maurier Theatre, an almost perfect performance space, especially for the intimate improvised music that had been programmed. The normal format as with AGRO and Azimuth, is to create a double program, first with a Canadian group and completed with a "main act". On the two occasions that I attended, indeed was the compère even, the music by both "locals" and visitors was, as this city likes to boast of itself, world class. Both occasions took on special meaning for me as it meant I would be among friends and musicians of my ilk.

A Tribute to **Michael Snow**, one of Canada's foremost multidisciplinary artists, opened one evening with a showing of his 1964 experimental film, ***New York Eye and Ear Control***. This was of interest to the audience mostly due to the presence in the film of Albert Ayler, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd and John Tchicai. The improvising quartet that performed live music, apart from Michael, consisted of **Paul Dutton, Nobby Kubota** and **Al Mattes**, and as is their style, unfolded a long, somewhat rambling set that could be described as linked together sound effects; somewhat delicate in nature. . . a short intermission, and then the performance of the incredible **Alexander von Schlippenbach** trio, which contained **Evan Parker** and **Paul Lovens**. Contained seems not to be the correct word, for the music was an astounding demonstration of a style of jazz (?) that is indigenous to Europeans. Completely freely improvised, and this trio which has been in existence for thirteen years, are masters, or perhaps even the inventors of this form. Always completely inside of each other, producing music that is in that perfect moment. Schlippenbach's piano, which should have been amplified, always the core, being if it were possible, a German, free improvising Thelonious Monk. Parker, who Canadian audiences have witnessed before, banshee whirling multi-phonic dervish, and then Paul Lovens, whose percussion is always within / without. From a bombastic roar to the smallest leaf floating down on an autumn day. Superb music that makes the heart dance and the body tingle.

The other occasion at the theatre had begun with the guitar duet of **Rainer Wiens** and **Nilan Perrara**, whose very names seem to suggest world music. Two Toronto based musicians who have much experience performing together, and whose interest in many rhythmic musics outside of the jazz form was most apparent in their charming presentation.

Once again a trio completed the evening, but unlike the Schlippenbach group, was more involved in the jazz conception of horn(s) (**Vinny Golia**), bass (**Barre Phillips**), and drums (**Alain Joule**). Although the music was again improvised, due to the instrumentation the feeling of accompaniment, rather than pure group music, prevailed. Percussionist Alain Joule, who was unknown to me, was superbly in control of his vast array of ethnic and drumkit drums, adding not only unusual rhythms, but a variety of beautiful, sensitive sound effects. In this format the focus is often directed toward the saxophonist, but that would not be accounting for the fact that the bassist was Barre Phillips. Surely one of the most inventive musicians in today's improvised music scene, who has the great talent of being so individual a player that he alone can tickle yer fancy. (Check his solo recording, ***Camouflage***, Victo CD 08). So this left Vinny Golia in the position of creating the musics melodic ebb and flow, which he achieved in his usual exuberant fashion on a multitude of horns. Everything from piccolo to baritone saxophone. A wonderful evening of freely improvised jazz.

Outdoor stages require a number of elements for them to be successful. A charming environment, a good sound system and clement weather, seeming

to be the three most urgent. Berczy Park has none of these attributes, and is one of the parts of the Toronto Festival that has need to be reorganized. Perhaps the worst element, as is so often the case, was the sound system, the purpose of which always seems to be too loud, distorted and as far removed from the natural sound of the music as possible. **Bob Movers** brash bebop band featuring several promising new young turks; **Ray Anderson's** quartet, with growl trombone and gravel voiced singing, and **McCoy Tyners** trio, all fared reasonably well under these circumstances. A feeling of plugging on regardless. But the double event of **Les Granules** and the **Oliver Lake Quartet** struggled with these unsympathetic circumstances. Les Granules, who are the amazing Montreal duo of **Jean Derome** (wind instruments) and **René Lussier** (guitars), were simply spectacular, and their avant garde show was very much enriched by their Quebecois heritage. Their very style reflects a social order so different from English Canada, the most apparent differences being the lightning humour and the use of Quebecois traditional music forms. To search them out is extremely important, for they are one of the truly original, non-American-influenced Canadian groups. Oliver Lake followed this dynamic duo to disadvantage, with his music sounding hollow and incomplete. Fortunately I was able to hear them the following evening at the other new venue, the Bermuda Onion. Amid ultraviolet lighting, chrome fixtures and black naugahyde seats, Oliver's music sprang forth in the manner expected. The leader's sinewy, blues based alto paraded the quartet. In a period of nostalgic traditionalism he finds the path of his heritage without casting more than a glance to the past. To hear this quartet again, with the startling finger picking guitar playing of **Anthony Peterson, Pheeroan Ak Laff** boiling out of the traditions of Max, Arthur, Rashied and Cyrille, and the opportunity to hear one of the new voices in jazz, bassist **Leon Dorsey**, erased the previous days disappointment in Berczy Park completely from one's mind.

Although not quite finished, the festival, at least for me, came to an abrupt stop midway through **Archie Shepp's** set. What had started as a tribute to Bessie Smith concluded with a vocal rendition of *Stormy Monday Blues*, as the heavens opened up, soaking a happy audience that seemed unperturbed by the sudden change in weather. Recent experiences of Archie Shepp seem to indicate the ever enlarging inclusion of show biz elements in his performance, creating, perhaps, a current edition of Satch. Yeah! Special mention must be made of **Ronnie Mathews**, whose piano playing was a definite asset, and provided the more substantial solos.

In closing this review it seems appropriate to return to two of Toronto's older establishments. The Underground Railroad, with the energetic **George Coleman / Harold Mabern** quartet, the group continually fuelled by drummer **Gerry Fuller,** and the sixties bebop music of **Dizzy Reece,** with once again **Don Thompson** on piano, at Georges Spaghetti House; providing the opportunity for me to relate to my music in the way I prefer. A club. A glass of wine. Friends. . . And a chance to relax and reflect on the enormous amount of joyful noise I had been fortunate enough to participate in. Thanx.
- *Bill Smith (In Exile)*

WHEN MO' BETTER IS NOT ENOUGH

As a serious feature film on jazz, ***Mo' Better Blues*** has a plethora of problems from the fact that the film never actually deals with jazz as an art form, to a truly sad treatment of women.

Where's The Jazz?

Neither the music presented in the film nor any of the scenes dealing with the art or business of the music offer the viewer any real insight. People who see ***Mo' Better Blues*** will not only leave unenlightened about jazz as an artform, they will actually have been subliminally subjected to some major misconceptions about jazz.

Moreover, the soundtrack is generally lacklustre, until the last part of the movie, beginning with a Branford Marsalis treatment of Ornette Coleman's *Lonely Woman* and concluding with extended selections of John Coltrane recordings.

Only two soundtrack numbers are standouts: one is a parody of top 40 pop and the other is a brief trumpet burnout number.

The parody is well rendered, but it's not really a jazz number, it's a jazz tune, complete with "mugging" from the band members.

The second excellent number is a "burn out" trumpet solo which aptly accentuates the off-stage action of Giant, the trumpeter's inept manager, getting whipped in the back alley; except, at this point the trumpeter doesn't know that Giant is being beaten. So why is this trumpeter, who up to this point plays in a cool style, suddenly coming on with a lusty, screaming solo like he was auditioning to play for Albert Ayler. The scene defies logic, as do many other scenes in this movie full of plot holes.

There are numerous other examples I could cite about the musical shortcomings, but they all point back to either an inability or a refusal by the filmmaker to rely on "contemporary" jazz music in a film allegedly geared toward uplifting jazz. I highlight "contemporary" because the end of the movie does entrust itself to the power of John Coltrane's music and that trust is amply rewarded.

Cinematographer Ernest Dickerson's shots are nothing short of stunning in their impact when mated with Coltrane's impassioned playing. The landscapes and the candid shots of the characters take on a texture and semi-abstractness that is a perfect visual counterpoint to the music. The key to this success is that these portions of the film seem to have been shot and / or edited with the music in mind, and thus, the music took the lead in shaping how the images would be presented.

But nowhere else, except in the "Top 40" and the "trumpet burnout" scenes aforementioned, does Lee put the music out front. A film to elevate jazz which does not trust jazz is immediately suspect in my book.

Rather than show the musicians discussing their views on the major issues facing jazz musicians today, Spike Lee resorts to presenting Bleek as the cliched, lonely, temperamental artist who will let nothing get in the way of his music, or else Lee wastes time focusing on contrived issues such as an in-band feud about the piano player violating the band rules against bringing a woman into the dressing room.

Jazz as an artform is never discussed. The history of jazz is never even alluded to, and the major musicians of jazz are never so much as mentioned as influential forces and role models in the lives of the ***Mo' Better*** musicians.

On the business level, the failure to confront the economics of jazz is even more glaring. Lee could have built the whole story around the economic exploitation of jazz musicians, but instead he is content to loll in general allusions about the business side of jazz without ever dealing with specifics. Why set up a conflict between the manager and the club owner over money if you're not going to directly address the money question? What about the problems of getting recorded, then getting the records distributed, and then getting an accurate count on the number sold and the royalties due? What about the question of airplay. The list could go on and on.

These are major questions every jazz artist must face, so why not at least acknowledge these questions, especially if you're trying to make a ***Mo' Better*** movie than previous films such as the infamous ***Bird***? My contention is, in his rush to complete a movie which he allegedly scripted in two weeks, Spike Lee just flat out overlooked these and a lot of other salient aspects of the jazz life.

Spike Lee says he really loves and appreciates jazz. If that's true, then why didn't he spend some time getting to know jazz before he screwed up the relationship?

The Bitch / Mother Syndrome

Mo' Better is billed as the story of Bleek Gilliam, a talented young jazz trumpeter who is torn between his love of jazz and his love for two women, but no real conflict is presented. When the trumpeter can play, he could care less about either woman, and when he can no longer play, he goes to the one who offer's a school teacher's economic security--so, where is the love?

Amazingly, one year after being humiliated and disrespected, the school teacher just lets him waltz back into her life now that he has hit bottom, physically can't play any more, and his mind has nearly snapped. One minute brother man is begging to come back, in the next scene she's pregnant, and in the following scene they're getting married. There's not one scene showing them discussing why, if or under what conditions she should allow him back into her life. Is this love?

Like many, many brothers, Spike Lee

JOHN COLTRANE (Photograph by Bill Smith)

understands sex, but he seems to be a little confused about "this love stuff." Clearly part of his confusion is that he has yet to figure out that women are human beings who exist outside of the purview of the male consciousness. I don't doubt he loves Black women, but, like jazz, which he also loves, there's a big difference between what he loves and what he understands.

It's time for Spike Lee to expand his vision, and specifically, it's time for him to employ talented Black writers who can produce scripts which reveal both the beauty and the contradictory complexity of our life and culture without pandering to a TV mentality, rather than scripts, such as the one Spike Lee wrote, that limp along in fake hipness from cliche to cliche, generalization to generalization.

Entertainer Or Artist, What Kind of Filmmaker Does Spike Lee Want To Be?

In the August 1990 issue of ***Interview*** magazine Spike Lee is quoted: "I've been able to balance the high-wire act because it's always been my belief that you could make entertaining **and** thought-provoking films with that balance. Because I do not want to get up on a soapbox and preach. At the same time, I don't want to make an ***Uncle Buck*** or ***The 'Burbs***. There is an audience for that type of shit, but I don't want to make that. You can make films that are intelligent and entertaining at the same time. So that's what I've tried to do. Because it's a business. ***Mo' Better Blues*** cost $10 million. And that's a lot of money, even though the average Hollywood film is $18 million, and people want to get their money back." Lee goes on to say, "I have to tell people this all the time--nobody appointed me spokesperson for 30 million African Americans. I'm very uncomfortable with that. I'm a **filmmaker**, first and foremost."

Spike Lee is evading the central issue of what kind of filmmaker he wants to be and whether he has a message he wants to share. He doesn't have to be a spokesperson for 30 million African Americans. It would be sufficient (although not required) for him to be a spokesperson for only one African American: Spike Lee.

The difference between great art and great entertainment is precisely a question of message. If the point is only to display our talents and to make people feel good, then at best all we will produce in the long run is great entertainment. We can't have it both ways. We can't provoke serious thought if we're not willing to take the risk of presenting a point of view.

Life would be much ***Mo' Better*** for all of us, if we had more artists and less entertainers. If talented and creative people are overly concerned with "the bottom line," i.e., how much money our work costs or how much money our work makes, whether conscious of it or not, they've chosen to elevate career popularity over creative development.

While Spike Lee's high wire act seems to make sense when you first read his defense, the fact is, within the American system, most of what we consider great art has never been a success as popular entertainment. This is not an argument against the development of craft and in favour of raw message; indeed, in order to get one's message across to audiences raised on entertainment, one must be a very **skilled** artist because invariably your artwork is going to be compared to the slickest entertainment. Nevertheless, regardless of the level of accomplishment, the central question remains: to what end is the work that we do?

John Coltrane is an appropriate example in this context. Early on in his career as a band leader (which didn't happen until after many, many years developing his craft and working under the leadership of others), Coltrane had a "hit" record with *My Favorite Things*. Had he wanted to, Coltrane could have rested on those laurels and churned out stylistic clones. But rather than go after being popular, Coltrane decided to pursue the much more difficult course of constantly reaching for deeper truths through art.

Coltrane never fancied himself a spokesman for African Americans, but at the same time he had a vision for how he should live and what kind of music he should create. To the benefit of the entire world, Coltrane not only followed his vision, he shared that vision with all who chose to partake.

Although *My Favorite Things* was a popular success, today Coltrane is best remembered for *A Love Supreme*. Had Coltrane fallen into the entertainment trap he never would have created *A Love Supreme*. Entertaining hits come and go, but great art stands the test of time.

This is the lesson of great jazz and this is the lesson that I hope Spike Lee learns.

WINNIPEG JAZZ FESTIVAL

JUNE 18-24, 1990

Winnipeg, a thriving city set on the prairie, in the Province of Manitoba, has joined the list of large cities sponsoring jazz festivals. After waiting in the wings for several years, their efforts can only be judged as successful beyond a doubt. In a 1990 article in the ***New York Times,*** some guidelines for what could be an ideal festival were developed. The hordes of persons involved in the Winnipeg week met most of the criteria from the article in the **Times**.

The musical activities were stretched out over a seven day period. The events were held in several arenas scattered throughout the city. Local as well as international jazz personalities were visible on stage. A lot of people seemed to be involved in the planning and staging of the festival. And most of all, the jazz fans emerged from what may have been thought to be hot club reclusivity.

From an outsider's view, it appears on the surface that two organizations were deeply involved in the detailed development, expansion and execution of the celebration. The Winnipeg Jazz Society was in evidence and visible. Jazz Winnipeg, Inc. was a figure on which recognition was highly bestowed. Then the ultimate was a festival staff which appeared to coordinate every involvement. On the side, but providing the foundation and strength, were contributors, sponsors, volunteers, and the "whoop-it-up" contingent. With such extensive backing, it seems as if subsequent jazz offerings in Greater Winnipeg are certain. Congratulations!

The music and films centred on the something for everyone concept best represented by Johnny Winter and Ellen McIlwaine through Walle Larsson, a local jazz stalwart, to Jon Faddis and Jon Hendricks, who represented the international scene at its best. In between were scores of local and visiting jazz stars, who gave Winnipeg a treat, long awaited.

One feature that brought the jazz festival into contact with a non-jazz public was a series that came under the title, **Jazz For Lunch**. From 12:00 until 1:30 p.m., each week day, the community was served up a plate of excellent Canadian jazz. Some like "Big" Miller and Terese Reese Marsalis were imported, while others, such as Papa Mambo and Walle Larsson are among those who "do it" over and over locally as they bring jazz to the people. On Sunday there was Jazz Brunchitis. For one week there was no sign of indigestion during the lunch hour. How do you spell relief? JAZZ!

Probably the most elaborate presentation was made on Tuesday evening with a full evening of jazz in several forms. The ever present Walle Larsson opened the festivities with a high energy level that included the debut of a new singer, Marcie Campbell. Then came a parade of luminaries. Jon Faddis, Jon Hendricks, David "Fathead" Newman and the New York Rhythm Section (David Leonhardt, Winard Harper and Eric Lemon) never let up. There was a reunion of Hendricks and Hendricks (Judith) with Yolande Bavan. Ms. Bavan has a history of receptivity in Winnipeg.

Jon Faddis, in addition to his brilliant trumpet playing, brought with him an array of old Dizzy Gillespie charts from the 40s - 50s orchestra. Full complimentary credit must be hurled at the Kerry Kluner Big Band. The musicians were so competent and exacting as they "cut" those intricate Gillespie arrangements.

Jon Hendricks completed the Tuesday evening spectacle with a display of how he has changed the art of jazz with his special approach to lyric writing and scat singing. He was the epitome of professionalism.

Bobby Hutcherson gave a demonstration on how a virtuoso of the vibraphone displays an unusual talent. He called a difficult set for the Roy Lerner Group, who accompanied him. Larry Roy, guitarist, hung in there behind Hutcherson under a series of tempi that might floor a lesser local player. David Blamires led a well-rehearsed group in a contemporary idiom as did the Greg Lowe Band.

On Thursday Evening, as the concerts moved into the community at the West End Cultural Centre, a spectacular event took place. Seated at the piano, poised for a solo performance, Andy Bey displayed a tremendous talent. No other effort in the week long series packed the emotional content into a set as did the choice of material, the delivery and, more than anything, the sincerity provided by

JON FADDIS (Photograph by Cairati)

Mr. Bey. From the opening Gershwin work, *But Not For Me*, to the closing Jay McShann opus, *Confessin' The Blues*, the audience members were carried up and down an intensive roller coaster.

On the same bill was a sleeper. The Holly Cole Trio captured the hearts of all present, at least in the row where I sat, with a variety of musical samplings not typically offered in a jazz festival. It was truly a trio offering with Aaron Davis (piano) and David Piltch (bass) very much incorporated into the act. Uniqueness sums up delivery. Different adds up to who she may be. Watch/search for Holly Cole. She may get there, wherever there is.

During the remainder of the week such featured talent was paraded as Ranee Lee, singer/actor and the Dick King Classic Swing Orchestra from Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Ross Porter and Kelley Fry held things together with their entertaining and informal patter. As communicators they displayed skill and enthusiasm for the festival.

One can be as objective as possible in reporting such a week of jazz but subjectivity does lurk. I had my favourites. Marilyn Lerner, pianist, composer, arranger and musical director, is truly the hidden local talent whose star is on the ascendancy. Kerry Kluner leads a band that did justice to the difficult Gillespie material. He must have strong leadership ability. Winard Harper is a young drummer but already a master. On the stage with Faddis or Hendricks or in a jam session with the blowers, Harper displayed the Art Blakey / Kenny Clarke rhythmic pulse.

Winnipeg has every reason to be proud of its Festival de Jazz. - *James F. Condell*

EUROPA FESTIVAL JAZZ 90

Europa Festival Jazz 90, which took place for the second time from the 12th to the 15th July in Noci, Italy, has every potential to become one of the most important new music festivals in Europe. The way they treat the musicians and journalists; delicious food and unlimited wine; the warmth of the Italian nights during the open-air concerts; and the coolness of the early hours of the morning, when all those who performed, or would be performing, are invited to yet another feast of snacks and wine to discuss what had already happened on the stage, provide an edge which cannot be equalled by any other festival I've seen or heard of.

Much of the credit for this extraordinary atmosphere should be given to **Pino Minafra**, who doubles as the artistic director /organizer of the festival and the musician, performing in several entirely different settings; as a trumpeter of an all-Italian project called **Italian Instabile Orchestra** and an arranger / conductor of one of the pieces, as an equal part of the trio with **Han Bennink** and **Ernst Reijseger**, and as a voice in **Sergey Kuryokhin's** Pop-Mechanika.

The programme of the festival, for which Pino Minafra was responsible, reflected both taste and consideration, offering four sets of music on each night from a solo to a larger group with the exception of the closing night when the stage was shared by the two most extraordinary congregations: **London Jazz Composers' Orchestra** led by **Barry Guy** and **Pop-Mechanika** led by Sergey Kuryokhin.

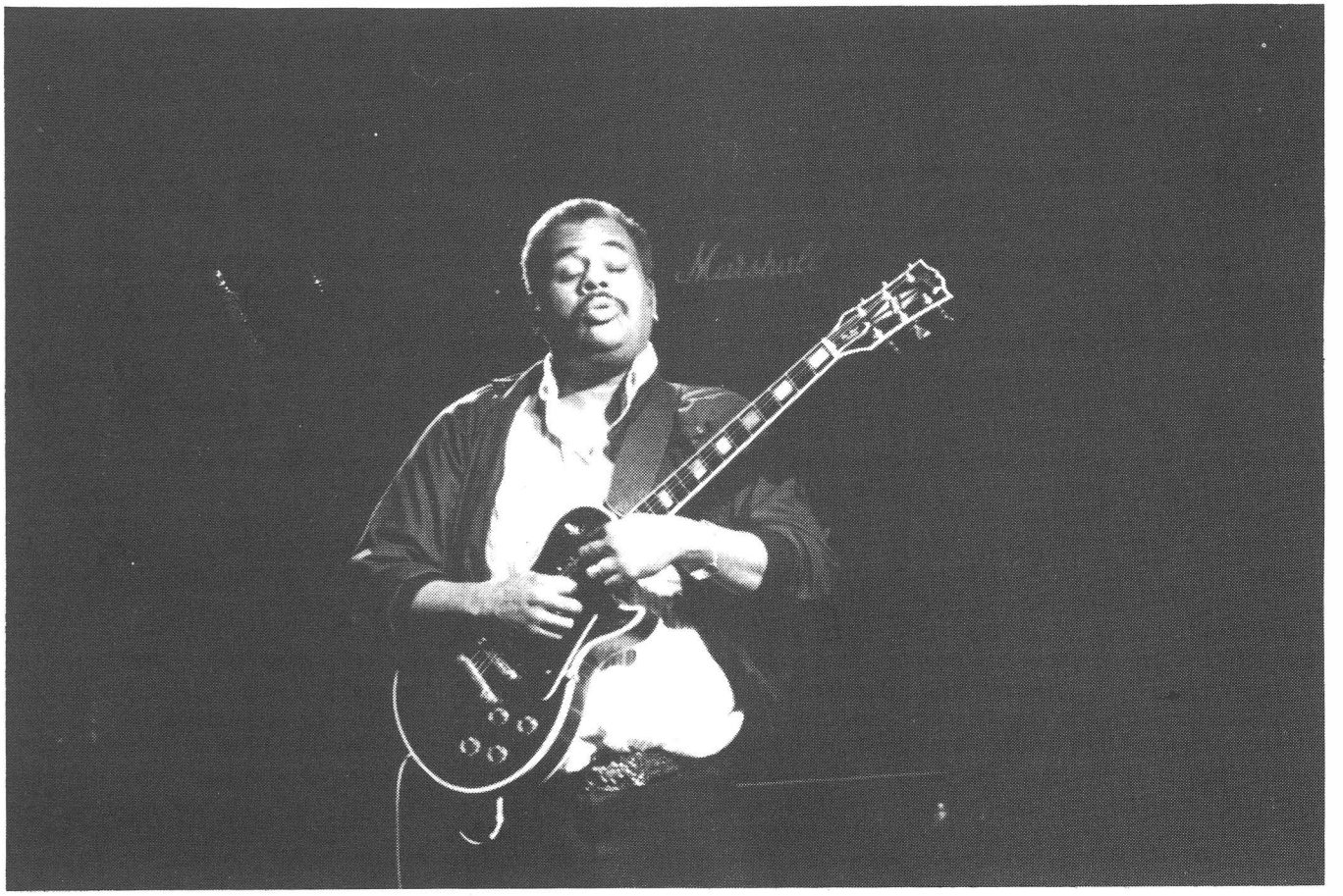
Free blowing by **Peter Brotzmann** (this time in duo with **Gunther Sommer**) is always a joy to hear, and so is the power drumming of Han Bennink who did not stop for a second during the whole set while creating lots of space for Pino Minafra to play everything from be-bop to free. Han also built endless possibilities for Reijseger to shine on his unique electric violin. If I had to pick a musician of the festival it would definitely be Reijseger. He fits any group of musicians, which he demonstrated when Pop-Mechanika was on stage. Sneaking behind the piano where the violinist of Pop Mechanika was sitting, he took his place while Kuryokhin was conducting a 25-piece local orchestra. Kuryokhin sensed the change and immediately adapted the riffs of the orchestra for Reijseger to come up with a brilliant and vibrating solo above the riffs to the sheer joy of the audience and the musicians alike. Mind you, Reijseger had never heard of Sergey Kuryokhin before.

Italians were aplenty, of course, using notated composition more than anybody else, but it was the music of **Stefano Maltese** and his singer **Gioconda Cilio** which attracted most attention. However the core of Maltese's Open Sound Ensemble was British. Bassists **Paul Rodgers, Marcio Mattos** and **Roberto Bellatallo**, trumpeter **Claude Deppa** and drummer **Steve Noble** did Maltese's music, which is deeply rooted in Mingus-Ellington tradition, a lot of justice.

The highlight of the festival, however, was the strong contingent of Soviets. Much to the credit of the organizers, it was actually the first festival in my life when the political hysteria was absent from publicity and the Soviets were both appreciated and enjoyed strictly for their ability to play, and not for being either the "heroes of the underground" or the "victims of perestroika". For the first time in my memory they performed in the Western context, every night a different group. What transpired is that they can play. Their music is different from that of their European counterparts. It is structured, it leans towards the suite form, it is eventful, and it is performed with total command of the instruments. **Chekasin's** Quartet was not as wild as it usually is, and the leader's playing in unison with **Labutis** could be the envy of any American saxophone quartet. The **Guyvoronsky / Volkov** duo of trumpet and bass performed a version of *Yankee Doodle*, taking it through all possible permutations of tonality and rhythm, and although their music should not be played in the open because its nature is chamberlike, it was greatly appreciated. **TRIO-O** failed to strike a feedback from the audience, but the Pop-Mechanika of Sergey Kuryokhin was absolutely great in spite of the fact that it was a bit too long and at times overindulgent. He had only two days at his disposal to put together a show, which comprised a huge local orchestra, a small kindergarten, a local dance ensemble, a mad poet, a cow, some brilliant European musicians. His opening of the show on piano was breathtaking, and he achieved all this without actually speaking any other language but Russian and a few English words. But with his ability to use body language, with his system of conducting the orchestra, who needs words anyway? - *Leo Feigin*

GUNTHER SOMMER & PETER BROTZMANN (Photograph by Cosmo Laera)

SONNY SHARROCK * SEIZE THE RAINBOW



Sonny Sharrock's counterparts in jazz are stalwart theoreticians like Cecil Taylor and Anthony Braxton: musicians who have spent too much of their creative lives suffering from public scepticism that their music isn't well, music. Just as these artists formed their ideas early on and stuck by them (Taylor's flights of subconscious feeling, Braxton's math-music with titles to match), Sharrock has practised a brand of electric guitar playing that has almost no ties to what came before it, at least in the circles of the jazz world, where he prefers to claim his territory. For those who think it matters, however, the question of his proper genre is arguable.

Recently, during a visit to his apartment in Ossining, New York (about thirty miles north of Manhattan), I told him I liked that moniker-free quality of his music. Using two examples from his 1987 album ***Seize The Rainbow***, I suggested that *Dick Dogs* runs close to heavy metal, whereas *The Adventures of Zydeco Honeycup* suggests Booker T. and the M.G.s with a New Orleans second-line beat. "I like that too," Sharrock said. "When we were putting the new record together (***Live In New York***, on the West German label, Enemy), the assistant engineer at the studio thought it was three different records by three different people." If Sharrock has gone in any definable direction since his early free jazz days with Pharaoh Sanders and Herbie Mann, it's toward the blues; his eighties recordings are suffused with some deeply felt blues playing, and that's no inspired accident. Sharrock is a devoted listener and collector of blues and doo-wop. In concert nowadays, you can expect to hear the Sonny Sharrock band play *Shake A Hand, Dust My Broom* (retitled *Elmo's Blues*), or *Money Honey*. His renewed interest in blues is like a painter's discovery of the primary colours. "As I get older," he explains, "I'm trying to make my music more simple."

Sharrock was born in Ossining in 1940 and grew up listening to doo-wop and popular singers of the Nat Cole variety. During his teens he sang in a doo-wop group, The Echoes, with his uncle. In 1957 they recorded with some of the musicians from Alan Freed's revues; among them, King Curtis on tenor saxophone, Kenny Burrell on guitar, and Panama Francis on drums. "It was a killer band," Sharrock remembers. "But we were very unfortunate... We got to record in December of '57, and [Freed] got busted in the spring of '58. So what we recorded for his people was never released." The bust Sharrock refers to was the famous Alan Freed payola scandal. In the era of payola, vocal groups had to pay record companies to have their music heard; The Echoes didn't have the money, and so their recording career came to an end. The group also performed on two amateur nights at the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem, but finally broke up not long after the unreleased recording session. In 1960 Sharrock took up the guitar after beginning to listen to jazz on a serious level, studied composition for three and a half months at Boston's Berklee Music School in 1961, moved to New York in 1965, and looked for work. He had almost instant luck.

That year he bumped into Sun Ra in Harlem on his way home from his day job

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

downtown and overcame his natural shyness to approach him. "I said, This is it. This is what I'm here for. I said, 'Sun Ra, I want to study with you.' So he said, 'Okay, come to my house.' ...I went down there, and he showed me two movies. One was a movie on his band that he led in Chicago in the fifties, a dance band. They were wearing tuxedos and shit. It was really out, man. And the other one was a film on how to make statues sing, by vibrating them very fast..." Also in Sun Ra's living room that day were Marshall Allen and Pat Patrick of Sun Ra's Arkestra, who were working with Olatunji as well to make ends meet. By the end of the afternoon, Sharrock had been recruited as a guitar player for Olatunji's band.

His first gigs were with Olatunji, and with John Gilmore's trio, which also included Johnny Ore on bass. The following year he reunited with his friend, the alto saxophonist Byard Lancaster, who had been a schoolmate at Berklee in 1961, and Sharrock played a series of dates with him in Philadelphia. One day when John Coltrane happened to be in the audience, Pharaoh Sanders sat in with Lancaster's group, and the next day Sanders brought Sharrock back to New York to work with his own band.

At the time, Sharrock was fairly unsure of his musical ability. "I could hardly play at all," he confesses, but he wasn't going after any kind of standard, jazz guitar style. Though jazz guitar has had its innovators (Charlie Christian, Freddie Green, Kenny Burrell), until the eighties most jazz guitarists served in a background capacity, perhaps only coming forth to throw in blustery rock riffs (i.e, John McLaughlin) or other outside elements. Now there's a passel of younger players who are beginning to demonstrate the guitar's massive capabilities. James Blood Ulmer, Bill Frisell, and Arto Lindsay (among others) are now free to play any way they like, fronting groups of fantastic importance to jazz. They owe quite a debt to Sonny Sharrock. Pharoah Sanders's 1967 ***Tauhid*** album was Sharrock's first jazz recording date, and on it you can hear what is generally agreed upon as the first free-jazz guitar playing. Though some of Sanders's other sidemen on the record play with an exaggerated soul feel, which hasn't grown much more interesting with age, Sharrock's guitar still resonates with the shock of the new.

As Sharrock explains it, jazz guitar has been limited by a general perception of it as a purely chordal instrument, used for accompaniment (or comping). Sharrock has always thought of himself as a soloist only, steering his style into a territory free of chordal comping, and attacking his strings with ferocious droning strums. More precisely, it is the cathartic style associated with the tenor saxophonists of the mid-1960s that identifies Sharrock's playing. John Coltrane, Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler and Pharaoh Sanders were all working to erase the formalist boundaries of jazz, and redefining improvisation to accommodate a deeper sense of emotion. Sharrock sought to replicate that emotional range on the guitar. "I'm a tenor player," he says matter-of-factly. "But I got asthma. I did think about [playing tenor saxophone] in the beginning, but I'm glad I didn't because I would have tried to sound like Coltrane, and that would not have been good... I hear the tenor. Man, those cats were just the best shit I heard in my life."

Sharrock may have been the first guitarist in jazz to claim total freedom from time and from chordal strictures, but it didn't win him unqualified support. Ira Gitler, as the story goes, announced on a radio program during the late sixties that he wanted to put Sonny in a bathtub with his amplifier. And in a 1970 ***Downbeat*** review of Sharrock's first LP as a bandleader, ***Black Woman***, Alan Heineman wrote, "Sharrock is one of the few musicians I've walked out on. I do it regularly... I know when Sharrock steps forward to solo that no matter what the tune has been like up to that point, the guitarist will play a few unrelated, dissonant notes and figures and then start flailing away, producing non-chords in dull rhythmic patterns with no melodic or harmonic content." (The review went on to give ***Black Woman*** three and a half stars.)

Sonny didn't care what the critics said. Those were heady days for the New York practitioners of the "new sound," and he felt secure in following those tenor saxophone notes he heard. "I hate to hear comping done on the guitar. Piano players can comp, they can play chords, but I hate to hear chords played on the guitar. Rock and roll, it's fine. But to hear jazz chords played on the guitar: I don't know. It's just a horrible sound to me. I don't like it, and I never have. So I don't play them. I just always thought of myself as a horn soloist. So I would take gigs with guys, back when I was doing that, and I would say, 'I don't do that, man. I just play solos. I'm like a horn player. Don't call me if you don't want a horn player.' Back in the early days, the guitar was an instrument that kept the rhythm in the back. Guitar players took very, very short solos, and their solos had to not get in the way. I like to get in the way."

Black Woman, released by Atlantic in 1970, is a challenging record. It's a practically unfettered emotional experience, assaulting the senses as Sharrock meditatively repeats his Ayleresque folk-gospel melodies, occasionally exploding into a kind of fervent chaos. His wife at the time and a member of the band through the seventies, Linda Sharrock, sings at a high-pitched, pleasure-pain axis over much of the music. Milford Graves, an important young drummer of the free-time camp, was also on the album, as was the pianist Dave Burrell and the bassist Norris Jones. "It took a lot of nerve," Sonny told me. "That was a hell of a band. The focus was extremely clear." After that first album, Sharrock now feels he lost his sense of direction. He released two albums during the remainder of the seventies: ***Monkey Pocky Boo***, on a French label, and ***Paradise***, for Atlantic. Sonny writes this off as his "middle period... I couldn't really get the direction together." But a tape from the closets of WKCR, the Columbia University radio station, displaying Sharrock's band in 1974, indicates otherwise. The band that played five songs over the air that night represented a completely different conception: drummer Abe Speller (still a member of Sharrock's band) had just joined, and a Latin percussionist, José Santos, adds bits of rhythm to the band, which was rounded out by Dave Artis on bass. Rhythmically, the songs are incredibly tight; there's much less of the experimentation with time that Sonny's previous drummers unleashed, and Sonny's playing, though full of the expected furious surprises, is almost understated in volume and attack, opting for scaled-down funkiness rather than diffuse emotional power.

Still, Sharrock felt a lack of musical purpose, and the years from 1975 to 1986, he says, he "just spent learning." In 1986 he released a solo record, ***Guitar*** (Enemy),

which began his practice of including blues standards on his recordings. The choice for ***Guitar*** was *Black Bottom*, a tribute to Guitar Slim's *The Things I Used To Do*, fattened up, slowed down, stripped of everything except overlaid guitar lines, possibly the meanest version of that 1954 classic ever recorded. The album also marked the beginning of Sharrock's experimentation with electronics, one of the few things he's learned from rock guitarists. Though some of ***Seize the Rainbow***, his quartet's album released in 1987, resembles rock more than anything else, Sharrock's not interested in what rock guitarists have done. A Jimi Hendrix CD recently given to him in Germany is the first Hendrix he's ever owned. For that matter, not liking the guitar very much, he hardly listens to guitar music. He prefers horn players. "I listen to Coltrane continually... every day. I try to listen to some of the masters every day. Miles, Bird... they're my favourite masters. Other masters, Louis Armstrong, Duke, Samuel Barber, Ralph Vaughn Williams, Copland... fuckin' Copland, man, those fuckin' melodies, Jesus!"

At the age of 49, Sonny Sharrock is finally enjoying his status as a full-time musician. The years since 1986 have been prolific. Enemy has released three records by Sharrock and his band as well as three records by Last Exit, another band Sharrock plays in, with Peter Brotzmann, Bill Laswell, and Ronald Shannon Jackson. Last Exit's most recent album, ***Iron Path***, was released on Virgin; the Sharrock band's latest, ***Live in New York***, is commanding a great deal of attention overseas. Sharrock's head is crammed with ideas for projects. Two of them he knows he will accomplish, though they're still in the "dream stages." The first is a transposition for his band of Aaron Copland's *Saturday Night Waltz* from the ballet ***Rodeo***. The second is The Sonny Sharrock 1954 Rhythm and Blues Revue. "It's extremely hard to get off the ground, but one day I'm going to record that thing. The last couple of years I've put versions of my group together backed with a vocal group, but the concept is to do a total fifties rhythm and blues revue, with a big band. We'd do the whole thing, with two vocal groups, and a couple of saxophone players, and everything... it would be as big as Alan Freed's shows, you dig?"

CANADIAN FESTIVALS

DU MAURIER INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL * VANCOUVER * JUNE 22 – JULY 2

The du Maurier International Jazz Festival Vancouver has developed a reputation as one that has the heart to put challenging music front and centre and the brains to realize that (unfortunately) this sense of adventure rarely pays for itself. The result is a program that appeals to as wide an audience base as possible with a heady mix of the engaging and the accessible in numerous free, mainstage and club settings. As in past years, this has meant reaching out to embrace music of the world that has both affected and been affected by jazz.

In this spirit, the 5th annual festival kicked off with an exquisite performance by Brazilian superstar **Milton Nascimento**. It's a real joy to see an artist at the height of their powers doing a perfectly paced, flawlessly performed presentation. Nascimento had an unusual configuration for a backing group, three percussionists, keyboards, electric bass, and Milton on acoustic guitar with that voice. The single long set consisted of many short tunes, the highest of many lights was San Vicente, an early composition of Miltons' recently re-recorded on **Miltons.** Milton persuaded the sizable Brazilian contingent of the audience to sing an a capella introduction to San Vicente reminiscent of the choruses he has recorded with.

Nascimento has a stage presence that commands attention, whether perched on a stool with his guitar, dancing playfully across the stage or encouraging the audience to sing along (in Portuguese) from the lip of the stage. Milton has a gentle power that enables him to bring the emotional fragility of Minas and Bahia through the turbulence of Rio. Worth noting was the Afro-Brazilian percussion presented by **Robertino Silva** (a Brazilian musician of some repute) on an augmented trap kit with two of his sons on either side complementing his every move. In fact, the Silva family took the only long instrumental breaks with extended percussion work covering everything from delicate gamelan-like duets to Burundi-like heavy syncopated drumming.

Across town **John Scofield's** quartet was kicking off its first of two club nights at Saturno's. Scofield's guitar has found a perfect foil in **Joe Lovano**, with the tenor addition he's come full circle from his early boppish days, through the fusion that he's best known for to a distinctive contemporary sound. Lovano doesn't always shine through as a sideman, but as a leader and co-leader his playing shows a wide palette of tonal colours and lyrical invention. Scof concentrated on material from **Time On My Hands** (in particular a playful interweaving rendition of Since You Asked), but the band was comfortable enough to do some fresh interplay on some as-yet untitled tunes, including a so-called harmolodic calypso tune.

The members of **Azimuth**, trumpeter **Kenny Wheeler**, vocalist **Norma Winstone**, and pianist **John Taylor**, made appearances in different groupings throughout the festival. Early Azimuth days concentrated on Taylor's ethereal compositions with wordless vocals; now their

THE JAZZ PASSENGERS (Photograph by Larry Svirchev)

repertoire has contributions from all three with the occasional diversion into a standard. Although, for the VECC (Vancouver East Cultural Centre) performance at least, Taylor gave up his synths for a purely acoustic piano show, the ghost of Manfred Eicher still seemed to be standing in the wings with the trademark ECM reverb and wash moving their sound into the surreal. After a floating set, the band was genuinely surprised by the number of requests yelled out for the encore. Although a 10 year on-again-off-again project, Azimuth seems to be building a following.

Zeena Parkins and **Ikue Mori** are two women who have been active in the fringe music scene in and out of New York for many years. In their performance at the Western Front, Parkins concentrated on an electronically processed electric harp which looked home-made. The harp was a right-angle triangle constructed from 2x4 boards with a primitive look, at times Parkins looked like she was hoisting a crossbow augmented with a whammy bar. She used that bar to good effect sometimes combined with a slide for some otherworldly blues. She also played some "prepared" pieces inserting bolts and other objects directly between the strings. Although Mori concentrated on electronic drums and preprogrammed sequences she did play more "acoustic" percussion (by way of an abbreviated trap kit) than she did on her last visit (with Bill Frisell and Jim Staley).

Joe Pass is a funny one, as always the incredible virtuoso / master technician of the guitar, simultaneously inserting ascending and descending lines on top of bewildering augmentations on the standards that form the basis of his repertoire. In fact, at the VECC he seemed to regard himself as a bit of an archivist, repeatedly introducing standards like Have You Seen Miss Jones, or They Can't Take That Away From Me with the comments, "you've never heard of this but. . .". Ultimately, his technique impressed me (as always) but didn't move me. He admitted early in the first set that he "didn't feel like playing" and proceeded through his dazzling performance with all the intensity of a man washing his hands.

The slider of the festival (in more than one sense) must go to **Ray Anderson**. Ray reaffirmed that there is nothing he can't do on his instrument and managed to keep reaffirming it all over town. He started with his "official" gig, with **Fumio Itabashi** on piano, **Mark Dresser** on bass, and **Dion Parson** (a last-minute replacement for an ailing Pheeroan Aklaff) on drums. Ray's sound is a combination of smooth butter, with a touch of growl, and fearless precision to match his improvisational imagination.

This was Anderson's third appearance at the Vancouver festival. In 1987, he appeared with BassDrumBone. In 1989, he was a bit more restricted within the confines of the George Grunz all-star aggregation, but this year he was front and centre and wanted to do as much playing as possible. His two-hour set at the VECC drew mainly from his recent release **What Because**, peppered with standards. Every tune was greeted with the thunderous ovation of the capacity crowd. His one vocal number (his role in the Slickaphonics still seems to be a well-kept secret in these parts) was *Nothing Can Be Done*. His voice has the smooth growl quality of his instrument, but oddly enough, he seems to incorporate the Manglesdorff multiphonics in his vocals that he avoids in his bone. His encore was a sumptuous version of Mona Lisa that had people singing and dancing along.

Across town at the Commodore, the **Kingsnake Blues Caravan** was just getting under way. The showcase alternated between the Louisiana blues guitar of **Kenny Neal**, the down-south picking and Hammond B3 comping of **Lucky Peterson**, the R'n'B of **Noble 'Thin Man' Watts** and beltin' blues vocals of **Yvonne Jackson**. Lucky and Kenny took turns doing the rhythm duties although they did do a couple of duelling guitar forays into the audience. Earlier in the week, Lucky Peterson knocked out loaded some SRO crowds at the Yale Tavern with a mix of standards and originals including a Muddy Waters medley that had me rivetted.

During the Kingsnake second set, Ray Anderson showed up and assumed his place in the horn section next to ex-JB and P-Funkin' trombonist **Fred Wesley**. For part of the set, Ray followed the charts, for some tunes Fred sang him some of the horn parts and they improvised the rest, trading plunger and open horn solos. Lucky Peterson recently recorded a trombone feature called Funky Ray in Anderson's honour and they did a high energy rendition leaving (almost) everyone exhausted.

Ray Anderson still wanted to play and showed up at the festival after-hours club, the Glass Slipper, a little before 2 a.m. There had been some other musicians sitting in with the night's features the **Taylor / Kane Explosion** but after a short break, Anderson, Dresser and Parson took the stage. After a short trio piece, and a quartet piece with Vancouver bonist **Brian Harding** (with Ray yelling encouragement), it turned into the jam session dream. Musicians descended on the stage from all corners of the club carrying horns of all varieties, from saxes to a tuba and the Ray Anderson pick-up Big Band was born. Again it was a delight to see Ray dynamically coaching this disparate orchestra through some improvised arrangements (singing parts again) that culminated after 4a.m. with Yvonne Jackson fronting the band for a last blues. Ray Anderson was last seen jumping up and down saying, "Next time, I gotta play in a club for a week!"

Much was made in the local press of the **Don Pullen** trio double billed with **Jon Ballantyne/Joe Henderson**. Pullen smoked through a set that would have been hard for anyone to follow. Repeatedly demonstrating his celebrated piano cluster technique (almost a keyboard equivalent of circular breathing), he was followed every step of the way by melodic **Santo DeBriani** and powerhouse **Cindy Blackman** on bass and drums, respectively. Moving inside and outside the changes, Pullen constantly searches for new patterns within the traditional forms that he uses as the base structures of his compositions. My favourites were Warriors, an updating of a 20-year old composition dedicated to his son and a flamenco-based piece, Cafe Centrale.

After a short interval, the Jon Ballantyne trio came on and, following Pullen's set, invited comparison. To his credit, Ballantyne played competently and melodically but the drop in energy had much of the audience shuffling in their seats. After Henderson appeared, the quartet still suffered from a bad sound mix with the drums often

overpowering the horn. Where the Pullen trio played as different intonations of the same voice, the bass and drums here seemed to be playing in a vacuum. The group's sound gelled only temporarily after a long exquisite solo horn intro to Monk's Ask Me Now, where Henderson took generous liberties with the song's lines tossing in the kinds of melodic curveballs that showed Henderson's sense of invention and his familiarity with the structure and intent of Monk's music.

The Jazz Passengers returned this year for two shows, one opening for (an especially jazz) **Hugh Masekela** at the Commodore and the other headlining at the Cultural Centre. The JPs have really mastered their exotic mix of old world and new world jazz using all the instruments at their disposal to set up moods and atmospheres from **Bill Ware's** Harlem air shaft vibes to **Jim Nolet's** neo-swing violin. **Marc Ribert** played more english horn than last year and was relatively subdued on the guitar, although he did contribute a solo skronk version of Body and Soul that had the audience howling. The focus of the group is still on the **Roy Nathanson / Curtis Fowlkes** alto sax / trombone interplays that at times (Spirits of Flatbush) has you floating and at others (Decomposed and Deranged) has you plummeting. A special surprise was the guest addition of **Syd Straw** who brought her pigtails and "aw shucks" manner to sing a couple of tunes including a delightful duet with Curtis on What A Wonderful World. Percussionist **E.J. Rodriguez** (AKA Pablo Casals) and bassist **Brad Jones** also did some after-hours sitting in over at the Glass Slipper.

One of the things about the Vancouver Festival that contributes a festival air to the city (outside the hardcore jazz community) is the numerous free stages and concerts all over town. In fact, if someone chose to ignore all the ticketed events and concentrated only on the free stages, they could still get a pretty good cross-section of styles and performers (in addition to hearing some incredible music).

This year, for the first time, there was an opening weekend blitz of music on one of the city's oldest streets, Water Street in Gastown. One of the ear-openers there was **The Fringe Trio** led by Boston tenor player **George Garzone**. Garzone's hard tone is reminiscent of his younger contemporaries Bob Berg and Bill Evans but his playing in a hard-working trio setting is more adventurous. His use of multiphonics (particularly in an extended solo piece) was bewitching and for some members of the free stage crowd bewildering. Overall, the setting was ideal for free outdoor listening, 2 stages at either end of the street with a variety of music from the Baton blues of guitarist Kenny Neal to the Scottish bop of **John Rae** to the **Rebirth Brass Band** to the large sound of **Claude Ranger's Jade Orchestra**. The Gastown experiment was a success that will undoubtedly be built on in the future.

At the other end of the festival (time-wise) is the 3-day Jazz at the Plaza (JATP) series now in its fourth year. Three solid days of music on three stages ranging from the challenging to the intimate to the astounding. Canadians were well-represented with a mini-showcase for various artists on the Toronto based Unity label turning some heads. The best feature for these artists was the last night of the festival at Isadora's where **John McLeod's** quartet was the ostensible host, but where the bandstand was reconfigured after every tune to accommodate almost all of the Unity players.

Returning to the JATP were **Les Granules (René Lussier and Jean Derome)** with their cut and paste sound collages overlaid with intricate guitar / saxophone (interlocking / interweaving) duo lines, clog dancing and party favours. A related group making their festival debut was **Evidence** co-led by Quebecers Derome on alto, **Pierre Cartier** on bass and **Pierre Tanguay** on drums. One of the highest lights (and close to the top of the entire 11 days) was a concert that almost didn't happen. Delayed by about 3 hours and moved from the intimate confines of the Discovery Theatre to the comparative carnival of the Plaza Stage was a solo concert by pianist **Randy Weston**. Once he started playing, the boat horns and other sounds were stripped away by Hi-Fly. Although his path out of Ellington runs close to the well-travelled highway paved by Monk, his use of subtle harmonies and the perfect punctuation of blue notes within his rhythmic compositions makes one wonder why his career since the mid-seventies has been so poorly recorded. With other plaza presentations like **Pierre Dorge, Elliot Sharp / Jin Hi Kim, Charlie Musselwhite, Robin Holcomb** and **Maarten Altena's** octet, one can't accuse this festival of playing it safe or saving all "the good stuff" for the ticketed concerts.

With the Weston concert so delayed, I only managed to catch the last half hour of the **International Creative Music Orchestra** at the VECC. Although he may have denied it, **Butch Morris** was the ostensible leader for the portion I saw, using a set of signals that he taught the group in rehearsal to guide and shape the structure of the improvisation like a refined game piece. At other points during the two-hour plus concert there were various small group outings drawn from the star-studded cast which also included the **ROVA** saxophone quartet, **Julian Priester, Andrew Cyrille, Vladimir Tarasov, Conrad and Johannes Bauer** and **Lisle Ellis, Wayne Horvitz, Michael Bisio** and others.

Since it's impossible to touch on everything that happened within a festival of this scope, I'll finish up with some final snapshots. Pierre Dorge managed to put a new twist on the name **The New Jungle Orchestra** with his arrangement of *The Mooche* with Dorge's fluid guitar lines replacing Bubber Miley's trumpet solos. **Gerry Hemingway's** quintet played a set of tightly composed intricate music that featured Canadians **Tom Walsh** on trombone and **David Mott** on Baritone. **Poncho Sanchez** presented an energetic evening of Latino soul with a tight horn section belting out a devastating cover of James Brown's *Cold Sweat*. **Evan Parker** proved himself the master of circular breathing employing the technique to weave interlocking ascending and descending lines into an astounding musical tapestry in a solo performance and as a part of the **Alex Schlippenbach Trio**. The after hours scene blossomed this year with the Glass Slipper regularly taking the die-hards just shy of dawn. **Stan Taylor** on drums and **Dan Kane** on reeds were the primo Slipper hosts as the Taylor / Kane Explosion with numerous guests including tenor player **Glenn Spearman**, and the ubiquitous virtuoso **Vinny Golia**.

MADE IN AMERICA

ATLANTA JAZZ SERIES
(Second Weekend)
July 4-6
Center State Theater and Piedmont Park
Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Jazz Series, described by Artistic Director **Rob Gibson** as a "summer-long snapshot of a musical evolution in process," demonstrated its commitment to the diversity of the music in this year's second weekend.

Friday night it was **Betty Carter**, with her latest youthful trio (**Mark Terry**, piano; **Dwayne Burrow**, bass and **Gregory Hutcherson**, drums) plus tenor saxophonist **Craig Handy**. There is really little that can be added to what I and others have already said about Ms. Carter, who offers one of the most consistently satisfying experiences in music.

I would like to direct one comment at other musicians. Let Betty Carter out of the vocalist / woman ghetto! Were she not female and a singer, she might be a major influence on instrumentalists. I expect (and get) from her the same sort of daring artistry I expect from, say, Sonny Rollins. This quality was thrown into relief in her duets with Handy. Handy, one of the most fluent and assured young soloists I have heard in some time, was highly communicative in solo, but his phrasing and choice of notes sounded utterly conventional juxtaposed to an artist who has liberated herself from many of the "limitations" of her instrument.

Sometimes one would like to hear Ms. Carter in the company of her peers, but then again few musicians her age can sustain her enthusiasm. After the concert she expressed pride in having become, like Art Blakey or Miles Davis, one of the master teachers who sends young people prepared, not just to play but to dedicate their lives to this art. Later in the weekend two of her "graduates" reminded us of her importance in this role.

JOSEPH JARMAN (Photograph by Enrico Romero)

Saturday's program, which I missed, highlighted the international influence of jazz with **Glenn Barbour**, the **Ray Anderson** quartet featuring **Fumio Itabashi** (piano), Pierre Dorge and the New Jungle Orchestra and Milton Nascimento. Sunday narrowed the focus from the planet to Chicago. There are at least four major musical currents I identify with Chicago; an in-depth celebration of "the Chicago musical tradition: would have featured all four. **Not** represented were the older "Chicago style" jazz of people like Bud Freeman and Pee Wee Russell which provided one of the bridges from New Orleans to Swing, and the postwar electrified Delta blues identified with the South Side. What was represented was what might be termed the Chicago school of modern tenor saxophone and the diversity of avant-garde musics growing out of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM).

When I think of Chicago tenor, I think of big-toned, aggressively masculine players with flexible tones which can range from piercing to a muttering hoarseness in the same solo. What is interesting about the Chicago way is that, while bop-centred, it seems to work in a wide range of contexts from rhythm and blues (consider some of Gene Ammons' work) to free jazz (e.g., John Gilmore).

Of the tenor headliners **Von Freeman** best represents this image. Some of his blues solos would not sound out of place behind Muddy Waters, but his experiments with tonality (described by some as faulty intonation) are as "outside" as anything you'll hear. Freeman plays mainly on his native South Side, and he is a living example of jazz functioning as a folk music.

His rhythm section (**John Young**, piano; **John Whitfield**, bass and **Wilbur Campbell**, drums) backed him like the old friends they are, with Campbell standing out as a player of imaginative breaks. Young is highly regarded in some circles as a soloist. For me, a man who quotes Holiday For Strings on the first chorus of his first blues

solo is suspect. On the positive side, Young is technically adept, harmonically alert and unfailingly swinging. But I could use more shading and less "cute" ideas. As the group's second soloist, he does provide effective contrast to the funk-on-the-sleeve of Freeman. Altogether, it was wonderful to hear such an unabashed individual as Von Freeman with players who know him well, but it would have been more fun over several sets in a small club.

Like Freeman, **Johnny Griffin** played a lot of funky material (Chicago Calling, Call It Wachawanna) but if much of Freeman's repertoire is bop-influenced blues, the reverse is true of "the fastest tongue in the West." Griffin's rhythm section (**Michael Weiss**, piano; **Dennis Irwin**, bass and **Kenny Washington**, drums) has been together for some time now. In an Atlanta concert two years ago they were good; today they are superb. To hear the eloquent Mr. Griffin with support like theirs is pure delight.

Griffin's guest, **Clifford Jordan**, is less identifiably Chicagoan than most Chicago tenors. He is one of the best ballad improvisers alive and his delicate solo on I Should Care was one of the evening's highlights. One the uptempo tunes. . .well, he quipped that he brought a tank truck full of plasma and he needed it. No saxophonist can go head to head with Griffin on an uptempo blues and not expect to come in second.

The two AACM groups (the **Art Ensemble of Chicago** and the **Douglas Ewart Clarinet Choir**), for all of sharing two members (**Roscoe Mitchell** and bassist **Malachi Favors Maghostut**) could not have made more different impressions. This was the world premiere of the expanded clarinet choir, adding Mitchell, **Anthony Braxton** and **Henry Threadgill** to regulars Ewart, **J.D. Parren** and **Mwata Bowden**, and featured music composed for the occasion. For all of that, and despite the visually arresting quality of the multiple clarinets plus Ewart's exquisite handcrafted rainsticks and dijeridoo, their well-rehearsed, intellectually demanding music did not come off. In fairness, it must be added that the choir, as the first of four featured groups, had to perform to an audience striving to cope with oppressive heat and humidity; it was not the time and place for earnest players like Ewart and Braxton.

On the other hand, the Art Ensemble overcame a brief thunderstorm and captured a large portion of the audience. After 25 years as one of the leading purveyors of "outside" music, the Art Ensemble can move from atonality to Dixieland, from shrieking protest to tongue-in-cheek commentary naturally enough to carry almost any audience with them. The members (Mitchell, **Joseph Jarman**, reeds; Favors and **Famoudou Don Moye**, drums) have reached such a level of confidence that they can even satirize themselves on occasion.

The Art Ensemble's success underlined what to me was the Ewart ensemble's failure. Carter, Freeman and Griffin had perhaps less need to reach out to their audience, but each in their own way they communicated extramusically as well as musically. Although the Art Ensemble, like Ewart, eschewed announcing numbers or talking to the audience, they projected warmth and theatricality that drew the audience in, while Ewart and company seemed remote. Ewart's presentation (deliberately?) drew the line separating "art" and entertainment. In contrast, all the other leaders celebrated what to me is one of the great achievements of Black Music in the Western Hemisphere--the blurring of that line. *--Bill McLarney*

APPLE SOURCE

Summer is festival time in New York, likely because the weather's too hot and muggy to endure too many nights squeezed behind a table in some crowded club. As usual, George Wein's June JVC Fest was a marvel of safe and conventional programming. Last year, after getting a lot of bad press about his lack of commitment to new music, Wein began letting the folks from the Knitting Factory book a few shows for him. But after two years it looks suspiciously like Wein's trying to sabotage the series, so he can point to its failure as proof new jazz has no audience. In '89, he put them in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, a house so big, crowds that would fill the Knit several times over barely made a dent; this year, he put the series in an admittedly nice hall hidden in the basement of a midtown office building, and scheduled the shows to start at five, when most people are just getting off work. (That's also the same time as JVC's solo piano series at Carnegie Recital Hall.) Attendance was understandably sparse. The best music I caught there was cornetist **Graham Haynes' Amarcord**, an unpretentiously funky, percussion-heavy sextet which like few New York jazz-funk bands was rhythmically lively. Gary Thomas on tenor and flute shared the front line; Zeena Parkins' twanging harp added effectively incongruous touches.

The Brooklyn Museum's Summer Jazz Series (held in an airy sculpture garden on four successive Sunday afternoons) was kicked off July 29 by Brooklyn natives Randy Weston and Max Roach, with Azzedin Weston added on congas. It took too long for the headliners to hit the stage en masse (Max began the show with yet another review of his same old trapset set pieces); they were unrehearsed and sounded it. Yet the percussive clarity of all three players made their hoedown worth the wait. Randy Weston's ringing piano attack and spare concept plainly reveal his roots in clanging melodists Hines, Ellington and Monk; each jabbing note carries more weight than whole solos by some other pianists. He teased his way through Monk's Well, You Needn't, deliberately botching the melody before slowly circling in on it.

Dick Hyman's annual July series at the 92nd Street Y, on Manhattan's plush East Side, draws a large but atypical audience: older, better heeled and even whiter than you see anywhere else. At one show, big-band revivalists Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks played arrangements straight off '20s records, right down to the absence of bass drum. The white-band stuff like Paul Whiteman's Wang Wang Blues had authentically staid, two-square integrity; a critic I know complained their versions were too stiff, but those bands weren't swinging much then either. Guest Hyman played a solo version of Earl Hines' A Monday Date that lacked Earl's explosive touch, but perfectly captured his wackily unpredictable left-hand moves. At another show, Hyman on harpsichord spearheaded a nonet (sic) playing six of Alec Wilder's little-heard, woodwind-heavy octets. They're charmingly mild, mixing French impressionism, boogie-woogie, and a corny

dance-band's harmonies and bouncing rhythms. Wilder began writing the octets around 1938: many show a marked kinship with Artie Shaw's 1940 Gramercy Five sides, with Johnny Guarnieri on harpsichord.

Of course, life in the clubs goes on. At Fat Tuesday's in mid-July, Abbey Lincoln proved again she's the greatest actor among modern jazz singers, making us believe in melodramatic relics like Ten Cents a Dance, or in a dramatic tour de force about a woman who decides to stay with her rotten man, realizing she deserves no better (because "It takes two heels to click"). Lincoln's upper register seems to have shrunk in recent years, but her power and charm are undiminished. Clearly, she's one of our very best.

I'm always raving about stunning Dewey Redman gigs other critics invariably miss; the scribes were out in force during his week at the Vanguard in early July, but his last night there was a letdown. When Redman has a rude rhythm section behind him, no one can touch him, but these days, he prefers sidefolk that don't push hard. Fred Hopkins' walking was splendid, but drummer Leroy Williams and pianist Holep Galeta (replacing Geri Allen for the weekend) let the leader coast. Son Joshua Redman, guesting on tenor, has absorbed a lot more Coltrane than Dewey, his solos contained too many off-the-shelf Traneisms.

A hot topic in town this summer was Tom Piazza's May 26 **NY Times Magazine** piece about the bebop brat pack. In August, when the flap had finally died down, RCA circulated a glossy reprint that started it anew. Piazza described jazz values and the current scene in terms so familiar, you half expect Stanley Crouch to sue for plagiarism. As either critic tells it, jazz was on the brink of death a decade ago, when all young musicians played fusion. Then came Wynton Marsalis followers, musicians with a sense of history, to bring back the real jazz. Piazza focused on up and comings like Roy Hargrove, the "astonishing" Marlon Jordan, the "brilliant" Christopher Hollyday, and Marcus Roberts, whose then-new record Piazza says, "may be the most important jazz album of the last ten years"--an appraisal that'll look even sillier ten years from now.

Piazza's not the first conservative to pay lip service to jazz history while evincing a poor sense of it. His article offered no clue that the '70s saw perhaps more grassroots action in jazz than any postwar decade; performance lofts sprouted up all over New York; improvisers across America were producing their own records; and during those dark late '70s days, musicians like Bobby Watson, Ray Anderson, Anthony Davis, Anthony Cox, Ralph Moore, Michele Rosewoman, David Murray (and his drummer, Stanley Crouch) and many more serious improvisers of every ideological stripe came to the Apple. Nor did Piazza, fawning over RCA and CBS's commitment to jazz (nearly all the musicians he talked about record for one or the other) touch on the detrimental effects of making 20-year-olds leaders, instead of encouraging them to apprentice with masters whose music they emulate.

Those ill effects were borne out by recent leader gigs by Roy Hargrove (who, at the Bottom Line in June, was notably less assured than in Ralph Moore's unit last December (Roy's peachfuzz band generated plenty of surface excitement but little else), Hollyday (who plays with agreeable fire, but comes up with nothing you can remember five minutes later) and Jordan ("astonishing" mainly for his valiant efforts to clone early Wynton, from his warm trumpet tone to his quintet's cool veneer to his natty double-breasted suits).

What Piazza and company are attempting is no less than a rewrite of jazz history, in which everyone whose music they dislike (read: people who don't jam on changes) is to be purged from memory. A quartet of the jazz musicians in New York will try to persuade any writer who'll listen that their crowd is the only one playing music that counts. But critics are supposed to cut through the crap, not buy into it.

DOC CHEATHAM

Lyrical, articulate Doc Cheatham is certainly the only jazz trumpeter to have recorded his best work after reaching the age of 70. He's also one of very few trumpeters ever to have achieved distinction as both a lead player and as a soloist. In a visit with Cheatham at his New York apartment, he was happy to share recollections of some of his experiences in both roles.

The first big name band for which Cheatham played lead trumpet (after learning his craft in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was born in 1905, and in Chicago, his home in the mid '20s), was Sam Wooding's. He recalls: "Wooding's band came to New York from Europe. They had been touring there. Sam needed a trumpet player and a drummer and a trombone player and a pianist. And he approached me to go to Europe with him. I thought that was a great thing for me: going to Europe with Sam Wooding! We went to Germany and France. Tommy Ladnier was in that band also. He was a hell of a New Orleans trumpet player, and that's what I wanted to do. He and I roomed together and he would show me a lot of things about playing trumpet, New Orleans style. So I was happy to be in that band."

Wooding's band, which in 1928 was a prestigious band to be a member of, had first gone to Europe in 1925 as part of an all-black revue, ***Chocolate Kiddies****. The show was a hit with European audiences; the band (the best received part of the show) kept touring on its own after the show itself closed. Between 1925 and 1927, Wooding had scored hits with his big band, offering a mix of dance music, show music, novelties, and hot jazz, in Germany, France, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Argentina, and a variety of other spots. It played an important role in disseminating American jazz, and paved the way for the later European tours of other American bands, such as Ellington's, Armstrong's, and Cab Calloway's.*

Cheatham notes: "I stayed in Europe three years with Sam Wooding. I was treated very well. You know, as a newcomer in the band, I wasn't paid as much as the older guys. I was getting $75 a week. The other guys were getting $125. Being young, I didn't worry about that. I played all the lead trumpet. In fact, I held up that band. The lead trumpet player is the most important member of the band, because they depend on him to lead; that's why he's called the lead player. But the audience don't listen to a lead trumpet player; I just realized that in the last few years. Nobody knows who's playing lead; they hear the band, that's all. But the guy that comes out and plays a solo, they notice him. But I was happy with what I was doing. I said, 'Now, I'm probably getting somewhere.'"

Wooding's band received red-carpet treatment, Cheatham recalls, playing top theatres and clubs. It was more than just a band, it was a full-fledged entertainment unit, much as Paul Whiteman's Orchestra was. Most of the musicians doubled on instruments, a number of them sang (by themselves or in combinations), some could even offer comedy. The band had so extensive a repertoire, Cheatham says, that if it was booked to do a run at a theatre, it could perform a three-hour show nightly, and never give exactly the same show twice. Clubs booking the band could dispense with their own singers and dancers; Wooding's troupe had all bases covered. And the men could kick out with honest hot jazz on numbers like ***Tiger Rag*** *and* ***Milenberg Joys****. Indeed, Wooding's Band was the first introduction to live American jazz for many Europeans (including, for example, the first important European writers about jazz, Hugues Panassie and Charles Delaunay). Wooding's band toured to enthusiastic audiences from 1925-1931. But being abroad for most of those years cost the band something; it got out of touch with the latest developments in jazz in the U.S.*

Cheatham recalls: "In 1930, we were in Paris, and I heard over the short-wave radio, a band playing like hell from America. I said, 'Who is this damned band?' And then they announced it was McKinney's Cotton Pickers from the Graystone Ballroom in Detroit. I said, 'Jesus Christ.' Because being in Europe with Sam Wooding, he had the only jazz band over there. And you know, he had been over there before. And his style was kind of corny. And being over there so long, you know how it is, over here things had progressed; jazz was changing, getting to be a different thing. When I heard the Cotton Pickers, I said, 'I can't believe this. Oh, I'd give anything to play in that band!' That's the way I felt. So I said, 'Hell, I'm going back to New York.' I left Sam Wooding in Paris--the band was playing at the Ambassador--I put in my notice and came back here. I was tired of listening to Sam Wooding all the time."

Less than a year after Wooding got back to the U.S., he recalls, "Benny Carter asked me, would I like to go to join McKinney's Cotton Pickers. I couldn't believe that! So he and I went to Detroit. Don Redman was leading the band at that time. I rehearsed with the Cotton Pickers under Don Redman's conductorship, until he left. Benny Carter was there, getting ready to take over the leadership. Then Don left and Benny came and took over in a couple of days. And I stayed with the Cotton Pickers. Man, I loved that band! That was the one band I wanted to play with.

"There was no other band in the world like the Cotton Pickers! This band played at the Graystone. We played a battle of music with Fletcher Henderson. We outplayed Fletcher. We outplayed everybody that came in. Because it was an entertaining band. See, Fletcher had a good band but it wasn't an entertaining band. If you know

Photograph by Barry Thomson

anything about the Cotton Pickers, they did everything. All kinds of songs, and all the beautiful songs that they did that Don Redman wrote and arranged for them. And that was much greater. And they had a good swinging band. They had all the great players. They had Rex Stewart in there when I went there, and Joe Smith and Quentin Jackson.''

The band seemed about to break up when Cheatham got a telegram, which he accepted, inviting him to join Cab Calloway's Band at the Cotton Club. Calloway was a sensation in early 1932 doing numbers like ***Minnie the Moocher*** *and* ***St. James Infirmary***. ''I sat in the band and played his music right on down, the show music and everything. I was reading like a top. There was nothing I couldn't read,'' *Cheatham recalls. Occasionally, Cheatham got to solo a bit with Calloway (****I've Got the World on a String*** *and* ***I Got a Right to Sing the Blues*** *are two examples) but such opportunities, he notes, came* ''very seldom. So all those years passed without my being a soloist.'' He didn't mind at the time. ''I wanted to be a good player. And if it was lead trumpet player, that's what I wanted to do. But it hurt me; it hurt! Because after all those big bands went, what was I going to do?'' *Calloway's musicians got a certain amount of exposure, but the charismatic Calloway himself was always far and away the main attraction; the band's primary responsibility was to collectively project the same kind of exuberance and gusto he projected. Calloway paid his men top dollar and they travelled in style.*

*In the half-dozen years after leaving Calloway in 1939, Cheatham played for other big bands and small groups. When the big bands faded, however, he wasn't sure which direction to take. He would have welcomed a chance to work steadily in New York with a combo of his own, but he hadn't established himself as a jazz soloist. His name was not known to people, and all of those years of playing straight lead parts had weakened his ability to improvise. In the meantime, plenty of other younger trumpeters--extroverted stylists with great technical facility--****had*** *made names for themselves as soloists in the past decade. He recalls:* ''I tried to play. And there was Roy Eldridge and all these other soloists coming up in the meantime and playing all these things. I said, 'Jesus Christ, I might as well forget it.' I could never learn anything from Roy Eldridge and Charlie Shavers; those guys, they were just too much. They were too fast. You can't learn anything from guys that play all like Roy. Or Dizzy (Gillespie). Dizzy used to play like Roy. That style I never tried to learn because of my age.'' *(It took him quite a while even to appreciate what Gillespie was trying to do on trumpet, he notes.) In the mid-40s, there was a revival of interest in New Orleans music in some quarters. He acknowledges:* ''I could play that. But I wanted a **jazz** style. I was listening. And I was confused. I was listening to Roy and Dizzy and Sweets Edison and Buck Clayton. And all these guys I never heard before. They were just as new to me as (King) Oliver and Louis (Armstrong) had been when I was in Chicago. And I couldn't play like these guys. No way. Because I didn't know how. So I knew I'd have to learn. I went through hell around here. You know, a lot of guys wouldn't hire me for a long time because I couldn't play solos. A lot of guys put me down.''

Developing himself as a jazz soloist became a goal of his. He earned a living alternating between Latin bands and traditional jazz bands. It took him years to feel secure in his abilities as a soloist. In 1957, he participated in the landmark CBS TV broadcast, The Sound of Jazz, along with such jazz trumpeters as Roy Eldridge, Rex Stewart, Red Allen, and Joe Wilder. He felt shy about soloing in such august company, limiting himself to obbligatos as Billie Holiday sang ***Fine and Mellow.***

He studied the way other soloists played, he recalls. ''I'd go around places and sit in, and play and play. Then I'd sit here and write. Or listen to records. I sat all day long listening to Red Allen. I said, 'That man is out of sight.' All of this confusion. Now what do **I** want to do? I'm trying to decide what I want to do.''

By the 1960s, Cheatham had begun to blossom a soloist. In 1961, he recorded a fine album for Prestige with Shorty Baker, ***Shorty and Doc****. From 1960-65, he led his own groups in New York. In 1966, Benny Goodman heard Cheatham leading a trio at the International Restaurant in New York, auditioned him, and hired him as the trumpeter in his sextet.* ''I stayed with Benny almost a year,'' *Cheatham recalls.*

Cheatham was inspired to add singing to his act, he says, after listening to trumpeter Red Allen sing. Initially, he was sensitive about people who criticized his singing. ''People said I couldn't sing. Then I made an album in Paris with Sammy Price [in 1975]. While they were getting a sound check in the recording studio, I suggested to Sam that we play a song called *What Can I Say After I Say I'm Sorry?* We did that just for the engineer to get the level of the sound to record. Well, I played shit out of that thing, and then I sang it, and I scatted. And then I listened to the playback. I didn't sound good to myself. I said, 'Oh, the hell with it.' The engineer said, 'Man, that's great! Keep that! I said, 'I sound like hell.' But the guy said, 'No, that's great.' And, you know, that thing became a hit in France. You'll hear that number on, I think the album's called **Hey Doc** (on Black and Blue Records). And everywhere I go now in Europe, I have to play that song.''

In the mid 1970s, George Wein began using Cheatham for various projects: the New York Jazz Repertory Company, jazz festivals, and so on. And that marked a turning point. Cheatham, who had matured into a poised and lyrical trumpeter, was now being seen and heard in all the right places. ''The first time I went to the Nice (France) festival, I was put on the same bandstand with Bobby Hackett and Clark Terry, Jimmy Maxwell and Cat Anderson--all on the same damned platform. I almost died! I knew every tune that they were playing, but I couldn't play like them. I felt I shouldn't be there. But I had to solo. I did the best I could. I was very critical of myself. I kept going to Nice: George sent me back there about five more times, and every time I was getting a little better, improved on my solos. I would have records and I would listen to these guys playing; not copying their solos, but just hearing. I wanted jazz to be all in this house, all in my ears, and all that. I began to get some kind of a style of my own. The style I have now is **my** style. I began to feel better. Bobby Hackett was very encouraging; he told me, 'You sound good.' You know, nobody had ever raved about me. I didn't expect it. But it took me all those years to get where I am now.'' Cheatham smiles as he recalls one highlight of recent years. ''I was so surprised when Wynton Marsalis came down to see me. And **asked** me, would I like

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187	(Dec. 1982)	Charlie Rouse, Frank Rosolino, Blues News, Fraser MacPherson
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180	(Oct. 1981)	McCoy Tyner, Joe Sealy, Loek Dikker, Fred van Hove
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174	(Aug. 1980)	Leroy Jenkins, Jemeel Moondoc, Eddie Jefferson, Charles Brackeen
170	(Dec. 1979)	Abbey Lincoln, Olu Dara
169	(Oct. 1979)	Amina Claudine Myers, Kenny Burrell, Pisa & Bracknell Festivals
168	(Aug. 1979	Albert Mangelsdorff, Barry Altschul, Blues News, Moers Festival
167	(June 1979)	Evan Parker, Incus Records, Red Callender, Bill Russell, Rova Sax Quartet
164/165	(Feb 1979)	SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO: Jeanne Lee, Gunter Hampel, Lester Bowie, Hank Jones, Vinny Golia, Nick Brignola
163	(Oct. 1979)	Henry Red Allen, Frank Lowe, Albert Nicholas
159	(Feb. 1978)	Randy Weston, Milt Hinton, Blues News
158	(Dec. 1977)	Joseph Jarman, Eddie Durham, Bobby Hackett
157	(Oct. 1977)	Bobby Bradford, John Carter, Chet Baker, Butch Morris
155	(June 1977)	George Lewis, Lloyd Glenn
154	(April 1977)	Milt Buckner, Christmann, Schonenberg
151	(Oct. 1976)	Don Pullen, Benny Waters
150	(Sept. 1976)	Milford Graves, Will Bradley
134	(Dec. 1974)	Julian Priester, Muggsy Spanier Big Band, Steve McCall
133	(Nov. 1974)	Charles Delaunay, pt. 1, Rex Stewart, Howard King
132	(Oct. 1974)	Karl Berger, Jazz Crossword, Johnny Shines

to do a concert with him and Sweets Edison, at Lincoln Center. Now that knocked me right out! Musicians don't do those things, especially big guys like he," Cheatham notes.

"So one Sunday before the concert, he and Sweets came into Sweet Basil with their horns. I said, 'What the hell is--' They said, 'We came to rehearse.' All three of us got up there. The people in the club, they raved. Wynton Marsalis! All three got on the bandstand and started to play. And the people just shouted. Whatever Marsalis wanted to play. Because it was his concert. He selected the tunes that we were going to play in the concert. So we played and everybody just flipped. And he was very nice. He thanked us and shook our hands. Admiring and all that. Compliments. He liked my tone and all that. He said, 'Gee, I like that tone.' I heard him say that to himself. You know! So I feel great about that. I know he has a pretty tone, too. So we did a concert. Man, the people screamed! We had a hell of a concert. It went over beautifully. And he was very, very lovely. That man was out of sight. He treated us like we were the big shots. And we were treating him like we knew he was a big shot.

"The people seem to accept me now, when before they didn't. I was in London a couple of years ago at the Pizza Express and I don't think they had two people in there the whole week. Now this year I went to London and I played the Pizza Express, and you couldn't get in! People standing, packed all around the place. Because I did a program for TV about the Cotton Club, called *The Cotton Club Remembers* or something, with Cab Calloway, the Nicholas Brothers, Adelaide Hall and others. They interviewed us all individually and that show was a hit. And I closed that film with my trumpet, playing and singing an old melody called *I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home.* And when I went out and sang this song, the people fell out. They fell out! Since then, if I go to London, I have to pay that song. At the Pizza Express, you couldn't get in. I went to Cambridge and you couldn't get in the concert, just because of that. Shows you how life is," he muses. "I went there and those people treated me like a king.

"So now I'm feeling like I'm kind of, you know, being rewarded for all of these things that I've gone through." ■

THE EARLY WORLD OF CECIL TAYLOR

I heard ***The World of Cecil Taylor*** standing in a booth in a Melbourne record store in the heat of the Australian summer of 1962. I still remember the subdued colours of the sophisticated ***Candid*** cover and the way in which the brilliant, precisely articulated notes cascaded on my ears. Here at last was music as I had wanted to hear it, though such as I could not have imagined it myself.

The record seemed then a turning point for jazz, as it still does today. During the 'fifties there had been many attempts to go beyond be-bop, to place jazz in the ranks of contemporary art music. Notable around 1960 was **Third Stream** music, an amalgam of conventional concert music and jazz, generally attained by writing jazz pieces in conventional classical forms, such as the suite, the *concerto grosso* or *passacaglia*, or by having jazz ensembles (in another version of the *concerto grosso*) play as chamber groups or soloists against a background of classical instrumentation such as a symphony orchestra. Neither approach produced much success, particularly the second, which usually resulted in something like a modernized version of ***Rhapsody In Blue***.

Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman had begun in the jazz idiom and had given their strongly blues-based music some of the fragmentation and freedom of form and the expanded conception of harmony that were found in twentieth century conventional music. Cecil Taylor also began *in jazz*; and he brought into it much of the idiom of modern music, not by copying its forms or instrumentation, but by absorbing its innovations into the jazz idiom. That was what was so wonderful about ***The World of Cecil Taylor***: one could hear the influence of Bartok; but Bartok had been taken into what remained essentially a jazz-based music.

This absorption of the features of modern conventional music into the jazz idiom had been from an early time an interest of Taylor's Among his admirations had been Lenny Tristano and Dave Brubeck, both of whom had a similar background of conservatory training to that of Taylor. As Taylor himself said, **"When Brubeck opened in 1951 in New York I was very impressed with the depth and texture of his harmony... I was digging Stravinsky and Brubeck had been studying Milhaud... [Tristano's] ideas interested me because he was able to construct a solo on the piano... Tristano had the line thing and Brubeck had the harmonic density I was looking for..."** At the same time, Taylor was listening to Bud Powell, to Erroll Garner, to Thelonious Monk and to percussive pianists like Horace Silver.

Taylor's earliest records give evidence of these attempts to forge a personal idiom that went beyond be-bop and yet remained rooted in the jazz tradition. There are no *apprentice* records where Taylor sounds like somebody else: by the time he made his first recordings for **Transition,** he was recognizably Taylor (***Cecil Taylor - Jazz Advance*: LP 19**; later part of ***Cecil Taylor in Transition*: Blue Note BNLA 458-2**). Yet, on this first record, the influences tend to show themselves in isolation. *Bemsha Swing* is a Monk number, and we feel the influence of Monk in the chording and the spacing between phrases. *Charge 'Em Blues* has a persistent drive and chordal density that could remind one of Brubeck at his best. On the out-of-tempo, *You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To*, Taylor laces the tune with runs in a manner that recalls Bud Powell's early unaccompanied pieces for **Clef** (***The Genius of Bud Powell* Verve MGV 8115**). *Sweet and Lovely*, both in its single-note passages and in its chording recalls Erroll Garner, Garner with a Monkish angularity. Two of the tunes are show tunes; and we see Taylor attempting to impose his idiom on show tunes, notably those of Cole Porter, as on ***Love For Sale*** for **United Artists**, three years later (**UAS 5046**; later part of ***Cecil Taylor in Transition*: Blue Note BNLA 458-2**).

Taylor's very free treatment of show tunes is only one manifestation of clashes of idiom with material and idiom with idiom on his early recordings. On ***Love for Sale***, things go well enough with two of the instrumental titles; but Ted Curson on trumpet and Bill Barron on tenor saxophone play *hard bop* while Taylor makes his own music behind them. Decidedly disconcerting, however, is Taylor's other record for **United Artists, *The Hard Driving Jazz of Cecil Taylor*** (**UAJ 15001**; later issued as ***Coltrane Time*** on **Solid State SS 18025**). With the seasoned bopper Kenny Dorham, with John Coltrane still in a transitional mode, and with the young bassist Chuck Israels and drummer Louis Hayes, the result is a set of performances where everybody succeeds in sounding out of place. The only wholly achieved Taylor recordings of the 'fifties are ***Looking Ahead*** **(Contemporary M3562)** and Taylor's side of ***Gigi Gryce-Donald Byrd and Cecil Taylor at Newport*** **(Verve MCB 8238)**, where Taylor, along

Photographs by Ton Van Wageningen

with the loyal Buell Neidlinger on bass and Dennis Charles on drums, has with him musicians who feel for his idiom: Earl Griffiths on vibraphone on ***Looking Ahead*** and Steve Lacy on soprano saxophone at Newport.

Both records consist of originals, except for Ellington's *Johnny Come Lately* (one of Taylor's most accessible early recordings). Ellington was an abiding influence with Taylor: *Excursion on a Wobbly Rail* from ***Looking Ahead*** is based on *The 'A' Train*; but the tune is completely absorbed to Taylor's idiom (in contrast with Mingus's version on ***Pre-Bird*** **(Mercury MG 20627)**, where the tune is given a Mingus "treatment"). Similarly, *Wallering*, named for "Fats" Waller "a giant piano player" for Taylor, is "an attempt to organize sounds in a typical jazz way" and does homage to the powerfully percussive manner of Waller and of so much great jazz piano playing.

Toll, also from ***Looking Ahead***, was described by Taylor as **"a three-part piece. The first part is written; the second improvised; and the third written."** Taylor, when confronted with the suggestion that his early music was atonal, characterized it as tonal, and as in *Toll*, Taylor's early music has both a local tonal relation to pre-conceived material and an overall formal one. His early music did not belong, as Buell Neidlinger points out, to the *free-jazz* idiom, even if he took greater freedom harmonically with his material than had before been customary. He did not start out in the same camp as John Cage and some other American experimentalists. Indeed, his early playing shows the influence of what one might term the *classical* modernists, Bartok and Stravinsky, rather than of the twelve-tone or atonal composers, Schönberg, Berg and Webern. Pianistically, there is a great deal of Bartok in Taylor's early playing.

An apparent blemish of the very engaging Newport performances is that the group tends to accelerate. One isn't surprised to hear that sort of thing on early jazz recordings such as Johnny Bayersdorfer's *Waffle Man's Call*; but with musicians as accomplished as Taylor it is not expected. Neidlinger, in his **Mosaic** notes, remarks on acceleration in some of the **Candid** performances. This is really an outcome of one of the most radical innovations in Taylor's playing at this time. As Ekkehard Jost explains in his ***Free Jazz*** **(1974)**:

Swing in the traditional sense... ceases to exist when musicians play in a free tempo that has no metrical identity... In Coleman and his "school," the old swing is integrated into a new context. Cecil Taylor... does not refashion swing by placing it in a new setting, but replaces it by a new quality, energy.

This does not mean merely that Taylor is or was an energetic player. It means that his music was structured in terms of what Jost calls **"an undulating rise and fall in energy."** The existence of a steady metre, implied or stated, was no longer required structurally as a reference, as in traditional jazz. Neidlinger speaks of a pattern of **"compression and release. By compression I mean acceleration or rushing, as people might call it. By release, I mean the establishment of a new tempo to accelerate from."**

In this respect and many others, the **Candid** sessions were transitional, indeed, pivotal for Taylor. There were four sessions in all: the first two on October 12th and 13th 1960, under Taylor's leadership, which produced ***The World Of Cecil Taylor*** **(Candid 9006;** later, as ***Air*** on **Barnaby KZ 30562)**; and the second two on January 9th and 10th 1961, under the leadership of Buell Neidlinger, that gave us ***New York R&B*** **(Barnaby KZ 31035)**. Neidlinger is on bass and Dennis Charles is on drums; while the main additional participant is Archie Shepp on tenor saxophone, making his first recordings. This is the group that played together (between the two sets of sessions) in the stage version of ***The Connection*** when Freddie Redd's group were away making the film of the play. These sessions were the last time that Charles and Neidlinger played with Taylor, and the last time for Steve Lacy. When, later in 1961, Taylor made his three tracks for ***Into the Not*** (issued under Gil Evans's name on **Impulse A-9**), he had with him, in addition to Shepp, the men who were to compose his group for most of the sixties: Jimmy Lyons on alto saxophone; Henry Grimes on bass; and Sonny Murray on drums. Murray appears on two unissued tracks on the Mosaic collection, where he generates a more floating, less decided rhythm than does Charles.

The October 1960 sessions took ten hours in all. They produced six numbers, five of which appeared on the original **Candid** issue: *Air; This Nearly Was Mine; E.B.; Lazy Afternoon*; and *Port of Call*. There were two takes each of *This Nearly Was Mine* and *E.B.*; three of *Port of Call* and one of *Lazy Afternoon*; though only one of each has survived, except for *Port of Call*, of which we have two. The remainder of the time went on 29 takes of *Air*. The reason for these repeated attempts was that, at the first session (as Neidlinger explains), Shepp didn't **"have the faintest idea what this tune is about."** Between the two October sessions Taylor spent the time coaching Shepp on the piece. Knowing what the tune was about, one supposes, was very much a matter of getting acclimatized to the idiom, with which Shepp's Coltrane-based style did not initially mesh easily. And, indeed, the contrast between the takes of *Air* made on October 12th and those made on 13th bear this out. By take 21, Shepp seems to have got the hang of things; and on take 28 (the originally issued take) and take 29, his playing interacts meaningfully with that of Neidlinger and Charles.

Shepp's inability to get with the tune is a great pity, because Taylor is at his most extendedly brilliant on *Air*, which is taken at a brisk tempo. There is a feeling of assurance as soon as he begins to play. It is interesting to observe his different approach to the material on the various takes: passages of almost orthodox comping on take 9; laid-back choruses of short, single-noted phrasing on take 28. Throughout we encounter gorgeous rippling passages in the right hand and an orchestral interplay of both hands, the left hand often carrying a more obvious melodic pattern than the right. Take 29 has lovely right playing from Taylor and the rhythm section; but I am inclined to agree with Neidlinger that he and Taylor and Charles excel themselves on the long take 9, despite Shepp's poor performance there. All the takes are marked by Taylor's incredible **dash**. It is on *Air*, too, that we encounter most notably Taylor's use of compression and release in the surging energy of his performances.

This Nearly Was Mine is one of the great performances of the period by anybody. Neidlinger calls it, justly, **a triumph in the creation of high art from a rather mundane subject matter**, an epitome of what the great jazz performance should be. This does not mean that Rodgers and Hart's tune is obliterated. Indeed, its lyric quality is

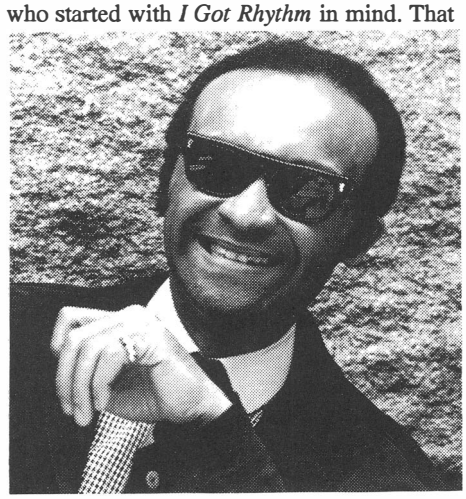
brought out and enhanced as Taylor, in a performance that lasts nearly eleven minutes, transforms it into a unified composition, the ideal that he early perceived in the work of Ellington. From its Chopinesque opening it utilizes a rich pianistic vocabulary in which Taylor draws on many sources, classical and jazz, taking the piece through a variety of modes, often with the strongly percussive emphasis that is a noted feature of his playing, even though the lyrical, ballad tone is maintained. Notable is Taylor's masterly shading of dynamics, not a frequent feature of jazz piano playing, even at slow tempos.

Equally carefully structured is the other masterpiece from the session *E.B.* (Everybody), with its lyrical opening and close and the rippling dash of its main section that again exemplifies the use of energic variation as a structural device. Noteworthy is the way in which theme is carried in the left hand through much of the piece, while the right hand generates a continuous flow of surging energy. This is perhaps the most brilliant piece pianistically from any of the sessions.

Lazy Afternoon and *Port of Call* are lesser pieces. *Port of Call* by the trio, is relatively short and does not give much opportunity to Taylor. It is nonetheless very satisfying, and take three has extremely nice work by Neidlinger. Taylor's solos on the impressionistic *Lazy Afternoon* are among the best on the set; but the long passages by Shepp are not the equal of their accompaniment. *Number One*, a previously unissued piece has a Monkish flavour. It is said to be Sonny Murray's record debut. The second of the two takes included here, take 3, was certainly worth rescuing from oblivion for Taylor's work alone.

There is a good deal that is less deliberately done from the two sessions arranged by Buell Neidlinger. The first session began with two previously unreleased performances by Shepp and Neidlinger, done before Taylor arrived to **"get mic levels on the bass and the sax."** The two takes of *Davis* derive from something that they had developed when Shepp would drop in on Neidlinger to *"practice."* It is free jazz on no particular changes.

Cindy's Main Mood, also made up in the studio (and not titled until eleven years later) gives prominence to the bass and drums, with Taylor playing a fragmented line above them. It is described by Neidlinger in the Mosaic notes as being **"in the great free jazz tradition established by Cecil Taylor, the prime example of which exists on *Looking Ahead... Of What...* is the original free jazz."** This is a little puzzling, as in the notes to the original Barnaby issue Neidlinger is quoted as saying that ***Cindy's Main Mood* has an I-got-rhythm set up;"** while, in the notes to *Looking Ahead*, Taylor says that *Of What* is **"a 32-bar tune with interesting things happening in it."** Taylor could have been leading the listener up the garden path; but Neidlinger, I feel, was not. Perhaps *Cindy's Main Mood* was free playing by three men who started with *I Got Rhythm* in mind. That



could be consistent with what one hears.

Cell Walk for Celeste (no celeste here!) is, in contrast, a **"clear illustration of Cecil's compositional abilities,"** Neidlinger is quoted as saying on the Barnaby issue. He went on to explain: **"Cecil has actually orchestrated the work for piano, bass, drums and tenor... There are real parts for everyone. Cecil... taught the drum part by rote to Dennis Charles... at the time Dennis didn't read music..."** The composition falls into three sections, with a reprise of material from the first two as its conclusion. *Cell Walk* went to eight takes, the last of which was chosen for issue. Here we have 1,3 and 8. On the first take, Shepp's playing does not mesh perfectly with that of the others. One cannot help agreeing with Neidlinger that 3 is in fact the best, offering some of the most brilliant playing by Taylor in the whole set. Neidlinger may have chosen 8 in 1971 becuase Shepp's playing sounds clearer on the slow passages; and, of course, this was the last take. Even after eight takes there seems to have been some dissatisfaction, because the first music recorded the next day was called *Section C*, a further attempt at *"section C"* of *Cell Walk*, which proves to be more exciting than take 8 but not as good, for Taylor at least, as take 3. Also by the quartet is *I Forgot*. It has Shepp playing rather lugubriously in the Coltrane ballad style, out of tempo and with arco bass. Taylor's Debusseyesque solo is more attractive; but this is not a very engaging performance. It might be described as an essay in stillness, with quite extensive passages of neat silence, where Dennis Charles taps a single cymbal.

Neidlinger had hoped, at his sessions, to record Taylor in more accessible contexts. He brought together on the second day a group that included, besides Taylor and Shepp, Billy Higgins on drums, Steve Lacy on soprano saxophone, Roswell Rudd on trombone, Charles Davis on baritone saxophone and Clark Terry on trumpet, to record two Ellington tunes, *Jumpin' Punkins* and *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*. Davis is clearly a "bopper;" while Terry, an Ellingtonian, was brought in to replace Don Cherry. Cherry, in Neidlinger's words, had **"made the music total revelation"** at rehearsal; but Ornette Coleman, with whom Cherry was then playing, would have none of it, so Terry was brought in at Nat Hentoff's suggestion. Neidlinger tells us that Terry and Davis **"were listening in the booth"** when *Section C* was being made: **"I don't think they had ever heard music like this before."** One can well believe it; and, in so far as these band performances have cohesiveness of idiom, it is, one feels, because Taylor held himself in and played in the idiom of the company, certainly on *Jumpin' Punkins*. Lacy could play compellingly in Taylor's idiom or in the idiom in which Terry belonged; and he turns in solos confident and lyrically enchanting, as he almost always did in those days. The two versions of *Jumpin' Punkins* seem to come off best, largely because they are not too adventurous. The two versions of *Things Ain't* I find less attractive, though I have to admit that I hate the way this tune has been vulgarised into a medium tempo romp, even by Ellington, ever since its first appearance as one of Johnny Hodges's delicately relaxed blues masterpieces.

The first take, as Neidlinger suggests, is the better, concluding with a **"free jazz**

part which I intended to be somewhat strangely reminiscent of New Orleans jazz." This comes off; but I recall being disappointed when I heard it on **Barnaby** in the seventies, and I still feel the same. The participants seem awkwardly to be trying to find how they can fit in, even Archie Shepp in the reprise on the second take. I cannot help feeling that if, for instance, the first take of *Jumpin' Punkins* had been issued with the note, **"pianist unknown,"** it would not have been singled out as an important recording in its essentially late bop idiom.

The masterpiece from the Neidlinger sessions is *O.P.* After a subdued and somewhat blemished first take with Dennis Charles on January 9th, it blossomed the next day as one of Taylor's magisterial performances. One critic is reported to have called it, **Cecil Taylor chainwhipping the 12-bar blues;"** yet this violent, impressionistic metaphor does not do justice to the respect for the traditional form that Taylor's treatment shows. For those familiar with Bartok's writing for the piano, the idiom will seem less violent and strange; and, indeed, what is remarkable is how Taylor transforms the simple blues into a sophisticated masterpiece. More to the point is the remark that Glenn Gould is reported to have made when he heard an acetate of this then unreleased performance in 1963: **"This is perhaps the most formidable pianism these ears have heard: this is the Great Divide of American piano playing."** It could stand as a comment on Taylor's playing on this album as a whole.

Buell Neidlinger's notes have the intimacy that comes from participating in making the music and the knowledgeability of an accomplished musician. It is a pity, however, that he does not explain all the titles, two of which are elucidated on the **Barnaby** sleeve: *O.P.* is a tribute to Oscar Pettiford; and *Cindy's Main Mood* was "dedicated to a great American dancer, Cynthia Clark." The discographical information concerning the sessions in the set is very full. However, there is a brief discography that purports to give **"all the recordings that Cecil Taylor and Buell Neidlinger made leading up to the Candid sessions."** This does not include Taylor's ***Hard Driving Jazz*** for **United Artists** (though admittedly Neidlinger does not play on this). However, it gives Neidlinger and Charles on the ***Love for Sale*** session, though the notes for the **Blue Note** reissue of this, ***Cecil Taylor in Transition*** (produced like the **Mosaic** set by **Michael Cuscana**) give Chris White on bass and Rudy Collins on drums (both real people). If the **Blue Note** set is wrong, an explanation of the correction might have been given.

It would have been interesting to have been told what happened to Dennis Charles, who had evidently left music by 1970. And what about Earl Griffiths, who plays vibraphone on ***Looking Ahead***? Like Charles, he was associated with Taylor regularly during the period. Even Buell Neidlinger, who went into symphony playing, is hardly a household name. On the basis of this and other albums, these men, who were part of the making of the new music, deserve to be better known. Only Steve Lacy of Taylor's early associates has remained in public view.

Are there disappointments with this collection? Yes. The poet LeRoi Jones, in reviewing ***The World of Cecil Taylor***, picked *This Nearly Was Mine, E.B.* and *Port of Call* as the best tracks. There is only one take of *Nearly*, one of *E.B.* and two of *Port of Call*. Perhaps this is a reflection of how easily these superlative performances came. The five takes of *Air*, in one aspect a record of Shepp's attempts to get the hang of the piece, occupy three sides of this issue, or a quarter of the album, and take an hour to play. It would be nice to say that these recordings allowed us to hear two masters playing together; yet it would be truer to say that we hear one master, Cecil Taylor, accommodating the uneven contributions of an incipient master, Archie Shepp. Additionally, it would be fair to say that *Davis* and *I Forgot*, new to most of us, are below the quality of the previously issued material.

Who will want to buy this set? Everybody, I would hope, at least everybody who likes this type of music. If you have the two earlier **Barnaby** issues, you will have the best takes of most of the music in the box. If you have, in addition, the British **Candid** or Japanese **Sony** issue of ***Jumpin' Punkins***, you will have all the music that the **Mosaic** set provides, except for the extra takes of *Air*, of *Cell Walk for Celeste / Section C*, of *Port of Call* and of *Jumpin' Punkins*. But then, if you are that enthusiastic, you will certainly want the lot. And if, like me, you still have the original **Candid** album, you could probably if you were Philistine enough) auction it for double the price of the **Mosaic** set.

Cecil Taylor has gone on to take his music into fields that could not have been imagined when these recordings were made. Nonetheless, they remain undated in their excitement, a memorial to those days when the horizons of jazz seemed to be expanding so rapidly and everything seemed possible.

DISCOGRAPHY

Transition LP 19 *Cecil Taylor - Jazz Advance* (1956)

Verve MGV 8238 *Gigi Gryce - Donald Byrd and Cecil Taylor at Newport* (1957)

Contemporary 3562 *Looking Ahead* (1958)

United Artists UAS 5014 *The Hard Driving Jazz of Cecil Taylor* (1958)

United Artists UAS 5046 *Love for Sale* (1959)

Candid 9006 *The World of Cecil Taylor* (later as *Air* on Barnaby Z30562) (1960)

Barnaby KZ 31035 *New York R&B* (1961)

CBS Sony 01107 *Cecil Taylor All-Stars* (as *Jumpin' Punkins* on Candid [British] 9013) (1961)

Impulse A-9 *Into the Hot* (Gil Evans) (1961)

Blue Note BNLA 458-2 *Cecil Taylor in Transition* (Transition LP 19 & UAS 5046)

ADDITIONAL READING

Hentoff, N. *Jazz Is* (New York: Avon, 1978)

- album notes for *Looking Ahead*

- album notes for *New York R&B*

Jones, L. *Black Music* (New York: Morrow, 1968)

Jost, E. *Free Jazz* (New York: Da Capo, 1981)

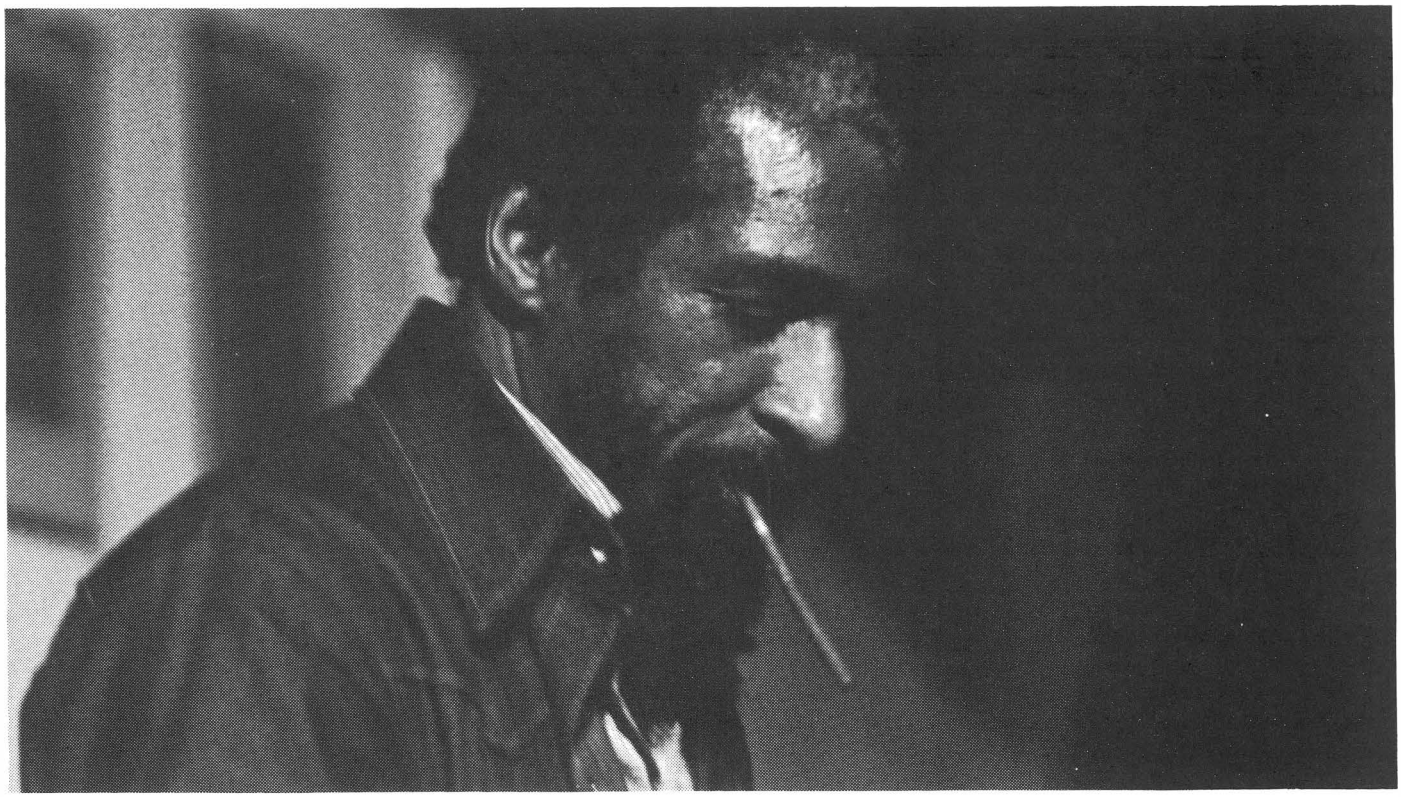
***"Unit Structures: Cecil Taylor in conversation with Bill Smith"* CODA 136 (Mar 1975)**

Spellman, A.B. *Black Jazz (Four Lives in the Be-bop Business)* (New York: Schocken, 1973)

Weiss, J. "Interview with Buell Neidlinger", **CODA 188 (Feb. 1983)**

Wilmer, V. *Jazz People* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970)

THE JAZZ DISCOGRAPHIES



Some commentators on the jazz scene have a peculiarly negative view of the work done by discographers. And yet without the research and publication of these works, our knowledge of the music would be much narrower. In fact, it is safe to say that anyone who compiles radio programs, writes overviews of musicians or simply listens to the music with an educated ear, will be more knowledgeable if access to discographies is possible.

The belated appearance of the first volume of the revised edition of the postwar edition of ***Jazz Records*** should begin to fill the present gap int eh basic discography of this music.

Brian Rust's estimable ***Jazz Records 1897-1942*** is **the** reference work for that period and it has gone through many different editions. The more recent eras of jazz were finally covered by **Jepson's** ***Jazz Records*** in eleven volumes with cut off dates ranging from 1962 to 1968. An updated version of this work has been needed for a long time.

Over the past two decades, the Jepson manuscripts were circulated among collectors/researchers. **Erik Raban** had the demanding task of coordinating the material and making the basic decisions regarding the content of these books. After interminable delays the first volume of ***Jazz Records 1942-1980*** has appeared. It covers artists from A to Ba with trombonist **Robert Barnes** (who recorded two tunes in Detroit in 1947/48) the final entry. The 644 pages includes an artist index. This volume covers such well known musicians as **Cannonball Adderley, Louis Armstrong** and **Chet Baker**.

Removed from this new version of Jazz Records are the many blues/R&B/gospel listings. Most of the secular items can be found in the updated and greatly expanded edition of ***Blues Records 1943-1970***. **Neil Slaven** has done a major revision of the original Mike Leadbitter work and it now reflects more accurately the broad parameters of indigenous black musics in America during the period covered by the book. It complements the jazz listings in Jazz Records but it is unfortunate that a common timespan wasn't arrived at. A separate discography of gospel music is also in the works concerning 1943 through 1969.

Only volume one of Blues Records has been published. It covers artists from A-K. Hopefully volume two will appear soon and that the publication schedule of Jazz Records can be stepped up so we can have the complete work available before this century ends. Both these books are well printed and the hard cover format and superior binding should make them resistant to disintegration through continual use.

The twenty year void since the original editions of Jepson's work appeared has been partially filled by the various discographies published by **Walter Bruyninckx**. His time frame encompasses the entire history of the music and, most recently, has assembled the material into books covering various musical styles. These are Modern Jazz, Progressive, Swing, Big Bands, Traditional, Vocals. You won't always find an artist where you think they should be but these books are particularly useful reference works for the LP era. In most cases the title of the lp is listed as well as the personnel, tune titles and catalog number. Verification of the published information is sometimes of questionable accuracy but these books are an invaluable adjunct to the other basic reference works.

More specialised reference works are now an essential part of jazz documentation. **Michel Rupplie** has made a specialty of compiling discographies of important jazz record companies. The most recent of these is a collaboration with **Michael Cuscuna** on ***The Blue Note Label: A Discography***. It contains all that you could possibly want to know about recordings made for that label.

MAL WALDRON (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

Cuscuna's ten years of research has brought to light many additional musical moments which otherwise might have become lost forever. Research, in this instance, not only documented the work of the company but has also resulted in a lot of wonderful music being released for the first time. A short history of **Blue Note** serves as an introduction and is followed by the main listings. It is fascinating to see the manner in which the pace of recording quickened through the 1950s and the early 1960s. It's small wonder that so many sessions remained unreleased. There are extensive supplementary listings of the numerical releases in the U.S. and other countries as well as an artist index. All the information you might want about Blue Note recordings is contained in this first rate reference work.

Profoundly Blue is a bio-discographical scrapbook on **Edmond Hall**. It is built around the previously published discography of the clarinetist by its author, **Manfred Selchow**. The models for this are **Walter Allen's** ***Hendersonia*** and the **Connor/ Hicks** ***BG On The Record***. Selchow has assembled an extraordinary amount of details about the New Orleans musician's professional life. The book contains many photographs and his story is interwoven with the details of his many recordings. It's well printed on quality paper and is an essential purchase for anyone interested in Hall's career.

Buck Clayton's Discography has been compiled by **Bob Weir** and complements the trumpeter's reminiscences in his own ***Buck Clayton Jazz World***, published in 1987. This is a well laid out and thoroughly researched listing of Clayton's many recordings. In discographies of this kind it is important to list as many of the various issues of the material as possible for jazz has become a globally marketed music and it is no longer possible to pick and choose over the many different releases in such specialized listings. In this listing, for instance, Bob Weir had to make a compromise on the many Basie and Billie Holiday recordings from the late 1930s and 1940s. The specialized discographies on those artists contain all the relevant information so here we simply have the original 78 issue plus a representative recent lp issue. It is a compromise which works reasonably well. There is a grouping of **Nancy Elliott's** evocative photographs of the trumpeter in different settings which cry out for printing on better quality paper than that used for the text.

The new **Charlie Parker Discography** by **Norman Saks, Leonard Bukowski** and **Robert Bregman** is a relatively slim 90 pages but it includes all the basic information about personnels, tune titles and recording dates of the various sessions recorded by Parker. Its value is best seen as an update for the **Piet Koster** and **Dick Bakker** work of the mid 1970s. This new compilation lists many newly found and issued Parker dates as well as more recent issues of the material. In effect it is a guide to the current state of the material (where possible) rather than a detailed notation of the many overlapping releases of the music.

50 Years of Jazz with Barney Bigard is a revised edition of the clarinetist's recordings compiled by **Daniel Koechlin**. It begins with a 1926 session with Luis Russell and ends with 1979 performances at Nice. Personnels are not listed and lp issues are given unless the original 78 remains unreissued. There is documentation of the many privately recorded tapes of European performances but these are unlikely to be issued commercially. Listings such as this serve as a quick reference to the artist's work rather than being a definitive overview.

Dizzy Gillespie, a discography Volume 2 (1953-1987) by **Piet Koster** and **Chris Sellers** is more useful. It is clearly laid out and printed and lists each session separately with full personnels, tune titles (including timings) and the various issues of the material. There is no annotation of the Hall of Fame JATP dates which included Dizzy (631, 632) and the authors missed the 1982 Bern Jazz Festival issues on Schweitzerischer NRP 19853.

A comprehensive discography of **Mal Waldron's** output is long overdue. He has recorded prolifically, both in the U.S. and in other countries and **Anders Mathiesen** has compiled a comprehensive and fully detailed listing of his recordings, in ***Mal Waldron: Black Artist***. It is laid out in accordance with the method first devised by **David Wild** for his **Coltrane** discography. Assigning a six digit control number to each session by year, month and day makes for easy cross referencing. The text is clearly laid out and one can only be impressed with the sheer volume of music created for our edification by Mal Waldron over the years. The author insists that this is only a first version. He anticipates additions and corrections once the book has been circulated. There are indexes for song titles, album titles and musicians as well as an introductory essay which puts Waldron's professional career into focus.

The most comprehensive annual catalog of currently available jazz recordings is compiled by **Manfred Scheffner** in West Germany. The 1989 edition of the book contains 1130 pages and is divided into three sections (tune titles, artists and record company releases). The book is a comprehensive cross indexed listing of all the recordings found in the third section under the record companies. The artist listing, for instance, includes all appearances by the musician whether he is the leader or sideman. The compilation isn't complete for it only lists those titles actively marketed by the Germany manufacturers and distributors. Even with these limitations it is still a book full of vital information for record stores, librarians, and researchers.

The publication of **John Gilmore's** ***Swinging in Paradise*** and **Mark Miller's** ***Cool Blues*** has focused more attention on jazz activities in Montreal. Complementing this work is a recently published monograph by **Jack Litchfield** exploring the history, members and activities of six Montreal jazz record collectors clubs. Litchfield was an active member in at least two of these organizations and half of the 30 pages is occupied with information on the most recent of these (The Montreal Vintage Music Society). It's an interesting social document which gives further insight into the degree of participation in jazz by a wide variety of people over the past 45 years.

The highly specialized nature of these books inevitably precludes them from being widely distributed. Most of them should be available directly from the publishers but the following specialized mail order book dealers are among those who provide a good service to the jazz community. Many jazz record stores also carry this kind of material as well.

Oaklawn Books, P.O. Box 2663, Providence R.I. 02907

Mr Stu, Suite 9-L, 1716 Ocean Ave., San Francisco CA 94112

Collecting Jazz, P.O. Box 543, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7U2 UK

JAZZ RECORDS 1942 to 1980
Volume 1 A-Ba
Edited by Erik Raban
JazzMedia, Dortheavej 39, DK-2400 Copenhagen, Denmark $45.00

BLUES RECORD 1943 to 1970
Volume One A to K
by Mike Ledbitter and Neil Slaven
Record Information Services, 74 Brockley Rise, Forest Hill, London SE23 1LR, England

THE BLUE NOTE LABEL: A DISCOGRAPHY
compiled by Michael Cuscuna and Michel Ruppli
Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Box 5007, Westport, Ct 06881 US $75.00

PROFOUNDLY BLUE
A Bio-Discographical Scrapbook
by Manfred Selchow
Manfred Selchow, Eekeweg 14, D-Westoverledingen, West German $62.70

BUCK CLAYTON'S DISCOGRAPHY
compiled by Bob Weir
Storyville Publications, 66 Fairview drive, Chigwell, Essex 1G7 6H2, England $28.00

THE CHARLIE PARKER DISCOGRAPHY
Norman Saks, Leonard Bukowski and Robert Bregman
Available from Norman Saks, 54 Rockledge Path, Port Jefferson, NY 11177 US$15.00 (Canada/US) $18.00 elsewhere

50 YEARS OF JAZZ WITH BARNEY BIGARD
by Daniel Koechlin
259 rue Le Longpoon, 76160 Darnetal, France) US$10.00

DIZZY GILLESPIE: A DISCOGRAPHY
Volume 11, 1953-1987
by Piet Koster & Chris Sellers
Micography, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 51-53, 1012 RD Amsterdam, The Netherlands

MAL WALDRON: A BLACK ARTIST
A discography compiled by Anders Mathiesen
Available from the author at Broendsteds Alle 4, CK-1803 FRB C, Denmark 150. Danish kroners plus postage at cost.

BIELEFELDER KATALOG JAZZ 1989
compiled by Manfred Scheffner
available from the author at Postfach 600732, 8000 Munchen 60, West Germany DM26,80

A CHRONOLOGY OF SIX MONTREAL RECORD COLLECTORS' CLUBS
by Jack Litchfield
available form the author at Suite 503, 35 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5E 1T3 $2.00 postpaid.

GREAT JAZZ ON SACKVILLE CDs

Celebrate The Season With Our Best Selling Christmas Record

9 PERFORMANCE **9** SOUND QUALITY

Sackville All Stars: Sackville All Star Christmas Record
Producers: John Norris, Bill Smith
Engineer: Phil Sheridan
Sackville CD 3038-2 (DDD)
Disc time: 48:50

You could really swing into the new year listening to carols played like this. Soprano saxophonist Jim Galloway teams up with bass legend Milt Hinton, drummer Gus Johnson, and pianist Ralph Sutton for a soulful set of straight-ahead jazz improvisations on "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "Winter Wonderland," "Go Tell It on the Mountain," and seven others. *All Star Christmas Record* has enough spirit and fine musicianship to cure even the worst case of last-minute-shopping blues. And the pristine sound quality brings this acoustic ensemble to life, giving you the impression that these seasoned artists have actually set up stage in your living room.

There's virtually no end to the inventive approaches the All Stars take. "We Three Kings" maintains a sense of minor key mystery that seems made for the bluesy licks of Galloway's saxophone. "At the Christmas Ball" swings with a slow burlesque tease of catchy musical phrasing and a rich bass solo from Hinton. Just try and sit still through this tune.

A light, carefree version of "Winter Wonderland" follows, taking you on a jazzy sleigh ride through walking bass lines, witty piano solos, and bright statements from the reed player. Only "Good King Wenceslas" lacks a little luster. The tempo and drum beats are a bit ponderous at the opening, but the effect is hardly worth mentioning once Galloway and Sutton add some choice musical insights.

If you're a jazz fan, you could listen to the artistry exhibited on this disc all year long. If you think you don't like jazz, give the *Sackville All Stars Christmas Record* a chance. You may be surprised at the sense of freshness, craftsmanship, and pure enjoyment these players inject into tunes that tend to get a little worn out by December 25. —*Linda Kohanov*
CD REVIEW, DECEMBER 1989

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